44

Super Simple

SEO Hacks

For Faster Results and Higher Rankings

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Hi There!

Thanks for downloading this free report.

I'm always asked about tricks and tips to get to the top of Google. Truth be told there is no such thing as a stand-alone SEO hack that gets you ranking on Page 1 for a high-volume keyword.

Without a doubt, you have to put in some serious time and effort into your SEO strategy. That being said there are habits you can do day in and day out to climb search engine results pages (SERP).

Better yet, there are hacks I learned working at Google for 5 years and running a digital marketing agency that will help you save time and money. I hope this report helps you master SEO for yourself and the websites you manage.

I dive deeper into all things organic search and answer all your digital marketing questions during in-person and online training courses. I lead a team of experienced and passionate digital practitioners waiting to help you succeed online.

View SEO Classes

Thanks, and all the best with your campaigns!

- Michael Peggs

Perhaps you believe that you already found the easy stuff, the "low-hanging fruit," as it were: good keywords for your niche, optimized titles and body copy, an XML sitemap. Nevertheless, you can't seem to break past your competitors in the Google SERPs for your most coveted keywords.

You may not have the time or resources right now to do an expensive site overhaul or to even commit to SEO long-term. You may only want a few simple tweaks that will help move the needle.
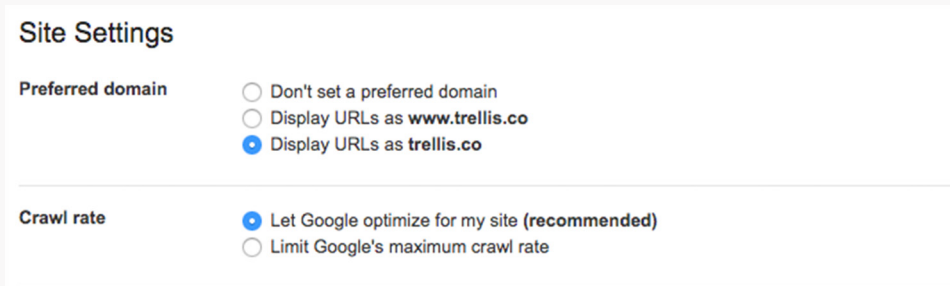
Well, look no further. You are in luck, because you won't need years of SEO training for the following forty-four hacks. And let me be very clear, when I talk about "hacking" SEO, I'm talking about saving time and doing things as efficiently as possible. I'd never encourage gray or black hat techniques in an effort to game the search engines! Plus, it just won't work.

These hacks won't cost you a lot of time or money to implement. You won't even need to change significant parts of your site. Intrigued? Then you're in the right place. What follows are 44 SEO Hacks for faster search results and higher rankings

1. **Baseline your Rankings** - The importance of Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, is well established. What is less understood is the importance of benchmarking your website's current SEO performance so that you can compare the improvement over time. The top 4 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to benchmark before you start SEO include the number of indexed pages in Google, number of keyword rankings, organic and referral traffic as well as your backlinks profile. Tools like Google Analytics, Google Search Console and SEMRush can help you track your progress.

