

The background of the entire image is a blurred photograph of a laptop. The screen displays a line graph with several data series, one of which is labeled 'New Visitor'. The keyboard is visible at the bottom of the frame. The image has a blue-to-teal color gradient overlay.

# The Ultimate Guide

**TO INCREASING**

# Organic Website Traffic



LEAN LABS

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# Introduction

Increasing organic search traffic doesn't have to be difficult, but it does take time and effort.

Unlike paid traffic - where boosts in website visitors can be seen within hours of posting an advertisement - organic search traffic builds over time and requires consistently publishing quality content.

It's an entirely different strategy, requiring a different mindset, and it's one we have wholeheartedly embraced here at Lean Labs.

We rarely run Google Ad campaigns on behalf of clients. We rarely run social media ads on behalf of clients. And we definitely don't run traditional advertising campaigns on behalf of clients (something that gets more expensive and less effective every day).

All of our clients and brands are grown via organic search tactics, and we favor this approach for one simple reason: It provides real value by delivering results that compound over time.



# Introduction

Compared to paid traffic, which requires a continuous stream of revenue to generate fresh leads, organic traffic keeps compounding, month over month.

Think about it: If you have a \$5,000 ad budget this month, which buys you 5,000 clicks this month - how many clicks do you think you'll get next month from that same budget? No more than 5,000. A year from now, you may be down to 4,000 clicks as the cost per click increases.

If you put that same budget toward content creation to increase organic traffic, your results will grow month over month, without having to increase your budget on a monthly basis. And a year from now, you may still be only investing \$5,000 in content creation, but the content you created last year will still generate traffic along with your new content. This compounding effect can 10X a brand rather quickly, without increasing ad spend to keep up with quotas.

Case in point: One of our clients has gone from about 500 organic website visits a month to more than 15,000 organic website visits a month. This growth is attributed to nothing more than organic traffic strategies employed on the website itself-no link-building, no paid traffic boosts, and no external content-this business is now generating 366% more leads a month.

We're going to reveal the exact tactics our team uses to generate organic search results for our clients. Consistently execute the practices outlined below, month after month, and you will see a measurable lift in traffic quarter over quarter.



# *12 Ways to Increase Organic Search Traffic to Your Website*

# #1 Fix Your Links

## Evaluate Your Backlinks

When a website links to any other website, it's called a backlink.

Every major search engine algorithm has placed significant value on backlinks when determining web rankings. The logic being: If someone else thinks you are worth talking about, others probably will too!

Despite recent rumors that their importance will decrease in the future, Google's own Matt Cutts has expressed that while they are working on new ranking metrics, backlinks still remain a major ranking factor. While it is possible to build organic search traffic without them, you will never be able to compete with the heavyweights in your industry sans backlinks.

Many of our clients are surprised to learn that, unfortunately, not all backlinks are good.

You can begin your SEO optimization process by analyzing backlink quality. Use a tool like [Moz's Open Site Explorer](#) to generate a quick roundup of your backlinks.

Here are some qualities of good backlinks:

- They are from a relevant website within your industry.
- They are contextual (e.g. placed within the main page content).
- They are coming from high-authority domains and trusted sources.
- The anchor text (highlighted clickable text) is relevant, and not spamming nonsense or irrelevant keywords.

