17 Actionable SEO Tactics For Building Materials Manufacturers

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The single greatest key to explosive online growth for Building Materials Manufacturers is **search engine optimization** (SEO).

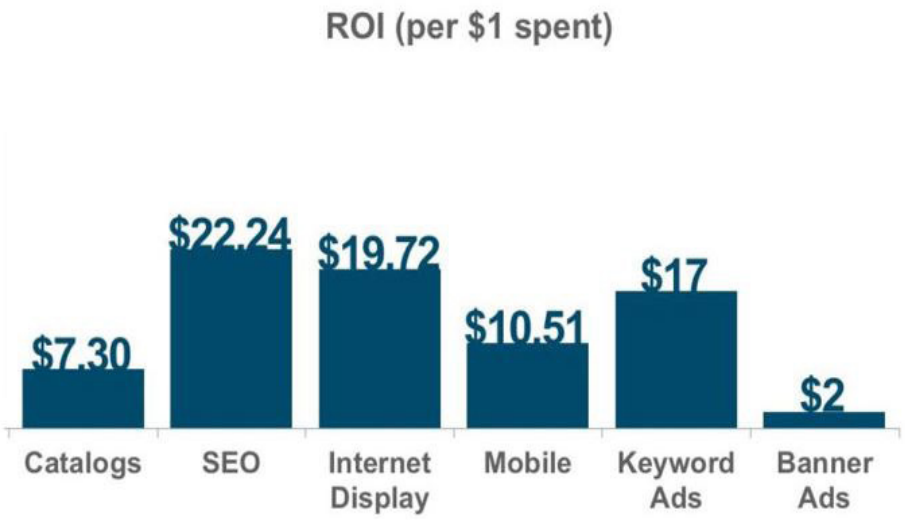
Every day, tens of thousands of people are searching the web for building material products. Many have buying intent and are ready to make any immediate purchase. As you can see from Google's data displayed below, there are a TON of searches being made around these topics every single month.

Search terms	Avg. monthly searches
acoustic panels	22,200
fiber cement siding	9,900
bamboo veneer	1,000
plywood for cabinets	260
low maintenance decking	170

Unlike virtually every other form of lead generation, organic search traffic is consistent. When you begin to rank your website for the right keyphrases, you don't just get a single batch of new leads. You get thousands of new visitors and leads arriving at your website week after week and month after month.

In other words, after you climb onto the front page, you are essentially getting free traffic and leads indefinitely.

Best of all, organic traffic is one of the highest converting channels for cold visitors. People who find your site via Google are very likely to buy, which is why SEO has one of the highest ROIs of any marketing channel.



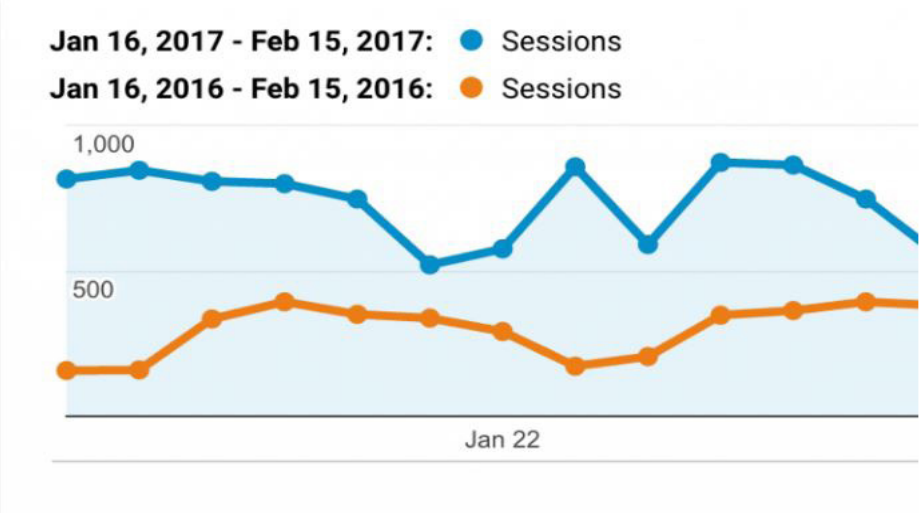
If you're skeptical about how SEO can benefit your company, let's take a quick look at some real world "mini-case studies" from manufacturers who have received exceptional results.

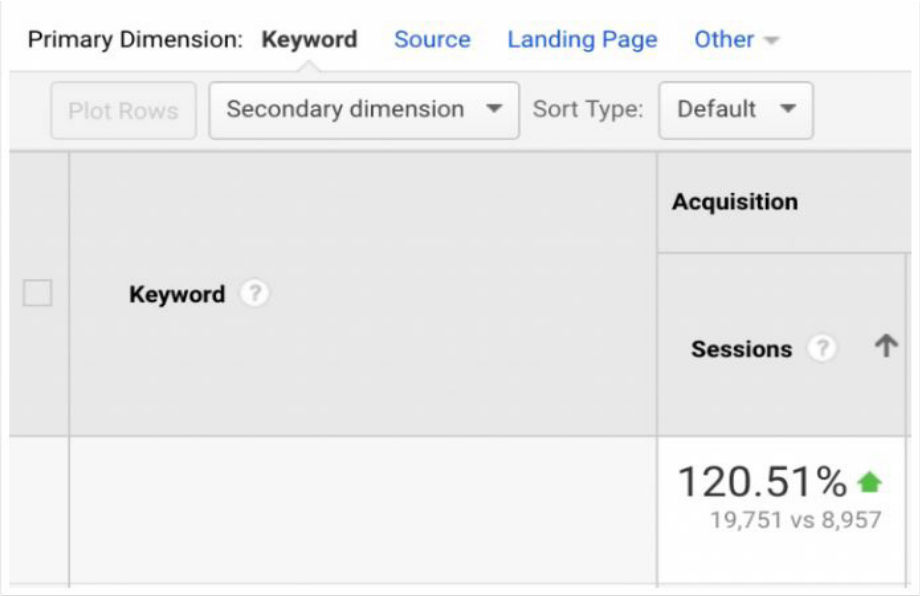
Case Studies

Mini-Case Study 1

In the screenshot below, we compare organic search traffic numbers over a 30 day period in 2017 to the same period in 2016. As you can see this particular company has increased their organic traffic numbers by 120.51% from 8,500 visitors per month to nearly 20,000.

With the extra 10,000 monthly visitors, this manufacturer will certainly generate more online leads than they did the previous year. Even better, all of these visitors were acquired free via organic search, so their overall cost per lead will decrease throughout the year as well. How did they make this happen? With a very strategical, methodical, ROI focused SEO campaign in 2016.

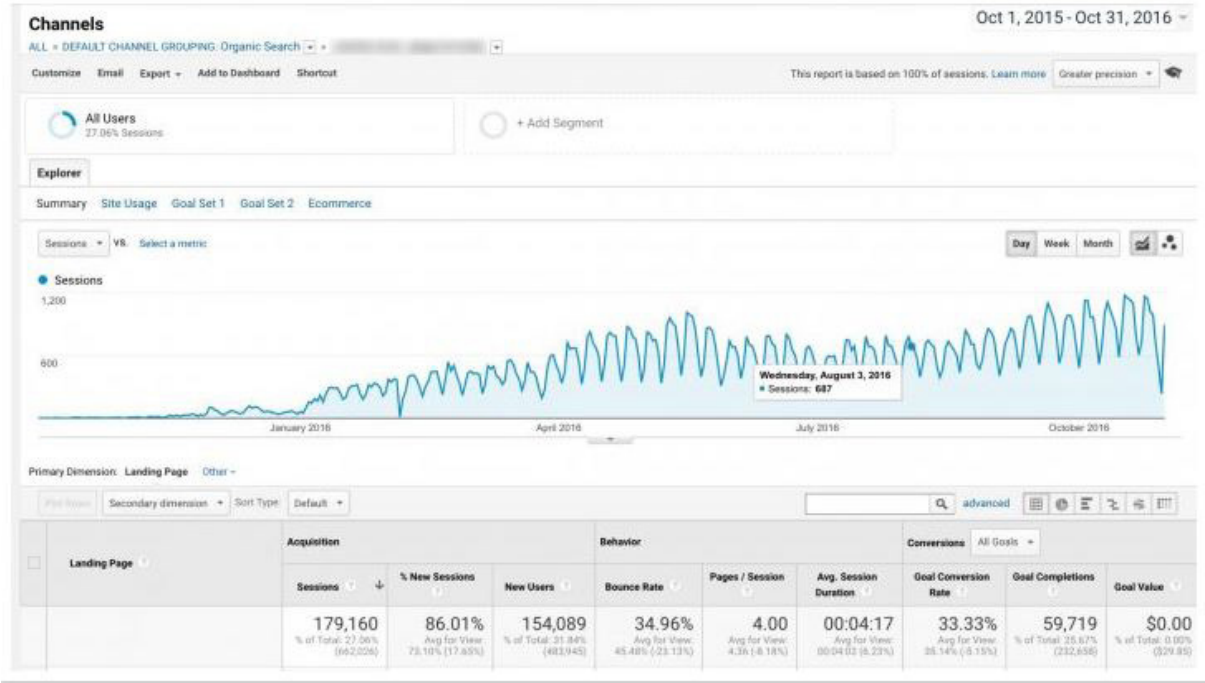




Mini-Case Study 2

A solid mix of SEO and content marketing can increase website traffic dramatically if you utilize the right strategies. A good example is displayed in the screenshot below. Here we analyze organic traffic going to one blog post.

Yes, I said that correctly, ONE BLOG POST.



Here's the deal…

Many manufacturers create blog content that generates traffic shortly after it is published, but then traffic typically dies down over time.

But, when you have SEO in mind, you can create blog content that gains more momentum month after month. In the screenshot above we review traffic numbers for a blog post that was published on October 1, 2015. Fast forward to over a year later and the blog continues to produce more traffic each month.

