SEO Simplified:
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A website's rankings are not going to magically improve. New websites are not going to instantly have thousands of visitors. This is online reality. But there is something you can do about it.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a tried and true method for increasing rankings, traffic, and sales. It is not rocket science and it does take effort, but with the right online tools, success is very possible.

WHY SEO?

The process of SEO has never been more important. Search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing, have developed an impressive ability to deliver relevant search results to a user's queries.

How well a site is ranked can mean the difference between continuous sales growth and virtual online obscurity.

Right now SEO might seem complicated and overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. SEO simply builds on your understanding of your business and clients. By learning the principles of SEO and how to use available SEO tools, you can begin to take advantage of the millions of new search queries made each and every day.

Who are we to tell you about SEO?

Before we get too far, we thought you might like to know a little bit about us. We launched the very first suite of online do-it-yourself SEO tools and reports in 2006. The idea came after launching a number of Internet-based businesses and then realizing that the success of our sites depended heavily on our search engine rankings for our keywords. At the time there were other online SEO related tools available, scattered all over the web, but no comprehensive SEO system with all the tools and resources in one place. Hence, the tools at SEO Gears are a response to that frustrating situation.

Learning about SEO used to be a real challenge. Previously the only way to really understand SEO was to spend months reading articles, blogs, and forums and attending SEO conferences. Even then it was difficult to put everything into a cohesive SEO strategy. Opinions of what made good SEO were varying and "SEO experts" popped up and faded away seemingly as quickly as the seasons changed. It was so crazy, we even found ourselves speaking at several SEO conferences on SEO tools, website analytics and Local SEO. Over time SEO has finally coalesced into a foundational form, and the search engines and their ranking algorithms have fluctuated much less, with apparently few new factors being introduced in the last few years.

This book is the result of our evolution and involvement in the SEO industry, through years of doing SEO for our own sites, as well as designing online SEO tools. This e-book is designed to educate readers on proven SEO principles and practices. While not required to do SEO, our suite of SEO tools at SEOGears go

hand in hand with this e-book to assist site owners implement effective SEO strategies for their own sites.

Importance of SEO

Whether you are a small business owner, a blogger, an entrepreneur, or just curious about SEO, this e-book will take you to the next level of SEO understanding.

Many people hear about SEO and know it is "good for business," but most people don't realize how significant a role SEO should play in nearly every firm's marketing strategy.

Dr. Paul Christ, a widely cited marketing expert, presented the five most important concepts all marketers must know to succeed in today's market on his site knowthis.com. The second concept on his list was "Search Engine Marketing." In the top spot was "Customer Loyalty" and in the third position was "Public Relations." This places SEO right up there with some of the most important marketing strategies today.

Many companies are finding success and profit by implementing SEO. Here are a few examples of real companies and real results:

Example 1: An established music programming company, in just four months of implementing an SEO strategy, has seen an increase of 1,100% in unique visits and an increase of 3,000% in conversion rates.

Example 2: An existing distribution company increased search traffic by 225% in the six-month period directly after initiating an SEO strategy.

Example 3: A news media group increased their Google search traffic by 1,200% over an 18 month period while performing SEO.

While these types of results are extraordinary and not achieved by all site owners, they do demonstrate the power of SEO in increasing traffic and conversions.

Benefits of SEO

The potential benefits of SEO are primarily focused on increased rankings, but the breadth of the effects of SEO extends far beyond, including:

- Increased traffic

- Increased conversions (sales, customers, or however you measure success)

- Increased visibility and branding

- Finding targeted, qualified, ready-to-purchase clients

- Long-term positioning

- Exposure to new markets and audiences

- Expanded branding opportunities

- Gaining industry authority

Who can do SEO?

We usually say "anyone can do SEO!!!" because we have seen our share of do-it-yourselfers experience amazing online suc-

cess. On the other hand, because SEO is work, we have also seen some put forth little effort and ultimately fail. SEO failures occur when a site owner gives up and doesn't keep working.

The success we have seen comes from site owners devoting some genuine time to learn SEO and then putting forth a consistent effort to apply proven SEO strategies. We are confident if the SEO work is done, then SEO will deliver results.
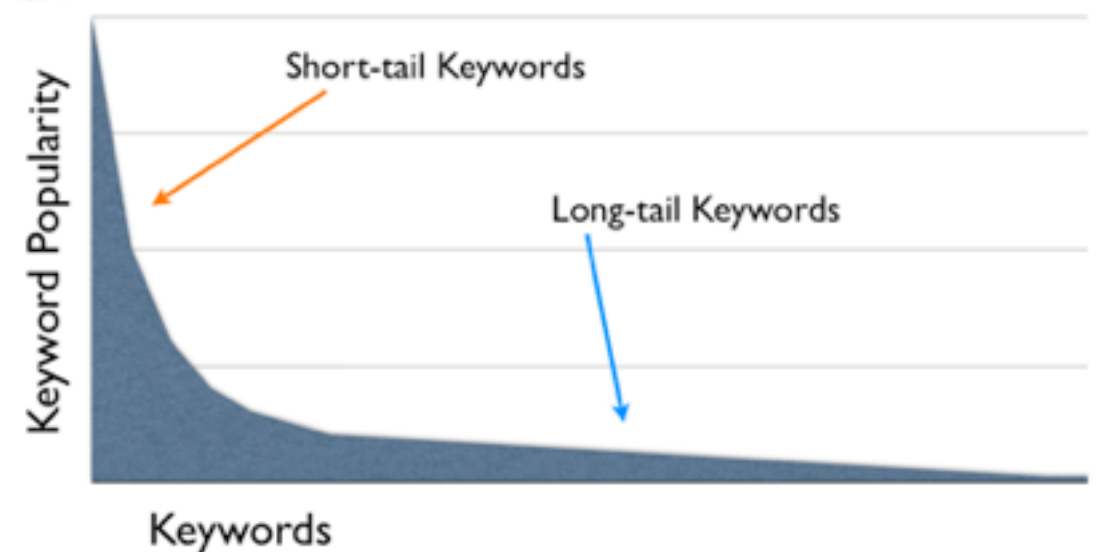
KEYWORDS

Keywords are the foundation of SEO. When people go online to find something, most will begin at a search engine. They enter a keyword or phrase that describes what they are looking for, and then scan through the results page to find a site they consider relevant.

Everything search engines do to return relevant search results is built around keywords, so it's no wonder most everything in SEO is also based on keywords.

Types of Keywords

A "keyword" in SEO can be a single word or multiple words, as in a "keyword phrase." There is really no limit to the number of words in a keyword phrase, and over the years people have learned to use an increased number of descriptive search terms in order to obtain more specific results.

The term "long-tail keywords" is used to distinguish a group of less-searched keywords, which are typically four to seven words or longer. Shorter, more often searched keywords, one to three words in length, are called "short-tail keywords." You can see from the chart below that shorter keywords are more popular and searched for more often and the longer keyword phrases are less popular. However, those who use long-tail keywords when searching purchase more often, so long-tail SEO work is very important.

As an example, let's use the product "digital camera." Some short-tail keyword examples for a digital camera are "digital SLR camera," "best digital camera," and "compact digital camera."

Long-tail keyword examples would be "SLR digital camera re-views," "7 megapixel SLR digital camera," and "compact profes-sional SLR digital camera."

Before we explain how to come up with your own keywords for your site, we suggest keeping a "keyword list" to organize key-words, either manually or by using an online tool like we have at SEOGears. Having keywords in one place will allow you to quickly refer back to them when you are creating and optimizing content and building links.

Choosing Keywords

So how do you come up with these keywords? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Internal Brainstorming: No one knows your site and products better than you do. Think about what your clients are looking for and how they would use the search engines to find your business. Get with your employees and business partners and just talk it out. Be sure to shift focus from industry or tech-nical jargon to the words and phrases your clients would actu-ally use when talking about your company and products, or words used when they have asked questions in the past. This is a great way to begin gathering keywords.

