

SEO Tips and Tools

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is the fine art of getting your website ranked high enough by search engines like Google, so that when people do a search on your keywords, your site comes up on the first page. Sounds great. Though its not such a simple goal to achieve. The bottom line is that the search engines want the content and actual popularity of your site to be the determining factor of your rank, and they are always trying to adjust their methodology to encourage and ensure that.

Still a few basics to consider which can likely help you:

1. Page titles that start with and include keywords
2. Multiple folders (If your site is built in html) and the folders are named with key words - this helps
3. Text rich pages concentrated with keywords (but not so much that it turns off humans - they are in fact your primary audience!)
4. Use links with keywords when possible
5. Get as many people to (legitimately) link to your site - when you write an article online, or set up a blog - include your web link.
6. Link to other people - again keep it legit.
7. Keep the content on your home page fresh and new - this keeps the spiders (and the humans) coming back for more.
8. Of course meta tags and descriptions should also have keywords added.

If you have a great product or service, and great content which you make available for your audience, overtime your ranking will organically improve. If you want to give it a big boost, be prepared to pay - either in time or money.

SEO is a growing industry. You can pay companies to run SEO campaigns. Its often an ongoing process that takes time, frequent monitoring, trial and error, focus and patience. Web designers can incorporate some basic tactics to help boost your ranking, but this is making a site Search Engine Ready and not the same as SEO, which includes ongoing monitoring of results and tweaking the site until you have the results you want. You can do this yourself, but it takes time.

You can also consider SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and pay for a service like City Search, Reach Local or Context Web to run a targeted marketing campaign. Many of these services start at \$400 p/m commitment level and that doesn't include the designing of the ads themselves.

Whether or not you're ready for such a marketing commitment, or not, be aware, the search engines are always changing their algorithms to thwart people trying to get their pages ranked higher through tricks. (Adding key words in tiny type that matches the background is one such trick.) These kind of shenanigans can get your site black listed and set your marketing back.

So what's a business to do?

Keep working on marketing your business and your site. Be mindful of SEO, but never loose site of your actual business. Content is what matters - to humans and spiders.

Below are a few tools that can help you

<http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/> check out what key words get the most hits online in a particular category.

<http://www.trackur.com/> Andy Beal is an ethical expert on SEO, and founded this company to help you track and monitor your brand and its reputation online. Check out his article on SEO (note: its quite dated, but the content still very applicable). <http://www.searchengineguide.com/andy-beal/search-engine-optimization-basics-part-1-keywords.php>

<http://www.alexa.com/> this site allows you to see who's searching your website and which keywords they used to find you.

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/checklist/>

We hope this tip sheet has been helpful. We look forward to putting our creativity to work for your business.



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