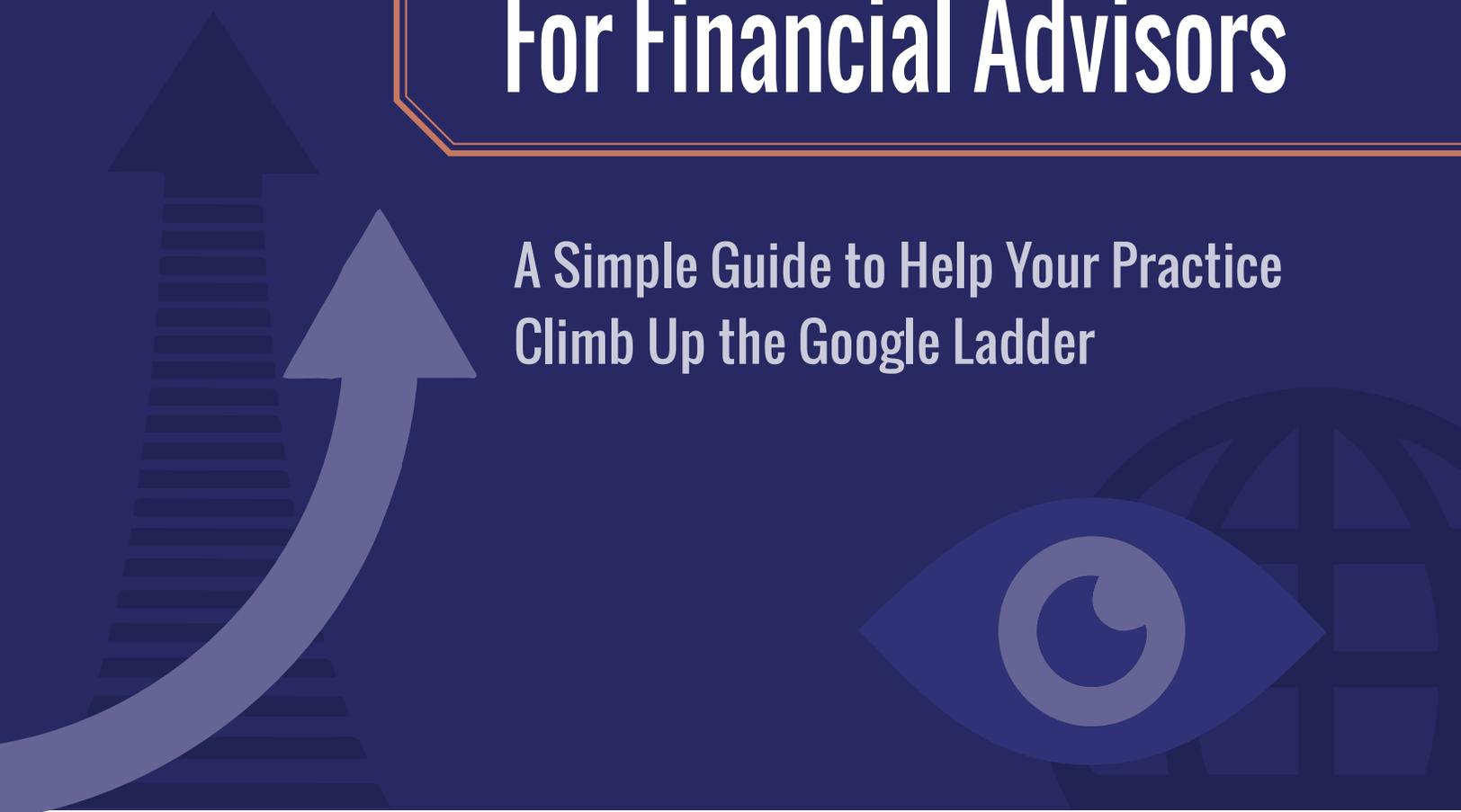


SEO

A large magnifying glass icon is positioned to the right of the word 'SEO', with its handle pointing towards the bottom left and its lens pointing towards the top right.

For Financial Advisors

A Simple Guide to Help Your Practice
Climb Up the Google Ladder

The background of the lower half of the cover features a dark blue gradient. On the left, there is a large, light blue upward-pointing arrow. In the bottom right corner, there is a faint, light blue icon of a globe with a magnifying glass over it.

Contents

A Message From Brian Hart

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Basics

Chapter 2: An Evolving Playing Field

Chapter 3: The Role of Social Media

Chapter 4: Public Relations and Content Strategy

Chapter 5: Measuring SEO

Chapter 6: Hiring Help

SEO Checklist

About the Authors

A Message From Brian Hart:

During my career in financial communications, I've witnessed a new arsenal of digitally driven prospecting methods supersede the tired practices of yesterday. This change has occurred as a reaction to shifting consumer preferences and demands. Veteran advisors are now finding that prospective clients no longer want to be sold to; they want to be engaged, educated, and entertained through the digital channels they trust and depend on.

When it comes to these modern consumers, if they can't easily find you online you don't exist. Essentially, you are opting out of a sea of potential business opportunity—forefeiting solid leads to your tech savvy competition.

“ *For today's financial advisors, the stakes are too high to not take action. Now is the time to act and invest in an ongoing digital strategy that will open new sales pipelines, thus fueling growth and bottom-line success in this new era of business development.* ”

Search engine optimization (SEO) should unquestionably be the central component of an advisor's digital strategy. With that said, due to unfamiliarity or neglect, firms too often fail to prioritize it accordingly in their marketing mix.



