

# Brett Tabke's 26 Steps to a Successful Site with Google

## Forward

In another post [Google as a Black Box](#) Giacomo proposed that we talk too much theory and not enough application of it. So, let's skip the theory and get to what I know works from time proven methods on Google. I know the following system works 100% of the time with Google to attain rankings across a wide range of keywords. This is what I do with clients to build a successful site and has worked every time. The level of success will depend largely on the subject matter, it's potential audience, and it's level of competition on the net.

The following will build a successful site in 1 years time via Google alone. It can be done faster if you are a real *go getter*, or everyone's favorite a *self starter*.

**A)** Prep work and begin building content. Long before the domain name is settled on, start putting together notes to build at least a 100 page site. That's just for openers. That's 100 pages of *real content*, as opposed to link pages, resource pages, about/copyright/tos...etc eg: fluff pages.

### **B) Domain name:**

Easily brand-able. You want "google.com" and not "mykeyword.com". Keyword domains are out - branding and name recognition are in - big time in. The value of keywords in a domain name has never been less to search engines. Learn the lesson of "goto.com" becomes "Overture.com" and why they did it. It's one of the most powerful gut check calls I've ever seen on the internet. That took serious resolve and nerve to blow away several years of branding. (that is a whole another article, but learn the lesson as it applies to all of us).

### **C) Site Design:**

The simpler the better. Rule of thumb: text content should out weight the html content. The pages should validate and be usable in everything from Lynx to leading edge browsers. eg: keep it close to html 3.2 if you can. Spiders are not to the point they really like eating html 4.0 and the mess that it can bring. Stay away from heavy: flash, dom, java, java script. Go external with scripting languages if you must have them - there is little reason to have them that I can see - they will rarely help a site and stand to hurt it greatly due to many factors most people don't appreciate (search engines distaste for js is just one of them). Arrange the site in a logical manner with directory names hitting the top keywords you wish to hit.

You can also go the other route and just throw everything in root (this is rather controversial, but it's been producing good long term results across many engines). Don't clutter and don't spam your site with frivolous links like "best viewed" or other *counter like* junk. Keep it clean and professional to the best of your ability.

***Learn the lesson of Google itself - simple is retro cool - simple is what surfers want.***

Speed isn't everything; it's almost the only thing. Your site should respond almost instantly to a request. If you get into even 3-4 seconds delay until "something happens" in the browser, you are in long term trouble. That 3-4 seconds response time may vary for site destined to live in other countries than your native one. The site should respond locally

within 3-4 seconds (max) to any request. Longer than that, and you'll lose 10% of your audience for every second. That 10% could be the difference between success and not.

## The Pages:

### D) Page Size:

The smaller the better. Keep it under 15k if you can. The smaller the page better. Keep it under 12k if you can. The smaller the page better. Keep it under 10k if you can - I trust you are getting the idea here. Over 5k and under 10k. Yeah - that bites - it's tough to do, but it works. It works for search engines, and it works for surfers. Remember, 80% of your surfers will be at 56k or even less.

### E) Content:

Build one page of content and put online per day at 200-500 words. If you aren't sure what you need for content, start with the Overture keyword suggest tool and find the core set of keywords for your topic area. Those are your subject starters.

### F) Density, position, yada...yada...yada

Simple old fashioned SEO from the ground up.

Use the keyword once in title, once in description tag, once in a heading, once in the url, once in bold, once in italic, once high on the page, and hit the density between 5 and 20% (don't fret about it). Use good sentences and spell check it ;-). Spell checking is becoming important as search engines are moving to auto correction during searches. There is no longer a reason to look like you can't spell (unless you really are phonetically challenged).

### G) Outbound Links:

From every page, link to one or two high ranking sites under that particular keyword. Use your keyword in the link text (this is ultra important for the future).

### H) In-site Cross links:

(cross links in this context are links WITHIN the same site)

Link to on topic quality content across your site. If a page is about food, then make sure it links it to the apples and veggies page. Specifically with Google, on topic cross linking is very important for sharing your pr value across your site. You do NOT want an "all star" page that out performs the rest of your site. You want 50 pages that produce 1 referral each a day and do NOT want 1 page that produces 50 referrals a day. If you do find one page that drastically out produces the rest of the site with Google, you need to off load some of that pr value to other pages by cross linking heavily. It's the old *share the wealth* thing.

### I) Put it Online:

Don't go with virtual hosting - go with a stand alone IP.

Make sure the site is "crawl-able" by a spider. All pages should be linked to more than one other page on your site, and not more than 2 levels deep from root. Link the topic vertically as much as possible back to root. A menu that is present on every page should link to your sites main "topic index" pages (the doorways and logical navigation system down into real content).

Don't put it online before you have a quality site to put online. It's worse to put a "nothing" site online, than no site at all. You want it flushed out from the start.

Go for a listing in the ODP. If you have the budget, then submit to Looksmart and Yahoo. If you don't have the budget, then try for a freebie on Yahoo (don't hold your breath).

#### **J) Submit:**

Submit the root to: Google, Fast, Altavista, WiseNut, (write Teoma), DirectHit, and Hotbot. Now comes the hard part - forget about submissions for the next six months. That's right - submit and forget.

#### **K) Logging and Tracking:**

Get a quality logger/tracker that can do justice to inbound referrals based on log files (don't use a lame graphic counter - you need the real deal). If your host doesn't support referrers, then back up and get a new host. You can't run a modern site without full referrals available 24x7x365 in real time.

#### **L) Spiderlings:**

Watch for spiders from search engines. Make sure those that are crawling the full site, can do so easily. If not, double check your linking system (use standard hrefs) to make sure the spider found it's way throughout the site. Don't fret if it takes two spiderings to get your whole site done by Google or Fast. Other search engines are pot luck and doubtful that you will be added at all if not within 6 months.