The results for the entire year show 179,000 visitors to this blog post and over 59,000 online leads.

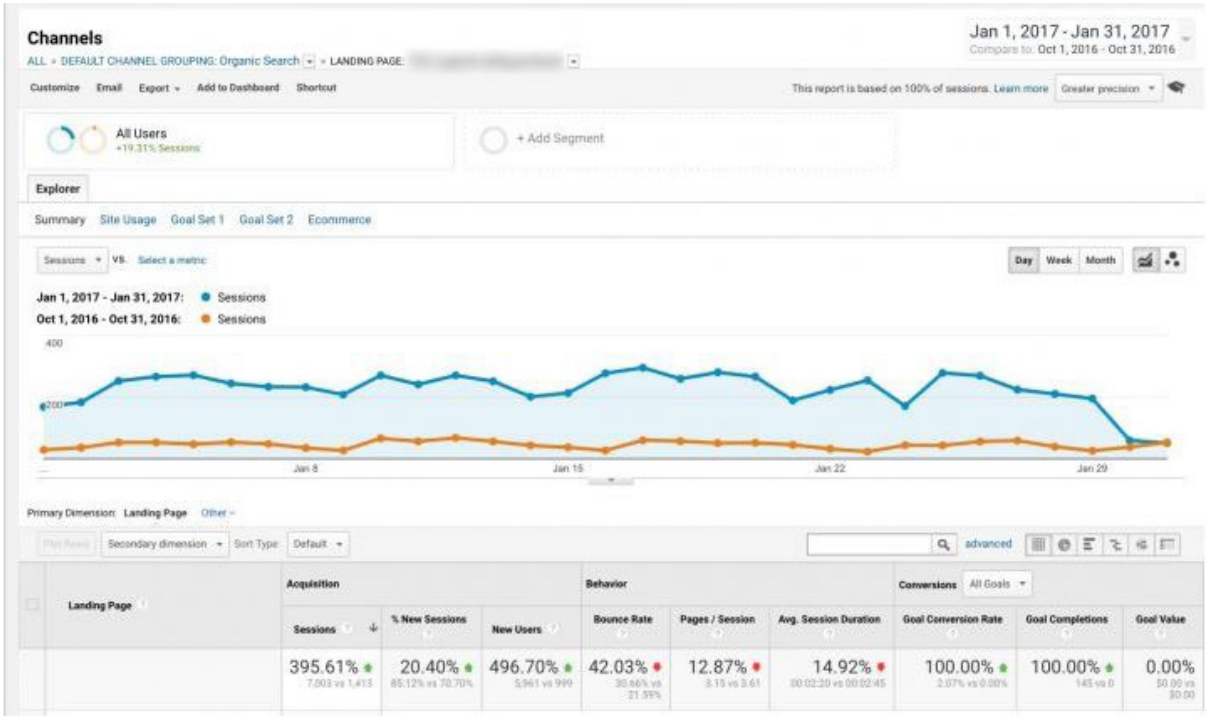
Question?

How much money would this amount of traffic be worth to your company? If you are running a Pay Per Click (PPC) campaign then this will be easy for you to calculate. Simply multiply your average cost per click by the traffic numbers above.

Mini-Case Study 3

Finally, let's take a look at the last case study below. It's true that SEO is an investment that can take some time to yield an ROI. This certainly is no hard fast rule, though. You can get results rather quickly if you use the right strategies.

Check out the screenshot below. Here we see organic traffic from Google search flowing into single product web page. As we compare traffic states from October 2016 to January 2017 we see an increase in organic traffic by 395% or 6,000 additional monthly visitors. That's an impressive result in such a short amount of time.



How would you like to get 6,000 additional eyeballs (from a relevant audience) on one of your products each month without having to foot the bill for PR, PPC, Banner Ads, Trade Shows, or 3rd Party Email Newsletters?

Google Ranking Factors

Before we get into the 17 SEO tactics below, let's discuss the 4 primary factors that affect a site's search ranking.

1. Backlinks
2. Content
3. On-Page SEO
4. User Experience Metrics

Backlinks are links on other websites that point to your website. They communicate to Google and other search engines that your website has great content. The more legitimate backlinks pointing to your website, the more value Google will place on your site.

Content is the amount of words, pages, and blog posts you have on your site. And just like backlinks, more is virtually always better. There are a number of simple ways to increase your site's content:

- Increase the word count of your service pages
- Add additional service pages targeting various customer segments
- Add blog posts on building materials topics

On-Page SEO is the process of optimizing all that content you just added to rank for specific keyphrases. For example, you could optimize your homepage to rank for the phrase "reclaimed wood cladding" by including this phrase in a number of key spots on the page. We'll cover on-page SEO in-depth later in this guide.

Finally, we have User Experience Metrics. This is just a fancy way of saying “how people behave when they visit your site”.

If people land on your site and then immediately leave, it communicates to Google and other search engines that your content is either not relevant or not valuable. If people land on your site and then click through to additional pages, it communicates that your website is what they were looking for, and the #1 goal of search engines is to give people what they are looking for.

Now that we’ve covered the basics, let’s dive into some specific SEO strategies for helping building material manufacturers increase organic search traffic.

Tactic #1 – Separate Content By Audience

If a guy walked into the room right now and started talking to Americans, you might sort of feel like he was talking to you, presuming you are an American. But it wouldn't be very compelling, because there are over 300 million Americans. What he is saying might not be relevant to you.

On the other hand, if he were to walk in and begin speaking to business owners, you would be paying a bit closer attention, because what he is saying will likely be more relevant to you. To an even further extent, if he were to walk in and say, "Listen here, John," and your name is John, you would be glued to the speaker.

The point is that the more exclusive the message, the more captivating it is. When you speak to a specific customer segment rather than addressing everyone, your message becomes more powerful.

Your SEO targeting becomes more powerful as well. One of the easiest ways to increase your rankings AND your on-page conversions at the same time is to break your audience into key segments and target them separately.

There are two major ways this will benefit your business:

1. Better user experience & engagement

It can be hard to build an audience if you are constantly speaking to multiple people at once or simply using generic language. It's best if you can target only relevant content to each customer segment.

One way to do this is to create separate blogs for each segment. A great example on how to do this is GAF.com, which has separate, designated blog areas for professional contractors, DIY homeowners, and architects.

Alternatively, instead of having 3 separate blogs, you can categorize your content into unique segments and create a custom experience for each category. This could be as simple as setting up a unique sidebar for each blog post category that displays additional content within that same category.

Regardless of how you approach it, segmentation will always create a better, more compelling user experience for your website visitors.

2. Allows you to target additional keywords with more content.

As we will talk more about later, you can only optimally target so many keyphrases on any given web page, be it a service page or a blog post. Naturally, this means that the keywords you can target are limited to the number of pages you have on your site.

By creating additional content, you can target and rank for additional keywords and phrases. Moving even broader, when you are targeting multiple distinct customer segments with dedicated content hubs for each segment, you are able to pursue a very wide range of keywords.

Tactic #2 – Find Keywords via Sales Inquiries

The ultimate goal of SEO is to have your site show up when real people type real search queries into Google.

Going after competitive 2-3 word keyphrases is great, but you can achieve significance boosts simply by framing pages around real questions people are asking and the phrasing they naturally use.

One of the best places to find these natural keyphrases is within the sales inquiries your website receives.

Your Name
Heather

Email Address

Case Number

Work Address

Work Phone Number

I am a...
Homeowner

Comments
I wish to add a "real wood" exterior design element to my contemporary house. Specifically, we will start with the soffits and perhaps will elect to "side" the protruding stairwell. I am curious, in images , is all the "wood" visible in those photos your product? There is a great deal of color variation -- which I LOVE. If your product is bug, rot, and weather resistant AND has that dynamite color variety, I am sold! Thank you!

Can you spot the key phrases in the above sales inquiry? There are quite a few that could make great SEO targets.

- Real wood exterior design element
- Real wood contemporary design
- Real wood siding
- Bug resistant wood siding
- Rot resistant exterior
- Weather resistant wood exterior
- Etc.

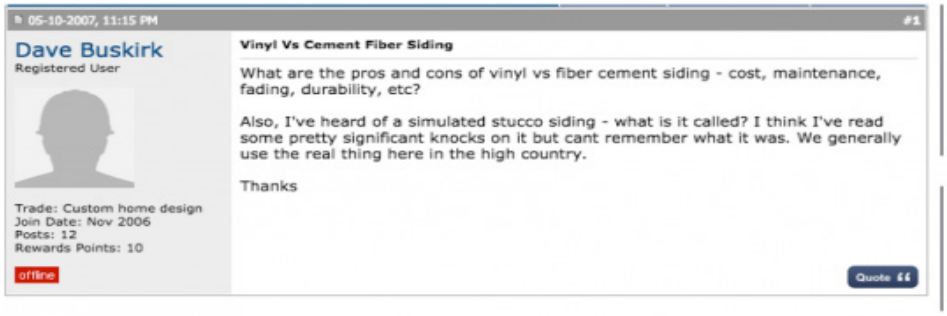
We'll look at several other sources for organic phrasing in the next section, but sales inquiries are particularly useful because they come directly from your actual prospective customer base.

Tactic #3 Find Keywords via Forums, QA Websites, Product Reviews, and Blog Comment Sections

Like sales inquiries, industry forums, Q&A sites, product reviews, and blog comments all make fantastic sources for mining keywords.

