

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO Ecommerce SEO

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**DEVIQTE**  
DIGITAL AGENCY

If you run an ecommerce business, you need to prioritize increasing your organic search traffic.

Here are some stats (from [Backlinko](#)) that demonstrate why:

**44%** OF ONLINE SHOPPERS  
START WITH A GOOGLE SEARCH

**37.5%** OF ALL ECOMMERCE TRAFFIC  
COMES FROM SEARCH ENGINES

**23.6%** OF ONLINE ORDERS  
ARE DIRECTLY TIED TO SEARCH TRAFFIC

Visitors who find your site through search engines are highly targeted and oftentimes ready to buy.

To help you acquire more of these valuable visitors, you're about to learn 5 tactics to improve your ecommerce site's search engine optimization (SEO).



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Let's get to it.



# 1. FIX TECHNICAL SEO ISSUES

Technical SEO is important for all sites, but it's especially important for ecommerce businesses for a couple of reasons:

1. Ecommerce sites tend to have a lot of pages, and all of those pages increase the chances that technical SEO issues will crop up.
2. Most ecommerce pages don't have that many backlinks pointing to them, meaning that technical SEO is often the "tiebreaker" on Google's first page.

To avoid annoying issues and reach Google's #1 spot, you need to run SEO audits on your site on a consistent basis.

## SEO Audit Tools

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There are a few tools you can use to run an SEO audit:

Raven Tools

ScreamingFrog

SEMrush

DeepCrawl

Site Condor

Ahrefs

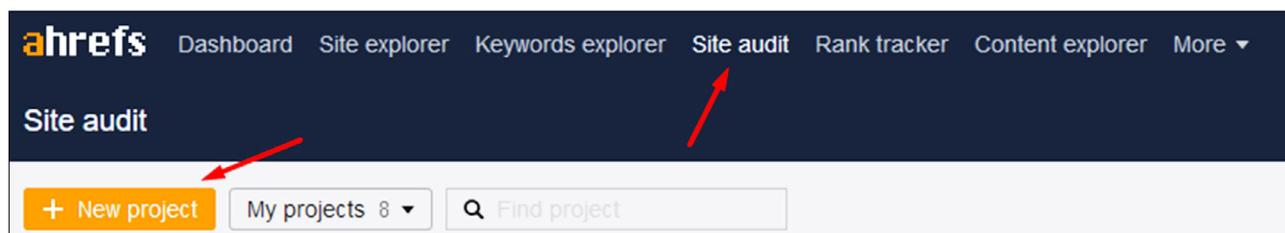
Ahrefs is the tool of choice for many SEO professionals. The paid plans are not cheap, but the people at Ahrefs do offer a 7-day free trial, which is more than enough time to run this audit.

# 1. FIX TECHNICAL SEO ISSUES

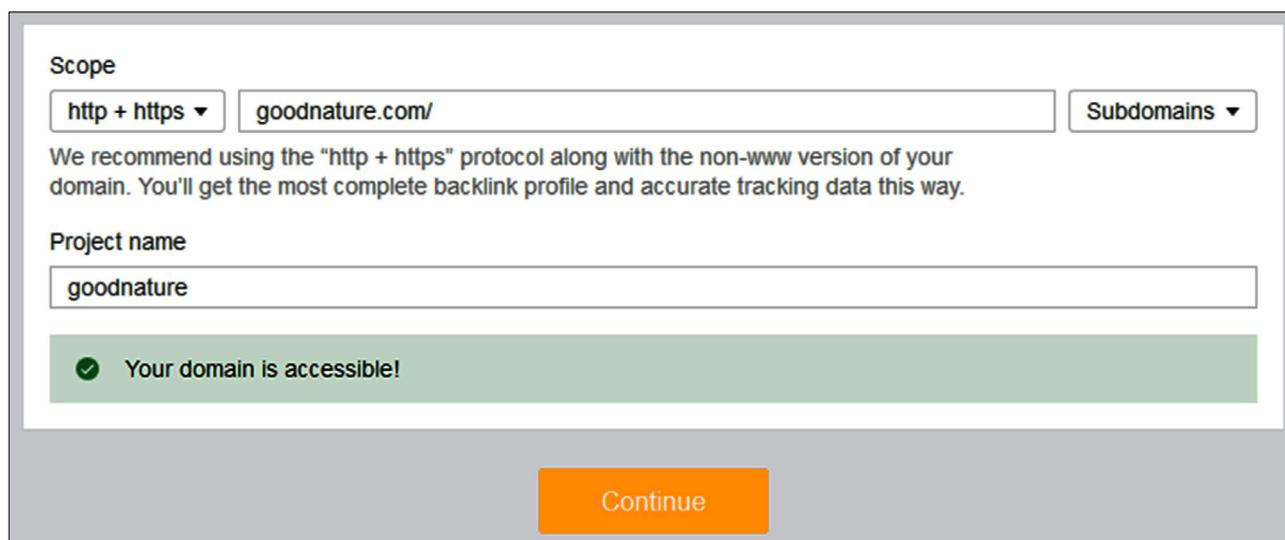
## Running an SEO Audit with Ahrefs

First, sign up for your free trial on Ahrefs.com

Once you're on the main dashboard, click *Site Audit* and then *New Project*.



