

THE
BLOG BUILDERS™
PRESENTS

SEO For Creative Bloggers™

Maximizing your search traffic without
compromising your awesomeness

Foreword

by Beckie Farrant, author of [Infarrantly Creative](#), [Knock Off Decor](#), and [Roadkill Rescue](#)

One of the reasons I am a home, DIY, craft or whatever-you-call-me blogger is because I love all things creative. Little did I know that in order to build a brand in this place called creative blogging that I would have to become a writer, photographer, stylist, social media guru, accountant, bookkeeper, networker and SEO strategist. And can you tell me exactly what SEO is? I didn't sign up for that! I just want to create and then blog. WAAHHHHH!!!

After I stopped my pity party I decided either I could buck up or move over. With a very saturated creative niche any number of people would love to take my spot in blogsphere (and yours too!). Since blogging and empowering women to DIY has been my burning passion for the last 6 years I made the decision to buck up and really become a student of my niche.

I worked hard on gaining a wealth of information on all things SEO so that my posts could pack as much punch as possible. In fact, I am one of those people Court probably would say “over-SEO's”. So now I read Court's e-book in its simplest form and I think “Where was this book 6 years ago when I started blogging?” This little gem would have put me miles ahead of where I am now had I read it earlier in my blogging career. SEO For Creative Bloggers™ is a bare bones, stripped away, clean and easy way to start your blogging (or get your blogging) on the

right foot when it comes to SEO and creative blogging. Yes you can mix the two. And Court makes it effortless, okay maybe not effortless, but he gives you the road map for success.

What you will quickly realize as you read this e-book is that while you are slaving away at being awesome you aren't utilizing all means necessary to share your content (and gain new readers) with a bigger pool than what you are currently swimming in.

Court has been studying SEO and internet marketing for a profession and the dude knows what he is talking about. Every time he opens his mouth I learn something new. So carve out an hour and do your blog a favor and read this 25 page book, I promise you will thank me later.

Beckie Farrant

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Introduction

You Might Be My Hero

If you're a creative blogger, I admire the heck out of you. In fact, you might be my hero. In the last week you have probably spent 400 hours (only you can make this math possible) planning new projects, building or styling amazing things, creating and editing blog posts, networking, refabbing or remaking or refinishing or reconditioning or reprocessing or reinventing, sewing, mixing, baking, plating, taking pictures and video, dominating your Canon Rebel and Photoshop®, and sharing things on Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, and Google+ - ok probably not on Google+. I'm so funny.

For most of you, your work doesn't end there. You have kids and husbands to babysit, meals to make, and a house to make beautiful and keep clean.

I don't know how you do it. I just got tired from *writing* about all of that. It's time for a nap.

The Bitter Reality Of Your Current Situation

I'm going to give it to you straight. The amount of search traffic you get probably isn't inline AT ALL with the quality of your work or blog. If you have the kind of blog I think you have, you should be getting a LOT more

and that would of course mean a lot more unique visitors and more page views. Blizzzam.

Why don't you get more then? Well...to be honest I've been part of your problem.

You see, for the last five years, I've been teaching people tricks and techniques that have helped them to get better visibility in Google and other search engines. While most of them have blogs that are far inferior to yours in terms of quality (as in, no pictures on a decor blog), they have great visibility and rankings in search engines.

Most of the people in the world of search engine optimization (SEO) work to create sites and blogs that are just good enough to get by. Their sites often don't have real audiences and have few regular visitors who hang out on the site. They would rather focus on building traffic through SEO and marketing. Some of them are great at it.

But, their lack of focus on creating an awesome experience on their blogs and sites gives people like you an enormous competitive advantage. If you can learn a few simple SEO skills and consistently implement them, you can easily turn the tide and outrank professional SEOs and that is the premise of this book.

What if I told you that with a few simple techniques, you could make a huge improvement in your blog's search engine visibility while adding just a few minutes per day to your normal routine?

Completely doable.