2. **Setup Google Search Console** - Formerly known as Google Webmaster Tools, Google Search Console is Google's most valuable free business tool. It's their secret communication portal and the only way for you to direct and monitor how Google sees your website. You can uncover crawl errors, indexing issues, markup structured data, set your language preferences and review links to your site. Maybe most important, the Search Analytics report is the only place you can find the exact keywords driving traffic to your website on google.com.
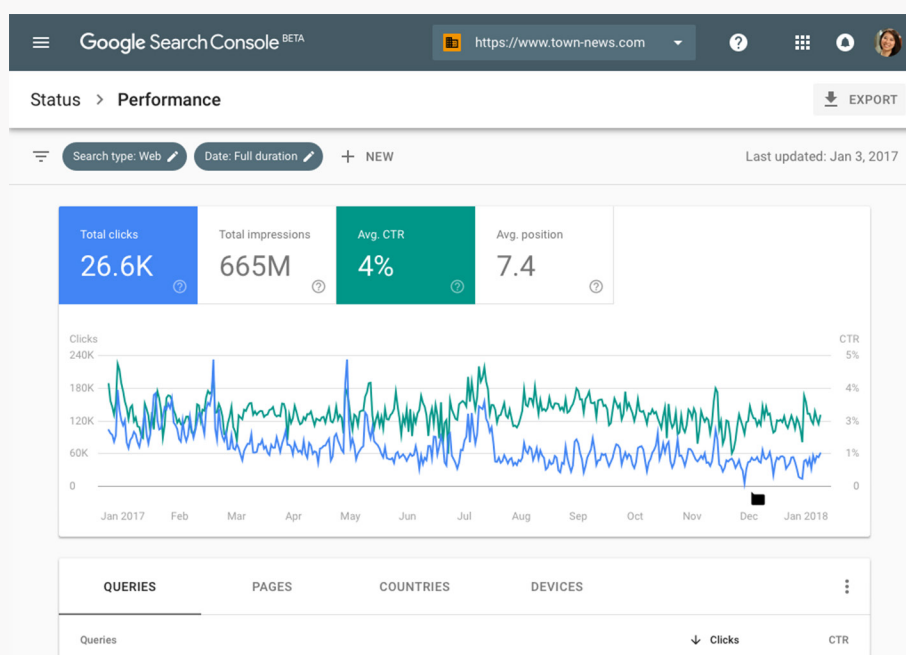
3. **Setup Search Console Site Preference -** Are you setting up Google Search Console for the first time? Remember to add all versions of your site. You should submit both www and non-www versions of your site. You should also submit http and https. Once you're finished, remember to set the preferred site. This helps Google know which domain to rank in search rankings.


4. **Share More Sitemaps -** Yes, it still makes sense to submit sitemaps via Google Search Console. Sitemap submission allows Google to understand the pages on your site more quickly. And you can have more than one sitemap. If you want Google to focus its crawl attention to specific sections of your site, create a separate sitemap and prioritize certain pages. You can also create sitemaps for content types, including images, videos, profiles, and blog posts.

5. **Mobile Matters** - With the new mobile-first index, use the Google Search Console Fetch and Render tool to test how Google's mobile search agent views your mobile pages in comparison to your desktop pages. Google will tell you about elements that spiders can't see or are blocked from seeing. Googlebot runs through the page (or set of pages you designate by entering a directory) and all the links on or within images, separate CSS files, JavaScript or other code. When the fetch and render is complete check the status for a list of issues to address.
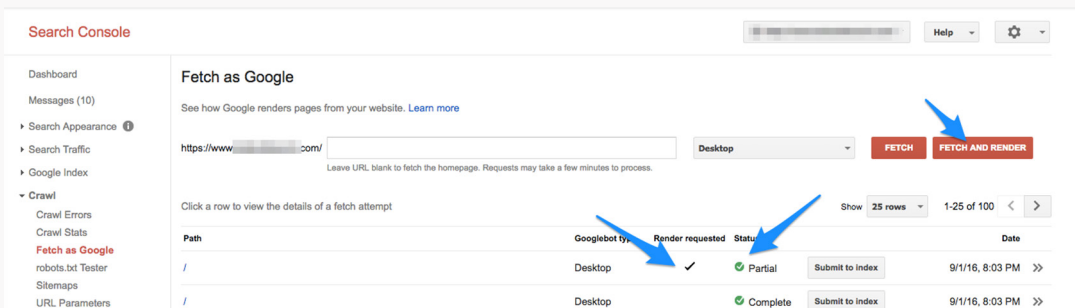
6. **AMP AWAY -** To help you prepare for the mobile-first index, launch Google Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP). Accelerated Mobile Pages is an open source initiative project designed to optimize faster mobile pages. It's like taking a page that's already mobile friendly and making it load quicker, by stripping it down to basics. There's a significant correlation between site speed, page views and mobile search engine rankings so you'll want to prioritize AMP ASAP. Remember, in a mobile-first world the user experience on mobile matters more than desktop.

7. **Voices Matter, too -** Now that Google voice search is available in 30 new languages, it's available to more than 1 billion people worldwide. Mobile matters and so goes speak to search. When conducting keyword research, incorporate queries that are more relevant to voice queries. Voice search will continue to become more important with Google Answers and the mobile-first index.

