

# LINK BUILDING VS MANAGED SEO

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FREE HOW-TO GUIDE

Research by

# LINK BUILDING VS MANAGED SEO

If you own, manage or have a business you need to promote, you will be keen to make its website more visible to your target audience. The only way to do this is to implement SEO techniques to improve your organic ranking and expose the site to new audiences.

Gone are the days when the quantity of backlinks was the key to unlocking a high-ranking position on the search engine results pages (SERPs).

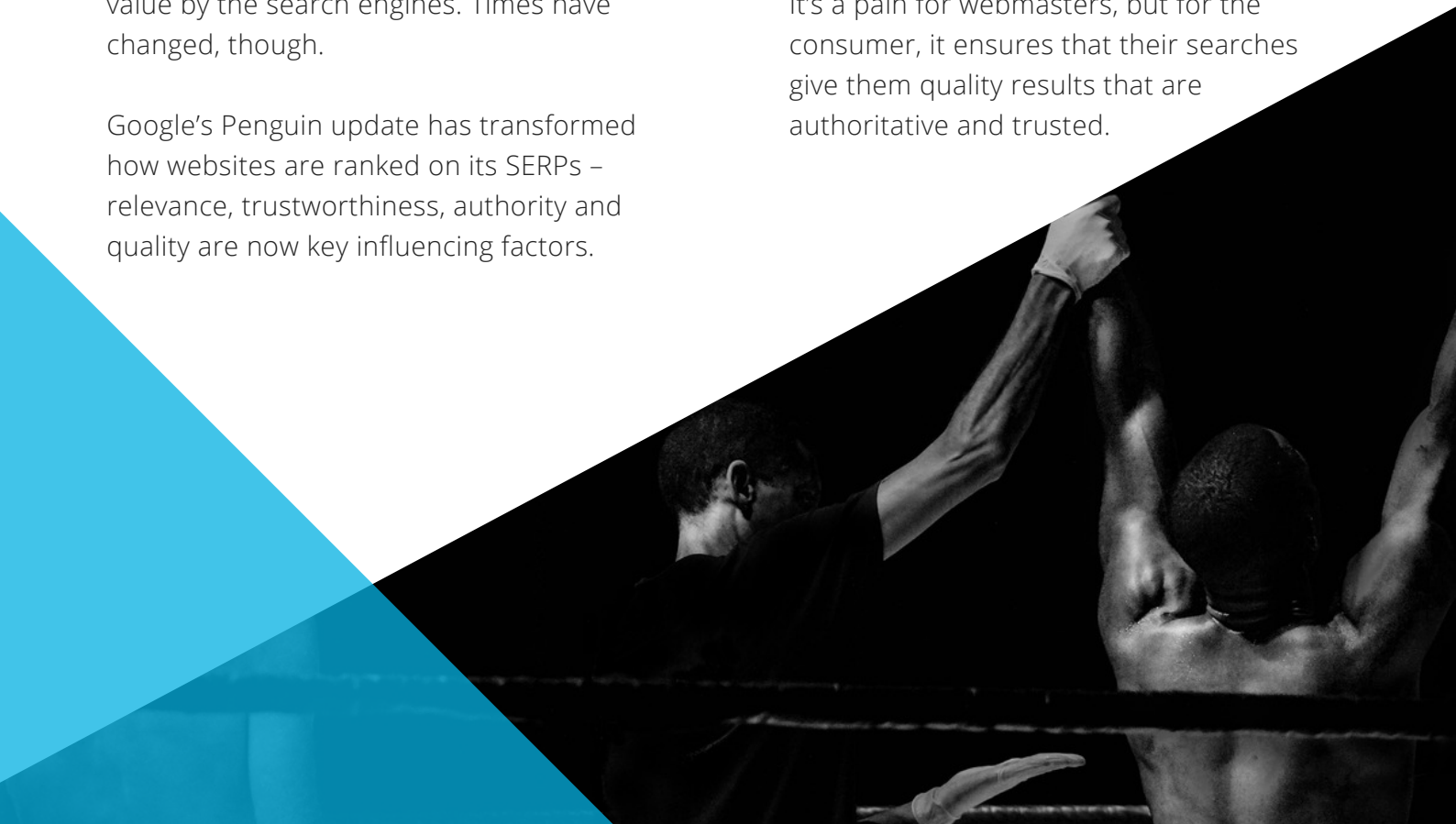
It didn't matter where the links came from – forums, chat rooms, blog comment sections, random websites – all were given the same value by the search engines. Times have changed, though.