2. External Brainstorming: Ask family and friends to do a search in order to find the products or services you sell. What terms and phrases do they use? It's amazing just how insightful this can be. Others can see and describe your products in a very different manner when they aren't current clients or familiar with the products you sell or provide. This is a great activity for learning how potential clients would attempt to find you through search.

3. Client Feedback: Ask clients what impressions they get of your site, company, and products, and write down the words they use. These phrases and ideas come from those who have already found your company and purchased in the past. They might provide some ideas to help address the demo-graphic and localization differences in the phrases customers use to find you initially. These differences can prove to be very important. The other day I purchased something online and within a day after I had received the product I got a follow-up email. In this email they asked me if I was satisfied with the product and if I had any comments to help them improve in the future. Thinking about it now, I realize my comments would really be helpful to this company in finding new and rele-vant keywords.

4. Discussions and Forums: Nearly every industry has some form of discussion group or forum, where people can discuss problems or seek advice. Using these groups and forums is a great place to find keywords that people use when casually referring to the product, services, and features, and even when describing problems they may have faced.

5. Keyword Tools: Tools like Google's Adwords Keyword Tool, WordTracker, SEOGears's Keyword Finder and other keyword discovery tools are great ways to find new keywords. As an example we will include a screen shot for the keyword phrase "SLR cameras" entered into the Google keyword tool (https://adwords.google.com/o/KeywordTool). The Keyword Tool suggested the following as possible additional keywords.

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches ?	Local Monthly Searches ?
best slr cameras ▾	High	90,500	40,500
canon slr cameras ▾	High	90,500	40,500
canon digital slr cameras ▾	High	60,500	27,100
nikon slr cameras ▾	High	60,500	27,100
used digital slr cameras ▾	High	5,400	1,900
best digital slr cameras ▾	High	60,500	27,100
used slr cameras ▾	High	8,100	2,900
slr cameras reviews ▾	High	49,500	22,200
nikon digital slr cameras ▾	High	40,500	18,100
cheap digital slr cameras ▾	High	12,100	4,400
slr cameras for beginners ▾	Medium	22,200	9,900

Just start with your top keywords and see what other related keywords these tools suggest, then record the ones you consider most relevant.

POWER TIP

Check your competitor's website and see what keywords they are targeting and ranking with. You will not only find keywords to compete for, but you can get ideas for keywords you haven't thought of yet.

Other Uses for Keywords

Before we conclude the keyword section, let us provide an important recommendation. Your keyword list is not only useful for SEO on your site, but it can also be used for other online marketing methods, such as Pay-Per-Click, which we will discuss in more detail in the Bonus section of this e-book. Pay-Per-Click, or PPC, are advertisements on search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo based on your keywords. Take your full list of

keywords, decide on some important ones and start a few PPC ads in order to get immediate traffic to your site.

Your keywords are the foundation for the rest of your SEO work. Don't spend all your time finding new keywords, but do spend enough time to get a comprehensive list of relevant keywords to get you started. Your content and link strategies will need to refer back to the keyword list time and time again, so if it's done right the first time, content creation and linking efforts will be more efficient and effective as you move forward.

CONTENT

Content is an opportunity to differentiate your website, and it plays a major role in SEO. Content communicates a message to potential clients as well as to the search engines, and it can set a site apart from the rest of the marketplace.

Search engines try to mimic people as much as possible in consuming and evaluating content. Like people, search engines prefer readable, unique, and fresh content. Taking the approach of creating content to satisfy site visitors first and then optimizing this content for search engines later is the most effective long-term content strategy.

Endless Possibilities with Content

Most of us will run out of time and money before we will run out of new keywords to write about. Google says that around 25% of the daily searches on their site are for new keyword phrases, never searched for previously – that is over 15 million new searches a day. This equates to an amazing opportunity in every industry to rank for old and new keywords alike.

One great advantage to the role of content in SEO is that it takes work and creativity to create high quality content. This makes unique content a barrier to the marketplace because you can't simply program it or fake it. It must be created.

What Can Content Do for Rankings?

1. Content allows you to increase the words and phrases your website can rank for. The more keywords you have ranking well, the greater the potential for increased traffic and increased customers. It is almost impossible to rank for words and phrases which are not included on your website, so you need to get all those important keywords on the site somehow.

2. Content can rank in the search engines without a lot of effort for many long-tail keywords. We have seen instances where websites have been able to hit the top spot on a search results page, and they have accomplished it primarily through the use of fresh, targeted content. This approach takes a well-conceived content strategy, which begins with effective keyword research and then is coupled with the creation of unique content where the important keywords occur naturally.

3. Content also plays an important role in obtaining links from other websites. Certain types of content can motivate other website owners to link to your pages, thereby increasing your traffic, authority, and rankings. If you produce link-worthy content, you will not only communicate a clear and targeted message to potential clients, but you will also gather links as others cite or reference your content and share it with their own traffic and followers.

Content No-No's

Before we begin with the many ways to increase the content on sites, let's start with some absolute "no-no's" in content.

1. DO NOT manually copy and paste or use software that employs "scraping" or copying another's content. Not only is it classless, but the search engines will ignore and possibly punish you for using duplicate content. It isn't worth the risk of being classified as spam by the search engines.

2. Do not buy content from article databases for use on your site, no matter how well written or appropriate the articles may be. Additionally, do not rely on text from product description databases when creating content pages. To get a site with many products launched quickly, you may have to accept canned product descriptions initially, especially if it is a pre-packaged commerce site. But you should quickly come up with your own descriptions for each product as quickly as possible, or append the existing descriptions with customized content or reviews. Remember to always go for originality over borrowed quantity.

Creating Fresh, Unique Content

Content can be anything, whether it's an article, a video, an image, an infographic, a downloadable file, or even an online game. With so many varied forms of content, there are endless options to create new content. The important thing to remember is that fresh and unique content is key to superior rankings.

The goal with fresh content is to show search engines that your website is not just a static, unchanging site, but a growing resource of content. Search engines award websites with fresher content a higher ranking, so it is in your best interest to keep adding fresh content on a consistent basis.

One of the best ways to add fresh content is to start a blog. One of the reasons blogs have become so popular is because blog content management systems make adding content very simple. Blogs can be used to discuss industry news or issues, announce products, educate visitors, handle public relations issues, reach out to customers, or convey anything relevant about the website to visitors.

Creating blog content based on your keyword list, including long-tail keywords, is a great way to ensure a long-term, dependable, and consistent presence in the search engines. This is done by creating new blog posts (pages), using keywords as a part of the topic of the page and the page title, and then adding well written content with the keyword(s) included naturally.

Blogging can be challenging, especially when you are a small business owner with so many other responsibilities to juggle. Content takes time and effort to create, and to be most effec-

tive, content must be created and added to the site consistently over time. Many small business owners find themselves unable to maintain the necessary pace of adding content.

In fact, due to our own time constraints as small business owners, we found ourselves in this same situation, essentially needing more content but not having the time to do it as well as we would have liked. As a result, we actually created a new business called Applied Content to address this content creation problem, not only for ourselves, but for other website owners as well. Applied Content is fortunate to have highly skilled writers available to research and create content for site owners, so anyone can add fresh content to their site as often as they need to, without the cost of having an in-house writer.

This option to create content by hiring an outside firm can free up valuable time and resources. The same principles for creating content must be relayed to any content creation company or writer. In addition, it is important to always check to make sure the content received is unique and keyword optimized before it is published.

In our own company blog, we have seen targeted long-tail keywords rank quite well in the search engines rather quickly, as well as generate a significant amount of traffic to our website. Much of it is based on the competition for these terms. If you target good long-tail keywords, which aren't overly competitive, yet are relevant to your business, you can quickly find your page ranked by including those keywords in a blog post.

We have also seen instances where we are actually ranking very well for some relevant keywords by accident, which has taught us the importance of using a blog to naturally discuss our business. Looking at all the keywords that generate traffic can help you expand your keyword list and focus your efforts on traffic-generating content. The lesson learned is you just never know when the words you use to share the specifics of your business will become important search terms and gain visitors and authority.

