SEO PowerSuite

SEO Checklist

This guide will lead you through the main SEO activities to help you efficiently organize your SEO process and achieve top rankings that will generate more sales.

The checklist is meant for SEO PowerSuite users, so it tells where to find or enter data in the SEO PowerSuite tools.

However, the SEO advice you get here will certainly help even if you're not using our tools yet.

> To try out SEO PowerSuite, just download the free version at
> http://www.link-assistant.com/download.html

After completing each step, you can tick the appropriate checkbox. This will help you see the overall optimization progress of your project. Please, take your time with every step, it's the quality of what you are doing that matters most!

Contents

1. Get the Keywords

1.1. Find keywords for your website

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Let's start with keywords, as they determine all your SEO activities. In Rank Tracker, you can add your keywords manually, or use the **Suggest** button to let the software find keyword ideas for you. Specify at least 5 seed key phrases that best describe your website topic.

In the keyword suggestions wizard, pick the keyword research method that will be used to build up your keyword list – Google AdWords Keyword Planner, for example. You can use as many search methods as you need.

Watch a video tutorial: Searching for new keywords

1.2. Thin out your keyword list

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After the tool collects the keyword ideas for you, you need to pick the most efficient ones. Pay attention to the following factors:

Length of key phrases

The good practice is to make sure your keyword list includes 2-4 word phrases. A single keyword may be too generic (e.g., "cars"); a phrase too long may attract little or no traffic (e.g., "where to buy a red ford with white doors in Seattle").

Keywords with higher KEI

When choosing the final keyword list, pay attention to KEI, the searches to competition ratio. Generally the higher KEI (marked green), the better, meaning that a lot of people are searching for this keyword, but there's no huge competition among websites.

Please, note that KEI is a relative metric and you should look at the numbers as relative values inside a niche. There is no good or bad KEI - so you should only compare one keyword against another.

In some cases (e.g., with low search volume key phrases) KEI can be low (marked red) for all of your project keywords, so you will need to choose phrases with low KEI just

because it's still a little bit higher than the KEI of other words in the group.

Keyword difficulty score

Find the **Keyword difficulty** tab in Rank Tracker (just below the table with site's rankings) and click the **Update** button.

The tool will check the top ten ranking websites and will show you how difficult it is to unseat them for the selected key phrase. The higher the score, the harder it'll be to rank in the top.

Focus on keywords with low and moderate (marked green and yellow) difficulty score.

Watch a video tutorial: Analyzing keywords efficiency
Watch a video tutorial: Checking keyword difficulty score

2. Make your site accessible

2.1. Make sure site's content is not blocked from indexing

Want to know how visible to search engines your site is? Launch WebSite Auditor, type in your site's URL and let the tool perform the audit.

When it's done, find **Pages restricted from indexing** category and see if there's any blocked content.

Make sure that important content is not blocked by:

- ✔ *the robots.txt file in the root directory*
- ✔ *the "noindex" tag in the <head> section of pages*
- ✔ *the X-Robots-Tag in the HTTP header*

Remember, if content cannot be accessed by the search engines, it will not appear in search results.

Please, check the following tips:

- ✔ *2.2. Revise Robots.txt*
- ✔ *3.6. Create and upload an XML sitemap*

Watch a video tutorial: [Site audit](#)

2.2. Revise robots.txt

If some of the important pages are blocked by the robots.txt file, you can edit the file right in WebSite Auditor. Go to the **Pages** module and click the **Robots.txt** button. Here you can specify the rules the search engines will follow when crawling your website.

Watch a video tutorial: [Creating a robots.txt file](#)

2.3. Fix HTTP server response codes

If some of your pages return errors (404 "not found" error, 500 "internal server" error, or any other 4xx and 5xx errors), you should fix these issues and have the server configured properly.

In the **Site Audit** module, find the **Indexing and crawlability** section and check your pages' status codes.

In most cases your pages should return the 200 status code. If there are any pages with 4xx/5xx status codes, take care to fix the errors.

Follow the built-in recommendations for any errors and bad redirects.

2.4. Set the redirect to the main domain version

In **Site Audit** find the **Redirects** section and see if you have set up the redirect to the main (either www or non-www) domain version.

Search engines see www and non-www versions of the same page as 2 different pages.

To prevent the duplicate content issue, set the main domain version for your website using the redirect method that works best for your website (e.g. the Apache mod_rewrite module). To get the best keyword ranking results, make sure the version you set the main is the one Google displays in its search results.

