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Top 10 "Must Do" Search Engine Optimization Tips

By Terry Mickelson

Building a site and each individual page to be optimized for the search engines will save you thousands of dollars over the life of your site in advertising costs and will generate qualified traffic that most advertising can't compete with. A well-executed search engine optimization plan and search engine marketing campaign will increase the odds of your target audience finding your site when they are ready to buy. Contrary to what you may have been told there is much more to getting good rankings on search engines than writing Meta tags and using an automated submission software.

Before we get into discussing how to make a site search friendly lets first define search engines. There are two different types of search engines: directories and crawlers. Directories use human editors to review your site. Editors make the decision to include it in their directory. Open Directory and parts of Yahoo results are from directories. For the rest of this article we will focus on "crawler" search engines. These engines "crawl" from link to link, discovering new pages. The pages are "read", cataloged and recalled for search results based on complicated algorithms and related information.

To create a search engine friendly site you must keep in mind that for all of the complex algorithms search engines employ, they are fairly simple to please. First and foremost you must understand that search engines can only read words. If they can't see it, it does not exist.

1. Define who your market is and exactly what you want your site to do.

When developing or redesigning your web site it is important that prior to laying a keystroke you know what the goals of your site are - to make sales, build a mailing list to sell to later, educate people about your product or service, support existing clients, build brand awareness etc. For some sites there are multiple goals for the site. However, each goal will affect the focus of the content of the site and the marketing of it. For example, if the goal of the site is to directly sell a product your content may use wording that compels the reader to take out a credit card and make an impulse purchase. It is built to close a sale. A site that is for existing clients may include areas for customer support, product support, product updates, etc. Clearly the content for this type of site differs from a sales site. The content used in the above examples directly effects the choice of words used to market the website.

2. Think the way your prospects and customers think.

What words will your potential customer think of when she is conducting a search for your offering?

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Here's a tip: Take a step back from your product, service, or home page, and think like someone who doesn't know your site exists but wants to find what you're offering. There are several good tools available online that can help you find exactly what your target market is looking for.

<http://www.wordtracker.com> is an online service that works like a thesaurus suggesting words and phrases related to what you input. Additionally it then tells you not only how many times a word has been searched for but also how many pages compete for that same word. The software produces a list that gives you a numerical formula to assist you in choosing the best keywords to include in the pages copy and to be used in your search engine marketing efforts.

3. Content is king

We have been saying this since early 1995. Content is king. Sites with the best content get the best

rankings – if the search engines can read it. Search engines read the text on your pages and index the text that contains your keywords. Some search engines will read the words on your pages and in your title and Meta tags. The title and Meta tags are key words hidden behind the visible part of your page. Search engines crawl through pages going from link to link and store the information in their database for later retrieval when a search is conducted. If you don't have keywords and phrases on your page the engines can't find anything to put into their database.

Text at the top of the page and in headlines establishes a "theme" and identifies the most important points for the search engines. By placing your keywords at the beginning of paragraphs and headings and by making words bold you are telling the search engines that these words are important and are to be used in establishing the pages theme. Use keyword phrases in your text as much as you can but write copy for people first, and then for the search engines. Before you delete pages make sure you install a 404–error page that has navigation or redirects people back to your site. This way no one will ever get a dead page.

4. Use Titles to define the theme of each page

The Title tag is the most important tag on a page. This is not the title that is visible on each page, rather the title that appears when you set a favorite/bookmark and also appears in the title bar across the top of your browser. Titles play an important part in creating the "reputation" of a page. If your home page has the title "home page" that is exactly what the search engine will look for. Information about "home page".

5. Optimize each page

Meta tags are popular. Don't expect too much of these tags. So many people have abused these through the years that many engines including Google appear to ignore them. Other engines still consider them important. We believe that using the description and the keyword tags is still worth the effort. For best results put the keyword or phrase from the title in the sentence used for the description and in the keywords.

Ranking criteria varies from search engine to search engine. Most calculate where the page will be ranked based on a combination of these elements:

Prominence of the keyword searched in the viewable text

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Frequency of the keyword searched in the viewable text

Site Popularity - Number and quality of inbound links.

"Weight" of the keywords - Bold, highlighted etc.

Proximity of keywords - a search for contact management software will produce better results if the words are next to each other on a page than if each is used on the same page but separated by other words.

Keyword Placement – Where on the page and in the paragraph.

Prominence, frequency, and weight of keywords in the tag(s)

Prominence, frequency, and weight of keywords in the

Prominence, frequency, and weight of keywords in the Keep the number of repeated keywords to 3 or less.

Keywords in or other headline tags. This is the visible headline.

Keywords in the link tags - This should accurately describe the theme of the page it links to.

Keywords in ALT tags - add a single word or phrase to each.

Keywords in comment tags

Keywords contained in the "" the hidden form tag

Keywords contained in the URL or site address, e.g., <http://www.keyword.com/keyword.htm>

Grammatical correctness and natural-sounding word patterns

Absence of formatting, repetition, and word arrangement that could be considered as spam.

Every engine has lower and upper limits or thresholds for each of the above variables. This protects the engines from spammers who clutter up search results and that is why simply repeating keywords or changing keywords to match the background color of your site will not work.

