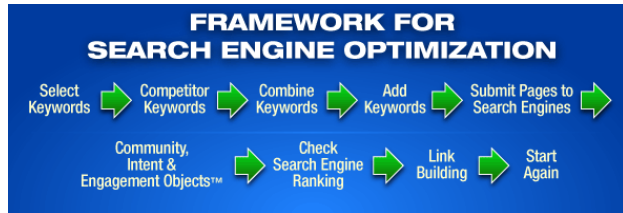


SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

THE PURPOSE OF SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the practice of designing a website to enhance its chances of being ranked highly when a person uses a search engine to find related content. The handout will give you what you need to know about the fundamentals of SEO and provide tactics to improve you website's ranking in the listings of natural (unpaid) search results returned by the many popular search engines.



Source: Bruce Clay - www.bruceclay.com/web_rank.htm

GOOGLE IS AT THE CENTER OF THE SEARCH UNIVERSE

Although many search engines are available, Google dominates the industry landscape with a 63 percent share of all searches as of January 2009. Given the Google-centric nature of search today, this handout focuses primarily on techniques for optimizing a website for Google.



Source: UWEBC

MONITORING SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING SUCCESS

For most businesses, it's as simple as "is our website making the phone ring?" However, there are a number of elements that you should track to ensure that your website and thus your search engine marketing strategy are effective.

- ◆ Page Views (by Hour, Day, Week, Month and Year)
- ◆ Unique Visitors (by Hour, Day, Week, Month and Year)
- ◆ Traffic Origination
- ◆ Keywords Used by Search Engine
- ◆ Frequent Pages
- ◆ Visitor Information (Including Web Browser, Operating System, Country and Language)
- ◆ Traffic by Time of Day
- ◆ Navigation Paths
- ◆ Defined Events (Orders, Registrations, Password Changes, Your Custom Event)

HOW MUCH TIME AND MONEY DOES THIS TAKE?

Search engine marketing, optimization and advertising can take a great deal of time and a fair amount of money (campaigns start in the hundreds, search professionals can cost a few to several thousand) and large organizations spend millions on the search engine marketing budgets. Nevertheless, search engine marketing delivers an acceptable rate of return in most companies.

Search Engine Dos

- ◆ Have quality text content (150 words a the bare minimum, 250+ is better)
- ◆ Have quality links to support placement
- ◆ Use tools to identify best metatags for each marketable page of the web site.
- ◆ Unique Meta Title, Description and Keywords for all marketable web site pages.
- ◆ Have anchor text links that support your title tags.
- ◆ Have your programmer use H1, H2, H3 ... tags appropriately
- ◆ Have a Site Map or at least a link from each page to every other page of the site

Search Engine Don'ts

- ◆ Frame a site
- ◆ Be part of a link farm
- ◆ Don't over "stuff" your keywords in your text
- ◆ Don't over populate your Metas (title, description, keywords, etc.)
- ◆ Don't use hidden or slightly off color text to fool the search engines.
- ◆ Don't search engine market more than 1 URL to your web site.
- ◆ Don't provide more than 100 links on any one page.
- ◆ Don't create a web site that replaces text with FLASH imagery.
- ◆ Don't use a splash entry page – but if you **ABSOLUTELY MUST** and can't live without one, don't create it without using additional text on the splash page for the search engines to use to index the page.



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Internet marketing veteran, Dana VanDen Heuvel, provides internet marketing assistance to corporations, non-profits and educational institutions. MarketingSavant will consult with your business on how it should market itself on the internet, what tools to use and how to make the most of the internet for your business.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

It all comes down to descriptions & keywords

Descriptions (Maximum limit 255 characters)

When you search for a website in a search engines, a list of web page titles will appear with descriptions following them. The description gives searchers an idea of what your page is about. Having keywords in your description is critical; some search engines will only use a site's title and description in its ranking criteria.

Sites will be ranked higher if the keywords appear in the description.