2.5. Check content for Frames

As it's still hard for search engines to properly index the content in frames, you should use these elements carefully not to hinder website crawling. If you have a lot of content in frames, add text transcripts to the pages.

In the **Encoding and technical factors** category of **Site audit module** check if you have any pages containing **Frames**, and follow the recommendations you see in that section.

2.6. Fix spam issues

If search engines detect any spam issues on your pages

- ✔ *Cloaking — the content presented to the search engine spider is different from that presented to the user's browser*
- ✔ *Viruses — any type of malware programs*
- ✔ *Doorway — a web page that is created with the only purpose of sending visitors to a different page*
- ✔ *Link farm — any group of web sites that all hyperlink to every other site in the group,*

they can penalize your website and you'll lose your rankings. Therefore, you need to fix them as soon as possible.

3. Fix Issues with URLs and Links

3.1. Make URLs static ☐

Review your site URLs. Dynamic URLs (e.g. http://site.com/product.php?cid=1&pid=5) are not user- and search engine-friendly, that is why you need to make URLs static (e.g. http://site.com/product/guide.html).

See all dynamic URLs in the **Site audit module of WebSite Auditor, URLs** section.

3.2. Fix too long URLs ☐

In **Site audit, URLs** section, check the pages with **Too long URLs**. Optimize the length of the URLs that are too long, making it around 75 symbols.

3.3. Make URLs descriptive ☐

Use keywords in the URLs of the pages you are optimizing to make them more relevant and enhance rankings.

3.4. Create a custom 404 page ☐

Check if your 404 page has been set up correctly in **Site Audit, Indexing and crawlability** section.

Customize a 404 page to make it useful for your website visitors. The custom 404 page may include links to the most important pages of your website. See an example on the SEO PowerSuite site: http://www.link-assistant.com/404

3.5. Fix broken links ☐

Broken links hinder usability and can cause traffic losses. Fix all broken links by correcting the invalid link URLs and setting the 301 redirects. You can find the problematic URLs in the **Links** section of the **Site audit module.**

3.6. Create and upload an XML sitemap

Check if your site has a correct XML sitemap in **Site Audit, Indexing and crawlability** section.

If a sitemap is missing, create and submit it to make sure that search engines know about all the pages on your site.

You can do this right in WebSite Auditor – go to the **Pages** module, click the **Sitemap** button and follow the wizard instructions.

You can also submit your sitemap in Google Webmaster Tools and Bing Webmaster Tools (for Bing and Yahoo).

Watch a video tutorial: Creating an XML sitemap

4. Take Care of Code & Performance

4.1. Make your pages' code valid (W3C HTML/CSS errors)

Make sure your pages' HTML and CSS code is error-free. Not all errors are critical for rankings, but it's hard to guess which one makes a site drag behind its competitors.

The point here is, if there're any code errors, this may prevent Google from indexing your pages and ranking your important content. Therefore it's best to check the site's code for errors.

See the **Pages with W3C errors and warnings** in the **Encoding and technical factors** of the **Site Audit** module and fix them.

4.2. Improve page load speed

Page load speed is one of the ranking factors used by Google. To improve the page load speed, you can:

- ✔ *apply the file compression (e.g. gzip)*
- ✔ *utilize browser caching*
- ✔ *use the externalized CSS/JavaScript code*
- ✔ *optimize graphics and video size*
- ✔ *put the scripts at the bottom*
- ✔ *minimize the number of iframes*
- ✔ *use a Content Delivery Network (CDN) to lighten the load on your server, and more.*

It may of course take different time for a page to load, depending on the speed of Internet connection and other factors. Therefore sometimes it makes sense to look at page size rather than load time. To see which pages can take longer to load, check the **Too big pages** factor in **Site audit**, the **Encoding and technical factors** section.

5. Optimize Site's Landing Pages

5.1. Select your landing pages and assign keywords for them

Select landing pages - the pages you are going to optimize in the first place to earn more traffic, conversions, and sales. It's better to select these pages out of your best ranking content.

Go to the **Content Analysis** module in WebSite Auditor, pick the page and type in 1-3 keywords for it.

Do not assign too many keywords for a single page. The more focused your landing pages are, the better.

