

# Emerging Methods for Effective Search Engine Ranking

By Lee Traupel

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Search Engine traffic has always been and continues to be one of the best ways to drive qualified traffic to a web site - it presents information about goods and services when the interest level is high and it can be acted on immediately. Up till now opt-in e-mail marketing has been an effective complement to search engine ranking campaigns; but the never-ending deluge of Spam is rapidly ruining the effectiveness of opt-in e-mail and helping to add luster to the value and cost-effectiveness of search engine traffic.

Unfortunately, the increasing popularity of search engine ranking methodologies is helping to raise the barriers to entry - as more businesses, ad agencies and SEO firms concentrate their efforts on creating highly optimized web sites, the competition for keyword rankings and qualified traffic is increasing significantly. The rules are changing rapidly and if you expect to succeed you must deploy a sophisticated methodology that blends technology and processes. Here is a list of five bottom line requirements that must be adhered to if you expect to generate qualified traffic:

**Link Strategy:** The web is maturing and search engines are putting more and more emphasis on link popularity or page rank or "PR" in Google's vernacular; i.e. the number of web sites pointing back to your own. If you are to be successful you must develop and deploy a systematic process to establish links to your web site with others that are in your market segment and setup an outbound "link to" resources page via your own site. This takes an investment of time and resources - typically you need between 400-800 links back to your web site to achieve a good "page ranking." Here is a link to an excellent detailed article on setting up an effective link popularity strategy: <http://www.website101.com/arch/archive143.html>

**Keyword Fundamentals:** Keywords are the fundamental building blocks of any search engine ranking campaign - many/many companies waste significant resources optimizing for keywords that are either wrong; i.e. not targeted for their market or there is too much competition and rankings will never be achieved. You must utilize keywords that are targeted for your market and find those that can effectively drive page 1-3 rankings - WordTracker [www.wordtracker.com](http://www.wordtracker.com) has rapidly emerged as the defacto industry standard technology tool for researching keywords - we've used it for years and highly recommend this cost-effective and comprehensive service to our clients and business partners.

**Keyword Saturation:** Search engine "spiders" or "bots" are automated software applications that constantly roam the web to assess what is called "keyword saturation" via web site content (pages) to identify how a site should be listed in a search engine database. They typically look for 3-7% usage of keywords versus the text on a specific page - you must adhere to their standards if you

want to achieve keyword rankings for your selected keywords. And, to further complicate matters, top tier search engines all have different rules for keyword saturation - we highly recommend and use this software application to help us ascertain and setup the correct keyword saturation for our client's web sites:

<http://www.se-optimizer.com/>

**Optimized Content:** Highly optimized content is still very important as far as search engines are considered - the more search engine optimized content on a web site the better. Search engines prefer content that is thematically grouped, loads fast, is textual with minimal graphics, is highly optimized for keywords (keyword saturation fundamentals are addressed) and incorporates one or two of your primary keywords for a specific page in the page title.

**Site Maps Essential:** Site maps are frequently overlooked when search engine ranking processes are deployed. A site map not only serves as a quick reference and/or navigation guide for anyone visiting your web site but it's also used by search engines to "crawl" (the action a spider or bot takes to review your web site) your web site to find pages and links. Make sure you include a basic site map in your optimization plans, it's very important to help search engines navigate through your site.

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Lee Traupel has 20 plus years of marketing experience - he is the founder of Intelective Communications, Inc. <http://www.intelective.com> , a marketing services company which provides strategic and tactical marketing services exclusively to small to medium sized companies.

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