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Search ...



Search engine.

# 17 SEO MYTHS **YOU SHOULD LEAVE BEHIND** IN 2016

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## FOREWORD

Over the last decade of SEO, **we've seen remarkable change** in how searchers perform queries and interact with results; in how engines crawl, index, and rank pages; and in how marketers effectively influence the engines to send them traffic. But, in spite of these monumental shifts, a shocking amount of misinformation about the practice of SEO persists. That's why we are so glad to see HubSpot addressing many of the myths that continue to bog down both aspiring and long-time practitioners.

It's possible that you've been contacted by SEO firms or SEO practitioners in the past who weren't fully above-board or that you've read articles in the blogosphere or the mainstream media (the latter is no less guilty than the former of spreading misinformation) that instilled some of these myths HubSpot will tackle as truths.

What's presented here are wrongheaded ways of thinking that can damage your marketing efforts on the web alongside some solid advice on how to avoid it.

**Please enjoy and apply, and best of luck in all your SEO efforts!**

**RAND FISHKIN**

Wizard of Moz

## INTRODUCTION

To say SEO has “changed a lot” would be an understatement. Just look at how Google’s Panda and Penguin algorithm updates shook the world of SEO professionals. Marketers and SEO agencies worldwide halted their link-building and keyword-obsessed ways and swapped them for a long overdue focus on quality content.

But does that mean an SEO’s job is just to pump out high-quality, keyword-optimized content? Far from it! In fact, SEO has changed so much in the past several years that many marketers aren’t sure what’s outdated, what’s important, what will actually move the needle, and what’s simply wasted effort. This guide is going to point out the most common myths and assumptions about how SEO works and debunk them for you. **Let’s get started!**

## MYTH #1

### KEYWORDS NEED TO BE AN EXACT MATCH

Keywords do not need to be repeated verbatim! In fact, nothing is more of a buzzkill than content that is awkwardly framed around one keyword or phrase. The goal should be to inform the reader, not to inform the search engines.



## MYTH #2

### I MUST SUBMIT MY SITE TO GOOGLE

The idea that you must submit your website to Google in order to appear in search results (or rank) is nonsense. While a brand new website can submit its URL to Google directly, submission does not guarantee anything.

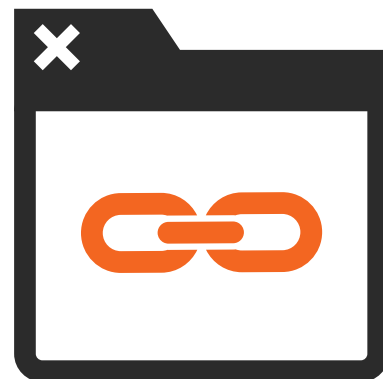


Crawlers will find your site and index it in due time, so don't be overly concerned about submitting it.

## MYTH #3

### MORE LINKS VS. MORE CONTENT

If you have a limited budget to invest in your website, I would say, "Hire someone to write for you!" Often when businesses hire someone to build their links, they focus on the quantity of links rather than their quality -- but linking is not a numbers game anymore (far from it).



When you invest in great content it will bring in more links over time. Research also indicates that search engines prefer content rich websites. Creating more, quality content will attract both visitors and Google.

## MYTH #4

### HAVING A SECURE (HTTPS ENCRYPTED) SITE ISN'T IMPORTANT FOR SEO

Ever wonder why some website URLs start with “HTTP” and others start with “HTTPS”? The former is your standard “HyperText Transfer Protocol,” which facilitates communication over computer networks.



The latter, “HTTP Secure,” provides the same functionality, only it has the benefit of an added layer of security called SSL/TLS.

In August of 2014, Google announced that it had started using HTTPS as a signal in their ranking algorithms, and as of 2016 more than one-third of Google’s results used HTTPS. While it is not essential to secure your site, sticking with HTTP may cause your where they’re commonly usrankings to suffer.

## MYTH #5

### SEO IS ALL ABOUT RANKING

While there's a strong correlation between search results placement and click through rates, ranking is not the supreme end goal that it used to be.