That is why I wrote *SEO for Financial Advisors*. This eBook is a simple guide to help advisors climb Google's ladder and establish a digital presence that will attract clients, talent, and other essential growth opportunities. Whether you're new to SEO or have some familiarity with it, this succinct guide will walk you through the essential building blocks of a results-driven SEO strategy. At the end, you'll find a checklist to equip you with immediate action items to put this necessary arm of your marketing plan into effect.

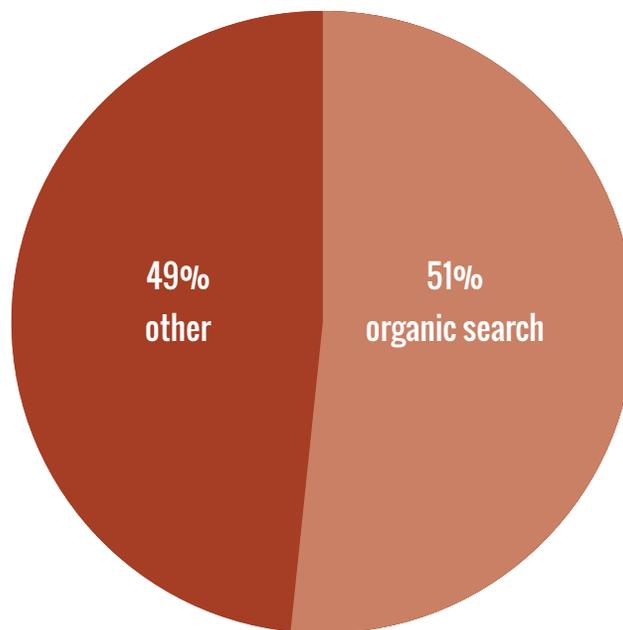
The path to improving your search visibility starts now.

Introduction:

We live in a new era of business development where consumers rely on digital channels to discover and research the goods and services they depend on.

As a financial advisor, if your services cannot easily be discovered via Google search you are doing prospective clients—in your community and beyond—a grand disservice by neglecting to establish a potentially powerful online sales pipeline.

Website Traffic



In the increasingly competitive field of financial advice, search engine optimization (SEO) is critical for your success. According to the [BrightEdge Organic Channel Report](#), 51 percent of traffic to websites comes from organic search and over 40 percent of revenue is captured by organic traffic. Simply put: without a solid SEO strategy your website becomes invisible to search engines, and also to the majority of consumers who use them to discover and research goods and services.

SEO helps search engines like Google to determine the relevancy of websites and webpages in relation to specific search terms and phrases; these are called “keywords.” Rather than trying to outsmart Google, a strategic SEO plan will focus on revealing your relevancy to these search engines by abiding to best SEO practices while also building a robust, positive, and ever-growing digital presence. By understanding the abilities and limitations of search engines, you can properly execute a plan that will elevate your practice above competitors vying for the same Google real estate.

Chapter 1: The Basics

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of increasing visibility in organic (unpaid) search engine results to improve rankings, drive traffic, increase brand awareness, and gain an edge over the competition.

Many aspects of SEO affect your site's ranking while determining what content will appear on the search engine results page (SERP). Those factors range from the words on your page to the way your site is structured. However, SEO isn't simply about building a website that search engines can easily understand. You also need to make your site user-friendly. SEO and the user experience should always work together to produce content that is valuable to both search engines and their users.

Crawling and Indexing

Google has indexed billions of pages. SEO helps Google determine the content that appears to users when they search for a specific keyword or phrase. Search engines use software known as "web crawlers" to collect and index data from publicly visible webpages. "Googlebot" is the most well-known crawler. Crawlers follow links on webpages in order to browse content and then bring data from those webpages back to Google's servers to be indexed. The only way for crawlers to access your content is by following links, which is why the structure and navigability of your website is vital for SEO.



Links

Links indicate importance and strength. They point to different pages on your website and help both users and web crawlers navigate through the site. A website needs strong internal linking to maximize the strength of the most important pages because pages such as the product, service, or contact pages should only be a few clicks away from the homepage.

