

Jaguar Land Rover

SEM & SEO Guidelines



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1. Paid Search (SEM) Guidelines



1.1. Overview

This is a guide for Jaguar Land Rover (“JLR”)’s partners in Tier 3, outlining best practices for Paid Search on the three major search engines, Google, Bing and Yahoo. The objective of these guidelines are: (1) protecting the Jaguar and Land Rover brands, (2) ensuring consistency of its use across all tiers in terms of both messaging and delivery, and (3) establishing safeguards precluding artificial inflation of bidding prices and cost-per-clicks (“CPCs”) for key terms.

This guide covers the following key components:

- ✓ Definitions
- ✓ Strategy
- ✓ Keyword Guidelines
- ✓ Overlap Guidelines
- ✓ Bidding Guidelines
- ✓ Use of Trademarked Terms
- ✓ Creative Guidelines
- ✓ General Best Practices

1.2. Definitions

Dealer or retailer websites are classified in three tiers based on the concentration of dealers in a particular area and the digital agency management. The highest tier, Tier 1, is comprised of national websites, while the lowest tier, Tier 3, is comprised of websites of individual retailers. Tier 2, the middle tier, is further broken down into “multipoint” locations with multiple dealers and “singlepoint” locations with one dealer in the area. Below are examples of websites classified within the tier structure:

Definition	Land Rover	Jaguar
Tier 1	LandRoverUSA.com	JaguarUSA.com
Tier 2 Multipoint	LandRoverTristate.com	TristateJaguar.com
Tier 2 Singlepoint	LandRoverCharlotte.com	N/A
Tier 3	LandRoverNorthPoint.com	JaguarPeoria.com

* Mindshare does not manage Tier 2 Singlepoint for Jaguar.

Mindshare is the digital agency managing Tier 1, Tier 2 Multipoint, and Tier 2 Singlepoint for JLR; excluding Tier 2 Singlepoint for Jaguar. These guidelines provide recommendations for optimal search strategy for each of the three tiers. Sample keywords and ad examples in these guidelines are focused on Land Rover, but the same recommendations apply to Jaguar as well.

1.3. Strategy

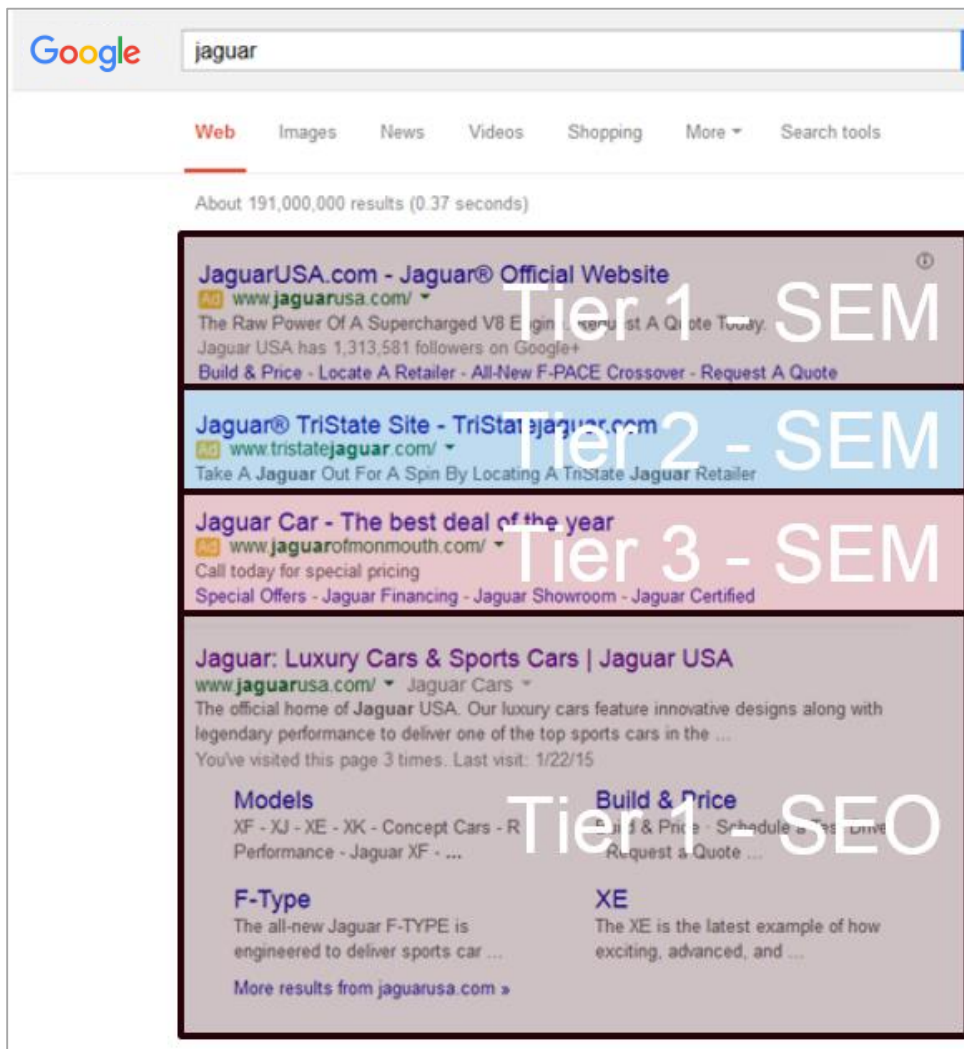
JLR’s strategy is to deliver highly relevant messaging based on keyword intent throughout the entire purchase path for a prospective owner. In conjunction with this, JLR leverages Tier 1, Tier 2 Multipoint, and Tier 2 Singlepoint to block out top ad positions from core competitors (including Lexus, Audi, Mercedes Benz, BMW, and Porsche) and lead aggregator sites (including Edmunds and Kelley Blue Book).

The goal of JLR’s Tier 1 strategy is to educate consumers, who are looking to explore and research Jaguar or Land Rover vehicles. Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint sites focus on informing prospective owners about regional and local special offers within in their perspective area. The primary goal across Tier 1, Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint is to drive leads and engagement. Our guidelines below seek to advance each tier’s goals.

1.4. Paid Search Coordination Goals

1. Achieve search engine results page dominance for all top level branded keyword search phrases
2. Lower costs involved through coordinated bidding
3. Increase lead generation on National and Retailer websites

1.5. Optimal Search Engine Results Page



1.6. Keyword Guidelines

The guidelines for each tier are intended to facilitate the role of such tiers play along the consumer purchase path.