Besides creating a blog, there are many opportunities in any industry for creating content. Creating content can be just as simple as generating informational pages about your product, industry, services, or company and publishing them on your website. New content can come naturally as part of running your business. Here's an example.

A good friend of ours called one day and asked what he should do with his website to help it perform better in the SERPs. This friend owns an auto dealership and deals mostly in used BMW cars. He also has a repair shop which specializes in repairing European-made cars. He, like many of us, just wants to be more visible online.

After a quick review of his site, we gave him a few ideas. First, he does an excellent job of keeping his car inventory current online. As soon as the dealership receives a car, they clean it up and take some photos, then put the photos and a simple description of the car on their site. We suggested that they spend a little more time creating more content for each car, focusing on targeted keywords, and the attributes of each car, as well as adding good keywords to the title and descriptions of the car photos. We further suggested they include local geographical references in their content, for example, "San Francisco, CA,"

"Northern CA," and "Bay Area," to assist in the local search rankings.

Local SEO is important when your clientele is primarily locally-based. Perhaps they prefer to see the products you sell in person, or maybe they want to pick the product up the same day, or they may be required to visit the business location to have the service performed, as in an auto repair shop.

We thought it would be helpful if our friend used the SEOGears tools to analyze the other local automotive sites doing well in the search engines, and start implementing SEO strategies for those specific keywords to increase their rankings. Always remember, the SEO which is working well for your competitors, will also work well on your site.

In the past, once a car was sold, our friend would remove the content and pictures of the car off the site. This is a major mistake. Instead we suggested he create a sold section, or past inventory page, and then organize all the cars by model and year in this new section. Using this method the dealership can continue to benefit from the content they created over time.

We know there are many who wish they were doing better online. Your site may be live, but it needs to do a better job bringing in new clients. This is most easily accomplished utilizing the search engines. So you need to look for ways to increase your content, add new pages, and maybe add a blog, then write about new products or changes in the industry, and always keep your content live and accessible. It may need to be tweaked or re-organized from time to time, but content is very valuable and should be seen as an asset that keeps on generat-

ing traffic over the long-term. It takes work to create content, so after creating it, you need to let it continue to work for you indefinitely.

How to Optimize Site Content

A site can be optimized through a series of steps. Start with the title, header, and body content to make sure keywords show up in each of these areas. If the content is going to be an image, infographic, video, game, or some other item, include some written text on the page so the search engine will be able to index the page content and topic.

Title

The title tag is one of the most important aspects of content to both the search engines and users. Search engines consider the title to be a short and concise description of a page. The title is used by search engines as the prominent description in search engine results, so a title should be descriptive and interesting for people as well as search engines. For users, the text in a title tag doesn't actually show up on a page, but it is often displayed by a browser at the top of the window.

To optimize content, you need to make sure your keyword is found in the HTML title tag of your page. If your keyword is "SLR Digital Cameras," the title for the page might be something like "Finding the Best SLR Digital Cameras" or "Best deals on SLR Digital Cameras" or something which includes the keyword exactly. In the HTML of your page the title tag should look something like this:

<title>Best Deals on SLR Digital Cameras</title>

Keeping the title tag to under 70 characters is recommended, as this is the maximum size that Google can display. The title tag is also a great opportunity to differentiate your page and entice users to click through to your site.

URL

The URL, or web address for the page, can play a minor role in affecting your rankings. When creating new content, try to use the title or keyword as the basis of the page name, using dashes between words. For example, your URL might look like this for the keyword "digital SLR cameras":

http://yourwebsite.com/best-digital-slr-cameras.html

Header tags (including H1, H2, H3, etc.)

Using header tags to organize your content can be helpful to both users and search engines. For users, it makes it possible to scan an article quickly and find what they are looking for. For search engines, it gives you an opportunity to emphasize your keyword with respect to other text on the page. The H1 tag is the most important and should be used high on the page to indicate the title of the article or content. H2, H3, and H4 tags have some merit but aren't required and can be used as subtitles to separate out paragraph sections. The HTML code of your H1 tag of your page would look like this:

<h1>Finding the Best Deals on SLR Digital Cameras</h1>

Body

The body text should be 2 or 3 paragraphs at a minimum or roughly 250 words, and the first sentence should include the keyword. The rest of the page should include the keyword several times, but not so much that it reads unnaturally. The number of times a keyword is used on a webpage is referred to as Keyword Density. A good keyword density target is around 1-3% in natural prose. There are many online tools that can check keyword density; we will discuss one of these tools in the Reports section.

In the earlier days of the Internet, search engines would award sites with higher rankings based on how many times a keyword was used on a page, which meant some website owners began "keyword stuffing" their pages, to fool search engines into believing their site was authoritative for that particular keyword. Here is an example of a stuffed keyword paragraph for the phrase "digital camera."

How To Choose the Right Digital Camera for You.

The best digital cameras take the best digital photos. Buy your digital camera here, we have the largest online digital camera store, much bigger than other online digital camera stores. Why carry a digital camera? Why not carry a digital camera? Everyone should have a good digital camera. Digital cameras can make you famous, digital cameras are a great graduation gift. Digital Camera, Nikon digital cameras, Canon digital cameras, Sony digital cameras found here. Digital photos can be saved online, right in your digital photos folder or right on your digital camera. Digital photography is best when using the best digital camera. Great deals on digital cameras can be found here, and you can learn

This stuffed paragraph has 159 words, and 40 of those are part of the keyword phrase, so this paragraph has a keyword density of 25%, way above the recommended 1-3%. Search engines can easily identify keyword stuffing now, which is a big plus for searchers. Stuffed pages are tough to read and unnatural, and can actually drive potential clients away from your site.

Search engines today are technologically advanced and can easily determine whether a site is using unnatural language, keyword stuffing, hidden text, and other black-hat SEO tactics, so these should be avoided. These tricks will eventually hurt your rankings.

Meta tags

The only meta tag to really worry about is the description meta tag. This is often used by the search engines to display what a page is about on the SERP. When there is no description meta tag the search engine will display a snippet from within the page's text, so unless you want Google to choose how to describe your business for you, it is good practice to include a meta description. This gives you an opportunity not only to describe your site, but also to persuade a reader that the link to your site is worth clicking.

The keyword meta tag is still used by many websites, but it is no longer used by search engines. For this reason we suggest not putting forth any effort into using this meta tag.

POWER TIP

If you limit your title tag to 70 characters and your meta description to 150 characters, your text won't get cut off by the major search engines in the results page. This way, you can frame your online SERP message exactly the way you want it displayed.

Organizing Site Content

Theming

The most optimal way to organize a website is to separate it into "themes." For example, a car dealer might organize their site into "car sales," "car repair," and "car accessories." For each theme they would have sub-pages corresponding to that theme, and under each sub-page they could have another set of sub-pages. It just depends on how much content you have, need, or want, and if this organizational structure makes logical sense. We recommend keeping an entire site accessible through a sitemap, as well as keeping the site no deeper than 3 levels.

Menu

A site's menu structure should be simple and not use anything too fancy like Flash. If your site menu currently uses images as

buttons, we suggest changing those graphics to text links, as search engines can't index text included within an image. Internal menu links, if they are text-based, can actually help give a search engine context in determining keyword relevance and rankings, so it is worth the effort.

Above the fold

"Above the fold" refers to the content of a website that is visible on an average sized screen, without scrolling down to see more. The content at the top of the page is thought to have more influence in your search engine rankings than content located "below the fold." So you must be sure to place your content higher up on each relevant page. This also means you will want to make sure your content is well written and helpful for visitors right from the very beginning.