#### **M) Topic directories.**

Almost every keyword sector has an authority hub on it's topic. Go submit within the guidelines.

#### **N) Links:**

Look around your keyword sector in Google's version of the ODP. (this is best done **AFTER** getting an **ODP** (Open Directory Project – DMOZ – [www.dmoz.com](http://www.dmoz.com)) listing - or two). Find sites that have links pages or freely exchange links. Simply request a swap. Put a page of on topic, in context links up your self as a collection spot.

Don't freak if you can't get people to swap links - move on. Try to swap links with one fresh site a day. A simple personal email is enough. Stay low key about it and don't worry if site Z won't link with you - they will - eventually they will.

#### **O) Content:**

One page of quality content per day. Timely, topical articles are always the best. Try to stay away from too much "bloggin" type personal stuff and look more for "article" topics that a general audience will like. Hone your writing skills and read up on the right style of "web speak" that tends to work with the fast and furious web crowd.

***Lots of text breaks - short sentences - lots of dashes - something that reads quickly***

Most web users don't actually read, they scan. This is why it is so important to keep low key pages today. People see a huge overblown page by random, and a portion of them will hit the back button before trying to decipher it. They've got better things to do that waste 15 seconds (a stretch) at understanding your whiz bang flash menu system. Because some big support site can run flashed out motor-head pages that is no indication that you can. You don't have the pull factor they do.

Use headers, and bold standout text liberally on your pages as logical separators. I call them **scanner stoppers** where the eye will logically come to rest on the page.

**P) Gimmicks:**

Stay far away from any "fades of the day" or anything that appears spammy, unethical, or tricky. Plant yourself firmly on the high ground in the middle of the road.

**Q) Link backs:**

When YOU receive requests for links, check the site out before linking back with them. Check them through Google and their pr value. Look for directory listings. Don't link back to junk just because they asked. Make sure it is a site similar to yours and on topic.

**R) Rounding out the offerings:**

Use options such as Email-a-friend, forums, and mailing lists to round out your sites offerings. Hit the top forums in your market and read, read, read until your eyes hurt you read so much. Stay away from "affiliate fades" that insert content on to your site.

**S) Beware of Flyer and Brochure Syndrome:**

If you have an e-commerce site or online version of bricks and mortar, be careful not to turn your site into a brochure. These don't work at all. Think about what people want. They aren't coming to your site to view "your content", they are coming to your site looking for "**their content**". Talk as little about your products and yourself as possible in articles (raise eyebrows...yes, I know).

**T) Build one page of content per day:**

Head back to the Overture suggestion tool to get ideas for fresh pages.

**U) Study those logs:**

After 30-60 days you will start to see a few referrals from places you've gotten listed. Look for the keywords people are using. See any bizarre combinations? Why are people using those to find your site? If there is something you have over looked, then build a page around that topic. Retro engineer your site to feed the search engine what it wants. If your site is about "oranges", but your referrals are all about "orange citrus fruit", then you can get busy building articles around "citrus" and "fruit" instead of the generic "oranges".

The search engines will tell you exactly what they want to be fed - listen closely, *there is gold in referral logs*, it's just a matter of panning for it.

**V) Timely Topics:**

Nothing breeds success like success. Stay abreast of developments in your keyword sector. If big site "Z" is coming out with product "A" at the end of the year, then build a page and have it ready in October so that search engines get it by December. eg: go look at all the Xbox and XP sites in Google right now - those are sites that were on the ball last summer.

**W) Friends and Family:**

Networking is critical to the success of a site. This is where all that time you spend in forums will pay off. **pssst:** Here's the catch-22 about forums: ***lurking is almost useless.*** The value of a forum is in the interaction with your fellow colleagues and cohorts. You learn long term by the interaction - not by just reading. Networking will pay off in link backs, tips, email exchanges, and it will put you "in the loop" of your keyword sector.

### **X) Notes, Notes, and Notes:**

If you build one page per day, you will find that brain storm like inspiration will hit you in the head at some magic point. Whether it is in the shower (dry off first), driving down the road (please pull over), or just parked at your desk, *write it down!* 10 minutes of work later, you will have forgotten all about that great idea you just had. Write it down, and get detailed about what you are thinking. When the inspirational juices are no longer flowing, come back to those content ideas. It sounds simple, but it's a life saver when the ideas stop coming.

### **Y) Submission check at six months:**

Walk back through your submissions and see if you got listed in all the search engines you submitted to after six months. If not, then resubmit and forget again. Try those freebie directories again too.

### **Z) Build one page of quality content per day:**

Starting to see a theme here? Google loves content, lots of *quality* content. Broad based over a wide range of keywords. At the end of a years time, you should have around 400 pages of content. That will get you good placement under a wide range of keywords, generate reciprocal links, and overall position your site to stand on its own two feet.

Do those 26 things, and I guarantee you that in ones years time you will call your site a success. It will be drawing between 500 and 2000 referrals a day from search engines. If you build a good site with an average of 4 to 5 pages per user, you should be in the 10-15k page views per day range in one year's time. What you do with that traffic is up to you, but that is more than enough to "do something" with.

<http://www.searchengineworld.com/misc/guide.htm>

**Brett Tabke** is an American programmer and SEO professional. He is the founder of [WebmasterWorld](#), an online search engine and Internet marketing forum that often receives over 1 million page views per day. <sup>[1]</sup>

Tabke started working with computers at a young age, developing software for Commodore home computers. He then worked for companies like Epyx and Berkeley Softworks (later renamed to GeoWorks, and makers of the GEOS operating system). In 1984 Tabke started his first BBS using a 300 baud modem on a dialup line. <sup>[1]</sup> In 1996 he made the transition to internet and web technologies.

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