

# Outdated SEO Practices You Should Retire

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The internet constantly evolves. As search engines become increasingly skilled at delivering targeted content to their customers, SEO best practices quickly become outdated and threaten to drop your site low in the rankings.

Fortunately, these outdated SEO practices are easy to avoid once you know them. Take a look at the SEO practices that once reigned supreme but now put your site at risk, and find out what you should do instead for long-lasting success.

## Focusing Only on Keywords

Keywords aren't the be-all-end-all of modern SEO as they once were. Sites used to be designed entirely around target keywords, but adapting to the new SEO tactics requires a different strategy.

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Keywords listed in title tags, headers and meta descriptions aren't readable, and worse, are now punished by Google algorithms. Instead, write enticing, interesting title tags, compelling copy for meta descriptions and intriguing headings that draw the reader further into the article. Not only is this content more readable, but it also ranks higher in Google, which searched for content quality and relevance more than anything else.

## Prioritizing Rankings over Traffic

Many businesses put the number one organic ranking above all else, which doesn't help ROI and does little for the increasingly popular voice search.

Instead, featured snippets, long-tail targeting and other SERP tactics should be the focus. These not only have a higher ROI per hour spent, but they also aren't as competitive and often bring you around to the primary keyword anyway.

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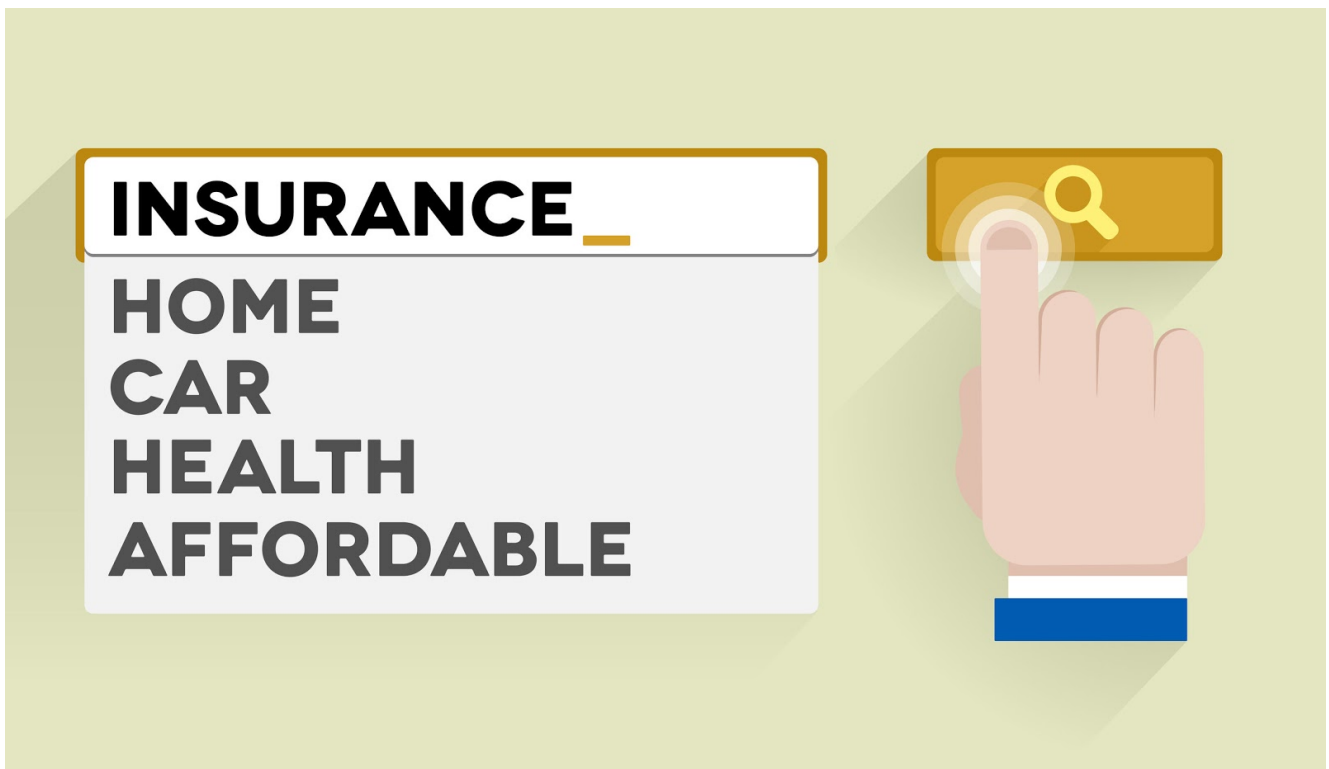


## Creating Multiple Pages for Keyword Variants

In the past, it made sense for a site to create and optimize pages for each keyword variant to cast the widest possible net. This was mostly due to Google's inability to differentiate between similar keywords and organize the search results accordingly.