Internal link structure

In addition to using a themed structure, it's important to consider the linking done inside your website. Instead of using text like "click here" or "learn more" for links, you should use descriptive text when linking to another page on your site. Sub-pages should link back to top-level pages with the keyword in the link text. In addition to links in the menu, you should be sure to include relevant links within your content which point to other target pages on your site. A good way to check for this is to use the "site:" query in Google and search for pages on your site that use a given keyword. For example, you might type into Google "site:yourwebsite.com digital slr cameras" to see a list of all pages where the keyword "digital slr cameras" is used on your site. The results from this query provide conclusive evidence of just how well Google knows what content and keywords are on our sites. It's truly amazing.

Summary

Creating fresh content is well worth all the time and effort. It is a fabulous investment that will reward site owners time and time again with search engine traffic. Content should be optimized for both users and search engines, as both will see and use the content. By optimizing content, search engines will be able to rank your site higher and for more keywords.

In SEO we like to say "content is king," and if content is done properly, you will definitely understand why as your rankings continue to improve.

LINKS

No SEO plan is complete without a strategy to obtain links from other reputable websites. The process of getting links can be one of the most challenging aspects of SEO, but it is one of the most effective methods to increase your rankings.

Value of Links

For years search engines relied almost exclusively upon content for ranking web pages. One of Google's unique features was the democratic approach of using links as a way to determine site rankings. This ranking approach brought more relevance and reliability to the rankings and began excluding some of the more "spammy" sites.

Today Google, Yahoo, Bing, and most other search engines consider a link as a "vote" of trust or authority from another site. Search engines consider the context of both pages, the page with the link, and the page the link points to, as well as the anchor text, which is the text of the link itself.

The act of obtaining links is called Link Building. Before we discuss how to build links, let's examine what makes a strong link. Several factors determine whether a link is strong or weak. A few strong links can help your search rankings much more than many weak links. The major factors that contribute to the strength of a link are:

- Anchor text

- Relevance of site

- Backlinks of site

- Domain age

- .Edu and .Gov links

- Location on a Page

Anchor Text

The displayed text others use as the link back to your site is a very important aspect to the strength of a link and how the search engines will rank the site being linked to.

Anchor text gives context to the subject matter of the linked page. If you write an article entitled "How to Fix a Leaky Faucet," others might link to your story with a link using the exact title of the article, or just fixing a leaky faucet. When a search engine finds the link to your article, it takes the link text into consideration for the ranking of that page and gives it more weight in determining the rankings for that keyword.

When building links, you must take any opportunity to determine the anchor text of a new link to your site. When submitting or contacting a site owner for a link, you should have the HTML code for a link ready to go, increasing the chance of your preferred anchor text being used.

POWER TIP

Keep in mind that having all anchor text the exact same is unnatural and may be devalued by search engines. Mix it up by adding a word, changing from singular to plural, or stemming a word differently. Google considers "Consulting" and "Consultant" to be very related, so much so that they would highlight the other word in a Search Engine Results Page (SERP) even though it doesn't match our search term exactly.

Relevance of Site

Getting links from sites whose content is related to your site contributes to making a strong link. If your site is about "digital cameras," we recommend getting links from any site dealing with photography, electronics, and technology, all of which are related to digital cameras.

Backlinks of Site

A site with many quality backlinks of their own makes for a strong link opportunity because search engines give links from these sites higher "authority" or "value." A few good links from an authoritative site, with well-designed anchor text, can have a positive influence on your rankings. Conversely, links from sites with hundreds or thousands of links from spammy gambling or prescription sites won't provide much link value, and could even hurt your site's rankings. Linking from these types of sites should be avoided.

Domain Age

One important factor search engines consider when determining the authority of a site is the age of the domain. The older the domain, the better the chance the site owners have created more quality content, which is well established in the industry and therefore can trusted more than a new site. So older domains and sites have an advantage in the rankings over newer domains and their resulting sites. Another factor may also be how many years the domain is registered into the future. We recommend registering your website for at least 5 years to show search engines your website is committed for the long-term.

Getting links from older sites and from sites registered for multiple years makes for a stronger link.

.Edu and .Gov links

Websites with a .edu or .gov extension are generally very strong links, particularly because the domains are not publicly available for purchase or transfer. Getting links from a .edu or .gov domain is not easy, but this is because the links are valuable. If you can find opportunities to earn them, you should take advantage. Some site owners have had success by sponsoring university career fairs, providing various event sponsorships, creating resource pages, and even having contests inviting the participation of students from a variety of on-campus clubs and vocations.

Location on a Page

Generally, a link within the main body of a page has more value than a link on the side menu or at the very bottom of a page, like in a footer.

POWER TIP

A lesser known link strategy called "Co-Citations" involves having two links to relevant, authoritative sites, like Wikipedia, in close proximity to a link in the text. This groups the site with the authoritative sites in the eyes of the search engines, and will help bolster the value of the link.

After understanding these important factors for strong links, the next step is to take these factors into consideration when searching to find potential link opportunities. Several link tools are available to help you.

Tools to Assist with Links

WHOIS
http://whois.domaintools.com

A "WHOIS" query simply gives you some basic information about a domain, and is particularly useful for finding out the domain age. To check WHOIS, visit the above site and type in the domain name. The "created date" will tell you when the domain was purchased and the "expired date" will tell you how much longer the domain is registered.

POWER TIP

Since Google itself is now a domain registrar, they and other search engines may factor in not only the age of your domain, but how long it has been registered. If you register your domain for 10 years instead of just 1 year, search engines have another reason to trust your site, as they can assume the site is going to be around for a long period of time.

PageRank

PageRank is simply a score of how "strong" a page is according to Google. Every page on the Internet has a PageRank, although newer and less popular pages will show a PageRank of zero for a period of time. PageRank is only slightly helpful because it gives us only a general idea of the strength of any particular page. One caution: don't get caught up in the PageRank calculation. It's not everything, and any publicly visible value of PageRank is quite outdated compared to the actual PageRank value Google uses as a ranking factor.

Competitors' Backlinks

In the past Yahoo offered a very powerful backlinks tool, but they have since done away with many of the helpful SEO tools they offered free to the public. We like to use the Google "link" operator, "link:http://www.thesite.com," to view links to a particular site. Unfortunately this query returns all kinds of links to the entered URL, and quite a bit of work has to be done to filter through and determine the quality of the links and if the links will be beneficial to your site.

SEOmoz.com offers a freemium links tool called Open Site Explorer at http://www.opensiteexplorer.org. Starting with a URL, like your competitor's, SEOmoz will return the strongest links to that site. It is a great tool for finding possible link partners and determining the strongest relevant links.

For this example we chose the URL transferbigfiles.com. The results provide information on the links to this site and display pages with the highest page and domain authority at the top. The higher the page and domain authority, the stronger the link would be from that page.

Getting Links

Getting links to your site can be divided into two methods, "Finding Links" and "Attracting Links."

Finding Links

There are many directories and industry listings that commonly take submissions. Blogs and forums are an excellent opportunity for getting links. In blogs and forums you can comment and join in on discussions, and include a link, even if it's just in the signature line. We suggest being actively involved in blogs and forums, not just as a one-time trick to get a link, but as a true member and participant. Remember, if you spam these sites by posting your link too much, or too often, you will most likely be banned from the blog or forum.

There are many search queries, when combined with your keywords, that can help you identify sites that are willing to add a link to their site or help you find relevant directories, blogs, and forums. If you have a photography site, you should perform queries like "photography 'add link,'" "photography directory," and "photography forum."

When getting links, you need to mix up the anchor text of these links, and focus links to multiple pages on your site instead of just the homepage. Each of your top keywords should have its own page that focuses on that specific keyword.

Opportunities for finding links are everywhere, but it certainly takes time, effort, and patience. Finding link opportunities is not a one-time activity, but should be a consistent effort as an integral part of any SEO strategy.

Attracting Links

Instead of going after websites and asking for links, you can also naturally attract links by creating content that others find interesting and want to share with their site visitors in the form of a link back to your site. This viral content, or "link bait" as it is often called, can be in the form of an article, video, game, infographic, or anything that people would find interesting, useful, or entertaining and want to pass along to their followers.

