SEO

A QUICK GUIDE

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Search Engine Optimisation
A Short Guide

Introduction

Search Engine Optimisation has been spoken about as the holy grail of web site development; the myth is almost as good as a religion onto itself. Although there is a very good reason for having the SEO process done, it should be used as another tool and as part of an overall strategy in marketing your business.

Before the Web Site

You know your business better then anyone, you know what sells and what works. When getting things together to build a site, you may have thought long and hard about what you want to tell people and what you want to say. Even before the idea of a web site you may have built a business plan, advertised in local periodicals, made some marketing literature; you may have more material then you know what to do with. Only you know what is relevant to your business. And that is where you start, gather the information that you already have, including any supporting material i.e. images.

What does all of the above got to do with SEO?

The material that you gather will give you a picture of your business that you may have not thought about. Provide you with tools and ideas that you may have forgotten. And gather the material to help build your website.

Now that you have done that it's time to look at key words and phrases. These will be what you will use to describe your business and help find your business with key word searches. At this point you would ask if your site developer can help with putting things together or even bring in a copywriter, but a good developer should be able to write good copy. You may know your business but your site developer knows his business as well, and this is the time to put his skill to work.

What will the developer do to make your site optimised?

Below is a small example of what a developer should do.

1. First ask you for images that you have copyright for.

2. Ask for any content that is relevant to your business.

3. Talk to you about your keywords.

4. Discuss the pages that more important than others.

5. Ask if any pages are regularly changed and when you will make those changes.

6. Design the site so that all relevant information is searchable.

7. Make sure that the site is compliant with W3C standards.

8. All images are tagged properly.

All the above and more should be done by the developer before your site goes live. When you have spent good money to build a site you should expect it to be ready to the highest standard. For SEO the site design is not relevant, it is the content and the way it is coded and that is the business of the developer.

If you are bringing SEO to an existing site, they should still ask for the above and also if they are contracted to do the work provide you with a report on what they intend to do.

If there are any changes done to your site make a note of every change done and provide you with a final report. (Some of the changes may look minor, but ever change makes your site more accessible.)

What to avoid.

In this small section I will briefly list the things to avoid, if someone tries to bamboozle you with things that you do not understand or tells you that it is to difficult to explain, then it may be time to go looking elsewhere for you expert. However, you must trust your specialist to do their job, no one can guarantee the top spot, but they can get you close; the rest is up to the search engine gods.

1. Tells you they can guarantee a top relevant key word page rank. No one can do that, they can make your site more accessible and make sure that it has every chance to get ranked into the pages that will make a difference.

2. Tell you that linking makes a difference or speak about the power of "free-for-all" links, link popularity schemes, or submitting your site to thousands of search engines. These are typically useless exercises that don't affect your ranking in the results of the major search engines -- at least, not in a way you would likely consider to be positive.

3. Some key words have few uses and unscrupulous people will use those words to show you hay can get you ranked in the first page, but gives you very little in the way of real SEO results.

4. Do not use disliked and inappropriate raking methods, it may get your site removed and you may find that your site is no longer listed.

How to get your site ranked well.

There are no tricks to developing a great site that ranks well in search engines. The best way to do this is to develop a well made site that has been built by a webmaster who understands what makes a good site.

A well developed site with the user in mind will eventually get the ranking you deserve. It's as simple as that, trust your web master to do the job right, the first time. Work with the web master and ensure that you provide them with the correct information.

Below are a few key points:

1. The page is relevant to the terms being searched for

2. The page is considered an authority about its topic

3. Relevancy -- How well a page matches a user's query, if they search for something they actually find the search relevant.

4. The page has good, useful content.

5. The page has been around for a while.

6. The page is part of a site with lots of information.

7. Keywords -- Relevant Search terms. A "keyword" is usually actually a short 2 to 4 word phrase.

8. The page loads quickly

9. The page doesn't have a bunch of broken links that go nowhere.

10. The page isn't filled with a cheap list of keywords.

So what next.

I hope you remember what was mentioned in the beginning of this quick guide, SEO is not everything. Your site should be great, the information should help your site visitor find what they are looking for. Make sure you have a good working relationship with you site developer and concentrate on making your business the best. If you are thinking of managing your own site, make sure you get some training and give yourself enough time to make things work.

Post Script: This is a quick guide and not a definitive set of rules of SEO, no guarantee is implied nor offered. Please consider all information provided as it is intended as a guide.