

7-Step SEO Power-Guide

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I want you to get the most out of this short read, so...There are 7 steps.

I expanded on each step briefly, then got right to the point.

It is hard to talk about all the aspects of SEO in a short report! My goal is to distill the processes I use when optimizing clients' sites & my own sites.

I am writing this at 10pm so lets see how far I get before falling asleep.

Utilize the 7 steps & watch what happens!

*Cheers,
Dori*

*p.s. Thanks to Ann Premazon for fixing my bad grammer!
Need help understanding the web? Check her [BusinessWebBasics](#) out, it rocks!*

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Process Map

7-Step SEO Quick Start Guide



Step 1: Buy an Aged Domain

"One" of my secrets (secret being, information that not many people utilize ;-)) that could be one of the most important things to do for SEO positioning when starting an online business.

Buy an Aged Domain

And, I hate to step ahead but we are going to have to journey to "Step 4: Study The Competition" for a minute to get the theory on this.

When I check the age of the sites that I am going to be competing with, chances are that they are 3 or more years old and in competitive markets you are going to see sites in the 8-14 years of age! =:0

Sure, one could argue that they are on the front page because they have been around longer to do the SEO work (that you plan on doing quickly) but don't neglect that the search engines "DO" give importance to "age" AND "registration length."

Authority of a site, according to the Google algorithm is determined by two main factors: The number and quality of links pointing to it and the age of the site, in terms of the period of time that the site has contained index able content seen by the search engines. Webmasters have no control over this factor. The only way to affect this is by buying old websites.

- <http://www accuracast.com/seo-weekly/ranking-factors.php>
- <http://www.seomoz.org/article/search-ranking-factors>

So, to make sure we start on the right foot when going into any market. I recommend purchasing an aged domain. Yes, a domain that has been used, been around, and NOT dropped by the domain registrars. (Dropping makes the domain start the creation date all over again and that is NOT what we want!)

There are many places to buy an aged domain. Ebay.com, sitepoint.com, digitalpoint.com are places where domains are commonly put up for auction and you can get some VERY good deals on aged domains AND websites. Sometimes when you purchase an aged domain they come with Page Rank and other SEO goodies attached which is icing on the cake.

But, my personal favorite place to buy an aged domain is Godaddy's Auction. Just the sheer size of auctions is enough to make my mouth water, but the bonus of purchasing here is the age of the domain stays in tact & that my friends makes it a total win!

Here is how to access GoDaddy Auctions

<http://auctions.godaddy.com>

We won't be able to find the age of the domains they offer on their site, but you can research their upcoming dropping domains as well as other domain repositories such as sedo, afternic, etc, using this service...

freshdrop.net

And yes, that is an affiliate link lol, if you choose to join and grace me with the credit, but you actually can search their database for age without becoming a member.

Once I have found a domain I feel will best serve me, I then go to the vendor whom is offering the domain and purchase it. Next is to have the owner transfer the domain to me IN THE SAME REGISTRAR they have held the domain in to retain the age.

Let me say that again as this is VERY IMPORTANT!

It is a MUST to "push" the domain to an account that is in the SAME registrar where it presently resides to RETAIN THE AGE. And again, when I purchase from Godaddy's auctions, this transfer is done automatically into my Godaddy account! :-)

So what happens if you already have an existing online business with a domain that is either perfect or you just can't start over.

Here is another secret (or trick of the trade rather ;-)

Do a "301 redirect" to your existing domain from the purchased domain that has the attributes you are waiting for.

When asked about the 301 redirect and sandboxing, Andy Lasnik from Google responded..

"301s pass PR and related signals appropriately. Usually takes a couple of weeks for things to smooth out, though."

[-resource link](#)

Ok, I might have thrown you for a loop... What..the..heck is a "301 redirect?"

Don't worry; it isn't as scary as it sounds. A 301 redirect is a fancy term that means you are pointing one page on or domain to another page or domain on the web, and it is permanent.

