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Search Engine Optimisation on a Shoestring

By Amanda Vlahakis

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Optimising your website for the search engines needn't be expensive for business owners. Many small or micro businesses simply don't have the resources to pay for their own marketing department and find they need to conduct their own marketing.

Search engine optimisation is very simple despite it appearing otherwise, and is a task any business owner can complete for themselves and achieve results; all it requires is dedication and time:

Firstly decide what search words people will be keying into a search engine to find you. A free trial at www.wordtracker.com can provide you with this information.

It may not be the best idea to pick the most popular words, because whilst you will have many search engine users keying in these keywords or phrases – you also will have plenty of competitors, making it harder for you to reach the surface of the search engines.

You may want to aim at the second or third most popular terms, or try and be very specific with your keywords, and make a niche for yourself.

Search Engine Optimisation Work Tasks

These will unfortunately need to be completed on a weekly/monthly basis, as search engine optimisation is an ongoing process. No sooner have you reached the top of the search engines you could easily slip down them again as your competitors double their efforts to pull ahead of you; this forces you to continue your optimisation work for the long term to stay ahead of the game.

1. Link Building

You need to build a good number (as many as possible) of incoming links to your site; create a links page for your site and build reciprocal (swapped) links with other companies in the same or similar line of business.

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When you ask for links from other people you should ask that they use a link title that contains your keywords (but makes sense still), and then link this text to your website address.

The best links are from similar companies who have a good ranking themselves, and whose link will feature any of your keywords.

This is a key factor in ranking – the number of links you have to your site – the top ranked sites have thousands of links to them. You will find people who want to swap here www.linkpartners.com – which is just an easy way of finding willing partners.

Build good quality content on your website, the content should be useful and keyword rich without being excessively repetitive – some search engines view excessive keyword littering as spam and actually can count this against you and perhaps even ban you from their search engine.

Others methods that can cause you to be banned are to litter keywords on your site and then hide them so that they are not visible. Frequently update and add to your content, as refreshing content also improves your importance in the opinion of the search engines.

3. Site Composition

Ensure that even if your site is flash based, or entirely image based, that there are plenty of textual links to navigate the entire site with, this will make it easier for the indexing robots (from the search engines) to find your pages and your keyword rich content.

Create alt tags on images to name them, if relevant use keywords in the image names.

Make sure the right keywords are used on your meta tags, page descriptions and page titles, do not use a string of keywords for your page titles or descriptions, some search engines don't like this and view it as spam/cheating. Each page should have titles, descriptions, and keywords relevant to the information on the page.

Use keywords in your page headers.

4. Submission

You can use www.submitexpress.com to submit your website to multiple search engines for free at once.

Submit your site to www.dmoz.org – Google rates this highly and a listing will greatly boost your ranking.

5. Patience

Expect it to take time (up to three months even) to achieve a good ranking from all of your efforts, and have patience.

Why Purchase Search Engine Optimization?

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Well that's easy, so your website can actually be seen by users within search engines when relevant key terms to your website, business or product are being searched. If your website is not ranking in the top 20 for actual keywords being searched on the engines, then you definitely require search engine optimisation immediately.

It is fact that 85% of visitors to a website will come from search engines. It is also fact that over 90% of users rarely go past the first twenty results, first two pages, from search engines. It has been statistically proven that users will generally change search engines before sifting past the first two pages.

From this you can start to imagine the lost revenue and exposure that your business and website is suffering. Search engine optimisation is like a well-marketed television advertisement, your business is placed in front of the most appropriate maturity audience at a given time to achieve the best return on investment. You would not place your television advertisement about "house renovations" in the morning during the cartoons for example. This type of advertisement would be marketed during programs that are relevant to that subject. The same is achieved through professional website optimisation. A professional SEO will ensure your website appears where it can be seen at the most appropriate times. For example, when a search for "home renovation" or similar is searched, your website would then appear on the front page of a search engine. Your website will not appear when "cartoon" is entered into a search engine for example.

You have to look at Internet advertisement like this, with Billions of Websites floating aimlessly, thousands or hundreds of which are in direct competition with your website, all fighting for the front two pages of a search engine. Only a professional SEO will know how to gain that extra advantage to ensure your website can maintain a constant high ranking. Ensure you utilise a professional SEO, and I mean shop around, as a hit and miss job is no good when all your competition are continually attempting to rank over the top of your business.

I achieve steady top 20 ranking for my clients as most professional SEO do. It always depends on the market your targeting to how many visitors you will see, but try not to look at optimisation as just improving your throughput, as the actual aim is to achieve targeted throughput that will buy your products or service. The numbers game is not really for any website on the Internet, even though many play that angle, as each website is unique in content which is only required to be viewed when searched for that type of information, product or service.

Anthony Parsons has been performing search engine optimization since 1998. In late 2003 I decided to fly solo and opened my own SEO business to service the global community. With my wife being an acknowledged copywriter, anthonyparsons.com as a business will continue stepping forward breaking the boundaries of conventional SEO techniques. Making a winning husband and wife team, we make SEO affordable for all budgets. <http://search-engine-optimisation.anthonyparsons.com>



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