37 Articles on How to Make Your Website Successful (+ 4 Experts to Follow)

Table of Contents

Getting traffic to your website

1. [The Two-Part SEO Ranking Model: Let's Make SEO Simple](#) *by Eric Enge*

   According to Google, there are 200+ ranking factors. Eric Enge argues that for most of the businesses, understanding all of them does more harm than good, and thinking of your rank in terms of just two factors – quality of your content and quality of your backlinks – is the way to go.

   Main takeaway: Make sure your content is A+ and you have a link building strategy that works before obsessing with minor things like image ALT tags or meta descriptions.

2. [The Three Pillars of SEO: Authority, Relevance, and Trust](#) *by Mark Traphagen*

   Google doesn't hate you. It's just trying to make the searchers happy and present them with the most relevant results from the most authorative sources. This article explains how Google judges authority and decides if your content can be trusted.

   Main takeaway: If you want to gain authority in Google's eyes, you need to treat your SEO as part of your ecosystem.

3. [Top 20 Google Ranking Signals for 2017](#) *by SEO Hero*

   A short and sweet article with a list of 20 most important Google ranking signals that gives you a clear picture.

Keyword Research

4. [How to Research Keywords: Tips, Competition and Squirrels](#) *by Andy Crestodina*

   To rank, your page must focus on the search phrase and indicate its relevance to search engines. Plus, search engines must consider your website credible. This article explains in detail and with many screenshots how to select keywords you have a chance to rank for depending on your current domain authority.

   Main takeaway: That page isn't going to rank itself. But to make it rank is not as complicated or mysterious as you think.

5. [How to Get Your Blog Post on the First Page of Google](#) *by Barry Feldman & Andy Crestodina*

   The best place to hide a body is Google's #2 page. I know, an old joke, but still the best to illustrate this point: You should target only keywords you have a chance to rank on page #1 for. To decide whether you can rank on page #1, you need to ask yourself 3 questions:

   - Are people searching for this?
   - Do I have a chance to rank?
   - Can I create better content than what already exists?

   Main takeaway: You have a chance to rank for a keyword on page #1 if your domain authority is in the range between the highest and the lowest domain authority scores of the pages from the current page #1.

Optimization for Search

6. [Master Your Homepage Meta Descriptions Now {+15 Inspiring Examples!}](#) *by Dan Shure*

   After the article's title, meta descriptions is the second most important thing people see in search results. In this article, Dan shares 3 ingredients that make an A+ meta description and provides 15 examples to get you inspired.

   Main takeaway: If your page has a lousy meta description you are losing traffic. Use that little space in search engines to reinforce your message.

7. [Local SEO in 2017: 5 simple ways to dominate local search](#) *by Sherry Bonelli on Search Engine Land*

   If the location of your business is relevant and you want to rank for example, for {what you do} + {city} you have to optimize for local search. This will indicate to search engines the relevance of your business for a particular location and help you rank higher. To optimize for local search, you need to take additional steps apart from "the usual" SEO. The 5 strategies this article describes will give you a head start on your competition.

   Main takeaway: If you are not optimizing for local search, you are losing traffic from your target audience.

Website Speed

8. [10 Ways to Speed Up Your Website](#) *by Kathryn Aragon on Crazy Egg*

   40% will abandon a web page if it takes more than 3 seconds to load. So having a slow website is not an option. This article shows

you what exactly you can do to speed up your website, with many of the tips easy to implement.

Main takeaway: Improving your website's speed should be one of your top priorities.

9. [The Best Way to Optimize Images for Your Website. With No Tools. In No Time](#) *by Gill Andrews*

If you don't want / can't use a plug-in that does it for you, there is still a faster way to optimize your images than manually tweaking them with a photo editor. This article shows you a simple trick how you can make Google optimize your images in the best possible way with just a couple of clicks.

Link Building & Guest Posting

10. [Organic traffic & link building for small businesses](#) *by Marcus Miller on Search Engine Land*

Getting backlinks is every website owner's headache, especially for small businesses. This article suggests to focus your link building efforts on two things: Guest posting and PR.

Main takeaway: To get quality backlinks, create valuable linkable assets and promote them in your guest posts.

11. [6 strategies to build links for your small business website in 2016](#) *by Pratik Dholakiya on Search Engine Land*

This article goes hand in hand with [Article #10](#) from this list and talks about concrete ways to get backlinks, among others partnering with local organizations and niche influencers, searching for business mentions and skyscraper technique.

