8 Must-Do Tactics to Get to the Top of Google Search Rankings

A Quick Guide for Solution Providers

W.O'DONNELL CONSULTING

Introduction

It's a fact: most purchase decisions today start with an online search. If your company is not ranking in the first few results for the services that your business provides, you might as well not be there at all. This is just as true for solution providers as it is for most other businesses.

We know the unique challenges for solution providers to get highly ranked on Google and Bing. How? Because we are a solution provider too! W. O'Donnell Consulting is one part IT Solution Provider, one part Digital Marketing Agency.

We experienced the waning days of owning the title of "the IT guy in town", and the decline in referrals as competition rapidly grew in the digital age. In hyper-competitive Manhattan, we had to quickly adjust tactics to continue to compete and grow, and one of the first things we mastered was SEO. In fact, we got so good at it, we started doing it for other solution providers around the globe.

Your ranking in the Google search algorithm comes down to two things: **relevance** and **authority.**

What is Relevance?

Google considers relevance to be how well your website addresses a search term. To boost relevance in Google, you must have lots of pages with detailed content that addresses common search terms.

What is Authority?

Authority is considered by Google as the extent to which your website is considered a credible and important and source in its field. The primary way you can boost your authority score is by having more backlinks with other credible and important websites pointing to your website.

Before engaging in SEO tactics, first ensure that your website has a great design, is mobile-friendly, and has SSL. SEO is going to fast forward the number of prospects that see you, so if you're not happy with your online image or your user experience isn't on point, fix that first.

Once you are happy with your site and ready to invite your prospective customers to visit you there, here are eight ways you can boost your rankings.

8. Focus on Specific Services

FOR MAJOR METRO SERVICE AREAS:

Identify and list every city and town you serve, as well as each individual service you provide. If you are in an area with a lot of competition, your list of services should be as granular as possible, right down to the brands you support. For instance, "AWS Support" and "Azure Support" vs. broad "Cloud Computing Support". The reason for this is simple: it is much more difficult to get ranked for broader, highly competitive terms in competitive markets than it is for more granular terms. Plus, searches on these specific terms indicate a level of purchase intent vs. someone just doing research on cloud computing.
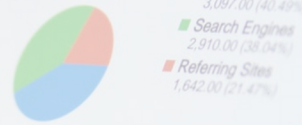
DON'T target this:

Cloud Computing
IT Company

DO target this:

AWS Support
Azure Support

FOR SMALLER TOWNS & SUBURBAN SERVICE AREAS:

Conversely, if you service smaller, less competitive towns or suburbs, list broader services, such as "IT Company" and "Cloud Computing" in addition to the granular phrases, as they have a better chance of getting to the top and have significantly greater search volume than more granular phrases...thus likely to generate more leads, albeit potentially less qualified.

DO target all of this:

IT Company
Cloud Computing
AWS Support

Once you have your list of services and markets, create a separate web page for each of the services, for each of the markets you serve, such as "Amazon Web Services Support, Milwaukee, WI", "Amazon Web Services Support, Madison, WI", "Amazon Web Services Support, Brookfield, WI" and so on.

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7. Use Customer-Speak, Not Industry Parlance

Most of your potential clients searching on the internet for your services aren't in your industry, so remember to stay away from industry terminology on your website and describe what your business does in plain English.

For example, most end users who are looking for help with managing their server will be searching for "server support" or "server help" or "outsourced IT," not "managed services."

NO

Remote Access

Network Security Assessment

YES

Work from Home

Cyber Security Consultant

6. List Contact Information in Every Partner Portal

Backlinks are the primary way Google determines the extent to which your website is an authority, and one of the easiest ways you can generate backlinks is by getting your URL listed in every single one of your vendor's partner portals.