What if I told you that what you are currently doing puts you literally miles ahead of many of my most successful students and that with a few simple tweaks you can drastically change your trajectory?

Likely.

What if I said that many of you could probably lower your current output (if you wanted to) and STILL improve the amount of search traffic you get from Google and other search engines?

You want it? You got it.

Let's Not Over-Complicate Things

I have no intention of creating a 500 page e-book that outlines all the theory behind successful SEO. Barfo. It would be exhausting to write, impossible to read, confusing, and completely ineffective.

Instead, I'm going to focus on the effective and easy-to-implement concepts that can make a big difference for the SEO of your creative blog TODAY.

The Goods

1. Finding And Using Effective, Searched-For Phrases Without Making Your Posts Sound Awkward
2. Creating Search Engine Friendly Post Titles That Are Still Exciting And Fun For Your Blog's Visitors
3. Optimizing Your Images For Maximum Impact

4. Building Friendships And Alliances With Other Bloggers
5. Using Content Off-Site To Increase Your Authority
6. Using The Link Structure Of Your Blog To Make Posts Look Strong

Keywords In Posts

Finding And Using Effective, Searched-For Phrases Without Making Your Posts Sound Awkward

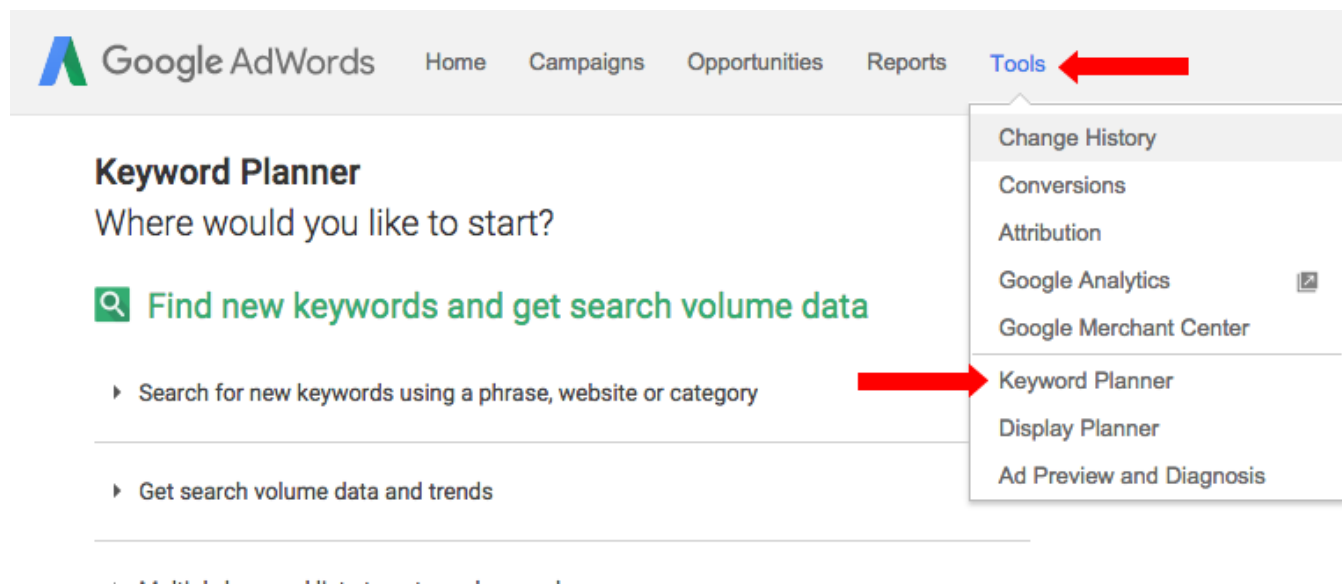
Before I post, I like to go through a quick process that makes sure that my post will have maximum SEO impact. The first step in that process is making sure that I'm aware of keyword phrases that are closely related to my post. I use the [Google Keyword Planner Tool](#) for that.