8. **Say My Name, Say My Name (Local SEO):** It may sound simple, but check to make sure your Name, Address and Phone Number (NAP) is consistent across all channels, including your website. Yes, 123 Main Street is different than 123 Main St. Correct accordingly.
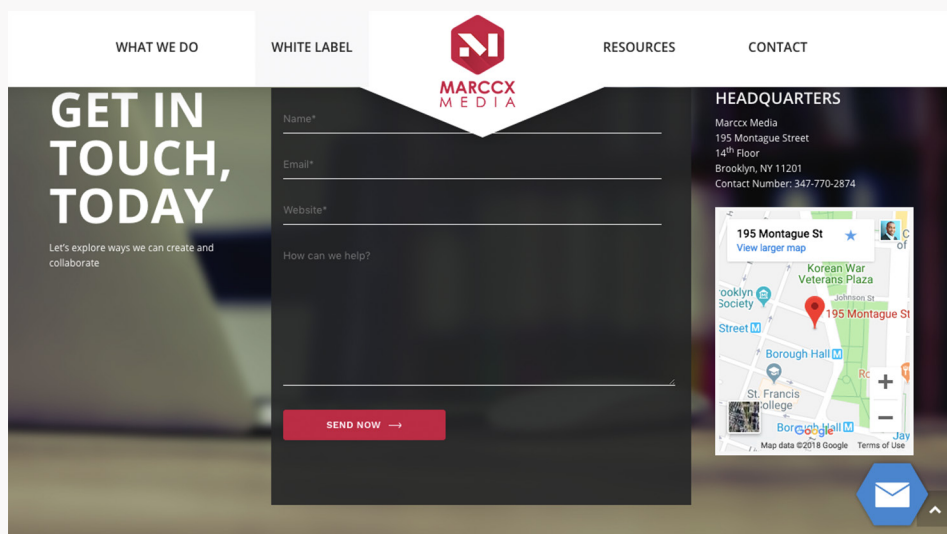
9. **Mentions Mean Something (Local SEO) -** Many SEOs feel unlinked citations offer no value. However Gary Illyes, Webmaster Trends Analyst at Google, hinted in an interview that there might be a future in unlinked citations. So, any mention of your NAP is a good mention.

10. **Garner Great Reviews (Local SEO) -** The importance of customer citations are continuing to grow. Put together a plan to ask customers for product reviews or comments on your services. if you want a prominent position in the local Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs), you need user reviews. If you want to protect your reputation, encourage click through, or physical visits, you need good reviews.
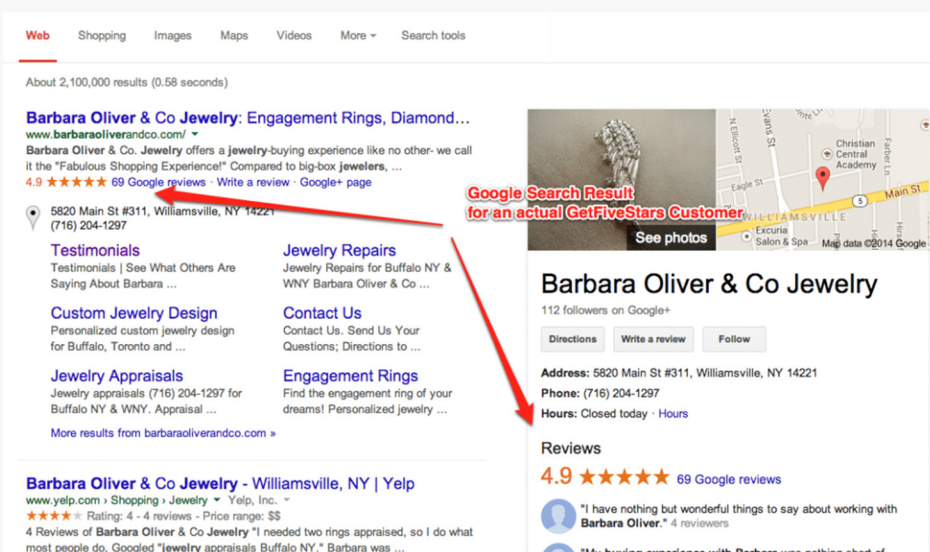
11. **Get Google My Business -** GMB is incredibly important for local SEO. Without it you won't be appearing on any local map listings in the SERPs which Google displays for the vast majority of local queries. Good news for you the setup is simple. Make sure you've claimed your listing. Verify your account. Update the details of your business. For example, have the correct business hours displayed. Populate the listing with high-quality images, prioritizing images of interiors. Focus on customer reviews. Again, super important for SEO!

