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Search Engine Optimization – Do–It–Yourself or Hiring Someone

By John Buchanan

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Anyone who has had a website for any length of time has already come to the realization that to succeed, you need traffic, and to get traffic, unless you have some pretty deep pockets for more traditional forms of advertising, search engines are the most effective form of obtaining that traffic.

The next realization that comes is that simply being listed is not enough. To get traffic from the search engines, you must come up at or near the top of the results for those searches that relate to your site.

Some call it search engine optimization, others search engine placement, and others search engine promotion. Regardless of the name, it is all really the same thing. It is the art of getting traffic from the engines.

Search engine optimization is a big business, and understandably so, but the question is, "Is it worth paying a firm to promote your site or is it truly something you can do yourself?"

Unfortunately, there is no cut–and–dry answer to this question as it is going to differ from person to person. In some cases, it can be well worth the money to hire an outside firm for your optimization needs, in other cases, you may be better off doing it yourself.

First let me answer a few questions and dispel a few myths that some of the less reputable firms like to promote.

Q – Can I do the optimization myself?

A – Yes, and in many cases be extremely successful.

Q – Is search engine optimization hard?

A – Yes and no. As with any new skill, there is a learning curve involved, but unless you are in an extremely competitive area, just having an understanding of how the search engines work and rank pages, can be enough for you to design some good ranking pages.

Q – Do I need to have any expensive software or programming skills?

A – No. Anything and everything can be done by hand. All you need to be able to do the optimization yourself is a basic understanding of HTML.

Q – Don't I just need to put my keywords in the Title and Meta tags?

A – Unfortunately, while this was true a couple of years ago, it is a bit more complicated than this now. Meta tags, play an extremely small role in optimization in today's search engines.

Now that we have a few of the most common questions out of the way, let's take a deeper look at which option may be right for you.

First let's start with hiring an optimization firm and look at the pro's and con's involved.

Pro's

– Optimization firms will already be trained in getting your site to the top of the engines.

– They will know what is required and you will often see results fairly quickly and the results will often be better than if you were doing the optimization yourself.

– You will have the free time to devote to other aspects of your business.

Con's

– Optimization firms can range from moderately expensive to extremely expensive depending on your target market and the number of search terms you want to target. This could mean you may initially spend anywhere from \$1,000 up to \$5,000–\$10,000 to hire a good firm and then a maintenance fee of near that amount monthly to maintain the rankings.

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- As with all firms, some will be top-notch, and some will be less than stellar. You could easily end up paying a few thousand dollars with little or no results ever seen.
- No one will ever have the same enthusiasm for your site's success as you do. Many of the less reputable companies will often use tactics that will work in the short-term, but may have some very negative long-term effects.
- Many optimization firms will create a new site that funnels traffic to your current site. The firm generally owns this site, which means, that you are trapped into paying this firm for your traffic. If you stop paying them, you stop receiving the traffic.

Now let's look at the pro's and con's of doing it yourself.

Pro's

- You will be saving yourself the cash outlay involved in hiring an outside firm (obviously one of the biggest benefits).
- Everything you do to promote your site is yours. It does not belong to someone else. You have complete control.
- Once you learn how search engine optimization works, you can create as many online businesses as you wish and be able to promote all of them without relying on, or paying, a third party.

Con's

- An initial learning curve. It will take a while to get a good grasp of what you are doing and to begin to understand the game we call search engine optimization.
- If your in a competitive market, a good deal of your time could be spent promoting and optimizing your site.
- Your results may never be as good as if you hired a top-notch firm.

Well, there you have it. A good number of the pro's and con's involved in both avenues. When you get down to it, deciding whether to outsource your optimization needs, or keep it in house, really boils down to what you have more of...time, or money. If you have lots of

money but little time, then hire a good firm. If you have lots of time but little funds, then you will be better off doing the work yourself.

If you decide to hire an optimization firm, be cautious with who you choose. Ask for testimonials from past clients. Find out if they offer any type of a guarantee. Do some research. Whatever you do, DON'T go on who is the cheapest. This is your success we're talking about.

If you decide to do it yourself, there are also some things you should do. The best thing you can do for yourself is to do some research on search engine optimization. Find someone who has been doing it a while and see if you can learn anything from them. Read books on the subject (electronic or printed). Visit newsgroups and forums on search engines. If you spend some time learning about how search engines work and what they look for when ranking pages, you will quickly begin to understand what it takes to make a top ranking page.

John Buchanan is the author of the book "The Insider's Guide to Dominating The Search Engines", and publisher of "The Search Engine Bulletin", a FREE monthly newsletter. Visit him at <http://www.se-secrets.com> for more information or to sign up for the newsletter.

How Can Seo Help My Website?

By Dana Bradley

SEO or search engine optimization is very useful for any website. Search engine optimization basically directs search engines to your website whenever a key word is typed. So if your web site is search engine optimized, whenever a user types in the keyword "cat," your website will be displayed on the search list if you are a cat lover's web site.

If you are a marketing firm trying to sell different kinds of products, then you may want to use search engine optimization to your advantage. If you are selling carpets for instance, you would definitely want the users to see your site when they search for carpets on the internet. Your sales will dramatically increase if you properly optimize your site for search engines.

If you are a charitable institution that is looking for donors to your cause, then you may want to use search engine optimization to increase everyone's awareness of what you are trying to do in the world. Let us say you are trying to save the dolphins in your area from extinction. If you would like to raise funds for dolphin protection in your area, you must use search engine optimization to reach users who type in "dolphins" in their search engines. Not only will you reach these people and let them know of your cause, they will also probably be donors and helping hands to what you are trying to do in this world.

Let us say you are an internet dating site. You charge members \$2 a month to be listed on your dating list. If you would like to increase the number of users in your website, then you should use search

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engine optimization. Whenever someone is looking for a date through the internet, all you have to do is to be key word sensitive to the word dating on search engines. Whenever someone types the word "date" or "dating," your site will automatically appear on top of the list. Watch web traffic increase in your site and watch your online sales soar to new heights.

If you are someone who simply wants to become popular, then you could use search engine optimization to your advantage. Whenever someone types in your name on a search engine, your website will appear. You can put all of your crazy stuff there or whatever substance that makes yourself popular. You can upload videos to your website showing off your soccer skills. Maybe you might want to upload some poems on your website if you are a writer that wants to be heard.

SEO or search engine optimization is definitely an advantage to anyone who uses the World Wide Web on a regular basis.

Dana Bradley writes about

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and



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