

# 5 STEPS TO LEVERAGING PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR BETTER SEO PERFORMANCE

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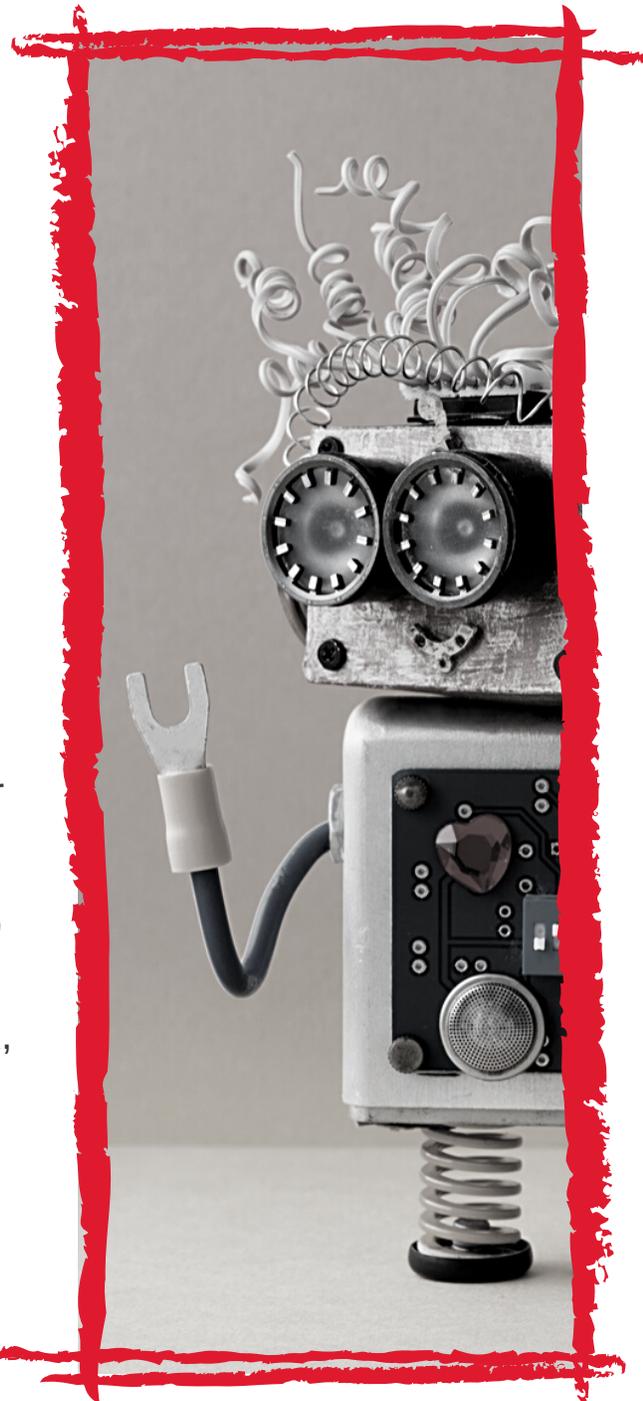
**VOXUS PR**

# PR PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SEO

Public Relations (PR) has evolved considerably over the past decade to become deeply intertwined with broader digital marketing strategies. In particular, as marketing has moved online, reaching and influencing customers often depends in large part on good search engine optimization (SEO). That emphasis on search is causing savvy organizations to reevaluate their PR programs to ensure they have a significant impact.

There was a time when it seemed like SEO would consume the entire marketing world, making other disciplines (including PR) obsolete. It didn't help that the impact of PR seemed difficult to measure, especially when compared to the data-driven, outcome-obsessed world of SEO. (Our last eBook, "[Measurement That Matters](#)," debunks that fallacy.) But the reality today is different.