In order to get all of the information you'll need, you'll have to sign up for a free account. The tool is intended for people who are interested in advertising on Google but we're going to use it a little differently. Go ahead and sign up and get signed in.

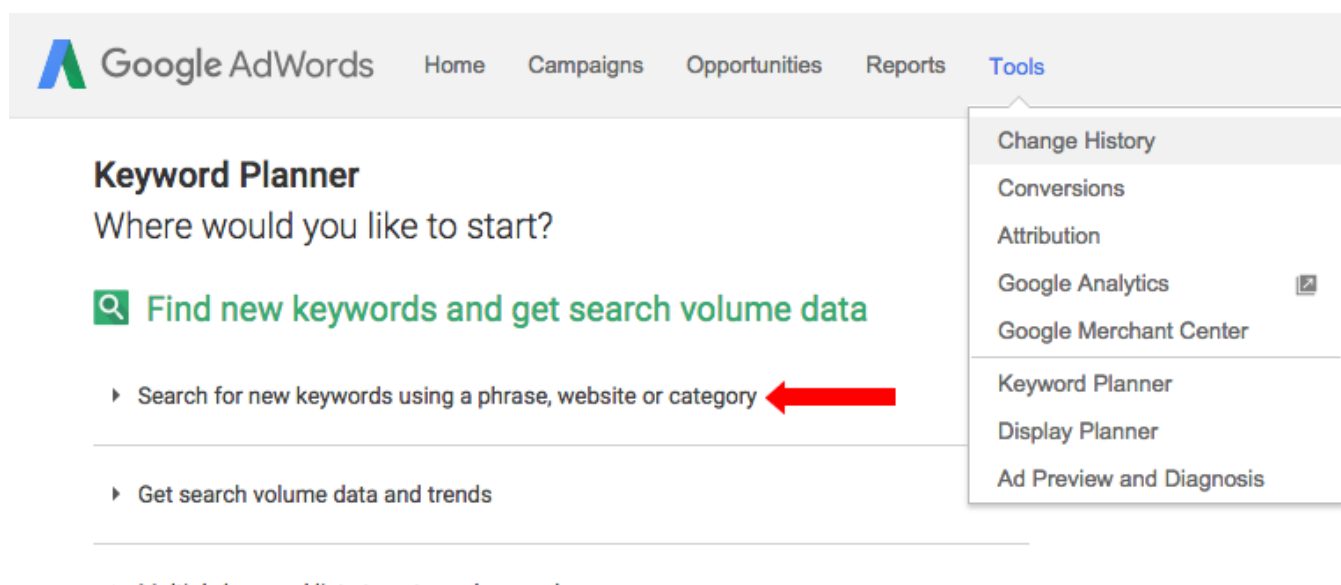
Note: some people get nervous because to get access to this tool, Google makes you sign up for an account. They also make you put in billing information. Don't worry! You are still many steps away from paying anything and won't ever have to.

The tool's original purpose is to help people who buy traffic to plan out their campaigns. To actually buy traffic, they have to create ads and do some other things that you won't ever do.

Once you're signed in you'll need to click 'Tools' and then 'Keyword Planner' to get to the right place:



Once you're there, go to 'Search for new keywords using a phrase, website, or category':



You then will enter the topic your post is about. In this example, let's assume that we have a blog post about a 'white kitchen table'. If we enter that into the tool, this is what we see:

Search terms	Avg. monthly searches <small>?</small>	Competition <small>?</small>	Suggested bid <small>?</small>	Ad impr.	Add to plan
white kitchen table	1,900	High	\$1.53		»

Show rows: 1 - 1 of 1 keywords |< < > >|

Keyword (by relevance) ↓	Avg. monthly searches <small>?</small>	Competition <small>?</small>	Suggested bid <small>?</small>	Ad impr.	Add to plan
white kitchen table and chairs	590	High	\$1.35		»
white kitchen table set	720	High	\$1.32		»
round white kitchen table	210	High	\$1.64		»
small white kitchen table	210	High	\$1.36		»
white round kitchen table	390	High	\$1.83		»
white kitchen table sets	110	High	\$1.61		»
antique white kitchen table	170	High	\$0.96		»

So, you're seeing these columns:

Search terms: (these are the keyword phrases).