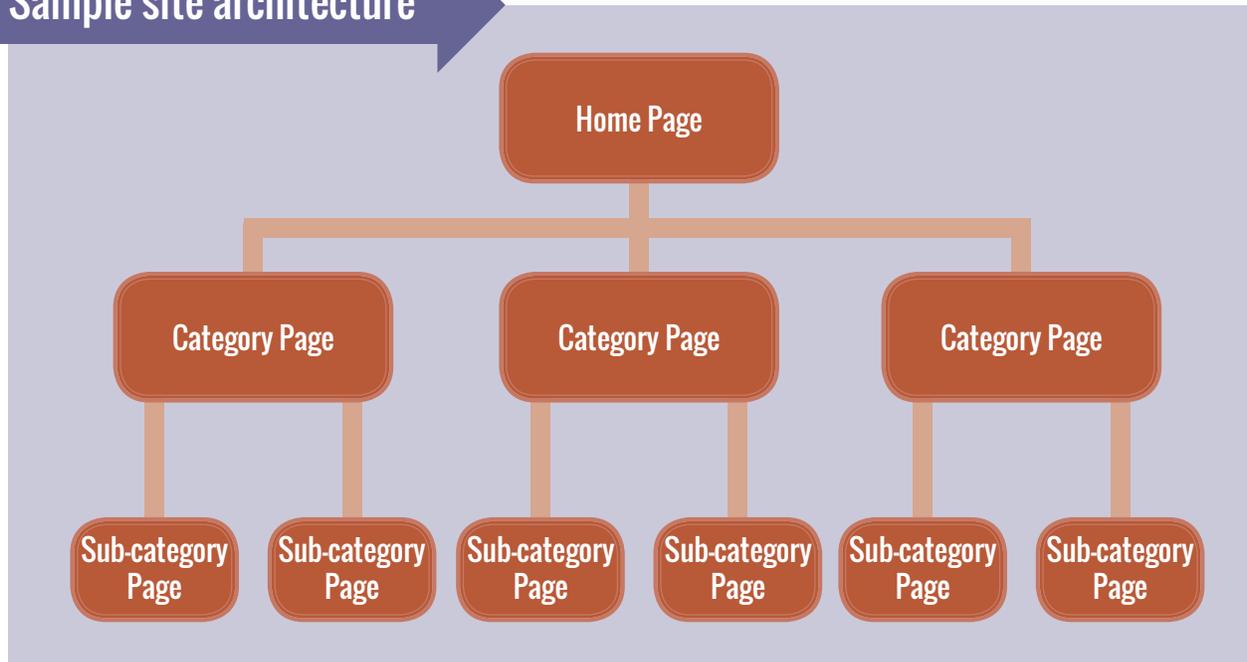
In summary

You must internally link these pages to the homepage for users and web crawlers to easily navigate your site.

Homepage

The homepage of your website holds the most authority because it is linked to most often by search engines, as well as other websites. This authority should be pushed out to the rest of the site. A sample site architecture may start with the homepage, followed by category pages, subcategory pages, and other interior pages. All of these pages are connected by links in order for web crawlers to easily crawl through and index content.

Sample site architecture



How Google Ranks Pages

Google chooses which pages appear on the SERP by webpage popularity and relevancy to the user's specific search. External links back to your site indicate popularity and hold high-ranking power, especially when coming from reputable sites.

For example

If an article on Forbes.com provides a link to your company's website within the article, the external link passes some of its ranking power to your site.

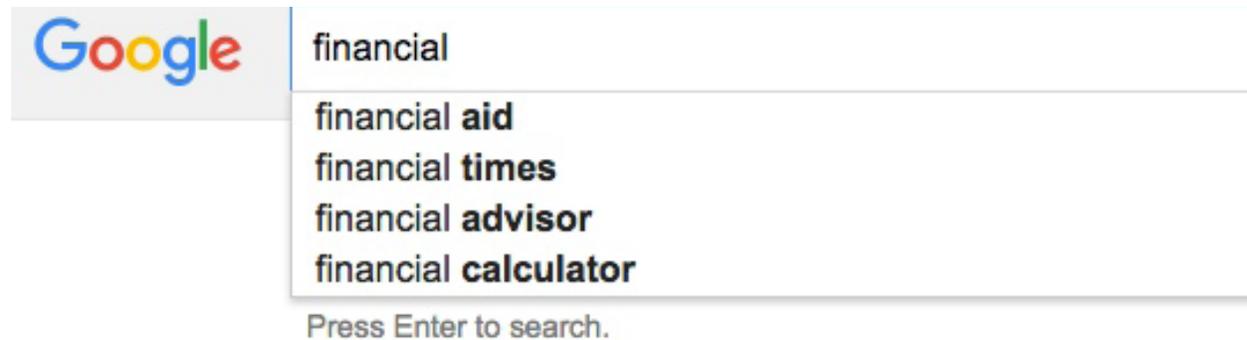
Think of it as a third party vote or endorsement from one site to another. External links also indicate relevancy, because links within an article tell the search engines that they provide further, relevant content.

Keywords

You can also use keywords to determine relevancy. A keyword is a word or string of words that users type into a search engine to find web content that matches what they are looking for. However, you want to avoid a high keyword density—the number of words on a page divided by the number of instances of a specific keyword.

Use keywords wisely

There's more value in receiving a good editorial (external) link from a reputable source than having 10 instances of a keyword on a page, which can look like spam to both the user and the search engine.



Black Hat vs. White Hat

SEO techniques can be classified into two categories: black hat and white hat.

Black hat SEO refers to the use of aggressive SEO strategies, techniques, and tactics that focus on the search engines and not the human audience. Black hat SEO usually does not obey search engine rules, and is used more frequently by people looking for a quick financial return on their website rather than a long-term investment. White hat SEO refers to ethical SEO practices that follow Google's Webmaster Guidelines. While optimizing a website, these are the techniques that should be used – not black hat techniques.

Black hat SEO techniques include:

- Hidden text: Utilizing text that only search engines can see
- Link farms: Belonging to a group of websites that all hyperlink to every other site in the group
- Keyword stuffing: Overloading a page with keywords in meta tags, descriptions, and page content
- Blog spam: Automatically posting random comments or promoting services to blogs and other publicly accessible online discussion boards
- Scraping: Plagiarizing content from other sites in order to have popular content on his or her own site
- Paid links: Purchasing links on websites solely to increase link popularity and rankings
- Doorway pages: Creating pages for spamming the index of a search engine; these pages are inserted into results for a particular phrase with the purpose of sending visitors to an entirely different page
- Parasite hosting: Hosting a website on someone else's server without their consent in order to receive search engine benefits
- Cloaking: Presenting content to the search engine that is different from the content presented to the user

Black Hat vs. White Hat continued...

White hat SEO refers to ethical SEO practices that follow [Google's Webmaster Guidelines](#). While optimizing a website, these are the techniques that should be used – not black hat techniques.

White hat SEO techniques include:

- Guest blogging: Writing a blog post for someone else's blog to earn backlinks; this increases search engine rankings
- Link baiting: Creating content that drives people to share and link to the content from another website. Shareable content includes informative articles, news stories, and sometimes controversial or sensationalistic content
- Quality content: Creating quality content will help a website to appear more valuable to search engines and human visitors, while also increasing the chances that people will link to the website
- Internal linking: Linking pages throughout the website in order for search engines to easily crawl through the site
- Site optimization: Manipulating content, wording, and site structure to attain a better search engine ranking

Although white hat SEO techniques take more time to develop and implement, it is the only way anyone should approach SEO. As Google continues to release new algorithms and improve the way in which website crawlers index content, it will become harder to get away with black hat SEO tactics. Eliminate the risk of getting in trouble with Google and take an ethical approach to optimization with white hat SEO.