# #1 Fix Your Links

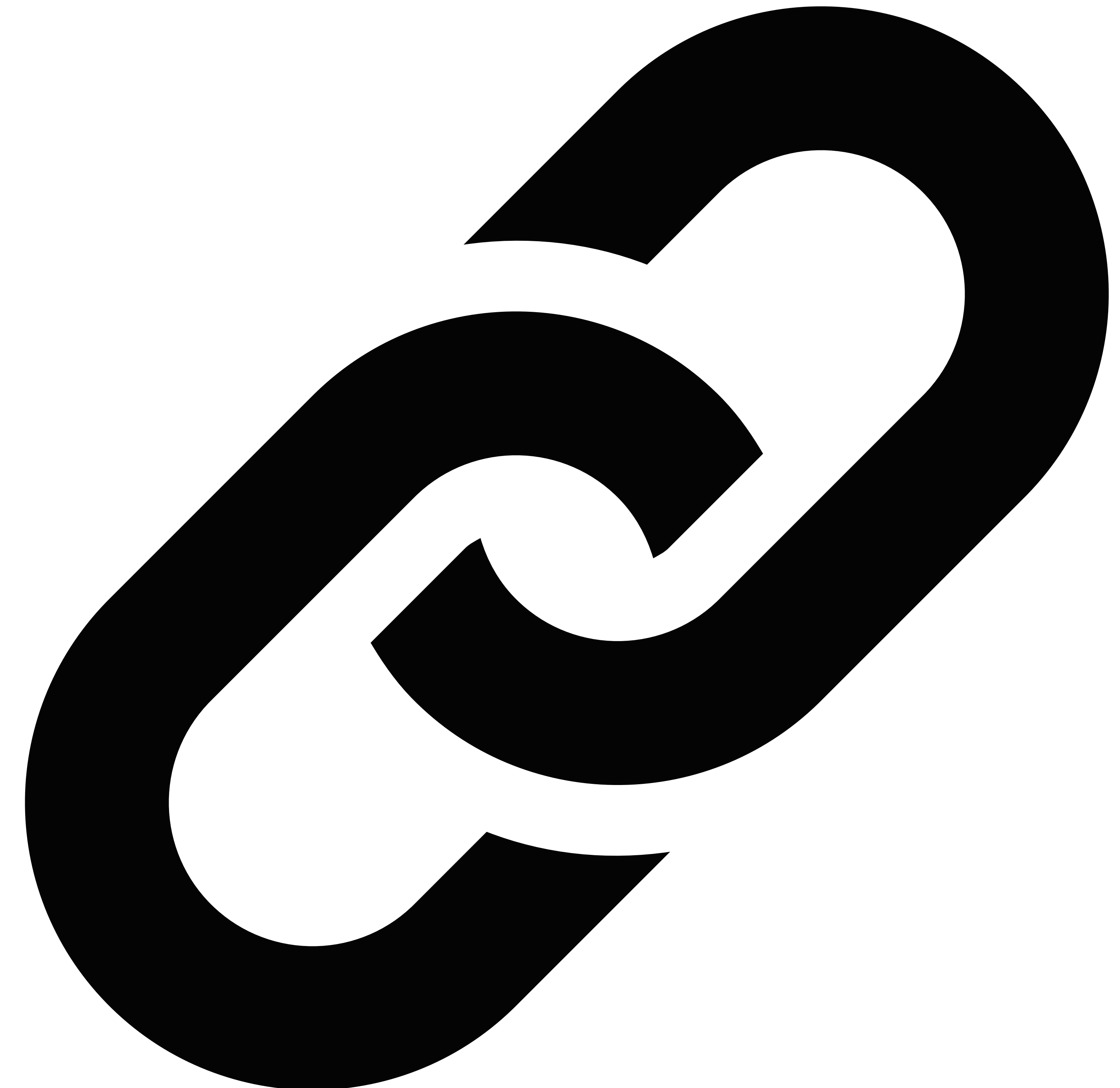
## Remove Bad Links

Once you have identified where your good backlinks are coming from, you obviously want to do what you can to get more of them. Additionally, you can improve your rankings by eliminating bad ones.

Here is how to eliminate bad backlinks:

1. After analyzing your backlinks, organize a list of the ones that don't meet any of the previously mentioned criteria.
2. Email the corresponding webmasters and ask to have the bad backlinks removed.
3. Expectedly, not every webmaster will follow through with your request. But don't fret; you can still submit a "disavow report" using the [Google Disavow Tool](#).

You may also want to consider using a paid tool like [Monitor Backlinks](#) to organize your research and alert you once the links have been deleted.



## #2 Create Quality Content (Regularly)

Back in the infancy of the internet, all content was created equal. The sophistication level of Google's early algorithm simply wasn't savvy enough to identify bad content. Early SEO practitioners took advantage of this by creating "black hat" content, which was essentially, "crap content."

In essence, they used what is called a content spinner - no, not a fidget spinner.

Content spinners are software that takes a single article, and randomly changes words to their synonyms to create hundreds of blog posts from a single article - each has a smothering of different words, but the articles are all essentially the same article.

Site pages and blog posts featuring keyword stuffing, nonsensical sentences, and poor value content, were quite common. Thankfully, for all of us, these practices no longer go unpenalized. Practice black hat SEO today, and Google will eventually drop the hammer - possibly remove your site from search altogether (yes, that actually happens)!