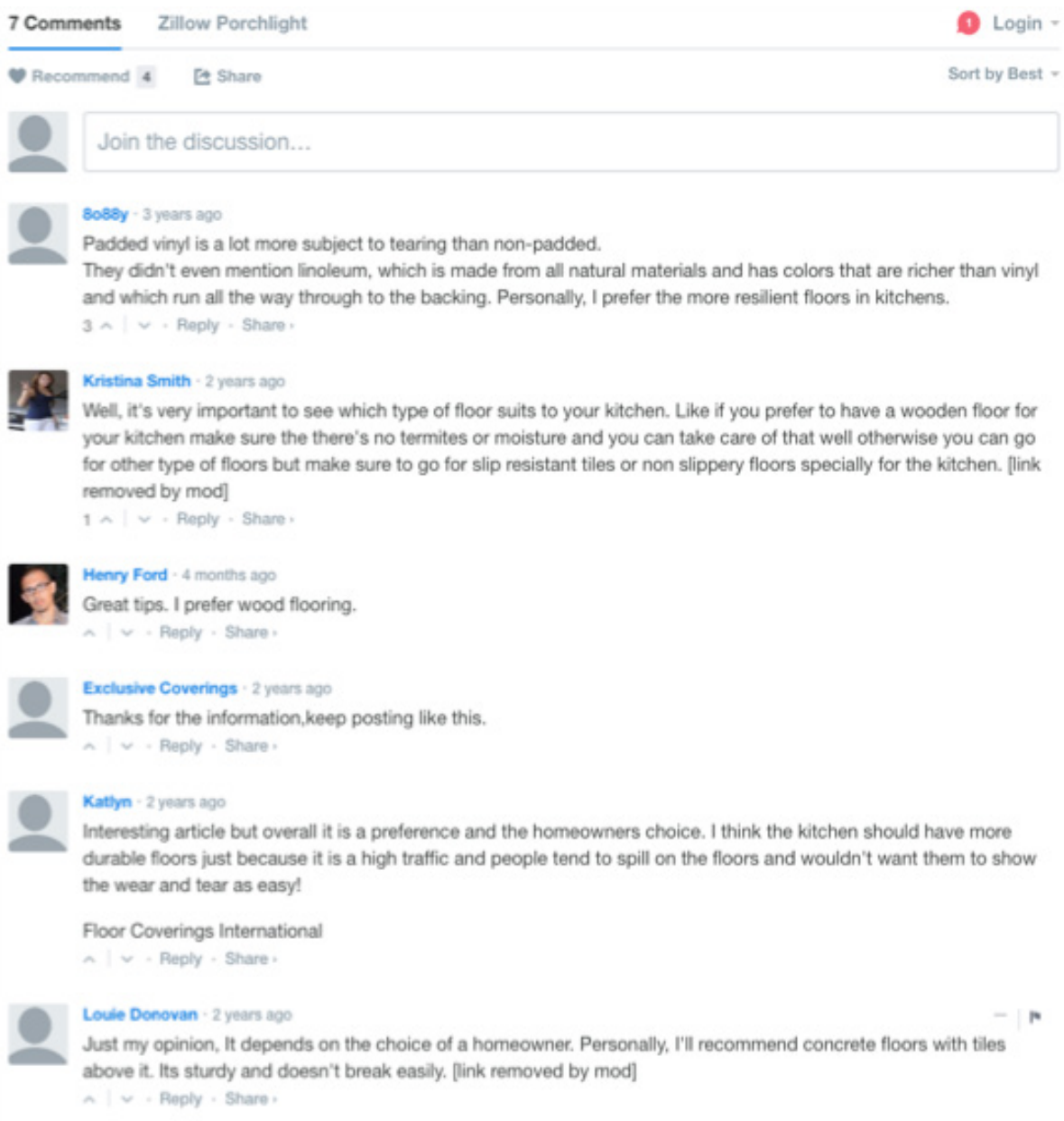
Industry Forums

Industry forums are one of our go-to spots for seeing exactly how people in the industry refer to various products, services, and needs. If you serve a B2B audience, these forums will be your best bet for identifying new, relevant keywords to target.



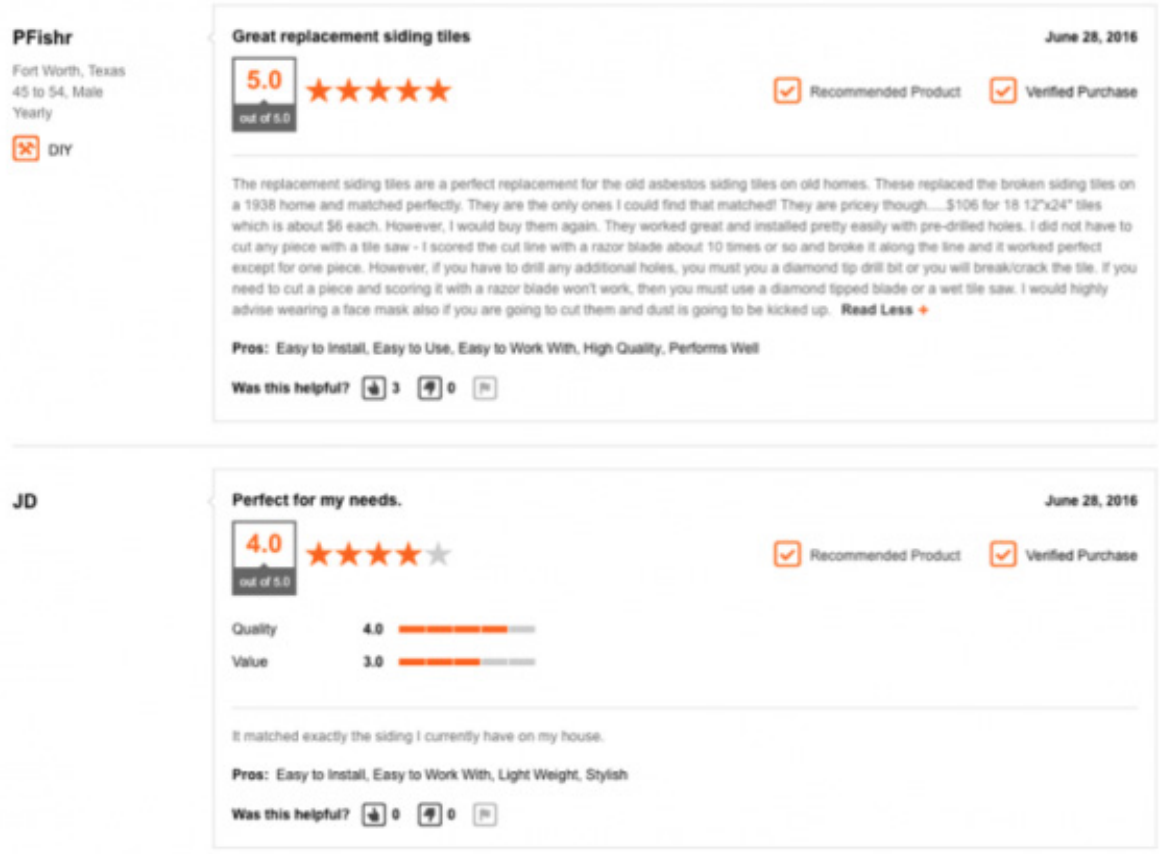
Blog Comment Sections

Blog comments are another fantastic source for great keywords, particularly if you are a B2C business targeting individual end users. Individual users often have a less sophisticated vocabulary within the industry, so understanding the phrasing they use can result in some big-time SEO wins.



Customer Reviews

Customer reviews are another great spot to find targeted keywords. Like forums, you will often find a significant depth of phrasing, but like blog comments, you will often find an unsophisticated vocabulary as well. Reviews provide an outstanding mix that can benefit both B2B and B2C businesses.



Tactic #4 On-Page SEO – Do It The Right Way

We've just spent quite awhile talking about finding great keyphrases, but once you've found them, what do you do with them?

On-Page SEO is how we connect your website content to search engine users via the phrases you've discovered. You will typically try to rank for one keyphrase (or several closely related keywords) per web page, and to accomplish this, you'll need to optimize 6 important areas.

1. **Title Tag**
2. **Meta Description**
3. **URL**
4. **Subheadings**
5. **Body Text**
6. **Image Alt Text**

In order to demonstrate proper on-page SEO technique, let's run through an example. Let's say we want to rank a service page for the phrase "Real Wood Siding".

1. Title Tag

The Title Tag is particularly important, because it is essentially the headline of your page AND the headline that needs to attract clicks in the search results. It needs to include our keyphrase, but it also needs to be appealing to our readers and communicate what the page is all about.

For SEO purposes, you only have around 55 characters to work, and you want to include your target keyphrase near the front, if not at the very beginning.

“Real Wood Siding Installation In Nashville”

2. Meta Description

The meta description is the blurb that shows up just below the title tag in the search results. It can be up to 160 characters, needs to include your target keyphrase, and should read like you are pitching someone on clicking the link.

“Real wood siding can take an exterior from dull to exceptional. Our team has installed immaculate siding in over 350 Nashville homes. Learn more.”

3. URL

The URL is the simplest part of the page to optimize. Be sure to include the key phrase and remember that shorter is better.

http://domainname.com/real-wood-siding

4. Subheadings

It’s good to structure your content using great subheadings and the <h2> tag. Be sure to include the key phrase in at least one subheading. You should use additional headlines to target secondary and tertiary keywords.

“The Most Popular Varieties of Real Wood Siding”

5. Body Text

The body text is the main part of your content. It's all the writing that actually makes up the page. The only thing to be aware of here is that you should try to include the target keyphrase once in the first couple paragraphs and you should NOT practice keyword stuffing. Other than that, just focus on writing content that will appeal to the target audience.