**In fact, good PR is essential to search engine optimization.**

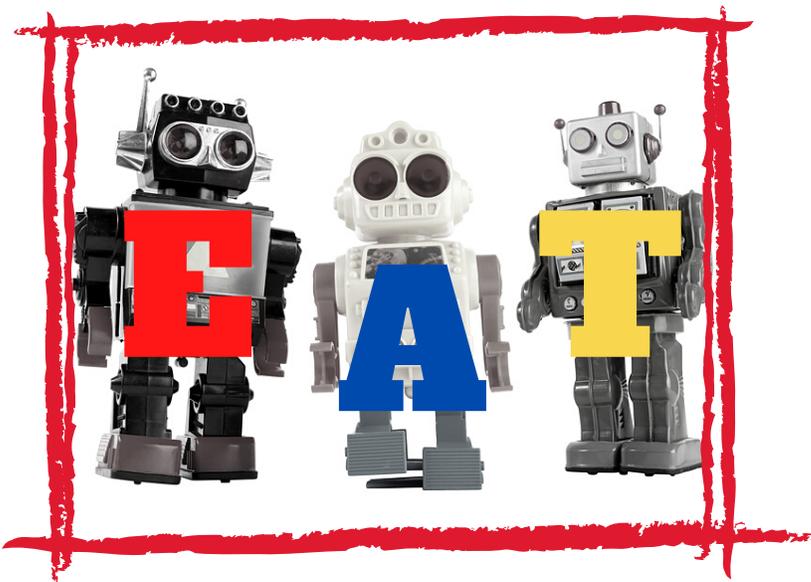




# SUCCESSFUL SEO CAN BE CHALLENGING

It's no secret that there are "good" and "bad" SEO strategies. Tactics that aim to game the system (bad SEO) become quickly obsolete – and are often penalized. Good SEO optimizes for what search engines consistently value, such that the impact grows over time.

Google, for instance, evaluates a range of factors – though the specifics are intentionally kept opaque – when determining where a web page shows up in search results. Some factors relate to site mechanics, such as page load times, use of HTTPS URLs, etc. But others are more subjective. The acronym E.A.T. is often used to describe how Google evaluates the content on websites; it stands for expertise, authority and trustworthiness.

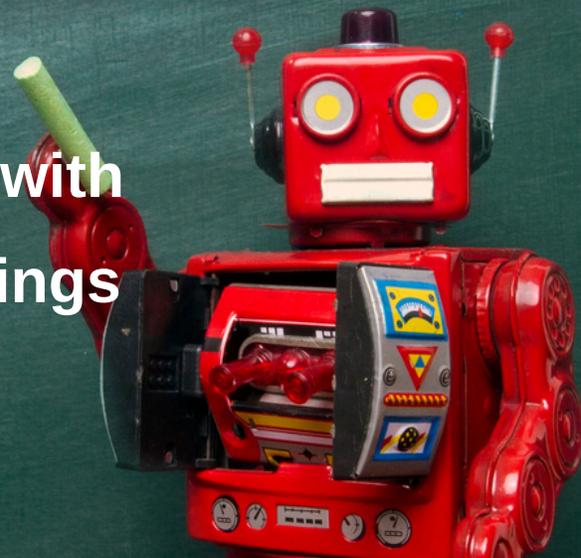


**It turns out effective PR has a strong influence across all three of these criteria.**

# HOW CAN PR IMPROVE SEO?

PR can have a profound impact on the brand's search rankings when done correctly and strategically. Organizations should adjust their PR programs along five key vectors.

1. Pay Attention to Domain Authority
2. Prioritize Search-Relevant Media
3. Build Authority with Content
4. Boost Validation and Traffic with Reviews, Rankings and Listings
5. Optimize Press Releases



Let's dive into each of these in more detail...

# PAY ATTENTION TO DOMAIN AUTHORITY

Domain Authority (DA) refers to the relevance of a website for a specific subject area or industry (essentially a rating system). And Page Authority (PA) is a secondary measure used to rate individual site pages.