Main takeaway: If you didn't have a link building strategy with an excuse you don't know how to do it, now you are out of excuses.

12. [How to Solicit a Guest Post (and How It Will Benefit You)](#) *by Eric Enge*

   This would be the shortest article you'd ever read on this topic but also the most useful one. Eric gives 10 clear points on how to go about pitching a guest post and 4 reasons why they still might not accept it (which are not your fault).

   Main takeaway: If you send the same pitch to different sites with no prior research, it's not going to happen.

Social Networks

13. [3 Website Mistakes That Cost You Visitors](#) *by Andy Crestodina*

   Did you know that social "follow-me" and share buttons, if not used carefully, can drive visitors away from your website? This article will teach you how to avoid these mistakes, and when it's time and place to send your visitors to social networks.

   Main takeaway: Remove all shiny objects that are distracting your visitors from doing what you want them to do on that page.

14. [Content Promotion Strategies: 50 Ways to Drive Traffic To Your Next Article](#) *by Andy Crestodina*

   Highly useful article on simple but effective ways to promote your article, some of them you wouldn't have thought of yourself (for example, #11: Pin your newest post to your Twitter profile).

15. [7 Proven Ways to Drive Engagement on Twitter (and One That Surprisingly Fails)](#) *by Mark Traphagen*

Guys at Stone Temple Consulting have analyzed 4 million (!) tweets to see what factors drive engagement on Twitter. This article is a summary of their findings and a gold mine of research-proven tips.

Main takeaway: There are specific things that work and that you can do to improve engagement with your tweets (yay!)

Making a great first impressing & getting people to know, like and trust you

Navigation

16. [Website Navigation: 7 Best Practices, Design Tips and Warnings](#) *by Andy Crestodina*

    This article trumps all other articles on this topic combined. All you ever needed / wanted to know about navigation explained in a crystal clear way and language.

    Main takeaway: Navigation is one of the little things that make big difference: Easy to improve and brings immediate results.

Internal Linking

17. [3 Internal Linking Strategies for SEO and Conversions {+ 10 Tips for Internal Link Building](#) *by Andy Crestodina*

    This article is a mini-encyclopedia on internal links; I've never seen an article that gives you more information on this topic. Plus, it has a step-by-step guide on how to use internal links to improve your rank in search (and who wouldn't want that?).

Main takeaway: Smart usage of internal links can improve your page's rank in search.

18. [Internal Linking: 4 Locations That Will Make Your Web Pages Work Smarter for You](#) *by Randy Milanovich from Kayak Online Marketing*

This article is a cherry on top of Andy's article (see [Article #17](#)) that shows you how you can strategically place and visually highlight internal links so that your visitors can explore more of your content (and get to know, like and trust you).

Main takeaway: Put your internal links in context and make them visually prominent.

Homepage

19. [How to Make Sure Your Website Sends a Clear Message (+7 Great Website Tagline Examples)](#) *by Gill Andrews*

Your homepage isn't just a collection of elements. It also has to communicate an important message and answer these important questions as fast and as clear as possible: What do you do? For whom? What's the benefit? In this article, I explain how to make sure you have it covered and fix it if it turns out you have a problem.

Main takeaway: Ordinary but clear always trumps creative but vague.

About Page

20. [How to Write a Sparkling ABOUT Page](#) *by Henneke Duistermaat*

One of my absolute favorite articles that makes writing an About page a breeze.

Main takeaway: Even your About page should be about your visitors, and not yourself.

Email Marketing

21. [4 Easy Emails That Will Help You Engage New Subscribers](#) *by Pawel Grabowski on Beacon*

I can imagine that email marketing is not your "favorite part of the job". Possibly because you can't help the feeling that you are budging into people's lives unannounced with your agenda. This article takes the pressure away and gives you 4 legitimate reasons to send your subscribers and email. It also has examples for each of them to inspire you to create your own.

Main takeaway: There are many more reasons to send your subscribers an email than content updates.

22. [How to Write an Email Sequence that Keeps Readers Hooked (and Craving More!)](#) *by Henneke Dusitermaat*

Everything's easy once you know how to do it. Even writing an email sequence. This article doesn't give you too specific advice on this (which would be useless, as everyone's audience and style is different). Instead, it gives you enough guidance to comprehend what makes a great email sequence and how you can write your own without stressing out about it.