From there, enter your website URL and click *Continue*. We will use commercial juicer company Goodnature.com throughout this example.

A screenshot of the Ahrefs 'New Project' form. The 'Scope' section has a dropdown menu set to 'http + https' and a text input field containing 'goodnature.com/'. To the right of the text input is a 'Subdomains' dropdown menu. Below this, a message reads: 'We recommend using the "http + https" protocol along with the non-www version of your domain. You'll get the most complete backlink profile and accurate tracking data this way.' The 'Project name' section has a text input field containing 'goodnature'. At the bottom of the form, there is a green message box with a checkmark icon and the text 'Your domain is accessible!'. A large orange 'Continue' button is positioned at the bottom center of the form.

You will then find yourself on the ownership verification page, where you are given a few options for verifying that you own the site. Completing one of these verification options will speed up the audit process considerably, but it's not mandatory. (You can even audit a competing site.)

The next page will allow you to schedule regular site audits and begin the first one. While you have the option to schedule site audits on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, we recommend starting with just the initial one now (pictured below). You can always come back and set up scheduled audits later.

# 1. FIX TECHNICAL SEO ISSUES

**Schedule** | URL sources | Crawl settings

Run scheduled crawls

Frequency: Weekly

Start day: Mo Tu We **Th** Fr Sa Su

Time & time zone: 11:00 AM (GMT -08:00) Pacific Time - Los Angeles

Run first crawl now

Continue

The next two pages (*Add Keywords to Track* and *Competitors*) will prompt you to input more information. You can complete these pages or skip them by clicking the orange button (your site audit won't be impacted either way).

At this point, Ahrefs will begin crawling your site. Step away or work on something else for a bit, as this will take some time.

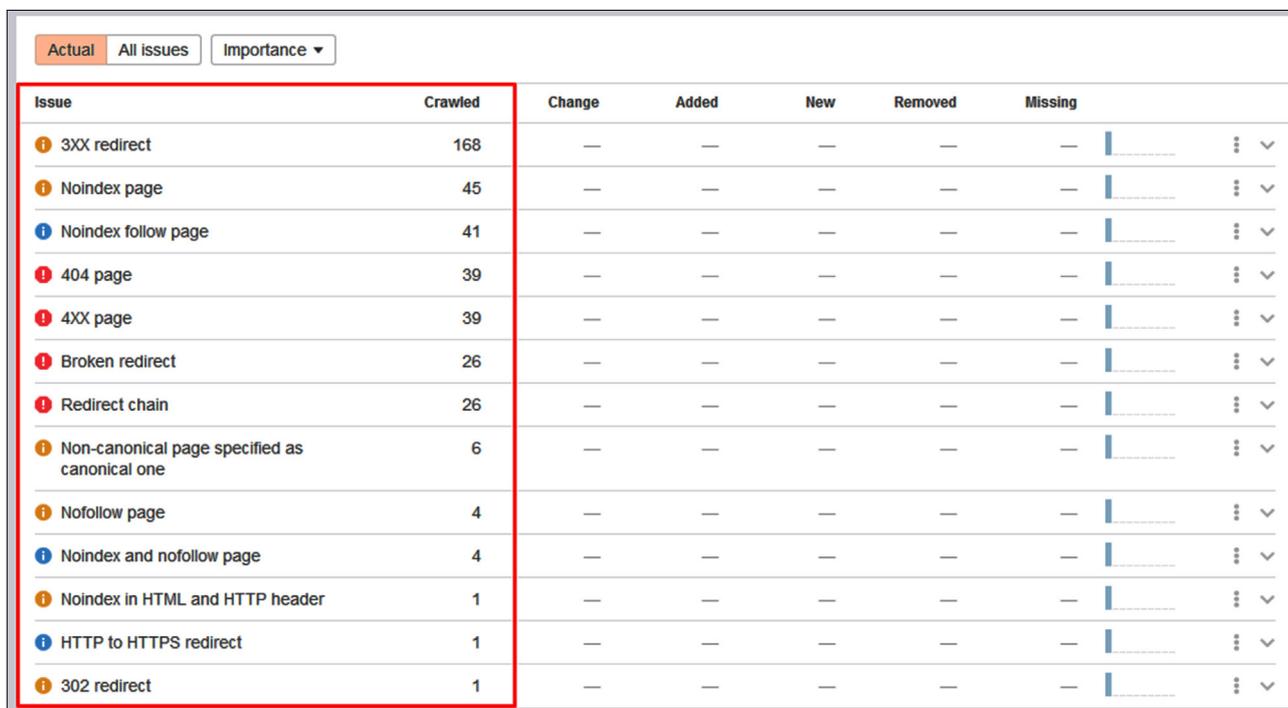
Once the audit's status shows as complete, click the green *Completed* bar...

