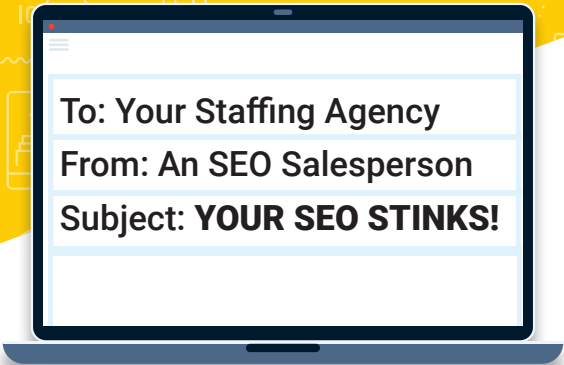# SEO Strategies for 2020:
Welcome to the New School

To: Your Staffing Agency

From: An SEO Salesperson

Subject: YOUR SEO STINKS!

Look familiar? How many times have you opened your email to find a message from an SEO salesperson telling you they Googled something like, '*best human capital management and talent acquisition agencies*' and you weren't #1 in search results?

Staffing company owners receive emails like this on a fairly regular basis, and they can be upsetting, to be sure. If no one can find you in Google, how will you attract new clients and candidates?

Before you panic...take a breath. Ask yourself how many people are really searching for a phrase like *best human capital management and talent acquisition agencies*?

Those aggressive SEO salespeople, while doing their jobs, are using scare tactics to attract your attention.

REMEMBER:

SEO is the process of driving targeted traffic to your website from people that are using search engines to look for the products, services or information you provide.

SEO is NOT ranking #1 for an obscure term!

So while you don't want to panic about your SEO, you do want to ensure you are following SEO best practices, and you are keeping up with the times. If it's been a while since you've looked at your SEO strategies, now is a great time to join the New School of SEO to start boosting traffic.

**CLASS IS IN SESSION;
LET'S GET STARTED!**

New School
SEO 101:
The Fundamentals

LESSON 1

KEYWORD RESEARCH:
Unlearn Everything You Thought You Knew

The best place to begin is with **keyword research.**

Old School Keyword Research:
Singular keyword research; ranking focused.

New School Keyword Research:
Engagement and user-intent focused; ROI and conversion focused.

Fifteen years ago, companies could build an entire business off of ranking #1 for just one or two significant keywords. That led many website owners to stuff the same keyword phrase every place they could find on a page.

While that strategy worked, it made for terrible reading for visitors, yielded poor results, and Google put an end to that practice long ago.

Despite the fact that the practice ended, many website owners still obsess over one or two keywords.

Getting hung up on one or two "critical" keywords isn't worth a staffing company's time or money today. Where you can score great rankings – and traffic – is by **focusing on user intent and engagement.**

Why?

Think holistically.

It's better to rank well for a variety of commonly searched terms than it is to rank #1 for a single term. Rather than putting all your eggs in one basket, you're spreading them out and attracting more people

Users search in many ways, and the more you focus on user intent and behavior, the better off you will be.

So, How Do I Know How My Target Audience Behaves?

You don't have to be psychic or hire an expensive market research company to learn about your target audience's behavior when they search online.

You just need some great tools.
These are the three that Haley Marketing recommends:

These tools allow you to see user metrics, exact phrases people are typing into search bars when looking for your services, how popular each keyword phrase is, and how easy or difficult it will be to rank for those terms.

What to Look for When Deciding Which Keywords to Optimize For

1 **Buyer intent:** Find the keywords that indicate the user is actually looking for your services and wants to buy (or apply) right now.

2 **Competitive analysis:** SEO is a competition, to rank well, you have to unseat someone else. So you need to analyze your competition, see who is ranking in the top spots and determine whether you have a shot at beating them.

3 **Breadth:** Remember, you don't want to get hung up on a single term. There are thousands of keyword combinations people use to find staffing and recruiting services. You just need to find the ones that are popular, but not too difficult to rank for. *The more keywords you can rank for, the more opportunities you have to drive traffic to the site.*

4 **Context:** Google isn't just looking for exact keywords on a page anymore (which is why keyword stuffing is *so old school*). Google will look at the context of your content to make sure the page actually provides relevant information for the searcher.

