



What SEO You Need To Worry About, And What You Can Skip

By Matthew A. Perosi

Google strives to create a world of Internet search where the smallest business owner can appear in search results side-by-side with a large brand. Google monitors more than 200 different online “signals” and ranks your website based on how well those signals match with a “searcher’s intent.”

With 15 years of search query data captured, Google is learning how to match websites with the intent of the user. Using this historical information they know that someone searching for “bridal” usually wants a wedding gown and someone searching for “wedding bands” more likely wants jewelry rather than a musician.

Google doesn’t say what those 200 ranking factors are, and they change them all the time as the Internet evolves. Prior to matching search phrases with intent, Google used a method of counting keywords, content, and hyperlinks to rank top results. In years past, you could hire a technically savvy person who could figure out and exploit some of those 200 search engine optimization (SEO) factors. Those who paid for larger SEO efforts, usually ranked better in the results.

Because Google’s trying to match search queries to intent every business owner now has the innate ability to manage their SEO better than any hired agency. The process of search engine optimization is no longer complicated; it’s just time consuming. There are still some technical aspects of SEO relating to the computer hardware and the initial setup of your website, but these technical aspects don’t usually need to be monitored as a SEO agencies would have you believe.

Your website should be an extension of yourself and of how you talk to and gauge needs of customers in your store. Google hopes to replicate that process with their algorithmic method of matching search intent. How you describe your business, products, and services on your website should mimic how you would speak to someone in person; this in turn helps Google match your website to someone’s online intent. Other than your website, Google monitors how your business interacts socially with your customers. This is another time consuming process that’s best managed by store employees. When I say, “time consuming” I really do mean it. The SEO exploitation method of the past usually involved some systematized process that could be repeated thousands of times the exact same way. This saved a lot of time, but it also artificially increased the results of any business that could afford to pay for it.

In 2012 and 2013, Google successfully squelched the effectiveness of any SEO act that could be turned onto a simple step process. They’ve even removed many websites from search results as penalties for their exploitation of SEO techniques.

I now classify SEO techniques into three categories: (a) those you should avoid; (b) those you can do yourself; and (c) those technical things that you will need to hire someone for. This is how I organize them:

Do-it-Yourself	Avoid These Now	Technical SEO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Creation • Social Media Engagement • Write Page Titles • Write Meta Descriptions • Put address on every page of your site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over analyzing keywords • Social Bookmarking • Article Submission • Press Release Optimization • Link Building • Directory Submissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host your website on a fast server • Use correct HTML programming code • 404 Error page check • Check settings of Robots.txt file • Broken links check • Sitemap.xml Updating • Analytics Analysis • Usability Analysis

It would take a while to explain each of the items above in detail. You and your staff could handle the items in the Do It Yourself column if you have the time and after learning the basics of how to do it on your website.

The items listed in the middle column are services that you should avoid now. These are the exploitable techniques that Google will penalize you for using them. The first four items in the Technical SEO column are usually one-time jobs that your programmer should take care of when setting up your website. The last four are the SEO tasks that truly need to be watched every month. Content creation is any type of website update, blog post, or even photography. You can share the burden by asking employees to get involved. Content creation should be a scheduled activity throughout every month. It’s the analytics analysis that will give you monthly new ideas for content you and your staff should be creating.

As you can see, most SEO work is now in your hands ever since Google eliminated everything that could be systematized. Your investment of time should pay off as Google strives to equalize search results based on quality of information and customer satisfaction.



Matthew A Perosi

Matthew Perosi is the Founder of the Jeweler Website Advisory Group (jWAG), a research team devoted to reporting how jewelers can use websites, mobile technology, and marketing trends to further personal and jewelry store goals. A library of articles, videos, and an archive of jWAG daily email “Nuggets” is freely available at www.jwag.biz. Matthew invites your feedback at matt@jwag.biz.