Most businesses make the mistake of only having their contact information listed on the websites of the partners they actively do business with, but it is critical to get a link to your website up on the portal of every single vendor you technically represent. That backlink might mean more to your business than any one-off sales you make of the vendor's products.

www.yourcompany.com

5. Get Clients and Non-Profits to Backlink to Your Website

If you sit on an advisory board of a university or non-profit, you should ask those institutions for backlinks where your name appears, since Google heavily weights references from a .org or .edu page.

Links from sites of other notable customers – for example, the Department of Defense – are also impressive to Google, even if the customer is simply noting the partnership.

Finally, every piece of your externally published content – from press releases to case studies – should contain a link back to your homepage.

4. Create Directory Listings for Every Office, Not Just HQ

Online directory listings go well beyond Yelp. There are several dozen listings sites online, and you should list the name, address and phone number for each of your offices – not just your headquarters – in every online directory.

Make sure your names, addresses and phone numbers are identical in each directory listing, as Google penalizes any discrepancies, even if one listing is only a single letter off from the others.

Finally, wherever possible, you should also post links to your social media pages in the directories.

3. Track Your ROI

There are a multitude of tools that can demonstrate how a focus on SEO leads to more credible leads.

The tools range from Google Analytics and Google/Bing webmaster tools to call tracking, video tracking, email tracking and form tracking. There are many options out there, ranging from free to quite costly.

Try the free ones first to get a feel for what they can do, and upgrade as needed.

2. Ensure Your Website has the Proper Markup

Website markup is critical to your SEO, and the most important component of markup is the title tag, a 70-character entry for Google.

Despite not being factored into the Google rankings, the description tag is the second most important markup component since it drives the human response. From there, focus on their top-level H1 header tag and keyword-focused links, taking extra care that the link matches the page where traffic is being directed.

The body text of the webpage should contain the same keywords and phrases that appear in the page title. This helps to prove to Google that the content on your web page answers the intent of the search query.

✅ Title Tag

✅ Description

✅ H1 Header Tag

✅ Keyword Links

✅ Body Text

1. Develop 4,000-8,000 Pages of Content for Your Website

Content is king when it comes to SEO, with Google's search algorithm considering sites with the most comprehensive content to be the most relevant.

As you may have surmised from Tip #8, you need to talk about every single offering category, every single sub-category, and make a page for every place you serve… and that's A LOT of pages!

To further illustrate, "Security", for instance, should not be its own page, instead it should be broken down into dozens or even hundreds of sub-categories. And then replicated for every area you serve.

Most solution providers have nowhere near 4k-8k pages and lack the bandwidth to create them. SEO is marathon, not a sprint. W. O'Donnell Consulting can help get you there exponentially faster than you can with your internal resources. We've created a highly efficient and affordable method for getting hundreds of pages of unique content onto your website in a matter of months. We have a track record of getting solution providers and other businesses ranked in or near the top of search results for virtually every service, using only Google-friendly, white hat tactics – no keyword stuffing, no shady backlinks.

If your website isn't up to par, we can help with that, too, whether you need an update and refresh, or an entire rebuild. If outsourcing your SEO isn't in the budget right now, we recommend setting a goal of creating at least 3-5 pages on your website every week.

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Conclusion

Remember, if you want to beat your competitors to the top of the search results when someone is looking for the services you provide, your website must win in the relevance and authority race.

First, be certain your website conveys the image you want it to and delivers a simple and positive user experience. Be sure to have many pages with specific and detailed content that addresses the terms that prospective customers are likely to search on, both short tail broader terms, and long tail, more granular queries. Make sure your title tags, descriptions and headings and body content all include your targeted keywords. Engage with your partners and affiliations to get backlinks to your page and be sure to list all your locations in relevant online directories, ensuring the listings are spelled exactly the same in all places. Include backlinks to your home page in all of your internally generated content.

Effective SEO does take considerable time and effort, but done properly, could be the single most important marketing investment you make in your business.

Want to see how your compare to your competitors online? Click here to request a
FREE Competitor Analysis.

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