Because of the permanence of this type of pointing (redirect), Google transfers the attributes of the purchased site, such as Page Rank, to a existing site. (Did I just see you smile? ;-)

So this time when we search for a domain, we are going to look for other attributes. Sure, find one that has age, but now also find one that has Page Rank, backlinks and maybe even TRAFFIC! :-)

And yes, I know what you are thinking, well can I find one to USE as my money site that has age, and then another one that has Page Rank to do that 301 thing you are talking about? And WOW, how many can I do?

The answer, ABSOLUTELY! Just don't over due it and get popped with an over optimization penalty. (More on that later) I think two or three should about do it.

And another note here. Above, Andy talks about it resolving in a couple of weeks. Well, that maybe internally, but let me share from experience, it may take months before that beloved Google toolbar shows improved Page Rank from the redirect so be patient.

(If you don't have this, go here and download)

toolbar.google.com

Step 2: Submit Your Site to the Web Directories

I have done some testing on my favorite directory submission service lately (videos on my blog) and the verdict is still out on the effectiveness of using the directories to get your site indexed. However before I go into that effectiveness let me share the theory and major benefit behind submitting to the web directories.

We 1st go back to studying the competition for this one. I look at a lot of sites and the links coming into them & start seeing some patterns.

One of those patterns is a link that has a domain URL. There can be a combination of variations, for example, my blog domain url is "http://www.dorfriend.com" so that would be one variation, others would be, dorifriend.com, www.dorifriend.com and Dori Friend.

There has been some discussion within my group of friends to whether this is even necessary and each can state examples of sites that are nicely ranked under competitive terms without the benefit of url links coming in.

And, the same can be argued for almost all aspects of Google's algorithm (except for the fact that if you aren't in Google's index, you can't get ranked!). One thing for sure is, it does keep us SEOs guessing as seo is a moving target on a good day.

And, I have "heard" that Google wants to see anywhere from 5% to 40% of these types of links coming in to a site, this is what Google deems natural. I typically see the average on sites I have reviewed, to be between 15% and 27% but that are by no means a rule.

Another pattern that I have seen when reviewing sites is the countless links coming from sites that are not in Google's index!

Yes, that is right, it is a HUGE pattern and sometimes in group discussions we think about the possibility of ranking sites based on massive amounts of otherwise worthless links.

I don't know if I subscribe to that, as most times, I see quality links coming in as well, but there is a good argument for a lot of low value links.

Now back to directory submissions...

Just with these two patterns alone -

- A. url type links
- B. links from sites not indexed in Google

- is enough reason to find a directory submission service to get the two patterns of links directed to your site.

Now... with those two possible parameters easily out of the way, you can concentrate your time on finding high quality links. You need "high quality, keyword rich" links for the terms you want to rank for.

About my tests with my favorite service? Inconclusive actually, but one thing is for sure, don't depend on this step to get your site indexed from FREE directory services. Get a link from a paid Directory, Yahoo being the best, or get a link from a site that you know is getting spidered frequently. Oh, and if you can get into DMOZ, then throw your hat into the air and dance a jig!

Step 3: Choose Keywords

Choosing keywords is a very important step (not that any of them aren't)! Care should be taken when choosing keywords to optimize for a website.

I not only looking for keywords that have traffic (and a lot of it) but more importantly I look for keywords that "convert!" Five visitors that have 2 paying customers sure beats out 100 visitors with 1 paying customer! So, I look for keywords my customers are buying, not the keyword that will boost my ego the most.

Ok, some ego boosters are ok and can be good for perceived social importance when I can say, "hey, I'm real; see I am here for this keyword." For some reason, we as a people, place a lot of trust in Google to tell us what is important. So, I give you permission to go after one or two of those words. ;-)

But the rest should be converting!

And normally this is found in what is called the "long tail" of search. You have probably heard of that term or "long tail keywords." I don't remember who came up with that but I'm sure it was someone smarter than I (lol) as they had discovered that there is as much traffic from the 80% of lengthy keywords as there is from 20% of the short keywords. (Please don't quote me on that one, but hopefully you get the jist ☺)

In any case, it is those types of keywords that generally convert.

The absolute best way to choose keywords for natural search is strangely enough with a Pay Per Click Campaign. (PPC) If you are doing your PPC campaign right, then you know which keywords are converting for you.