6. IMG Alt Text

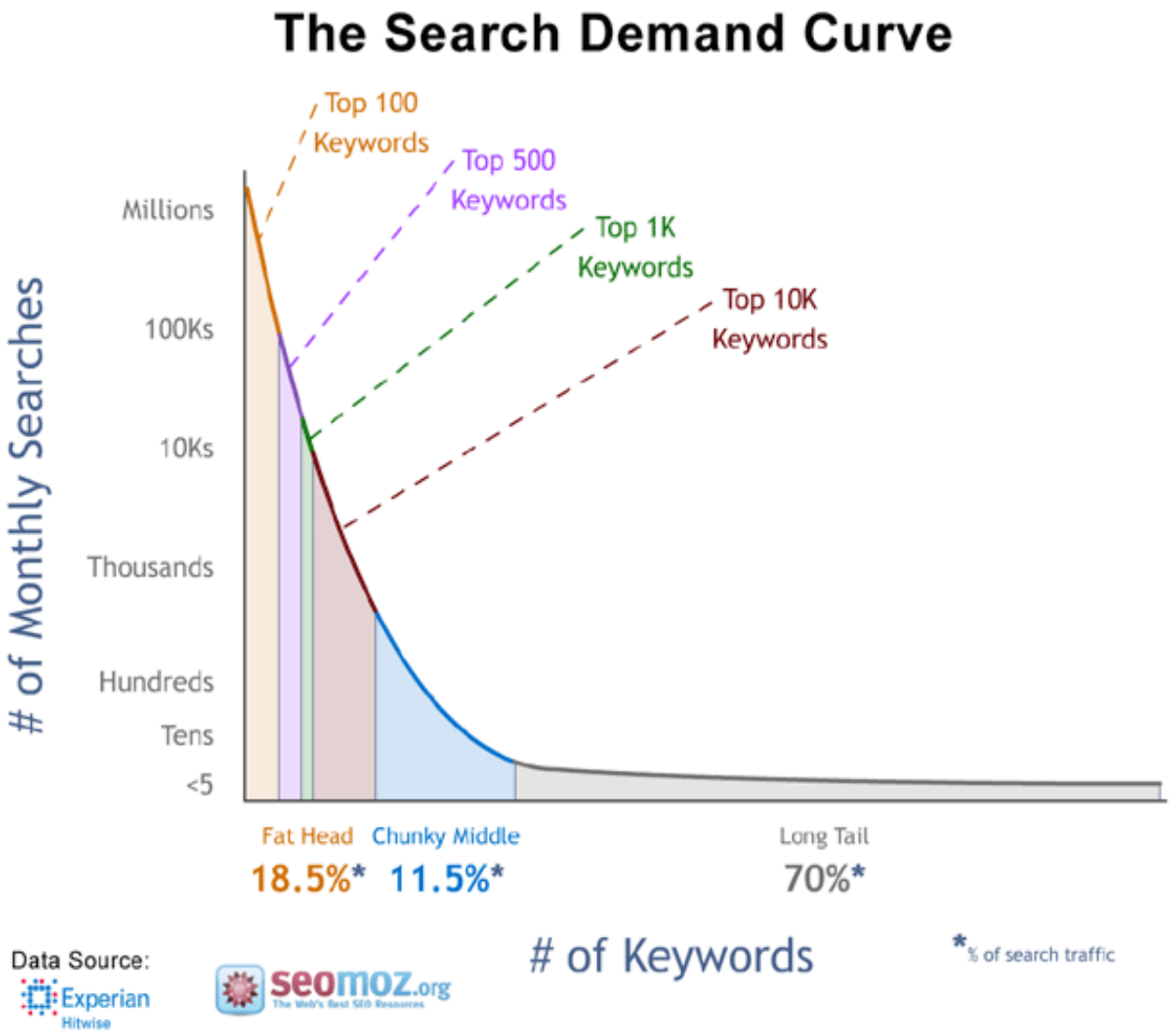
The alt attribute text which is also commonly referred to as the alt tag. The alt attribute text contains image description text that is used as an accessibility feature for people with visual impairment who use screen readers. Search engines also make use of the alt attribute text to categorize and index images.

Tactic #5 Use LSI keywords In Your Product Pages & Blog Posts to Rank for Long Tail Keywords

While most Google searches tend to be relatively short, there are also a large variety of long searches, called "long tail keywords" that are entered into Google every day.

For example, if I were to hop on Google and enter "That movie where the guy plays a mental game using poisons", that would be a longtail keyword.

I'm probably going to be the only person to search for that exact phrase this entire year… maybe ever. There are millions upon millions of phrases just like this that will be searched for this year. In fact, long tail keywords make up an incredible 70% of search traffic!



On the one hand, since most of these phrases are being searched no more than once or twice, it doesn't make sense to optimize a page specifically for a long tail phrase. Fortunately, there is a way to optimize existing pages to attract more long tail keywords.

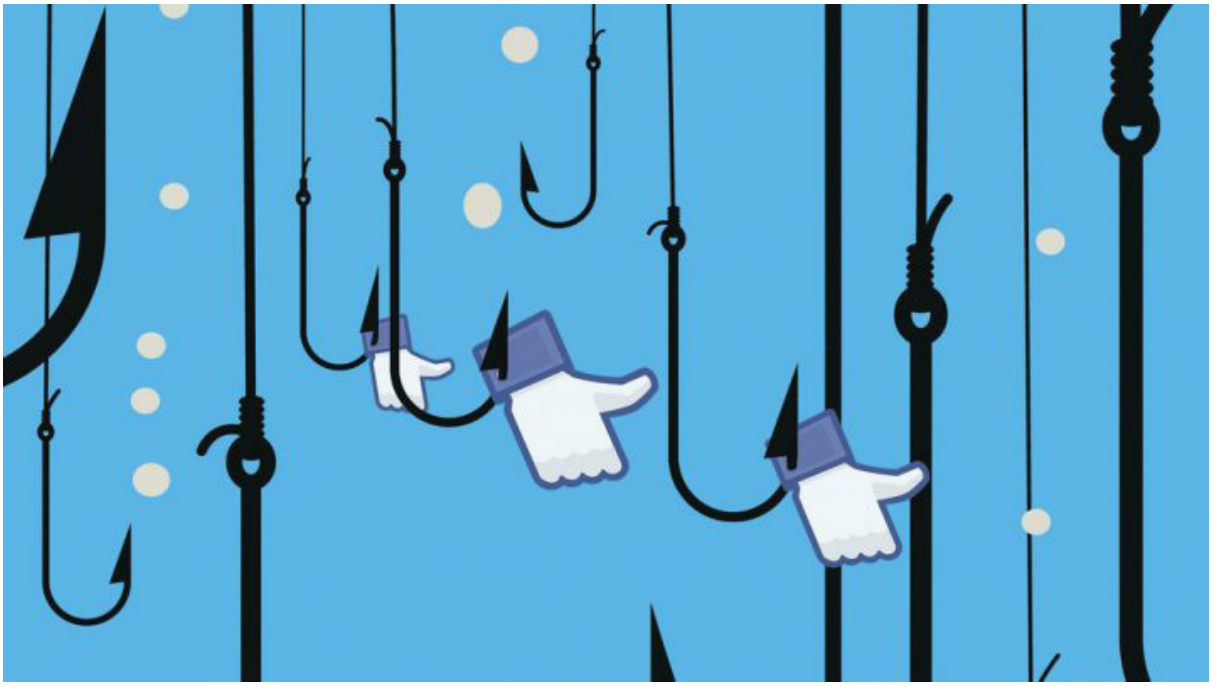
It's called LSI Keywords. LSI stands for Latent Semantic Indexing, and LSI keywords are simply keywords that are semantically related to the primary keyword. By adding LSI keywords into the body text of your content, you will increase your odds of being found by long tail searches.

To find LSI keywords, simply enter your primary keyphrase into this LSI Keyword Generator and it will generate a list for you. We entered “real wood siding” and received a big list, beginning with the following 15 phrases:

- wholesale wood siding for houses
- real wood look vinyl siding
- real cedar siding
- engineered wood siding vs vinyl
- wood exterior siding
- exterior wood siding for sale
- durable wood siding
- real wood log cabin siding
- real wood siding
- wholesale log siding
- best wood siding for commercial buildings
- real wood siding for houses
- siding for sale wholesale
- cheap wood siding
- metal siding for houses wholesale

Once you have your keywords, look for places in your content where you can naturally replace phrases with LSI keywords. Don’t force them in at the expense of the content. Just look for natural opportunities and cycle them in.

Tactic #6 – EGO Bait Content



We mentioned at the beginning of this guide that it's important to have backlinks from other websites pointing to your own.

But how do you do that?

There aren't a lot of scenarios where someone is going to link to your service page. Where you have the potential to get a bunch of backlinks is in your blog posts. If you can create content that is really appealing to people, for one reason or another, they will share it and link to it.

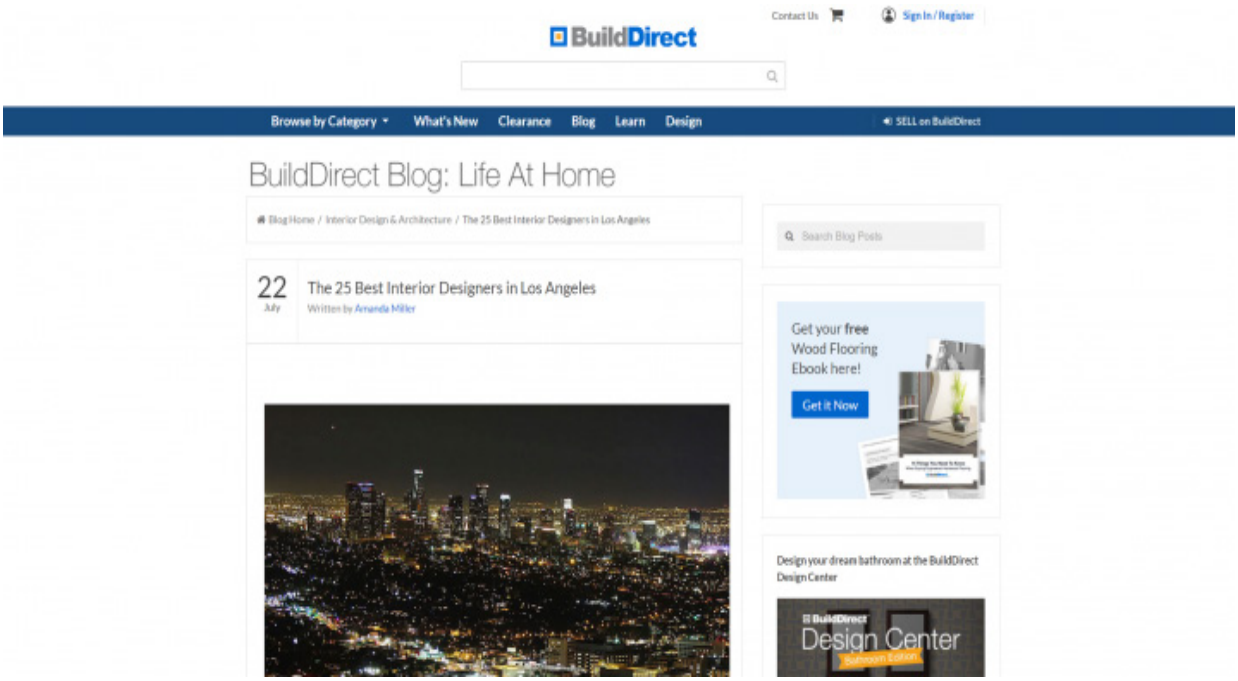
One of the easiest strategies for building this type of content is called "**Ego Bait Content**".