- No Broad Match keywords are to be used; Exact, Phrase and Broad Match Modified match types only.

- **For Broad Match Modified keywords, every term within the keyword must contain “+” directly in front of the term.**
1. Tier 1 national campaigns help consumers to learn about the brand and explore the opportunities it opens. As such, these campaigns are the most exhaustive in terms of keyword coverage with Brand, Vehicle-specific, Segment, and Conquesting terms.
 - a. Keyword examples include:
 - i. Brand: “land rover”, “range rover”, “range rover sport”;
 - ii. Segment: “luxury SUV”, “fuel efficient suv”, “crossover suv”; and
 - iii. Conquest: “bmw x5”, “porsche cayenne.”
 2. Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint campaigns focus on top Brand keywords, as well as regionally geo-modified versions of Brand, Vehicle specific, Segment terms, and specific Retailer names. Within Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint campaigns, Tier 1 and Tier 3 ads run in position 2-5 to prevent competitors, such as Mercedes Benz, from taking up top positions in searches involving Jaguar or Land Rover terms. This ensures that Tier 1 or Retailers appear in top positions, while competitors show in lower ads positions. This is referred to as the ‘Blocking Out Strategy’.
 - a. Keyword examples include:
 - i. Brand: “land rover”, “range rover sport”;
 - ii. Geo-Modified Brand: “tristate land rover”, “atlanta area range rover”;
 - iii. Retailer Names: “land rover princeton”, “land rover monmouth”; and
 - iv. Segment: “suv dealers south carolina”, “luxury suv dealer locations illinois.”
 3. Tier 3 campaigns focus on city-level geo-modified versions of Brand and Vehicle specific keywords. Tier 3 markets can also bid on top level brand terms, but must follow the CPC guidelines in this document. These guidelines include position rules ensuring similar efficiencies between Tier 2 Multipoint, Tier 2 Singlepoint and Tier 3. Tier 3 terms may also include Inventory and Price related keywords.
 - a. Keyword examples include:
 - i. Geo-Modified Brand: “land rover paramus inventory”, “range rover prices manhattan.”

1.7. Overlap Guidelines

A launch of an independent Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint campaign through a third party digital agency without coordination with Mindshare may give rise to several problems. If such third party neglects to adhere to certain permissible categories discussed below, concurrent bidding on the same terms by the third party and Mindshare on behalf of the same dealer will artificially inflate the CPCs. Furthermore, such approach violates Google’s advertising policy specific to Double Serving, which discourages advertisers from running ads for the same business across multiple accounts triggered by the same keywords. Several violations can result in consequences, including account suspension by Google. Please see link below for further details on Google’s advertising policy on Double Serving:

- <https://support.google.com/adwordspolicy/answer/2600168?hl=en>

In an effort to limit Double Serving occurrences, the following categories are set forth in Table 1 to delineate bidding between Mindshare and third party. A third party is permitted to bid on Financing, Parts & Accessories, Service & Collision and Trade In Value.

Table 1. Keyword Categories

Category	Who bids on this?	Category Definition	Example Terms
Brand General	Mindshare	General branded terms	land rover, jaguar, land rover vehicles
Brand - Geo Modified	Mindshare	Geo-modified branded terms	land rover new york, South Florida Jaguar
Branded Dealership	Mindshare	Retailer, dealer, dealership, store/hours terms	land rover dealerships, jaguar dealer
Model Specific	Mindshare	Branded and non-branded model specific terms	range rover sport, jaguar xf, evoque, lr4,
Segment	Mindshare	Non-branded vehicle terms	luxury suv, luxury sedan
Leasing & Offers	Mindshare	Specials, offers, lease, leasing rates related terms	land rover special, jaguar xj lease
Price & Purchase	Mindshare	Sale, purchase, price, payment, credit related terms	F-type prices, range rover evoque price
Certified Pre-Owned	Mindshare	Pre-Owned vehicle, previous model year terms	preowned land rover, used xk, preowned lr4
*Dealer Brand Names	Mindshare	Dealership related names	Warren Henry Jaguar, Dimmitt Land Rover
Warranty	Third Party	Warranty related terms	land rover warranty, xj extended warranty
Financing	Third Party	Finance, credit application related terms	finance a land rover, xf pre-approval
Parts & Accessories	Third Party	Parts, accessories, tires related terms	range rover accessories, f-type exhaust
Service & Collision	Third Party	Service, collision, body shop related terms	jaguar xk body shop, range rover service
Trade In Value	Third Party	Trade in value, value your trade related terms	trade in Jaguar, land rover trade in value

* Mindshare bids on Dealer Brand Names to lower positions to assist in blocking out competitor and lead aggregator ads.

Mindshare provides a top 500 keyword list to further assist clarification around Double Serving. Mindshare delivers coverage for these terms for Land Rover Retailers and recommends not using a third party bid on these terms.

Promotional campaigns should not drive traffic to Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint sites managed by Mindshare. For instance, launching a campaign around a holiday. With respect to each of the above instances, please contact Mindshare.

1.8. Bidding Guidelines

These guidelines will ensure that your dealer ads appear on top of search results based on the Quality Score ("QS") assigned by Google and Bing. By way of background, QS is an estimate of how relevant your ads, keywords, and landing page are to a person viewing your ad. Higher QS typically lead to lower costs and better ad positions. Relevant ads tend to earn more clicks, appear in a higher position, and bring you the most success. Because the above Keyword Strategy will likely establish your ads as very relevant, your ads are likely to have a high QS and thus, appear at the top of the results.

- For top Brand, Segment and Vehicle specific keywords, Tier 1 will retain the top position, followed by Tier 2 Multipoint or Tier 2 Singlepoint then Tier 3 ads. This allows Tier 1 to cover the more general, expensive keywords. For Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint, top brand terms should be geo-modified to the specific region, (e.g., "Tristate Land Rover"). Similarly, Tier 3 should also geo-target to the city or DMA and geo-modify their keywords as well, (e.g., "Detroit Land Rover").
 - Maximum CPC bids for Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint should remain below \$3.00 and retailers should bid to positions 2-3; and
 - Maximum CPC bids for Tier 3 should remain below \$2.50 and retailers should bid to positions 3-5.
- For region-specific keywords Tier 2 Multipoint or Tier 2 Singlepoint will retain the top position, with Tier 3 targeting the remaining positions. These terms will yield the highest results for your campaigns, and we recommend you should focus your keyword strategy on those terms. This also ensures each tier occupies its own informational space without competing against each other, which ensures there is no inadvertent inflating of CPC's.
 - Maximum CPCs bids for Tier 2 Singlepoint and Tier 3 should remain below \$2.50, and retailers should bid to positions 2 and below.

