Search engine optimization — SEO — seems like alchemy to the uninitiated. But there’s a science to it. Below are some important “ranking factors” and best practices that can lead to success with both search engines and searchers.

### The Periodic Table of SEO Success Factors

#### On-the-Page Factors
- **Cq**: Quality
  - Are pages well written & have substantial quality content?
- **Cr**: Research
  - Have you researched the keywords people may use to find your content?
- **Cw**: Words
  - Do pages use words & phrases you hope they’ll be found for?
- **Ce**: Engage
  - Do visitors spend time reading or "bounce" away quickly?
- **Cf**: Fresh
  - Are pages fresh & about "hot" topics?
- **Vt**: Thin
  - Is content "thin" or "shallow" & lacking substance?
- **Va**: Ads
  - Is your content ad-heavy, especially "above the fold"?

#### HTML
- **Ht**: Titles
  - Do HTML title tags contain keywords relevant to page topics?
- **Hd**: Description
  - Do meta description tags describe what pages are about?
- **Hh**: Headers
  - Do headlines & subheads use header tags with relevant keywords?
- **Hs**: Structure
  - Do pages use structured data to enhance listings?
- **Vs**: Stuffing
  - Do you excessively use words you want pages to be found for?
- **Vh**: Hidden
  - Do colors or design "hide" words you want pages to be found for?

#### Architecture
- **Ac**: Crawl
  - Can search engines easily "crawl" pages on site?
- **Ad**: Duplicate
  - Does site manage duplicate content issues well?
- **As**: Speed
  - Does site load quickly?
- **Au**: URLs
  - Are URLs short & contain meaningful keywords to page topics?
- **Am**: Mobile
  - Does your site work well for mobile visitors, on smartphones and tablets?
- **Vc**: Cloaking
  - Do you show search engines different pages than humans?

#### Off-the-Page Factors
- **Lq**: Quality
  - Are links from trusted, quality or respected web sites?
- **Lt**: Text
  - Do links pointing at pages use words you hope they’ll be found for?
- **Ln**: Number
  - Do many links point at your web pages?
- **Vp**: Paid
  - Have you purchased links in hopes of better rankings?
- **VI**: Spam
  - Have you created many links by spamming blogs, forums or other places?

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- **Ln**: Number
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#### Trust
- **Ta**: Authority
  - Do links, shares & other factors make site a trusted authority?
- **Th**: History
  - Has site or its domain been around a long time, operating in same way?
- **Ti**: Identity
  - Does site use means to verify its identity & that of authors?
- **Vd**: Piracy
  - Has site been flagged for hosting pirated content?

#### Social
- **Sr**: Reputation
  - Do you hope pages will be found for?
- **Ss**: Shares
  - Do many share your content on social networks?

#### Personal
- **Pc**: Country
  - What country is someone located in?
- **Pl**: Locality
  - What city or local area is someone located in?
- **Ph**: History
  - Has someone regularly visited your site or socially favored it?
- **Ps**: Social
  - Have you friends socially favored the site?

### Factors Work Together

All factors on the table are important, but those marked 3 carry more weight than 1 or 2. No single factor guarantees top rankings or success, but having several favorable ones increases the odds. Negative "violation" factors shown in red harm your chances.


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