

Compliments of  
**Gannett**



# SEO

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION  
**FOR SMALL BUSINESS**

## SEO:

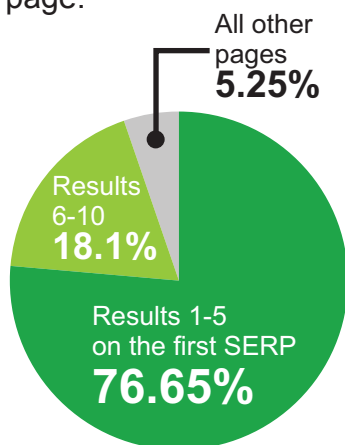
Search Engine Optimization: a way to improve the traffic to a web site from search engines through a high-ranking "organic" or unpaid search results. SEO examines how search engines collect data and the keywords people use in searches to modify content and code within the site.

## SERP:

Search Engine Results Page; a list of web pages generated in response to a search. Results obtained through content appear on the left, while ads using the searched terms appear on the right.

## YOU NEED TO BE ON THE FIRST PAGE!

According to 2010 data from Chitka Research, 34.35% of all clicks went to the website the search engine ranked first. But it's also crucial to land on the first page.



## What is SEO?

**SEO** is way to get your business heard.

As you look for opportunities to get customers into your store or office, you'll need roads to drive traffic to your web site, too. Half of all internet users use search engine daily to the tune of 15.5 billion searches per month. That's great news- they're looking for you! But you need a tool like Search Engine Optimization, or **SEO** to get users' attention.

**SEO** projects make a series of changes to gain a higher "organic rank" on a search engine results page (**SERP**.)

The **SEO** method examines the formulas search engines use to rank results by trustworthiness and relevance and then modifies web site content and HTML code to move your site directly in front of potential customers. **SEO** provides the highest long-term return on investment of all online marketing methods. Unlike paid advertising on the web, the effects of a good campaign will grow with time as your business expands.

**Small businesses need high ranks in search engines to reach customers.**

- In a Webvisible & Nielson 2007 report, **74% of those surveyed used search engines to find local business information** and 80% reported researching a product or service online, then making that purchase offline from a local business.
- In a Yahoo! Study, consumers spent **\$16 in stores to every \$1 online** when they used searches to research a purchase.

## SEO:

Search Engine Optimization

## KEYWORDS:

Words or phrases potential customers type into search engines that describe your business.

## WHERE TO USE YOUR KEYWORDS

- **Once** in the HTML title tag, headline and subhead (H1 and H2 tags.) Create unique title tags for each page.
- At least **three times** in the body copy on the page, and at least once in bold.
- At least **once** in the alt attribute of an image on the page. Crawlers can't see pictures, but they can read the alt attributes.
- **Once** in the URL (for example, [www.smithandjones.com/estatelaw/](http://www.smithandjones.com/estatelaw/) instead of [www.smithandjones.com/home.html](http://www.smithandjones.com/home.html).) Put a description in your URL of your site's content, not a series of punctuation and numbers. Creating readable URLs will make it easier for crawlers to report on content and help readers link to your site.
- **Once** in the meta description tag. Search engines sometimes use your meta description tags to summarize your site on the results page. Write your meta description to describe your business within 156 characters to target your specific client.

# How Does SEO affect search engine rankings?

To establish rankings, search engines send crawlers to travel the roads of the web.

The crawlers collect, prioritize and report data from web sites back to the search engine to determine results page rank.

The engines then use a formula to determine how sites land on results pages to give the best possible search experience. For example, Google wants to present the most accurate and relevant results to keep users revisiting their site. The more credible and trustworthy the results, the more users will return to Google for their next search.



**SEO** provides signs to point web crawlers to specific messages in a web site.

The two ways SEO does this is through on-page and off-page direction. On-page direction begins with **keywords** that attract your best possible customer. The heart of your business is the niche only you can fill. That specific product, quality, standard, price point or location gives you a competitive edge- use it to develop your keywords. Your target customer

will search for what makes your business special, and your keyword needs to appear in several areas to be noticed by search engine crawlers.