Main takeaway: An email sequence is meant to establish a relationship with your readers. Let your subscribers get to know you and learn things about them yourself.

23. [4 Simple Tips for Persuasive Emails: How to Turn Blah Into Crisp Writing](#)*by Henneke Duistermaat*

Sometimes don't need the right answers but the right questions. This article shows you what questions you should have answered for your emails to have a chance to be opened and read. Plus it has wonderful examples of "meh vs great" emails.

Main takeaway: Be clear in setting a goal for each email and give people a reason to read your emails.

Blogging

24. [What Is Quality Content?](#) *by Patrick Stox on Search Engine Land*

The most popular advice for businesses and bloggers out there is: "Create quality content". But what is quality content? This article is a comprehensive and nicely structured analysis of how Google sees it. It's a longer read, but it is worth your time. And if this article doesn't answer this question for you I don't know what will.

Main takeaway: Whether something is "quality content" depends on the query intent. But there are at least 10 objective indicators of quality content that you can always control.

25. [The Underdog's Guide to Building an Unforgettable Blog) by Henneke](#) *by Henneke Duistermaat*

If you often find yourself paralyzed by the thought that everyone and their grandma write better than you, this post will snap you out of this mood and get you all excited about your own writing again.

Main takeaway: People scan blogs for useful information, but they read and keep coming back to a blog for personality.

26. [The Anti-Blog Post to Writing Better Blog Posts.](#) *by Mars Dorian on BusinessGrow*

    One of my favorite blog post of all times. It will inspire you to stop trying to be like everyone else, leave the echo chamber, and create original work.

    Main takeaway: Stop regurgitating. Share something original from your experience.

27. [How to Write with Power and Authority, Even if You Feel Like a Nobody](#)*by Henneke Duistermaat*

    The fact that nobody know you or you are just starting in a crowded niche is intimidating. But it doesn't have to be. If you write clear, powerful and with substance, and back up your thoughts with examples and links to authorative articles, you will be perceived as an authority.

    Main takeaway: Writing brings clarity, deepens your understanding, and strengthens your ideas. Don't be afraid to write, and write often.

28. [15 Blog Images: Best Practices for Adding Great Pictures To Every Post](#) *by Andy Crestodina*

    Images are an all-important ingredient, second only to a great headline. If your post has images, readers will read and remember more of it, and be more likely to share it. This article is an invaluable and very specific guide on what kind of images to use and how to create them.

    Main takeaway: You don't need a design team and a budget to create great images for your website.

29. Why Emotion Is Essential to Content Success *by Mark Traphagen & Eric Enge*

You would think that business people expect serious and purely informative content. But in this article, Mark & Eric arguee that business people are first of all humans that react to emotional stimuli rather than dry facts. They also provide a nice example of how one of their own articles went viral – although it was written on a topic no one seemed to care about before – just because it had an emotional hook in it.

Main takeaway: Business people don't hang up their humanity when they go to work. If you want your content to resonate, add emotional hooks.

30. How to Sculpt Concise Sentences So Your Message Becomes Clear and Strong *by Henneke Duistermaat*

The advice Henneke gives in this article will help you make your writing more powerful. She argues that good writing is like sculpting: To create a pleasurable reader experience and a round piece, you need to eliminate weak and meaningless words. To do that, highlight the meaningful words and remove as much of the rest as possible.

Main takeaway: In the world of too many words that cary too little meaning, you win if you can say more using less words.

31. 15+ Worthless Words to Cut to Improve Your Readers' Experience *by Julia McCoy*

Worthless words in your writing water down your message, and distract and alienate your readers. This is a good list of such

words. ~~I believe~~ you should ~~really~~ eliminate them from your writing ~~in order~~ to make it more powerful ~~and stuff~~.

32. [The Ultimate Guide to No-Pain Copywriting (or, Every Copywriting Formula Ever)](#) *by Joanna Wiebe*

    A fundamental piece on every possible copywriting formula out there for writing headlines, lead pages, email sequences, testimonials, and anything else you can possibly need to write for your business. It must have taken Joanna an insane amount of work to put together. One of the most useful articles on the topic I've ever seen.

    Main takeaway: Don't write from scratch. Use formulas that work. You will still have enough room to be original, but you'll get the main points right without agonizing over your copy for hours.