5 **Their terms, not yours:** You must think like a user, not like a staffing company owner. Many staffing and recruiting companies reject "temp" terminology in favor of "contract" terminology, but if users are typing "temp" into the search bar, you're going to miss out on those people.

BECOME THE MASTER OF YOUR DOMAIN

Yes, your domain matters, but not in the same way it mattered 10 years ago.

Old School Domains:
Pick a domain name stuffed with keywords
(e.g., industrialstaffingcompanybridgeville.com)

New School Domains:
Build authority under your own name
(e.g., yourstaffingcompany.com)

It can be tempting to use a domain name stuffed with keywords, but the best advice is:

- Pick a great domain and stick with it, unless your company has completely changed focus or changed its name.

- If your domain has been active for years, try not to change it all. You've built credibility and authority under that name.

- Branded domains are preferred (just use the name of your company).

THE BOTTOM LINE:
Don't waste money buying a domain that is keyword stuffed and point it to your existing website. It won't help your SEO.

LESSON 3

WHAT'S ON THE PAGE MATTERS

Old School On-Page SEO:
On-page SEO is all about keyword stuffing.

New School On-Page SEO:
Every page has a purpose and is optimized accordingly.

Every page of your website needs meta data.
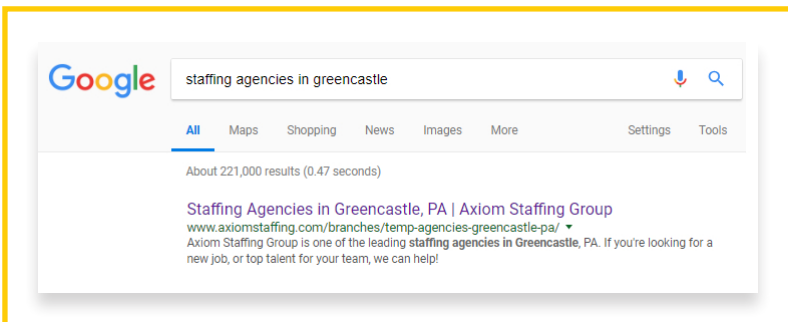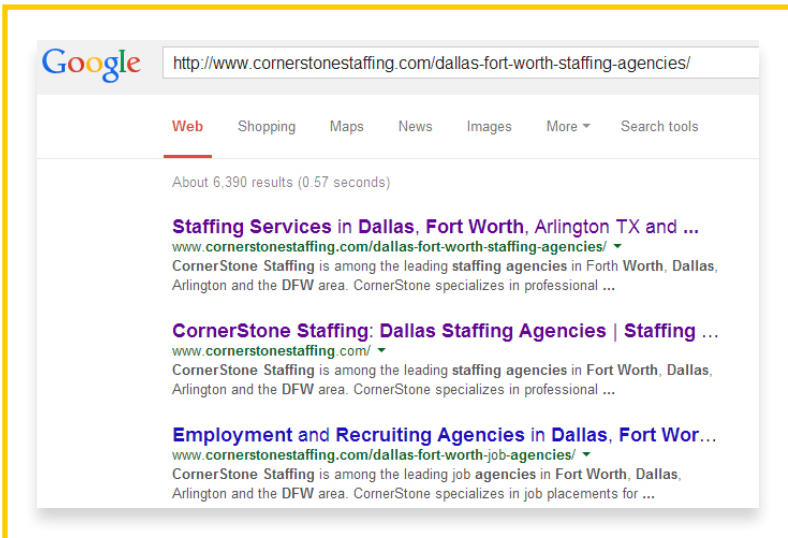Meta data is code that tells search engines what your pages are about.

There are two main types of meta data:

Title Tags | Meta Descriptions

Title Tags

Your title tag shows up at the top of internet browsers and is what appears in search results.

- Include keywords near the beginning of the title, but don't go overboard.

- Keep it between 50-60 characters in length.

- Use keywords specific to the content of that page.

- Use keywords early and put the company name at the end of the page title.

- Use a unique title tag for every page.

Meta Description

When your site appears in search results, this is the description that tells the search engine and the user what your page is about.

- Including keywords in the meta description is not a ranking factor; click-through rate is a ranking factor.
- Your descriptions should be compelling, accurate and include keywords because…
- Keywords that match search criteria will appear in **bold letters.**

What's On the Page Matters: Structuring Your Content

The other element of on-page SEO is the actual content itself.