TAKEAWAYS

- Make sure your site is linked internally to make it easy for web crawlers to access and index the data on your website.
- Google determines what appears on the SERP by popularity and relevancy. External links back to your site increase popularity and ranking power, especially when they come from reputable sites.
- Use keywords wisely, and avoid a high keyword density.
- Don't use black hat SEO techniques. Do use white hat SEO techniques.

Chapter 2: An Evolving Playing Field

The financial services industry has been slow to adapt to new marketing practices created by digital technology and contemporary consumer preferences and behaviors.

Just a few years ago, the U.S. Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) were hesitant to move into the digital world and clarify their rules; it was often easier for large brokerages to say “no” than help create a solution for their advisors. Many advisors saw websites as static, pamphlet-like resources and believed their target audiences and prospective clients were not using social media or search engines to discover and research advisors. Many of the advisors who were interested in developing a digital presence felt restricted by conservative and often unclear rules and regulations.

As the digital playing field has evolved, consumers are increasingly turning to the Internet to discover, research, and engage with advisors online. This consumer behavior has helped the SEC and FINRA move forward. In March 2014, the SEC released the [SEC Guidance Update No. 2014-04](#). Before this update, advisors had to follow the [Advisor Investment Act of 1940](#), making advisors feel like they had to avoid websites that allowed for third party reviews such as Yelp and LinkedIn.

To summarize

To summarize, the SEC Guidance Update states that:

1

Commentary about the advisor on independent, third party websites, where the site displays both positive and negative reviews that cannot be deleted or edited by the advisor, would not be considered a testimonial.

2

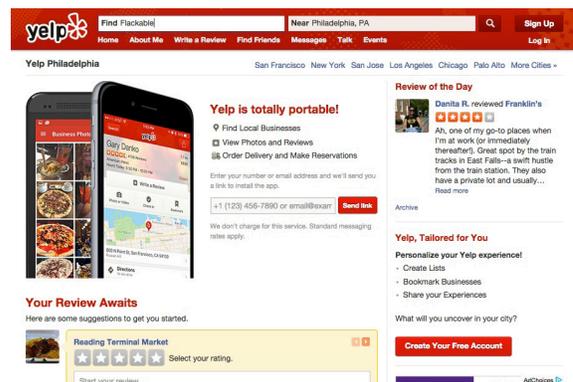
An advisor can display this content on the advisor’s website or social media as long as all comments are included and displayed in a neutral manner (i.e. chronological or alphabetical).

3

Advisors are prohibited from soliciting testimonials or reviews, but they can reference that public commentary can be found on third party websites.

In terms of marketing, advisors can register with appropriate third party sites such as Google My Business, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Yelp.

However, advisors should avoid doctoring, editing, or subjectively influencing third party reviews. Social media should also be closely monitored for reviews and testimonials that are entered in the “comments” section. When possible, it is recommended to turn off the option for comments, reviews, or endorsements.



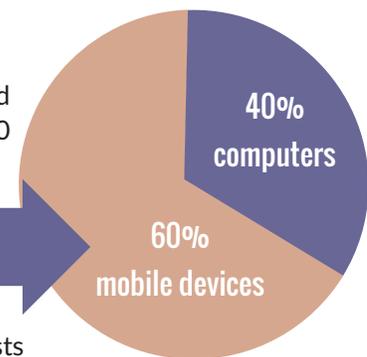
Google Algorithm Updates

Google changes its search algorithm 500-600 times each year. Many of these changes are minor, but when a major algorithm update such as Google Panda is released, search results are affected. This in turn affects SEO strategies. Moz provides a [Google Algorithm Change History](#) that is constantly updated for SEO marketers to keep themselves current with these algorithm updates.

In March 2015, Google released [a small change in its algorithm](#), allowing companies' own statements to appear at the top of searches in Google News. This change means press releases now appear in "news" and "in the news" searches. For PR, this is earned media because Google does not charge a fee for placing press releases in its search results. This algorithm change is good news for PR and proves that press releases are still relevant today, especially in the digital space.

Going Mobile

According to comScore's "[Digital Future in Focus](#)" report, consumers spend 60 percent of their digital media consumption on mobile devices and only 40 percent on computers.



Consumer Digital Media Consumption

Google rolled out its latest mobile-friendly update in April 2015, which boosts the ranking of responsive pages on mobile search results. Therefore, being mobile-friendly has become a vital ranking factor. Websites and pages that are not optimized for mobile see a significant decrease in rankings in mobile search results. The mobile update gives priority on mobile search engine results pages (SERPs) to businesses with mobile responsive sites and mobile apps. If a company's website is not optimized for mobile, it may lose quality leads and traffic. To find out if a page is mobile-friendly, use the [Mobile-Friendly Test](#), which can be accessed in Webmaster Tools.

Since Google's search algorithm is constantly changing, it is important to continually update website content and adapt to the evolving playing field.

TAKEAWAYS

- The SEC and FINRA are making it easier to implement digital marketing tactics. Continue to monitor guidance updates.
- Keep yourself current with Google algorithm updates in order to change or modify your SEO strategy when needed.
- Make your website mobile-friendly. Find out if your page is mobile-friendly by taking the Mobile-Friendly Test.

Chapter 3: The Role of Social Media

SEO and social media work hand-in-hand to significantly increase search rankings, as well as overall digital presence.