Ego Bait Content is exactly what it sounds like. It's content that baits exposure by playing to people's egos. And while that might seem a bit sinister, it's really just a standard exchange of value.

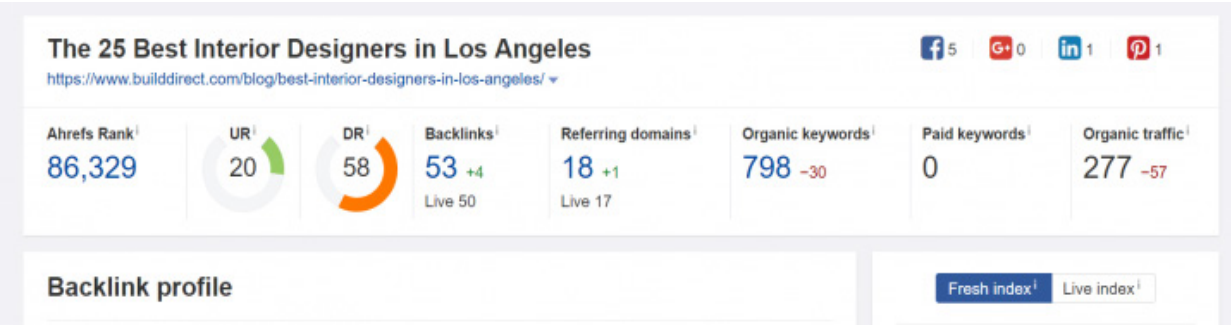
You promote the brand of influencers in your niche. They share your content and link to your site.

BuildDirect has some fantastic examples of this, which we've listed below:

- The 25 Best Interior Designers In Los Angeles
- The 15 Best Architects In Savannah, Georgia
- The 15 Best Contractors In Orlando



This simple, easy-to-create piece of content highlighting 25 designers has generated 53 backlinks for BuildDirect via 18 domains and is bringing in nearly 300 organic visitors per month to their site!



Ego bait content is an incredibly effective ways to get links. It is founded on the reality that people really like it when you recognize them, talk about them, or highlight them in any way. The result is that they respond better, faster and are more open to giving you links than if you just asked them to link to or share a random blog post.

Despite the ROI, it can still be intimidating to reach out to people the first time around, so we've included a step-by-step process to help you get your first ego bait post published.

1. Come up with a post direction that will appeal to people's egos.

When coming up with an Ego-bait post, keep in mind that the post must be attractive to the prospects in a way that appeals to their ego. It's important to recognize the person (or their website) as someone important in your niche. There are several easy ways to do this.

- **Quote the person** – This can go from simply quoting them on your blog or conducting a full-blown interview
- **Recognize them as an expert** – This is one of the most effective ways to do ego-bait because it's shooting multiple birds with one stone. Instead of doing one post for one person, you make one post including a list of people, like the top 25 designers post from BuildDirect.
- **Award them with a badge** – This usually goes hand in hand with lists. You give the participants a digital "Top 10" badge to display on their site, which links back to your website.

2. Identify Influencers And Experts To Promote In Your Post

After creating an Ego-bait idea, you now have to look for the people you want to include in your blog post. For the purposes of this guide, we will pretend that we have created a post called "Repair Advice From Atlanta's 10 Best Roofing Companies".

One of the easiest ways to get prospects is to search for them by city. If there is no reason to target a specific region, go for the bigger cities like New York, LA, Chicago, Houston, Atlanta… you get the idea. So for our Repair Advice From Atlanta's 10 Best Roofing Companies example, we'll start prospecting by searching "Roofing companies Atlanta" on google. Next, list the websites that come up in a spreadsheet.

Tip: One nifty tool for making this process faster is to install an extension called "Linkclump" on chrome. This extension makes harvesting links faster with just the drag of a mouse over multiple links. You can then just paste the links Linkclump harvested on your spreadsheet.

3. Create an email script for outreach.

A good script is a succinct one. Most likely, the people you will be emailing will be busy individuals, so the e-mail you shoot them should be polite and to the point.

Here is a great example:

> Hi [Name of prospect],
>
> We are currently working on a blog post at [website name] titled, "Repair Advice From Atlanta's 10 Best Roofing Companies." For the blog post, we are interviewing the top roofing experts in Atlanta, asking them, "Why Is Your #1 Roof Repair Tip For DIY Homeowners?" Would you be interested in participating? If so, could you email me back the following:
>
> 1. A short response to the question: "Why Is Your #1 Roof Repair Tip For DIY Homeowners?"
>
> 2. *Optional - Attach a picture of a company logo or picture you'd like use to use in the blog post.
>
> Please let me know if you have any questions.
>
> All the best,
>
> Mike Smith
> 888-999-1010
> www.example.com

4. Send out and track your outreach emails.

Once you have your prospects and your script, it's time to email your prospects. There are a lot of relatively cheap tools for tracking when people open these emails, including Connector and Yesware, which will help you determine how to followup with them.

Tip: For Gmail, there is a handy plugin called 'Canned responses.' What this does is it saves your outreach email script so that you can have it all typed out, subject and all with just a single click.

Tip: Enabling 'Undo Send' is also a great Gmail labs plugin that can retract your e-mail within a 30-second window, if in case you got the name of the prospect wrong or any other mistake you might want correct.

5. Resend to those who don't open your email and follow up with those who do.

In an ideal world, all of your contacts will respond immediately and be incredibly excited to be listed in your post. In reality, many will open your email and then forget to respond. Others won't even open it. Some might respond initially and then sort of drop off the map. This process takes time and requires follow-up in order to succeed. Again be polite but straight to the point. A one-liner is enough. And if they decline, thank them anyway.

6. Collect the responses and create the post.

Usually, you'll receive answers with varying lengths. Try to order the posts by alternating the long responses with the short ones. It also helps to start with two or three short replies, in the beginning, to get the audience to read through several items quicker before they get to the longer answers (which may bore some people.)

7. Send the published post link to the respondents.

Finally, it's important to subtly invite respondents to share your post. Be concise and show gratitude. Here is a great example:

Hi [name of prospect,]

Thank you so much for contributing to our "Repair Advice From Atlanta's 10 Best Roofing Companies." blog post. We love how it turned out. As promised, here is the live post. [link to the post]

We'd really appreciate it if you shared our blog post on your blog or shared it on your social media!

Alternatively, we could write a short post on your behalf. How does that sound?

Again, thank you, we really appreciated each and every one of your answers and I'm sure our readers will find the information you shared highly valuable as well.

All the best,

Mike Smith
888-999-1010
www.example.com

Notice that in the e-mail, we subtly told them what to do. This is more effective than just thanking them and hoping that they will share it with their audience. It's important to actually call the reader to action.

Tactic #7 – Invite Influencers to Guest Post on Your Website

As we mentioned at the beginning of this guide, more content is nearly always better than less content. Provided the quality is solid, one of the best ways to improve your website's standing with Google is to add more content.

Unfortunately, content isn't exactly free. It costs time, money, or both. But just like you want backlinks from other sites, other sites will want backlinks from you, and there is an easy way to exchange those links for free content.

It's called **guest posting**.

A guest post is typically an unpaid article written for your site by someone wanting to get a backlink to their own website. This is a win-win for both parties, since you get quality content to add to your site and the author gets a relevant backlink. Additionally, if the guest author has a strong following of their own, it can expose your brand to a new audience.

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While this can be an effective strategy, it's important to realize that influencers will rarely guest post on blogs that don't have a decent following of their own. You probably won't get many people wanting to write for you blog in the first year or two, but once you've built a following and have a decent domain authority, guest posting is a great way to secure free content.

Who should you invite?

- Thought leaders of popular industry blogs or publications.
- Industry influencers with large social media audiences.
- Technical or product related experts.
- Your customers! builders, architects, contractors, distributors, and suppliers.
- Industry marketing, sales, and business experts.

Tactic #8 – Create a Directory

Directories are one of the earliest ways SEO strategists were able to rank sites and monetize their skills, and while we are far past the "heyday" of the online directory, they can still be a viable means for increasing your site's ranking.

One great example of this comes to us once again from GAF.com.

Building a directory can provide two key benefits.

First, it allows you to directly reach out to and attract businesses that match your customer profile. Businesses are always looking for new ways to generate leads, particularly if those ways are free. Offering to include them in your directory is an easy way to begin a conversation with businesses that have the potential to become customers.

For example, GAF sells to roofing contractors and has created a massive directory of roofing contractors. This puts them in direct connection with their target market.

The second benefit of directories is that they give your site an SEO rankings boost. By having hundreds of businesses listed in your directory, you have a very good chance of ranking for relevant topics in your niche, which attracts additional businesses to your site.

As you can see in the image below, GAF's directory is the 7th result when people search for roofing contractors in the Bartlesville area.

Setting up a directory isn't difficult, and it's a great way to combine SEO benefits with direct customer outreach.