If I don't have a PPC campaign to grab data, I would sort of have to fly blind... but there are ways you can make educated guesses. Picking the right keywords could be a course onto itself, but let me give you a quick run down on some tools.

There are a lot of keyword tools out there you can use, my favorite being Google's external keyword tool. It shows you a good deal of data that is useful when choosing keywords. I also like Wordtracker and their KEI measurement of competition on a keyword. I also hear Keyword Elite and Keyword Discovery are excellent.

Using these tools and their sets of algorithms help. Make your best educated guess on what keywords will deliver the best results for you.

When I can't use PPC and I rely on these tools I suggest adding Google Analytics (this is free) to a site. Adding Google Analytics at the very least offers a way to track where traffic is coming from, what keyword drives a visitor to the site, and begins to let us see how Google views the site.

If you CAN grab data from a PPC campaign then great!

For both (from PPC or picking from tools) I normally pick 10-20 mid range keywords to start with. Long tail is great, but if I can find a mid range choice that I can rank for without monumental effort, that is where I begin.

Next I will start my long tail campaign. This type of campaign can take time, but I remember... it only takes one or two links to get those types of keywords ranked but links are in step 7. :-)

Bottom line, create one list of 10-20 keywords that are midrange, and then maybe 100 long tails. (And of course, that isn't where you stop, we are going to rinse and repeat :-)

Next, I want you to check out NicheWatch.com. This is a cool tool I use to research the competitive nature of a keyword. Quick instructions are...

- 1) Go to NicheWatch.com
- 2) enter your mid range keyword and click "check competition"
- 3) The results will come up

I don't pay attention to anything but the columns of "anchor" and "title." It is these two items that gives me an idea how well that keyword is optimized for by other seo's.

What I am looking for is a lot of "-" dashes in those columns. If I see low numbers and not dashes, I know that is going to be a tough place to squeak in. But if I see those "-" dashes, then I know there is room for me to rank easily there!

If keywords are all full of low numbers and no dashes in those columns, go back and reconsider the mid range terms. And, I only do this for mid range terms as long tails should be FULL of dashes! lol

I also like to start paying attention to the size of the sites in this market. Not that it is a huge indicator and certainly doesn't stop me from going into a market when I see only beefy sites, but I do like to see the size of sites that are ranking. Bets are, if you are in a competitive market, the sites are going to be at least a hundred or two pages and into the thousands.

It has been long believed that Google likes big sites and I have no evidence to report on the contrary. On every money site I put up, I make sure there are articles being published in the back ground to bulk up my site, but now I am getting into Step 6 already! lol

One thing about NicheWatch.com, they have columns for Page Rank but I have YET to see any results appear. It usually says NA or just has a dash. I would think they would have a pro version, (that I would gladly pay for) to get those results, but I have never found a way to sign up for it if one does exist.

I do know from first hand with my tools however, how hard it is to return Page Rank results without getting the IP of my 100s of proxies banned. =:0

Step 4: Study Your Competition

This might be one of the most important and most "LEFT OUT" steps when people start their seo campaign.

It I don't know where I am going, then how will I get there?

Most folks just throw links at a site and hope for the best. But, I am here to tell you there is another more calculated way, and because of the over optimizing penalties I am seeing lately (dec 2009) that this is becoming even more important and is not a step you should over look.

First, I choose my favorite mid range keyword I have found and do a Google search for it and look at the sites that come up in the top ten.

This is our competition for that keyword. I do this for each mid range keyword, but really, after a couple, I begin to see the rhythm for that market.

This is when I get kind of nerdy and get out my spreadsheet out and keep track of the numbers I am going to gather in my research.

I do this because then I can have it all in front of me and in a glance, I can get a general idea of what it is going to take to rank for a keyword.

By researching the competition, we are finding the qualities that Google likes for our market and in particular for that keyword term. And once we have this information, we have the end of our road map. Our destination! We now know where we are going! This is BIG!!!

So, what are we looking for in those top ten sites?

- 1) the age of their site
- 2) the size of their site (remember I was starting to pay attention to this at nichewatch.com)
- 3) their backlinks, number, quality and composition.

