

Does first page ranking mean success? No. Here's why...

 By [Dee Stephens](#)

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In the not-so-distant past, your SEO success was measured by whether or not you ranked on the first page of a Google search, but even if you did rank well, that doesn't necessarily mean that you saw results or will see if you do. So ranking at position three doesn't mean you will convert anyone.

Let's cover the basics first, we know in 2015, that SEO translates to search engine optimisation, a multitude of applications that help your site rank better in organic searches, making your business or site more visible to those who are looking for your brand, product, news, or services.

Search engines look for elements like keywords, title tags, inbound links, image tags and so forth, but they also look at your off site factors like site structure and design, traffic behaviour, social signals and other factors to decide how your site should be ranked in search engine results.

However: optimising for your keywords has nothing to do with including your keywords into your content as much as you can, in fact you will do more damage as search engines consider this to be keyword stuffing. Meaning the search engine knows exactly what you're up to, it recognises you are trying to rank for that particular keyword.



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So what now? The answer is that ranking is actually focused more on content with a combination of technical SEO techniques. When creating a new content piece/blog/post, incorporating your keywords should not be your key focus, it's what matters to your audience that really matters, so that should be your only focus.

If your content is aligned, your keywords will naturally pollinate the content and in turn your content will be naturally optimised in the process. When you cut it down to the nuts 'n' bolts, it's understanding your target audience, what they are looking for, and what interests them on the side that is the key to not only attracting relevant visitors, but keeping them. Bearing in mind that it is totally possible to have the same content rank for different terms!

Social search is now as an important factor to SEO than any other, as a few years ago it didn't make an iota of difference who found your site via social search, going into 2016, after 10 years of integration; social search is a major player in how SEO affects you.

It takes into account all the tweets, posts, Google+ authorship, and all other social signals.

See, the difference with social search is that it prioritises your content and the people that are connected to you and your brand. With social activity (Facebook and Twitter) now being available in a ranked Google search, it makes it far too easy for social ranking to be mistaken for real rank. The quality of your rank should be your primary focus. This translates into the following; when thinking about your SEO strategy, you have to consider and include your social strategy, you have to know that it's the long haul, this is not an overnighter.

Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Instagram have all implemented over a collective 750 new algorithms in the last year that directly affects all of us and our marketing efforts.

SEO is still the same thing, it's just the metrics of success that have changed considerably, to adapt to these changes. It's up to you to stay up to date with delivering the best experience possible to your desired audience. Part of that responsibility is to make sure you have the correct team driving your content and SEO.

The UX or users experience is now an important cog of SEO.

SEO is now about attracting that audience and getting them to stay and consume other content, content marketing at its core, lateral content if you will. I'm so sick and tired of the saying "Build it and they will come..." Yes indeed, they will come, but will they return? Or stay? Or convert? The list goes on... So let's look at why first page ranking does not actually translate into success.

If you attract a visitor with a keyword and that visitor isn't aligned to your content you lose. So instead of trying to attract a mass audience that is a little bit of a fly by night, or hit and run, think rather about how you could provide the content that they ARE looking for, and retain them.

Let's say you rank really well for a term that isn't really ideal for your business, you get heaps of traffic, but your bounce rate is sky high. So ranking for that particular keyword is a fruitless and wasted opportunity. But in truth, the top three slots don't translate to success; you could rank well on other pages, and have a high click through rate, albeit less traffic. As I always say "The amount of traffic to your page matters far less than how qualified that audience and traffic is."

ABOUT DEE STEPHENS

I am a dedicated individual, an analyst at heart, SEO professional, ORM professional, accomplished Content Marketer, SMO expert, and digital media award winner. Starting out as a content producer I have evolved this business to be the cornerstone of success in all things SEO and Content Marketing for my clients. My ability to identify and recognise the requirement, and craft the perfect online solution for my clients is un-paralleled.

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