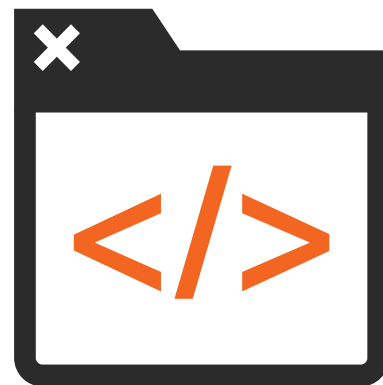


While searchers still favor the top search results, they also show similar click behavior with later results, so long as they were listed near the top of the page. Also, now that search results are appending rich text/snippets, lower results are now able to get higher click rates.

## MYTH #6

### META DESCRIPTIONS HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON SEARCH RANKINGS

Meta descriptions are HTML attributes that concisely explain the contents of a web page. You've seen them before on Google's search engine results pages (SERPs), ed as preview snippets.



Google announced back in 2009 that meta descriptions (and meta keywords) have no bearing whatsoever on search rankings. That's not to say that these descriptions aren't important for SEO. On the contrary: Meta descriptions present a major opportunity to separate yourself from the riff-raff and convince searchers that your page is worth navigating.

## MYTH #7

### SEO IS SOMETHING I CAN HAND OFF TO IT

There seems to be a perception that SEO requires some technical expertise. And, since the work is mainly technical, IT can just do the work. While there are some technical components to SEO, it requires way more than just technical knowledge, so I'd think long and hard before handing an entire project to IT or a web designer.



While IT professionals are adept at many areas -- just remember that IT personnel also work on things like setting up printers, which is ... well ... a different skill set than what's needed to effectively run an SEO strategy.

## MYTH #8

### ON-PAGE SEO IS ALL I NEED TO RANK

Until search engines are able to enter our brains and read our thoughts, we'll always need to use written language in order to make search queries. We need keywords to communicate. However, Google doesn't simply try and match keywords.



It tries to understand the intent behind those keywords so it can offer you relevant, high quality content.

The bottom line is: search engines of the future aren't going to punish you for under using keywords, but they will continue to punish you for overusing them.

## MYTH #9

### GOOGLE AUTHORSHIP CAN INCREASE MY SEARCH VISIBILITY & CLICK THROUGH RATES

Bad news, friends: In June of 2014, Google removed Google Authorship photos from search engine results pages. While your name and byline would still appear, your beautiful headshot would not.



Then, in August of 2014, Google struck the final blow to Authorship and completely dismantled the program. For 2017 — and the foreseeable future — you can forget about Authorship altogether.

## MYTH #10

### H1 IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ON-PAGE ELEMENT

Think of the content structure on your webpage as an outline. It's a tiered approach to present information to users and search engines. What title tag your headline is wrapped in has little to no influence on your overall SEO -- that title tag is only used for styling purposes.



It really doesn't matter what header tag you use, as long as you present your most important concepts upfront and close to the top of the page. Remember, you're optimizing your page for users first and foremost, which means that you want to tell them ASAP what your page is about.

## MYTH #11

### MY HOMEPAGE NEEDS A LOT OF CONTENT

Think of your homepage as the gateway to your business. Visualize it! This is your chance to make a first impression and convey what you're all about. Maybe your value proposition is simplicity -- in that case, just a single login makes sense (especially if your name is Dropbox).



Your homepage content should be long enough to clarify who you are, what you do, where you're located (if you're local), your value proposition, and what visitors should do next. These visitors should leave satisfied, not overwhelmed or underwhelmed -- and certainly not confused.

## MYTH #12

### THE MORE PAGES I HAVE, THE BETTER

You would think that the larger the footprint of your website, the better you would rank -- but it's simply not true. Not all your pages get indexed, and even if they are it doesn't mean they will bring in qualified traffic and leads.



Additionally, people who try to have lots of pages on their website also tend to overlook the quality of that content -- realistically, it's difficult to provide both. Publish only your best.