- Tier 1 will participate in the auction for Tier 3-specific searches in order to support the “blocking out” strategy; all retailer names are bid to lower positions 3-7 by Tier 1 to mitigate against competitor and lead aggregator ads.

1.9. Use of Trademark Terms

- Please direct any site related trademark disapprovals specific to Mindshare for submission to JLR.
- Sites are initially screened by JLR and submitted for approval through Ansira.
 - Once the approval is granted, Ansira will follow up with a letter of confirmation, and Mindshare will proceed with Google to authorize usage of trademark terms;
 - If sites are disapproved, please follow-up with Ansira on re-submitting for pre-approval.

1.10. Creative Guidelines

Anatomy of a Search Ad – Toyota Example:

The image shows a Google search for "toyota highlander" with results categorized into three tiers. Tier 1 includes Toyota.com and Toyota.com/Highlander. Tier 2 includes Toyota.com/Highlander and Toyota.com/Highlander. Tier 3 includes Toyota.com/Highlander and Toyota.com/Highlander. A detailed ad breakdown on the right shows the ad structure for "Bay Ridge Toyota".

Tier 1

Tier 2

Tier 3

Position 3 Site links

Use of Registered Trademark

DBA

Deep linked url w/repeat of model name

Trackable Phone number

Directions link

Bay Ridge Toyota

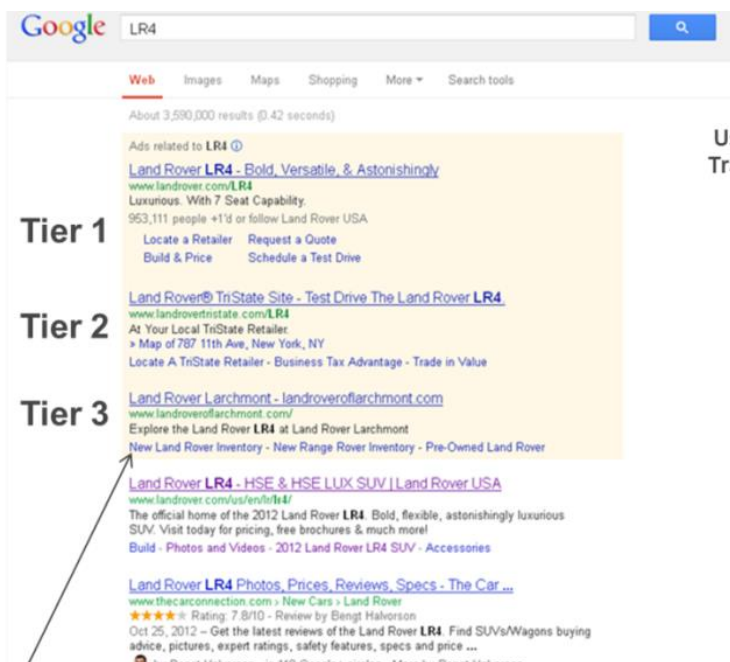
www.bayridgetoyota.com/Highlander

Find the Toyota® Highlander that's Made Just for You. Shop Now!

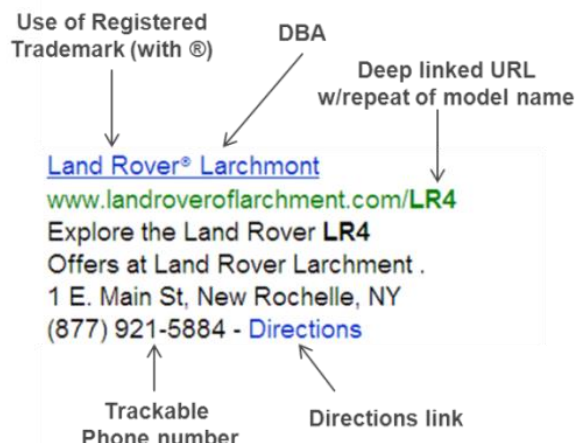
6401 6th Ave, Brooklyn, NY

(888) 539-0951 - Directions

What this looks like For Land Rover:



Position 3 Site links



1. Creative should be kept relevant to what's available on the Tier 3 website. For example, "search inventory" should not be mentioned if there is no functionality to search the inventory on the retailer site.
2. "Retailer" should be used over "dealer" wherever possible in creative, unless there is an issue with character limits.
3. Creative should use ® for all registered trademarked terms used in ad copy, where character spacing allows.
4. Ensure that any time-sensitive creative (e.g., with mention of sales events or specific model years) is kept up to date, and paused when necessary. When adding in seasonal and/or event related ad copy, this should be added into the creative rotation, always keeping live 1 piece of "evergreen" ad copy (see above example), preferably the top performing, to avoid any loss of performance and history.

*Evergreen ad is an ad that can run all year without becoming outdated because of price or messaging.

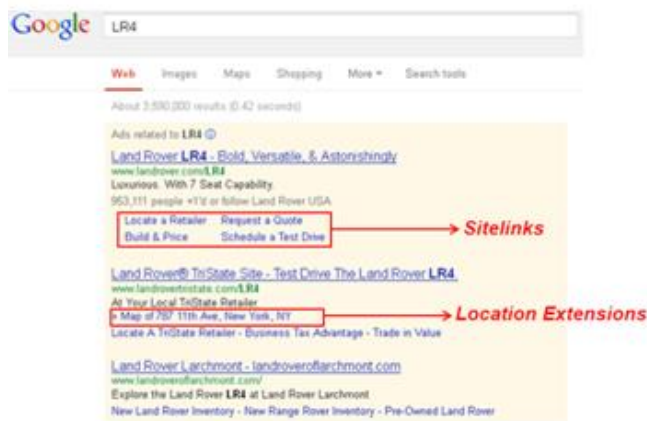
5. Offer specifics (e.g., monthly lease quotes, such as \$799) are effective in targeting pre-qualifying users before they click on the ad, decreasing the number of "lookers":

i. Example of price/offer ad:

Land Rover® Philly
www.DelawareValleyLandRover.com/RRS
 Lease The Range Rover Sport For
 \$799/mo. For 33 mos. Learn More.