12. **Shave Seconds off Page Speed** - Keep site speed to 2-3 seconds for the user. Why? According to surveys done by Akamai and Gomez.com, nearly half of web users expect a site to load in 2 seconds or less, and they tend to abandon a site that isn't loaded within 3 seconds. You can use tools like Google's PageSpeed insights to check your site speed and download a list of suggestions to shave seconds off your page speed.
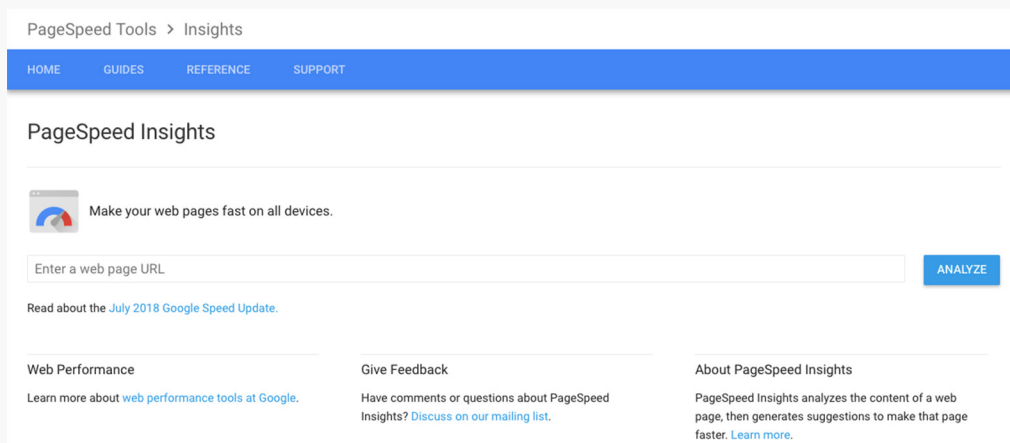
13. **Internalize Internal Links -** Make sure you have a clear linking structure within your website. If you're counting on your footer links to drive your internal linking strategy, think again. Footer and header links do not hold a lot of weight. Instead, link within your body copy and help Google navigate your website better.

14. **Breadcrumbs Are A Mandatory SEO Ingredient -** A breadcrumb is a small text path, often located at the top of a page. This breadcrumb trail immediately shows you where you are. Every step of that path is clickable, all the way back to the homepage. Not only do bread-crumbs give Google another way of figuring out how your website is structured but they enhance user experience by directing visitors forward and back, reducing friction and keep-ing them happy along the way.
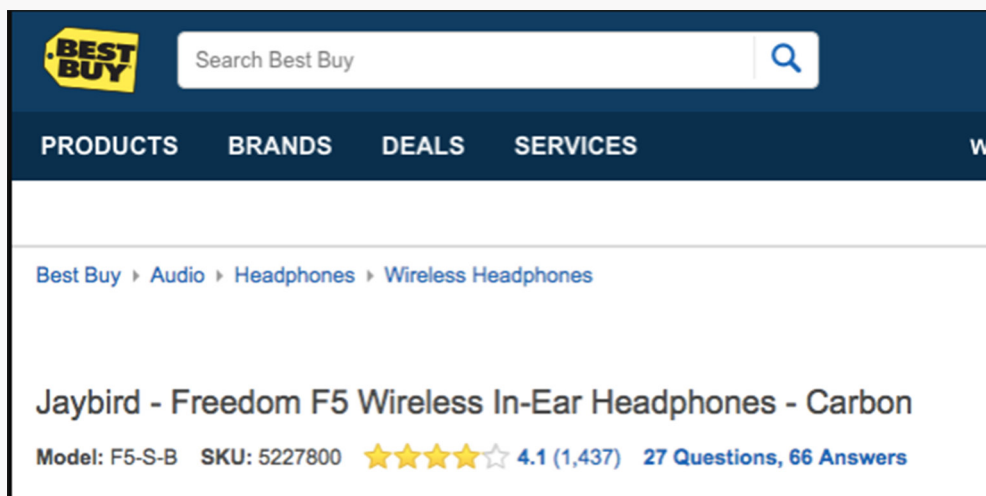
15. **Figure out Featured Snippets -** Featured Snippets are generated by Google from the content of pages at the top of SERP. Google prefers to display featured snippets in search when they believe this format will help people more easily discover what they're seeking, both from the description and when they click on the link to read the page itself. It's especially helpful for those on mobile or searching by voice.