Avg. Monthly Searches: (the approximate number of times the keyword is searched for each month - **this is the only metric that matters**).

Competition: (this is the amount of competition advertisers have when they try to buy traffic with the keyword - **irrelevant to us**).

Suggested Bid: This is the amount advertisers are paying for each click when they buy traffic with this keyword (**also irrelevant to us**).

If you see extra columns, don't worry about them. Avg. Monthly Searches is the one that matters. For that reason, I sort by this column by clicking on 'Avg. Monthly Searches' at the top of the column. That way I see the keywords with the most traffic at the top.

So as you can see, we have a bunch of keywords that are related to 'white kitchen table'. The question is, which ones are really related to your post? Is the table round? Did you do tables and chairs? Is the table small? Antique?

Quickly write down the phrases that are related to your post. Let's say for example purposes that the table is small, round and antique.

Note: For me, the whole process of opening up Adwords, finding the related phrases, and writing them down only takes a minute or two.

Getting The Primary Keyword Into The Post Title

In this example, our primary keyword is 'white kitchen table'. You really need to get it into the title of your post. See the next chapter to learn how to rock this process!

Integrating The Secondary Keywords Into The Post

People tend to over-complicate integrating keywords into their posts. This comes mainly from the belief that they have to put the whole phrase into their text if they want to rank for it.

You don't have to use "antique white kitchen table" as text in your post to rank in Google or other search engines for it! It's a good thing too, **because it would be super awkward to use all of these phrases in the post:**

- white kitchen table
- antique white kitchen table
- round white kitchen table
- small white kitchen table

Again - you don't have to do use them all! You simply need to make sure that each of the individual words appear somewhere in the post.

It should be easy to integrate 'white kitchen table'. Do that and then use 'round', 'antique', and 'small' somewhere else in the post. That will take care of it!

At first this whole process might feel a little awkward. If you need any help with a specific situation, feel free to shoot me an email at theblogbuilders@gmail.com. I'd be happy to help out!

After you get the hang of it, this whole process will add less than five minutes to the amount of time it takes to publish a post and will have a significant amount of benefit.

Post Titles

Creating Search Engine Friendly Post Titles That Are Still Exciting And Fun For Your Blog's Visitors

The way you structure your post titles is critical(!!!) when it comes to ranking in search engines. If you want to rank well in the SERPs (search engine result pages), the keywords have to be there.

The Dilemma

The problem is that most of the time, it's boring to just use a keyword phrase as your post title. Which of these titles do you think is more exciting?

1. Refinished White Kitchen Table (*Zzz zzz zzz...*)
2. This Table Brings Tears to my Eyes!!! (better for your readers, depending on your taste and personality)

So we're assuming that you just spent the last two days refinishing this now-beautiful, white kitchen table. You're ready to post about it. What should you use as your title?

You want your blog's visitors to respond well to the new post, but you also want as much SEO impact as you can get.

My SEO buddies are mostly using the first version of the post title and most of you creative bloggers are using the second. The SEO guys drive more traffic through SEO but you provide a better user experience.

The truth? **Neither of these titles is ideal.** Both have drawbacks from an SEO standpoint.

The first title is boring and has no emotion. It's less likely to get shared and linked to and the more you can get shared and linked to, the easier it is to get search traffic.

The second title is equally problematic. Our keyword, 'white kitchen table', doesn't appear in the title and that makes it a LOT harder to rank in search engines for the phrase.

Two Effective Solutions To This Dilemma

Solution #1 - combine the two titles, as best as you can.

In some cases, this solution will work amazingly well. In other cases, it won't. I think that in this example, it works. By using it, here's the post title we would come up with:

This White Kitchen Table Brings Tears To My Eyes!!!

In my opinion, you don't lose emotional impact by adding 'white' and 'kitchen'. And, by using this method we get our phrase in there. Score.