Google's Penguin update has transformed how websites are ranked on its SERPs – relevance, trustworthiness, authority and quality are now key influencing factors.

Google assesses the quality of the content and the backlinks that point to the website to determine the relevance and value it can provide to the search engine user, and to evaluate whether the site is worth its ranking position.

Google's Penguin update has cleaned up the SERPs - it has annihilated the websites that relied on black-hat link building techniques. With each algorithmic update that Google rolls out, new queries and challenges to the quality of the websites come under scrutiny – Google keeps raising the bar, so you must keep up to speed with new updates.

It's a pain for webmasters, but for the consumer, it ensures that their searches give them quality results that are authoritative and trusted.





# HOW CAN YOU GET QUALITY BACKLINKS?

Penguin has tweaked the process for defining which backlinks are valuable to your website. The most effective way for your website to be found is through organic search using keywords and through the links that have been acquired through merit.

Through merit?

Yes, through merit. While Penguin makes you work harder to earn your links, it inadvertently helps to boost your ranking.

Any archaic methods (black-hat techniques) will see that your ranking on SERPs plateaus and eventually diminishes, whereas now?

You are given the opportunity to keep on rising as you embrace multiple tactics to support your digital marketing strategy.



## CONTENT IS KING

One way to guarantee quality backlinks from top-tier publication sites is to publish high-quality content.

This involves high-level research into identifying what subjects and topics these publications are likely to be interested in and producing content that befits their standards. It's a tall order, and it's a high-risk strategy, but if successful it will pay dividends..

## GUEST BLOGGING AND COLLABORATION

Guest blogging on or collaborating with a valued site is a great way to ensure the quality of your backlink. You have control over how your website is represented.

However, it's a fine line between flouting Google's guidelines and the white-hat techniques they promote and paying for articles to be published. There is a real risk of being penalised! You need to understand who you are working with by developing a relationship with them, plus the content needs to be relevant to the site regarding tone and context.

Developing a successful backlink profile is a time-consuming task that requires patience, resilience and diligence; that's on top of SEO skills. You need to know which link building attributes will help your business grow, and which ones can lead you to being penalised by Google.

## PURE LINK BUILDING

There are 2 options for you to explore with respect to maximising the effect of link building to improve your website's ranking:

- Pure link building.
- Managed SEO campaign.

Let's look at pure link building first.

If your website is optimised for organic ranking, you need offsite content that will support it and strengthen brand awareness and develop your credibility.

A pure link building campaign is a critical asset to your strategy. Pure link building solely focuses on building links on external publishing sites that point to your website.

You need to identify which keywords to use and the landing page that they are going to point to. This can take ample amounts of research.





# HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE KEYWORDS TO TARGET?

## RELEVANCY

Your keywords should be relevant to your business. Google trawls your backlink profile for relevance to your content, and so there should be an obvious and clear relationship between the two.

## STYLE

Your keywords should be included within a diverse range of anchor texts. Naturally placed links within relevant editorial are ranked higher than obvious keyword links that stick out like a sore thumb.

## VOLUME

While you want to use keywords that are searched for, you don't want your site to be ranked using words that are competing against hundreds and thousands of other websites. It's a fine balance between popular searches and overly competitive ones.



# HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH URL SHOULD BE THE LANDING PAGE?

It can be a tricky decision to make and boils down to personal preference. How targeted do you want the traffic to your site to be? Is it better to drive targeted traffic to a relevant page, or bring general traffic to your homepage?

