

## 7 Search Marketing Myths Your Firm Should Forget in 2015

Date : February 14, 2015



Google is constantly tweaking its [algorithm](#) in an effort to deliver the best information to its users. Big releases like Panda, Penguin, Hummingbird and Pigeon combine with smaller daily and weekly updates to create an environment in which search marketing tactics must continuously adjust. Some methods have remained relatively solid over the years, while others, like [keyword stuffing](#) and search engine submission, became obsolete long ago.

What are some common search marketing myths? What tactics can your firm drop in favor of up-to-date best practices? Below is a list of some of the more persistent myths that can be dropped in 2015.

### 1. Links are dead.

Many sites engaged in questionable link-building activities pre-Penguin were severely affected by the roll-out of the Penguin algorithm. The drastic drop in rankings seen by some created a ripple effect that still tarnishes the good name of ethical link-building today.

In its communication with the public, Google also tends to downplay the roll of links in favor of an emphasis on [quality content](#). Matt Cutts, head of Google's Webspam team, has been releasing [articles](#) and [videos](#) for the last three years detailing the importance of relevant, well-written content to Google's algorithm.

However, links are still an integral part of how Google determines which pages to return for a search

query. In 2014, Matt Cutts released a [webmaster video](#) on the future of backlinks. In it, he said, “I think backlinks still have many, many years left in them.” And number of backlinks placed fourth in [Moz’s 2014 list of ranking factors](#). While Google may be trying to limit the relevance of links over time, quality links are still important to search marketing.

Just remember, not all links are good links. A link from a long-standing, influential site carries more weight than a link from a newer or lower-authority site. And links from sites known to contain spammy content can do more harm than good.

## **2. WordPress is optimized out of the box.**

No [content management system](#) (CMS) is search engine optimized by default. Some marketers may try to use the myth of the optimized CMS as a selling point, when the reality is that a good CMS is just a starting point.

WordPress is search engine friendly; it can natively produce search engine compliant urls and structurally organize pages and posts, and it is built with lightweight, clean code. It also integrates well with many SEO plugins. All of this starts a site out in the right direction, but it will not replace an online marketing strategy implemented over time.

## **3. Links, content marketing or (fill in the blank) is all that matters.**

There is no one magic search marketing pill. Google is intentionally making its algorithm more complex in order to dissuade spam and other search marketing “cheating.” Links matter, content matters, authority matters, local matters and so on. Good search marketing is an amalgamation of many tactics, which shift over time in response to developments in the industry.

## **4. If you build it they will come.**

The Content is King mantra that has been parroted for the last four years leads many to believe that good content is the fulfillment of a search marketing plan. And, overused or not, the saying has more than a grain of truth at its center. Good, relevant content is critical to a website’s success, not just for marketing purposes but also for conversion. However, quality content in a vacuum is not enough.

Content must be promoted through a variety of outlets. Firms should actively court attention with activities ranging from manual link building to press appearances to social media shares and comments to classic networking. Make your content — and by association your firm — the news. The very process of promotion builds authority and trust, two admitted Google ranking factors, while driving a diverse range of [traffic](#) to your website.

## **5. SEO is quick and easy.**

Search marketing is a process. No amount of on-site, technical quick fixes can significantly affect a page’s ranking in the long term. Search marketing involves a number of moving pieces, any of which can change the effectiveness of another in sometimes surprising ways. Because of this, search marketing requires changes in tactics over time as algorithms evolve. Companies that try to sell a one-time fee, instant solution are trying to take advantage of unsuspecting buyers.

## **6. Paid search affects organic results.**

A long-running conspiracy holds that people who pay for advertising (pay-per-click) on any major search platform receive favorable treatment and higher organic rankings. According to [Moz](#), this myth has been debunked by both the search engine companies and their users. The organic and paid sides of Google, Yahoo! and Bing are completely separate from each other. Breaching that wall would violate the trust of all users and be a poor business strategy.

Pay-per-click advertising can be used to supplement organic search marketing. Done thoughtfully, it can be an affordable way to reach users that an organic listing may have missed. But it will not change the organic ranking of any participating site.

## 7. Penguin is a penalty.

Penguin in and of itself is not a penalty. It is an algorithm. If your site is suffering from a manual penalty, you will be informed by Google and given a chance to rectify the problems. But if your site has lost favor with Google without warning, you are suffering from a more nebulous problem: its algorithm no longer thinks your pages are relevant. This could be because the site has too much thin content or too much keyword heavy content. It could be because at some point in the past, poor-quality links were purchased. It is most likely a combination of many factors, but it is not a specific penalty with a clear path to recovery.

Sites that have been hit with an algorithm update have a lot of work to do. Work that may involve writing new content and removing or disavowing links. Work that may involve eliminating duplicate content left over from the old days of article distribution. Work that will most likely involve some technical steps in conjunction with an active marketing and networking campaign. Building authority, winning high-value links and getting social mentions requires a lot of activity. The good news is that such activity is likely to hold up over time regardless of changes made by Google.

By [Kristen Friend](#) - Kristen is a 1999 graduate of Indiana University, with Bachelors Degrees in both journalism and religious studies. In 2003, she graduated from the International Academy of Design. She is a contributor to the Bigger Law Firm magazine, and is the Art Director for Adviatech (Custom Legal Marketing's parent company). When she isn't making law firms look their best, Kristen can be found hiking up Mt. Tamalpais or inventing gluten free baking recipes.

## Share:

- 
- 
- 
- 
-