If you use this method and are comfortable with how your post reads, use it! If not, you might want to think about solution #2. Each situation will be completely different so you'll have to go on a case-by-case basis.

Solution #2 - split the blog post into two separate posts.

A really effective method that I've used a lot is splitting my posts up. In this example, I would create the original blog post using title #1:

This Table Brings Tears To My Eyes!!!

Then, I would create an entirely separate post called:

White Kitchen Table Tutorial: How I Created The Table That Brought Tears To My Eyes!

(note: this title works pretty dang well for my first solution)

If you're going to put a tutorial into the post anyway, this solution will cost you very little time.

If you decide to split the post into two parts, there are a few different methods you can use to deliver the posts. The first one I've used is to publish the post itself first, followed by the tutorial a few days later. The post naturally creates demand for the tutorial and you can let your readers know that the tutorial is on its way in the original post.

You can also publish both simultaneously. I'll leave it up to you.

Images

Optimizing Images For Maximum Impact

Most of you operate in niches that are highly visual. For you, that's an enormous opportunity. Image searches can bring literally gobs of extra traffic to your site. It can also lead to social sharing and links (regular search visitors up!).

This is another area that people tend to complicate in a huge way when it's actually very simple. Image optimization is a three step process.

1. Use your keyword phrase as the file name of your image. What I mean by that is that you should change the name of your picture from DSC2456.jpg to white-kitchen-table.jpg
2. Use your keyword as the alt tag of your image. An alt tag is the text that shows up when you hover over a picture and you set it when you upload the picture in WordPress or Blogger (or whatever platform you use).
3. Use your keyword as text on the post where you put your image. Or, make sure that all of the individual words that make up the phrase appear in your post.

Let's go back to our example post to bring this to life. I assume that most of you would use multiple pictures of the white kitchen table.

For the first picture, use “small-white-kitchen-table.jpg” or something similar for the file name. Use ‘Small White Kitchen Table’ as the alt text (WordPress or Blogger lets you set alt text when you insert the image). In this example, we’ve already talked about using all of the words on the page. We need small, white, kitchen, and table to appear in the text of the post. **This will help you to show up for more image searches!**

For the second picture, you are going to repeat the process while using the next version of the phrase. Use “round-white-kitchen-table.jpg” or something similar for the file name. Use ‘Round White Kitchen Table’ or “Round White Kitchen Table by YourSite.com” as the alt text. Use round, white, kitchen, and table somewhere in the post. In other words, don’t name all of your pictures the same thing!

Repeat for as many pictures as you’re going to use.

Can’t decide which phrases to use in the pictures? Pick the ones with the highest search volume in the Adwords tool since they’re all relevant.

Networking

Building Friendships And Alliances With Bloggers

Google assumes that if you have a really high quality blog, other high quality blogs and sites will talk about you and link to you. If those links don't happen, Google feels that they can safely assume that you aren't that great of a blog.

Who you know is a huge factor when it comes to getting linked to and talked about on other high quality blogs.

How To Screw It Up

The easiest way to screw things up with a high level blogger is by emailing them and asking them to link to you, feature you, or help you in some other way.

The most important thing that you have to understand in this process is this:

Everyone else would also like to get to know them, and create a strategic alliance and friendship with them.

Because of that, most high level bloggers get a ridiculous amount of communication through their social channels and email. People are constantly asking them for things!

I would highly recommend NOT emailing them and asking them for favors and I would like to recommend an alternative approach.

The Smarter Approach

To have the best chance at connecting with a popular blogger, you really need to get yourself on the giving side of the equation. You should be focusing on what you can provide to them instead of what you can get from them.

An Example

Let's say you have 1,000 fans on Facebook and would like to connect with a popular blogger that has 20,000 fans on Facebook (we could do the same example with RSS readers or any other social metric).

In this example, you are definitely on the wrong side of the equation. You would be the taker in any collaboration with this blogger. As long as that's the case, the odds aren't in your favor. You should be focusing on getting yourself into a position where you can provide more value than you get!