Even in the financial industry, not having a strong social media presence can negatively impact your business and competitive advantage. With the updates to FINRA and SEC regulations, advisors are increasingly using social media to gain visibility. Links to a company's website from social media platforms increase website credibility and help search engines understand that the site should be ranked for certain keyword phrases. When people "like," share, or retweet a company's content, credible backlinks are built. These backlinks increase that company's website's authority and credibility.



Social Media for Financial Advisors

As a financial advisor, it is extremely important to comply with FINRA and SEC regulations.

What SEC Social Media Guidelines mean to financial advisors:

- Social media content must be archived for a period of no less than 3 years.
- Firms are responsible for third party content.
- Firms must have a documented social media policy on file.
- Be careful when distinguishing what constitutes a recommendation and what constitutes research. Recommendations must be suitable for everyone.
- If you show **all** reviews, you can promote them. In other words, you can publish reviews from sites such as Yelp as long as all the reviews are published – not simply a select few. You can do this by adding a Yelp widget to your site so reviews are automatically added and updated.
- You can publically show your friends, fans, and followers as long as you don't imply a recommendation. You can use photos of people who follow your social media accounts on your website as long as you don't do anything that would make other users believe that the people shown are actual clients recommending you or your financial services.
- You may be able to publically post ratings. You can advertise ratings of your business from websites such as Yelp, but these ratings must reflect both the positive and negative ratings and cannot be filtered.

Social Media for Financial Advisors continued...

What SEC Social Media Guidelines mean to financial advisors:

- Firms must supervise social media communications.
- A registered principal must review proposed social media sites and posts.
- Firms must confirm that every recommendation on social media is suitable for every investor to whom it is made.
- Firms must keep a record of their social media activity.
- Firms must adopt procedures to manage data feeds on their websites and accept the burden of responsibility for third-party data presented on their website as accurate.
- Firms must be able to retain, retrieve, and supervise business communications conducted on personal devices.

Once you understand what you can and cannot do with social media due to SEC and FINRA regulations, you can develop a social media strategy for your company.

How to Increase SEO

Through the use of Social Media



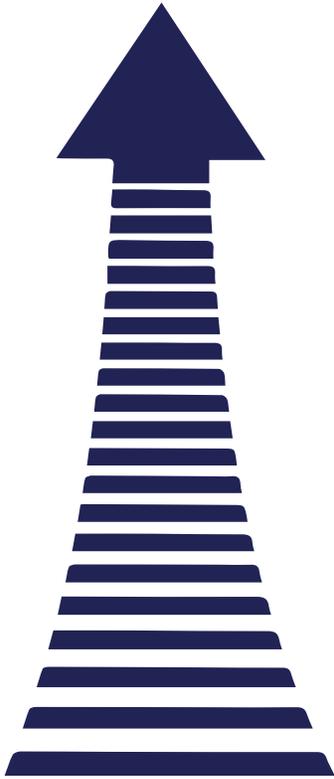
- *Increase your followers.* The number of followers and connections on a social media profile influence search rankings. A company with only 100 Twitter followers would not have the same ranking power as a corporation with millions of followers.

- *Create and share high-quality content to encourage external inbound links.* When you create high quality, shareable content, more people will link to that content. The more external links you have, the more authority you'll gain.

- *Optimize posts for search.* Along with news articles and Knowledge Graph entries, Google favors popular social media updates in its SERPs. To create a strong post, post a video, infographic, or other visual content; you could also link to a full-detailed article. Make sure the title of your content is accurate and descriptive. When you post it, optimize the text for a specific type of search. For example, if you have written an article on social media best practices for financial advisors, you can frame it with a specific query like "What is the Best Way for Financial Advisors to Utilize Social Media?" You can also use seasonal keywords to maximize timeliness and increase your chances of coming up in search results.

How to Increase SEO

Through the use of Social Media continued...



- *Increase social sharing.* Social sharing increases a brand's authority just like external links. To Google, a verifiable external source (such as social media) that validates your brand or your content improves domain authority. If you can get hundreds of people sharing your content, your domain authority will increase. Likes, shares, favorites, replies, and retweets are all ways to improve authority.
- *Geo-target your posts.* Social media is an easy way to engage with the local community sending local-specific signals to search engines. The easiest ways to locally optimize your content are to post whenever your company is involved with a local event and to interact with local brands and establishments on social media. This will increase your participation in the community and make you more visible in local searches.
- *Increase brand awareness.* SEO benefits from brand awareness, because when you increase your reputation on social media through engagement and high-quality content, you increase your online brand presence. The positive growth in brand presence leads to more branded searches on Google, and the more branded searches you receive, the more likely it is for you to rank for non-branded keywords.

For a successful social media and SEO strategy, the most important principle is that the more positive experience you give your users, the higher you will rank in Google search.

TAKEAWAYS

- Backlinks from social media, including “likes,” shares and retweets increase website authority and credibility.
- Financial advisors must comply with FINRA and SEC regulations.
- Develop a social media strategy to increase followers, create and share high-quality content, optimize posts for search, increase social sharing, geo-target your posts, and increase brand awareness.