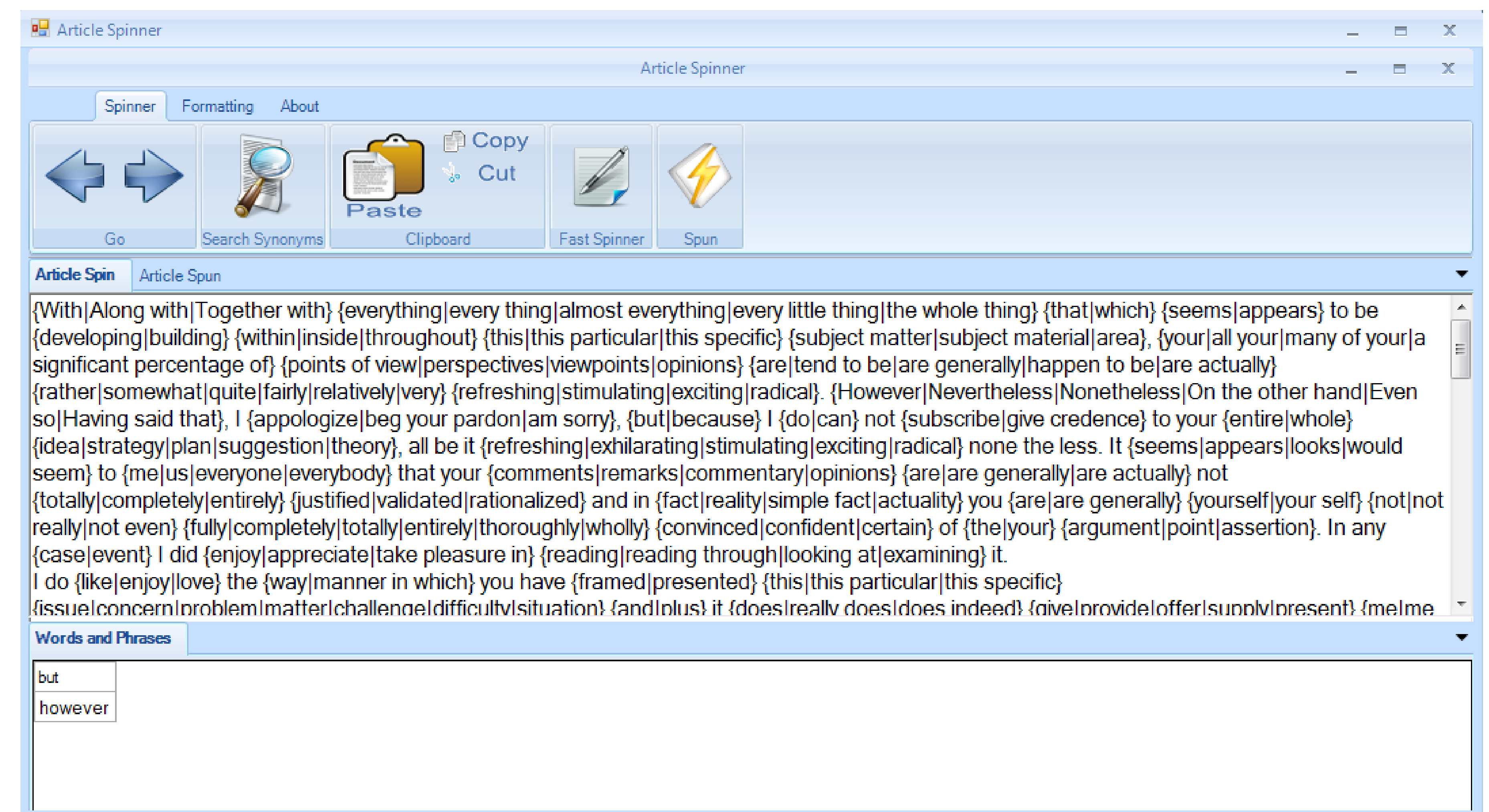


Image credit: [SEO Clerks](#)

## #2 Create Quality Content (Regularly)

However, simply being “white hat” isn’t enough to get ranked. You need quality content.

That means informative content of substance, which could include:

- Helpful content. Really, the kind of content that helps.
- Relevant contextual links to authoritative sites.
- Relevant h1 and h2 tags that organize content.
- Relevant photographs (with alt-tags).

The best strategy for ranking #1 on Google today is to deserve the ranking. Make better content than everyone else, and rightfully deserve the top spot. Yes, it’s a longer play than “gaming” the system, but it’s also a far longer-lasting strategy than any gimmicks.

The good news is you don’t have to put much thought into “following rules” when creating quality content. Simply, aim to provide value to your audience and optimize your pages when you are finished.



## #3 Rank In The Featured Snippet

The Featured Snippet is a fairly new Google search feature; it's a small box of "featured content" that now shows up at the top of search page results. Google pulls this snippet from the website it feels will best answer your search query. We could, essentially, call this coveted spot "ranking zero."

This feature appears most frequently for question-related keywords, like the title of this article: *How to increase organic search traffic?*

[According to Hubspot](#), from a sample of just under 5,000 queries, the CTR to the HubSpot website for high volume keywords within Featured Snippets increased by more than 114 percent.

What does this mean?