Make sure to use title tags and heading tags to break the content up.

Headlines: H1 and H2 Tags

- Use keywords in Heading tags (H1, H2, etc.).
- Items of equal importance should have equal headings.
- The way you structure your headings helps search engines determine what your page is about.
- Include keywords early in the body copy.

Most importantly: *Write for humans first!*

Think of your H1, H2, and H3 tags as the outline for the page and incorporate primary and secondary keywords, but your content must be readable, and it must be useful. Don't write for robots, write for the audience you are trying to attract.

SECURITY FOR YOU AND FOR YOUR USERS

Digital security matters more than ever before, and it now matters for your SEO.

> **Old School Website Security:**
> Security, what security? I don't sell things online.
>
> **New School Website Security:**
> Lock it down for every website or get left out.

Back in the "old days", webmasters typically only worried about security on their website if they were selling items directly to customers.

Times and best practices have changed.

2014: Google encouraged webmasters to use SSL encryption to improve data security.

2016: Google told webmasters that unencrypted sites would soon be marked as "unsafe" by displaying a red "x" in the Chrome browser.

MID-2020: Users won't be able to download files in Chrome from non-SSL sites.

What is SSL, Anyway?

SSL stands for Secure Sockets Layer. It is an encryption technology that creates a secure connection between your website's server and a website visitor's web browser. This allows for information to be protected during transmission between the two.

Anytime you see a web address in a browser that starts with "https," it is SSL-certified.

Why Do Staffing Companies Need SSL?

SSL isn't just for websites that sell things. It's for every website to give users peace of mind that anything they download or any forms they fill out are encrypted.

Security has become so important that browsers are warning users when a site they are about to enter is NOT secure, and they are blocking the ability to download items from sites that are not secure.

DON'T HAVE SSL?
There's a fix for that!

If Haley Marketing hosts your website, we've communicated with you the importance of switching, and we've helped most of our clients make the transition. If you haven't done it yet, give us a call, and we can get the process moving quickly.

SECURE

LESSON 5

MOBILE SEO: GET FOUND WHERE EVERYONE IS HANGING OUT

If you haven't thought about your mobile SEO strategy, you're lagging behind the times.

> ### Old School Mobile SEO:
> No one needed mobile SEO...mobile websites didn't even exist.
>
> ### New School Mobile SEO:
> More people have mobile devices than desktops, and they use them more often...so you better be optimized.

— *Did you know that more traffic comes in from mobile devices than desktop devices for nearly every staffing website Haley Marketing tracks?* —

It's true, and that's why it is so important to focus on a mobile strategy.

First and foremost, your website should have a mobile-responsive design. This used to mean having two websites – one for mobile and one for desktop. But today, responsive design ensures the desktop version of your website transitions to a mobile-friendly version when the user is on a phone or tablet.

It transfers all your design and on-page elements and adjusts the screen automatically to ensure the mobile user has a great experience regardless of the size of their device. And that's the ideal user experience that Google and the other search engines prefer.

FOCUS ON YOUR JOB BOARD!

Even if you have a mobile-ready website, your job board could be holding you back. Many job boards do not offer a good mobile experience for candidates, which leads to abandoned applications.

Apply for a job at your company on your mobile device. Is it easy? Frustrating? Think like a candidate and determine just how user-friendly your job board is on mobile.

> *If your job board offers a poor mobile experience, Haley Marketing can help!*
>
> *Give us a call to learn how we can bring your job board up to New School standards.*

SEO 101
Complete!

We've laid out the fundamentals for your SEO best practices, but if you would like help with any aspect of your SEO strategy, Haley Marketing is here to help.

Contact us now to learn more...

...Or you can continue on to SEO 201 for some more advanced techniques.

New School
SEO 201:
Advanced Strategies for Success

SEO IS GETTING TOUGHER IN 2020

As we said in our 101 lessons, SEO is a competition. Your success requires you to beat out your competitors for key positions in search results.

The most challenging aspect of SEO is that the landscape is always evolving. Google is constantly changing its algorithms and new staffing companies are always entering the market, vying for the same space you are.

Sticking to the basics is a good start, but it won't be enough to (literally) come out on top.

