

Do Your Brand & Sales Materials Greet Your Buyer on the 1st Page of Google?

Like it or not, all your industrial buyers have moved online. Inside are 11 proven steps that elevate your industrial brand to the top of Google ... and dominate your industrial niche for improved top-line growth.



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Key Takeaways for Industrial Marketers



- **When your best prospects search for your products and services, are your sales & marketing materials there to greet them?**

If your sales & marketing pages are currently at the top of Google, do not waste your time reading this ebook.

However, if your sales materials are nowhere to be found ... and losing valuable market share & brand visibility ... read on or give this outline to your agency or web developer.

- Small to mid-size industrial marketers (\$10 million to \$1 billion) have a window of opportunity to own their online marketplace.
- To be successful online you need a competent coach, guide, partner ... to lead your team.
- It is critical to understand a web developer's job is to build a great website, not optimize SEO.
- You will need to develop a new marketing paradigm ... publishing helpful content your prospects & customers love.
- Face the fact that your website is your most visible marketing asset and needs your attention more than just once per quarter. Your marketing must always be on.
- This effort can pay rich rewards, but like anything worth doing right, it takes time, patience and adaptability.

INTRODUCTION

Imagine your company has 100 keywords or topics that are critical for your brand's online identity. These keywords or topics could be product related, such as "electric motors near me". Or they could be keyword/topics related to a service your company provides such as "overhead crane rail survey". Or it could be a highly specialized product such as "wrapper & case packer conveyors".

IMAGINE a potential customer searches for any of your 100 critical keywords/topics and your webpages (i.e., sales materials) are nowhere to be found.

Using a sports analogy, **you are not even in the game.**

Now IMAGINE prospects searching for any of your most prized keywords/topics and your webpages end up #1 for Google's PageRank ... or search engine return page (SERP) as we call it.

IMAGINE the effect on your company's brand and visibility.

IMAGINE the supplemental marketing activities on top of dominating online visibility.

IMAGINE the opportunity to gather valuable leads.

I believe most midsize industrials (100 to 999 employees per Gartner Research) can achieve this lofty goal.

Hear me out!

Your prospects and customers will continue using online information as their "go-to" spot for most resources. Why not build a [digital moat around your business](#) and rank #1 for most of your critical keywords/topics?

The web is not going away, and your prospects are not giving up the web or their iPhones.

Below I will outline a proven strategy honed by 25 years of experience and research in the mid-sized industrial market (\$10 million to \$1 billion) that can achieve this lofty goal and build the necessary foundation for your company's long-term growth.

And ... from a well-known sports figure, "Taking on a challenge is a lot like riding a horse, isn't it? If you're comfortable while doing it, you're probably doing it wrong.



Taking on a challenge is a lot like riding a horse, isn't it? If you're comfortable while doing it, you're probably doing it wrong.

Ted Lasso

STEP 1: DO I NEED A CONSULTANT OR COACH?

I recently had a good friend critique this 11-step plan. He is former President of global manufacturing company. He is in his mid-50's, Midwest born, with an engineering degree and MBA in marketing and management.

His comment was, *"Tom, this is great stuff. Your outline is critical for any business today. The problem is this fast-changing information does not get filtered up to guys like me that come from a traditional marketing background. However, this is marketing's tip-of-the-spear in today's world"*.

I'm confident this is also the case for owners of mid-size industrials as well.

They need a coach with different skill sets or mindset than traditional marketing.

Most mid-size industrials simply do not have the marketing knowledge or marketing resources for today's online world.

From my experience and research much of this information does not get pushed up to the leaders of these industrials, as my friend said.

Yet, all the marketing data tells us all your customers are constantly on the web looking for specific answers.

So ... are your company's branded sales materials there to greet them?

Be honest with yourself, now!

I have found that most owners of mid-size industrials think it is important to be on the first page of Google, but next to impossible to get there.

I beg to differ.

It is just the opposite... with some help from a knowledgeable resource.

Most B2B industrials are thinking exactly what you are thinking. They build nice looking websites and then do not take advantage of the opportunity Google has given all of us in the B2B industrial space.



This is marketing's tip-of-the-spear in today's world.

Former President, global manufacturing company

STEP 1: DO I NEED A CONSULTANT OR COACH?

For every one of the unique industrial niches I have researched over the years there is very little competition for top spots in Google. Sure, you and your competitors may be on the first page of Google for a few important keywords or topics, but that is typically by default.

It is not because of consistent, strategic marketing efforts.

For example, I recently researched a B2B specialty parts supplier to the bottling industry. The owner gave me 5 keywords that matched their specialized products. When I searched the 5 keywords, 4 out of 5 returned #1 in Google. This was because the keywords were unique and non-competitive for their specific niche. Then the web developer, either knowingly or unknowingly, placed the keywords in the page's title tag and voila'. Their web pages popped up in #1 position.

Real world searches don't work like that now. Google will focus on the semantic search for specific keywords or topics. For example, when I searched using a real-world question related to these products, "How can I improve the leakage on my bottling line?", their pages were nowhere to be found. Not good for brand visibility and lead generation in the age of search.

If my narrative rings true, maybe you need a coach, a digital guide?

There is plenty of [marketing data](#) that recommends my approach for web development & SEO specifically.

"Those who use third parties rate the third party's effectiveness higher than their internal skill. SEO and web design/development particularly skew towards third parties being more effective."

If you find your marketing department or your marketing agency is not versed in the steps outlined below, [it is time for outside help](#). The Repp Group would love to coach your championship team to take the burden of online marketing off your shoulders.

I'm open for interviews and would love a look at your talent.



Those who use third parties rate effectiveness higher than their internal skill. SEO and web design/development particularly skew towards third parties being more effective.

Borrel & Associates - [Digital Services Continue to Dominate Marketing Budgets](#)

STEP 2: YOUR COMPANY HAS A GREAT BRAND STORY. IS IT BEING WELL TOLD? *by Greg Miller, Brand Consulting & Creative @maxwellandmiller.com.*

When customers think of your brand, what quickly comes to mind? If you are not sure, then you've probably got a little work to do.

