



## 10 Useful Things to Know About SEO

### 1. Page one is where it's at.

People who search Google are looking for endorsement, the top answer, the most important or trustworthy result. Ninety-five percent of the time and more, people will not even click to Page 2 of the search results, and some will not even scroll to the bottom half of Page 1. Does this mean you should give up hope of landing a plum spot on Google? Not at all. It's a challenge, but doable.

### 2. You don't need to pay Google.

True, Google ads can take up a great deal of space on the results page, but people generally know they're ads and click much more on organic results. So just because you have money to blow doesn't mean you've got that top position nailed. Quality and user benefit still count more.

### 3. Optimize for mobile.

More than half of Google searches are done on mobile, so optimize your site to deliver the best user experience.

### 4. Meta keywords don't count, never have.

If you're hiring an SEO and want to test for credibility, ask them their process for optimizing meta keywords. If they answer anything other than "Meta keywords have never counted with Google," you'd best look elsewhere for your SEO.

### 5. SEO is not just backlinks.

Backlinks are still a foundation of Google's ranking algorithm, but they're not all you need. SEO is about:

- Having a search-engine-and-user-friendly website.
- Having keywords that are relevant, popular and attainable for you in Google search results.
- Achieving buzz and link equity by having people mention and link to you.
- Being willing to explore machine learning and adjust nimbly to change.

### 6. Take advantage of machine learning.

Some current SEO tools have machine learning baked into them. A good example is MarketMuse. It suggests new keyword themes for you to target, and can analyze your entire website. If your site's got 1000 pages, it will use AI to improve keyword themes and focus for each page, figuring out good keywords to tweak each page around. You can expect to see other tools incorporating AI into their algorithms as time goes on.

### 7. Use the right tools.

Like MarketMuse, tools like Google Trends and the Google Keyword Planner will tell



you what keywords are popular and which are not.

You can also identify new trends or opportunities by looking at what's hot in Buzzsumo, or even checking out the trending topics on Facebook or Twitter.

## **8. Featured snippets - how to get them**

You may have asked Google a question and been rewarded with a direct, concise answer, displaying at the very top of the search results. These are called featured snippets, and they occupy a space on the search page known as "position zero". To get a featured snippet, it's recommended you address a question by repeating the question, providing a concise answer, and using an appropriate answer format, i.e. a brief paragraph, or for how-tos a numbered/bulleted list.

## **9. Stealing snippets**

You can steal featured snippets from competitors. First create a list of them (a good tool for this is SEMrush), then identify their weak keywords. Create stronger, well-thought-out snippets to post to your site, that Google will prefer over your competitor's.

## **10. On linking out**

Does linking to outside resources increase the value of content, or is it wasted effort? True, linking out sends equity outside your site. Google, however, doesn't reward stinginess - it rewards being the best resource. So if linking to relevant tools, services, etc., will benefit your user, by all means link. If a link fails to serve the user in any way, leave it out.

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