

SEO Techniques for Business Websites

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In the world of website marketing, search engines are an essential key to success. They are the most important way to bring traffic to websites. Understanding how search engines work and what they require is an important first step to harnessing their marketing power. There are proven methods to search engine marketing involving website design, content adaptation, and keyword strategy. The primary goal of these methods is to bring traffic to your site. The secondary goal is for that traffic to be targeted to your product. In the internet marketing game, exposure is essential. But marketing efficiency requires effective exposure to the right prospects.

Keywords: SEO, search engine optimization, pagerank, business website, Internet

Introduction:

When first building a website, you are excited to get it up on the web. You are anticipating how to handle all the new business that will be generated by thousands and thousands of visitors. Cut to a few weeks later, and you realize that no one is finding you!

Surely, by the time you have made the plans for the new website, you have heard that you must use some technique named search engine optimization to be found on Google or Yahoo.

Concepts :

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) – a subset of search engine marketing that seeks to improve the number and quality of visitors to a web site from "natural" ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results.

PR (PageRank) - a link analysis algorithm that assigns a numerical weighting to each element of a hyperlinked set of documents, such as the World Wide Web, with the purpose of "measuring" its relative importance within the set. The algorithm may be applied to any collection of entities with reciprocal quotations and references.

Web directory - a web directory is a directory on the World Wide Web. It specializes in linking to other web sites and categorizing those links. Web directories often allow site owners to directly submit their site for inclusion, and have editors review submissions for fitness.

The most common methods of SEO include on-page optimization or utilizing keywords and meta tags and link strategies. Here are some steps to take in order from not being listed far away from the top or not being listed at all:

1. Search Engine Submission

The first thing to do is submitting the website's homepage. Many search engines will promise to find and crawl the rest of your website automatically. But if they don't disagree from doing so, submitting several of the important pages will help. For example, a site map is definitely something to submit, since it should have direct links to the rest of the website.

Also, it is recommended to ask for another webmaster to link the new site to his already submitted website. That way the search engines will recognize that this resource has changed.

WHERE TO SUBMIT

It is recommended to submit your home page to the major search engines individually, at least initially:

- Submit to Google
<http://www.google.com/addurl/?continue/addurl>
- Submit to Yahoo
<http://submit.search.yahoo.com/free/request>
- Submit to MSN
<http://beta.search.msn.com/docs/submit.aspx?FORMWSUT>

A Yahoo account is needed to submit to the Yahoo search engine. Immediate results should not be seen immediately. Your site should normally exist in MSN within about 6 weeks, in Yahoo in 8-12 weeks, and in Google within about 3 months. In the long run, Google will normally give you about 60 - 70% of the search engine traffic if you follow the hereafter steps.

There are several services that do groups of them for you - and is a big time saver for the rest of your site. The following is one of the free and well-known website submitter: <http://www.freewebsubmission.com/>.

2. Directory Submission

A web directory is not a search engine, and does not display lists of web pages based on keywords, instead it lists web sites by category and subcategory. The categorization is usually based on the whole web site, rather than one page or a set of keywords, and sites are often limited to inclusion in only one or two categories.

The first directory to submit into is **DMOZ** (<http://www.dmoz.com/add.html>) which is closed for submission for the moment, but all people hope it will come up again. The Open Directory Project is the largest, most comprehensive human-edited directory of the Web.

This is a massive directory that is republished in several other websites. It is managed by volunteer humans, and is therefore considered to be of special relevance by other search engines (especially Google).

Read all their rules before submitting - and follow them closely. Make sure that you try to get listed in only one category - the most relevant one for your business. It can take a month or two to get listed, but it really helps with your back links and overall accuracy as a website.

After DMOZ, here are the most important list of directories to be listed in :

- Yahoo Directory website submission (\$299 annual fee)
<https://ecom.yahoo.com/dir/reference/submit/>
- Business.com website submission (\$199 annual fee)

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

- Best of Web website submission (\$40 annual fee)

<http://www.botw.org/>

- wowdirectory.com website submission (\$25 lifetime fee)

<http://www.wowdirectory.com/howtoadd.php>

- LOCAL directories from your own country.

There are specialized directories that focus on a particular category of links. These can be valuable - you will just have to do a bit of searching to find them. These may be considered as part of your overall strategy.

Being listed in a search engine doesn't guarantee that you will have a good ranking - this is just the first step - letting them know that you exist.