1.11. General Best Practices

1. Implement Site Links, Location Extensions (desktop and mobile) and/or Call Extensions (mobile only) where appropriate:



- a. Current top performing sitelinks include:
 - i. Tier 1: Build & Price, Schedule a Test Drive, Request a Quote, Locate a Retailer;
 - ii. Tier 2 Multipoint and Tier 2 Singlepoint: Lease Offer (specific to each model), Locate a [Tristate]Retailer, Schedule a Test Drive
 - iii. Tier 3: New Land Rover Inventory, Used Land Rover Inventory, Current Land Rover Offers, Contact Retailer;
 - Avoid "Special" in reference to any offers- please reserve this for sales events.

NOTE: Multiple extensions can be added to each campaign. Ad extensions will only show on Ads that have a strong enough CTR and Quality Score.

2. Set Ad Rotation to "Optimize" – this setting gives preference to your ads that are expected to get the most clicks based on your past click-through rates ("CTRs"). Google and Bing will show those ads more often than other ads in your ad group to help you to gain more clicks and impressions.
3. Implement keyword negatives:
 - a. Adding a negative keyword to your ad group or campaign means that your ads will not show for search queries containing that term. By filtering out unwanted impressions, negative keywords can help you to reach the most appropriate prospects, increase your QS and reduce your CPC. Negative keywords should be added to the campaigns on an ongoing basis; monthly or quarterly checks should keep CPCs low and help to reduce overall costs. **It is possible that in order to achieve optimized search terms, you may need to include as many negative keywords as you do targeted keywords in any given campaign.**
 - b. Vehicle nameplates should be added as campaign negatives of other nameplate campaigns. Example: "Range Rover Sport", "Discovery Sport" and "LR4" should be added as negatives to a "Range Rover Evoque" campaign.
 - c. Another subset of negative keywords that should be added to every campaign includes those which are sexual, negative, offensive or otherwise unrelated to the campaigns. This

subset will be provided to you with the expectation that all negatives terms will be implemented.

- d. To ensure compliance with co-op guidelines, other nearby retailer names and local groups should be added in as negative keywords.
4. Separate campaigns per nameplate to ensure creative is nameplate specific:
 - a. By creating separate campaigns per nameplate, you gain increased control over keywords, both in terms of creative control and budgetary concerns. Unique campaigns allow you to allocate budget to specific nameplates, particularly useful if you need to create a strategic advantage for certain vehicles in the inventory over others, which may allow you to increase the sales performance.

Example: sample campaign breakout could follow --

Land Rover, LR4, Range Rover, Range Rover Sport, Range Rover Evoque, Retailer Name.

Jaguar, Jaguar XF, Jaguar XJ, Jaguar F-Type, Retailer Name.

 - b. Keywords relating to parts or service should also be broken out into separate campaigns. These keywords should be added as negatives to your other campaigns to avoid overlap and control the ad copy for parts- and services-related keywords.
 - c. If a Conquesting campaign is requested, we recommend starting with the following competitors:
 - i. Audi BMW, Lexus, Mercedes, and Porsche
 5. Implement Ad Scheduling to assist in optimally using budgets throughout a day or week or month.
 - a. Ad Schedule is beneficial in enabling ads only during specific times during the day.
 - <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2404244?hl=en>
 6. Google offers a useful tool for managing your campaigns offline, Google AdWords Editor:
 - <http://www.google.com/intl/en/adwordseeditor/>
 7. Google and Bing offers Ad Preview Tools for viewing ads in different locations and device types:
 - <https://adwords.google.com/d/AdPreview>
 - <https://bingads.microsoft.com/Tools/AdPreview>

2. SEO Guidelines



3. Overview

This is a guide for Jaguar Land Rover (“JLR”)’s partners in Tier 3, outlining best practices for Search Engine Optimization (Organic Search). The objective of the following is to provide JLR a resource when developing new dealer sites, pages, content and technical updates – to ensure these updates follow Google’s Webmaster Guidelines and are set-up to be easily accessed by all major search engines, including Google, Bing and Yahoo!

This guide covers the following key components:

- ✓ Crawling and Indexability
- ✓ SEO Site Architecture
- ✓ On-Page Coding Guidelines
- ✓ On-Page Content Guidelines
- ✓ Guidelines for Other Media (Flash and Video)
- ✓ Content Management System (CMS)
- ✓ Practices to Avoid

4. Crawling and Indexability

4.1. General Internal Linking

4.1.1. Introduction

Search engines use the internal linking structure and overall site architecture of a website to discover new pages and to understand which site pages are the most important.

4.1.2. Best Practices

When appropriate, use targeted keywords as anchor text to link to necessary pages, in order to give users insight in to what the linking pages is about. For example...

- Link to Tier 1 homepage with anchor text such as, “Jaguar luxury cars”, “Land Rover luxury SUVs”, etc.
- Link to Tier 1 vehicle pages with anchor text such as, “Jaguar XF sports sedans”, “Range Rover Sport”, etc.
- Link to Tier 2 homepage with anchor text such as, “Boston Jaguar Dealers”, “New York Land Rover Dealers”, etc.
- Link to all Tier 3 local profiles, such as Google Local Business Listings
- Link all dealer names to their appropriate Tier 3 homepage such as, “Jaguar Woburn”, “Land Rover of Glen Cove”, etc.
- Avoid creating pages that contain more than 100 outbound links in order to maximize the distribution of “link authority” to important site pages.

4.2. Navigation Menu

4.2.1. Introduction

The navigation menu is the single most important element in ensuring that search engine crawlers are able to traverse the site. While navigation menus may come in different forms, there are some essential best practices that must be followed to increase search performance of the site. A well optimized menu also supports user experience by making it easy for visitors to quickly locate content on the site.

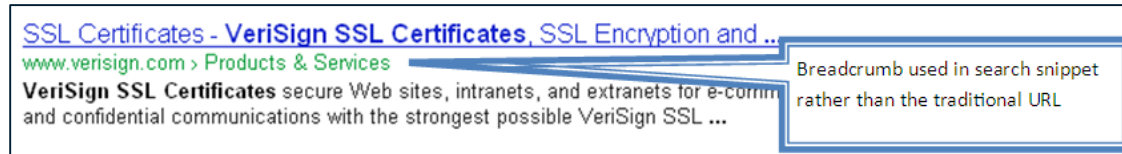
4.2.2. Best Practices

- Elements in navigation should be text-based. If elements must be constructed using images, add Alt Attributes to the image or repeat the menu elements in text at the bottom of the page. Font replacement should be used using HTML/CSS, in order to user branded fonts, without needing to use images.
- The navigation menu should be constructed in HTML to ensure that it is search engine readable. Do not design global navigation exclusively using Flash. JavaScript can be used to improve functionality, but ensure the links are accessible without JavaScript enabled.
- The navigation menu should contain relevant keyphrases as link text to provide users and search engines with contextual relevance about the content of the destination page.
- For menus with dynamic content: While JavaScript and CSS may be used to control the display of drop-down menus, the content within the dynamic submenu should be created using HTML.

