

What Constitutes a Complete and Effective SEO Campaign?

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Unfortunately, not many Search Engine Optimization companies know what this involves. You may see a "one size fits all" package, link popularity development in the form of submitting to link farms, or even the dreaded "Submit Your Site to 1000's of Search Engines" scam. While the basic premise of each of these ideas is true, the execution of them is extremely important.

First of all, your web site needs human attention. A real person should thoroughly analyze your site before any work is done. Get them on the phone and ask them questions. There should be a clear process that the Search Engine Optimization company uses and tailors to each client. The SEO company should also have a clear idea of what your goals are for your web site.

The first step in any work that is done should be keyword research. Like any kind of advertising, you need to know where your target market goes and how they find businesses like yours. The keywords chosen should apply to the theme of the web site. High rankings for these keywords should also be obtainable given your budget. If you are a computer repair shop with one or two locations in a city and can not service computers outside your area, then targeting a term such as "computer repair" is overkill. The cost for obtaining high rankings for a term such as that will be far greater than what you will make from the exposure, as much of your web site traffic will not be targeted enough.

Once keywords have been chosen for the web site, the content should be updated to reflect them. This may include subtle changes to the meta tags, page titles and text headings; or it could involve adding additional sections to the site, rewriting content and reorganizing the web site's structure. It all depends on the specific requirements of the site and market.

Once the on-page content optimization is complete, link popularity development needs to be done. A link development campaign should be done to acquire quality incoming links to the web site. This phase of search engine optimization should take place as soon as possible and can be continued as needed. Reciprocal linking is fine as long as some caution is used. There are many sketchy services out there that use huge networks of gambling and pharmacy sites with no unique content. Always make sure that each incoming link can be interpreted by the search engines as a 'vote' by that site for

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yours. It is worthless and possibly dangerous if the site links out to link farms and Free-For-All sites (FFA's). Writing articles with a link to your web site, getting people to post on forums and message boards, and advertising or getting links to drive targeted traffic to your site are great methods to use in improving your link popularity.

For the most part, you get what you pay for with Search Engine Optimization. A quick fix will rarely work, and if it seems too good to be true it probably is. Talk to the search engine optimization company about your concerns and make sure they understand your goals. Read their site and make sure they seem legitimate. Ask for results they've obtained for previous clients. Methods that not effective and have a chance to get a site banned include hiding text or links, participating in link farms, keyword stuffing, repeat search engine submissions, and copying web sites to multiple domains.

Proper SEO does not involve tricks. Web sites that have well written and well focused content, have been advertised in one way or another (including link popularity development), and overall are a good informational resource will get traffic from the search engines. Search engines are constantly updating ways to weed out the spamming and illegal SEO methods, so think long term with any search engine optimization campaign.

John Metzler is the co-creator of Abalone Designs, Inc. www.abalone.ca, a Search Engine Optimization company in Vancouver, Canada. He has been involved in web design and web marketing since 1999 and has helped turn Abalone Designs into one of the top SEO companies in the world.

Why Optimize Your Site For Search Engines?

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Sometimes a search engine optimization company will miss that glaring question posed by potential clients and assume the benefits of search engine optimization are obvious to everyone. While shelling out a couple thousand on an SEO campaign is common sense to some, others may find it hard to part with the cash unless they know it is an investment in their business that is sure to bring a good return.

Search engines account for a huge portion of traffic to web sites. Data varies depending on what sources you read, but the bottom line is that search engines are used millions of times each day by consumers searching for goods and services. And having your business displayed at the top of search results is essential if you want to do any business from the major search engines. Nine in every ten users will find what they're looking for in the top 10 results and won't go to page 2.

It's obvious that people can make a lot of money from online sales, but how you advertise your products has a large bearing on what kind of profit you make. If you buy advertising space on Google AdWords or other services that charge per click, you may only shell out 10 cents for every visitor to your site – But what if it takes 100 clicks to make one sale? If your products only sell for \$10 a piece, then there is no profit being made. Pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns will also never stop costing you

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money. Search Engine Optimization, on the other hand, can be very affordable over months and years.

Many SEO and Internet Marketing companies will say that ongoing maintenance is needed to reach and keep top search engine rankings. While this is true, be careful how the company says they do it. There is an affordable way and then there's a way to pad the pockets of the "experts." For more on this issue, read my other article entitled "What Constitutes a Complete and Effective SEO Campaign?" In short, the affordable way will involve an intense content optimization followed by work to raise link popularity. This link popularity development should be the bulk of any ongoing maintenance. A couple times a year keyword research should be done again and the content should be looked at. Search trends can sometimes fluctuate so you want to make sure your content is still aimed at the right audience.

What is affordable and what isn't varies greatly from company to company, industry to industry. In the bed and breakfast industry, \$30 per month may be enough to keep a top 5 ranking on Google if the market is not very competitive. A web site competing for a top spot in a database administration field may be looking at several hundred a week if not more. The bottom line is, if you pick the right Search Engine Optimization company, your return on investment from an SEO campaign can be over 1000%.

While there are other ways to advertise a web site (No, search engine optimization is not the be-all and end-all of online advertising) very few can match the wide targeted audience and affordability that search engines provide.

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