More advanced on-site optimization techniques involve creating an XML sitemap, a robots.txt file and redirects. GannettLocal's expertise and experience with these methods will help you achieve higher organic results.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can put your posts on the map with unique immediacy. Create a Twitter and Facebook page to gain exposure and new readers. As you point your followers to new site content or blog posts, they will repeat links to your cool or interesting content. The chain of re-linking or re-tweeting will get passed down from users to their friends, friends of friends, etc.



## WEB DIRECTORIES

Build links through web directory submissions. Web directories categorize sites by subject or purpose and provide links back to the site. Some directories are free, like DMOZ.org, while Yahoo! directory charges a yearly fee. The best web directories are human-edited for accurate content and older directories carry more weight with search engines for trustworthiness.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Our SEO specialists know the best web directories for your business. Contact us today to get listed in the best place for search engine ranking.

## What is Off-Page Direction?

Self-promotion will only get you so far with search engines.

They will look to other sites for validation of your credibility. To accomplish this, off-page direction incorporates link building, blogging, social media and relevant directory submissions.

Create a site rich in unique and informative content to build links.

How does your business serve your community offline? Communicate this on your site (hint: use keywords!) and create an essential resource for potential customers. Compelling content like a home remodeling project how-to series will gain links from other web sites. The more credible the web site where your link appears, the more influence it will have in your ranking.



**GannettLocal can do the heavy lifting of link building for you! Contact a Navigator today at 602-444-1700)**

Update site content regularly with blogs.

Blogs are a great way to educate customers on new products, promotions and changes within your business. They're also a chance to take readers behind the scenes. Fun, informative and interesting content creates links, as other blogs collect sources to keep their page updated throughout the day. Add buttons that encourage readers to share your blog posts to sites like Digg or Reddit to gain buzz and links. Consider writing a guest post on a related blog for a guaranteed link in your bio.





### SEO:

Search Engine Optimization

### CACHED:

A snapshot of a web site page taken by the web crawlers. They are used as a backup if a site is unavailable.

### KEYWORDS:

Words or phrases potential customers type into search engines that describe your business.

### PPC:

Pay-Per-Click;  
An advertising method where businesses pay a provider a fee when their ad is clicked as it appears on a search engine page.

### SEO ROADMAP:

A plan that schedules tasks to implement each month during the beginning phase of SEO. An average length of time for an SEO roadmap is 6 months.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can help crawlers collect your web site's data by posting video and audio transcripts, alt attributes for photos and text repetition of flash content.

## Where Do I Start?

The winding journey of **SEO** includes four actions: Analyze, research, prioritize and implement.

- **Analyze your site:** Look at how you're presenting information. If it's mainly through Flash animations, photographs, video and Javascript, the crawlers lack text to collect and store. Search for your page in Google and click on the **cached** version of your site. The highlighted parts give you clues on **keyword** frequency. Seo-browser.com performs a similar function as it pulls the images and colors off your page and gets down to the basic content the crawlers see.
- **Research your keywords:** Talk to your regulars and employees to come up with a list of **keyword** candidates. Use tools like the Google AdWords Keyword Tool to see how frequently users search for your keywords. If you have a **PPC** advertising campaign, test different keywords and populate your web site text with the most effective phrases.
- **Prioritize tasks by creating an SEO roadmap:** **SEO** is like any task in your business, steps need to be organized. Break the actions down by on-page and off-page tasks and assign deadlines for each to help you stay on track.
- **Execute the tasks on your SEO roadmap:** These will involve changing your tags, inserting keywords, creating compelling blog posts and gaining links. It will take time - adjust your deadlines if something is taking longer than expected.

**SERP:**

Search Engine Results Page.

**PPC:**

Pay Per Click.

**SEO:**

Search Engine Optimization.

**KEYWORDS:**

Words or phrases potential customers type into search engines that describe your business.

**CONVERSION RATE:**

The frequency that a customer completes an action on your landing page such as a purchase or form completion.

**LANDING PAGES:**

The web page where customers will 'land' when they click on a PPC ad.

Want to get started on a PPC campaign?  
Call our navigators at (602) 444-1700

## Do I need PPC too?

Organic search results lead to 70-80% of clicks on a **SERP** and 20-30% of clicks result from sponsored ads.

