

THE COMPLETE REFERENCE

Google Ranking Factors

Every ranking signal that matters, grouped and tagged by how much evidence actually stands behind it: confirmed by Google, revealed by the 2024 Content Warehouse leak, or debunked myth.

● Confirmed by Google ● Leak / strongly evidenced ● Myth / negligible

The Complete List

Grouped by category. Each factor is tagged by evidence level. Read the tags, not just the factors, that honesty layer is the whole point.

Content & relevance

Content that satisfies the query intent (helpful, people-first)	Confirmed
Topical relevance and depth (semantic coverage, entities)	Confirmed
Content quality and originality	Confirmed
Freshness / query-deserves-freshness	Confirmed
Title relevance to the query (titlematchScore)	Leak / Evidenced
“Effort” / page-quality scoring on articles	Leak / Evidenced
Content length / word count as a direct target	Myth / Negligible
Keyword density	Myth / Negligible

Links & off-page

Backlinks from trusted, relevant sites	Confirmed
Number of referring domains (breadth beats raw count)	Leak / Evidenced
Link source-page quality tiers (high / medium / low)	Leak / Evidenced
Homepage PageRank distributed sitewide; trust buckets	Leak / Evidenced
Anchor-text relevance (and anchor-mismatch demotion)	Leak / Evidenced
Link volume bought at scale	Myth / Negligible

Technical & indexability

Crawlability and indexability	Confirmed
HTTPS / site security	Confirmed
Mobile-friendliness (mobile-first indexing)	Confirmed
Site structure and internal linking	Confirmed
Structured data (rich-result eligibility, not a rank boost)	Confirmed
Exact-match domain over-optimization	Myth / Negligible

Page experience

Core Web Vitals (LCP, INP, CLS)	Confirmed
Intrusive interstitials (penalty)	Confirmed
A perfect PageSpeed score	Myth / Negligible

User interaction & behavioral

Click signals / NavBoost (good, bad & longest clicks)	Leak / Evidenced
SERP-dissatisfaction / pogo-sticking demotion	Leak / Evidenced
Chrome usage data at the site level	Leak / Evidenced
Social-media shares as a direct signal	Myth / Negligible

Site-level, brand & entity

Site-wide authority (siteAuthority in the Q* system)	Leak / Evidenced
New-site suppression / hostAge “sandbox”	Leak / Evidenced
Brand and entity consistency (recognizable entity)	Leak / Evidenced
Author entities and author-page associations	Leak / Evidenced
E-E-A-T as a direct ranking factor	Myth / Negligible

How to Read the Tiers

Confirmed by Google

Google has stated it publicly or documented it officially. Get this tier right and you out-rank most sites, because most sites still don't.

Leak / Evidenced

Surfaced in the March 2024 Content Warehouse leak or in strong correlation studies. Documented inside Google's systems, but not confirmed as live-weighted today.

Myth / Negligible

Debunked, retired, or a rounding-error signal. Chasing these while your real pages aren't indexed is where most SEO effort is wasted.

Sequence Beats Checklist

Knowing the factors isn't the hard part. Working them in the right order is.

1 • Indexation

A page that isn't indexed can't rank, full stop. Confirm crawlability first.

2 • Search intent

The right page type for the query beats a better wrong one.

3 • Content quality & depth

Satisfy the query completely. Don't pad it to a word count.

4 • Authority & links

The slow compounding asset, so start early. Referring domains beat raw counts.

5 • Brand & entity

Feeds both Google and AI search over time. Keep your entity consistent everywhere.

6 • Page experience & minor technical

Tie-breakers. Only worth it once 1–5 are solid.

Want this run for you?

PipeRocket Digital turns SaaS search traffic into pipeline. We fix indexation first, match intent before publishing, and build genuine authority and entity over time. If your content is good but rankings aren't moving, it's almost always one of the confirmed factors, not a missing minor one.

Book a call →

Read the full, sourced guide at piperocket.digital/blogs/google-ranking-factors-saas