4.3. Breadcrumbs

4.3.1. Introduction

Bread crumbs are a series of links that inform the user where the page they are currently viewing resides in relation to the site. Search engines use breadcrumbs as a means to understand website architecture and to discover new site pages. Additionally, the keywords contained within the link text of the breadcrumbs provide search engines with contextual information about the pages they point to. Lastly, some search engines may display the breadcrumb path as part of the search listing instead of the URL which is traditionally used.



4.3.2. Best Practices

- It is generally recommended that large sites utilize breadcrumbs to assist search engine crawling, relevance, and user experience.
- Breadcrumbs provide search engines and users with the most value when they are linked, as opposed to static text.
- Breadcrumbs should contain targeted keyphrases when possible.
- The text that appears as part of the breadcrumb for a particular page should be independently configurable within the CMS. In other words, the breadcrumb should not be auto-generated according to the pages title tag, header tag or other site element.
- Adding semantic markup (schema.org) around breadcrumbs can be used to improve indexing.

4.4. HTML Sitemap

4.4.1. Introduction

A site map enables visitors and search engines to easily find all of the pages within a site. Sitemaps are vital because they facilitate easy movement throughout a site for both engines and users, typically in a hierarchical fashion, and provide direct links to main pages. A site map is especially helpful for the larger sites that include many sub-levels with numerous pages.

4.4.2. Best Practices

- It is preferred that each site page is listed on the sitemap. However, if this is not possible, a site map should be designed specifically to provide links to all of a site's important, interior pages.
- The sitemap should be linked to from the bottom of all site pages, based on UX best practices.
- Sitemaps should be created using text, rather than images. Sitemap pages should not contain more than 200 outbound links. Very large sites should paginate the site map into multiple pages, broken out by specific subject matter or category.

4.5. XML Sitemap

4.5.1. Introduction

Google describes its Sitemaps service as, "...an easy way to tell Google about all the pages on your site, which pages are most important to you, and when those pages change, for a smarter crawl and fresher search results." It's important to note that their Sitemaps service does not preclude their normal methods of crawling and discovering pages, but rather serves to augment their crawler results.

4.5.2. Best Practices

- All site pages should be included in the XML sitemap.
- All attributes should be completed
- Google and Yahoo/Bing should be alerted the location of the XML sitemap via their respective webmaster consoles.
- Location of the XML sitemap should be included in the Robots.txt, which tells all major search engines the location of the file. (Sitemap: www.example.com/sitemap.xml)

4.6. Robots.txt Files

4.6.1. Introduction

- Webmasters have the ability to restrict a spider's access to any part of any website using a Robots.txt file. The Robots.txt file is a list of pages and directories that search engines are instructed not to visit.

4.6.2. Best Practices

- All restricted areas should be deliberate.
- Use a robots.txt file on every domain and subdomain to set rules for deliberate restrictions.
- DO NOT block site assets such as images, JavaScript and CSS in the robots.txt.

4.7. Inaccessible Content

4.7.1. Introduction

In order for a search engine to index a site page it must be able to find and crawl it. There are several common practices that may impede search engines from discovering content on your site.

4.7.2. Best Practices

- Avoid requiring the user/search engines to complete forms in order to access information. If form fields must be used, provide alternative direct links that a search engine can use to find content.
- Avoid the creation of orphaned pages.
- Ensure password protection of content is necessary. Search engines cannot enter access credentials.
- Ensure no content is contained within iframes.
- Inform Mindshare when new content is created. Mindshare can provide recommendations to ensure the new content can be discovered by search engines.

4.8. Duplicate Content / URL Canonicalization

4.8.1. Introduction

Search engines identify unique pages by using URLs. When single page content can be accessed by using any one of multiple URLs, a search engine assumes that there are multiple unique pages which can negatively impact the health of a website's SEO campaign.

4.8.2. Best Practices

- Use a single URL to reference a page to prevent dilution of page relevance and link authority. Prevent search equity dilution by following a standard URL format.
- Ensure content is unique to each Tier 2 site and that it provides valuable information to a visitor.
- To avoid indexation issues, the rel=canonical tag should be used to indicate to the search engines a page's primary source.

4.9. JavaScript / CSS (inline, SEO compliant use of JavaScript & CSS)

4.9.1. Introduction

Large quantities of script will force the actual text content of the page further down in the HTML. Since search engines may analyze only the first 100 KB of a page, it is possible that the script block may prevent search engines from indexing any page content.

4.9.2. Best Practices

- JavaScript and CSS should be externally referenced in the <head> of the HTML document whenever possible.
- For optimal crawling and indexing, content should not be generated using JavaScript. For example, content should not be written using the JavaScript document.write() function.
- CSS should not be used to hide content from the search engines (display:none). For example, do use CSS to maliciously hide content from the visitor but not to search engines.

4.10. JavaScript Links

4.10.1. Introduction

Search engines have little problem crawling standard HTML links whether they're text or image. On the other hand, it is not optimal for search engines to execute JavaScript to follow links. Even though most search engines are crawling post render (after the execution of JavaScript files), the recommended use of links are contained in the standard HTML link attribute (href). Main navigation and all important page links should be coded in this manner. Having a site's main navigation links within JavaScript can significantly hinder a site's overall visibility in the search engines.

4.10.2. Best Practices

- Generally, JavaScript links should not be used to link to important content pages.

4.11. Redirects

4.11.1. Introduction

At times, it may be necessary to change the URL of a page. When search engines request a URL, and the response from the server contains a redirect, the search engines will attempt to follow that redirect. However, they don't treat all redirects equally. Different situations call for the utilization of different types of redirects, and there are many issues that can arise from using redirects. For SEO purposes, there are 2 main types of HTTP Redirects: the 301 Redirect and the 302 Redirect.

The 301 Redirect indicates to search engines that the new URL for a page should be considered permanent. The search engine will then update its index to reflect the new location. Benefits to using 301 redirects will allow all the link power from the previous URL to pass on to the new URL.

The 302 Redirect indicates to search engines that the URL change is only temporary and that the page will return to its original location within the next 30 days. The search engine will note the new location but maintain the original URL in its index. 302 Redirects don't signal search engines to assign the search equity attributed to the old URL to the new URL.