Understanding the DA (or in some cases the PA) of target websites (for example publications, blogs, influencer sites, etc.) is a critical step in the marriage of PR and SEO.

It's obviously important to concentrate your outreach efforts on outlets with high DA and PA scores. That said, it's also important to know where your customers get their information; it might make sense to prioritize outlets with average DA if their visitor profile matches your target customer persona.

## **What tactics to consider?**

- Track and rank DA/PA scores for the outlets you target.
- Make DA a sortable data column on your publication, blogger or influencer databases/lists.
- When evaluating media outreach or thought-leadership placements, prioritize outlets with high DA/PA.
- Consider designing specific content campaigns for outlets with the highest DA.
- Track performance on search over time from placements in these key sites.

# PRIORITIZE SEARCH-RELEVANT MEDIA

When it comes to impacting SEO, it's important to secure media placements that include links. But for SEO purposes, all coverage isn't valued equally. Be sure to prioritize specific opportunities that are relevant to your business and audience. The old adage, "any press is good press," doesn't really translate when supporting SEO. It's the right outlet in concert with the right link that impacts SEO.

## What tactics to consider?

- Agree on what constitutes a good media opportunity by evaluating key factors including DA, audience and topic relevance.
- Be sure to verify that the outlet will allow link inclusion, and that the link will be dofollow (ie, link juice that positively ranks to your page) versus nofollow (a link that doesn't count toward your page's favor).
- Consider how to make your links appealing for journalists to include. For instance, be less promotional (a vanity link like "/acme\_salestips" would be poor) or create a neutral, brand-sanitized landing page to present data. Remember: small nuances can have a big impact on the media's willingness to include a link.
- Coordinate with your subject matter expert (SME) or team to consistently use keywords when sharing information with the press, in the hopes those will find their way into coverage.
- Track the impact of link inclusion in your search rank and site traffic.

# BUILD AUTHORITY WITH CONTENT

Placing a good thought leadership or technical article (authored by one of your SMEs) on an authoritative website can drive traffic back to your own domain, allow you to completely control the narrative and messaging, and help your brand rank highly for the search terms you care about most. This content can also be reworked and reused in other formats as part of a broader keyword strategy. For example, a contributed article can serve as the basis for a nonduplicate blog post, landing page, case study, whitepaper, ebook and more.

## What tactics to consider?

- Much like general media opportunities, you should start by using DA in ranking the list of publications that accept contributed content.
- Next, be sure to verify that the outlet you're contributing to allows links (dofollow). In many cases they allow a variety of links, so consider what relevant pages you could include.
- Think about keying on one specific keyword or phrase for the article. Evaluate keyword competition when making the selection (be strategic and realistic about SEO battles you can win). Include it at least four times and be sure to use it in the headline (and other headers).
- Need help planning out your keywords or evaluating competition, check out Google Adwords free keyword planning tool.
- Track the performance of these articles as related to defined keywords.

# CASE IN POINT: AUTHORITATIVE CONTENT

A few years ago Forbes introduced a Councils program that provides a platform for industry professionals from across different disciplines (e.g. tech, communications, agency, etc.) to share their expertise. While this is a "pay-to-play" opportunity, content posted here gets SEO juice from Forbes' highly ranked domain.

Links to Forbes Council articles will often turn up on the first page of search engine results pages (SERPs) for specific topics.

## What tactics to consider?

- Develop an editorial calendar of keyword-optimized content for Forbes Council articles.
- Try to publish on a regular basis (monthly for instance). Consider developing a series of articles on a specific topic to build even greater authority.
- Track the success of the program over time with SERPs and keyword ranking.
- Consider other pay-to-play content programs like IDG Network, ISMG, and more.

# BOOST VALIDATION & TRAFFIC WITH REVIEWS, RANKING & LISTINGS

A good product review serves two purposes. It provides third-party validation that your product or service does what it claims to do and shows that it provides good value for the money. It can drive high quality traffic (and links) back to your website, which will improve your own domain authority. For many customers, product reviews are an early and essential part of their journey from consideration to purchase decision.