Here's the deal. There is little difference between competitive products in purely functional terms. Chances are, customers think they're all pretty much the same. So, what tips the scale?

Effective branding — a brand story customers can relate to makes all the difference, and must be the foundation for all your marketing. Mark Barnes, Global CMO, Kellogg Company said, *"Unless you have absolute clarity of what your brand stands for, everything else is irrelevant."*

The reason? What people think about a brand is often why one is chosen over another. The one they feel the strongest connection with wins. By uncovering a special something about your brand, then building a story around it, you'll be that winner.

Particularly in the age of Google, a strong brand is more important than ever. Your customers are shopping online without you even knowing it. Will your brand stand out and be the one chosen for the next step in the selection process?

If your brand is greeted with more "huh" than "hooray," it's time to take a good, hard look at it. And decide what needs to be done next.

Don't be the best. Be different.

I bet you think your product is the best in its category. Right? And you're telling that story online, in marketing materials, everywhere you can think of. You're the best.

There's a problem though.

If I asked your competitors about their products, they'd say the same thing. "We're the best." Oops. When everyone says they're best, everyone looks average. You need to zig while they're zagging.



***Don't be the best. Be different – Greg Miller,
Creative Director, Maxwell+Miller***

STEP 2: YOUR COMPANY HAS A GREAT BRAND STORY. IS IT BEING WELL TOLD?

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Perhaps Al Ries, in **The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding**, said it best: “A branding program should be designed to differentiate your cow from all the other cattle on the range. Even if all the cattle on the range look pretty much alike.”

What about your brand? Does it tell a story that makes it one of a kind, not one of the crowd? Remember, Price, Service, and Quality don’t count. Customers already expect that you do those well or you wouldn’t still be in business. They’re cost of entry, not differentiators.

It all starts with a brand strategy. Here’s how we go about it.

1: DISCOVERY

We’ll interview executive leadership, employees, and customers. Each of these groups can provide insights to build a brand strategy that resonates with consumers. Meeting with executive leadership allows for tapping into their experience while challenging their assumptions.

Employees often have an even better feel for what differentiates the company. The pride they have in what they do and why they do it often leads to branding insights not found in the boardroom. Customers also provide a wealth of information as well. Give a customer the names of three companies, including yours and ask what they think of each. The answer can lead to a defining moment.

2: DEFINITION

What was learned in the Discovery phase will be defined and put into a branding statement consisting of:

- **What you do** — If someone asks what your company does, what would you and others in your company say? You’d be surprised how often there isn’t a consistent answer.
- **For whom you do it** — Communicating with customers on a person-to-person basis is much more effective. We will develop customer personas that humanize target markets.
- **What they want** — What problem can you solve for them?. People don’t want to buy a quarter-inch drill, they want a quarter-inch hole.
- **What makes you different** — A couple of hamburger patties and a slice of cheese on a bun are just that. Until you add “special sauce.” Then, it’s a Big Mac. What’s your special sauce?

STEP 2 : YOUR COMPANY HAS A GREAT BRAND STORY. IS IT BEING WELL TOLD *by Greg Miller, Brand Consulting & Creative @maxwellandmiller.com.*

3: DELIVERY

Once the strategy and branding statement are finalized, the project is handed from Einstein to Picasso (slight exaggeration). The branding specialists give the strategy to the artists and writers to craft a brand story that connects with your target market through all appropriate digital and traditional media.

How to tell when the branding is paying off

When a brand delivers on a unique promise, people will be willing to pay more — whether they're located across the street or across the globe. That's always been the case with top-notch brands. It is no different for the industrial market.

The reason is simple. If a business is viewed as a commodity, prospects won't see any difference between it and its competitors. So, they'll choose on the difference they do see — price. Uh-oh.

Most industrial companies have terrific brand stories to tell. They just have trouble telling them. We will make sure your brand story is well told.

Bottom line?

When competitive products seem alike, the brand people feel a connection with wins. We'll develop branding that will make your brand the winner ... then make it visible to the world.



Unless you have absolute clarity of what your brand stands for, everything else is irrelevant – Mark Barnes, Global CMO, Kellogg Company

STEP 3: IS A FRESH WEBSITE NECESSARY?

The short answer. Probably yes.

Like it or not your website is your most customer-facing and easily managed & leveraged marketing asset. It is the marketing asset that does all the work in our connected world ... 24/7.

Trusted organizations such as the Content Marketing Institute, GlobalSpec, MarketingProfs & ON24 have recently surveyed the B2B, manufacturing and engineering landscape. All confirm in recently published surveys & reports such as [Manufacturing Content Marketing 2022-Benchmarks, Budgets & Trends](#), [B2B Content Marketing 2022-Benchmarks, Budgets & Trends](#) and [GlobalSpec's State of Marketing to Engineers 2022](#) your audience is online constantly looking for the best resources to help them do their jobs.

Moving forward, to grow your business, you need to be in this critical game.

So, how do you build a better website?

First, you must dig in. Building a website is like coaching a sports team. You cannot just throw great talent on the floor without teaching and nurturing your team and expect success. You need to understand the game. Your website is no different.

This document is designed to help you understand the game and the terrific opportunity before you.

Start by understanding the typical web developer, either independent or agency developer, is not responsible for your company's brand visibility. Good web developers are charged with building a great looking website. Period. It is not their job to perform SEO tactics that improve your company's brand visibility and beat your competitors to the top spots.

To improve your website's brand visibility your web developer needs to know the consequences of what they are working with and how their work can hurt your company's brand visibility. It has been my experience that there is [significant divide between SEOs and developers](#).

I also recommend you start with the expectation that you will be using a marketing automation platform so your marketing associates can easily create webpages, add blog posts, manage email campaigns, create drip campaigns for segmented email lists, manage your social media engagements, etc.

Trust me, web developers come and go with the wind. By relying on a quality content management system such as HubSpot, Pardot, etc. you add needed stability to your marketing efforts. You minimize a ton of hassles; security, unexpected hosting issues, ability to easily measure success or failure ... basically time taken from running your business.

Marketing automation basically comes in two flavors.