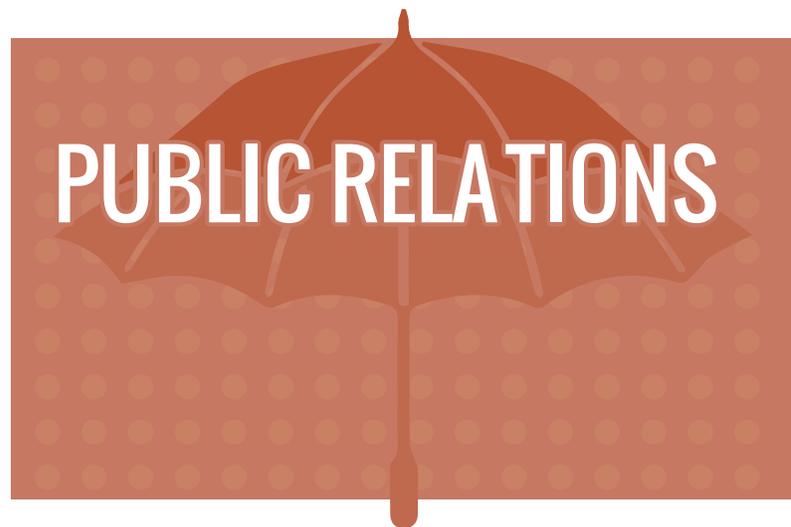
Chapter 4: Public Relations and Content Strategy

As Google updates continue stomping out the black hat SEO gambits of yesterday, public relations and content development have become critical components of a complete SEO strategy.

While your web developer, web designer, or SEO specialist may be best suited to build the foundation of your search presence on the backend, they are quite unlikely to deliver a game-changing media strategy that will produce high authority backlinks or steady, original, and relevant content.

Many of today's best SEO practices fall under the umbrella of public relations.

If you are interacting with influencers, journalists, and bloggers on social media, you can call it social media marketing but you are still doing PR. If you are pitching guest posts or by-lined articles to news outlets and other online publications, you are doing PR. If you are conducting e-mail outreach to get links and mentions, you are doing PR.



While working on a public relations and content strategy on digital channels, identify your overall business and marketing goals, whether you want to gain more business leads or build your brand through authoritative content. Next, you want to research and determine your target audience. This information will help you with keyword research to determine which words or phrases your target audience is using in search queries.

“ *Public relations efforts are not always as black and white as some traditional SEO efforts like creating a website that Google can crawl and index, avoiding duplicate-content issues, or reducing page-load time. With that said, the tangible impact of a focused PR strategy is real and potentially powerful.*

Communicating Online

Understanding how your audience communicates with your business is key to creating optimized content online. By doing keyword research, you can determine what keywords your audience is using in order to implement those keywords into your content. It will also help you attract the right kind of visitors.



Keyword research can also be beneficial when you are writing press releases and blog content. If you know what keywords are currently ranking high for your business or for your competitors, you can use specific keywords in your press release and blog posts to optimize this content for digital publications and blog sites.

Use this research to optimize your spokesperson's language as well. He or she should use the identified keywords in speeches and interviews because it will increase the chance that articles and blog posts about your company will contain those keywords. You can find more information about keyword research [here](#).

As well as including keywords in press releases, blog posts, and speaking opportunities, you should include links. When sending pitches and press releases to media contacts, include a link to your company's homepage and any other relevant links. Don't be afraid to ask a reporter to include a link in the story, but only request to include a link if it can add value to the story. Read more about how to bolster SEO through earned media on [Flackable's blog](#).

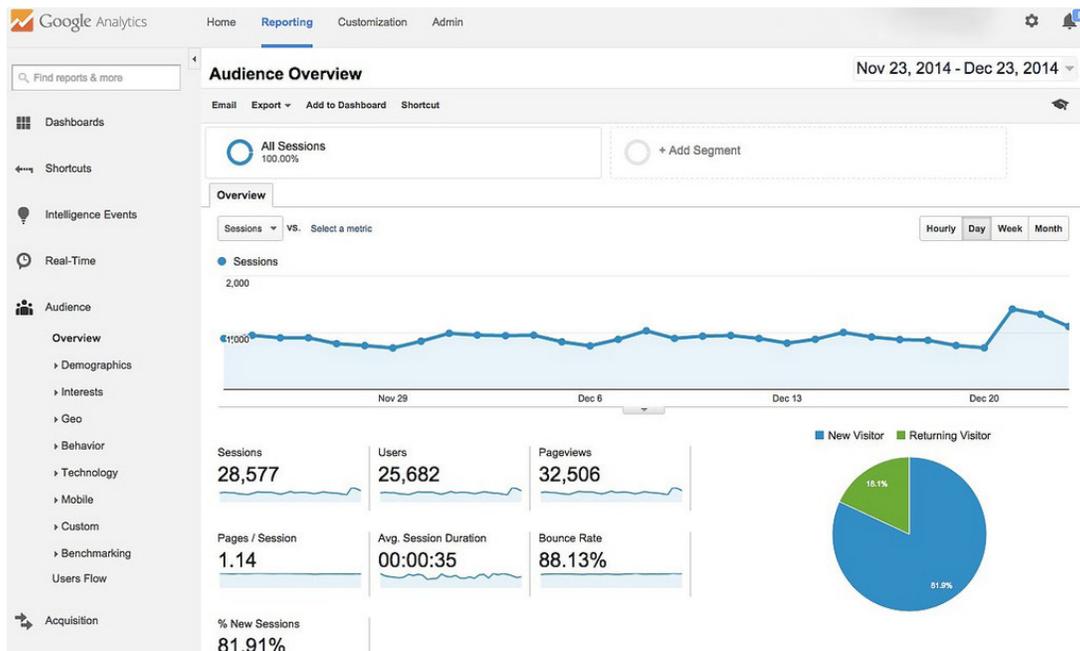
TAKEAWAYS

- A complete SEO strategy includes public relations and content development.
- Identify your overall business and marketing goals. Then research and determine your target audience. Afterwards, perform keyword research to determine which words or phrases your target audience is using in search queries.
- Keyword research is beneficial for press releases, blog content, speeches and interviews.