Similarly, articles that compare or list similar products and services tend to rank highly in search, and often provide links back to the companies that are listed. Whether your company is product or service-focused, make sure you're doing everything possible to be included in any roundups that are written about your industry, service or product segment.

## What tactics to consider?

- Have your PR team conduct an audit to identify all the outlets that publish reviews, rankings and listings. Be sure to tier them based on value (DA, audience, etc.).
- Like any source, be sure they allow dofollow link inclusion. Remember Google considers links to (and from) reputable sources, as well as media mentions in evaluating expertise (and thus rank).
- Have a dedicated internal resource to support product reviews. Good reviews often depend on answering questions and resolving issues quickly.

# OPTIMIZE PRESS RELEASES

The function of a press release has evolved dramatically over the past decade. Done correctly, press releases can be an effective way to frame company and product messaging for media while also positively impacting SEO. Done incorrectly, however, a poor release can hurt SEO.

When crafting the news, it's important to follow the same guidelines that govern all good content:

- Effectively use keywords and phrases throughout the content (especially the headline and sub).
- That said, do not "keyword bomb" the release and tank readability.
- Properly post releases to your site (with tags, etc.) and link strategically to pillar content.
- Make sure the press release doesn't just duplicate other website content and is in fact newsworthy.
- Strategically include internal and external links only to relevant pages.
- Do not go overboard on linking; Google will penalize releases that are link-heavy or that include irrelevant links.
- You may even consider using nofollow links in the release.

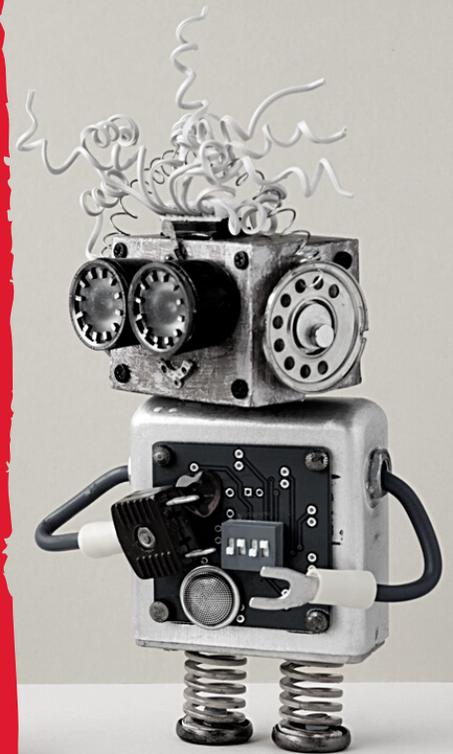
# OPTIMIZED FOR SEARCH

**Data shows that nearly seven out of 10 customers start the buying process using a search engine.**

As a result, most organizations have an active investment in SEO tactics as part of their digital marketing strategy.

Increasingly, these same companies are recognizing that PR can be a significant driver for optimizing search. At its core, PR is about developing awareness, relevance and authority through media. The products of good PR – high quality coverage and content – map directly to the criteria search engines use to rank websites.

If you're not working with your PR team to effectively boost search relevance in the five areas mentioned above, it's time to re-evaluate your SEO strategy.





# VOXUSPR

*Want to discuss how PR impacts SEO performance? We're here to help.*

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*We're always thinking about how to push our clients' marketing programs forward.*

*We enjoy telling stories – even complex ones – clearly, effectively, and in approachable ways.*

*Most of all, we love delivering more (for less) for clients that value focused, nimble and high-touch PR, social media and content services.*

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Phone: 253-851-5151

Email: [info@voxuspr.com](mailto:info@voxuspr.com)

Web: [www.VoxusPR.com](http://www.VoxusPR.com)

Twitter: @VoxusPR