Let's dive deeper into the strategies you can use to earn better rankings and drive more traffic to your site.
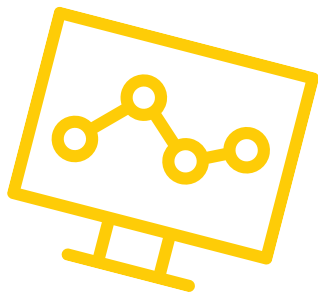
WHAT IS GOOGLE'S NUMBER ONE RANKING FACTOR?

Old School SEO:
Keywords, keywords, keywords!

New School SEO:
Relevance!

Remember, Google is so successful because it generates real answers to questions people have every single day.

That's why the most relevant content for a search ranks the best. It's also why Google is always tweaking its algorithms. The point is to provide the best matches for every search, so with each tweak, Google gets "smarter" about which results to kick back for individual searches.

HOW DOES GOOGLE DETERMINE RELEVANCE?

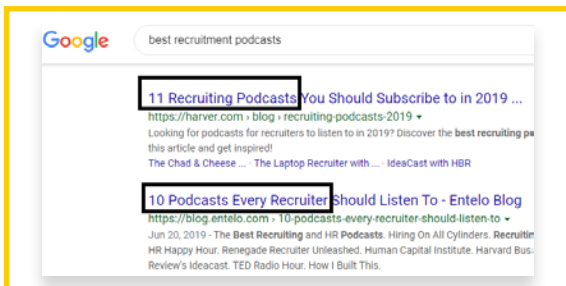# 1 Search Intent

2 Semantic Search

What the Heck is Search Intent? (And why does it matter?)

We define search intent as the primary goal of a user when they type a search query into a search engine.

This is one of the biggest factors in determining whether your page has a shot of ranking.

And believe it or not, it doesn't necessarily have to do with keywords! Most people search for answers to questions or solutions to problems. There is a person behind every single search, so your job is to be the most relevant website for your target audience's questions.

The main types of search intent are:

Informational
This is when someone types in a keyword or phrase that doesn't indicate exactly what action they want to take. They are simply looking for an answer to a question.

Commercial Investigation
This type of search is familiar to all of us. This is used when you are just starting to investigate a purchase you may want to make down the road.

Navigational
This is a search used when someone knows the website they want to go to, but they don't type in the address. For example, they type "Wall Street Journal" because they are looking for that exact website.

Transactional
When someone is ready to buy right now, we call that a transactional search because the result is a transaction.

So, when you're analyzing keywords, you want to understand the intent of the search behind those keywords. Then, you match your content to that intent.

If your content doesn't match with search intent, you will not rank.

SEMANTIC SEARCH

Semantics is the study of the relationship between words and how we draw meaning from those words.

Semantic search is the relationship between what a user types into the search bar and what they actually mean (or are looking for).

> ### Old School SEO:
> Keywords, keywords, keywords (again – notice a pattern?)
>
> ### New School SEO:
> Understanding what your content is about to determine relevance.

What is Your Content About?

In the old days, you could stuff keywords about dentistry into an article about trees and it would rank.

Today, that's not the case.

Google realized long ago that people were gaming the system, so they focused on getting better at matching results. Yes, they are looking for keywords, but that's just one component. They are also looking for related keywords and secondary keywords to gauge what your page is about.
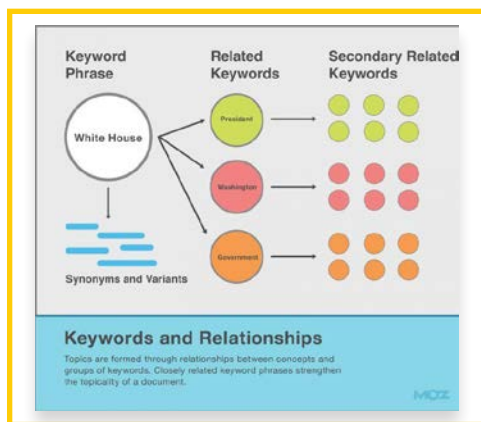
Semantic Search Quick Tip:
Use Google Search console to uncover all the different queries your content ranks for. This will give you clues into the secondary keywords you should be including in your content to help you rank for a wider variety of keywords and generate more traffic to your website.

ZERO CLICK SEARCHES:
A REAL ROADBLOCK TO SUCCESS

As of 2019, over 50% of searches did NOT result in a click.