Hubspot provides this example:

*Say you rank number one (the first post below the snippet) on page one of Google for a keyword that's searched for 10,000 times. From the data I've collected, you could expect roughly 1,700 visits, compared to the 3,700 you might see if you landed the Featured Snippet spot -- and that's just one keyword.*

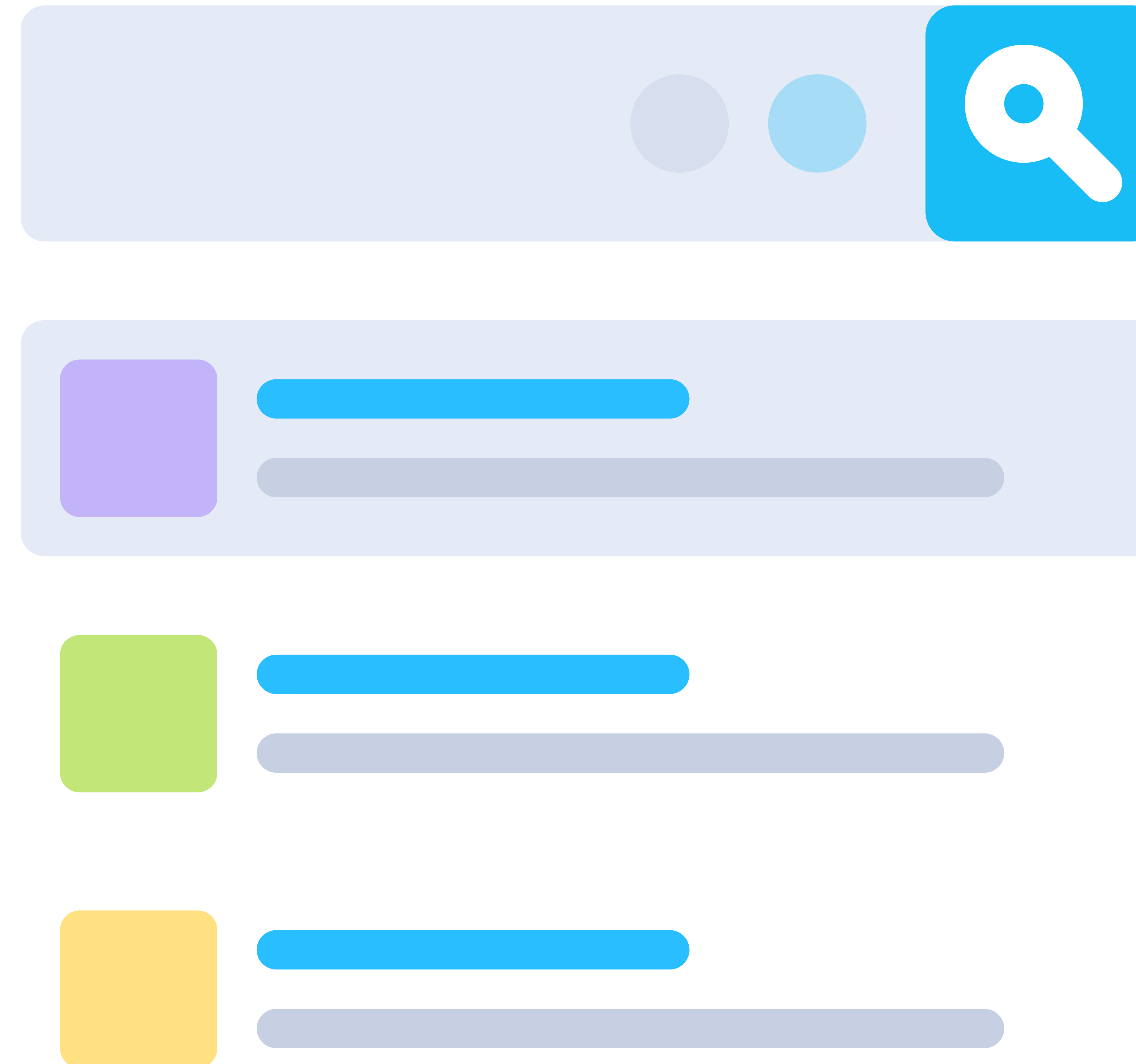
## #3 Rank In The Featured Snippet

Here are some facts about ranking for the Featured Snippet:

- Backlinks matter much less when you are already on page one.
- The search query should appear in a page header (h1, h2, h3).
- The content that will appear in the snippet will be 54–58 words long.
- The content that will appear in the snippet will be taken from the <p> tag directly below the header.
- Google prefers ‘answers’ that begin logically in the format of how-to writing.

Use a tool like [SEMrush](#) to find the keywords you rank for that garner Featured Snippets.

Once you identify a Featured Snippet opportunity, review your existing content and revise it according to the aforementioned guidelines. Expect to see results in just a few weeks, especially if you are already ranking within the top five search results.



## #4 Answer The Right Questions

Another important factor of building organic search traffic is answering the right questions within your page content. These are usually the questions your target audience is asking themselves as related to the product or service you provide.

This is actually the essence of how Google is supposed to work.

Got a question? Type it into a search bar and get an answer.

It is for this reason we spend significant time working with our clients to identify the primary drivers of their ideal customers:

- What are their biggest questions, concerns, and fears?
- What exact language do they use to express themselves?
- What are the most common questions received by sales and customer service?

Instead of putting all the responsibility to answer common questions on the shoulders of your organization's customer service and sales departments, why not let a comprehensive article do all the heavy-lifting?