You need to ensure that there is relevancy between your keyword and the landing page – think about the user and the call to action that you are promoting. Your landing page should funnel visitors down the pathway that you want them to take. Always have user experience at the forefront of your decision. Remember, confusion kills conversion!



WWW.

## PUBLISHING SITES

Now that the keywords and landing page have been confirmed, it is time to find websites that can publish content that carries your backlink.

In-house software is used to identify which sites will potentially be most beneficial to you and meet the metrics that you have identified. A combination of tools is then used to further analyse the sites and gain a holistic view of the sites' metrics.

### THESE INCLUDE:

- Ahrefs.
- Link Research Tools.
- Majestic SEO.
- Moz.com.
- Search Metrics.
- SEMrush.com.

The benefit of using a variety of tools is that you can get a deep understanding of how the publishing sites are perceived and received by the search engines and the searchers alike.

Once the sites that will be most relevant to your links, website and the target demographic have been identified, we forward you a list of sites for your approval. You have control over which sites your links will be published on.

You may be surprised at some of the sites that have been chosen, but they will have been added for the merit of their metrics – this is not an emotion and sentiment led exercise, but one based on facts and figures!

## THE CONTENT

With an approved list of publishing sites, our in-house team of creative content writers get to work.

They research your business and write compelling and unique content that is suitable for the publishing site and includes your keywords and the link to your selected URL.

It will not be obvious to the readers that the content is written for the express purpose of carrying a link.

The articles that are produced are written in accordance with white-hat guidelines and using techniques designed to increase the ranking position of your keywords.

## THE CONTENT FOR A LINK BUILDING CAMPAIGN NEEDS TO BE:

- Natural.
- Not overly promotional.
- Not link rich (so that the value of each link is not diluted).
- Unique.
- Authoritative.
- Relevant.

# WHEN IS PURE LINK BUILDING THE BEST OPTION FOR YOU?

You don't have the time to devote to identifying relevant quality publishing sites.

You don't have access to the metric testing tools for publishing sites.

You have a digital marketing strategy in place.

You have a deadline to meet for backlinks.

You know the keywords that you want to target.

You know the landing page that you want to promote.

You don't have the time to research the latest white-hat techniques.

You don't have the time to write unique and relevant content that complies with the latest white-hat techniques.

You don't have the time for manual outreach.





# MANAGED SEO CAMPAIGNS

You are expert in your own niche and industry, but perhaps the online world of SEO gives you the heebie-jeebies. A managed SEO campaign can be the answer to your prayers. The online representation of your business is potentially your greatest asset, and so you need to take steps to ensure that you protect and nurture it to help it reach its full potential.

Collaboration is key to the success of a managed SEO campaign. You will need to make tweaks to your website to optimise it to the demands of SEO. This usually means that you need to make technical changes to your site and to the content that you currently have published.



# AUDIT

**YOUR SITE IS AUDITED  
TO IDENTIFY WHERE  
YOUR SITE MAY NOT BE  
REACHING ITS FULL SEO  
POTENTIAL.**

**Technical SEO:** the architecture of your site needs to be optimised as part of your managed SEO campaign. This includes things like how you have labelled your images, your meta descriptions and title tags on your web pages to name but a few.

**Poor quality backlinks:** not all backlinks are created equal. Links from sites that have been penalised by Google, have poor quality or duplicated content, or are from sites that have no relevance to your site can negatively affect your ranking.

**Using ineffective keywords:** using keywords that are not productive can seriously dampen your SEO efforts. It is critical that the most effective keywords are used to attract the target audience to your site. Using duplicate keywords can prompt your site to be deemed as spam.

**Private blog networks:** you may have inadvertently joined a private blog network (PBN) to link to your website. While external links to your site will boost your ranking, links from a PBN are a short-term fix, and you risk being penalised by Google for implementing black-hat techniques.







## PROFILE

Once a complete picture of how your website's SEO is limiting its success, a profile is created that details the fixes that need to be made to improve its performance.