First, you can deploy ALL your marketing assets, including your website, onto one platform such as HubSpot, Pardot (now owned by Salesforce), Marketo (now owned by Adobe), Act-On, etc. All these platforms have everything you will need to reach the top of your industrial niche, including some excellent CRMs.

STEP 3 : IS A FRESH WEBSITE NECESSARY?

Second, you can build your website on an open-source CMS (content management system) platform. Currently WordPress is the defacto standard. Then you attach a popular marketing automation service such as SharpSpring, ActiveCampaign and others to handle your online marketing chores.

I lean heavily towards a high-quality platform like HubSpot for my industrial friends. Back in 2013 I wrote "[Is Marketing Automation Worth It?](#)" The 9 reasons I laid out 9 years ago are still as valid today as they were in 2013, along with one other advantage ... SECURITY. Open-source platforms with their hundreds of plug-ins are highly susceptible to hacks. I see many industrials sacrifice security for convenience and costs. I highly recommend that you educate yourself and your organization about WordPress security.

In the end, you will need marketing automation tools along with your website to dominate your online competitors. Along with marketing automation you will need these added elements as you plan your coming championship seasons:

- Make sure your newfound brand story is told clearly above the fold. Your web visitor needs to know at once what it is that you do and what's in it for them
- Make sure your site map and content management system include a blog module. This is the single best tactic to promote your brand visibility.

Some of my clients ask, "Everyone is blogging, how can our content make a difference?" My response is, "Blogging is as important as ever for industrial and your competitors are not doing it, so you have a clear lane to success."

Acquaint yourself with the power of blogging. Here is a recent (7/15/2022) article from Search Engine Journal, [6 Reasons Why Blogging is Important for Marketing & SEO](#)

- Use plenty of calls-to-actions on your web pages. Make sure they are colorful and obvious. We all know that your web visitors do not read your website, they scan them. So, make your CTAs obvious: **DOWNLOAD HELPFUL PDF**, **GRAB OUR HANDY WHITE PAPER**, **BUY NOW**, etc.
- Use images and testimonials of happy customers that have used your products or services successfully.
- Give your visitors an idea of the costs. Break the costs down into manageable bits if necessary.
- Keep it simple. Use as few words as possible. Your website is today's new elevator pitch.



If you blog, you're accomplishing something 99% of the people of the world will never achieve. So be patient, hone your craft, and don't give up.

Mark Schaefer, Author, [Marketing Rebellion](#)

STEP 3 : IS A FRESH WEBSITE NECESSARY?

- ❑ When diagramming your new site map create a “Helpful Articles” or “People Also Ask” section. Some call these “pillar pages”. This is where you prove to Google your company’s expertise for EVERY topic you want to be number one on Google’s search engine return page (SERP). Now every time you write about a specific topic in your blog, you insert a URL link back to your authoritative & content-rich pillar page. This proves to your audience and Google ...”*these guys really know what they are talking about*”.

Linking your blog topics back to a [similar, authoritative, webpage](#) (i.e., pillar page) is called content consolidation, a tactic that Google tracks and is an important element when you are mapping out your new site map.

According to [Bruce Clay](#), probably the oldest and most authoritative voice on the topic of SEO and the first speaker I heard at my first web development and SEO conference in 2004, *“In order for SEO to perform correctly, you have to be subject matter expert.”*

You should at least acquaint yourself with the SEO concept of content consolidation or [topic clusters](#) before you design your new site map. Want to brush up on this concept? Here you go: [How content consolidation can improve your SEO performance](#)

- ❑ Now that you are adding more content to your website you will need a robust search feature on your content management system.

What is the first thing you do when you go to Amazon ... search, right? Prospects and customers want the same feature on your website. Google also makes note of this valuable feature because having a searchable website improves internal linking, one of the most underrated SEO tactics.

- ❑ I highly recommend a database driven knowledgebase. This is like your own Wikipedia for your specific industry. Using a database format makes it easy to continually add categories, questions, answers, white papers, graphics etc. without having to add or change your webpage hierarchy structure. This strategy keeps Google happy and your online competitors in the locker room.
- ❑ Looking at all my client’s traffic analytics, nearly half of their visits to their websites are from mobile devices. Make sure your web developer is well-versed in responsive design, a method of programming a website that formats easily to desktops, mobile and tablets. [The SEO advantages are significant using responsive.](#)
- ❑ Last, regular maintenance of your website should be part of your marketing and SEO budget (**Step 5**). According to [HubSpot](#) & others you should update your website every 2-3 years. Then, make sure you are performing critical maintenance steps outlined in **Step 5**.

Like a long, difficult season in sports of tough practices, training, injuries, difficult losses ... this is a grind. However, your industrial company will be richly rewarded if you accept this long-term challenge.



In order for SEO to perform correctly, you have to be a subject matter expert.

Bruce Clay

STEP 4: DO I REALLY HAVE TO PUBLISH ONLINE CONTENT?

Developing content and publishing is a new paradigm for an industrial owner.

According to Search Engine Journal, *“If your organization is not investing in content marketing, it might be safe to assume you are losing market share to your competitors.”*

This task must be done with full budget and cultural support throughout your company.

Call it your “Content Machine”, “Production Studio”, “Publishing House” ... whatever. But take this seriously. Face the fact that you are not just selling and servicing industrial products, but you are now a publishing company. A publishing company that produces content that helps your prospects and customers do their daily jobs, [builds trust](#) and elevates your brand story.

Take as much pride in teaching your prospects and customers with great content as you do with your products and services.

Here are some key concepts:

- Use the concept of “*They ask, you answer*” by Marcus Sheridan [to select the topics you need to produce content for](#).
- Get to 150 quality blog posts as fast as you can (4 blogs per month will take you 3 years. 8 per month will take you a year & half) From my experience and research, my clients do not really get a lot of SEO traction with their blog posts until they get to about 150 blogs posts. This, of course, depends on your industrial niche. Some niches are more competitive than others. Explained in more detail in **Step 5** and [backed up with marketing data](#) from the smartest digital marketers in the industry, there is strong correlation between good keyword research and a successful blog.
- All marketing automation platforms will automatically publish each blog post to your social media platforms. For industrial, LinkedIn is the most important. You should assign someone to pay attention to interactions on industrial’s most valuable social media platform.