- Form a brief sentence using as many keywords as possible. For example:
"Manufacturer of keyword, keyword, keyword. . ."
"Specializing in keyword, keyword, keyword. . ."
- DO NOT use your company name, phone number or founding date in the description.
- Avoid using slogans, catch phrases and persuasive adjectives.
- Character counts include spaces & punctuation. Keep descriptions under 255 characters.
- To keep track of character counts, type descriptions in Microsoft Word. (Go to Tools > Word Count. "Characters (with spaces)" is the accurate count.)

Keywords (Maximum limit 30 keywords per page)

Keywords tell search engines about the content of your page. Search engines will look at the keywords listed in your Meta Tags and compare them to the text found on the page. If a keyword is not found in the text of your page, it is unlikely you will be found for that keyword. While most major search engines no longer use keywords in their ranking criteria, they are still used by us to place your website in appropriate categories within directories.

- Look at the text on your web pages. Good keywords appear in the text of a site. Start with the words your site contains when you develop your keyword list.
- Keywords can be "key phrases" as well. If using a phrase as a keyword (like "internet marketing"), 3 or less words per phrase is preferred.
- DO NOT repeat a word more than 8 times! For example, a company that sells 20 types of "oils" can list the keywords as "oils, motor, lubricating, marine..." A search engine can then combine the words "marine" and "oils" to make the phrase "marine oils."
- Do not include competitor's names and products in your list. General terms are acceptable (soda), but avoid registered product names (Pepsi) unless your company is authorized to use such terms. Proper names may be included, though capitalization is not necessary.
- List the keywords in order of importance. Many search engines only read through a limited number of words on your pages.
- Search engines do treat singular and plural forms of a word as separate instances. You may list both forms, but remember to not repeat a word more than 8 times!
- You may list commonly misspelled product or company names in your keywords list. For example, "Klein" can be misspelled as "Klien" or "Kline."

THE BEGINNER'S CHECKLIST FOR SEO

Adapted from www.seomoz.com

Research

Many people believe this is the most important step in the SEO process.

No skipping!

- Write down your goal
- Brainstorm - What words might people use to look for your company
- Use Google Adwords and learn how to use the "keyword tool" to research your chosen keywords
- Using what you learned, record what you believe to be the best keywords
- Analyze the current Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) for your keywords
- Create a list of your competition
- Use Yahoo Site Explorer to find the sources of your competitor's links

Onsite

- Sign up and verify with Google Analytics, Google Webmaster Tools, and Live Search Webmaster Center
- Let Google Analytics run for two weeks before doing any SEO
- Evaluate the visual design of your site
- Check compatibility between browsers
- Optimize all of the SEO related tags - Here are a few things to keep in mind:
 - Keyword in title tag (unique for each page, include keywords), keyword in text, optimize URL architecture, include keywords in alt tags and in file-names for images, Decide if you need a meta description
- Add company address and phone number

Offsite

- Add your business and website to the major search engine's local listings:
 - Yahoo Local, Google Local, Live Local, CitySearch, Yelp
- Add your website to industry specific directories
- Try to get the links your competition already has gotten
- Get more links - A good place to start is to use the Juicy Link Finder. You should also consider your local chamber of commerce, local networking groups, and local complimentary businesses.
- Decide if utilizing social media sites is advantageous
- Create and submit sitemaps.
- Optimize your site from Google's side - Use Google's Webmaster Tools.

Track and Improve

- Track progress
- Create and maintain a spreadsheet of your rankings
- Continue to make changes, build links, and record your results

Free Search Engine Marketing Tools

<http://www.marketleap.com>

<http://toolbar.google.com>

<http://tools.seobook.com/>

<http://www.webconfs.com/>

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/>

http://www.bruceclay.com/web_rank.htm

<http://www.selfseo.com/>

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

<http://www.google.com/analytics>

<http://www.the-escape.co.uk/tools/pageanalyzer/>