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## SEO in 2007 – What's hot and what works

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### Executive Summary

The only certainty about natural search is that ever-changing methods drive success. What worked in the past may not work in the future, and businesses that want to maintain or create better search engine rankings must stay abreast of the latest approaches.

The more you know about search algorithm factors, the better you will position yourself as an authority to Google, and the better your rankings will ultimately be. This brief discusses the latest approaches being leveraged by search engine optimization experts in 2007, and provides details for your business use of these tactics to grow online traffic.

### Organic is more healthy

Organic search is an acronym for "natural" search, or better said, traffic that came to your website for which you did not pay. Great "natural" search placements occur when search engines (mostly Google) see your website as a great resource, and because of this, place you on the first page within search results for a given keyword(s).

Winning this game can be monumental for your business. Consider the following statistics:

A healthcare information site: **227,866** monthly referrals.

An automotive retail site: **632,469** monthly referrals.

A motion picture industry site: **821,390** monthly referrals.

(Source: Clickz)

These are all real world statistics of incremental gains from natural search. These increases are all no-cost and pure profitability to a company's bottom line.

Smart marketers realize that search engine optimization is vital to a full multi-channel marketing strategy. Four concepts can be immediately leveraged by your organization in efforts to increase natural search rankings:

## Tactic #1

### Always alternate anchor text and destination within incoming links

Incoming links are tremendously important to get Google to see your business as trusted. Within every link that comes to your site, two things matter most: anchor text and the link destination.

**Anchor text** is the first clue to a Google web spider as to what a web page is about.

For example, if you were targeting the “Leather Jacket” keyword niche within a sub-category page, an incoming link to your site presented as Leather Jacket | Leather Jackets would be much more effective for SEO than showing a link as [www.leatherdirect.com](http://www.leatherdirect.com)

**Link destination** is where a user winds up after clicking a link. In every link that you build, you must select a link destination within your website.

[www.leatherdirect.com/jackets/bomber-ck.htm](http://www.leatherdirect.com/jackets/bomber-ck.htm) is an example of a link destination

It is vital that your business **alternate these variables** within your monthly link building efforts. Because each page within your site should target two to three phrases, each month should focus on a new group of pages (via new link destinations) and a new subset of keywords (to utilize within the anchor text).

Doing so helps Google better classify your secondary site pages and will increase search rankings – especially with “long tail” type traffic.

## Tactic #2

### Use the “no follow” tag to channel pagerank

The “no follow” HTML value is used to instruct search engines that an existing hyperlink should not influence the link target’s ranking in a search engine’s index. Originally created by Matt Cutts and Google’s web spam team in 1995, the no follow tag is used by bloggers to try and prevent spam.

Little known to most marketers, the no follow attribute can also be used to **channel pagerank to high value pages** within your site. This process, known as “pushing” pagerank, occurs when a business associates the attribute to non revenue generating pages.

To recap some basics, each webpage within Google’s main index has pagerank, or a **numeric value that is contrived from the Google algorithm**. As spiders follow the links on a page, pagerank dilutes as it gets distributed within links.

Your business can drive pagerank to your important pages by using the no follow attribute within links to your non-value pages. Pages such as privacy policy, terms and conditions, or security provide no value to your bottom line within search engines because there is no merchandising at these pages.

By using the attribute on the links that point to these pages, more pagerank will be distributed to the more vital category, sub-category, and product pages on your website, leading to better search engine rankings on non-branded phrases.

### **Tactic #3**

#### **Cleaning up your site code**

Here is an interesting fact - Google doesn't spider every page they know about, nor do they add every spidered page to their index. Because of the limited computing resources (bandwidth and electricity) available within their current datacenters, Google only has a fraction of the websites on the Internet within their index.

What does this mean to you as a marketing or technology executive? It means you need to **construct your website code as cleanly as possible**, to make the job of spidering your site as easy as possible for Google. Doing so will reap big rewards.

Technology teams need to work on their site to reduce what is known as "code bloat" or unnecessary commenting within existing lines of HTML. Coders should move Javascript and CSS definitions to external files, while taking necessary precautions to make sure that improper tags, elements, and characters do not exist within the code.

In conjunction, coders should try and move the body text as high within the code as possible. Doing so allows search spiders to more rapidly access the "meat" on a page and better classify a web page or document within their search index.

### **Tactic #4**

#### **Get Social**

An essential part of SEO is link building, and over the last year, the most effective methods for link building have been to **develop a brand presence within external blogs and social bookmarking sites**. By establishing inbound links from these type of sites, your business will gain links from what Google sees as some of the most trusted entities on the web.

To leverage blogging for SEO, your internal marketing teams should attempt to establish relationships with blog publishers within your sector. Old fashioned telephone calls or email communications work wonders in building these relationships.

By providing publishers with fresh and unique content that makes their site more useful for their readers, your business will receive credit for the content it provides – and that credit is typically in the form of a one way link.

These types of links are the most valuable; they are from trusted content sources and are permanent within the pages of your content partners.

Social bookmarking is another vehicle to drive SEO performance. Social bookmarking sites allow web users to “tag” their favorite content and save it within an online site. Social bookmarking sites like DIGG and Stumble Upon are trusted by search engines and when users bookmark your content, you essentially receive a link in each instance.

The key is consistent submission of brand webpages within the major social bookmarking sites. Your primary category and sub-category pages should be submitted and the target keywords/link destinations for these pages should be included within the submissions for optimal results.

### **There is no silver bullet**

All of these tactics will help you raise your search engine rankings but are not substitutes for the most fundamental piece of the SEO equation: Quality Content.

If SEO is on your radar as a strategic tactic for the near future, ensure that someone on your team, or an external resource, will be providing new content on a daily basis. The more often content is added to your site and the more keyword-rich the web copy, the better your website will rank organically.

If you have questions into these concepts, or would like to learn more about how Trinity Insight can assist within your natural search opportunity, please visit [www.trinityinsight.com](http://www.trinityinsight.com) or call us at 610-638-1047