Once the content is created, getting the content out to a social network is the next step to get as many people to view it as possible. Specific industries, genres, and communities may have niche social networks that are an opportunity to get your content out there attracting links. The most popular social network sites for this include Twitter, Facebook, and Google+.

As an example, consider a local landscaping company. Some ideas for viral content might include an article like "Top 10 Most Amazing Yards" and "What a Billionaire's Yard Looks Like," or a

simple video like "5 Tips for a No Hassle Yard" and "How to Get the Greenest Grass on your Block."

By implementing a comprehensive link building strategy, using methods to both find and attract links, you can significantly improve your rankings.

AUTHORITY

For those just getting started in SEO, the term "authority" can be a bit confusing and intangible. Domain authority is a good indicator of how well a website will perform in search engine rankings and is based on factors relating to the website as a whole. Authority isn't easily measured like the number or quality of links or content. When authority is determined, several factors are considered, including the age of the website, the frequency and publishing date of the content, the authority and freshness of external links and social factors.

Gaining Maturity

Authority comes with age. The longer a domain has been registered, the more it is seen as authoritative by search engines. The first year or so a domain is active is often called the "sandbox" year, because websites won't start ranking for stronger keywords until the site has been online for more than a year.

When a domain is registered or renewed, we suggest registering the domain for several years (at least 5). This shows you are serious about your online business. Search engines appear to consider registration length when determining authority.

When preparing a new product, resource, tool, or campaign, consider launching it within your existing website instead of creating a completely new and separate website. A new domain has zero authority, so a new page within an established site with even a base level of domain authority may quickly begin to rank well from the start, whereas ranking well with a new domain is very difficult.

Fresh Content

We discussed content in detail Section 3, but it is important to mention fresh content as it relates to authority. A website can be stale or fresh depending on how it is used by a company. A stale website, with little to no new pages and updates, will be seen as less authoritative over time as compared to a website with consistently fresh content. A fresh content site is one with new content on a more frequent basis (even once a week or once a month).

Authoritative and Fresh Links

One way to fast-track the rise of authority is to gain the respect of the search engines through receiving links from other more authoritative sites. Authority can be shared from a more authoritative site to a less authoritative site. If established authority sites start linking to your new site, you will quickly be seen as more authoritative for that topic. Experts who link to you are helping to establish you as an expert. These links should be sustained over time from websites with increasing content and value.

Section 4 provides several ideas for obtaining links, but here are a few tips for obtaining more authoritative links. Having well-researched and well-written articles about your website topic can help you gain links from news organizations. Press releases can also be an opportunity to obtain links if the press release obtains links from authoritative entities. A new business may wish to contact local .gov websites and the Chamber of Commerce to obtain links. This can be done by offering to speak to a gathering sponsored by that group, and sharing your industry knowledge. Links from .gov and local organizations can help considerably with site authority.

Whichever strategy you decide on for obtaining links, always include an effort to obtain links from high-quality sites, as quality over quantity is very important in gaining authority. One inbound link from a quality site is much better than multiple links from low quality sites, and links from some low quality sites may even hurt your authority.

Social Factors

Today businesses are finding social networking websites helpful in developing authority. Regular information posted to these social sites like Twitter and Facebook can generate authoritative links as content is shared. The more a "tweet" from your Twitter account is shared by others on Twitter, or by your friends on Facebook, the more authority you can gain from the search engines as they see your followers consider you an expert.

Videos, images, and infographics are ways to generate more social networking with your brand or product. Creating these types of media makes it easy for users to share them with others, making it possible for one image or video to be shared across networks of people quickly. Social networking sites such as Pinterest.com are making sharing of these types of media fun and simple, all the while generating more traffic and authority for site owners. Videos posted to Youtube.com also have the benefit of showing up quite regularly, and often more quickly, in search engines.

SECTION 6 - REPORTS

REPORTS

Keywords, links, and content are the foundation of good SEO, but to assist in obtaining a clear understanding of the current state of your site, you should utilize a series of reports.

A Check-Up report provides site data concerning the use of chosen keywords. A Ranking report displays where URLs rank for keywords and lists competitors. A Head to Head report compares the aspects of SEO between two competing sites for a specific keyword phrase. Each of these reports can be used to develop more effective SEO strategies.

SEOGears offers a free SEO Check-Up report right from the home page. This report provides a snapshot of the SEO strengths and weaknesses of a site based on specific keywords. For the purpose of this section and for running a sample report, we will use the search term "send big files" and BigSenders.com as our sample website.

Check-Up Report

We start by running a free SEOGears Check-Up report. To access the report, just click on "Free SEO Report" in the top menu on the homepage; enter in a URL, Main Keyword, Competitors' URL; enter in some contact information in order to receive the report; and click the "Get My Free Report" button. It will take a few minutes for the report to arrive.

In the first section of the Check-Up report, points are awarded based on certain SEO aspects related to keywords.

Details of Your SEO Score for BigSenders.com

Keyword Rankings: 7/25 pts

✓ Site is indexed in Google (5 pts)

✓ Rank in top 50 for "send big files" (2 pts)

✗ Rank in top 20 for "send big files" (3 pts)

✗ Rank in top 10 for "send big files" (5 pts)

✗ Rank in top 5 for "send big files" (10 pts)

Keyword: send big files

| Website	Ranking
BigSenders.com	31
https://www.yousendit.com/	3
www.yousendit.com/solutions/send-large-files	17

BigSenders.com is indexed in Google and ranks in the top 50 for the keyword term "send big files"; however, BigSenders.com

does not rank in the top 20, 10, or 5, which hurts the score for a total of 7 out of a possible 25 points. Translation: BigSenders.com needs to spend more time working to improve their site to convince the search engines they should rank higher for the term "send big files."

Section two of the report focuses on links.

Links: 1/25 pts

- ✓ Site has 15 or more links (1 pts)
- ✗ Site has 50 or more links (3 pts)
- ✗ Site has 100 or more links (5 pts)
- ✗ Site has 250 or more links (7 pts)
- ✗ More links than competitors (9 pts)
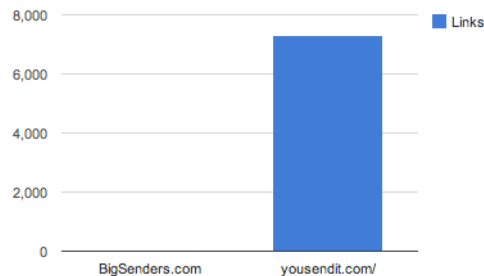
BigSenders.com has under 49 links, which compared to the competitor is relatively few. Notice this report awards the most points for having more links than the competitor site. Consistently referring to competitor site data and adjusting SEO practices to catch-up with, keep pace with, or out-perform this competitor ensures productive SEO work. In this section BigSenders.com misses out on the bulk of the points because the number of their links is very low for this keyword.

The content portion of the report provides some good internal site data by looking at ContentRank (a proprietary ranking developed by SEOGears) and checking certain aspects of the page, namely the occurrence and placement of the keyword as well as the keyword density.

The report indicates BigSenders.com has used the keyword in the title tag and in the body of text, but not in the H1 tag, and has met the optimal keyword density. The ContentRank shows

Content: 15/25 pts

- ✗ ContentRank 15+ (5 pts)
- ✓ Keyword in Title Tag (5 pts)
- ✗ Keyword in H1 Tag (5 pts)
- ✓ Keyword in body (5 pts)
- ✓ Keyword Density 1–3% (5 pts)
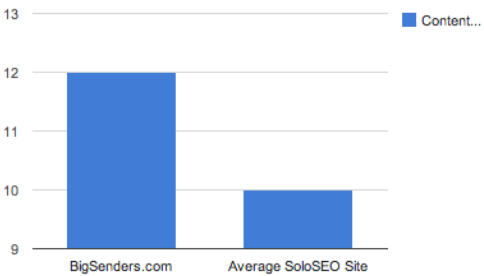
the deficiencies of the keyword optimization by its low rank.