4.11.2. Best Practices

- Use a 301 Redirect to indicate a permanent URL change of a page.
- Use a 302 Redirect to indicate page changes that are truly temporary.
- When changing the URL of a page, change all instances of the old URL and update it with the new URL.
- Create a site wide 301 redirect of all non-www pages to www pages.
- Create 301 redirects of all old URLs to appropriate new URLs.

4.12. 404 Errors / Custom 404 Page

4.12.1. Introduction

A server returns a 404 Page Not Found error when it receives a request for a page that does not exist. Although there are many causes of 404 Page Not Found events, the most common are broken links. Custom 404 Pages are pages that are displayed to the user or search engine instead of the default error page. A Custom 404 Page provides a better user experience while providing additional avenues to content for search engine crawlers.

4.12.2. Best Practices

- 404 errors caused by broken links should be corrected. Broken links are typically corrected by updating the link reference to an active page on the site or creating a 301 Redirect.
- All websites should have a Custom 404 Error Page that is displayed when a Page Not Found Event occurs. The Custom 404 page should clearly indicate that the request page cannot be found, and return a 404 HTTP header status. Additionally, the page should have links to other areas on the site to help visitors and search engines discover additional content.

4.13. Page Speed

4.13.1. Introduction

Search engines have recently started to use page load time as a factor in determining a webpage's rankings, especially as more user access website on mobile devices. This section analyzes the brand site for several of the most important elements that contribute to a fast page load time and makes recommendations, where applicable, to optimize the page load time of a webpage.

4.13.2. Best Practices

- CSS and Javascript should be minified. Learn more at <http://code.google.com/speed/page-speed/docs/payload.html#MinifyJS>.
- Remove excessive amounts of commented out source code.
- The server should have Gzip should be enabled for HTML, CSS, and Javascript (functionality permitting). Learn more at <http://code.google.com/speed/page-speed/docs/payload.html#GzipCompression>
- Utilize CSS sprites for background and formatting images when possible. Learn more at <http://code.google.com/speed/page-speed/docs/rtt.html#SpriteImages>.
- Serve scaled images to reduce image file size and to reduce the time it takes for an internet browser to re-size the image. Learn more at <http://code.google.com/speed/page-speed/docs/payload.html#ScaleImages>.
- Compress images using lossless image formats so that no reduction in image quality can be perceived by the user. Learn more at <http://code.google.com/speed/page-speed/docs/payload.html#CompressImages>.
- Consider using a content distribution network or CDN to store site pages or large multimedia files as needed.

4.14. Dynamic URLs

4.14.1. Introduction

Dynamic URLs are defined as URLs with dynamically generated parameters (query strings). Pages with URLs that contain question marks, ampersands or equal signs are indications of dynamic URLs. Although search engine technology has certainly improved in the last few years, dynamic URLs remain a major roadblock to getting a site deeply indexed in the major search engines.

4.14.2. Best Practices

- Avoid the use of parameters in URLs.
- If URLs must be used ensure that the URL contains no more than 3 parameters.
- From Google's information for webmasters: "If you decide to use dynamic pages (i.e., the URL contains a "?" character), be aware that not every search engine spider crawls dynamic pages as well as static pages. It helps to keep the parameters short and the number of them few."

4.15. Session IDs in URL

4.15.1. Introduction

Session IDs are particularly problematic from a search engine optimization perspective. Typically when session IDs are used, each time a search engine spider visits, they will receive a different URL for the same content, effectively diluting the incoming links and ranking power of the page as a stand-alone document.

4.15.2. Best Practices

- Session IDs in URL should never be used. Instead use HTTP cookies to record session ID data.

4.16. Mobile SEO

Even though Mobile SEO should not be viewed as a stand-alone approach to SEO, here are some best practices when developing a mobile experience, from an SEO perspective.

4.16.1. Best Practices

- Responsive Design is the recommended method for developing a mobile site, however as long as the desktop and mobile experience maintain the one-to-one page relationship, other methods can be used (m.example.com, etc.).
- Use Mobile Site Redirects - code that automatically can tell if visitors are using a mobile device and send them to the mobile-friendly version.
- Give users a choice to go toggle between the desktop site and mobile site.
- Create a clear hierarchy in navigation menus.
- Provide clear back and home buttons on every page.
- Use 7 links or fewer within navigation menus.
- Prominently display a search box on every page.
- Prioritize content that mobile users need most. Reduce large blocks of text and use bullet points for easy reading.
- Use large, centered buttons to reduce accidental clicks. Pad smaller buttons and check boxes to increase the clickable area.
- Use HTML5 for interactivity and animation.
- Keep forms short and use the fewest number of fields possible.
- Use check boxes, lists and scroll menus to make data entry easier.
- Use Click-To-Call functionality for all phone numbers.

5. SEO Site Architecture

In this section, Mindshare analyzes the site along several dimensions including website structure, information architecture, and page layout to ensure it is maximized for organic search.

5.1. Website Structure

5.1.1. Introduction

How a website is organized in terms of its vertical and horizontal structure can have a significant impact on search rankings and user experience. This section examines the website structure of the site to ensure compliance with SEO best practices.

5.1.2. Best Practices

- Pages should be as close to the root of the site as possible. Generally, pages should be no more than 3-5 directories deep from the root of the site.
- Directories should be used to organize content in hierarchal format. For instance, <http://www.website.com/automobiles/buick/century/car-parts.html> is an example of using directory structure in a manner which gives search engines as well as site visitors how the information on the site is organized.
- Generally, core site content should reside on the main domain (<http://www.website.com>) rather than designated subdomains (<http://subdomain.website.com>). In many ways, search engines treat subdomains as a separate website than the primary domain. Therefore, only a portion of a site's SEO equity gets transmitted from the main domain to the subdomain.