33. [47 Headline Examples: Steal These Nifty Formulas From Popular Blogs](#) *by Henneke Duistermaat*

    Competition for readers' attention is tough. On average, five times more people will read your headline than your article. To increase the odds in your favour, your headline needs to be the best. This article gives you 10 headline formulas and many great examples to get inspired.

    Main takeaway: These (or any other) content formulas help only if you know your audience and the issues they are struggling with.

Trust

34. [7 Ways to Make Your Website More Trustworthy](#) *by Amanda Clark on SemRush*

An ultrashort article with valuable tips you can implement immediately.

Main takeaway: Only if your website is new doesn't mean that you can't make it look trustworthy.

35. [Customer Testimonials: Social Proof for More Website Leads](#) *by Mary Iannotti from Digital Marketing Deva*

Customer testimonials can turn website visitors into prospects, but only if you have the right testimonials. This article explains how you can collect testimonials that will actually benefit your business in an easy and more effective way.

Main takeaway: Great testimonials address benefits of your product/service your customer experienced and provide numbers that prove it. "It's great!" is not a great testimonial.

Getting new clients / making a sale

Conversion

36. [The LIFT Model: Use these six factors to increase your conversion rate](#) *by Chris Goward on WiderFunnel*

To be able to create pages that get you customers it is important to first understand what factors influence conversion in the first place. This article presents a clear model of conversion: Relevant and clear value proposition plus with urgency minus distractions and anxieties.

Main takeaway: Just by understanding these basic principles you can improve your lead pages right away.

37. [How to Increase Your Conversion Rate](#) *by Andy Crestodina*

In this article, Andy argues that Conversion = Context + Empathy. To increase your conversion rates, know the questions your audience has, provide answers to them that you back up with evidence, and then urge them to take action. This article also has a nice 5-point checklist of questions to ask yourself if you want to improve your marketing page.

Main takeaway: You don't need technical skills for this. A bit of writing done in 10 minutes may lead to a better conversion rate right away and years of better results in the future.

4 people writing articles that are worth your time. Every time.

You might have notices that many articles from this list (20 out of 37) were written by the same 4 people. I thought I should tell you why it's the case.

I have a strategy of fighting information overload:

- Find people who consistently provide outstanding in-depth content about things I'm interested in.

- Subscribe to their blogs.

- Spend time actually reading their articles.

This strategy guarantees that you spend your time learning things.

The only problem: Such people are damn hard to find. These 4 people belong to this hard to find kind of experts that I know will

teach me maximum things using minimum amount of words in a clear language and style that resonates.

Eric Enge, CEO of [Stone Temple Consulting](#)

Mark Traphagen, Senior Director of Marketing

Eric and Mark are a power duo behind Stone Temple Consulting, an award-winning digital marketing agency, and describe each of them in detail would need a separate blog post.

They are my go-to people for SEO advice. I learned a lot about SEO from their posts, which always provide newest information, often backed up with in-house research. Because they do what they teach, you can be sure it's 100% solid advice.

The best way to keep up with their work is to follow them on Twitter: [@marktraphagen](#) and [@stonetemple](#).

Andy Crestodina, Co-Founder / Strategic Director of [Orbit Media Studios](#), Speaker, Author

Andy Crestodina is a co-founder and the Strategic Director of Orbit Media, an author and a top-rated speaker at national conferences.

Andy is a rare example of someone with outstanding practical skill *and* ability to teach it in a clear and understandable way. His posts are packed with strategies, practical tips, and small details that make a big difference explained in the clearest way possible.

If you'd like to make your website successful, [following his blog is a must](#).

Henneke Duistermaat, founder of [Enchanting Marketing](#)

Henneke Duistermaat is an irreverent marketer and copywriter, an author, and a regular contributor to popular marketing blogs like KISSmetrics and Copyblogger.

Her unique style that resonates and invaluable tips will help you create a sparkling business blog and win more clients. My favorite

---

part about Henneke's posts is that she understands that writing starts from the writer. She has the right words for you when you doubt your abilities.

If you'd like your writing to help you better connect with your audience (and who doesn't?), I recommend joining her free 16-part snackable email course.

About the Author

Gill Andrews
Gill Andrews is a versatile content creator and web consultant for small businesses and solopreneurs. When she is not writing blog posts or reviewing websites, she is probably running after her toddler son or eating chocolate cake (because reviewing websites and running after toddlers requires a lot of energy). Follow Gill on Twitter and Google+.