So in the content section BigSenders does okay, scoring 15/25 points. It is an easy fix to get the keyword into an H1 tag, and with a few more tweaks to its content, BigSenders.com will be able to improve the ContentRank fairly quickly. So overall content is moving in the right direction.

Lastly we get to the authority portion of the report. Authority is earned over time as a domain name gets older and is considered more reputable.

So if we have launched a new site in a competitive industry, then we would expect our authority score to be low to start and then grow over time with good SEO practices. Authority increases through adding unique, expert content about your business and industry consistently to the site. Finally, links from highly ranked sites, using relevant keywords as anchor text, contributes significantly to the authority ranking.

Authority: 15/25 pts

✓ Domain Authority > 20 (15 pts)

✗ mozRank is 1+ (10 pts)
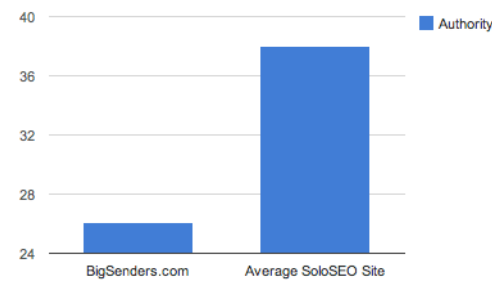
Bigsenders.com is doing a decent job on authority, despite being a fairly new site. This is because the site had been set up correctly (as indicated in the content section), and many aspects of SEO are already in place. The search engines know exactly what BigSenders.com is about, and they can feel confident in returning BigSenders.com as a result for the keyword phrase of "send big files," but only on the 3rd page.

The general recommendations from this Check-Up report would be:

1. Focus on updating or creating more content around this keyword phrase.

2. Obtain or attract more quality links.

3. Fix the H1 tag.

4. Keep active to improve the authority ranking.

If these items are addressed, BigSenders.com will see improvements in their overall rankings over time.

Ranking Report

The top section of the SEOGears Ranking report includes a graph displaying the Google ranking over time for the targeted keyword phrase. The lower section displays the rankings, your listing on the SERP, as well as your competitors' listings and their position for the same targeted keyword.

In the Rankings report BigSenders.com ranks 29th, or on the third page of the search engine results, which will get very little traffic. Anything after the first page of the SERPs is virtually invisible to anyone using "send big files" in their search query, as only 1 of 10 visitors goes past the first page. BigSenders.com needs to do more SEO to move up the rankings for this important keyword. As the work is being done, they should refer back to this report periodically to track their progress over time.

To ensure the SEO work is most effective, they should also carefully analyze the SEO strategies of some of the competitors ranked higher on this Ranking report.

As an example, we will analyze the competitor site in the #1 position, namely, TransferBigFiles.com. To do this we will run a SEOGears Head to Head Report to get a better understanding of how TransferBigFiles.com is achieving their #1 ranking for the "send big files" keyword phrase.

Head to Head Report

In a Head to Head report you can obtain data on how you are performing against your competitors for a specific keyword. This report compares head to head between your site and a competitor, examining several different factors including Links, mozRank (link strength, developed by SEOmoz.org), ContentRank (developed by SEOGears), Keyword Density, and Domain Authority. You can then use this data to develop your SEO strategy and close any gaps in these scores. The Head to Head SEO Report is available within SEOGears along with other powerful SEO tools and reports.

Head to Head SEO Report for bigsenders.com

	YOU bigsenders.com	COMPETITOR transferbigfiles.com	
Keyword Ranking	29 3rd Page	1 1st Page	Keyword: **send big files**

You are missing 99% of potential traffic by not being on the 1st or 2nd page!

Since you aren't on the first page for **send big files** you are missing tons of potential traffic! Want to do something about it? We provide DIY SEO Tools as well as Managed SEO options to get you on your way to maximizing visitors! See buttons below to get started!

	YOU	COMPETITOR	
Links	15	5064	Did you know links are the #1 factor used by search engines to determine your ranking? Get links, get traffic! **Managed SEO Plans start at $125/month** Learn more »
mozRank	0.20	4.90	MozRank is a measurement of link popularity that includes factors beyond just numbers of links. The higher the MozRank, the higher the quality of your links.
ContentRank	12	0	Content is the #2 factor used by search engines to determine your ranking! Optimize your content, rank better! **Get DIY SEO Tools just $14.95/month** Learn more »
Keyword Density	1%	0%	Tell search engines your content is about your keyword by using your keyword in your content! Keep keyword density at 2–5% for optimum effect. **Get 3 Pages Optimized Unique Content: $99/month** Learn more »
Domain Authority	26.06	66.33	The authority of your domain is an important key to better search rankings! Improve your domain authority with stronger links, optimized content, and other social and brand SEO strategies. Our Managed SEO plans can help you improve your domain authority! **Managed SEO Plans start at $125/month** Learn more »

The report clearly indicates how the competitor has achieved their #1 ranking. At the very top of the report we see a significant discrepancy in the number of links between the two sites. The competitor has 5,064 links, while BigSenders.com only has 15.

Any SEO strategy being considered by BigSenders.com should include a focus on obtaining more links to gain ground and reduce this disparity.

The mozRank indicates TransferBigFiles.com not only has more links, but the strength or quality of their links is over 4 points higher than that of BigSenders.com. So as the link strategy for BigSenders.com is put in place, they should make sure they are pursuing quality links from quality sites and pages.

BigSenders.com does a much better job on the content side. Search engines have indexed the site content, the tags and titles are in good order, and the keyword density of the content is in the 1-3% threshold.

In Domain Authority the competitor once again comes out ahead. Domain Authority takes into consideration many aspects of SEO, then provides an overall score. In this case, due to the strength and number of their links, the competitor has overcome the advantage by BigSenders.com in content and achieved a higher score in Domain Authority and obviously a much higher ranking in the SERP.

Based on this report, BigSenders.com should spend most of their SEO efforts in building and attracting quality links. This can be done by adding attractive content, and by analyzing the in-coming links to their competitors and going after the strongest ones. By implementing this SEO strategy, BigSenders.com can be confident they will rise in the rankings for the keyword "send big files."

The competitive analysis made possible by the Head to Head report provides site owners a clear long-term SEO strategy for targeted keywords. As a SEOGears client, you can run numerous reports to view the differences between your site and a site in any position on the SERPs. You can then determine how much work is required to make it onto the first page for your important keywords. Getting on the first page of the SERPs is very important as 99% of searchers never make it to where BigSenders.com currently resides, on the 3rd page.

If you want to be successful in the rankings, you need to start adjusting your site to rank higher than those sites above you for your important keywords. The Head to Head SEO Report provides data on exactly how a site owner would need to improve their site and pages to make a move upward in the rankings.

BONUS SECTION

We wanted to provide a few extra sections to address some of the most frequently asked questions we have received over the years dealing in do-it-yourself SEO. Here are the top three questions:

1. How do I recover from a bad SEO company, which used black-hat SEO techniques on my site?

2. What is PPC?

3. How can I use PPC to increase traffic?

How to Recover from Bad SEO

The quest for good search rankings can sometimes steer good websites down the wrong path. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of inconsistency in the SEO industry over the last decade. While there are many excellent SEO professionals out there, there are also plenty who are either incompetent, willfully unscrupulous, or dumb enough to believe that the worn-out, black-hat tactics of the past are still helpful to rankings today. If a website falls victim to bad SEO, it can damage search rankings or could possibly get a site banned from SERPs completely. Luckily, it is possible to recover from bad SEO if the problems can be identified and then rectified.

Damaging SEO, sometimes referred to as "black-hat" SEO, can come in numerous forms and is often difficult for site owners to detect. Initially, the bad SEO techniques may seem effective, by temporarily improving search rankings. However, eventually the search engines will discover the cause of the artificially quick and high rankings and will change the ranking of the site with a penalty. The site will remain penalized indefinitely if nothing is done to correct the problem.