If your organization is not investing in content marketing, it might be safe to assume you are losing marketing share to your competitors.

Search Engine Journal

STEP 4: DO I REALLY HAVE TO PUBLISH ONLINE CONTENT?

❑ I would highly encourage you to read David Meerman Scott's [The New Rules of Marketing & PR](#) before you embark on this task. David will make you a believer in becoming a great publisher as a successful industrial marketing tactic. Scott, the best-selling author for marketing, delivers a real blow to the [status quo for the industrial marketers](#).

❑ A few words about publishing to social media:

I can't tell you how many times I have asked an owner what they are doing with social media. Often, I get something like this, "Our receptionist is taking care of our Facebook page."

No!

Remember, this marketing effort is an exercise in management of scarce resources. Spending resources on much of social media for most industrials is a waste of resources. Instead focus on your most trusted and effective channels to your decision makers:

- Use [highly segmented mailing lists](#) on your marketing automation platform.
- Some market research says that [80% of B2B leads come from LinkedIn](#). Some say 97%. Regardless, double down on what works for the industrial market and forget the rest for now. Here is a fantastic ebook on using LinkedIn for B2B industrial: [The Ultimate Guide to B2B Lead Generation on LinkedIn](#)
- According to [GlobSpec's 2022 State of Marketing to Engineers](#), YouTube and LinkedIn, by a wide margin, are viewed as the two most valuable platforms for seeking information. The rest of social media are far behind.
- In the interest of full disclosure: Social media can be a highly effective marketing tool. However, given the resources to effectively manage social media, this marketing channel is punching way above its weight class for the industrial market. Also, in my opinion social media has been a disaster for America's culture. The collateral damage has been devastating to our youth and TikTok is clearly a tool for China to gather intelligence. I refuse to use it or recommend it. Enough of that. Focus your marketing resources on email marketing for the long term. More predictable. More reliable.
- A little about your buyers' psychology: I believe search has a unique advantage over social for the industrial market. Your buyers use search engines for specific intent. They are busy and they want answers quick. The website that provides answers easily, wins the brand visibility race. Social users are bored and look for info without specific intent. Different mindset. Different intent. Stick with search moving forward as a marketing strategy.



*Pick up David Meerman Scott's book **The New Rules of Marketing & PR***

STEP 4: DO I REALLY HAVE TO PUBLISH ONLINE CONTENT?


❑ Video production must be on your radar as well. According to [GlobalSpec's 2022 State of Marketing to Engineers](#), 96% of engineers & technical staff consume videos for work-related purposes. YouTube, is their most valuable social media platform. (LinkedIn is a close 2nd) Again, this is a new paradigm for industrial owners and marketers. I have been in industrial marketing for over 25 years and have seen 100's of videos produced by all kinds of industrials. Frankly, most are lacking in the elements that make for successful video production and campaign.

If you really want to reach the top of online industrial niche, video is the one tactic that has the best opportunity to distance your brand from your industrial competitors. According to David Meerman Scott, *"Great video that educates & informs is always the best marketing strategy."*

I recently posted a blog article on the best way to create industrial videos and why they are so important: [Industrial Video, A Case Study: Your Key to 75% Online Visibility](#)

Keep in mind that Google will soon issue a new update that will emphasize the quality of your content rather than the quantity. Google's goal is to reduce the frequency with which your prospects are disappointed in the search results. Google will do this by de-emphasizing SEO-first tactics and focus on addressing the needs of human readers. Hurray ... it's about time.

To close **Step 4** I would like to highlight a few quotes from, [David Meerman Scott](#). These come from several of his best-selling books & live presentations I have attended.

- 
- Great video that educates & informs is always the best marketing strategy.
 - Think like a publisher, not a marketer.
 - The time is now. Now we can market in real time. Now we can market instantly.
 - Today's marketing success comes from self-publishing web content that people want to share. It's not about gimmicks. **It's not about paying an agency to interrupt others.**

David Meerman Scott

STEP 5: DO INDUSTRIAL BRANDS NEED SEO?

Industrial brands need SEO first as the most easily managed way to reach your industrial buyers.

Now it is time to dive into, the behind the scene tactics, of your game plan.

Remember this is a long-term project. This should take 2-4 years to build a solid foundation. Once these steps are implemented you will be on your way to the top of your industrial niche.

Continuing the sports analogies, I am a big Indiana University men's basketball fan.

The new IU coach, Mike Woodson, is a brilliant defensive coach. He gets his talent to do things defensively that you simply don't see in most teams. To most observers these critical defensive tactics are barely noticeable. However, these highly technical tactics made a huge difference. This past season (2021-2022) IU ranked #1 for defense in the most talented conference in the country, the Big 10.

So, it is with [SEO tactics](#).

Understanding what tactics work and what tactics to ignore is huge because execution of these tactics can be very expensive. SEO is a labor-intensive effort. Most agencies simply do not take the time to use these tactics because they cannot charge enough to make their labor profitable. Additionally, most graphic-oriented web developers are not interested in SEO research and tactics. It is not their job.

SEO is much like defense in basketball. Defense is not the "glamour" part of the game. Great defensive efforts are rarely seen on the highlight reels. Defense wins games. So does SEO!

But paying attention to SEO discipline can propel your brand to the top of the pack.

Like any successful sports franchise you'll also need great scouting and competitive intelligence to successfully beat the competition.

You will need a good SEO research tool. There are many out there, but my favorite is [SEMrush.com](#). SEMrush has a massive suite of tools that allow you to keep great statistics and keep track of your competitors. This valuable tool gives your team a tremendous competitive advantage.

According to Danny Goodwin at Search Engine Land in [6 Fundamental Truths About SEO](#), "*SEO should beat the competition, not the algorithm. Google makes thousands of changes to search every year. And every keyword you're trying to optimize for is essentially a new algorithm. Your job is to beat the competition.*"



Your job is to beat the competition

Danny Goodwin – Search Engine Land

STEP 5 : DO INDUSTRIAL BRANDS NEED SEO?