This doesn't mean that you have to have 20,000 Facebook fans before you can collaborate with this blogger. There are other things you could do.

For example, you could find a group of bloggers that have between 1,000 and 2,000 Facebook fans. Work together for six months to improve your numbers! Do some giveaways, guest post on each other's sites. Together, you'll be able to make gains on your numbers.

Think about how much power you'll have when you can collectively get to 25,000 Facebook fans. To get there, you need a group of five bloggers with 5,000 each. This is MUCH easier than getting to 25,000 yourself.

At that point, it would be a lot easier to approach the high level blogger about collaborating on a project. Maybe you could all do a giveaway together, hosted on the high level blogger's site. Delivering the value to them is the best way to connect and I can't stress that enough!

As an alternative, your group could take your 25,000 FB fans and network with some bloggers who have 10,000 fans to move a little more up the chain.

The Real World Correlation

In the real world, we generally aren't as focused on what we can get from people. We don't start a friendship thinking "I'm going to get this person to be nice to me and give me stuff". We just try to be genuinely nice and helpful to others and we end up connecting with people.

With networking online, the same concepts apply.

High level bloggers live with people trying to take from them all day long. They are over-connected and it takes a toll on them. You don't want to be one of the people who is constantly trying to get stuff from them. Focus instead on providing them with value and trust me, you'll stand out in a huge way.

Offsite Content

Skip This Step And Be Doomed!

Let's get real about what matters the most with SEO. Right now three things will define 90% of the results you get through your SEO efforts:

1. The quantity and quality of websites and blogs that link to your blog.
2. The amount and quality of social sharing that is attached to your blog.
3. The number of co-citations that happen with your blog and its topics.
This is when someone mentions your blog on their site and talks about your beautiful white kitchen table, but doesn't link back to you.

Most of my SEO friends focus hard on #1. They are really good at getting sites to link to them and that's the secret of their success. But, since their sites aren't of the highest quality, they don't have a lot of the quality signals you already have. They don't get social shares and don't have people naturally talking about them. If you can learn how to get a few more links, you'll blow them out of the water.

There are a lot of ways to get linked to. The ones that have been the most effective for me are:

- Posting epic content
- Being controversial
- Guest posting

I'm going to let you take care of the first two and focus on the hardest of the three: guest posting.

Learning To Give Away Content

I've worked with people in many creative niches and I'm blown away by their ability to provide valuable posts. But, in many cases I've worked with people who can be somewhat selfish with that value. In fact, when I started out, I myself was extremely selfish with that value.

It was really hard for me to even think about spending hours and hours creating content that would go up on someone else's site. **Fortunately, I saw the light and it completely revolutionized the results I get.**

This concept makes complete, logical sense if you think about it. Before your site has traction, incredible work will yield little in terms of results. Amazing work gets little attention and generates zero social sharing or links. Why? Because your blog doesn't have the traction to generate social sharing or links. You're losing the game of numbers.

If the same work had gone up on a site that had a bigger audience, the impact would have been completely different.

I eventually caught on to this and started sending some of my best work as guest posts to other bloggers who had bigger audiences than I did. Sometimes they didn't want to publish it and sometimes they did. When they did, it had a huge impact.

Those of you who buy into this concept the most will have the most success with your SEO efforts.

Relationships Make The Biggest Difference

Getting guest posts published isn't easy and here's the biggest problem you're going to run into - high level bloggers may feel ultimately that you are trying to get traffic and links from them. This happens primarily because they get multiple guest post offers per day. If you want to turn them off right away, send a cold-call email trying to get them to let you guest post. I'm telling you, I'm so tired of those emails I could scream.

You have to again try to get yourself on the value-providing end of the spectrum. In this situation, you should be thinking about what you can provide to the high level blogger. In my opinion, a solid post isn't good enough. You have to deliver more.

Building A Relationship

If you're a stranger to the high-level blogger, your likelihood of failure is going to be really high. It isn't personal, you're just going to get grouped in with everyone else who's trying to contact them and ultimately take value from them.