Write informative articles that answer the exact questions your prospects ask. This should be at the heart of every organic search traffic strategy.



## #5 Transcribe Video Content

Google is now factoring video into ranking factors. A reported [55%](#) of people now watch video online every day. By 2017, video will account for an estimated [74%](#) of all online traffic.

From a technology perspective, Google still hasn't figured out how to understand the content contained within videos. But that doesn't mean an opportunity to maximize rankings through video doesn't exist.

Create full-text transcripts that accompany the embedded videos you feature, this way Google's spider has something to crawl and rank.

Moz does a great job of this with their '[Whiteboard Friday](#)' videos.

Instead of just pasting an ugly block of text below their videos, they intersperse the text with helpful links, images, and extra information not contained within the videos themselves.

Essentially, their transcriptions are not an obvious ploy to enhance SEO, but a method of improving their users' experience.

One of the most popular video transcription services is [SpeechPad](#). Just upload your video file, and a team member will quickly transcribe your content for as little as \$1 per minute.

## #6 Republish Old Content

If your blog lists your individual posts in order of the date they were published, as most blogs do, then the older the post, the lower down the website architecture it goes.

Website architecture is the planning and design of the technical, functional and visual components of a website. Not only does it dictate how users interact with pages, but it also dictates how search engines crawl and rank pages.

In general, the higher up in the website architecture hierarchy, the more SEO power a page has. For this reason, the homepage of most websites is usually one of the highest ranked.

As blog posts get older, they go deeper into the architecture of your website. Beyond the publish date itself signaling outdated content, being forgotten deep down in your website architecture inevitably causes Google to give them less and less priority as time goes on.

An easy way to get around this is to routinely update your old blog articles with fresh content.

Replace old links with more relevant ones, incorporate new findings and republish it with the current date. You improve the on-page SEO focused on valuable keywords and bumped the blog article up in the architecture hierarchy as well, giving it a little more SEO juice.

## #7 Consolidate Cannibalizing Content

This is a weird one - cannibalizing content refers to consolidating complimentary blog articles with the goal of achieving a higher organic search ranking.

Say, you've got two blog articles covering similar topics:

- How to Make a Breakfast Taco
- 9 Types of Breakfast Tacos

Both articles are ranking for the keyword "breakfast tacos." Article number one is ranking #11 in organic search, and article number two is ranking #12 in organic search. The savvy marketer would combine both of these articles into one massive article in order to reach for #1 ranking.

[According to a study](#) conducted by online ad network Chitika, the top listing in Google's organic search results receives 33% of the traffic, compared to 18% for the second position.

- Page 1 results took 92% of all traffic from the average search.
- Traffic plunges 95% for Page 2.

This shows that while getting on Page 1 is a significant achievement, you really want to go for those top spots, as they account for more than 50% of traffic. Thus, if you're able to consolidate both of your articles to take the number one spot, you will have easily multiplied your organic search traffic.

## #8 *Create An Internal Linking System*

When marketers learn how important backlinks are to SEO, they often immediately wonder: Where am I going to find all of these people to link to my website?

While you definitely want to garner links from high-authority sites on the internet, you don't have to rely on them exclusively.

The easiest way to create links for the pages you want to rank for is to use an internal linking system. While this doesn't funnel in external "SEO Juice," it does send signals to Google to help put your site into context.

Build your site architecture on a few carefully chosen keywords. Once you have created these anchor pages, continue to link to them as your content library grows. As you create more and more blog content, you will also want to link to the same key articles, using anchor text, over and over again.

In that way, you keep readers on your site longer, and increase your SEO power for your chosen keywords at the same time. This strategy is at the core of all the content building we do on behalf of clients at Lean Labs.

From initial website architecture conception, to editorial calendar planning, we are always making strategic choices about what to link to from where within our clients' websites. Since it can get a little confusing, we recommend visually mapping out the primary keywords you are pursuing, and how they relate to your site's various pages.

## #9 Optimize Metadata and Content

On-page SEO is critical to ranking. You can have the best content in the world, but if it's not optimized for search, no one will ever find it.

**Here is a look at what should be optimized on blog articles and web pages:**

- Page Title
- Page URL
- Meta Descriptions
- Images and ALT-tags
- Headers (h1, h2, h3 etc.).
- Page copy

The page title, for instance, should have the focus keyword used at the beginning (far left) of the page title. But the title also needs to appeal to readers and build curiosity.

The meta description is the short, descriptive summary you see underneath each search result. If you don't specify what you want this description to say, Google will decide for you, usually pulling from the first few lines of content.

The meta description is almost as vital as the headline. Now, Google doesn't currently use the meta description in their algorithm, at least not from a keyword standpoint. Yet, it still impacts your rankings.

How?