5.2. Optimize your landing pages

After the tool scans your landing page, it will offer optimization advice based on the top-ranking competitors. In the **Content Analysis** module click the **Reports** tab, select the **Page Optimization Audit Report** in the drop-down menu and follow the on-page tips listed there.

You will get tips to optimize keyword use in page titles, meta descriptions, H-tag headings, link anchors, ALT attributes, and text paragraphs.

Watch a video tutorial: Optimizing landing pages

6. Check On-page/Content Factors

6.1. Re-write duplicate/missing titles

In the **Site audit** module of **WebSite Auditor**, find the **On-page** section. Check the **Duplicate title** and **Empty title** factors. If there are duplicate titles, they need to be rewritten.

Also, pay attention to the factor **Too long titles.** The most effective page titles are about 55 characters long, including spaces.

6.2. Revise meta descriptions

Meta descriptions are useful because they are shown in search results and can influence the number of clicks your site gets. For optimum effectiveness, meta descriptions should be about 150 characters long. To see if your descriptions comply with the industry standards, check the **On-page** section in **Site audit.**

Check the **Missing meta descriptions** factor to see which pages need a description, and the **Too long meta description** factor to detect descriptions that need to be rewritten.

6.3. Diversify text-only content

Use images to diversify your page content and get traffic from Google image search. In the **Page Optimization Audit Report** you'll get recommendations for the image ALT texts on your landing pages – see the **Image alt attributes** stats.

6.4. Insert keywords in document names (.pdf, .doc, .ppt, etc.)

Use your main keywords while naming the documents available for download on your website. This will increase your chances for getting found when one uses *filetype*: or *ext:* search operators in Google.

6.5. Decrease the number of outgoing links (less than 100)

In **Site audit** find the **Pages with excessive number of links** factor (**Links** section). Having too many links on your pages may cause your website to appear as a link farm or a spam site and can potentially hurt your site's SEO. For best results, try to moderate outgoing linking to 100 links per page or fewer, and link to relevant pages that are of value for your visitors.

7. Find and Analyze Site's Backlinks

7.1. Find all your site's backlinks

Before you start a link building campaign, explore your site's existing backlinks in SEO SpyGlass. Launch the tool, and let it scan your website for the existing links. SEO SpyGlass will use multiple methods (including its own backlink tool) to collect as many links as possible.

Watch a video tutorial: Finding site's backlinks

7.2 Analyze your current backlinks

Now check how strong your backlink profile is. After SEO SpyGlass gathers the backlinks, it will offer to analyze them using the most important backlink factors.

This information is useful for:

- ✔ *Identifying the websites that discuss you or your organization*
- ✔ *Identifying your top content*
- ✔ *Discovering errors in the links that point to your site for correction and improvement*
- ✔ *Comparing link metrics between multiple sites to estimate the competition*
- ✔ *Analyzing anchor text*

Watch a video tutorial: Analyzing backlinks' quality

7.3. Improve the quality of backlinks

The backlinks are of great importance for your SEO, but you should remember that it's the quality not the quantity that matters first. Here are the things you should look at when building up your backlink profile:

- ✔ *The origin of the link*

Consider Google PageRank, age, the number of outbound links, and the geo location of the linking page. You can analyze the linking pages of your existing backlinks in the **Backlinks module of SEO SpyGlass.**

✔ *Anchor text should include your main keywords*

Anchor text (the visible clickable text in a hyperlink) should be optimized for your target keywords. Search engines use this text to help determine the relevancy of the linked-to document. Press the **Statistics** button in the **Backlinks** module to view the detailed anchor data.

✔ *Focus more on "dofollow" links*

In the **Backlinks module** you can also see that some of your incoming links have a "nofollow" tag. This basically means that search engines are instructed to ignore these links when determining how to rank the page the links point to. That's why it is better to have "dofollow" links pointing to your site.

7.4 Remove links with high penalty risk

Not all backlinks are equally good for your website. When the search engine bots analyze your site's links, they check how natural they are. In SEO SpyGlass find the **Penalty risks** tab and see if you have any high-risk links. Backlinks marked red can potentially cause a penalty for your site, so consider removing them using the Google Disavow tool.

Watch a video tutorial: [Anti-penalty link audit](#)

7.5. Compare your site's backlinks with competitors

In SEO SpyGlass, you can compare your site's links with up to 10 competing sites. All you need to do is to create projects for competitors' sites and add them in the **Backlink Comparison** module of SEO SpyGlass.