Stop being a stranger! Be friendly with them in their comments, talk about them on your site, and share their work on your social networks. You should be giving value to them - that's how relationships work! If you're genuine and really want to help them out, a relationship can start to form.

Building Value

Before you ask to get a guest post on a blogger's site, you should work on building extra value into the equation because if you don't you'll be taking more than you're receiving. Here are a few simple ways:

- Build your followers on social networks as much as possible and offer to share the guest post on them. The more followers you have, the more value this provides.
- Build your blog itself so you can offer to trade guest posts. The more traffic you get, the better this offer will be. Consider guest posting on smaller sites first and working your way up.
- Offer to do a give-away associated with your guest post. The better the give-away, the more value it will provide to the blogger.

Guest Posting With The Right Mentality

It takes a long-term mentality to be able to guest post effectively. You aren't going to start a blog today and guest post on a bunch of high level blogs next week. Be patient and build relationships!

When I started guest posting, it was pretty hard on me. A lot of people didn't want to take my posts. The rejection was hard to take. Honestly, I failed a lot because I asked way too soon and didn't have a solid value proposition. My success rate now is a LOT higher.

But, remember that guest posting is a lot like real life. Not everyone in the world is going to love and adore you or recognize the value you provide to the world. To a certain extent, it's a game of numbers and you have to be willing to face some rejection. You may have to be persistent and that's an art in itself.

Link Structure

How Most Bloggers Fail Epicly To Make Posts Look Strong

Google looks at the structure of your blog to see which URLs are 'strong'. The best URLs will be linked to from other URLs. To put this into blog terms, your best posts will be linked to from other posts.

Unfortunately, most of the bloggers I know aren't that good at making this happen, mostly because they see their blog as just a blog. Because of that, they tend to get outranked by a lot of SEO dudes and corporate sites who are willing to take a small amount of time working on their link structure.

Learning how to improve your link structure is easy and you can implement better policy with a few minutes work each time you post.

When I Publish A Post...

From now on, when you publish a post, you should be thinking about old posts that would be relevant to the new post. Edit the old posts and link them to the new one. Boom - instant impact.

Picking the right posts to edit and knowing how to do this properly tends to be intimidating.

Making them stronger is simple. Link to them from similar posts on your blog. Guess what? You should be doing this anyway! It will help you to increase your page views and we all want that.

If you get confused, hit me up via email: courtneytuttle@gmail.com.

Using Relevant Tags That Aren't Spammy

Using tagging (in WordPress) or labeling (in Blogger) can help you to increase the link relevance within your site. Both of these blogging platforms (and most others) will create tag/label pages that list all of the posts with that tag/label. These pages link back to the posts that are listed.

Make sure that you use 3-5 relevant tags for each post that's keyword focused.

Good Example of Tagging

- kitchen table
- white
- round
- antique
- small

Bad Example of Tagging (spammy)

- white kitchen table
- small white kitchen table
- round white kitchen table
- antique white kitchen table

Identifying Opportunities Where You Can Improve The Strength Of Old Posts

Many of you already have hundreds of old posts that can be improved. You can probably increase your search traffic really quickly, without a ton of extra work.

The primary place you should be looking for opportunities is in your analytics. Look at the blog posts that are currently getting search traffic. Those are the posts you want to strengthen.

Start small and make a change today! Find your post that gets the most search traffic and link to it from three other posts that are already on your site. It will take five minutes and it won't cause you any pain, I promise.

Repeat the process with other posts that get search traffic.

Bonus Material

A Printable Step-By-Step Checklist For Doing Proper SEO On Each Blog Post

As an added bonus, I've created a simple SEO checklist that you can use every time you post. It will help you to put the concepts from this book into action!

The checklist is a free download and you can sign up to receive it and more tips and tricks from me here:

[Blog Post SEO Checklist™](#)

Legal

Let's get this business taken care of so we can get to what you're here for.

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Court Tuttle

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