   If you want to be featured, research the questions your readers are asking and create content specifically to answer those questions. Provide in-depth, quality answers. Organize your answer with headers, including h2 headers, h2 headers or "paragraph styles" in WordPress. Featured Snippets are complex so keep experimenting to figure out what works best.
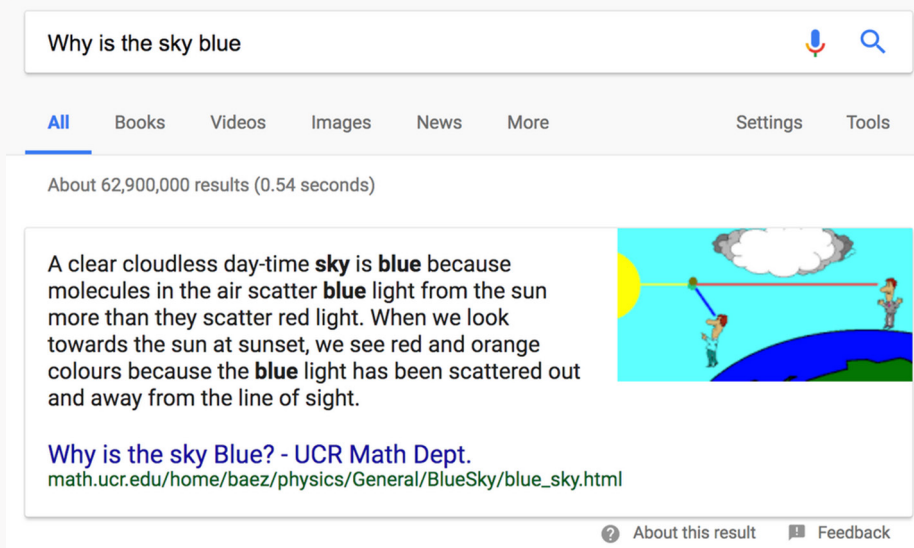
16. **Remember Rich Snippets -** Which one of these would you rather click?
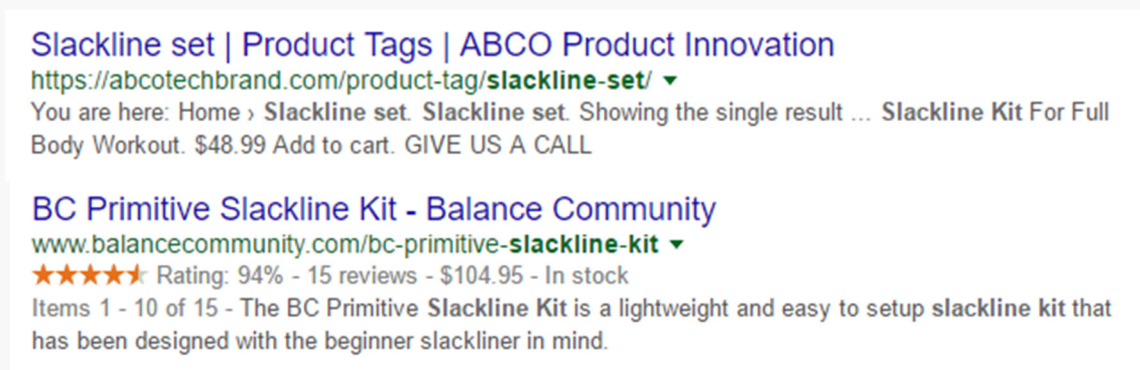
    I would choose #2. What about you? The rating shows the searcher that this product is high-quality, as evidenced by pleased past buyers. The price and the "in stock" markers tell searchers what they need to know to invest in your quality product.