--and somewhat important is page rank, but I often see PR2 above a PR4 (or something similar) in rankings as I believe it is the combinations of factors that play a larger role in ranking.

Now of course, if every one of those top 10 sites have PR5-6, then we just might not get there with a PR3 but this is speaking more to the quality of links coming into those sites that reflect the high PR and it is the linking that you replicate and the PR will naturally come so don't sweat the PR so much. ;-)

A really quick thing I do to get some competitive advantage is by using SpyderMate.com. I absolutely LOVE this tool. Maybe because it is so visual and nicely reflects its results but for some reason, it just makes me smile! lol And it is FREE! You just need to register with them for unlimited use!

URL again for you skimmers is <http://www.spydermate.com>

I enter the URL I want to gather information on and submit. It may take a couple of minutes for them to spider and come back, but when they do... you will see this very cool graph that gives a great visual indication the strength of a site, and you also get a score!

The only indications I have on their scoring algorithm is from the results they give us, but it is pretty cool and when you get a report on your top ten competitors, you are going to get a very good idea of where you need to go to compete.

So I put my results in a spreadsheet so I can see the scope of my destination, be it a little hill or mount Everest. The things I track are again, score, age, number of backlinks and page rank.

I don't put much credence into the Alexa Rank when doing my research, but if MY site is coming up low on that end; I can easily escalate it to match my competition. (but that is another secret for another day ;-)

The "Compete Ranking" I have to be honest, I don't know much about, but I visited their site the other day and OMG! The information you can pick up there about your competition is incredible!

Ok, quick tip not related to SEO but you can even find out where your competition is getting their traffic from! Meaning, where they are BUYING traffic! And if they are buying it somewhere and you have a similar product, don't you think that same site they are buying from might be a good place for you to buy as well? The answer is YES! Cut to the chase and go directly to the site that is delivering traffic and negotiate a deal!

Once I have all that material in front of me, I will probably pick 3-5 sites to do in-depth research on. Meaning, I am now going to look at who is linking to them and get a good feel for the quantity and quality of links I'm going to need to rank on the page without over optimizing.

My absolute FAVORITE tool for this is [SEO Elite](#). It is only \$147 bucks and is well worth it on many levels for the part time or small business seo'er.

When using [SEO Elite](#) you enter a domain and hit go it is going to pull up a ton of information on the sites linking to your competition. I use this for a couple of reasons.

The first, is to see the quantity and quality of links that are needed to get me on page one, the second is, well, I look at "where" they got their good links, if they got a link from a great site, then maybe I can too! :-)

There is so much about the information you can use when researching your competition that I could write an entire report on it so that will have to wait for a Home Study Course.

Bottom line. I don't go out and blindly link. In a lot of cases, that may over optimize you and you get stuck on page 5. And then what do we normally do when we are stuck on page 5? Go get more links lol, when in fact, that may be what pushes us to page 6 lol.

Take the keyword I am going to optimize my dad's site for, "organic olive oil" even though the sites in the top ten have HUGE age on them, the [SpyderMate](#) scores and the links to them are really not all that frightening so I am going to have to be REALLY careful not to load and fire my cannon when all I need is a couple of good slingshots for that one. And a little methodical placing of links will no doubt get me there in the next couple of months.

Step 5: Creating a Baseline

Creating a baseline is almost as important as studying your competition. I need to know where I am so I can write out the directions to my destination.

What I do here is repeat all the steps I did in Step 4, but I do them for MY site. Once I have studied my competition and I know the age of their site, the size of their site, their backlinks, and the quality of those backlinks I can begin to see exactly what I need to crush the competition therefore creating my baseline.

For example in the Olive Oil market, I know that most of the sites that I want to beat for "organic olive oil" have only a handful of pr4 sites and a handful of pr3 sites with maybe a dozen of pr2s and pr1s, and the rest are PR0s or are not in the Google index. And, most of those sites only have a couple of hundred links coming in as well.

So the list of links I want to get may look like this.