There you can investigate your competitors' links, find their best link sources, see what anchor texts they're using and analyze each link for a variety of factors including Google PR, Alexa rank, domain age and IP, link value and many more.

Usually competitors' backlink profile analysis helps you easily find new great link sources for your own site.

Watch a video tutorial: [Comparing sites' backlinks](#)

8. Do Link Outreach

8.1. Get more backlinks

Generally the more backlinks you have, the better. You can get natural links when people find your content useful and interesting and place links on their own websites and you can build up backlinks using such methods as:

✔ *Article marketing*

✔ *Getting listed in popular directories*

✔ *Guest Blogging*

✔ *Social media marketing, etc.*

In LinkAssistant you can find more potential sources to get links. Launch the tool, press the **Look for partners** button, choose the search method and type in your target keywords.

Additionally, you can specify such filter phrases as "submit a guest post," "add a comment," "forum." If you are looking for a particular type of link.

Watch a video tutorial: [Finding new link building opportunities](#)

8.2. Run an effective link outreach campaign

After you've found sites for link building, it's high time to connect with their owners or webmasters. First of all, let LinkAssistant find the contact details for the selected websites.

Now click the Email button and you'll get to the built-in email client. Here you can manage all your link building correspondence with either personalized emails or ready-to-use outreach templates.

Watch a video tutorial: [Link outreach](#)

8.3. Verify your most important backlinks

It's essential to keep track of live links that help your site rank high in the search results and bring you traffic.

You can use LinkAssistant for monitoring your important links. Just import your backlinks into the tool (for instance from a Google Webmaster spreadsheet or SEO SpyGlass) and click the Verify button.

This will let you see at a glance if the most important links are in place and have the right anchor texts, point to the right pages etc.

Watch a video tutorial: [Verifying your links](#)

9. Use Social Signals for your SEO

9.1. Compare the number of social media signals to the traffic sent

In SEO SpyGlass, go to **Preferences, Domain Ranking Factors** and mark social media factors as preferred. After that go to **Factors Overview** and compare the number of social media signals (tweets, Facebook likes, +1s, bookmarking shares) with the amount of traffic that flows from social networks to your site's pages (to see the traffic stats, please connect SEO SpyGlass with your Google Analytics account.)

Find the social networks that bring most traffic to the site and try to build even more social popularity on them.

9.2. Compare social signals for different landing pages

In WebSite Auditor you can compare social media popularity of different pages of your site. Just click the **Popularity in social media** workspace and see the number of Facebook likes, Twitter mentions, Google +1's, LinkedIn, Pinterest shares, as well as social bookmarks.

See which pages get more social media signals and create similar content to get high user attention.

9.3. Create pages in Social Media

To engage more social media users to visit your site, you can additionally:

1. *Create a Facebook page and engage your readers in sharing and discussing your posts, photos and videos.*
2. *Add a Twitter button to your website, so that visitors are able to tweet your content an Share it with their followers. Also you can create your own twitter account and notify your followers about interesting content, news, product updates, etc. In tweets use a hash tag with keywords to be easily found in Twitter search.*
3. *Add a Google +1 button to your website, so that users with Google accounts will be able to share this content with their circles. It may also significantly influence personalized search results in Google. Additionally, create a Google+ page and share some valuable content with your circles. Use a plus sign for your key phrases in posts when it makes sense.*

10. Track Your Progress

10.1. Check your rankings for keywords ☐

Make sure you track your search engine rankings for keywords in Rank Tracker. You will be able to see your current rankings and history, and compare your rankings to competitors.

Check both regular organic results and Universal Search results (Images, Videos, Places). Rank Tracker will also show the multiple positions a ranking page has.

Watch a video tutorial: Checking your site's rankings
Watch a video tutorial: Tracking competitors' rankings

10.2. Sync your SEO tools with Google Analytics ☐

You can sync your Google Analytics (GA) account with SEO PowerSuite. (Just go to **Preferences, Google Analytics settings**).

After the app collects the data from GA, you'll be able to see stats for landing pages, keywords and backlinks in Rank Tracker, WebSite Auditor and SEO SpyGlass.

Check:

- ✔ *Which keywords bring the most traffic*
- ✔ *Which landing pages have most visits and smallest bounce rate*
- ✔ *Which backlinks bring more visits to your site*

Watch a video tutorial: Google Analytics data in Rank Tracker
Watch a video tutorial: Google Analytics data in SEO SpyGlass

10.3. Check SEO factors of your site and landing pages ☐

Don't forget to add competitors into your Rank Tracker project. You'll be able to monitor they ranking progress along with your own – in one table and on one progress graph.