Chapter 5: Measuring SEO

SEO is measurable, calculable, and controllable. With help from Google Analytics and other tools, you have access to traffic data, keywords, conversion rates, and more.

Measuring your SEO efforts matters because it provides key information to understand your company's goals online; it is also a great indicator of whether or not you need to change your strategy to achieve the best results.



Metric Tracking

Every business is different and requires different metric monitoring, but there are some universal metrics that are valuable to every business.

1

Online Traffic - Monitor each traffic source that contributes to your site. Look at direct navigation (typed-in traffic, bookmarks, email links without tracking codes, etc.), referral traffic (links from across the web, trackable email links, promotional links, etc.) and search traffic (queries that sent traffic from major and minor web search engines).

2

Search Engine Referrals - The majority of all search traffic comes from three major engines: Google, Yahoo! and Bing. As you look at the percentage of search traffic, you should then compare the volume of search traffic from each major search engine. This information is useful for determining whether your contributions are impacting search engine referrals or whether an algorithm has changed.

Metric Tracking continued...

3

Keywords – You want to know which keywords are sending you traffic in order to create optimized content and determine what content is under-optimized. You should also test keywords in search engines to see what information appears on the SERP to see what pages and content you are competing with for that

4

Conversion Rates – Conversion metrics matter when it comes to the bottom line for your businesses. If people aren't engaging with your service or product, you need to reassess the content on the pages of your site. Previously, Google Analytics users could see what keywords were converting. With updates and the addition of paid search, you can no longer see the keywords that actually produce conversions—now, you will see the words “Not provided” instead of the keyword. However, you can still see the conversion rate. This information is still valuable because you can see which page is bringing you the conversions, and you can make inferences on what keywords may be responsible. For SEO tips for “not provided” keywords, read more [here](#).

5

Number of pages receiving at least one visit from search engines – Know the number of pages that receive search engine traffic, because this information can give you a glimpse into indexation--the pages that engines are keeping in their indexes. If pages aren't receiving traffic, you may need to work on issues like site architecture, link acquisition, SML sitemaps, and uniqueness of content and meta data.

To track and analyze these metrics, you will need to use analytics software. Paid and free analytics software will help you measure your SEO efforts:

Paid Analytics Software

- [Moz Analytics](#)
- [Omniture](#)
- [Fireclick](#)
- [Mint](#)
- [Sawmill Analytics](#)
- [Clicktale](#)
- [Coremetrics](#)
- [Unica NetInsight](#)

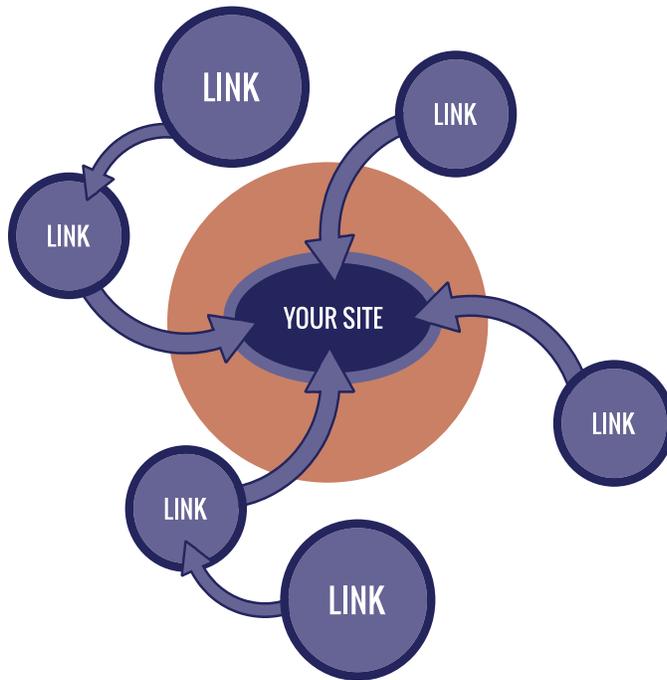
Free Analytics Software

- [Google Analytics](#)
- [Clicky Web Analytics](#)
- [Piwik Open Source Analysis](#)
- [Woopra Website Tracking](#)
- [AWStates](#)

Choosing analytics software can be difficult. The best thing you can do is test out different software to determine what works best for your company. For free tools, Google Analytics offers more than just measurement tools. You can find tutorials and guides online as well. Google Analytics also offers a cross-integration with other Google products like Webmaster Tools, Adwords, and Adsense.

Backlinks

Backlinks are incoming links to your site from another site. They increase your popularity, which increases your chance of ranking higher on the SERP. Backlinks also signify authority: if you have valuable content on your site, people will link to that content to refer other people to the information. In SEO, it is important to know how many people are linking to your site and how many backlinks you have earned.



To find this information, use a backlink checker tool. A backlink checker will tell you who is linking back to your site and will enable you to interact with the site owner—if you so choose—to simply say thanks for linking to your site. Free backlink checker tools include SEMrush, SEO profiler, Majestic SEO, and Site Explorer Info. Find the top 25 free backlink checker tools [here](#).

TAKEAWAYS

- SEO is measurable, calculable, and controllable. Use Google Analytics and other tools to track and analyze your metrics.
- Metric tracking can guide you to modify or change your SEO strategy.
- Backlinks increase your popularity and signify authority. Use a backlink checker tool to see who is linking to your site.

Chapter 6: Hiring Help

If you aren't an SEO expert or don't have the time to upgrade your digital presence yourself, it may be time to consider hiring an in-house professional, a freelancer, or an agency.

When hiring SEO help

It is important to ask the right questions:

1

Who are your current and past clients? SEO experts should be able to briefly talk about their work with different clients and how their SEO efforts impacted search ranking, conversions, and web traffic.