3. Technical recommendations

a. Site Design

Use the "Keep It Simple" principle. Employ an external CSS file, clean up any Java Scripts by referring to them off the page in an external file, don't use frames, use flash the way you would an image, and no matter what, do not create a flash site.

Page Size - Your web page's speed is important to your visitors and the search engines, because the robots will be able to spider your web page faster and easier. Try your best to keep your web page over 5k and under 15k in size.

b. Validate your site

Run a website validator on the pages intended for submitting - to keep the search engine spiders from choking on your website. (<http://validator.w3.org/>)

c. HEAD part of the page

Title Tag - The title tag is the most powerful on-site SEO technique you have, so use it creatively! What you place in the title tag should only be one thing, the exact keyword you used for the web page that you are trying to optimize. Every single web page should have its own title tag.

Keyword Density - This is also vital and should be used with research. You should use the keyword(s) once in the title tag, once in

the heading tag, once in bold text, and get the density between 5% to 20% (Don't over do it!). Also use your keyword(s) both low and high on the web page, keyword(s) should be in the first sentence and in the last one.

d. Internal links

Internal links are the easiest to attain links. That would be, the ones right there on your own site and those which you have total and complete control of. Properly used internal links can be a useful weapon in your SEO arsenal.

The internal linking structure can:

- Insure that your website gets properly spidered and that all pages are found by the search engines
- Build the relevancy of a page to a keyword phrase
- Increase the PageRank of an internal page

Your web pages should be no more than three clicks away from the home page. Link to topic related quality content across your site. This will also help build you a better theme through out your web site. On every page you should link back to your home page and your main service(s).

e. External links

External links are links coming from other websites to your pages.

External links could be reciprocal or one-way links. Reciprocal links should be avoided, because of the Google's new policy to ignore reciprocal linking – named JAGGER.

There are a number of tactics for building one-way links: articles, press releases, paid links.

Digging for External links

Instead of looking around for nice sites, and then asking if they're interested in a link exchange with you, just scout around and look at where other people are getting links from. Visit a site that's similar in topic to your site (competitors).

Go to Google.com and type "link:www.nameofyourcompetitor.com" (this will list all the pages that have links pointing to the current page).

Click on every link, opening each one in a new window. Close all the pages with Page Rank less than 5.

Visit the remaining sites and see if they accept subscription or paid advertising.

f. Site Map

Build a site map with a link to each of your pages. Keep it up to date. This will allow the spiders to get to every page. Do not include session IDs in the links advertised. Session IDs confuse search engines.

Submit it to search engines or put a text link to the site map on the main pages.

g. Short URLs

Keep the URLs short with page names having the keywords that best reflect page's content. Use a delimiter like underscore or dash to separate the keywords or products model from each other.

h. Fresh content

Add a new product/service or a new review every 2-3 days: 200-500 words. Create original content, don't copy others. The more original and useful it is, the more people will read it, link to it, and most importantly of all keep coming back for more.

i. NO Spam

Stay away from black hat optimizing techniques. Black hat optimization consists of using any method to get higher rankings that the search engines would disapprove of, such as keyword stuffing, doorway pages, invisible text, cloaking and more. Stick to white hat methods for long-term success. People who use black hat optimization are usually there for the short-term (just look at your email spam for more black hat markets). These black hat industry sites are usually around just long enough to make quick incomes.

j. Statistics

Make sure your server has a good statistics program. If you don't have access to a good program, then pay for one. Without the knowledge of who is coming to your site, where from, and how often, you will be missing out on some essential tools to improve your site.

k. RSS Feeds

RSS (Real Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary) is becoming a powerful tool for Internet marketers. You can quickly and easily add fresh content to your website. Article feeds are updated frequently, so you can give your visitors (and the search engines) what they want - fresh content! You can use RSS to promote any new content, such as new products, special offers, articles or reviews.

I. Text browser

The final step is to use a text browser like **Lynx** (<http://lynx.isc.org>).

This helps you to see how your website "looks like" for search engines. Try to find good keywords within the pages.

Conclusion

80 to 90% of Internet users turn to search engines such as Google, Yahoo, MSN to find information they need. Therefore, the importance of search engines should be treated accordingly in the marketing campaign. Even if the exact formulae that the top search engines use to calculate rankings are usually a closely guarded secret, you can apply SEO techniques because it is free, it is easy, it is tar-

geted marketing, and do not need to be constantly monitored or funded as they are self-sustaining once you set them into motion.

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