Project	Last crawl	Status
 <b>Commercial Cold-Press Juicers &amp; Pasteurizers   Goodnature</b> www.goodnature.com	Today 11:34 AM	<span>Completed</span>

...and then click on *Internal* pages.

Here, you will see a list of all the on-page technical issues found during the crawl.

# 1. FIX TECHNICAL SEO ISSUES



Issue	Crawled	Change	Added	New	Removed	Missing	
 3XX redirect	168	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Noindex page	45	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Noindex follow page	41	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 404 page	39	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 4XX page	39	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Broken redirect	26	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Redirect chain	26	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Non-canonical page specified as canonical one	6	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Nofollow page	4	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Noindex and nofollow page	4	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 Noindex in HTML and HTTP header	1	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 HTTP to HTTPS redirect	1	—	—	—	—	—	▬
 302 redirect	1	—	—	—	—	—	▬

Start by fixing any *Errors* (red), then move on to *Warnings* (orange) and *Notices* (blue). You can filter the list by importance to make this easier.

If you're unsure of how to fix a particular issue, search for it in the [Ahrefs Help Center](#) to find instructions.

## 2. RESEARCH KEYWORDS AND COMPETITORS

Research is one of, if not the most important part of SEO, and it's the very first thing you should do if your site is new or isn't set up yet.

There are two types of research on which you need to focus: **keyword research** and **competitor research**.

### Keyword Research

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There are three primary parts to keyword research for ecommerce sites:

#### 1. Find keywords for your "money" pages (your home and product pages).

Start by figuring out which keywords to target with the most important and valuable pages on your website.

Try to find keywords that are highly relevant to your brand/product, have a relatively high search volume, and a low difficulty score. You can use [Moz's keyword tool](#) to do so.

For example, if you offer shower curtains on your website, you should not go after broad keywords like "curtains," "bathroom," or "shower," as these are not what people search for when trying to find shower curtains. Additionally, those keywords have high competition and your website likely won't be able to rank for them.

#### 2. Discover keywords to target with blog posts.

Creating blog content will help you bring targeted search traffic to your website and power up your website in the eyes of Google. You should use blog posts to target keywords that you can't justify targeting with a product page.

To continue with our shower curtain example, you might target a keyword like "how to install a shower curtain" with a blog post. Seems like something a real human might want to read, right? That should be your goal when researching blog topics.

Blog posts are covered more in-depth later in this guide.

## 2. RESEARCH KEYWORDS AND COMPETITORS

### 3. Avoid competing with yourself for keywords.

Trying to rank for the same keyword with multiple pages on your website is called keyword cannibalization, and it confuses search engines.

To quote Sean Work from NeilPatel.com:

*"The problem with this is that it's confusing to the search engines. You end up forcing them to choose which page is more important for that particular keyword out of the group of webpages. This weakens your ability to obtain traffic for that keyword."*

To avoid keyword cannibalization, list each page on your website alongside the keyword that page is trying to rank for. If you sort the keyword column, you should not see any duplicate keywords. If you do, adjust one of the pages (the one that's ranking worse) to target a new keyword.

## 2. RESEARCH KEYWORDS AND COMPETITORS

### Competitor Research

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Now, it's time to leverage the websites of your competitors.

You should aim to figure out:

- 1. Which keywords your competitors are targeting.**

Tool: [Moz's keyword explorer](#).

If it makes sense, you should target the same keywords with a page or blog post of your own.

- 2. Where their backlinks come from.**

Tool: [Moz's Link Explorer](#)

Acquiring backlinks is absolutely crucial to ranking your website. See which sites are linking to your competitor and try to get them to link to your site.

(We'll go over what backlinks are and some strategies for link building at the end of this guide.)

- 3. What their site architecture looks like.**

Figure out how your competitors have structured their navigation, category pages, and the rest of their site. Then, use what you learn to plan and create your own site's architecture.

- 4. How to differentiate your website.**

What can you do on your site that will help it stand above your competitors?

Make a list of actions that will ensure your site is better for customers than theirs. For example, you could include extra details on your product pages, or implement a blog.