Tactic #9 – Create Linkable Assets

A linkable asset is a piece of online content designed specifically to attract backlinks. In other words, it's the type of content other sites will naturally want to link to and share with their audiences.

Some of the best linkable assets you can create are:

- Online Tools
- Case Studies
- "How To" Guides
- Infographics
- Long-From, List Style Blog Posts

The first step towards creating a linkable asset is to identify a key problem your audience is looking to solve. You can also use the materials you sell to help guide this process.

For example, if you wanted to rank for "asphalt shingles" you could create a DIY guide to installing asphalt shingles. While a page advertising your asphalt shingles is very unlikely to attract backlinks, a guide, on the other hand, is something people will want to link to.

A good way to identify what types of DIY content is popular is to check out Reddit's DIY section. With over 8 million subscribers, it's a popular hub for DIY activity. You could even identify users who create popular guides and either hire them to make a guide for you or send them free materials in exchange for a guide.

With the right content, promotion is fairly easy. You'll want to promote two different ways:

1. Post the content where your target audience hangs out
2. Reach out to influencers in your niche and tell them about your content

Every niche has online hubs. These could be LinkedIn or Facebook groups, forums, or Reddit subsections like the DIY one I just mentioned. The first and easiest step in promoting linkable assets is to share your content in these places

The next step is to email people directly and share your content. You'll want to look for websites and individuals who carry influence in your niche, and send them your content to include in the resources they share. It's particularly easy to do this if you invite them to contribute to the linkable asset.

For example, you could create an infographic on the what roofing materials work best for different climates, and invite various experts to weigh in. Then, once you've published the infographic, it's easy to invite them to share the content, since they are mentioned in it.

Tactic #10 Repurpose Photo Galleries Into List Posts

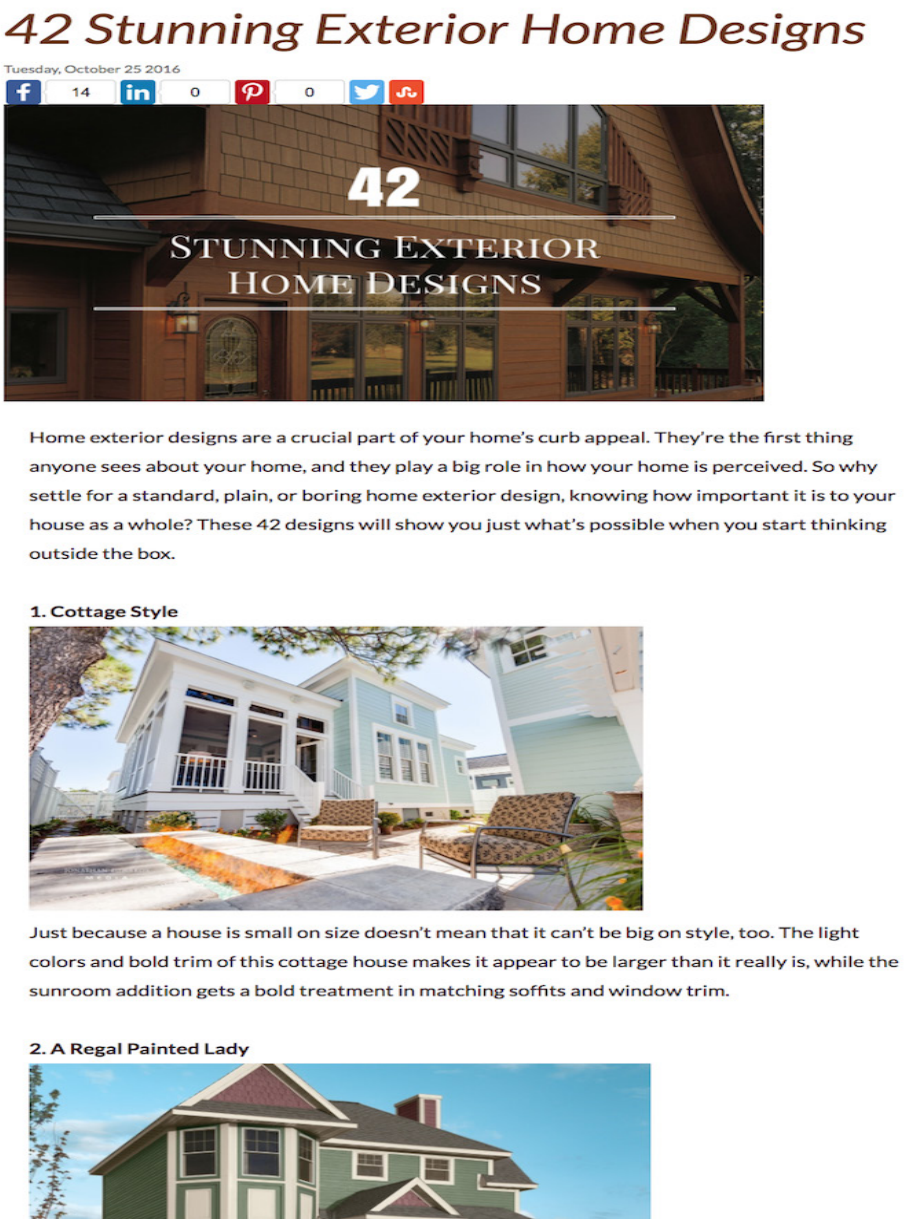
Since creating content for your website isn't always free, it's important to look for opportunities to repurpose existing content as often as possible.

And one of the easiest types of content to repurpose is photos.

Many building materials manufacturers tend to collect various collections of photos during their normal business processes. These photos can be easily repurposed into a variety of content types, but one of the most productive is the list post.

List posts – for example, The Best Roofing Types For Warm Climates – tend to do very well with online audiences. They are easy to read, and they are easy to write. They are especially easy to create when you have a big photo gallery on hand.

A great example of this comes from Allura. They turned 42 project photos into an attractive list post for their website.



42 Stunning Exterior Home Designs

Tuesday, October 25 2016

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42
STUNNING EXTERIOR
HOME DESIGNS

Home exterior designs are a crucial part of your home's curb appeal. They're the first thing anyone sees about your home, and they play a big role in how your home is perceived. So why settle for a standard, plain, or boring home exterior design, knowing how important it is to your house as a whole? These 42 designs will show you just what's possible when you start thinking outside the box.

1. Cottage Style

Just because a house is small on size doesn't mean that it can't be big on style, too. The light colors and bold trim of this cottage house makes it appear to be larger than it really is, while the sunroom addition gets a bold treatment in matching soffits and window trim.

2. A Regal Painted Lady

Notice how simple this is to produce. Each entry is simply a photo and one paragraph, and yet this one article is bringing in over hundreds of visitors per month for Allura.

Why?

Because it's optimized for "exterior home designs", and with 42 paragraphs and images, it has enough content to rank in search.

This is one of the easiest ways to get high-ranking content on your site. Simply select a batch of photos and turn them into a list article like the example above.

Tactic #11 – Guest Posting

Just like it's a good idea to invite other businesses to guest post on your website, it's also a good idea to write guest posts for other websites.

There are a number of key benefits that come with guest posting:

- **Link building**: when you guest post for another site, you will get at least one link pointing back to your own site. This is a great opportunity to get a link to one of your product pages.
- **Referral traffic**: when people read your guest post, they might click the link to your site and see what you're all about. This can sometimes even result in direct sales.
- **Brand awareness**: when you publish content around your niche, you establish your brand as an authority in that niche and expose new readers to your business.

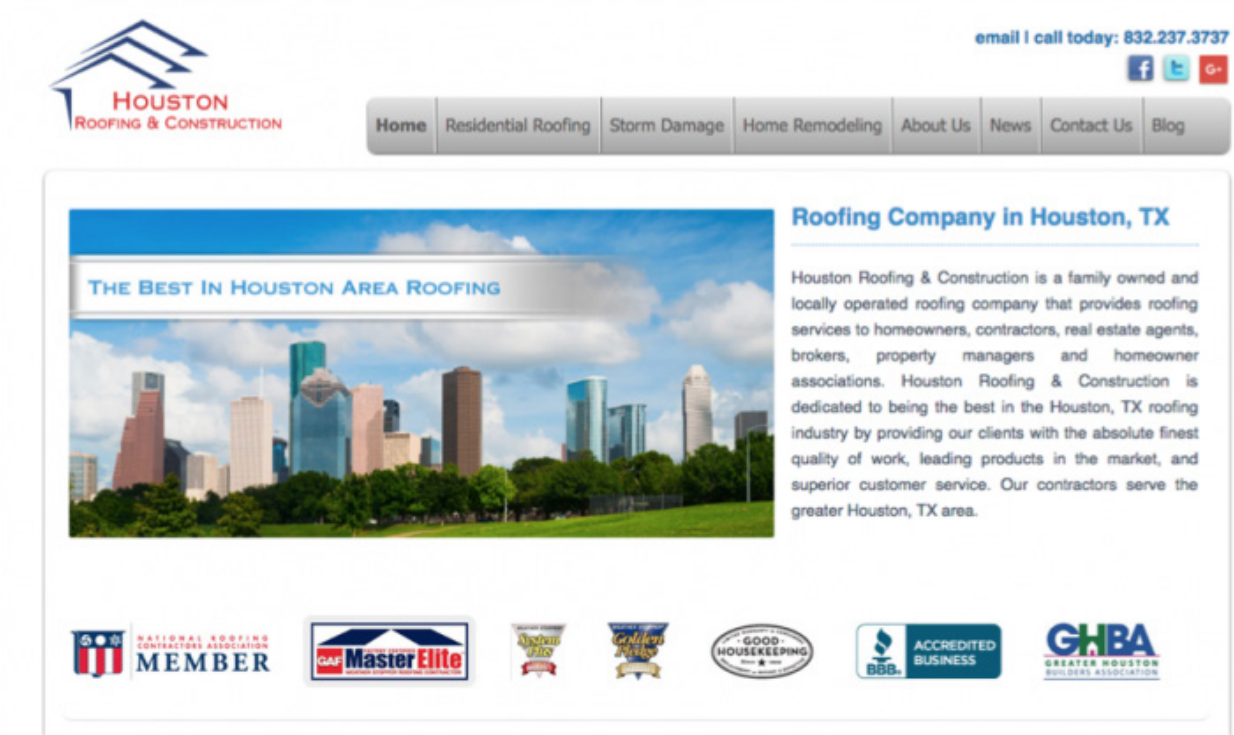
While guest posting is a great strategy, many business owners go about it the wrong way, which tends to lead to a lot of frustration.