Below I highlight the tools and tactics that afford my client's a significant competitive edge.

❑ **SEMrush vs Google Analytics (GA):** Most marketers and agencies know about Google Analytics ... most don't understand it. GA is ONLY an internal service. GA only measures traffic from your own website. Whereas SEMrush provides data from consumers, Google, third parties and my client's competitors. This data delivers the scouting reports I need to crush the competition. You see, using GA is like preparing for a big game knowing your own teams' stats and tactics, but nothing about the competition. You are flying blind. SEMrush provides an amazing amount of data such as search volume, user intent, keyword difficulty, competitive levels, keyword variations and more, that help me create content that beats the competition to the Google's top spots. GA is free. SEMrush is not free. You get what you pay for! If you want to know more about the differences and how SEMrush benefits the industrial market, you can go to [SEOchatter](#).

❑ First select your topics by talking to the owners. The owners will give you the most important topics that need to be found by the search engines. Then using SEMrush's **Keyword Magic Tool**, you can prioritize the keywords/topics so you can achieve improved PageRank. Depending on the business, you should have a minimum of 20 topics. I have one client that has 150 keyword/topics we are focused on. Don't overdo it for your first SEO research effort. Remember you can always add more keywords/topics as you start to see more of your keywords at the top of Google's SERP.

❑ Again, the most dependable way to get my client's topics on top of the search engine return pages is topic-focused blogging from good SEO research. Secondly, I focus on the topic-specific pillar pages you built into your website. Using SEMrush's **On Page SEO Checker** along with their **Organic Research Tool** I can perform helpful updates for each pillar page every 6 months. I can also check my client's top online competitors. SEMrush tells me which competitors are ranking ahead of my client and why. I can then go back to each of my client's pages and make necessary changes so that my client will outrank their competitor's page.

The graphic below demonstrates this tactic I used on one of my client's pillar pages in June of 2021. Notice the difference some basic research and minor changes made in the page views of a critical topic for my client.



STEP 5 : DO INDUSTRIAL BRANDS NEED SEO?

- ❑ If you follow the above formula, then a good majority of your selected keywords will be in the top 3 of the SERPs, especially if you get to 150 blog posts.
- ❑ After success with most of your keywords, you look at the bottom of your list of topics/keywords in SEMrush's **Position Tracking Report** and look for the topics that are critical for your business that are still poorly ranked. Select the most important topics and plug them into SEMrush's **Keyword Gap Analysis Tool**. This tool will tell you which competitor is outranking you for each keyword/topic and what you need to do to move past them on the SERPs. Can you say, "brand visibility"?
- ❑ What is the big deal about backlinks?

Backlinks, or inbound links, remain one of the top 3 ranking factors for Google. Google views these inbound links as "votes" and the more votes you get the more beneficial for your PageRank. Unfortunately, as your website gathers more traffic your pages become targets for the bad guys. Bots or online robots will scan the web for pages that get good traffic for specific topics and then send nasty links to your pages. The bad guys will then turn around and sell those links to other bad guys. We call these toxic backlinks.

Once your site gathers 10,000 visitors per month, you should use SEMrush's **Backlink Audit** twice per year. This tool analyses all your backlinks and then sends a disavow file to Google. Google will then ignore toxic backlinks to your domain's benefit.

With that said, I would not spend too much time trying to get quality back links from trusted industry sources. This can be huge resource drain. For the mid-size industrial market, I do not think this SEO task is worth the effort. In fact, during a [recent live webinar](#), Google predicted backlinks may not be a critical ranking factor. I have achieved great results without spending a lot of time building backlinks, primarily because the B2B industrial market is not that competitive for quality backlinks.

However, **DO** pay attention to your toxic backlinks, create a list of toxic backlinks and send that list to Google to remove your site's association with these nasty little links.



If you follow the above formula, then a good majority of your selected keywords will be in the top 3 of the SERPs, especially if you get to 150 blog posts

STEP 5 : DO INDUSTRIAL BRANDS NEED SEO?

❑ Schema.org

Schema.org is a tightly [structured markup language](#) created in 2011 by the major search engines to help them better understand information that is on each page. The Repp Group has successfully used Schema.org markup language on our client's pillar pages. Make sure your web developer understands these important guidelines. Using schema.org markup language also puts your company in a position to take advantage of Google's coveted [featured snippet](#) as well as, increasingly important, voice recognition.

Just today, as I am wrapping up this project, I get a notice that HubSpot will now make sure each of your blog posts will be compliant when it comes to Schema.org markup language. Just another advantage of using a [quality marketing automation platform](#).

- ❑ I am a strong believer that most businesses, especially retail/food service have poor service these days. So, when I get great service, I am a prolific writer of great reviews on Google. Just today I received a notification from Google that my reviews had 10K "views". That is a LOT of brand visibility and good well. I encourage my clients to gather online reviews. I have even designed handy hand-outs for the sales team to give out to their customers after a great experience, making it easy for client to write a good review. [Regardless, get good at acquiring good reviews](#).
- ❑ SEMrush has a **Site Audit Tool**. This powerful tool will crawl your entire site and then supplies a detailed report concerning your site's health. The **Site Audit Tool** generates a report with a list of issues and then tells you exactly what to do to correct them. Fixing these issues will improve your search engine results, especially compared to your industrial competitors that are probably not paying attention to these harmful issues. Pay particular attention to Google's new metric called [Core Vitals](#), established in May 2020. If you site is older than May 2020 there are probably issues that affect your site's health and PageRank. Of course, SEMrush will tell you exactly the pages that need your attention. A site audit should be done at least twice once per year. It is like predictive maintenance on a factory floor. It is essential. Google will love you for it.
- ❑ Finally, if you are redesigning your website, it is critical you take steps to avoid huge drops in your, hard-earned, brand visibility. Not following the proper procedures, such as mapping URL redirects, [careful audit of existing content](#), etc. will result in a loss of years of SEO. One of my most trusted resources, Neil Patel, posted [Website Redesign SEO Checklist: Tips to Avoid Big Drops in Your Rankings](#). I highly recommend you share this article with your web developer. Remember, it is not the web developers' job to elevate your branded sales materials to the top of Google.