## 3. OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

Improving your on-page SEO is one of the easiest ways to improve your rankings. This is especially true for new sites, which often have many on-page mistakes to correct.

*On-page optimization refers to all of the elements on your site that you can change to help your site rank better.*

According to [Neil Patel](#), these are the seven key targets on which you need to focus your on-page optimization efforts:

1. **Keyword Optimization**
2. **Site Structure and Internal Linking**
3. **Usability**
4. **Mobile Version of Website**
5. **Customer Reviews**
6. **Rich Snippets**
7. **Social Media Integration**

### 1. Keyword Optimization

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You need to optimize each of your pages for one target keyword.

This involves including the keyword in a number of strategic locations:

- The page title
- Headings and subheadings
- The main text on the pages
- Product descriptions
- Image file names and alt tags
- Meta titles and descriptions
- URLs

Be sure to keep the user experience in mind as you're placing your keywords on each element of the page. Avoid keyword stuffing and make sure everything looks natural.

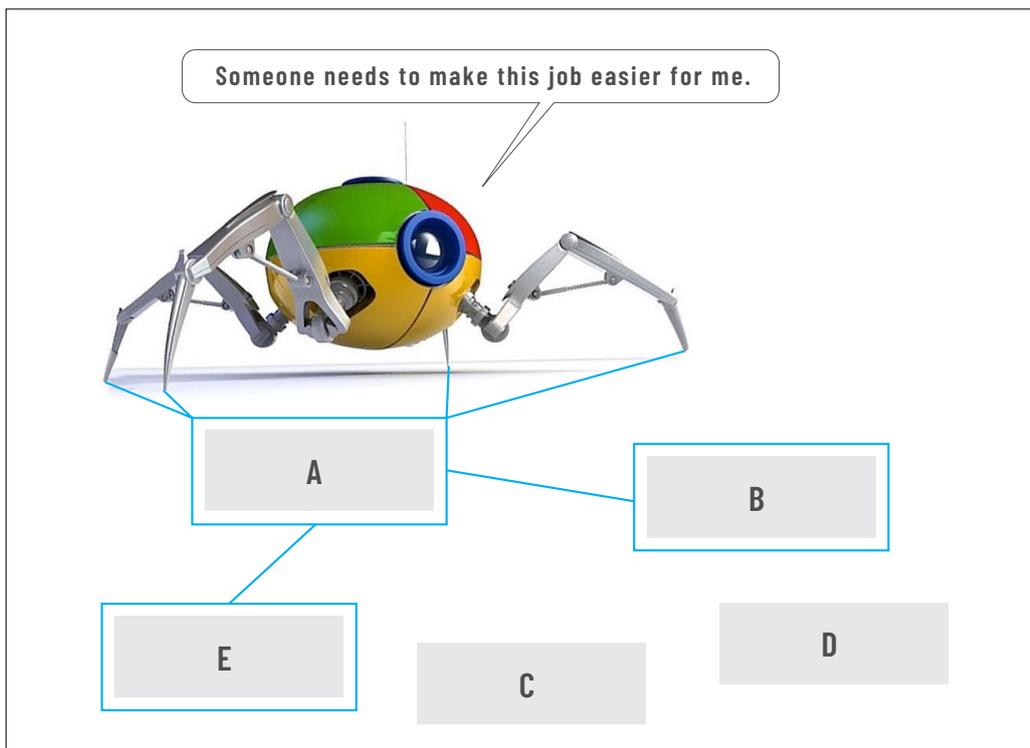
### 3. OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

## 2. Site Structure

The structure of your site greatly impacts the user experience, rankings, and conversions.

**Not only does a bad site structure make it difficult for your potential buyers to find what they're looking for, it also prevents Google's AI from doing its job.**