The report documents the quick fixes that need to be applied to your website to improve its SEO and provides insight into the limitations and SEO gaps in your current strategy.

Long-term solutions are identified and prioritised to clearly define the road map that your campaign will follow.

## RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

To create an effective SEO campaign, detailed research and analysis needs to be undertaken.

Remember, this is metric based and every decision is backed up by fact and figures to boost your site's performance.

This is a critical step to ensure exceptional results are achieved



## DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

The word is bandied about, but do you know the difference between a strategy and a tactic? Quite often the words are used interchangeably, but they are very different beasts.

Strategy: why, what, and where.

### TACTIC: HOW.

Your digital marketing strategy is the glue that unites your SEO tactics. It needs to be ordered, planned and controlled to ensure that it is effective. You don't want to shut the stable door after the horse has bolted!

A strategy gives you a measured framework to work within and must be defined before you implement the tactics. Every business is unique, and so there will never be a one-size-fits-all approach. Your customers have different expectations when they engage with your business in comparison to your competitors, so it is important that time is spent to identify the best strategy for your business.

## HOW DO YOU CREATE A DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY?

Defining your strategy requires research, analysis and evaluation; it requires insights and experience. A deep understanding of your business needs to be attained.

What is your business?

Who are your customers?

Who are your target customers?

What are your current marketing efforts?

What are your goals?

What are your objectives?

Who are your competitors?

What's your timeframe?

A digital marketing strategy is critical to your business's success so that you can take full advantage of the growing opportunities that digital marketing presents. Without one, you risk your business falling behind the competition.

A managed SEO campaign incorporates a digital marketing strategy within its remit – it doesn't just implement tactics haphazardly but introduces them to an agreed schedule. The benefit of a managed SEO campaign is that it is flexible and agile. Rather than being set in stone, it can evolve to satisfy market changes and technological innovations. The digital landscape, as well as the search engine algorithms, is ever changing and so your SEO campaign needs to be responsive to keep you ahead of your competition and in a high-ranking position.



# COMPETITION

To rank highly above your industry competition, thorough research of your competitors is necessary. Their strengths and weaknesses are identified so any gaps in their strategy can be exploited and used to your advantage. Which keywords do they use? Which are most effective and profitable, and where do the previously untapped opportunities lie?

## KEYWORDS

Using the data from competition research and search tools (for example, SEMrush, Ahrefs, Search Metrics and Link Research Tools), the best keywords to optimise your site's visibility in organic search are identified using metrics. The keywords are used to optimise your onsite content as well as the offsite anchor text in the content that is created.

