

# A Quick Guide To Search Engine Optimization

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## What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

Have you ever been in a crowd of people all waiting for some famous movie-star or musician to arrive at an event? What did you notice about the behavior of the fans? Or how about the many times you've seen a crowd of reporters circling around some newsworthy figure? What did you notice?

Chances are that in either of those scenarios you saw a massive crowd of people all fighting to get to the front where they could be seen and heard. There is a lot of pushing and shoving and yelling and all of that. It's chaos, and many people would just as soon avoid such a situation. It's all about competition. The few who get to the front of the crowd are the only ones who stand a chance to have their voices heard. It is these few who will have the opportunity to reap the rewards of their effort.

So now you're asking yourself: "Just what does all this have to do with Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?" And the answer is a simple one: **competition**. That's what it's all about. Competition in any field is the struggle not only for survival but also for dominance. Very few people want to 'just get by'. Most are willing to do what it takes not only to succeed, but to be the best at what they do. It's this very idea that brought about the concept of SEO in the first place.

Search Engine Optimization is really a technical science more than anything. It is the process of collecting information on your market and your competitors in an effort to fine tune your site's headlines and content so that you achieve more hits on every search a web-surfer conducts. Each time they search, they will use keywords that help them find what they are looking for. It is up to you to make sure that your site has the best, and the most, of these popular search terms. With them, you jump to the front of the line and get the results. Without these words, you fall into the background and are never noticed.

The way it works, basically, is by search engines tapping all the sites with the most accurate and abundant search terms relevant to a search. When you use the right terms to describe the content of your site, you achieve a higher ranking with that search engine. The search engines update these rankings weekly, giving you many opportunities to score a higher rank. The trouble is, whereas you have a chance to move up, so does your competition. And the competition will always be looking for a way to beat you. So be sure to keep on top of the game. Modify your site as needed so you can keep your rankings higher and stay ahead of the competition.

## Why is Search Engine Optimization Important?

When you start any business, you have a lot to worry about. But above all else, you have to concern yourself with visibility. If the customer doesn't know you're there, how can you expect him or her to ever visit your business? In the physical world, stores and other businesses have many ways of getting noticed. Radio, television, newspaper, and mailing ads are all ways that they get noticed.

But what about the person traveling through the town where you do business? Chances are that the traveler will not have received any of these advertisements. What else can you do to bring in these potential customers? And the answer is **your signs**. The signs you place are a clear beacon to the customer of where you are. You see it all the time, driving down the highway. And the bigger the sign, the better it catches your attention.

It really works quite the same way with search engine optimization. You need to be noticed. The best way for you to get noticed is to have, figuratively speaking, the biggest and the best sign. That's how traffic on the Internet, zipping by, notices that you even exist. It's the words you use and how you use them to describe your site and its content that get you the customers.

This is where it becomes so important to use search engine optimization to your advantage. If you can come up with that all-important list of best keywords to describe your site, and if you can incorporate those words into the content of your site, then you stand far greater chances of directing that Internet traffic to you instead of your competitors. Remember, if you don't get the customers, they will.

It doesn't cost you anything to show up on a search engine's results. But it can cost you everything if you don't show up on a search. The amount of revenue you have planned for your company is going to depend on how well you can utilize this feature of Internet Marketing. If you can't get the customers to notice you, you may as well throw those revenue goals in the fireplace.

The traffic on the Internet is much pickier than the traffic on the roadways. It is focused traffic, looking for a specific want or need. They will search, find, and buy. Who they buy from is of little importance to them, but to you, it is everything. So when you think about why it's important to effectively use search engine optimization, just remember that everyone on the Internet is really a traveler through your town, and if you don't have that sign they'll notice, they're going to pass you by.

## Steps for Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, is a rather involved process that you must follow through to ensure that your Internet business is getting results and revenues. Without SEO, you may as well close your virtual doors and go home. This is the most vital means by which you can direct traffic to your site, and so it is critically important that you understand at least the basic steps in the process to optimize your ranking with the search engines. Here are basic steps you will need to follow.