2

How will you improve my search engine rankings? They should explain their strategies to improve your website's search engine ranking and realistically achieve your SEO goals.

3

Do you adhere to the [Webmaster best practices](#)? If the answer is no, do not hire them. Google's Webmaster best practices prohibit common SEO tricks such as generating spam-like content and adding fabricated links. If your website does not follow these guidelines, your search results ranking could be lowered, or Google could ban your site from search results altogether.

4

Can you guarantee my website will achieve a number-one ranking? This is a trick question. If they say yes, this is a big red flag and you should not hire them. It is impossible to guarantee a number-one ranking. Also, ranking does not hold the same value that it once did because of paid search results, photos, and videos that also appear in the SERP.

5

Do you have experience in improving local search results? Local search engine results are especially valuable for small brick-and-mortar businesses that want to attract local customers. If your goal is to attract local business, you will want to hire an expert in local SEO.

6

Will you share with me all changes you make to my site? SEO will likely require changes to your existing web page coding. If you want them to get your permission before accessing or altering website code, clearly communicate that information with the SEO professional.

7

How do you measure the success of your SEO efforts? They should be experienced in using Google Analytics and other analytics software to track their SEO success, and be able to share these analytics with you.

Hiring Help continued...



If you'd rather hire an agency than an in-house professional or freelancer, consider whether you want an SEO firm or an SEO-savvy PR agency. As more and more content is produced for digital use, forward-thinking PR agencies are now adapting an integrated approach that includes SEO. PR agencies that incorporate SEO strategies into their PR strategies know the value of backlinks and pitching stories to digital channels. They research the most important key phrases that you will want to rank for in search engine results. They provide suggestions on how to improve your site in order to

help you attract journalists who are looking to do a story on you or your industry. They may even perform keyword research to enhance blog posts, infographics, speaking opportunities, and media placements. They use Google Analytics and other analytics software to measure their success. Most importantly, these firms generate media coverage and high authority backlinks needed to build a powerful digital presence.

Whether you are ready to hire professionals to help you with your SEO strategy or you want to start implementing an SEO strategy yourself, having an understanding of SEO and applying a digital strategy will help you thrust your advisory practice ahead of the competition.

TAKEAWAYS

- Ask the right questions when hiring an SEO expert, whether you hire an in-house professional, a freelancer, or an agency.
- PR agencies that incorporate SEO strategies into their PR strategies know the value of backlinks, pitching stories to digital channels, and producing high quality digital content.

SEO Checklist

Install Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools.

Check Crawl Errors Report, which can be found in the Crawl section of Google Webmaster Tools.

Perform keyword research. Make a list of the services you offer.

- How do you refer to them?
- How do your clients and customers refer to them?

Incorporate keywords from your keyword research into your web content.

Are you linking to your internal pages in an SEO-friendly way?

Is your site mobile friendly?

Set up social media accounts.

Link building: identify industry influencers, news publications and reporters. Follow them for opportunities to pitch your content, and don't forget to provide them with your links.

Do your press mentions include links back to your website?

Check for updates on the Google algorithm.

About the Authors

Brian Hart



As founder and president of Flackable, LLC, Brian Hart is committed to helping clients reach a new level of growth by emboldening them with superior communications counsel and services.

He is accountable for the planning, development, and execution of goal-driven public relations campaigns for clients in financial services and related industries. His efforts routinely land clients in top news outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, CNBC, Fox Business, Bloomberg, Forbes, Barron's, Time, US News & World Report, The Associated Press, Reuters, and various industry trade press. In 2015 he was honored by Adweek and his peers as one of the public relations industry's "30 Under 30."

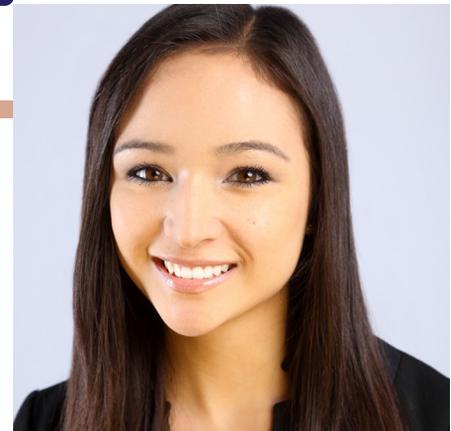
Brian is a Temple University graduate with a B.A. in Strategic Communication and a Political Science minor. He began his career as a licensed life and health insurance professional at a broad-based financial services firm in King of Prussia, PA. Prior to founding Flackable, Brian represented a number of leading financial services firms at a public relations agency in Greater New York City.

Connect with Brian:



Megan Healy

Megan Healy is an account coordinator at Flackable. In addition to creating marketing content and implementing strategies to increase brand awareness for the agency, Megan executes media relations and social media campaigns on behalf Flackable's growing client base.



Megan is a Temple University graduate with a B.A. in Strategic Communication, with a concentration in Public Relations and a minor in Spanish. She was an active member of the Public Relations Student Society of America and was also an account executive for PRowl Public Relations, Temple's student-run PR firm.

Connect with Megan:



This book is presented solely for educational and entertainment purposes. Flackable, LLC and the authors are not offering it as legal, technical, or other professional services advice. While best efforts have been used in preparing this book, Flackable, LLC and the authors make no representations or warranties of any kind and assume no liabilities of any kind with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness of use for a particular purpose. Flackable, LLC and the authors shall not be held liable or responsible to any person or entity with respect to any loss or incidental or consequential damages caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information or programs contained herein. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. Every company is different and the advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should seek the services of a competent professional before beginning any search engine optimization or marketing program.