Sounds crazy, right? But think about the number of times you've typed a question you just needed a quick answer to like, "Who was the president after Lincoln?" You type the question, the answer pops up at the top of the results, and you close your phone without clicking a thing.

It's convenient for the user but challenging for website owners. Since people are clicking on fewer results, it's becoming harder to get traffic to your website.

The good news:
You can get your website to show up at the top of those results with a few important strategies.
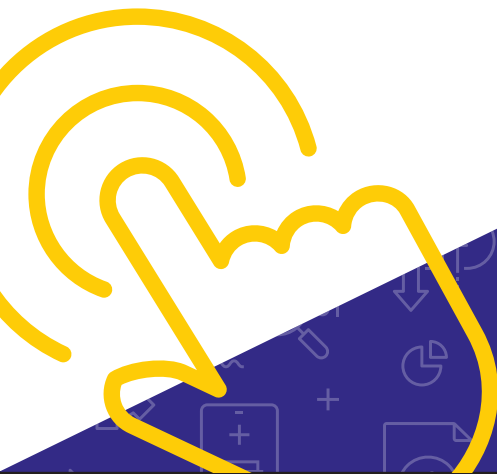
1 Overcome Zero-Click Searches With Featured Snippets

When someone types a question, Google finds the website that has the best answer and grabs one or two sentences and places them at the very top, actually appearing before the #1 organic result.

How do you get a featured snippet?

- **Write how-to articles.**
- **Ask and answer questions like:**
    - "What are the most common interview questions?"
    - "What should I ask during a reference check?"
- **Use tools to help:**
    - SEMRUSH Snippet Search Tool
    - AnswerThePublic.com
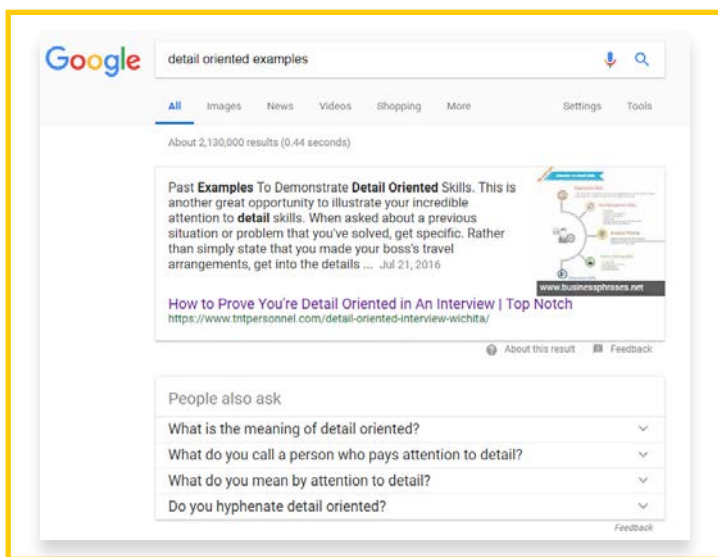
BE DIRECT AND GET TO THE POINT.
Featured snippets are usually 40-50 words.

2 Overcome Zero-Click Searches With Local SEO

When you search a localized term like, "Staffing agencies in Dallas," local SEO determines the results you see.

The results kick back a map, a couple of listings on the map, reviews of those businesses, and in the case of mobile, links to tap to call that business directly from the results.

Why does this matter? *Appearing in the map pack can be even more lucrative in terms of clicks and calls than ranking number one organically!*

You can appear in local results by:

- **Claiming and setting up Google My Business Listing (GMB).**

- **Including NAP on your website and making sure all information is consistent with your GMB.**

- **Uploading images of your office to GMB.**

- **Acquiring customer reviews on your GMB listing.**

- **Claiming local citations from other sites (Bing, Facebook, Yelp, etc.).**
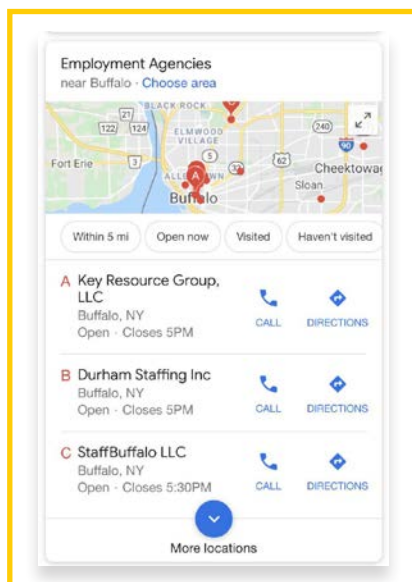
3 Overcome Zero-Click Searches With Video

Don't forget that YouTube is the second-biggest search engine on the internet!