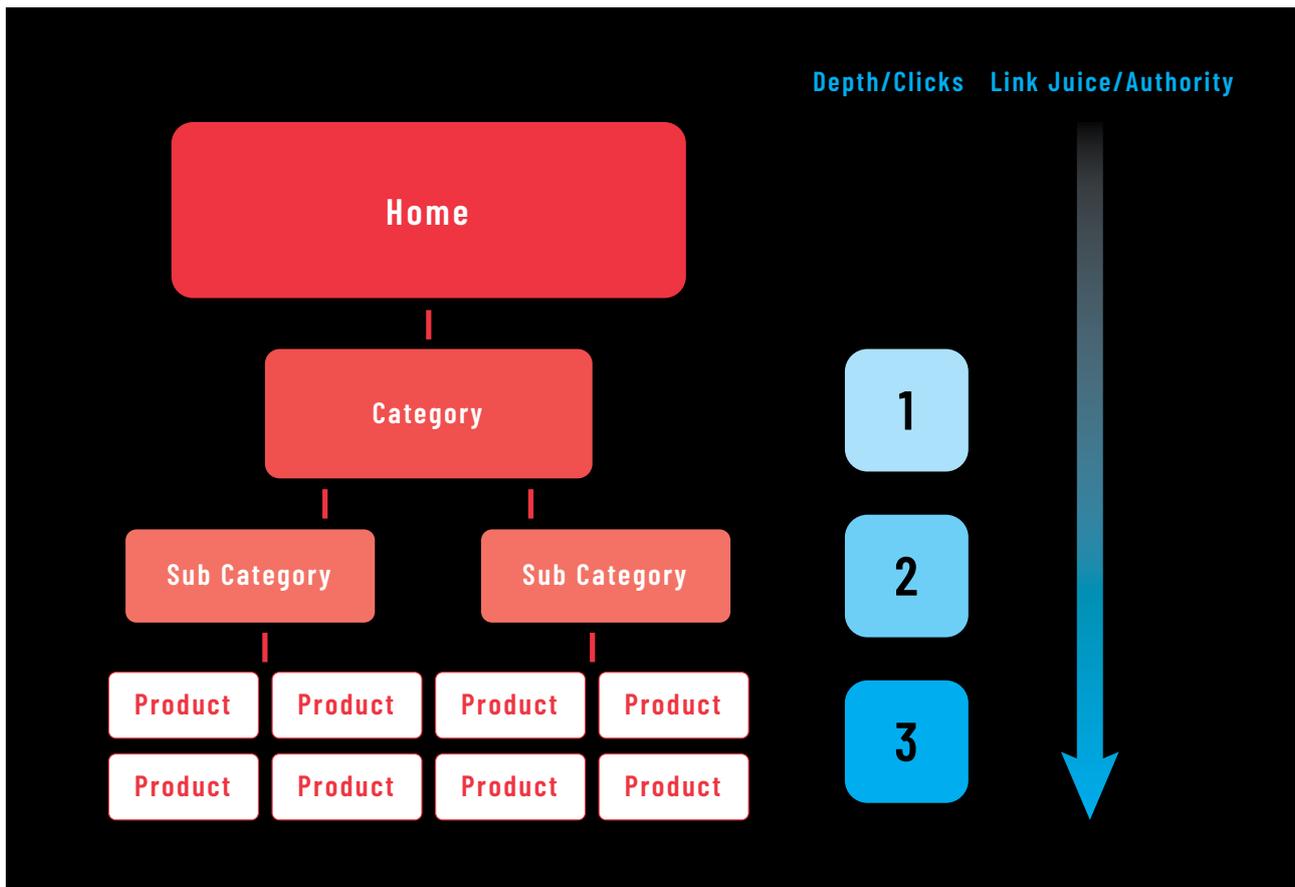
Google likes to rank sites with easily crawlable link structures that make sense because it makes their A.I.'s job easier. This infographic from [Moz](#) does a good job summing it up (and makes us laugh):



The Google spider has crawled page "A" and is able to follow internal links to crawl "B" and "E" as well. But pages "D" and "C" aren't anywhere to be found via internal links. These uncrawled pages basically don't exist in the eyes of Google.

### 3. OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

For ecommerce sites, you should focus on making it take as few clicks as possible to get from the home page to a product page. Here's what a good site structure looks like:



## 3. OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

### 3. Usability

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You need to make sure your site is easy to use, fast, and helpful. Here's some words of wisdom on what that means for ecommerce sites (from Neil Patel):

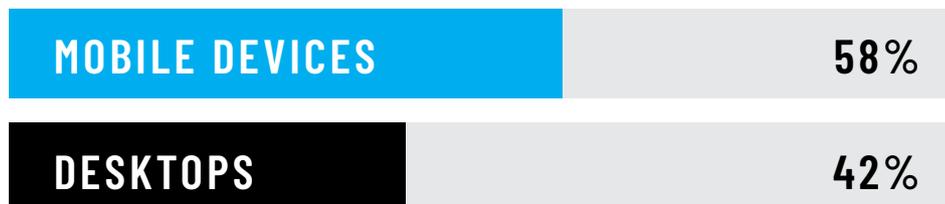
*Part of your usability testing should include making sure there are as few steps as possible in the checkout process, ensuring the checkout process works seamlessly, giving your visitor quick ways to contact you, making it simple for visitors to navigate to other important information, and guaranteeing your site loads quickly.*

In other words, make sure users will love your site.

### 4. Mobile Optimization

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In late 2016, [mobile devices passed desktops](#) in worldwide internet usage for the first time. Since then, mobile has extended its lead:



This underscores the importance of ensuring your site is mobile-friendly.