These ads come from **PPC** campaigns which center around paid search results while **SEO** projects focus on organic, or unpaid, search results. Both types of marketing share the element of **keywords** to get traffic to your site. The benefits of **PPC** keywords are near-instant results. Use these results to place the most effective words and phrases in the broader, more complex process of **SEO**.

The winning combination of **PPC** and **SEO** will lead to a healthy, growing business.

- Keywords used in a **PPC** strategy give you data on which words and phrases convert searches to customers and which merely bring page views. While some keywords may prompt curiosity to a page, others yield actual results. Keywords with a higher **conversion rate** will be more valuable for your **SEO** plan.
- **PPC** ads allow you to test **landing pages** for conversion effectiveness. Test different **landing pages** to determine the most effective page to sell your product or service. These well-tested pages will enhance your site once it is highly-ranked organically.

- Once your **SEO** data reveals your page is moving up the search ranks, don't cancel your **PPC** campaign. **PPC** is a great way to promote a new product or special event and find more **keywords** for future optimization efforts.



### SEO ROADMAP:

A plan that schedules tasks to implement each month during the beginning phase of SEO.

### ON-PAGE DIRECTION:

Components of an SEO plan performed within a web site's HTML tags, structure and keywords placed within body text.

### XML SITEMAP:

The pages of a web site broken into list form to be used by crawlers and users. The XML code language is the standard for web crawlers.

### ROBOTS.TXT FILE:

Also known as the Robot Exclusion Standard or Robots Exclusion Protocol: a file to prevent crawlers from collecting data from a part of a web site. It can be used to keep the parts of a site irrelevant to search rankings private from the crawlers.

### OFF-PAGE DIRECTION:

Components of an SEO plan that focus on getting links from credible, well-established sites to gain credibility in search engine rankings through fresh and compelling content.

### KEYWORDS:

Words or phrases potential customers type into search engines that describe your business.

### PPC:

Pay Per Click.

## When Will I See Results?

Results can't be measured without the work that goes into implementation.

Based on a six-month **SEO roadmap**, the first two months will center around **on-page direction** like HTML tags and creating a **XML sitemap** and **robots.txt file**. The last four months focus on **off-page direction** and gaining trusted links to site content.

**GannettLocal will distribute your content to get trusted links. Contact a navigator at (602) 444-1700.)**

The time it takes to reach your target of high search results depends on:

- **Market competition:** Your site will take longer to emerge from a crowded playing field.
- **Keywords:** The more your **keywords** appeal to your target audience, the less time your campaign will need to be successful. Having **PPC** ads can shave time off your results.
- **Web site age:** Your carpet cleaning company could be open since the '60s, but Google will put more value into a newer competitor whose web site is older.
- **Your competitor's strategy:** If you do your own SEO, you could be up against someone paying an experienced agency.



**SEO is a long-term commitment.**

You need to maintain SEO for as long as your web site remains active. Ranking high on a search page will have an exponential effect on your traffic and is worth the time and effort.



## BOUNCE RATE:

the percentage of visitors who “bounce” away from your site, rather than continue on to the rest of your pages.

## CONVERSIONS:

A way to measure success with a PPC ad. It occurs when a user participates in the landing page.

## KEYWORDS:

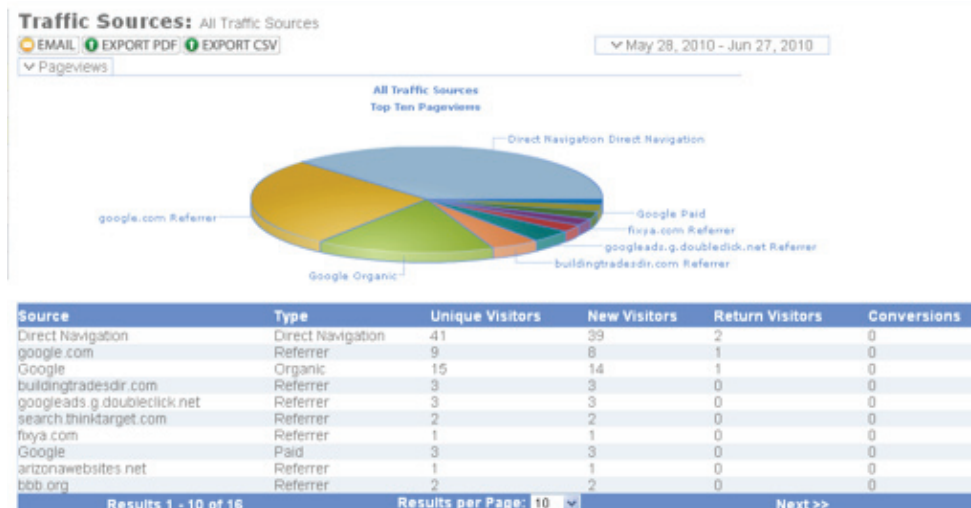
Words or phrases potential customers type into search engines that describe your business.