- **Over 62% of searches include video results (mostly from YouTube).**

- **Video search results have a 41% higher click-through rate.**

- **Posts with videos attract 3x more inbound links.**
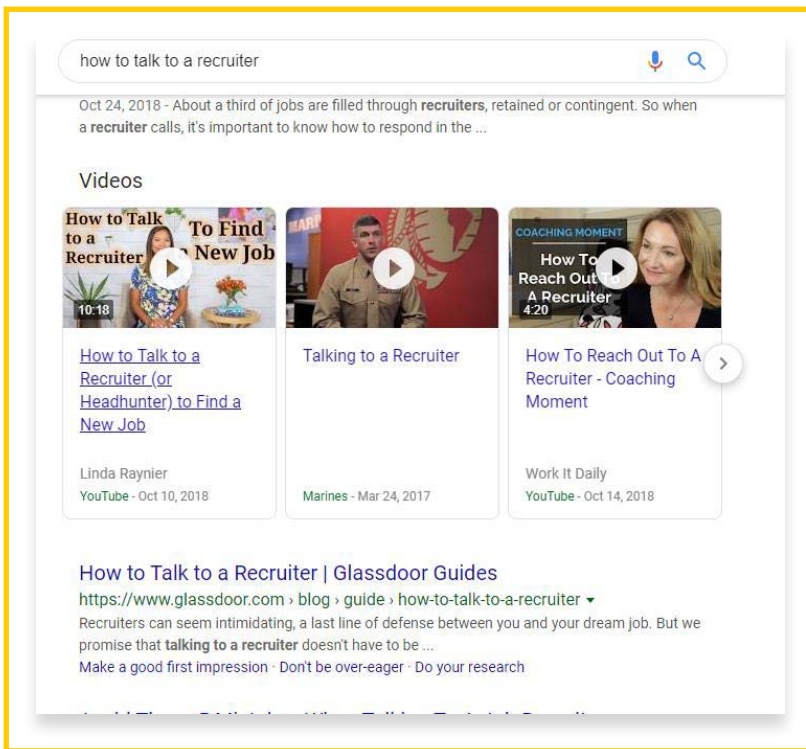
USER ENGAGEMENT:
WHAT VISITORS DO ON YOUR WEBSITE IMPACTS YOUR RANKINGS

Google also takes cues from website visitors when making determinations about the relevancy of your pages.

When someone clicks through to your website, what do they do? How long do they stay? What do they do after? These are the factors Google looks at to determine user engagement:

Click-Through Rate | Dwell Time | Bounce Rate

User Engagement: Click-Through Rate (CTR)

Percentage of people that clicked on your website when appearing in search results.

You can improve CTR by:

- Examining Google Search Console for low CTR
- Updating meta page titles
- Updating meta page descriptions
- Testing different languages
- Adding more value to a page
- Refocusing your keywords strategies for a page

User Engagement: Dwell Time

Percentage of people that clicked on your website when appearing in search results.

You can improve dwell time by:

- Identifying top- and bottom-performing pages on your site.
- Focusing on matching search intent more accurately.
- Adding "rich media" to your website (videos, SlideShares, infographics, etc.).
- Improving the mobile experience.
- Using strategic internal links to other pages to share related content.

User Engagement: Bounce Rate

Percentage of people that leave your site after only visiting one page.