Unfortunately, the search engines won't tell you what was detected as being wrong or incorrect on your site. Often your only indication of a penalty is a drastic drop in search rankings. If this occurs you should quickly comb through the site yourself, or with the help of a reputable SEO expert, to discover the nature of the infraction. Look for common black-hat SEO methods like cloaking, hidden text, duplicate content, keyword stuffing, doorway pages, redirect pages, and linking to bad neighbors, unrelated sites, or banned sites.

Once you locate the bad SEO practices, you must remove or fix them. Unfortunately, this can take several months to achieve. Removing bad links, for example, can be easier said than done. Ultimately, you may have to cut the offensive pages out of your site completely or redirect the site to a new domain to completely rid yourself of bad SEO practices. Once you have successfully addressed the site problems, you should see an improvement in the rankings over time. If that doesn't happen, you may need to appeal directly to the search engines and request reconsideration.

What is PPC?

PPC, or Pay-Per-Click, is an Internet advertisement opportunity used to drive traffic to a website. PPC has proven to be an effective search engine marketing tool with many savvy site owners and SEO professionals. PPC ads can deliver immediate traffic, but for a price. It's important to understand how PPC works and how to use it to ensure you get the most for your money.

The mechanism behind Pay-Per-Click marketing is simple. Search engines, like Google, Bing, and Yahoo, auction off ad space on their SERPs. These ads are usually found at the top and/or the side of the SERPs and are not mingled with the organic search results.

In the graphic above, we see the Google search results for "send big files." The PPC ads are located in the top yellow box, and in the side bar area to the right. These companies-- ShareFile.com, YouSendIt.com, and DropBox.com (top); and Box.com, Huddle.com, LiveDrive.com, SyncPlicity.com, Exavault.com, and Mail.com (right side)--have all set up a PPC

campaign with Google Adwords and set a bid amount to pay when someone clicks on one of these links. The first organic or free result on this page is from TransferBigFiles.com, which is located below the yellow box of PPC ads in the white, main body portion of the results page.

For example, let's say ShareFile.com, as an advertiser, has bid $.10 per click for this ad. If 100 people click on the PPC ad, ShareFile.com will pay Google $10.00 for these clicks, whether or not these site visitors end up buying ShareFile services.

PPC is an attractive marketing tool because it generates almost immediate results. It can also be very expensive and not very cost-effective if you do not know what you are doing. A PPC ad may bring a lot of traffic, but that traffic may not be converted

into profits. In order to make the most of PPC marketing, advertisers need to take a targeted approach and monitor results carefully. One of the best features of PPC campaigns is that they are very flexible. Advertisers can adjust or eliminate their PPC ads quickly if the ads are not producing the desired return on investment.

PPC is a great way for sites to gain instant traffic to their sites by becoming immediately visible for certain keywords. If a site owner has a new product or service, PPC can get the word out quickly and deliver visitors to a new site, but PPC should never replace good SEO. SEO efforts are long-lasting, while PPC lasts only as long as a campaign is actively running.

Also keep in mind that 80% of searchers still prefer to click on organic results (the ones in the white, main body in the graphic), rather than on PPC ads, so solid SEO practices will prove very beneficial in the long-term once pages are indexed and begin to rank higher on the SERPs.

Using PPC to Increase Traffic & Revenue

PPC advertising is a very popular tool to many, but is not always used as effectively or efficiently as it could be. Advertisers often end up paying a substantial amount for targeted keywords, but later discover that they are not seeing a commensurate uptick in visitors or sales. Here are the keys to using PPC to increase not only your traffic, but also your conversions:

- Choose keywords carefully. The most common and simple keywords (short-tail) will cost more and lead to fewer conversions. Instead you should target keywords that are more spe-

cific and descriptive (long-tail) on what you have to offer. Niche or long-tail keywords and phrases are less expensive and more likely to lead to conversions, because searchers will find what they are looking for and are prepared to buy. Searchers have evolved over the years. Most now understand that the more descriptive they are in their keyword searches, the more quickly they will find the goods or service they really need.

- Write a good ad. Don't underestimate the necessity of a well-written ad. Just because an ad is on the top of the list doesn't mean searchers will click on it. You need to make sure your ad copy is targeted to your user and promotes your product or service accurately. Attempting to trick a client into a click doesn't make for an easy conversion, and still costs money to get them there. You want to let your potential customers know you have what they are looking for, but in a unique and catchy manner.

- Don't just track traffic; track conversions. Conversions are what a site is trying to achieve, actual revenue, or a specific result. It could be the sale of a product or service, collection of user information, downloading of a file, or any other quantifiable action. A decent, borderline good PPC listing will generate increased traffic to your site, but if the additional traffic does not translate into conversions, then the ad needs to be re-written or your ad money is essentially wasted. Keep track of how many clicks turn into "customers" to truly measure the return on investment.

- Monitor PPC spending versus benefits. It pays to crunch the numbers to see if the amount going out exceeds the benefits gained. If a PPC campaign is costing more than you are mak-

ing in increased profits, or not providing the increased expo-
sure desired, the campaign needs to be quickly adjusted or
ended. You may have chosen keywords that cost too much
per click or are not targeting the right audience for your prod-
uct or service. If quick action doesn't improve the situation,
you should cancel the PPC ad campaign and go back to the
drawing board. There is no point in spending money unneces-
sarily if the benefit doesn't warrant the expenditure.

• Set it, but don't forget it. Even the best PPC campaigns will
need to be adjusted to remain effective. PPC advertising is a
fluid advertising medium, and changes can happen quickly.
You may find a wonderful combination of keywords and ad
copy and see many conversions from your brilliance from time
to time, but competing advertisers will quickly realize the situa-
tion and may very well outbid you for an essential keyword. Or
they may decide to drop out of the campaign all together,
which allows you the opportunity to lower your bid, while main-
taining your PPC position. Search habits and patterns of
searchers can also shift, affecting the value of certain key-
words. PPC campaigns can't run on autopilot for long and
stay efficient, so you must remain active in managing your
PPC efforts.

CONCLUSION

As long as the public continues to use search engines to find the products and services they require, site owners will need to put forth effort to position their sites to be found.

SEO is simply the process of transforming a site into one which is easily indexed, categorized, and eventually trusted by the search engines, and thereby more advantageously positioned in the search results pages.

While this e-book was never intended to be a detailed and comprehensive review of SEO, we believe it provides site owners enough SEO knowledge and basic introduction to the most pertinent SEO concepts and most effective SEO reports, making the optimization of a site for search engines very possible for most anyone.

We wish you the very best in your SEO efforts. We will continue to create and improve the latest in do-it-yourself SEO tools within the SEOGears system. We hope our SEO tools, coupled with your work and knowledge, will bring you much success in increased rankings, more visitors, and ultimately more conversions.

.Edu

.Edu is the string awarded to learning institutions, and is considered highly trustworthy by the search engines as .Edu domains are not available to the general public. .Edu awards are determined by EDUCAUSE and under the authority of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Because institutions receiving .Edu domains have been carefully vetted by EDUCAUSE, search engines give more authority to links from these sites.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

.Gov

A domain string restricted for use by U.S. government entities and not available to the general public. .Gov awards are overseen by the General Services Administration (GSA), a famously wasteful independent U.S. agency. Search engines give more authority to links from these sites.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Above the Fold

In the digital world of email and websites, it is the area viewable on the screen when the email or page initially loads, without scrolling, based on an average or standard screen size and resolution.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Anchor Text

The visible and clickable text of a link from one URL to another. Search engines consider the anchor text in determining keyword relevance and ranking.

Related Glossary Terms

Links

Index   Find Term

Chapter 1 - Links

Article Databases

Online stores selling content on various topics. The available content is typically sold and resold again and again. Search engines punish sites which use duplicated content. For this reason, you should never use content purchased from article databases, or copied and pasted from other sites.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Backlinks

A link from one website to another, including internal links on the same website. Search engines use external backlinks as a significant factor in determining keyword rankings based on the authority and strength of the linking website.