To be successful, following these steps:

1. Reach out to people, business, and organizations you are already connected with (ie. Roofing Associations, Home Builder Associations, Architect Associations).
2. Just like you would for your own content, think through what their website's audience would want to read and pitch them 3 different topics to choose from.
3. Write and deliver the type of article you would be happy to publish on your own website.

Remember, the more backlinks you have, the higher you will rank. Guest posting takes some work, but it's a guaranteed way to get links to your site.

Tactic #12 – Create Embeddable Badges



Badges and certifications are indicators of trustworthiness, which is why business love to display them. One way to quickly grab a large number of backlinks to your site is to create embeddable badges that link back to you.

This is best done in conjunction with a directory or ego bait type post like we talked about earlier. For example, GAF uses a certification process to screen businesses included in their contractor directory, and those contractors are then given an embeddable badge to place on their site, like the one pictured above.

This provides GAF with links from all over the web and is one of the main reasons they receive so much organic search traffic.

Tactic #13 – Get Backlinks From Product Sample Libraries

Often, educational institutions will maintain product samples with the sole purpose of providing students, researchers, teachers, and faculty with a comparable database of products within a specified category and purpose.

The samples can usually be found through the school's website, like with this example from the University of Texas, and can provide a high-quality backlink to any business able to get itself included and cited.

Unfortunately, even if your product is listed, it's likely a link to your site hasn't been included. Here's how you could go about getting a backlink from the University of Texas.

The first step is to identify the category of product you'd want to be listed under in their database.

Determined which category of products would be a good fit for your product and then run them through the database to see if they are already listed and cited.

This can take some time as the libraries often aren't listed on the sitemap or website itself and you have to dig a little deeper to find them.

Once you have located the listing, you'll need to contact the right people at the University and tell them you are a representative of the company and conducting a campaign to catalog and update all mentions of their products within these kinds of libraries.

You might find that the University of Texas' listing for your products might all be listed but won't have any reference to the website. In order to get the link added, you'll want to send them an email like the following:

> Hi Professor Jacobs,
>
> I recently visited the Materials Lab (http://uh.edu/archmrc/) and was pleased to see that a number of our products were cataloged. However, I was wondering if it would be possible to include these links under the description information for each entry?
>
> Thank you and have a nice weekend!
>
> yours truly,
>
> Mike Smith
>
> www.yourcompany.com

And...

Hi Chelsea,

I recently saw that you've mentioned our product in your page (

https://soa.utexas.edu/headlines/recycled-pet-acoustic-panel).

We wanted to thank you for mentioning us but I was also wondering if it is

possible for you to add our links in the description? It would be really

great if you could.

Here are our preferred links,

www.example.com/1

www.example.com/2

We're making updates on our site and wouldn't want people landing on 404's

and broken links. Thanks again and all the best for Texas Architecture!

Regards,

Mike Smith

p.s. I wasn't sure where to address concerns regarding information posted

on the website so I apologize for the inconvenience.

A surefire way of getting their attention is to find contact info for the "top dog", like the dean of architecture, as opposed to using the generic contact information. These contacts can usually be found via Linkedin.

Once you've acquired the contact info, it's important to frame your outreach as a benefit to database users as opposed to simply asking for a backlink.

If You Aren't Listed

If your products aren't already listed, you can request that they are added, but you will need to have brochures and physical samples of your product prepared.

These samples are like swatches the students can go through when they're working on a project or proposal. Sending the university samples that follow their specifications will get you on their good side.

It also helps to offer a student discount for your materials. This can be a small discount of 5% off, and it's a small price to pay to be mentioned in a scholarly paper and listed on a .edu website. Projects by students are also published in online journals and can often result in free marketing for your business.

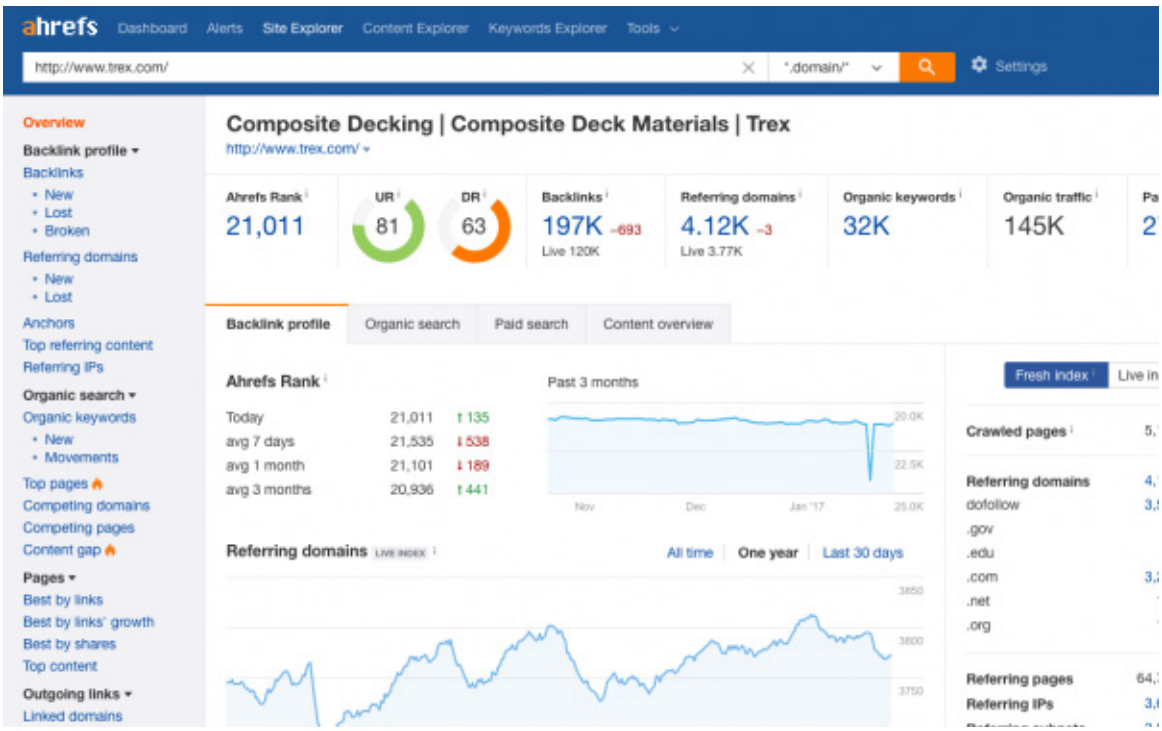
Tactic #14 – Steal Competitors Best Link Building Strategies

One of my favorite methods for improving rankings is to look at the most successful competitor's website and steal all their SEO strategies.

You don't need to reinvent the wheel. You don't need to overcomplicate things. Just do exactly what your top competitors are doing and then do a little extra.

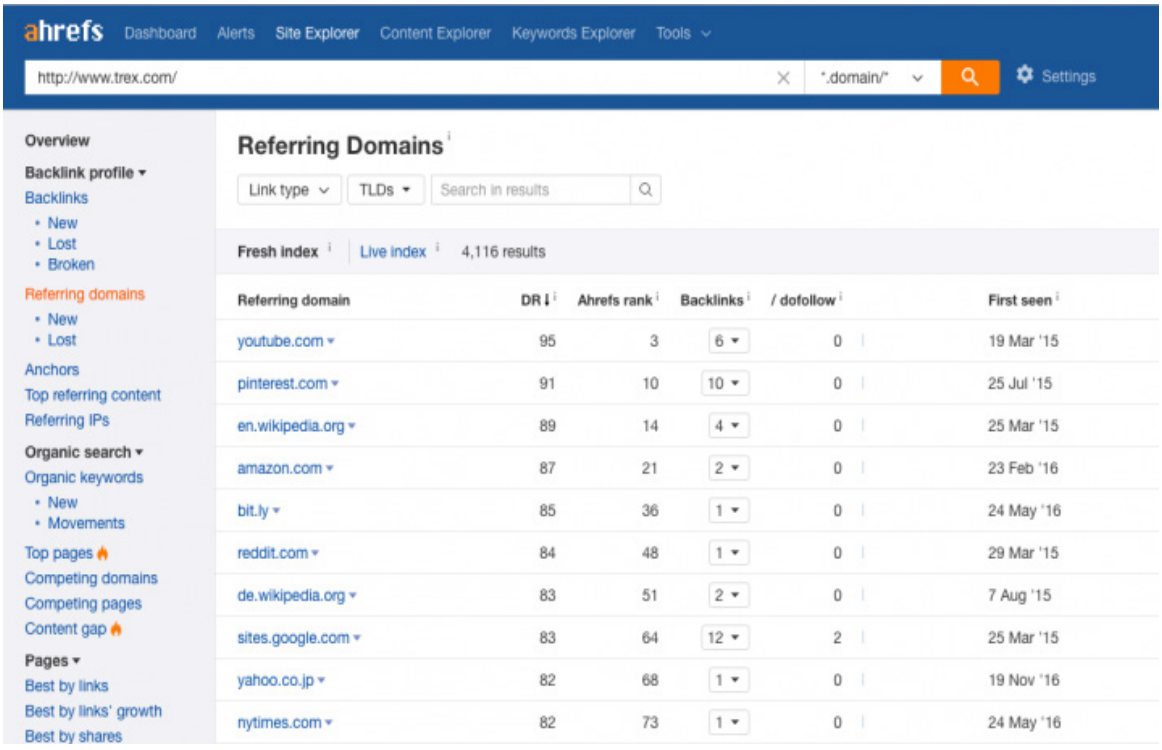
So how do we accomplish this?