Here are a few things to look at regarding your site's mobile optimization (credit to [OptinMonster](#) for this list):

- Whether you have a responsive site that automatically resizes to fit the device.
- Whether you're using large fonts for easy readability on small screens.
- Accessibility and navigability, including making it easy to tap menus.
- Ensuring that essential content isn't hidden by interstitial ads.

For more on mobile SEO, read [Backlinko's behemoth guide](#) to mobile SEO.

### 3. OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

## 5. Customer Reviews

It's possible to increase your ecommerce conversion rate by up to 76% by including product reviews, according to [Internet Retailer](#). This means you are leaving a lot of money on the table if you're not including reviews on your product pages.

Reviews also help with SEO because more reviews means more content on the page, which is typically rewarded by Google. Additionally, it can improve your click-thru rates by making your page stand out in the SERPs, like this:

**Yeti Tundra 45 Cooler review: It wasn't close. Yeti's cooler ...**

[https://www.cnet.com > reviews > yeti-tundra-45-cooler-review](https://www.cnet.com/reviews/yeti-tundra-45-cooler-review) ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4 - Review by Ry Crist - \$299.99

Jun 21, 2018 - The Good **Yeti's cooler** was the top performer in our tests, with better insulation and ice retention than any competitor we've reviewed.

**Yeti Coolers On Sale | Reviews of The Best Coolers**

<https://www.coolersonsale.com> ▼

A comprehensive review guide to buying the best **cooler** for the money. **Yeti**, Pelican, Orca, and Igloo find the cheapest and best **cooler** for your needs.

The review stars under CNET's result make it stand out compared to the plainer result from coolersonsale.com.

### 3. OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

## 6. Rich Snippets

Rich snippets can have a huge impact on a website's rankings. The blue arrows below point to a few examples of rich snippets:

**One Bowl Chocolate Cake III Recipe - Allrecipes.com**  
<https://www.allrecipes.com> > [recipe](#) > [one-bowl-chocolate-cake-iii](#) ▾

 ★★★★★ Rating: 4.7 - 2,948 reviews - 1 hr - 157 cal

This is a rich and moist **chocolate cake**. It only takes a few minutes to prepare the batter. Frost with your favorite chocolate frosting.

**The Most Amazing Chocolate Cake Recipe - The Stay at ...**  
<https://thestayathomechef.com> > [the-most-amazing-chocolate-cake](#) ▾

 ★★★★★ Rating: 4.8 - 636 votes - 45 min - 767 cal

Jun 8, 2016 - Ingredients. butter and flour for coating and dusting the **cake** pan. 3 cups all-purpose flour. 3 cups granulated sugar. 1 1/2 cups unsweetened cocoa powder. 1 tablespoon baking soda. 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder. 1 1/2 teaspoons salt. 4 large eggs.

[Funfetti Birthday Cake](#) · [The Most Amazing White Cake](#) · [Buttermilk Substitute](#)

These rich snippets are added via HTML, and they tell the search engines what searchers should know about your page before clicking to see it.

Unsurprisingly, pages with rich snippets are more likely to be clicked on than pages without them.

Adding rich snippets takes some technical know-how, so you may want to work with a developer to add them. If you want to try adding rich snippets on your own, read [this guide from Backlinko](#).

### 3. OPTIMIZE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO

#### 7. Social Media Integration

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Social signals (such as shares and comments) tell Google that people like your website, which can improve your rankings. The most obvious way to grow your social signals is by adding social share buttons and links to your social media pages to your website.

Some SEO experts believe that [social signals will one day surpass links](#) as the most valuable ranking factor. Whether that's true or not, you do not want to neglect social media when it comes to your ecommerce website.



## 4. WRITE BLOG CONTENT THAT RANKS AND SELLS

Publishing blog content on a regular basis will help your ecommerce business grow in two major ways.

**First, your blog posts will bring more search traffic to your website by ranking for keywords related to your business.**

Since search traffic is highly targeted, the visitors are relatively likely to convert to leads or sales.

**Second, getting blog posts to rank makes your website more powerful in the eyes of Google.**

When your website becomes more powerful, rankings become easier to attain for all of your pages (including your products and categories).



## 4. WRITE BLOG CONTENT THAT RANKS AND SELLS

So, how do you publish blog content that actually ranks and brings your business value? Follow this six-step process:



### CHOOSE TARGET KEYWORD(S)

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Start by finding a keyword with good traffic potential and business value.



### RESEARCH YOUR TOPIC/POST

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Search for your target keyword on Google and scope out the top results to figure out *why* people are searching for that keyword.

If many of the top results are blog posts, leverage them to come up with your own superior topic, ideally with a unique angle.