You can improve bounce rate by:

- Using Google Analytics to identify top bounce pages.
- Providing a better experience.
- Improving readability.
- Making sure each page is optimized for the right term(s).
- Improving site speed and mobile experience.
- Adding more rich media.
- Creating value people can't get elsewhere – make it worth their time!
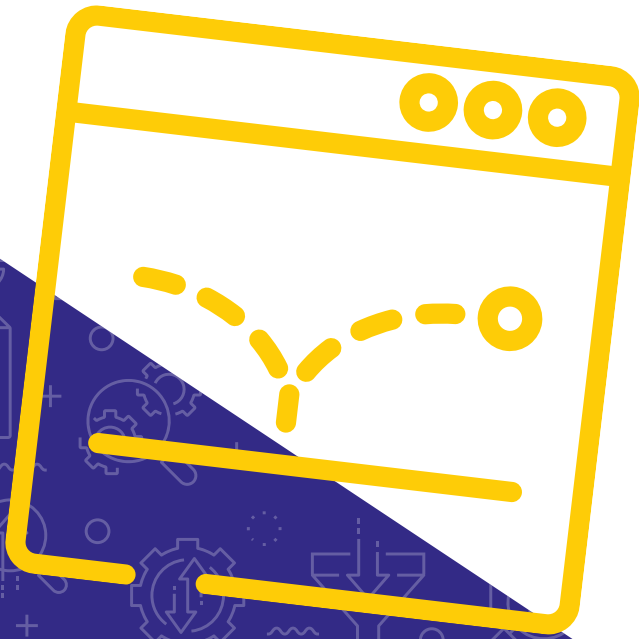
CONTENT:
## THE BACKBONE OF ANY EFFECTIVE SEO STRATEGY

By now it should be clear that the one element of New School SEO that matters the most – and matters to almost every other aspect of your strategy – is content. Without content, you have nowhere to put keywords. You cannot show relevancy. You can't answer practical questions and ultimately, you won't show up in searches.

— **Content makes your website a sought-after destination.** —

Google rewards websites that regularly provide quality content that answers search queries. Make sure you create content that aligns with your goals, your value, and leverages rich media – not just text.

Pillar Content Facilitates Robust Content Creation

Pillar Content is a substantial/informative piece of content that can be broken down and supported with smaller content and other content forms. For example, a whitepaper or eBook can be used to create blog posts, infographics, SlideShares, videos and more.

Whitepaper

- Blog Post Series
- Infographics
- SlideShare
- Press Release
- Social Shareables
- Videos
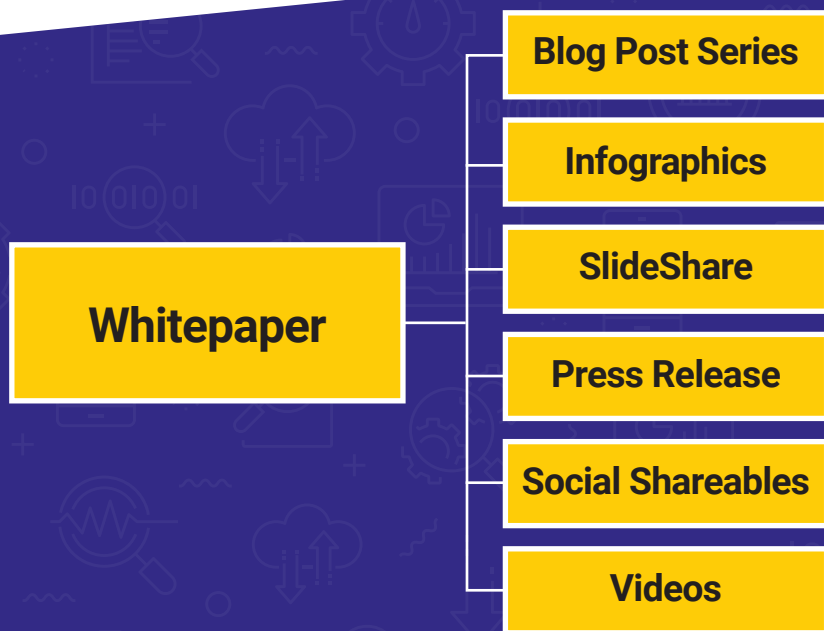
Great Content (And Lots of It) Generates More Links

Google also looks at the types of websites and the number of websites that link to yours when determining where they should rank your content. They examine:

Off-site links

Quality of links vs. quantity

Trust and authority of the linking website

**Diversity of websites linking back to you**

Google's #1 tip for starting to generate backlinks?
Blogging.

Each time you blog, push your content out on social media, and ask your employees and colleagues to share it, as well.