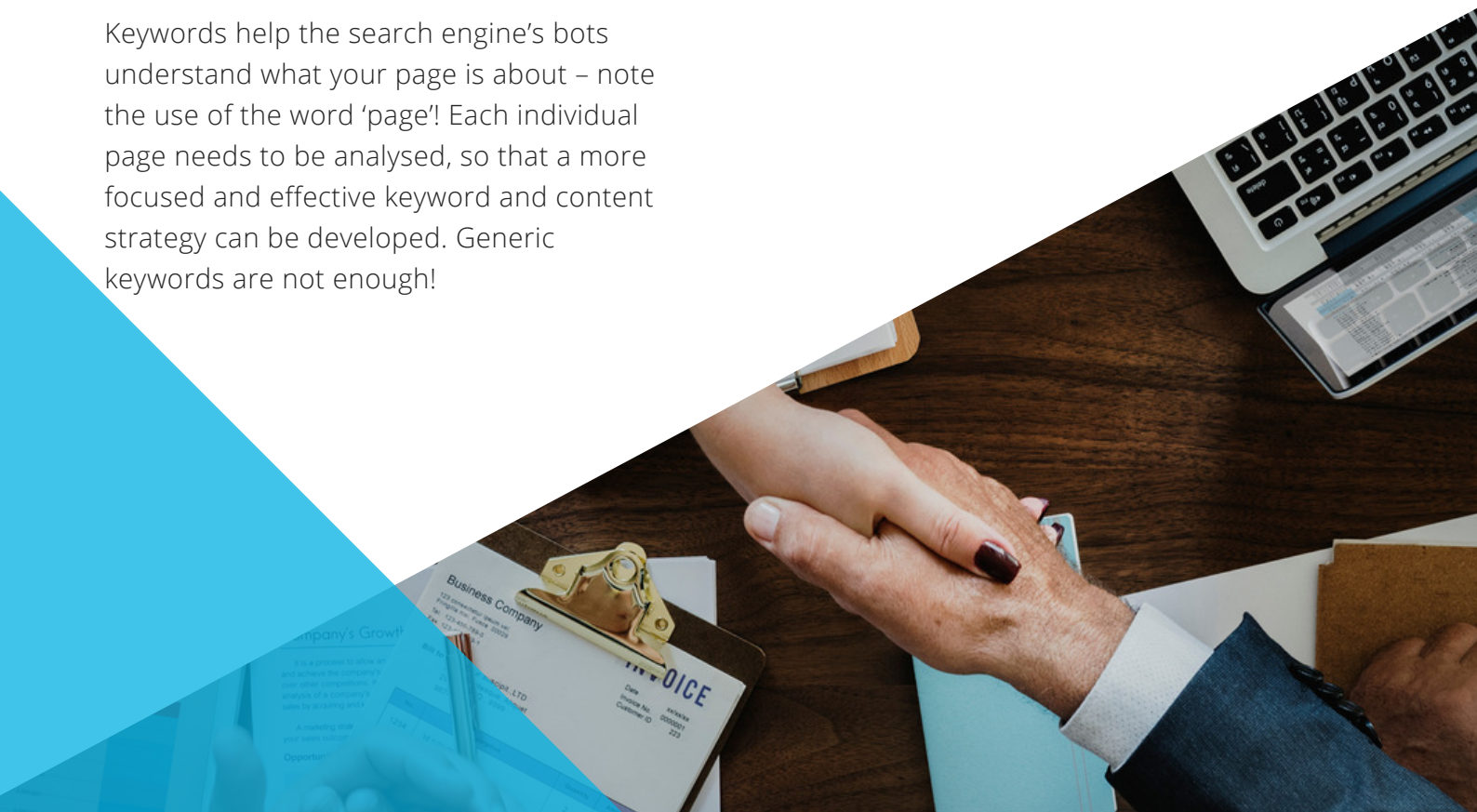
Keywords help the search engine's bots understand what your page is about – note the use of the word 'page'! Each individual page needs to be analysed, so that a more focused and effective keyword and content strategy can be developed. Generic keywords are not enough!

## BACKLINKS

You now know why quality matters for your backlinks moving forward, but what about your historic links? Your site's health is the priority, and that means looking at links that have been made in the past. You need to have links from diverse external sources, the anchor texts need to vary, and the links need to work.

Analysing your backlink profile is a critical part of a managed SEO campaign. Google is so hot on relevance and quality that being negligent with your online history will jeopardise any positive actions you are taking now.

The greater the number of quality links that you have pointing to your website, the higher it will organically rank.





# USER EXPERIENCE

How do people navigate around your site? You may think you know how your website is used, and which pages are efficient in funnelling visitors to the checkout, but your site's metrics often tell a very different story.

Using a variety of tools and in-house algorithms, where you are leaking visitors and where you are attracting them can be defined. This isn't about gut feelings and intuition – it's not an art but a science.

You need to know your strengths and weaknesses so that you can be proactive in developing your website's SEO.

Detailed research and analysis exposes which pages are your workhorses and which are the show ponies – the effective and the under performing.

Every aspect of your site should provide you with a return on your investment. If individual pages are not working to their full potential, tweaks need to be made to ensure that every page works towards your business goals.

Analysis of the users' experience and your business objectives helps to determine the landing pages that should be used for the offsite anchor text. This is an important part of managing your SEO campaign.



## BUILD LINKS

Once your website is technically optimised and its content maximised for search, you are then in a position to get your website out there and visible to your target audience.