## MYTH #13

### FOR LOCAL SEO, I ONLY NEED TO LIST MY COMPANY'S CITY, STATE, AND/OR COUNTRY

This myth couldn't be further from the truth. If you're a local business, optimizing for local search won't only help you get found, but it will help you get found by people who are nearby and more likely to buy!

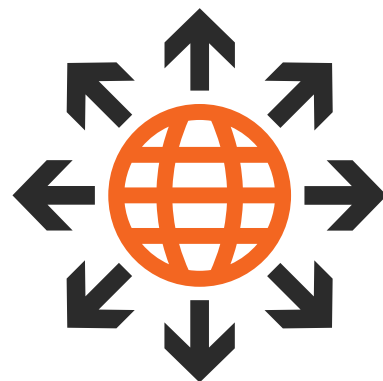


Looking forward, Google will continue to take steps to bubble the best local content to the surface of search results. Need proof? In July of 2014, Google took a major step in this direction with the release of its new Pigeon algorithm. The algorithm treats local search rankings more like traditional search rankings, taking hundreds of ranking signals into account.

## MYTH #14

### LINKING MICROSITES TO MY SITE WILL HELP MY SEO

The chances of this helping your SEO are slim to none. It's like having an election in which you vote for yourself a thousand times -- that still counts as one vote.



Search engines are smart enough to know who the registrants are for a domain and can see if it's the same person as your primary domain.

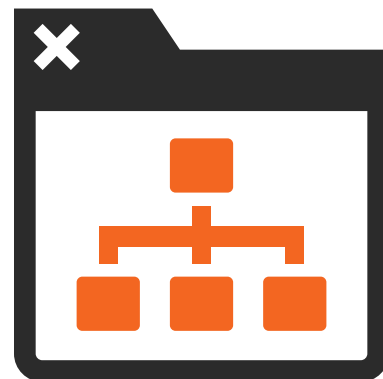
Instead of spreading your SEO thin, put all that love and energy into your primary domain.

## MYTH #15

### GOOGLE WILL NEVER KNOW IF I HAVE BAD SITES LINKING TO ME

#### **Yes, they will!**

Just like Santa Claus knows if you've been good or bad. Just like the Tooth Fairy knows when you've lost a tooth. Just like your parents can sense when you've missed your curfew.



The point is Google knows (everything). Don't try to fool them -- especially post-Panda, -Penguin, and -Hummingbird, or you will be sent to your room (well, in this case, penalized).

## MYTH #16

### SEO AND INBOUND MARKETING DON'T MIX

Au contraire! Inbound marketing and SEO are inexorably linked. If you think of the former as a giant wheel, you can think of the latter as a spoke on that wheel.



Inbound marketing is a holistic philosophy that focuses on efficiently turning strangers into people who want to -- and should -- do business with you. SEO is a specific marketing tactic that focuses on improving a business's visibility in -- and traffic from -- search engine results. SEO helps customers find you!

## MYTH #17

### SEO IS NOT ABOUT USABILITY

SEO is so much more than simply optimizing for search engines. You need to optimize for users first and foremost, so they actually click through your listing to your website and stay there.



To keep visitors on your site, ensure your website is intuitive and easy to browse, publish content that's personalized and relevant, and don't make visitors look for what they need. Provide clear calls-to-action, and you'll convert those visitors into contacts, leads, and -- eventually -- customers.

## CONCLUSION

Now that we've debunked the most common SEO myths, what are you doing that isn't moving the needle? Or worse, what are you doing that's making your SEO efforts even less effective? Understanding these SEO truths will make you both more competent and efficient with your organic search strategy.

If you can take one thing away from this guide, it's this: More than anything else, SEO is about the overall experience for a searcher, and that experience starts the moment they enter a search query. The better their experience with you -- from your SERP listing, to the quality and relevancy of the your content, to the ease with which they can move through your site -- the better your SEO will be, too.

## ABOUT US

Farotech International is a leading inbound marketing, SEO, and web development company dedicated to helping businesses large and small expand their presence on the internet and increase profitability.

WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW FAROTECH  
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