### OUTLINE YOUR POST

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Your goal in this step is to come up with an outline and write a post that will be significantly better than all of the current results on the front page.



### WRITE YOUR POST

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Fill in your outline and be sure to write an effective intro. Remember to trim and refine your post in the editing process!



### BUILD INBOUND LINKS

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Link to your new post from every page on your website that makes sense to do so.



### REEVALUATE YOUR POST IN THREE TO SIX MONTHS

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See how it is ranking for your target keyword and consider if anything is worth revising.

## 5. BUILD VALUABLE LINKS

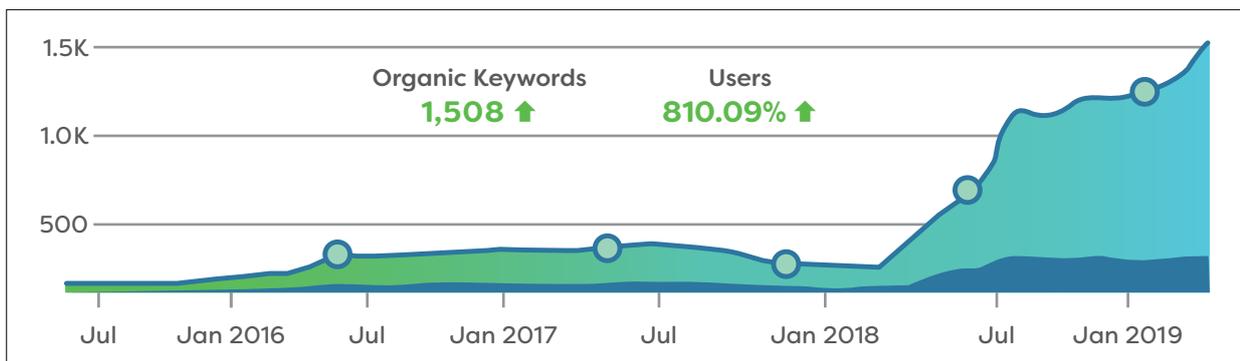
The number and quality of referring domains and backlinks pointing to your website are one of Google's most consequential ranking factors.

In fact, unless you're in an extremely uncompetitive industry, you will need backlinks to rank for keywords. But don't think of this as a challenge. Instead, think of it as an opportunity because backlinks can help your site's traffic to absolutely explode.

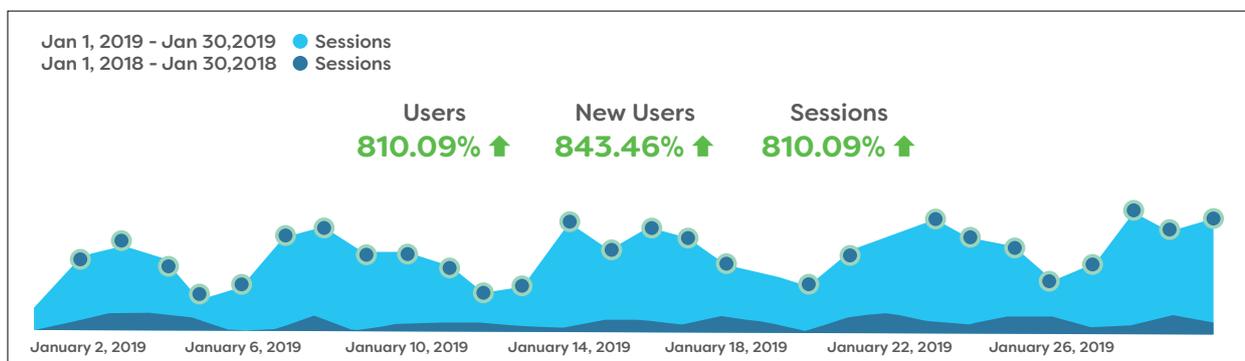
### How Link Building Skyrocketed Responsify.com's Traffic

Throughout 2018, Responsify.com executed a backlink building campaign that had the following results:

Ranking keywords increased nearly tenfold...



...and organic monthly users in 2019 increased by 810% compared to 2018.



These results are incredible, but not unusual. Almost any website can see gains like these (or better) with a smart and sustained backlink building campaign.

## 5. BUILD VALUABLE LINKS

### Backlinks vs Referring Domains

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Before we get into specific link building strategies, you should know the difference between a backlink and a referring domain (definitions from [Ahrefs](#)):

#### WHAT IS A BACKLINK?

Backlinks are hyperlinks that point from one website to another. You can have multiple backlinks from a website or web page.

#### WHAT IS A REFERRING DOMAIN?

Referring domains are websites from which the target website or web page has one or more backlinks.