6. Generate cashflow, not ooo's and awes!

If your site uses Flash, frames, image maps, a database or even Java buttons, chances are the search engines cannot read the page because they can only recognize words. Asp, php, Cold Fusion and other databases generate URL's that include illegal characters. Usually this is a ? generated when the data is called from the database. Search engines stop when they see this. What this means to you is that your site may be invisible because even if the engines find the site they can't find any of the deeper pages. If you "have to have" JavaScript, place the script in a separate file and off the page.

7. Make a site map

Create a simple site map using text links to help both human visitors & search engine spiders. Keep it simple. Use a layout with HTML links, which include keyword descriptions. i.e. contact management software . Your site map should be linked to every page in your site. This way the engines can find and spider every page.

8. Keep your pages Lean and clean

Pages linking off your home page are best optimized for search engines if they contain between 300 – 550 words. Too many companies put too little text on pages. Get to the point and include the keywords. Place the most important content as close to the root as possible. I.e.

www.yourname.com/index.html instead of www.yourname.com/home/index.html Keep your SEO goal consistent through out your site – treat each page as a potential open door for customers and

prospects to get in.

9. Create links to all pages

Some engines like Google will not include "orphan" pages in the database. Every page on your site has a title. Every page must have at least one, and hopefully more links from other pages. Use the same keyword or phrase that you used in the title of the page in all links to that page.

10. Test, measure, rinse and repeat

Realize that it will take time to see your work pay off. Typically sites will be fully propagated in the search engines within ninety days but it can take longer, sometimes up to six months. Be prepared to make changes based on results. Measure the results of whatever your site goals are. If the site is used to generate leads or sales, install a tracking package that will let you see what words were used to find you, what search engine delivered the traffic and what words/engines are producing sales. Expect everything to change over the next 12 months. Search engine optimization is constantly changing but the basics have always been the same. Content is king. Link all pages and get links from others. Make sure the search engines can read your site. Measure, test, modify, and repeat. Once you determine what is working, make modifications to those that are not and keep measuring. As it says on the shampoo bottle, Rinse and Repeat!

Terry Mickelson founded PageViews, Inc. a successful search engine optimization company in 1998. PageViews roster of clients include Schiff Vitamins, Universal Music, Act, Sales Logix, Shea Homes, NADA and many others.

Extensive experience in search engine marketing, bringing a unique approach to the methodology of linking and an in-depth understanding of how linking contributes to an online marketing strategy.

PageViews is committed to client communications and outstanding customer service.

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Search Engine Optimization For Traffic And Profits

By Chet Holcomb

The point of this article is to help you to the next level and show you what search engine optimization has to offer.

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Doing business on the internet is very competitive. You have to arm yourself with the know-how and the marketing tools to make your business a step above the rest. Each day, more and more websites are clambering to optimize their rankings in search engines and if you don't keep up, you may just be left behind in the abyss packed with so many failed websites.

Search Engine Optimization or SEO is a tool used nowadays by many websites. In the past and years to come, search engines have and will be the most used internet tool for people to find information they want.

Most people that use search engines use only the top ten search results in the first page. Making it to the first page, more so to the top three is a gauge of a sites victory in search engine optimization. You will get a high ratio of probability in being clicked on when you rank high. The more traffic for your site, the more potential business which leads to profits.

In the beginning of this article, we went over the basics. Now, we will look at this topic a little more in-depth.

So just what is search engine optimization and do you have to use it? The answer to why you have to use it is a simple one. You need search engine optimization to be number one, or perhaps at best make your site generate profits.

With search engine optimization you have the advantage of generating a high traffic volume. Lets just say you get only a turning out of successful sales with 10 to 20 percent of your traffic. If you get a hundred hits or more a day, you get a good turning out of sales already. If you get only twenty to ten hits a day, you only get one or two if not any at all.

So once again, what is search engine optimization? search engine optimization is utilizing tools and methods in making your site the top position in the results of search engines. Acquiring a position in the first page and better yet in the top half of the page will guarantee that your business will produce awareness and subsequently stimulate more traffic, that could lead to possible earnings.

Search engine optimization requires a lot of work to be a total benefit. There are many aspects of your site you may have to change or add to, to benefit from search engine optimization. This will require researching information about the keyword phrases that are prevalent in regards to your sites theme.

You may also have to revise your sites contents so that you will get the right keyword phrases in place trying not to make it too commercial but light with good information. There are certain rules and guidelines to be followed with making your sites content applicable and favorable to search engine optimization.

You will also have to collaborate with many other sites so that you could get link exchanges . The more

inbound and outbound traffic generated by sites among others are one of the algorithms search engines uses to rank sites.

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Search the internet for valuable help, tips, guidelines and methods for search engine optimization. Read many articles that can help you optimize your website in search engine results. The more education and information you gather the better. This will all help you in receiving those high rankings. This may require a little time and effort on your part but the payback will reward you.

If you can part with some money, there are many sites in the internet that can help you in search engine optimization. There are many sites that help in tracking keyword phrases that can help your website. There are also some content writers that have heaps of experience in making good keyword rich content for your sites that have good value.

Act now and see the payback you gain with search engine optimization. Search engine optimization will mean more traffic and business for your website leading to a sale.

The complexities of the subject matter within this article strive to give you a better look at what search engine optimization is all about.

Chet Holcomb of Internet Promotions Marketing Tools is a successful marketing expert providing advice for web marketers and webmasters on how to promote your website, or product using marketing tools that work. His numerous articles provide a wonderfully researched resource of interesting and relevant information.



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