SEO tactics and SEMrush can overwhelm you with tools and data. For a large consumer B2C site many of these tools are invaluable. But for the not so competitive mid-size industrial market you can ignore most and focus on the steps and tools I have outlined above.

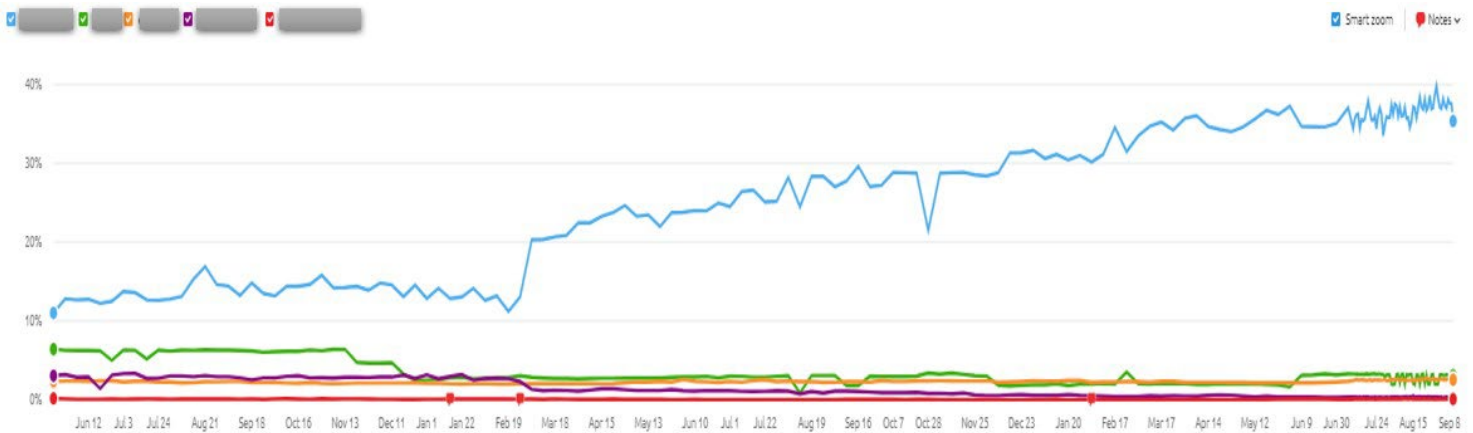
Your efforts will be rewarded, proven in the graphic on the next page.



Remember, it is not the web developers' job to elevate your branded sales materials to the top of Google.

STEP 5 : DO INDUSTRIAL BRANDS NEED SEO?

The blue line in the graph below demonstrates the PageRank position of my client's critical keywords/topics. The multi-colored lines at the bottom of the graph show ALL my client's competitors' keyword positions.



This is a significant brand advantage in the world of search.

A recent quote from John Mueller (@JohnMu), Google's Senior Webmaster Trend Analyst since 2007 caught my attention. In a [recent post](#) to my SEO friends John said, "Maybe you should stop reading SEO blogs and instead do something useful for your site and its users".

I could not agree more.

Go back up to **Step 4** and focus on producing great content for your prospects and customers first. That's winning offense. But the real competitive advantage for the industrial market is defense ... your SEO tactics outlined above.

Keep in mind this is an investment in your brand's future revenue.

- What drives a business is sales
- What drives sales is leads
- Digital leads come in through your website
- Your prospects find your website through branded impressions in the search results

Finally, in the [6 Fundamental Truths About SEO](#), Danny Goodwin says, "SEO is a perpetual project because search is constantly changing". In the same post Goodwin quotes [Bruce Clay](#), "You cannot ever be done with SEO. The search engines have seen to it".



You cannot ever be done with SEO. The search engines have seen to it. Bruce Clay

STEP 6 : WHAT ABOUT MARKETING AUTOMATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ?

Let's get some of the difficult preparation out the way for effective marketing automation, OK?

It has been my experience that most mid-size industrials migrated to some form of CRM years ago. This might be an old third-party vendor such as Constant Contact or a, sometimes, clunky CRM attached to an industry standard ERP system. Maybe you are still using Microsoft Outlook? Many industrials migrated to the popular Salesforce platform.

Here is my point.

For marketing automation to really work well your CRM MUST be integrated with your marketing automation.

Why?

The primary benefit of marketing automation is it helps your company save time and money by focusing on targeted and personalized marketing efforts that matter the most. These marketing efforts, such as email marketing, automated drip campaigns, social monitoring, etc. are only effective if the contacts in your CRM are continuously segmented by their specific interests and profiles such as, job title, company, location, web behavior, etc.

HubSpot spells it out in more detail at [Why CRM and Marketing Automation Need Each Other](#)

Back to email marketing.

Email is still the [most cost-effective way to reach your customers](#) for a variety of reasons and is the marketing automation module to focus on once you have a handle on great blogging.

The email accounts of your prospects and customers are their most prized possessions. Countless marketing studies, and common sense, tells us that email is the best way to reach your customer, especially if your marketing budget is limited. More marketing data tells us that great email marketing overwhelmingly outperforms social media for sending out updates, fresh blog posts, new offers, service updates, etc.

[Email marketing and social media can work together](#) nicely but get good at email first before you implement social media tactics without any strategy ... a financial rabbit hole.

For your marketing automation to really pay dividends you need to use the email marketing module effectively.

So, what is great email marketing?



For marketing automation to really work well your CRM must be integrated with you marketing automation.

STEP 6 : WHAT ABOUT MARKETING AUTOMATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ?

DO NOT send out blanket emails to all your contacts in your integrated CRM database. Sending out unwanted email blasts to everyone on your contact list simply destroys [trust](#) in your new brand story.

With marketing automation, you can deliver highly personalized emails at scale. Sending the most relevant content at the right time is best way to develop trust in your brand story. Build your mailing lists on hundreds of criteria, such as:

- Company
- Region
- Job Title
- Web behavior
- Age
- Which resources have they have downloaded?
- Is this a marketing qualified lead or a sales qualified lead?
- Have they opened your last email?
- And on & on....