Because the purpose of the meta data is to “sell” the click. It's the preview of the content of the page, and it needs to appeal to the searcher, compelling them to click. If your meta description is weird, disconnected, or irrelevant, searchers won't click on your result, even if you are ranked in the top three spots.

## #9 Optimize Metadata and Content

Now, if you're ranked #1, but more people are clicking on #2 and #3, you will eventually fall below them in the rankings based on nothing more than click-through rate (CTR). And, your page, regardless of how great the content is, will continue to fall until it reaches an equilibrium of CTR.

That's why all this meta information is critical to ranking, and maintaining rankings. Use the keywords in your meta data, and make them appealing to the reader.



## #10 Build a Linkable Asset

What is a linkable asset? It's a piece of content that is SO valuable people can't help but share it, link to it, and tell others about it. As previously mentioned, backlinks are one of the most important factors when it comes to ranking for competitive keywords.

In 2016, [SimilarWeb](#) collected data on backlinks for the top 100,000 Web sites for five categories: All traffic, organic search traffic, paid search traffic, referrals traffic, and social media traffic. The study ultimately found “The highest correlation between all traffic groups came through referring domains,” meaning backlinks still play a significant role in organic search traffic.

Again, the key to attracting “referring domains” is to create something so valuable that they want to share it with their readers. Obviously, this is easier said than done.



# How to Strategically Build Linkable Assets

## 1. Determine Your Audience

Before creating anything, it's important to know who exactly you are creating it for. You may assume it to be your buyer persona, but that isn't always the case. Additionally, chances are your buyer persona doesn't actually have the kind of domain authority you really need to build SEO power.

The biggest boosts come from news sources, educational sources, and blogs with high readerships. For example, say you are in financial services, and your ideal client is a high net-worth individual who is planning for retirement. Your goal is to create a linkable asset that will get picked up by online financial publications, not future retirees.

Thus, while creating a 24-page report might be a valuable lead generation tool, it probably won't do anything for your SEO. Unless, of course, you make it available on your website as an anchor page that can be indexed by search engines. However, in the interest of garnering backlinks from high authority domains, you would be better off creating a great infographic.

Here is a great source on [How to Build Quality Backlinks Using Infographics](#).