Now, Google's algorithms are capable of finding multiple pages that use similar content and keywords, and they penalize you for it. This doesn't mean you need to simplify everything, but it does mean that you should eliminate multiple pages for every variant with the intent of keyword optimization. Instead, focus on the user experience with your site and the optimal funnel, which will get you high marks in search engine algorithms.

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## Link Building to Improve Rankings

Many businesses attempt to move up the search engine rankings with link building, but this outdated practice no longer works with modern SEO. Now, searcher task accomplishment, user experience and valuable content get the ranking.

[As Neil Patel states](#), the golden rule of SEO, regardless of algorithm changes, is searcher task accomplishment. Google's first and foremost concern is giving searchers exactly what they're looking for, which can't be accomplished with SEO shortcuts. Google wants to reward sites that help the searcher with what they searched for initially, uncover other possible needs and address them. Ultimately, the goal through this is to find the sites that lead to more action and engagement.

All of this can be accomplished through high-quality, relevant content and an optimized user experience. If Google's main goal is to go above and beyond to serve the needs of searchers, your site experience should focus on that as well.

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## Obsessing on Keyword Placement

Spending a lot of time and energy putting keywords in the H1 and H2, the headline tags, as well as the URL or repeated multiple times throughout the content, works, but only to an extent. For example, you want to have your keyword in the title or headline, but that doesn't mean it needs to be stuffed into every area.

Instead, focus on getting value out of the keywords and their related topics. Make sure that the content explains the subject, topics, words or phrases that Google is likely to associate with the keyword. You can scatter your keyword all over your site and links, but if you don't have related content that Google may recognize, you won't rank as well.

## Ignoring Mobile Site Optimization

Designing for mobile sites isn't new, but many businesses are still behind the times with sites that are far from mobile-friendly. Even if most of your audience uses a desktop to view your content, you could be missing out on loads of mobile traffic.

Fortunately, this is an easy fix. Software that isn't supported or common on mobile devices, links that are too close together and cause accidental clicks and text that doesn't have a readable zoom are enough to move a user away from your content, so that's a great place to start. Google also offers a [guide to mobile-friendly sites](#) to ensure you're on the right track.

## Churning Out Low-Quality Copy

The old rule for SEO used to be quantity over quality, but now, Google will penalize you for it. Low-grade blog fillers, stuffed keywords and other tactics are a flag to Google that your writing has no relevance, so it will direct users elsewhere.

On top of the effects on SEO, low-quality copy just isn't good for business or marketing. It's less likely to draw visitors in, less likely to convert visitors and less likely to bring them back, actions which are much more valuable to a business than a ranking on a search engine.

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## Offering Non-Strategic, Shallow Content

Content strategy and content marketing have become a considerable investment for businesses in recent years, sometimes with the idea of drawing links to a site that aren't relevant or helpful. We've all seen this with "clickbait" articles that include information that has nothing at all to do with the original site.

On the other hand, link bait that offers high-quality content that draws others to link to it and draws attention, as well as creates a positive brand association, is far more valuable for your site. This requires information that's interesting and makes others naturally want to link to it, which is best accomplished through content that solves a problem effectively and enhances the value of another's site.

## Ignoring Other Search Engines

We've discussed these tactics at length in regard to Google, but that doesn't mean other search engines should be left by the wayside. True, Google has the most comprehensive set of resources for SEO and is undoubtedly the most popular search engine, but if you're forgetting about the likes of Bing, Yahoo and other search engines, you're missing out.

These search engines are a major source of organic traffic, so don't neglect their tools in your planning process. They can easily supplement your SEO efforts and often provide even more data to work with, giving you a thorough understanding of your total SEO picture.

## The Best Way to Update Your Outdated SEO Practices

As discussed, Google is only concerned with solving the searcher's problem. Whether that's through related keywords, related topics or other tactics, all Google cares about is directing users to sites that are useful, valuable and relevant.

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Because of this, the key to modern SEO is creating a website that people want to use by offering value and solving problems. This isn't about shortcuts or cheating the system, which will only change tomorrow. It's about caring for your customers and focusing on helping them, rather than artificially inflating rankings. Put a little effort into that, and you'll start to see long-lasting results.