

Search Results

Five SEO myths busted.

BY EMMA HANES

Search engine optimization, or SEO, is both complicated and always changing. Because of this, many SEO myths get disseminated and are hard to shake. Here are five SEO myths busted.

1. **Google Analytics is bad for my website.** Let me be absolutely clear: Google Analytics is in *no way* bad for your website. It will not hinder your website performance, affect the user experience, or cause any negative effects. If someone is telling you Google Analytics is bad for your website, he or she is either misinformed or doesn't want to be held accountable for his or her work. Without Google Analytics, or some type of website data tool, it is impossible to tell if SEO and/or other digital marketing work you are undertaking is effective. There is no point in beginning SEO work for your law firm website if you will not be able to measure its effects.¹ While Google Analytics is the gold standard for website data analysis, other tools like Adobe Analytics can also be effective. Various website data analysis tools are available, but it's important to understand that you will need more information than just the number of website visits and page views. You will need an analytics tool that can provide in-depth measurement and analysis of your law firm website's performance.
2. **"I can get you on the first page of Google."** If you ever hear those words, or anything like them, *run!* There are many dishonest companies that will sell you on the idea that they can easily get your law firm website to show up on the first page of Google search results. The problem with this is that either (1) they can't deliver on that promise, or (2) they use "black hat" marketing tactics (practices that may increase results

but violate terms of service)—and Google *hates* black-hat tactics. When Google discovers a website is using black-hat tactics (and believe me, Google will), the website will essentially be blacklisted. While the website may appear on the first page of Google search results for a time, eventually the site won't even show up on the 10th page of search results—or show up at all. Trying to repair your website's reputation after a vendor has used black-hat optimization tactics will be extremely difficult, and in some instances, impossible.

3. **We did SEO once and it didn't work.** Google updates its algorithm several times each day. What you did two years ago is likely completely irrelevant to how modern SEO work is done. SEO is a continuous game of adapting to Google's algorithm updates. You need to commit to at least six months of SEO work just to start to see results, and you will need to continue the work for a long time after that. Although Google frequently updates its algorithm, a few key ranking components will likely never change. Google will always look for websites that continue to provide fresh, quality content and frequently undergo updates.
4. **Social media doesn't matter for SEO.** I'm not sure where this myth came from, but it's just not true. Having a large social media following and an active presence on social media platforms can help legitimize your website and provide high-value backlinks. Google can analyze your social media profiles and determine that (1) you actually exist and (2) you are actively engaging with others online. While you will need much more than an active social media presence to help improve your search engine rankings, it is an important part of an overall strategy.
5. **It doesn't matter that my website is slow.** Here's the thing, before you start any SEO work, you have to have a solid foundation. If your website does not load quickly, your SEO work

is going to be done in vain. Google *hates* slow websites, and if your website loads slowly, Google is not going to include it as often in search results. Improving your website's speed isn't an easy fix either. You may need to make major changes or even completely redesign and rebuild your website. Your website needs to load in less than three seconds to be considered fast. **TBJ**

Notes

1. Emma Hanes, *What Do The Numbers Mean: Understanding Your Website Analytics*, Stacey E. Burke (Nov. 1, 2016), <http://www.staceyeburke.com/blog/what-do-the-numbers-mean-understanding-your-website-analytics>.

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