# How to Strategically Build Linkable Assets

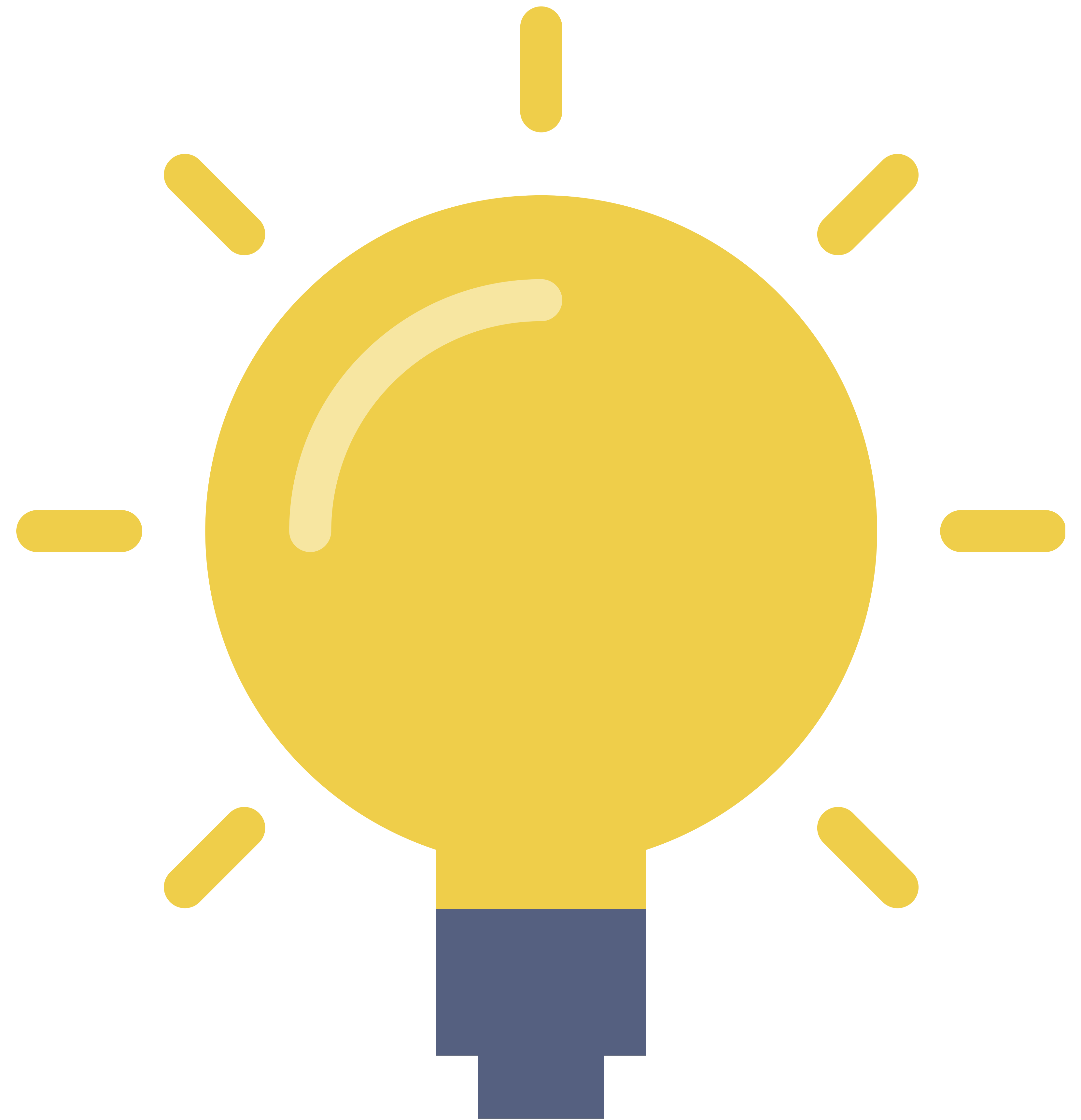
## 2. Conceptualize Your Idea

Once you have determined your audience, ask yourself:

- What kind of information would they want to share?
- What sort of data would they find interesting?
- What would support what they are already doing?

Once you have an idea of how your business' innate resources could be valuable to your audience, you're ready to brainstorm a little more. Check out [BuzzSumo](#) to find out what sort of content is getting shared within your industry. With just a simple search, the platform can pull up the most frequently shared pieces of content on major social channels like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Another search resource you can turn to is [Digg](#). While BuzzSumo is useful for determining what is hot on social media, Digg is more useful for uncovering obscure/creative topics that are trending online.



# How to Strategically Build Linkable Assets

## 3. Determine Format

By reviewing the most popular content around your subject matter, you can also better determine what format will most likely get back linked. We previously mentioned infographics, but that isn't your only option. Based on who you desire backlinks from, another format may be just as (if not more) advantageous.



Here are some other content formats you could try:

- Videos
- Case studies
- Reports/Studies
- Slideshares
- Tutorials
- Podcasts
- Illustrations
- Checklists
- Interactive guides
- Tools/Software
- Quizzes/Surveys
- Memes
- Charts
- Lists

Once you have created your content, make sure it focuses on your desired keyword and that it is easy for others to link to.

## #11 Use Topic Clusters

Another key strategy we use on behalf of our clients is building topic clusters around keywords. In addition to creating an internal linking system, this is probably one of the most important things we do to increase organic search traffic. Obviously, no SEO strategy would be complete without your basic keyword research.

[See our post on keyword research best practices here.](#)

However, using [Google's keyword tool](#) to identify the language prospects are using when searching is only part of the equation. Strategizing at a higher level involves not only writing for those keywords, but also grouping them into topic clusters.

Topic clusters are groupings of similar content for organizational purposes. Let's return to our previous example of tacos and assume our primary topic is, "The Best Tacos." On our foodie website, we will want to create several articles that tie back to this topic cluster, including:

- *Where to find the best tacos in San Antonio?*
- *How to make the best breakfast tacos*
- *Which city makes the best tacos?*
- *The 10 best breakfast taco recipes on the planet*

The more content we create around "the best tacos," the more relevance Google will assign us in its rankings. As we continue writing about tacos, we'll continue linking between various posts for that keyword phrase. The number of clusters a business utilizes will obviously depend on how many keywords they are trying to rank for, but we usually recommend 3-4 major topic clusters.

Within those topic clusters, you can also infuse other related keyword phrases, including longtail keywords that are often much easier to rank for. Again, this is a long-term strategy; it's not something that happens overnight. But, when you work the strategy consistently over time, you will see compounding results.



## #12 Build Relationships and Promote

Remember the linkable assets we mentioned earlier?

Once you have spent significant time building a piece of content, it's important to promote it. Without doing so, your content might not gain the kind of traction it deserves.

One of the best things you can do before publishing a major piece of content is to get featured somewhere else. Whether it's being interviewed for a podcast, getting quoted on an industry blog, or guest posting on a major news source, it will inevitably help drive fresh traffic to your site. Unfortunately, finding these opportunities can sometimes be challenging for someone without a ton of credibility behind their brand.

But everyone has to start somewhere. The key here is not to wait to start building relationships!

Chances are, no matter what your specialty, there is an online publication who could use your expertise. Offer yourself as a resource and see what happens. You just might be surprised.

Note: Don't be lame and try to automate this process. You can't automate a relationship, no matter what new spam tool hits the market. The Lean Labs team gets emails daily from someone wanting to "connect" that all come from the same spam tool. The sad thing is, some of the emails come from legitimate businesses - their marketers are just lazy.