As your multiple email lists grow, you continue to slice and dice your lists so that you can pinpoint your contacts' specific interests. When an email lands in their inbox they say, *"Gee, that is exactly what I was interested in!"* instead of unsubscribing after a string of unrelated and irrelevant emails.

Your email marketing lists should be cleaned up quarterly. This task keeps your marketing automaton costs down as most charge by the number of contacts in your CRM database.

For a terrific lesson on great email marketing go to a recent webinar by Neil Patel, [How to Build Trust Through Email Marketing Strategies](#).

At this point, the difficult preparation is done.

One of my favorite sports (and life) quotes of all time is from "The General", Bob Knight, former men's basketball coach at Indiana University.

"The will to win is nothing compared to the will to prepare".

If you have followed the outline above, you have done a great job of preparing to win. The rest of the bells & whistles in your marketing automation platform will be a cake walk once CRM integration and email are mastered.



The will to win is nothing compared to the will to prepare

Bobby Knight

STEP 7: IS THIS A PAINFUL EXERCISE FOR INDUSTRIAL MARKETERS?

It can be, but ...

Remember, this is a team sport. Team sports should be fun. All this does not happen individually. Several members of your company will need to take part.

All marketing automation platforms have fantastic tools to make a mid-sized industrial look like a marketing giant. Their suite of tools can be overwhelming and a major reason most industrials ignore marketing automation.

Take it one step and one module at a time.

You are now blogging helpful articles on a regular basis, right?

Now, let's go back to email marketing for a moment as this module provides the most immediate and gratifying feedback. Less painful! Fun!

Mastering a well-deployed, segmented and goal-oriented email strategy will more than pay for the additional cost of the marketing automation platform. As results improve leads and sales, the pain fades away.

I have often seen one good sale from well placed content or an effective mail resulting in a sale that more than pays for the marketing automation subscription.

Get good at email marketing. Marketing automation makes it fun and easy to master this critical marketing skill.

Once you get good at email marketing, focus on other features of the marketing automation platform. Again, unless your contact lists are segmented properly, the following features will not be effective.

- Create attractive & effective calls-to-action without using a graphic designer
- Create white papers, ebooks, etc. for lead generation
- Create forms to collect email addresses
- Create automated drip campaigns from email marketing lists
- Easily monitor your social media engagements, especially LinkedIn
- Marketing automation will supply all the marketing data you could dream of. However, competitive data about online competitors and market niches will only come from SEO research services like SEMrush.com.
- Once you get your contacts segmented properly, every action your customers take are tracked and then leads to more effective marketing tactics.



Mastering a well deployed, segmented and goal-oriented email strategy will more than pay for the additional costs of the marketing automation platform.

STEP 8 : HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT LOCATION SERVICES?

If your industrial business has multiple locations, pay attention to the site map for your new website. Most industrial clients include all the locations on just one page.

This is a huge SEO mistake.

You need to create separate and optimized pages for each of your locations. Each location page should include the following:

- Your URLs should look like this:
 - www.yourdomain.com/indianapolis
 - www.yourdomain.com/ftwayne
- Your location's name, address & phone number (NAP)
- Location-specific content
- An embedded Google Map
- Location-specific comments and reviews from your customers.

[This can be complex issue](#), so pay attention and study what makes for good local search. But if you stick to the basics outlined above, you will not damage your winning game plan.

Of course, The Repp Group can help.



You need to create separate and optimized pages for each of your locations

SEMrush.com

STEP 9 : STICK TO THE FUNDAMENTALS ... BUT BE ADAPTABLE, BE PATIENT

One of my greatest disappointments in my business was when I lost a contract with a large logistics and parts supplier in Detroit. We had been working with this client for about one year. We had just started building out **Step 3**, their content machine. We were making head way with some of their key topics. We were on the first page of Google for several of their 60 keywords/topics.

However, the owner was not happy as he had not closed any multi-million dollar deals attributable to our online marketing efforts. The owner had a new salesperson who convinced him to spend all his resources on new social media platforms and he lost interest in our efforts.

Big mistake!

I certainly wish them well, but I can tell you when I search for their critical keywords/topics their brand message and sales materials are nowhere to be found. Yet, their major competitor dominates the search engine return pages for multiple topics. In today's world of search ... they are out of the ball game.

So, what is the best way to stay at top of your game in your respective industrial niche?

Adaptability.

The pace of change in technology and SEO is unmatched.

My steps outlined in this formula are fundamental. Fundamental, meaning these steps are built on a great brand story and content that continues to weave in your company's brand story.

... Then making that branded content available to as many prospects as possible by being at that top of Google. Like sales, it is a numbers game.

However, the tools to deploy your brand will continue to change.

For example, my two primary tools for my outlined formula continue to be HubSpot (i.e., marketing automation) and SEMrush.com (i.e., SEO & market research). Hardly a day goes by without some notification that these SAAS (i.e., Software As A System) platforms have added a new feature. It is next to impossible to keep up.

Be willing to try these new features and see if they work. Some will, some will not for the industrial market.

Fundamentally the success of your online marketing effort still boils down to a great brand and great content that rises to the top of Google.



... Then making that branded content available to as many prospects as possible by being at that top of Google. Like sales, it is a numbers game.

STEP 9 : STICK TO THE FUNDAMENTALS ... BUT BE ADAPTABLE, BE PATIENT

Every great sports team has a game plan before they take the floor. But every game plan must be adaptable for a win.

My client in Detroit had a great game plan that was working.

They were then influenced by social media startups that, in my opinion, had little influence on his specific industrial niche. I heard from a friend that my client was upset because they were losing relevance on the SERPs. Then they tried to use the SEO marketing channel to catch up to their competitors. SEO as just a marketing tactic, without good content, will always fail.