PR4 = 5

PR3 = 7

PR2 = 12

PR1 = 14

PR0 = 20-50

N/A = 50-100

Now I can make a plan about getting those links. (more on that in Step 7 ;-)

I also like to add analytics to my site, track my traffic, alexa rank, PR, and the size of my site.

As I improve on these things, my site will naturally rise up the rankings in Google and my SpyderMate score will go up as well. :-)

I check in on myself every other week or so and redo the test to make sure I continue on the right rode up the mountain.

One other tool I use to check to see if and where I am currently ranked is SEMrush.com.

The SEMrush.com database includes most, if not all top 20 Google rankings. The data is about 30 days old, but this also let's me see where I am.

If I see my site and any keywords that I can easily bump up to page one, I will then put those on my keyword list, and begin to optimize for it. It doesn't matter if they are short tail or long tail. If I am already that close, I am going to push it OVER!

SEMrush also lets me track how well my seo campaign is doing on another level as well. When I started using this, I noticed after a seo campaign ran for a couple of months that I was starting to show up for derivatives of the keywords I had optimized.

Many times, again, I take the page 2 keyword list and put those into the seo mix so I can bump them up.

And of course, it is nice to see my keyword coverage grow in SEMrush.com as well. :-)

For specific keyword rank checking, again I recommend Seo Elite!

Step 6: Develop SEO Pages

If you know me, you know I don't do much on page optimization if at all. But I do like my title tags to match (or have in it) the keywords that I am targeting that page for. That has been a constant item that has remained important through the years. Don't even think about keyword density on the page as it DOESN'T MATTER!

So, when I am thinking about my seo campaign, I have to think about where I am sending my links. I don't want them ALL to go to my index page. The fact that it is better for SEO to link to inner pages but also speaks to site conversion! And, that is what we are all doing this for, (well at least me anyway) to CONVERT our visitor. We can do that better on a page specifically tailored to that keyword.

Now, I am not saying I make an individual page for each keyword, I use common sense when deciding what traffic I want to send where. And then I am sure to include those

keywords in my Title Tag! And, if I can do it, my url as well. I am seeing a lot of url based rankings and even did a small test on this and when all things are equal, the keyword based url won! And I am talking domain.com/keyword not just keyword domain names. Make sense?

When I drive links to inner pages, this also helps with passing Page Rank/authority through a site. Passing this authority is when a good site structure can really help out. I use silos. Silos is a fancy name for something as simple as inner page links to sub-directory page that links to index page or home. I have a process map at my site <http://www.seonitro.com/sitestructure.htm>, that explains this perfectly. Check it out!

Which brings me to my next topic. Link Bait.

I didn't come up with that term but seems appropriate and I just gave you an example of what that is and how I using it.

The page I gave you for my site structure process map, is, link bait. It is an invitation for people to link to that page because I have something cool and useful to give away. And you can bet that that page links back up into my site to pass the link juice love! :-)

Sometimes the most effective way to do seo is to just do your business and the links and rankings come naturally. And then again, if you are like me, you want to help it along lol, so next...

Double Listings! We LOVE double listings! I don't know what the exact percentage of click through increase there is with a double listing and it is late and I am too lazy to look it up right now, but I can tell you it is absolutely worth your attention!

The way to get a double listing is to link not to just one page in your site for a particular keyword, but to link to TWO. This is most often seen with the index/home page being the first and then an inner page underneath.

The inner page will NOT have to have the same ranking strength to get there as the strength of the first listing kind of pulls it up. :-)

I normally take my best converting keywords and link to both my index page and coordinating inner page (with matching title tags)

There is other type of multiple listings going on but that goes beyond the scope of this report. ;-)

In fact, it's time for bed and I have one last step. The biggest, bestest, what 90% of seo is all about and that is **GETTING LINKS!!!**

Step 7: Punching your site with Backlinks

Where to get them, how to get them, and what to get, is all covered, but it has to be...

to be continued... <http://www.seonitro.com/Step7.htm>

I'm getting tired. I promise you will be able to handle the punch. It is spiked with all kinds of goodies to rocket a site to the top!

So again, before I nod off go to <http://www.seonitro.com/Step7.htm>