    Rich snippets are among my favorite SEO tactics. Rich snippets are descriptive HTML tags which help search engines to better understand the content of a web page, including people, products, recipes, events, music and movies. And the cool thing is they will show up in the search results for certain search results, like our balancecommunity.com example.

17. **Snippets Support CTR TOO** - Coupled with a great, enticing meta description and title tags, Rich Snippets make your search listing stand out from the crowd. And a higher Click Through Rate on SERPs is one of 200+ SEO signals that can rank you higher.

18. **Write Moving Meta Tags** - Let's face it! We're emotional so it's an excellent hack to start using emotions in snippets and meta tags like your page title. The secret here is to find the perfect balance between very SEO focused titles vs. emotional ones. Comedy, Romance, Whit and Wonder all are emotional hooks to increase CTR. Adding a little bit of emotion helps to connect faster and the faster the connection the quicker the click.

19. **Consider Competitor Keywords** - Instead of making a list of hundreds, if not thousands, of words worth ranking find a competing site that's already ranking well in Google. Then reverse engineer what they're doing. When it comes to keywords, a paid tool like SEMRush shares all the organic and paid keywords they're targeting. Of course everything won't make sense for your business so focus on the keywords that A) your target market searches for in Google and B) you could create awesome content around.

20. **Done with Density** - If you're trying to structure your keyword buckets based on density, stop. Keyword density hasn't been a thing for many moons. Adding a single keyword too many times is a red flag for Google and can result in a potential penalty. Just don't do keyword density.

21. **Mind Your Keyword Match Types** - You do not need to use exact match keyword terms. Thanks to semantic search Google can associate your topical keyword search terms. So instead of writing 'nike basketball shoes' over and over again use variations like "basketball sneakers" and "nike shoes".

22. **Content Requires More Content** - Write More. Get rid of thin content or rewrite it. It's doing nothing for your site but bringing down the quality. Long-form content has proven to get higher search results thanks to a 2012 study from serpIQ that revealed the average content length of each of the top 10 results was more than 2,000 words.
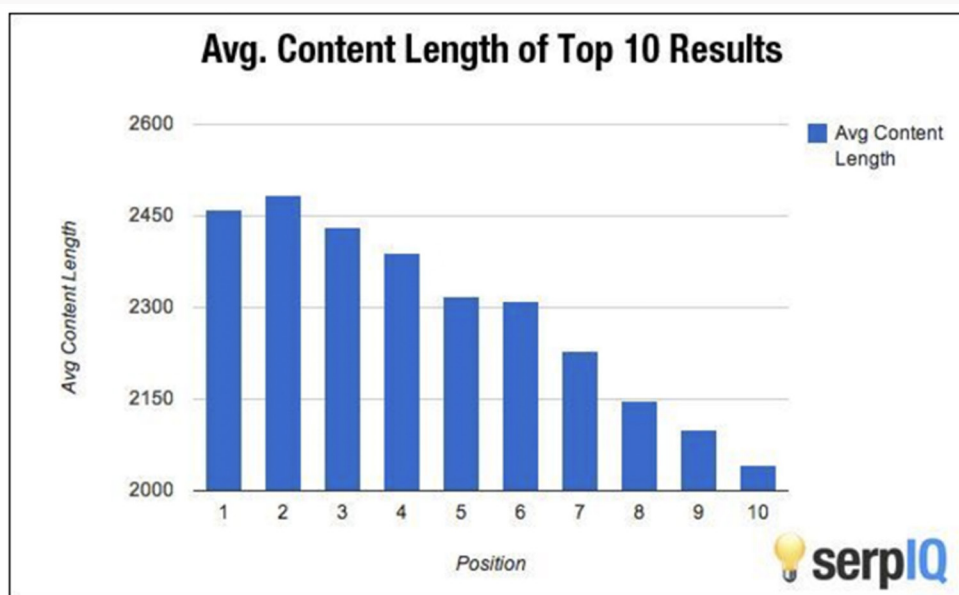
23. **Consolidate Competing Content -** In terms of traffic generation it's better to have one higher ranking piece of content than two lower ranking pieces. You can consolidate two pieces of content together by adding a 301 redirect to the lower-performing piece, it's that simple and takes seconds. So instead of two articles (Understanding The Healing Properties of Herbal Tea and 17 Ways That Herbal Tea is Good for You) targeting the keyword "Herbal Tea' you redirect one to the other based on keyword rankings, organic search traffic, content age, etc.