“Remember, SEO is not a demand creation channel. It captures **existing** demand” - Holly Anderson on July 7, 2022, from [Search Engine Land](#)

The graph below, from SEMrush’s **Position Tracking** tool, demonstrates the need for *strategic patience*. The blue line demonstrates that one-third of my client’s topics were #1 in Google and had a significant brand advantage over their competitors. Then my client abandon our SEO tactics and relied on social media for online branding. It is obvious which tactic makes the most impact on your industrial brand.



Adapt, but stick to the fundamental skills that got you to the big game ... and learn *strategic patience*.

No great sports franchise became great overnight.



Remember, SEO is not a demand creation channel. It only captures existing demand.

Search Engine Land

STEP 10 : HOW DO I KEEP SCORE OF OUR SUCCESS?

Now your company is in the “big dance”.

How do you keep score of your championship game? Put another way by the great Peter Drucker, *“If you can’t measure it, you cannot improve it”*.

There are hundreds of metrics and ways to measure your online success in today’s data-driven world.

Marketing automation companies want you to measure conversions right out of the gate. When I say conversions, I mean enticing a web visitor to fill out an online form and then converting that contact to a sale.

I can understand why.

The marketing automation companies want you to stay on their platform to keep their gravy train flowing so they encourage you to gather conversions as quick as possible so you can report a positive ROI to the boss.

Tracking conversions is great, and I encourage you to use the tools & metrics that marketing automation provides, but FOR NOW let’s focus on creating great content that answers your customers’ most pressing issues. Creating great content that your prospects and customers love in the context of your competitive environment will produce the most long-term success. Keep in mind all your content is “evergreen”, meaning it continues to tell your brand story until you take it down.

Also ... owners, engineers, technical staff are not likely to fill out online forms based on my experience and market research from [GlobalSpec](#).

Let me remind you as of this writing, none of the marketing automation platforms offer an overview of your industries’ competitive landscape. Strategic thinking and patience requires an awareness of your company’s current standing in your industrial niche to gain a competitive advantage. You need a strong SEO research tool such as SEMrush.com, Ahrefs.com, etc. to get the data you need.

For now, focus on your company’s **brand visibility** to distance your company from your competitors.

You have built a terrific brand story that tells prospects exactly the benefits they get when they do business with you, right?

You want that new brand story to be as visible as possible, right? Remember, it is a numbers game.

So...here is how we measure **brand visibility**.



If you can’t measure it, you cannot improve it.

Peter Drucker

STEP 10 : HOW DO I KEEP SCORE OF OUR SUCCESS?

Let's say you have 100 critical keywords and topics that need to be on the first page of Google. Right now, 10 of those keywords are #1 in Google's SERP. That is 10% brand visibility. Not good in the world of search for your industrial brand.

Then, after publishing some topic-focused blogs, videos, pillar pages, etc., 75 of your topics are in #1 position in Google. That is 75% brand visibility. Now, your branded sales materials are seen by thousands more potential customers.

Based on my experience and research, achieving 100 percent brand visibility is possible in most industrial markets. This means that your domain occupies the first position in the search engine return page for all 100 keywords/topics. Now your team is in the top echelon of your industrial niche and will gather the most eyeballs and the most leads.

Imagine the potential leads that level of brand visibility would yield?

If you have followed my guidance and achieved brand visibility of 75% and beyond you have built an almost impenetrable [digital moat](#) around your industrial brand.

Congratulations...you now own your online marketplace and reached the **top of your industrial niche**.

Below is what the **industrial marketing success** looks like viewed on SEMrush's **Position Tracking Tool**. This is a graph of one client for brand visibility percentage (my client is the green circle) and their "Top Competitors" are all the other circles. Two of those circles (the blue and red) are highly visited industry association websites. The pink circle is a billion-dollar multi-national competitor of my client. The remaining colored circles are fierce regional competitors.

I am confident I can achieve this same online dominance for your industrial company, given the chance.



STEP 11 : HOW MUCH WILL THIS MARKETING EFFORT COST?

It is no secret mid-size industrials depend on direct sales to gather leads and close sales. As a result, sales have always received the biggest share of the budget.

Almost every one of the mid-size industrials I have worked with over the years' view marketing budgets as an expense. This expenditure mindset is the reason why industrial marketing is the first thing to go when it's time to "cut the fat".

It is also no secret the industrial buying process has changed dramatically. Industrial buyers do not need your sales group as they did years ago. Your prospects just need to find their answers on your branded webpages.

This expenditure mindset must change to stay competitive in the world of search, social, mobile and voice recognition.

This document is designed to address this changing landscape and give you an idea, from my personal experience and documented research, what it takes to dominant your online industrial niche in the future.

Your industrial company needs to get out of the expenditure mindset. Digital marketing needs to have a dedicated seat at the budget table yearly.

The question at this point is what percentage to invest in your company's' key driver of growth ... your marketing's "tip-of-the-spear" ... your online presence?

I am not going to pretend to know your budget process. My goal is to just change your mindset and provide proven steps that will lay the foundation for your online strategy and brand moving forward.

By simply considering a percentage-of-sales approach for mid-size industrials, plan on at least 5% of sales to deploy a strategy outlined above. In hard numbers, a minimum of \$200-\$300K per year to achieve the success outlined above for smaller mid-size (\$10-40 million) industrials . Much more if you produce high quality video.

The bottom line ...

Your buyers have changed the way they buy your products. Having a well-branded digital strategy is now as essential as a quality sales group for growth.

The proven steps above provide a template and foundation for you to confidentially become the leader of your industrial niche and well prepared for your buyers' changing habits.



A man who stops advertising to save money is like a man who stops the clock to save time.

Henry Ford

WANT TO KNOW MORE? NOT SURE HOW TO BEGIN?

Call or email Tom Repp at 269-375-0349 or
twrepp@thereppgroup.com for details and free consultation



When you call me, be prepared to give me 20 of your most critical keywords and 5 of your fiercest competitors. I will supply you with an overview of your brand's visibility, average positions of your keywords and traffic compared to your competitors. I will also provide an estimate of what it would take to achieve the kind of results outline in this ebook.

**Call 269-375-0349 or email me
at twrepp@thereppgroup.com**

Tom can offer a free consultation. If there seems to be good fit, I can travel to your office for a more involved interview with Coach Repp