The first step is to identify where your competitors are getting backlinks. There are a number of tools you can use for this, but my favorite is Ahrefs.



As you can see, there is a lot of information available to us. We can see that the website has 197,000+ backlinks from over 4,100 different domains.

The next step is to select “Referring domains” in the lefthand sidebar. This will bring up the following screen.



As you can see, Ahrefs shows us every single domain that is linking to Trex's business. While you will need a paid membership to see ALL of them, a free account will still show us the top 30 results, which is a great starting point.

For many of these sites, you will be able to get your own listing and backlink at no cost. For others, you might have to pay for a membership or simply email the website and ask to be listed. You never know what it will take to get a backlink, but you will know exactly how your competitors are ranking higher than you.

Use the link building methods we've described elsewhere in this guide to try and get links from the best websites linking to your competition. The key here is to uncover your competition's best link building strategies and capitalize on them.

Tactic #15 – Turn PR & Blogger Outreach Campaigns into Powerful Link Building Campaigns

Many building materials companies utilize PR companies to get placements on premium websites. This can be a very effective strategy if done correctly.

Unfortunately, most PR teams don't keep SEO in mind when it comes to link building. They will take your money and give you incredibly unoptimized links in return.

To solve this problem, either work with a PR team that understands SEO and can work in harmony with your campaigns, OR provide very specific backlink instructions to whatever firm you are working with, and make sure that payment depends on them following your instructions.

It's important that PR links point to your product pages, because those are the most difficult to rank. Blog content is easy to rank. Even your homepage is fairly easy to rank. Your product pages, however, are the biggest challenge, which is why running a PR campaign pointing to those pages can be so effective.

Tactic #16 Get Backlinks on Unlinked Web Mentions

The larger your web presence becomes, the more likely it is that somebody somewhere is talking about you.

Typically, if someone mentions you in a blog post or some other resource, they are going to link to your website. This isn't always the case, however. The good news is that people who mention your brand positively or neutrally will usually be very amenable to including a link, which is why unlinked mentions of your brand are the perfect opportunity to get quick, easy backlinks.

To begin this process, search for mentions of your brand across the web.

The easiest way to start your search is to hop on Google and type the name of your brand in quotes. For example, let's say we are searching for mentions of Allura USA. We would go to Google and type in:

"Allura USA"

Here is an example of a pre-existing mention of Allura's brand name that has not been linked out to:

http://www.coastalvirginiamag.com/Coastal-Virginia-Idea-House/An-Inside-Peek/

Once we discovered this, it took just a few minutes to email the site and ask them to include a link. In this particular case, the editor approved the request and our link was live within a few hours.

Try to contact the author of the posts when possible. Authors of the post themselves are more likely to respond positively (even feeling like it is an error on their part not to have linked to you in the first place.) If you cannot contact the author directly, contact the webmaster or other administrators instead.

Here is a sample script of how to reach out to the sites. Be polite, concise, and direct about what you are requesting.

Subject: Regarding [brand name / page] in your article/post/page about [topic]

Hi [Webmaster],

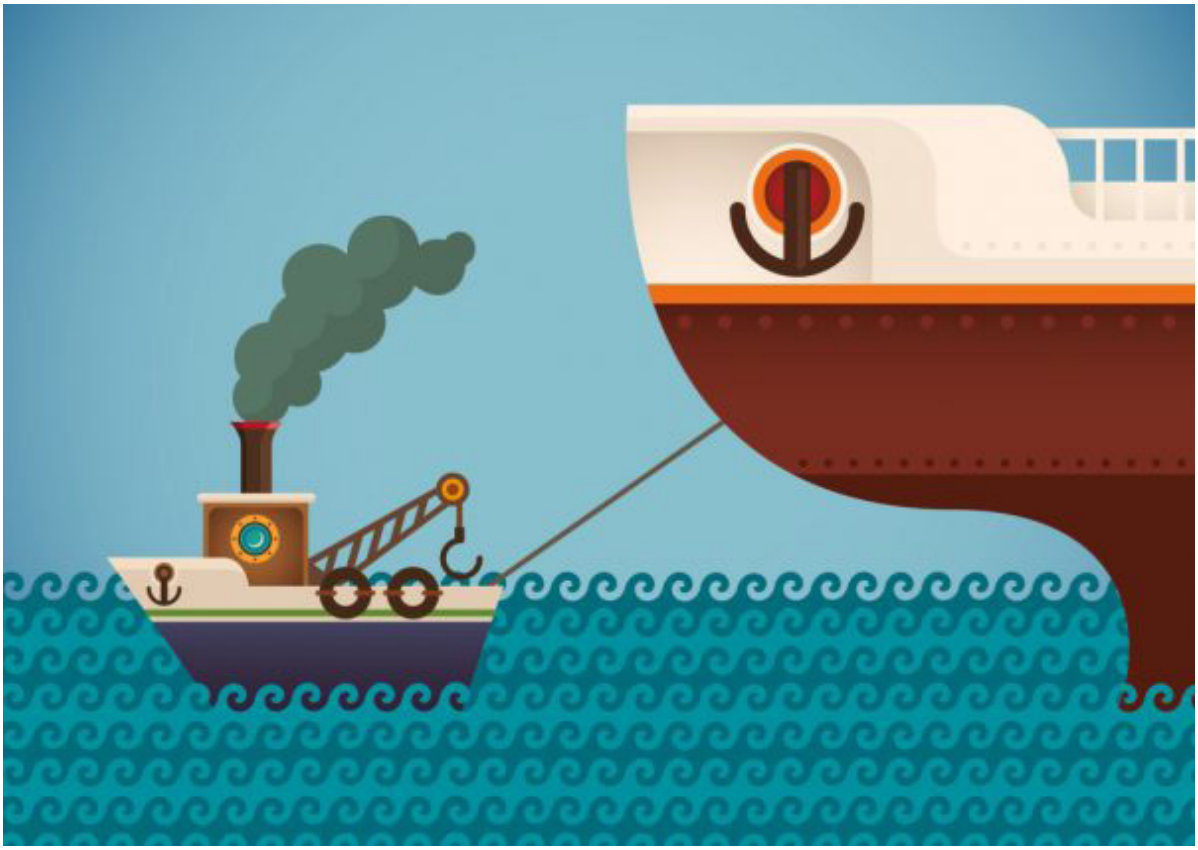
I recently saw that you've mentioned [your site] in your post [url.] We wanted to thank you for mentioning us but I was also wondering if it is possible for you to add our link in the mention? It would be really great if you could.

Thanks again and all the best for [their site]!

Regards,

Mike Smith

Tactic #17 Use “Barnacle SEO” to HiJack Traffic From Websites That Already Rank High for Your Product Related Keywords.



Barnacle SEO is the strategy of identifying websites that already rank high for the keyword you want to target and finding ways to tap into that traffic and reroute some of it to your own website.

This is a great strategy for targeting highly competitive keyphrases that you don’t have the resources to rank for. Instead, you can attach yourself to the winner – like a barnacle – and scoop up some the traffic that floats through the site.

The way you go about this will depend on the type of site that is ranking, so be creative. To identify these sites, simply enter the keyphrase into Google and see what shows up on the front page.

For the purposes of this guide, however, we are going to identify ways to attach yourself to 3 common web properties that tend to rank high for competitive keyphrases.

1. Directories

For mega competitive keyphrases, directories tend to rank the highest. Google Business listings, Yelp, Angie's List, etc. are all examples of directories that tend to outrank individual businesses for key search terms.

In order to take advantage of this, simply add a listing for your business and then make it the best listing on the site.

- Have more, higher quality pictures than anyone else
- Write an in-depth description that includes your target keyword
- Try to get as many positive reviews as possible if relevant
- Link to the listing from your own website and a few guest posts

Most businesses don't take their directory listings seriously, so invest some time and effort into yours, and you'll come out on top.

2. Forums

Forums are another type of web property that tend to rank high for competitive search phrases. Unlike directories, you can't simply list yourself on a forum.

What you CAN do is be active in the top ranking forums.

- Participate in Q&A's
- Leave in-depth answers for popular questions that include your target keyword
- Include a CTA and link to your website in your forum tagline

This strategy requires a bit more work, but it can be very successful when done on popular forums.

3. Popular Blogs

Popular blogs and blog posts are fast becoming the leaders in search rankings for competitive terms. While you might be able to come up with a blog post that can outperform the current leader, that won't always be possible.

Instead, you can barnacle it by adding an in-depth comment onto a popular blog post or even guest posting on the site.

You will often have more success if you add your comment early in the blog post's lifespan, so it's good to follow popular blogs and post in-depth comments on new articles as they go live. That way, your comment will receive replies and likes that push it to the top as more traffic comes in, and hopefully, it will remain at the top as search traffic begins arriving to the post.

4. Online Retailers & Local Distributors

Do you have products featured on websites like homedepot.com, lowes.com, mendards.com, or amazon.com? If so, chances are they have websites with much stronger "SEO" metrics than your current website. Here's an excellent strategy for your:

1. Find all of the product pages on your retailer's website that features your products.
2. Determine how these product pages rank in Google Search for relevant product-related keywords.
3. Scope out any pages that have below a top 3 ranking.
4. Lastly, create a link building strategy to help get more links to these particular product pages.

By implementing the items above, you'll have the opportunity to send more search traffic to your retailer's product pages that feature your product. You will not only have the opportunity to grow sales but also build stronger relationships with your retailers. This tactic can work well with local distributors too!

About
Matt Lee

Matt Lee is the founder of Lead Generation Experts a digital marketing agency helping building material manufacturers increase traffic, leads, and sales through SEO and smart, ROI-focused online advertising.