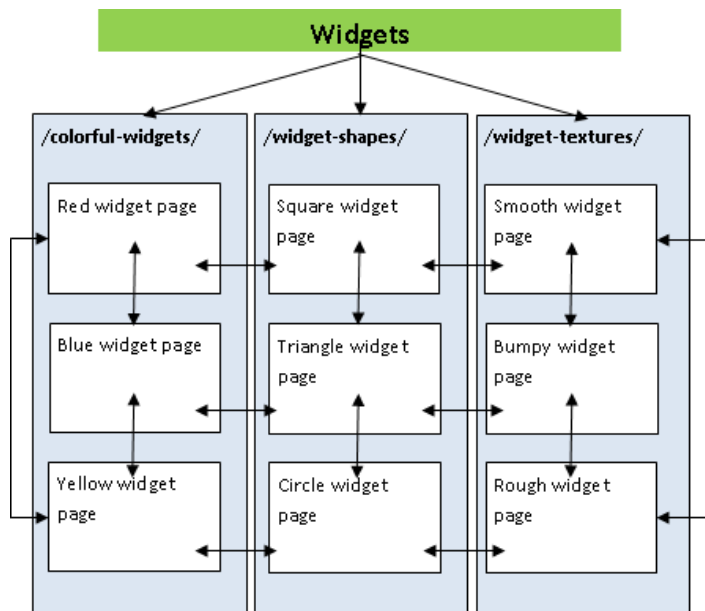
5.2. Information Architecture

5.2.1. Introduction

Information Architecture is concerned with organizing webpages and other digital assets so that they can readily understood and used by human users and search engines. Search engines analyze how pages are grouped together via directory structure, main menu, and in-line linking in order to identify and classify websites at the page, section, and site level.

5.2.2. Best Practices

- For SEO purposes, pages should be organized through directory structure and linked together in semantically related themes to help search engines understand the overall topic of a section on a site as displayed below:



- Organize the main navigation of the site in logical and conceptually related ways that are intuitive to human users.

5.3. Page Layout

5.3.1. Introduction

What type of information resides on a page can impact how a search engine scores a page's relevancy for a search query. Some webpages attempt to address a multitude of seemingly related or unrelated topics, while not providing enough depth of content on a single theme to register a top search ranking. Moreover, on-page content often can be technically optimized to achieve better performance. This section examines content in relation to page templates, and makes technical recommendations to optimize page content for better search value.

5.3.2. Best Practices

- Each page should generally focus on a single content theme for optimal keyphrase targeting.
- Page content should be maximized as best as possible to achieve assist in search performance. This may involve consolidating pages, or splitting content into multiple pages.
- Ensure pages are technically optimized consistent with other Best Practices within this document.

6. On-Page Coding

6.1. Title Tags

6.1.1. Introduction

The Title tag <title> of a site's pages is arguably the most important and easiest to implement HTML element outside of actual text. Using keyword-rich page titles can significantly impact search engine rankings. When used in conjunction with an optimized Meta Description Tag a search compliant Title Tag can improve the click-through rate of an organic search listing.

6.1.2. Best Practices

- Each page should have a unique Title tag. CMS should have the ability to create both unique as well as templated Title Tags.
- Title Tag should not exceed 65 characters in length.
- Titles Tags, along with the Meta Description Tag, should summarize the primary content on a page.
- The most important keywords for a given page should be placed near the beginning of the page Title.
- Guidelines for the structure of a site's page titles should be established to retain consistency and to make the writing of titles more efficient.
- Titles should be written in headline-style rather than as a full page description.
 - Stop words (such as the, a, if, of) should be limited as they waste crucial character space in titles.

6.2. Meta Description Tags

6.2.1. Introduction

Search engines use the Meta description tag in the search result listings, particularly when there is little visible text on a given page, or a brand search is made. Although, the major search engine crawlers may create dynamic snippets of text from the given page that relate to that particular keyword search. These snippets of text are used as the description in the search listings below the Title.

6.2.2. Best Practices

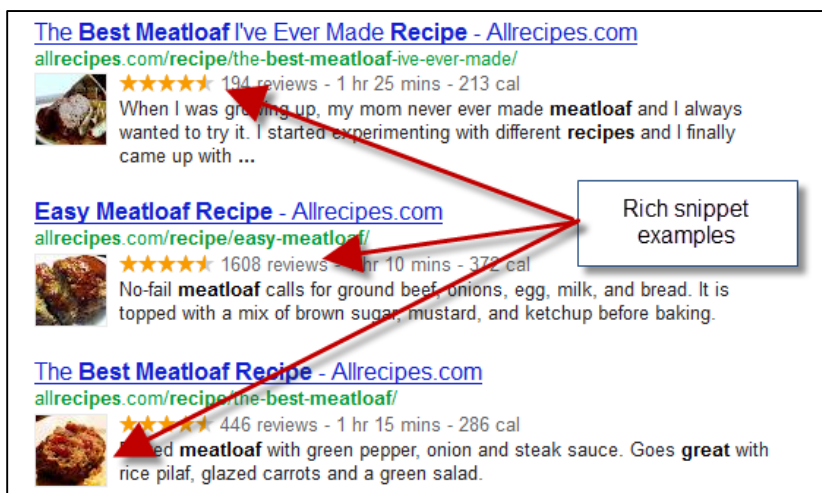
- All Meta tags should be placed at the top of the code within the <head> </head> tags.
- Higher priority keywords should be near the beginning of the tags.
- The Meta Description Tag should be no more than 160 characters.
- The Meta Description Tag should be written in sentence form that contains the following:
 - A brief description of the page
 - The page's targeted keyphrase
 - A benefit statement to entice the searcher to click on the search snippet
 - A call-to-action.

6.3. Microdata

6.3.1. Introduction

From <http://Schema.org>: "Your web pages have an underlying meaning that people understand when they read the web pages. But search engines have a limited understanding of what is being discussed on those pages. By adding additional tags to the HTML of your web pages—tags that say, "Hey search engine, this information describes this specific movie, or place, or person, or video"—you can help search engines and other applications better understand your content and display it in a useful, relevant way. Microdata is a set of tags, introduced with HTML5, that allows you to do this."

In other words, Microdata allows webmasters to structure their content using markup in a standard format that can be easily understood by search engines. Additionally, some search engines such as Google and Yahoo use microdata to formulate Rich Snippets. Rich snippets are search engine listings that incorporate additional information such as average user rating, and product images in addition to standard text links. Below is an example of Google using Microdata to formulate a Rich Snippet.



6.3.2. Best Practices

- Use Microdata definition as defined by <http://schema.org/> to structure items such as Reviews and Location Business addresses. Schema.org is the preferred library for all major search engines; Google, Bing and Yahoo!

6.4. Alt Attributes for Images

6.4.1. Introduction

The use of elements typically used to meet accessibility requirements - ALT tags in images and Title attributes in non-descriptive anchor links, such as "Learn More" - may be leveraged to enhance the optimization of a site. Although it is not as important as body text, ALT tags and title attributes are yet another method to enhance the on-site optimization of a website.