For example, if a web page has a backlink from the *New York Times*, then it has one referring domain. If it has a link from the *New York Times* and *Forbes*, then it has two referring domains. If it has two backlinks from the *New York Times*, then it still has one referring domain.

## 5. BUILD VALUABLE LINKS

### Link Building Strategies

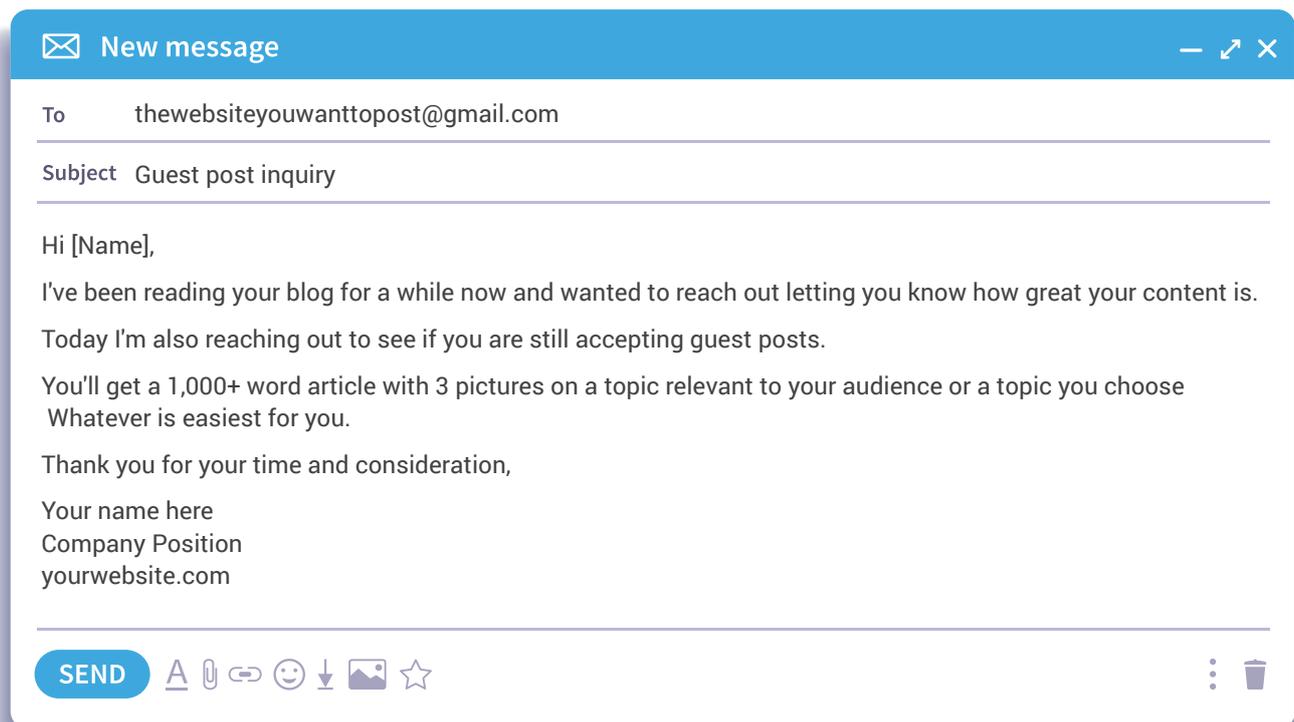
There are a number of popular link building strategies you can try on your own if you have the right tools (and patience).

#### GUEST BLOGGING

**Step 1:** Find sites that accept guest posts.

**Step 2:** Write a high-quality article.

**Step 3:** Pitch your article to other sites.



*Almost all link building strategies require sending outreach emails like this.*

[LEARN MORE ABOUT GUEST BLOGGING HERE](#)

## 5. BUILD VALUABLE LINKS

### THE MOVING MAN METHOD

- Step 1:** Find sites in your industry that have changed names, moved to a URL, or shut down.
- Step 2:** Find sites linking to the outdated URL.
- Step 3:** Reach out to the sites with dead links to give them a heads-up (and gently suggest they replace it with your link).

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MOVING MAN METHOD HERE](#)

### BECOME A SOURCE FOR REPORTERS AND BLOGGERS

- Step 1:** Sign up for [helpareporter.com](https://helpareporter.com).
- Step 2:** Keep an eye out for requests to which you are qualified to contribute.
- Step 3:** Send the journalist a brief and valuable pitch.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A SOURCE HERE](#)

### HIRE AN AGENCY

No steps required for this one. Agencies can do all the hard work of building backlinks for you. At the end of each week/month, you get a list of which backlinks were acquired and to which pages they are pointing. Then, sit back and watch your traffic increase, along with your leads and sales.



**Save time and money  
growing your business  
with Deviate.**

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