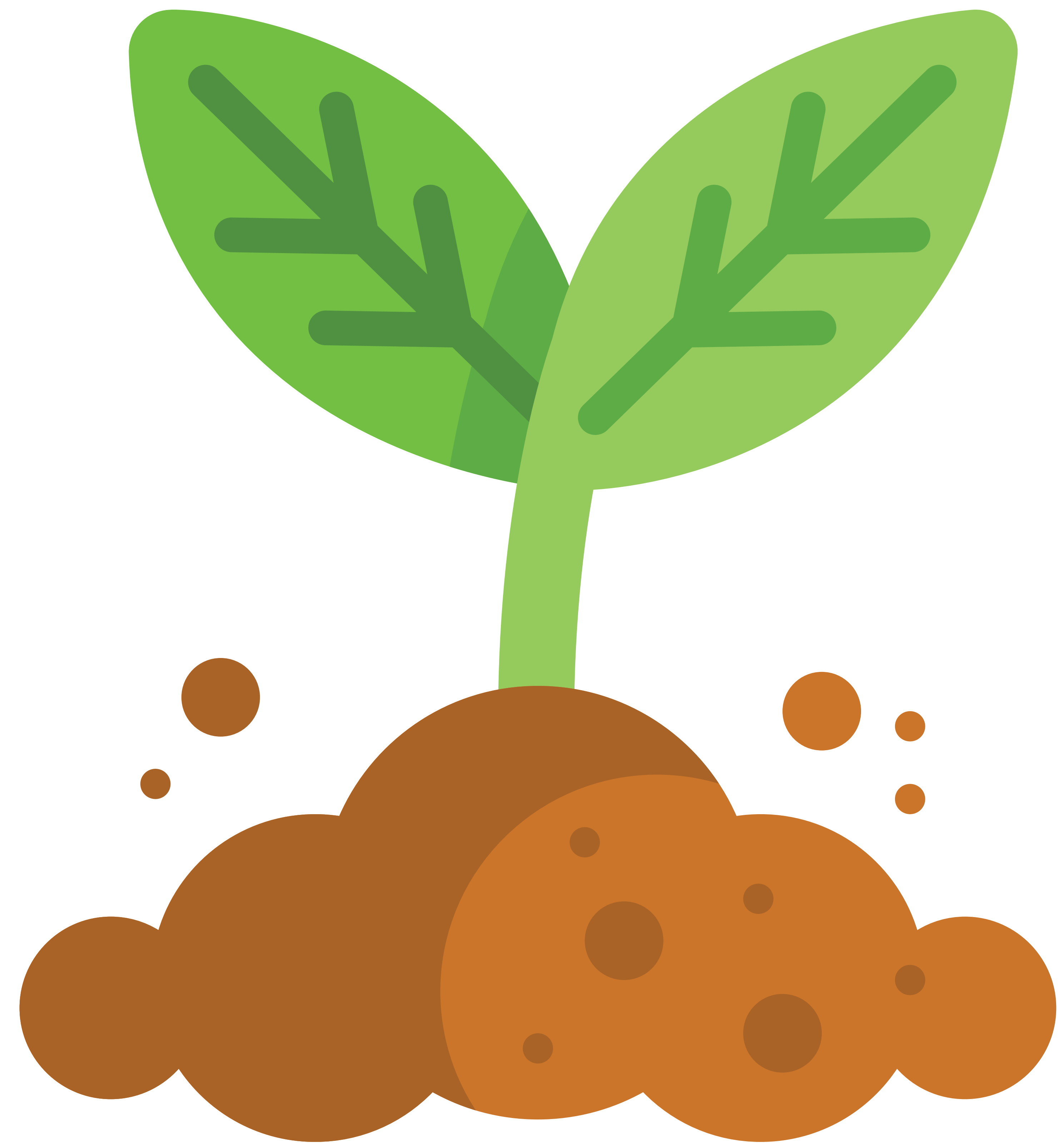
It's spam. Stop it!

# Grow Your Organic Search Traffic Now

As you can see, getting organic search traffic isn't that mysterious. It simply requires repeating a series of actions consistently over time. Unfortunately, this is why most businesses haven't succeeded with it. They haven't grasped that *it does work* when done correctly.

Not only has organic traffic proven to convert better than traffic from other sources, but it also ends up significantly reducing the cost of customer acquisition over time. And who doesn't love that?

However, it's important to remember that building organic traffic is only one part of creating a scalable, lead generation system. Creating content for every stage of the buyer's journey, gating that content, and building ongoing relationships with prospects is what ultimately generates results.



The background of the image is a blurred photograph of a laptop screen. On the screen, there is a line graph with several data points connected by lines, and a pie chart is visible below it. The overall color scheme is a gradient of blue and teal.

*Want Lean Labs to go to work on  
building your website traffic?*

Let's Talk