Other Link-Building Strategies:

- **Create press releases for newsworthy information like awards, new hires, promotions, etc.**

- **Submit career fairs and open houses to local newspapers as events.**

- **Share content on social networks.**

- **Provide testimonials to your vendors.**

- **Claim all social and local listings.**

- **Ask local/industry organizations to list you on their sites.**

- **Connect with local college and university career offices.**

- **Guest blog for quality niche-relevant news sites.**

- **Create pillar content.**
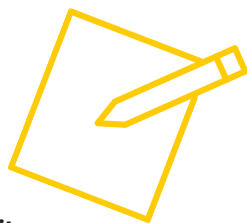
A WORD OF WARNING!

Whatever you do, do not buy links. That strategy worked in 2006, but will get you penalized or even banned today.

SEO FOR JOB LISTINGS:
GET FOUND BY CANDIDATES

It's easy to overlook your job board when you're thinking about SEO, but if you want your jobs to get in front of more candidates, it's got to be part of your plan.

The best way to ensure your jobs will be seen is to make sure your job board is mobile friendly and you have schema markup on your jobs.

Google for Jobs drives significant traffic for staffing and recruiting sites, and you can see they get broken down by category, title, location type, company type and employer.
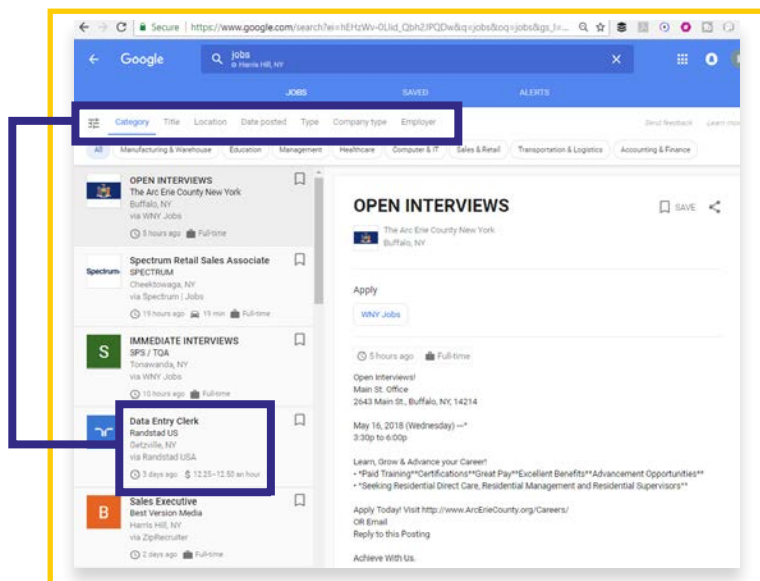
The way you feed information to Google determines whether your jobs get listed, which is why schema markup is so important. If your jobs aren't programmed the right way on the back end, you won't get seen.

Want to make sure your jobs get found?

Haley Marketing job boards are optimized for Google and for mobile, so you can literally set it and forget it. **Talk to our team today** to learn more about getting your jobs in front of more candidates.

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT!

That's what you need to do to bring your SEO strategy into the modern age.

But, if you want to know what the most important aspects of SEO to focus on would be, they are:

1 Pillar content strategies

2 Optimizing for featured snippets

3 Local SEO

4 SSL for your site

5 Schema markup for your jobs

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER:

Google is always making changes.

To achieve and protect your rankings and generate more traffic, you must keep pace with those changes.

haley
MARKETING

READY TO CRUSH SEO?

WORK WITH THE BEST IN THE STAFFING INDUSTRY.

Since 2003, Haley Marketing has helped staffing and recruiting firms keep pace with the rapidly evolving rules of SEO. We can help you grow more organic traffic and become a true resource for clients and candidates looking for your services.

Ready to get started?

Connect with a marketing educator. We'll learn about your business, discuss your goals, and help you develop a strategy to start boosting rankings and traffic.

About Haley Marketing

We are staffing industry specialists, and we make great marketing and marketing technology more affordable.

OUR SERVICES

- **Website Design & Content**
- **Blog Writing & Social Media**
- **Recruitment Marketing**
- **Direct Mail Campaigns**

- **Email & Content Marketing**
- **Corporate Identity & Creative**
- **Marketing Strategy**
- **Online Advertising**

1-888-696-2900 | www.haleymarketing.com | info@haleymarketing.com