Read the previous section for pure link building again – a managed SEO campaign incorporates link building as a standard. You will now have a clearer understanding of just how important quality backlinks are to the success of your SEO campaign.

## TRACK

A managed SEO campaign is not an overnight solution for an under performing website. It's a long-term commitment to helping your business reach its full potential. How can you be sure that your SEO campaign is working?

A detailed and transparent road map of the campaign combined with the metrics of your site's activity and the links that point to it are tracked to ensure that you have the data to confirm its success. Remember, we don't deal with feelings – we want hard metric evidence as to what is working and what needs more attention.

By tracking the activity related to your website, you can keep it and your digital presence well and truly in the realm of white-hat techniques. The risk of falling foul of Google's algorithms and receiving a penalty is dramatically reduced. It also enables you to future-proof your website – you'll be responsive to changes in the marketplace and to visitor habits.



# WHEN IS A MANAGED SEO CAMPAIGN THE BEST OPTION FOR YOU?

- You don't have a defined digital marketing strategy.
- You have an under performing website wish to increase its visibility.
- You don't have the time to devote to optimising your website.
- You don't have the necessary SEO skills.
- You want a cost-effective solution that you can budget for.

Whether a pure link building or a managed SEO campaign is more relevant to your business model, both rely on successful outreach management to gain your curated links the visibility that they need.

Outreach is an important aspect of your link building strategy. Manual outreach is a time-consuming task, but it is an essential part of the link building process - reaching out to influential publishing sites to develop a working relationship with them.



## CONCLUSION

Your online presence is critical to your business's success. Whether you have a digital marketing strategy in place or not, you must pay attention to how the business is represented online.

While Google penalises those who manipulate their content to exploit the algorithms to raise their ranking on the search engines results pages, it does not mean that you can't safely work within their guidelines to better your position – using celebrated white-hat techniques, of course!

Developing your online presence can feel like a minefield. There are so many things to avoid and so many things that are critical – there is often a fine line between the two. The aim of the game is to boost your ranking position – how you get there is in your hands.

If you have a digital marketing strategy in place and wish to develop your online presence through natural link placement in bespoke articles, the pure link building option would meet your requirements. You can accurately target your audience and increase visibility and ranking position.

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If you need a more inclusive SEO experience, a managed SEO campaign will allow you to outsource your SEO entirely – you will benefit from the multiple skills that are on offer and be able to work within a defined framework to meet your goals.

In summary, the key to unlocking your website's potential is by being moralistic:

Give value to your audience.  
Guarantee quality.  
Enhance user experience.





# CONCLUSION

Google's mission statement gives credence to this and guides you as to how you should approach your link building and online presence:

"Organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."

We have worked hard to develop a relationship strategy that enables us to work with key influencers to give the content and your links the exposure that they need. The bloggers and webmasters that we approach are busy just like you, and so pitches and negotiations need to be managed and carefully orchestrated to enable your links to be active on valued, trusted and effective websites.

## ORGANISED

You need to be in control of the direction that your online presence has been heading and where you are directing it to. Show the same amount of organisation to your backlinks as you do your content.

## ACCESSIBLE

Your website should give people the information that they desire in an accessible format. A quality backlink makes your site more accessible to the masses, so you are able to piggy-back on the hosting site's success.

## USEFUL

Google loves relevance. Remember, it's all about user experience, so if a link to your site comes from an unrelated source, the user will be flummoxed. Your backlinks need to be from pages that are relevant to your niche, so that Google can read that there is a relationship there that is worth celebrating.

There is no supremely quick way of achieving a high-ranking position on the SERPs, but you can be proactive in building on your success. Google makes you work harder for your ranking position more so than before. Don't think of this as a negative thing though – it means that your ranking position is more valuable than ever before – it's authentic and natural.

By spending time reviewing your current strategy and tactics, you will discover new opportunities to grow your business. Therefore, to improve your ability to rank highly in the SERPs, you must plan, research, analyse, evaluate and act.

# CONTACT US TODAY



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