24. **Contribute Via a Column -** One-off guest posts are good and can be useful for driving traffic to your website, but having an ongoing writing gig for an industry publications will seriously benefit you in the long term. Not only are you building your name within the industry, but you're also creating a relationship that you can regularly tap into to promote new content on your own website and bring through a steady flow of visitors and relevant backlinks.

25.
    Guarantee Credit For Your Content - Contributed content lives elsewhere, but what about the writings on your website? When someone else is syndicating your content, make sure they place the rel=canonical tag to direct "link juice" back to your original page. Otherwise, Google gives them the credit and not you.

26.
    Fix eCommerce Product Pages - If you have products with very close descriptions and names, use the canonical tag instead of 301 redirecting them. You want both pages to be indexed, but you need to tell Google if the Grey or Blue (https://www.furniture-store.com/products/sofa-conrad-dark-grey and https://www.furniturestore.com/prod-ucts/sofa-conrad-dark-blue) is better. Personally, I prefer the blue.

27. **Use Unique Product Descriptions -** Buyer beware. If you're an e-commerce site, do not use the manufacturer's description when writing your product descriptions. Take the time to rewrite engaging product descriptions for the user and search engines. Given content is the #2 SEO factor, writing unique product descriptions is an easy way to differentiate your store from all the others.

28. **Build More Backlinks -** Speaking of SEO Factors, inbound links are #1. Links act like votes, the more votes the higher you rank. Of course SEO is not that simple, but links do matter. A lot. Maintain a healthy link profile because search engines like Google connect this to the authority and quality of your overall website and brand.

29. **Quality > Quantity -** Link building is not what it was five years ago. Link building and PR efforts are now merging to create a more authentic linking experience. Earn links with helpful content that answer questions and provides solutions. It's better to build backlinks from niche websites serving a smaller audience than large directories and web 2.0 sites that do little to build your business.

30. **Steal Your Competitors Backlinks -** Do your competitors rank at the top of Google for your target keywords? Then they likely have a solid backlink profile. Similar to researching competitive keywords, you can research their backlinks also. Tools like SEMRush, Ahrefs (my personal favorite) and Open Site Explorer reveal the referring domains sending "link juice" their way. Because if people are happily linking to your competitors, chances are they'll be happy to link to you,
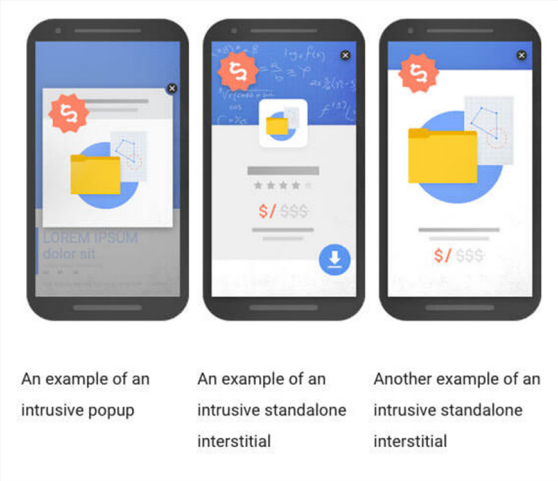
31. **Help A Reporter Out -** HARO (Help a Reporter Out) does exactly what it says: It allows you to "help a reporter out" by providing them with credible (and relevant) sources for their upcoming article(s). You receive alerts from journalists, respond to their requests and get mentioned in their in their publications once your opinion is published. Sometimes on sites as large The New York Times, Reuters, Mashable and Refinery29.

The trick to HARO is to respond quickly and answer exactly as the reporter asks. Most often they want you to address a specific question, mention your name and employer, share your social media profiles and a personal website. And a photo, preferably a professional head-shot. Photos are important.