Related Glossary Terms

Links

Index   Find Term

Below the Fold

Just the opposite of Above the Fold. The area of a webpage that can only be viewed by scrolling downward.

Related Glossary Terms

Above the Fold

Index   Find Term

Chapter 1 - Content

Bing

A search engine owned by Microsoft and previously known as Live or MSN Search. In 2009 Yahoo announced it would start being powered by Bing's search and indexing technology.

Related Glossary Terms

Yahoo

Index   Find Term

Black-Hat

SEO techniques which are outside acceptable SEO guidelines, and used in order to fool search engines into sending more traffic than the site deserves/earns. Black-hat strategies may work temporarily, but typically end up hurting a website's ranking eventually.

Related Glossary Terms

White-Hat

Index   Find Term

Body

The main area of text on a webpage, excluding the header, menu, and footer.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Cloaking

The practice of displaying different types of content on the same webpage, first, to inform site visitors, and second, to communicate to search engines. Cloaking isn't always considered black-hat SEO, as it can be used in areas such as localization SEO to show geographically-based results. However, if the intent is to fool the search engines, cloaking is considered black-hat, and may be grounds for being banned by a search engine.

Related Glossary Terms

Black-Hat

Index   Find Term

Content

Any text, image, video, audio, slide show, file download, design, or other media included on a site which communicates to the visitor the purpose or theme of the site. Content is used by search engines to help determine keyword relevance.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Discussions

Also known as discussion boards and similar to forums. A site where users discuss and comment on topics or questions, usually centered on a niche or community.

Related Glossary Terms

Forums

Index　　Find Term

Domain Age

Refers to how long a domain name has been registered and owned, and how long the website has been active and running. The older the domain age, the more trusted it can appear to search engines.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Doorway Pages

A black-hat SEO trick where pages are created to target high traffic search queries, then those searchers are pushed to other pages with advertisements.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Forums

Similar to discussion boards, where individuals discuss their opinions on topics either created by the users or offered by site administrators. Users are allowed to review the posts left by others and then make general to specific comments.

Related Glossary Terms

Discussions

Index   Find Term

Freemium

The combination of Free and Premium, and used to describe a business marketing technique where a free version of a product is given away, in hopes free users will eventually agree or desire to pay a premium for increased functionality.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Google

The largest search engine, known for creating an algorithm to deliver more relative webpages to a search query.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Header Tags

In HTML, header tags are used to show emphasis and are often used for titles and sub-titles within the body of a page. H1-H6 tags can be used with the H1 tag being the most important. H1 tags should only be used once per page. In HMTL the H1 tag is represented as: <h1>SEO basics</h1>.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Infographic

See Infographics.

Related Glossary Terms

Infographics

Index   Find Term

Infographics

Short for Information Graphics. A graphical model to more simply convey a complex concept, data set, or survey. In SEO, infographics are a great way to attract links.

Related Glossary Terms

Link Bait

Index   Find Term

Internal Link Structure

Internal links are hyperlinks from one webpage to another within a single website. There are several approaches to an optimized internal link structure that often involve grouping parts of a website and using links within those groups.

Related Glossary Terms

Links

Index   Find Term

Keyword List

A list of keywords created as an early step in performing SEO. This is a list of words potential searchers will use to find a relevant site, and the list of words which will be the focus of SEO efforts in content and links.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Keyword Phrases

A group of words used to query search engines. In SEO the term "keyword" includes not only single words but also key phrases when multiple words are used in a search query.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Keyword Stuffing

The outdated practice of including a targeted keyword in the body of a page far more frequently than it would be used in natural prose. In the early days of search engines, keyword stuffing was enough to boost a website's search engine rankings.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Keyword Tools

Tools for helping discover or create keywords for a keyword list. An example of a keyword tool is to take basic keywords and add informational words to help create longer tail keyword phrases. Instead of the keyword "plumber," a keyword tool might also suggest "expert plumber in Sacramento, CA."

Related Glossary Terms

Keyword List

Index   Find Term

Chapter 1 - Keywords

Keywords

A word or group of words used to query search engines. Used as the basis for optimizing content and obtaining links in SEO.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Link Bait

The use of content, contests, social media, infographics, and other media used to attract other site owners to link to a particular site.

Related Glossary Terms

Content, Infographics

Link Building

A process of obtaining links from other websites through various methods. High quality links are used by the search engines to gauge a site's authority.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Chapter 1 - Links

Links

A link from one website to another. Links may be from external websites (external links) or from within the same website (internal links). Search engines use external links as a significant factor in determining keyword rankings based on the authority and strength of links to any one website.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Long-tail Keywords

Keyword phrases of four words or more are considered long-tail. Long-tail keyword queries in search engines allow for more specific search results and increased opportunities for optimizing for less competitive keywords.

Related Glossary Terms

Short-tail Keywords

Index   Find Term

Menu

A site organizational tool allowing for quick navigation to main sections of a site from page to page. Usually placed in a prominent, consistent, and visible location.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index Find Term

Meta Tags

The page title, the meta description, and the meta keywords are often bunched into one group called Meta Tags. The meta keywords tag is no longer deemed useful by search engines.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Optimized Content

A coordinated content strategy in which the site owner develops well-written, unique content. Optimized content typically involves keyword use, keyword placement in HTML tags, and internal link structure.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Pay-Per-Click

A program offered by search engines to allow site owners to purchase their way onto Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs). These text ads are located at the top and side of the SERPs to set them apart from the organic search results. Advertisers are typically charged on a per-click basis.

Related Glossary Terms

PPC

Index   Find Term

PPC

See Pay-Per-Click.

Related Glossary Terms

Pay-Per-Click

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Chapter 1 - Keywords

Redirect Pages

Pages used to let search engines and searchers know a page has moved. A 301 redirect is used for permanent page moves and a 302 redirect is for temporary page moves.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index [Find Term]

Chapter 1 - Bonus Section

Relevance of Site

A search engine's perception of a website's relevance related to a certain keyword. The relevance is obtained by both content and external links.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Chapter 1 - Links

Scraping

Copying or stealing another's site content.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Chapter 1 - Content

Search Engine Optimization

Otherwise known as SEO. The process of transforming a site to a state where a search engine not only knows the site topic, but eventually trusts the site owners and knows the content, services, and products are desirable to searchers using certain keywords.

Related Glossary Terms

SEO

Index   Find Term

SEO

The abbreviation of Search Engine Optimization.

Related Glossary Terms

Search Engine Optimization

Index   Find Term

SERP

The abbreviation of Search Engine Results Page. Provides a list of websites for a particular keyword search.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index   Find Term

Short-tail Keywords

A keyword or keyword phrase of typically three words or less.

Related Glossary Terms

Long-tail Keywords

Index   Find Term

Sitemap

A page created and submitted to search engines to provide the URLs of a website. A new XML standard is now universally accepted. Submitting a site map to a search engine may increase indexing speed.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index　　Find Term

Chapter 1 - Content

Theming

A site organizational strategy, separating a site into categories or themes via a prominent menu.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Title Tag

HTML tag indicating the title of a web page. Considered by many in SEO to be one of the most important content-based ranking factors. Each title tag should be unique, descriptive, and less than 70 characters. The title tag is also used by search engines as the predominant text describing a page in search results.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Chapter 1 - Content

Traffic

Visitors to a site.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

Index　　　Find Term

URL

Abbreviation for Uniform Resource Locator, essentially the unique address for each webpage.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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Chapter 1 - Content

White-Hat

The opposite of black-hat. Good SEO practices, which are acceptable to the search engines and promote natural, organic ranking results over time. White-hat SEO usually takes more time and effort, but has a long-lasting impact and long-term positive outcome.

Related Glossary Terms

Black-Hat

Index   Find Term

Yahoo

Was considered the main search engine rival to Google for many years. Now Yahoo's searches are powered by Microsoft's Bing.

Related Glossary Terms

Drag related terms here

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