Open Google Search Console (if you have access to it), and check the crawl errors report to see if you can see any site or URL errors. If there are URL errors, review what type of errors there are and whether they are for important web pages.

One of the most common types of errors is a "404 page not found". This means that a URL used to exist but it doesn't anymore. This could be that the page has been deleted or the URL has been changed. If the page has been deleted, sometimes it's best to 301 redirect the old URL to the next most relevant page. Similarly, if a URL has been changed, the old URL should be 301 redirected to the new URL.

Soft 404 errors are strange because they often look like normal error pages, where a message says the page could not be found but rather than return a server response code of 404, they actually return a server response code of 200. A 200 response code tells search engines that everything is OK but in this case, it is contradicted by a page not being able to be found. The fix to this, it usually requires letting your web developer or technical person know and they can tweak the web server settings.

The best way to learn SEO is through practice and repetition. For this exercise, decide on a website that you wish to test out your on-page optimization skills on. Pick 10 topics/landing pages to research, then decide on their best keywords and then outline the key on-page optimization elements. The

reference URL below will take you to a Google spreadsheet where you can follow the on-page optimization template.

From there, you can:

Download the spreadsheet (File à Download as), or
Make a copy (File à Make a copy..) which requires you to be signed in to a Google account
You can use Open Site Explorer to benchmark your website against competitors. If you haven't used a Moz product before, create a free community account:

You will now need to benchmark a website against three of its top competitors for key Moz metrics. You only need to enter the homepage URL of each site to

record the homepage Page Authority, Domain Authority and Root Domain Links.

Review to see how far or close your website is from the competition and gauge how much extra work is required for off-page optimization success. The higher each metric is, the more likely it is to perform for off-page optimization.

By changing the Inbound Links filter, you get a better idea of how the whole domain is performing, specifically for backlinks that can pass PageRank.
What to do:

Setting the Target to "this root domain" ensures backlinks are reported for the whole domain and not just the URL (e.g. homepage URL) that you enter
Setting the Link Source to "only external" ensures that you only get backlink information and filters out internal links
Setting the Link Type to "only follow" ensures that you'll only see backlinks that actually pass PageRank and filter out those that do not
Then, review the incoming link and highlight the top three backlinks that you feel offer the most value.
When deciding on the best ones, bear in mind the page authority of each but also consider how relevant the backlinks are to the industry and whether they felt authentic or not.

Action Point

PS: I know you might agree with some of the points that I have raised in this article. You might not agree with some of the issues raised. Let me know your

views about the topic discussed. We will appreciate it if you could drop your comment. Thanks in anticipation.

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