

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION DO'S AND DON'TS

Dramatically increase visitation of potential customers

The reason for and purpose of Search Engine Optimization is to dramatically increase visitation of potential customers to your website by achieving first page and ultimately a top three page rank in searches using keywords and keyword phrases that define your business and products.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION METHODOLOGY

There are several approaches to developing a strategy for improving a website for search engine placement. The most common is finding the top site for your keywords and "just doing it better than that site" using a follow the leader methodology. While this approach will give you some insight into the level of SEO the competition has employed, it won't necessarily help you get ranked in a higher position without a deep understanding of all the criteria that drive that top position listing. A thorough review of the content below should help you get that understanding and you will see that while examining the top ranked competition may be instructive, it won't reduce the hard work you need to do to be a web contender.

We have worked with several of the greatest marketing minds in the world and without exception not one would give a thought to the competition when defining a marketing strategy for the business. In fact, if you are focused on the competition and not on differentiating your business and website from the crowd, you will never achieve a higher ranking (your content will be seen as redundant and of low value to the search engines) and there is no guarantee that the competition is using the correct keywords for your business in the first place.

Your best plan of action for any SEO effort is to optimize, dramatically expand your content, and focus relevant content on specific keyword phrases that are based on your customers needs. It is this deep dive content with specific customer centric keyword phrase focus that search engines love. Your success or failure has nothing to do with what your competition is doing. If you don't know what keywords are relevant to your business, or even if you think you do know, talk to your customers. Take their language and their challenges as the basis for your keyword research. Then use a comprehensive free tool like Google keyword generator. You will have more truly relevant keywords than you know what to do with. Use them all and start generating content around them.



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In search engine optimization there are a handful of things to check first, then more advanced tactics to implement, and finally a host of things to avoid. Here we have provided a comprehensive overview of all the tactics that make up an aggressive SEO strategy for you to use and learn.

#1 LINKABILITY

Can search spiders find and see your content? Dynamic database driven content is a killer for SEO. You want to make sure your text and links are presented to browsers in a static form that can be read by search spiders. Dynamic menu navigation using javascript or DHTML can also be a problem. The way to correct this linking problem is to employ a site map. Link to the site map from a text link on your home page. Search spiders will follow the link to the site map and find all your pages from there.

#2 PAGE TITLES

Each page of your website should focus on the keyword phrases that are search engine relevant to its content. The primary keyword phrase should be the title for the page. For instance this page is about Search Engine Optimization, so the title of this page is Search Engine Optimization. *It's that simple.* Each page should have unique keyword focused content and the page title tag should reflect that primary individual keyword phrase.

#2 KEYWORD CONTENT

While search engines don't measure keyword density as a criteria for page rank it's generally agreed your relative keyword density should be about 3-5% of total page content. You can measure keyword density by dividing the number of keywords by the total word count expressed as a percentage. The more content you have the better. We recommend 500 to 1000 words of relevant content. Ever wonder why Wikipedia is #1 for many searches? Shear volume of targeted content.



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You may argue that this page about search engine optimization could be broken down into separate pages for better readability. Perhaps, but not better for the SEO strategy we are engaged in. This volume of single focus single page content is what I am talking about. Did I mention that this page is about search engine optimization and search engine optimization strategy? I think you get my point.

#4 KEYWORD HEADINGS

Your pages should be well segmented and defined by related keyword headings. Headings are expressed in HTML as H1, H2, H3, etc. Search engines love content that is well defined by category and keyword focused on the section content. Note that on this page the subject Search Engine Optimization is an H1 header while the sub chapters of the page are H2 headers.

#5 META DESCRIPTION TAG

This META tag is of the most importance. It will be used by most search engines as the descriptive text under your search listing. There are instances where these descriptions may be pulled from other directories such as DMOZ, however this is less common as the quality of these directories erodes over time. You can actually use META tags to tell the search engines *not* to use DMOZ (My recommendation). So using a description META tag is very important.

Most websites fail at one or more of these most basic criteria for SEO readiness, and fixing them can lead to dramatic improvements to your search engine ranking.

#6 SITE SUBMISSION

There is so much garbage on the web regarding this almost useless tactic. The top search engines will find you whether or not you submit your site. The search spiders for Google are always looking for new and unique



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content to add to their index. Provided you have properly implemented all the basics above, your pages will be spidered and indexed in a matter of weeks. If you want to be proactive then you can register for a Google AdWords account and access Google webmaster tools. This will allow you to submit an XML site map with all your pages to the index. Updating your XML site map to notify the index of changes to pages is also easy to do using these tools.

#7 INTERLINKING

Interlinking is the practice of using keyword targeted phrases within the content as anchor text for links to your other pages. For instance, in this discussion of search engine optimization I might describe SEO as subset of search engine marketing and use that phrase as the link to the relevant page. You should create content with one to five interlinks, provided you have the pages to support that. You do not want to use several different phrases as links to one single destination page. The idea is to focus each individual page on the primary keyword phrase related to the anchor text.

#8 BACK LINKING

This refers to one-way links to your site from other content relevant sites. Notice I did not say reciprocal links. Link exchanges can work if you are careful not to allow garbage sites into your directory. You must also have actual content on your website meaning that your site can't be just a link farm. These link farm sites are all but dead now. Having one is of no SEO value and linking back to one is likely to damage your SEO effort. Other strategies for acquiring relevant back links range from using online PR to making forum posts and blog entries with links back to keyword relevant pages using those keyword phrases as the anchor text for the link in your posting. Back linking is believed to be one of the most critical factors considered for page rank in the latest search algorithms. If no-one is linking to you from outside your domain you will have a very difficult time getting a first page ranking.



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION DO'S AND DON'TS

Things to Avoid:

These will get you penalized and/or banned from the major search engines.

AVOID

- Overuse and repetition, repetition, repetition of keywords
- Focus on keywords unrelated to the content
- Colored text that matches the background
- Duplicate content on different pages
- Use of Cloaking tactics and Fast Redirect scripts
- Too many reciprocal links or bad neighborhood links
- The use of multiple gateway pages that all link to the same content page.

Some terms you may encounter are *Keyword Stuffing, Google Bombing, Link Farming* - all of these tactics are *bad news* and you should stay clear or risk having your domain banned from the major search engines.

Your higher rank in searches depends on these 8 basic rules. Follow these do's and don'ts for Search Engine Optimization and you will see that dramatic increase of potential customers to your website.