- 1. Know your competition.** You will need to find out everything you can about who else is in the same market as you. Perform searches to collect information. Repeat this process often, using up-to-date search terms. New businesses open all the time. You don't want to miss a new competitor.
- 2. Gather a list of keywords.** You can go online and obtain massive lists of keywords that are used all the time. Put together the list according to the words that will have the most impact on your site.
- 3. Find ways to combine the keywords you've selected.** The more combinations you can incorporate into the content of your site, the better will be your results.
- 4. Modify the content of your website.** Change headlines, labels, and content throughout your site to enhance the capabilities of your site to draw in highly-directed traffic.
- 5. Refine your keyword list often.** Knowing that the Internet is ever-evolving, you must stay on top of what words will have the most impact. Make changes as necessary to keep on the top of the ranking lists.
- 6. Make sure that your URL is added to the top search engines.** The last thing you want to do is be missed because one of the majors didn't know you were there. Keep on top of this. Know which search engines are most popular.
- 7. Keep track of your results.** Just like grades in school, the rankings you achieve will tell you how well you're doing and how much you need to improve for that A+. Analyze whatever information you can collect and constantly work to improve your results.
- 8. Repeat the process.** Over and over again, you will need to redo all of these steps, keeping in mind that the competition is doing the same. Always look for innovative ways to improve your results. Sticking with the same old stuff all the time is not how giants are made.

This is a relatively basic illustration of the process you need to follow to optimize your search engine results. There are certainly more ways to fine-tune your site's rankings. However, for the purpose of getting started, this list should serve to put you on the path toward higher search engine rankings.

## Going After the Competition With SEO

No matter what business you're in, there is one common factor all businesses share: they have competition. Sure, the exception is the monopoly, but you would be hard-pressed to find any form of true monopoly on the Internet. More likely you will find that there are at least a few, and perhaps as many as hundreds, of competitors all scrambling to get to the top. If you have an Internet business, you're one of them. And for you to be successful, you must know how to successfully compete. It's a game with very real consequences, and winning is the ultimate goal.

Search Engine Optimization is one way you can effectively compete with others in your market. But the only way you can even start to compete with them is to know them. You have to know your competition as well or better than you know your own company. And, fortunately, there are ways you can do this.

First of all, to know your competition you will need to visit them. Search for all the sites you can find that may be doing the same thing you are, and then visit each one. Pay careful attention to the results at the top of the search engine list. These are the **highest** ranking sites, and you will want to find out what got them there. When you go to each site, take notes on layout, content, obvious keywords, and any other things about the site that may make it more visible than yours in searches.

Once you've gotten through all of the sites and reviewed the results of your study, look for ways to enhance the quality of your own site. Consider different types of content, better or more keywords, and any other additions that will make your site as good or better than the competition. Remember, too, that this is not something you can do one time and leave it alone. You will want to do this as frequently as possible to keep on top of the game.

Besides looking to others for ideas, also think of ways you can enhance your site that others have not tried. Innovation is what will set you above the rest. It doesn't hurt to add an innovation to your site to test the market's response. Just be sure to study it for effectiveness before you use it. You want to be reasonable sure that it will work before you put the idea to the test.

A final note: constantly review your results. Determine what worked and what did not work. Keep an eye on your competition for what they are doing. This is an ongoing process without end. It is the best way to go after the competition online, and it will be the key to your success or failure.

## **Building a Content-Rich Site**

In order for your efforts to optimize your search engine results to work, you will need to make your entire site a billboard of sorts. Everywhere you can place some keyword to effectively build your search engine rankings, you must. This is the best way for you to get your business noticed on the Internet.

The more people who search for what you sell, the more customers you will likely have.

But it's not just keywords that do the job. If it was, you could have a site where all you did was list all the keywords you could think, and you would possibly have thousands of visitors per week. But what are they going to do when they get to your site? If it's just keywords in a list, they'll go away. That's why it's so important that you make not just a noticeable site, but also it must be a content-rich site.

The first thing to remember about the Internet is that it is all about information. No matter what else people do, they are on the Internet for information about one thing or another. Therefore, it is up to you as the Internet Marketer and business owner to develop content rich in information that will not only attract people to your site, but keep them there long enough for you to make the sale. In the case of Internet business where information is the only thing your site offers, you really need to keep up on this. If the content is no good, they will not return.

The best ways to make yours a content-rich site involve a lot of writing. You need to write articles that will inform and entertain readers. These articles should be related to your site's market. The more small articles you write about various different aspects of the subject matter of your site, the better. Another thing that makes for a content-rich site is news. Information relating to some new event in the market will dramatically enhance the content of your site. Even interviews, reports, and product descriptions can enhance content.

The final thing to remember is that your content should be revised frequently. The same old information will wear out, so you have to be on top of it, with something new all the time.

Also, remember that the keywords are how you really get noticed. The more content you have, the more room you've got for the important keywords. When you add content, be sure to have as many keywords as you can incorporated into that content. It's all about getting noticed and getting results, and keywords and content are how you get there.

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A Competitor, Or Even Your Own Mother  
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