6.4.2. Best Practices

- Mindshare recommends assigning ALT Attributes to all 'significant' images, particularly those that are within an anchor link.
- Alt Attributes should incorporate the site's targeted keyphrases as appropriate being careful not to "stuff" with too many keyphrases.

- Generally, the Alt Attribute should not exceed 10 words in length.
- The ALT tags should be constructed to provide insight into the destination page if the image is a link, or the current page if not.
- CMS should have the ability to assign Alt Attributes to images.

6.5. Image File Names

6.5.1. Introduction

As search engines cannot view and understand graphics as human users do, they use image filenames as one of several clues to better understand images. This section surveys the site to ensure that image filenames are in line with search best practices.

6.5.2. Best Practices

- Image file names should be descriptive and keyword-rich to improve the site's overall keyword density.

6.6. File and Folder Naming

6.6.1. Introduction

Directory folders and file names should be keyword-rich to improve the site's overall keyword density. Beyond the onsite benefits, there is another more tantalizing justification for deploying keyword-rich URLs. By including important keywords in the URL, a site increases its chances of obtaining links with keywords in the URL by default. In many instances, other sites create links by using the URL as the 'visible' or anchor text. Thus, by including keywords in the URL, a site increases the likelihood of obtaining inbound keyword-rich anchor links, a critical component to the overall ranking algorithm employed by the major search engines.

6.6.2. Best Practices

- Integrate keyphrases into file and folder names when possible, being careful not to "stuff" the filename.
- Use hyphens ("-") as word separators rather than underscores ("_").
- Avoid creating folder names of files more than have more than 5 words.

6.7. Tracking & Analytics

6.7.1. Introduction

Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools are extremely powerful analytics tools that when properly setup and executed can provide invaluable insights into user behavior and site performance.

6.7.2. Best Practices

- All domains need correct Google Asynchronous tracking code.
- All domains need appropriate Google and Bing Webmaster Tools tracking codes.
- All external links need correct event tracking coding.
- Implement internal site search.
- Implement appropriate goal setup for each profile.

7. On-Page Content

7.1. Text vs. Images

7.1.1. Introduction

Frequently, images of text are used for page headers and navigation links. While this approach may be easiest from a design perspective, it is important to include as much text on a page as possible to increase the overall content of a site.

7.1.2. Best Practices

- Use text instead of graphical copy to ensure content is search engine readable.

7.2. Header Tags

7.2.1. Introduction

There is evidence that search engines give extra weight to text that is contained within a headline tag. Headline tags should be used in a graduated manner, by using H1 tags for the page headings (only one per page) and H2 tags for sub-headings. These headline tags can be defined in CSS, so that they match the necessary style guidelines for a given site.

7.2.2. Best Practices

- In addition to headline tags, any text that is of a greater size or in bold is given extra weight in search algorithms. Therefore, it's crucial to make page headings and sub-headings keyword-rich.

8. Other Media

8.1. Flash

8.1.1. Introduction

As search engines have evolved, they have become more sophisticated. Yet, no search engine can fully 'understand' the content of rich media content like that delivered through Flash. If content and menus are in Flash, search engines may be unable to follow the links.

8.1.2. Best Practices

- Due to the inability of mobile devices to use Flash, it is not recommended that Flash be used for developing websites – outside of SEO implications. However, best practices include:
 - Minimize the use of Flash and other rich media plugins on the site.
 - Never use Flash for navigation, links, or for main site content.
 - Use Flash embedded within HTML rather than constructing a page entirely from Flash.
 - Consider using HTML5 instead of Flash as search engines are better able to crawl and interpret HTML5 content.
- If more than half of a page uses Flash use the following techniques to "externalize" it in order to make it readable to search engines.
 - Use progressive enhancement techniques to ensure graceful degradation in cases where a browser or search engine does not support the use of Flash.
 - Use <swfobject> to duplicate Flash content using HTML. Learn more about SWFObject at <http://code.google.com/p/swfobject/>.

8.2. Video

8.2.1. Introduction

Video represents an additional opportunity for visibility in organic search results, allowing a site to benefit from Universal or Blended search. The key is developing the video in the proper format so that search engines can crawl it and optimizing the video for relevance.

8.2.2. Best Practices

- Provide a transcript of the video to help search engines understand what the video is about.
- Create a Video XML Sitemap and notify search engines such as Google and Yahoo of its location. A Video XML Sitemap provides search engines with additional information about videos contained on the site.
- Incorporate sharing features to propagate site videos around the web.

9. CMS

9.1. SEO Friendly CMS

Many CMS (content management systems) are not built with search optimization in mind. Choosing the appropriate CMS at the beginning of a site design can save a lot of SEO rework further along in the project. Here are some Search Engine Friendly CMS features Mindshare recommends:

CMS Features:

- Customization of Meta tags, image Alt tags, and link rel=canonical tags on a per-page (per image) basis
- Control of Meta Robots tag on a per-page basis
- Support for static, customizable URLs (known as permalinks)
- Automatic link management
- Automatic updating of sitemap.xml
- Custom 404 (page-not-found) page
- Ability to customize

10. Practices to Avoid

The world of search engine optimization is rife with 'black hat' techniques—aggressive tactics employed often with the intention of deceiving the major search engines. Mindshare strongly discourages these tactics. Our belief is that through the accumulation and delivery of value to visitors and other websites, our clients will ultimately achieve success in the search engines in the long term.

From Google's [Webmaster guidelines](#):

Quality guidelines - basic principles

- Make pages for users, not for search engines. Don't deceive your users or present different content to search engines than you display to users, which is commonly referred to as "cloaking."
- Avoid tricks intended to improve search engine rankings. A good rule of thumb is whether you'd feel comfortable explaining what you've done to a website that competes with you. Another useful test is to ask, "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"
- Don't participate in link schemes designed to increase your site's ranking or PageRank. In particular, avoid links to web spammers or "bad neighborhoods" on the web, as your own ranking may be affected adversely by those links.

Quality guidelines - specific guidelines

- Avoid hidden text or hidden links.
- Don't employ cloaking or sneaky redirects.
- Don't send automated queries to Google.
- Don't load pages with irrelevant words.
- Don't create multiple pages, subdomains, or domains with substantially duplicate content.
- Don't create pages that install viruses, Trojans, or other badware.
- Avoid "doorway" pages created just for search engines or other "cookie cutter" approaches such as affiliate programs with little or no original content.
- If your site participates in an affiliate program, make sure that your site adds value. Provide unique and relevant content that gives users a reason to visit your site first.