Watch a video tutorial: Checking Universal Search results

10.4. Set up Events to track what impacts your site's growth

Whenever starting out a new SEO activity and trying out a new technique, create an event in SEO PowerSuite tool to track how effective it'll turn out for your website. To create a new event, go to **Preferences, Manage events.**

Create events:

✔ *When you publish new content*

 And what to see how it affects your rankings.

✔ *When you get new links*

 And want to make sure it won't put your rankings at risk of a penalty.

✔ *When you fix some technical issues on your site*

 And need to see if it boost your pages indexation and ranks.

✔ *When you launch a viral social campaign*

 And what to see if the efforts pay off.

✔ *When another Google algo update happens*

 Add you need to make sure your rankings keep unaffected.

Watch a video tutorial: Managing events

Extras: Enhance Your Online Presence

1. Create a Google Places listing

97% of consumers search for local businesses online, so If you run a local business (sell flowers in NY, provide consulting services in London, have a small grocery store in Barcelona, etc.) and have a physical address, you should sign up for a Google Places account. This will help you enhance your local search engine rankings.
By the way, you can customize your business listing with photos, videos, and special offers, which may become an additional sales venue for your company.

2. Produce some videos

Videos are an important marketing tool you can leverage to get more traffic and sales. If you offer media-related services, video marketing is simply a must for you. In all other cases, use videos to tell users about your brand, expertise, and success stories.
Apart from your website and blog, you can use the following video content platforms to promote your videos:

- ✔ *YouTube*
- ✔ *Vimeo*
- ✔ *Blip.tv*
- ✔ *Dailymotion*
- ✔ *Flickr Video*
- ✔ *Videojug*

3. Present your business

Another way to promote your products and services is to publish some presentations with useful information and links to your website. You can also distribute the presentations you've made at conferences and other events. By the way, presentations like videos can be embedded into pages, so other users might easily share them on their websites and blogs.

To start promoting presentations, take a look at:

- ✔ *Slideshare*
- ✔ *Scribd*
- ✔ *Authorstream*
- ✔ *Issuu*
- ✔ *FlexPaper*

4. Define your content marketing strategy

Content is vital for any online business, but it's even more important to have a strategic plan, so that you invest resources with maximum efficiency:

1. *Define your audience and think about questions your potential users may have – these will be the corner stones of your content strategy.*
2. *Set up a content calendar – post on a regular basis, this will make people get back to your site to check out the latest news and recommendations.*
3. *Choose the content format that works best (remember checking the traffic and bounce rate stats for content pages in Rank Tracker!) – blog posts, landing pages, interviews, Q&A section, video pages – and improve the pages that could perform better.*

And while working on your site's content, do not forget to analyze what your competitors are up to: scan the competitor's site in SEO SpyGlass and analyze which content gets the most backlinks (see the **Anchor URL** column).

5. Improve Usability

Sometimes website owners are getting a lot of traffic, but sales do not increase and the bounce rate is huge. If this sounds like your case, this section is for you. On the one hand, the problem might be in the wrong keywords, and then you have to get back to keyword research and review your current project key phrases. On the other hand, something may be wrong with your website and landing pages. In this case, you'll need to make your website and landing pages in particular more user-friendly.

Some of the common things to look into are:

1. *Case Studies*
2. *Testimonials*
3. *Strong call-to-actions "above the fold"*
4. *Grammatically correct texts*
5. *Emotion-based headlines*
6. *Offering some stuff for free*
7. *Re-design*

In the end, do not forget to return to this checklist on a regular basis to review, recheck, and enhance every SEO activity described.

Start rocking SEO with SEO PowerSuite

Now that you've learned the main steps of DIY SEO, all you need is a powerful toolset to put those steps into good use!

Join thousands of SEO PowerSuite users and get the competitive advantage:

Download SEO PowerSuite
(try out the tools for free)

Buy SEO PowerSuite
(grab SEO PowerSuite Professional or Enterprise)

See rankings with a click of a button

Monitor your competitors' SEO

Track SEO changes on auto-pilot

Create professional SEO reports

Find new linkbuilding opportunities

Get in-depth analysis of 50+ SEO factors

Get the all-in-one SEO toolset and optimize your website to the next level!