## SEO:

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## IS MY SEO A SUCCESS?

- Search your keywords after the implementation of site changes and fresh content. **Has your organic ranking improved?** Don't expect a top spot after a few weeks. Any improvement points to a movement in the right direction.
- Look at your web site traffic. **Did you gain visitors AND customers?** The goal of your SEO campaign is new customers. If you're not gaining customers, take a closer look and modify your strategy
- Browse social media. **Does your site have buzz?** Also, search for your business to see what others are saying about you in forums and blogs.



# How Can I Tell if SEO is Working?

Use an analytical dashboard to measure success.

Analytical dashboards gather statistics like traffic sources (paid vs. organic,) return and new visitors, **bounce rate**, page views and **conversions**. The dashboard will also give you a glimpse of which **keywords** drive users to click on your site and how long they spent reading the information. The statistics are formatted in easy-to-read charts to track improvement over time.

**GannettLocal provides an easy-to-interpret Analytical Dashboard for you to track your results anytime, anywhere.**

**SEO** is a long journey and there's no magic method to reach your goal quickly.

Be patient and persistent. Keep an eye on the data, but more importantly, provide new content to an engaging web site that useful to visitors and potential customers. With great content comes great search engine results.



## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- The average SEO project costs **\$3 per day per keyword**, but that number will vary due to your market, age of your site, and how much work will need to be implemented to the existing site structure. Once your business is being discovered by searches, you should be generating 10 times that amount per day in new business.
- Training and equipping your own staff members will cost around **\$1,500 per person plus whatever wage they earn as part of your team**.
- Outsourcing your SEO campaign will range from **\$1,000 to \$5,000 a month at the beginning**, and less as your campaign stays maintained.



## Can I DIY my SEO?

Some small business owners have a Do-It-Yourself spirit.

Before opening, were you refinishing the floors until late at night or bribing family members with pizza to paint walls? With DIY SEO, you have control to guide your business to better traffic numbers and see results without a large budget. Set aside a few hours to read SEO beginner guides, talk with customers to see which keywords they used to find your business, write great content to gain links, use social media consistently and follow posts from SEO bloggers to keep up on tips and what to avoid. The biggest expense of a DIY SEO campaign is your time. A basic knowledge of search engines will yield a smaller learning curve and you'll get to the implementation phase faster.

## Time is the most valuable resource for growing your business.

You probably already work around the clock to pitch in and keep things running smoothly. With any skill that needs training, there are consequences for inexperienced methods. Some primitive SEO methods like reciprocating links or keyword stuffing can get your site banned from search engines, a setback that could take extra time to untangle.

## Don't hurt your search engine listings with inexperience.

SEO takes consistency, if you get busy with a New Years' Resolution rush of customers using your weight-loss services and set SEO implementation or maintenance aside for a few months, you may lose whatever gains you made.

**Call a GannettLocal navigator today to get your web site on the road to success.**



**GannettLocal delivers  
big results for small businesses.**  
**We can do the same for you!**



Start a conversation today  
with a GannettLocal Navigator.  
GannettLocal is the local marketing partner  
small business owners rely on to get  
maximum exposure and bring in new customers  
– easily and affordably – with a proven set  
of local marketing programs that combine  
online and print media.

**Call 602-444-1700**  
to talk with a GannettLocal Navigator