32. **Yes, images Are Important** - Don't forget to add image ALT attributes before publishing your blog post. Also, try to include relevant keyword phrases in your alt tag, image title and description.

33. **Invest in Infographics** - In a world with so much noise and shorter attention spans, visual data is processed much faster than text. According to the University of Minnesota, the human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text, and 90 percent of information transmitted to the brain is visual. Said simply, the more infographics you add to your site and promote, the more likely you are to gain traffic, be sourced, and climb the SEO rankings.

34. **Invest in Vectors, Too** - When using images, try to get the vector format image file. These types of files scale better, giving you better image quality on multiple devices.

35. **Consider CDNs** - Consider getting a content delivery network (CDN) to host your images. A CDN helps speed up your website. Remember, every second counts when it comes to SEO page speed.

36. **Try YouTube Video To Text Transcription** - Video content is a great way to drive engage-ment from your visitors. Facebook users are now watching over 100 million hours of video per day on the social network alone, and video is becoming an increasingly cost effective format for advertisers. From an organic search point of view, video has a few issues, espe-cially if you're not hosting your video content through YouTube. The biggest problem is that search engines can't understand the content within video (yet). One way to maximise the amount of keywords that your video content can rank for is to create full text transcripts to accompany them. Better still, it's not just benefitting SEO but it's also improving user experi-ence by catering to different content consumption preferences.

37. **Pop-ups Lead to Penalties -** Ever since Google announced they were going to implement a penalty on sites still using intrusive pop-ups and interstitials, webmasters have been cleaning house. So it's time for you to remove pop-ups and interstitials on mobile. No, this does not affect desktop and the penalty only matters on the transition from search results to the page that is loaded. So technically just set up your popup to show on the second or third page that the user (hopefully) goes to view. But you didn't hear that from us.

An example of an intrusive popup

An example of an intrusive standalone interstitial

Another example of an intrusive standalone interstitial

38. **Safe Sites Require SSL Certificates** - Install an SSL Certificate on your site. Google gives a small ranking boost to sites accessible over HTTPS, and it's likely that in the future this will increase as a ranking factor.

39. **Edit Exit Pages** - Track what pages users are leaving your site by analyzing the exit pages in Google Analytics. Why are users leaving? Consider optimizing and/or redesigning these exit pages to increase time on site. Time on site is one of many "engagement factors" that factor into SEO. Other factors include page views, CTR and bounce rate, all of which are accessible through Google Analytics.

40. **Uncover Unknown Keywords** - Unlock "not provided" Keywords by Linking Google Analytics and Google Search Console. By connecting Search Console with Analytics you can pull in the keyword data from Search Console's "Search Analytics" report. But this data is only available on a rolling 90 day basis so act fast!

☐	1. (not provided)	217 (99.54%)	80.65%	175 (99.43%)	79.72%	1.5
☐	2. ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓	1 (0.46%)	100.00%	1 (0.57%)	100.00%	1.0

41. **Rank Brain Rules -** Google RankBrain is Google's first machine learning update to it's algorithm and one of the top #3 SEO factors. Google RankBrain goes beyond simple keyword-matching. It understands the intent of your search query and matches context to the best content. Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to create tons and tons of quality content tied to topics and subtopics rather than keywords alone.

42. **Potential Penalty? -** If you have a sudden drop in traffic, it could be due to a penalty. Check your email and Google Search Console to see if they sent you a manual penalty notification. If you don't have Google Search Console setup then it's too late for the notification. You'll have to pursue other channels to diagnose the issue and find a solution.

43. **Algorithm Updates Are Always Occurring -** Some SEOs believe Google updates their algorithm 3 or 4 times a day. With RankBrain on the rise, those update are automatic and ongoing. Things are forever changing in SEO, so keep up to date with those changes.

44. **Learn Along The Way** - Knowledge is power, and you will never know it all. You'll get it wrong more times than you'll get it right, especially at the beginning. Fail Fast and Fail Forward. Read Backlinko and SearchEngineJournal, attend HubSpot's annual INBOUND conference and work with SEO Experts like Marccx Media to become the best SEO Hack to every do it. Happy Hacking!