

## SEO - What Is It, Why Do I Care, And How Do I Get It?

Search Engine Optimization, also known as SEO, is one of the most under-considered aspects of owning a website. If it's done well, your website can become a lead-generating machine. If not, you may find that you are not gaining a business return from your website. With even a small website typically costing a few thousand dollars, you cannot afford to not maximize that investment.

In terms of your website's SEO performance, it's said that you are always either rising or falling in rank.

Every month that you do nothing on your website, you are going to lose ground to those who are actively working on their SEO. Each month that you take steps to improve your site, you are likely to gain ground.

## Top 15 Questions to Ask About Your Website

If you are interested in improving the quality of your website and your site's Search Engine Optimization, consider the following questions.

1. Is your content grammatically correct? Is it structured in the best way possible to optimize it in searches?
2. Are there broken links on my website?
3. Was your content written strategically, with your keywords in mind?
4. Do your pages have enough words on the page to gain a good SEO ranking? Do I know the minimum number of words that are needed?
5. Are you updating your content regularly, or is it static for long periods of time?
6. Are you writing keyword-focused Blogs that are shared on my social media platforms?
7. Do you know what keywords you should be using? Which ones your competition is using?
8. Is your site well-built without technical problems that might harm your SEO?
9. Have you paid attention to the fine details, such as having a Favicon on your site?
10. Do your images have alt-tags and meta descriptions that support your SEO?
11. Are you attached to Google Analytics so that you know how much traffic you are getting?
12. Have I submitted my site map to Google Webmaster Tools and requested indexing of my website?
13. Do you know which pages are attracting the most traffic?
14. Do you know if your site is converting visitors into prospects, or even clients?
15. Do you have back-links on other sites that lead back to your website?

If you aren't certain about the answers to some - or all - of these questions, and you want to get your site working for you more effectively, it may be time to call in skilled SEO reinforcements.

When we send e-newsletters or social media posts, we are **PUSHING** our marketing message out to potential clients.

SEO is about **PULLING** visitors into your website by ensuring that we have the right content on the pages to get found in their web searches.

## What to Look for in an SEO Services Provider

When buying SEO services, it's critical that you work with someone who truly understands your goals. Many companies are interested in checking off boxes and producing a number of clicks or backlinks each month, without consideration for the quality of what's being done. This approach is about meeting quotas, not about meeting your business goals.

Ask yourself these questions about your existing provider, or before you engage one for the first time.

- Does your provider offer you a service guarantee? If so, what does it include?
- Are you able to discontinue their services if they aren't helping you achieve your goals?
- Do they provide you with the data that you need to know that the program is working?
- Are they responsive to your changing business goals?
- Do they alter the SEO plan based on learning month to month?
- Are they listening to you about what your goals are?
- Do they make themselves available to you when you have questions, or want to discuss the next steps?

## Questions to Ask Yourself About Your SEO Needs

You can help ensure that you get the best fit in your SEO Services Provider by considering the following questions.

- What goals am I trying to achieve? Do I want to build traffic for some advertising purpose, or do I want to convert visitors into solid leads or clients?
- Can I articulate what I want to achieve so that my provider can develop a plan to meet those needs?
- What is the geographic area that I want to reach? Is it purely local, regional, or nationwide? Does my SEO company understand the difference?
- Do I have a solid understanding of how my clients are looking for me, i.e. what search terms they use?
- Does my provider have ideas about how to do content marketing in such a way that it helps my SEO?
- Am I using social media outlets to my advantage? Do I understand how they can drive traffic?

- Is my provider building back links (links back to my site) on websites and directories that make sense, or just placing links to meet their monthly quota?
- Is my provider using the data gathered each month to react and alter our plan, or are they doing the same thing month after month without change?
- Am I using landing pages effectively to 'snag' potential clients as they search for me?
- Am I gaining a return from the money that I'm investing?
- Do I know how to do all of these things, or do I need a provider with a track record who can help my business with some or all of these SEO priorities?

## Quick Case Study, or, 'How Not to Do SEO'

A local architect was getting no traffic and no conversions on her website, and was perplexed as to why. A quick audit of her website revealed that she referred to herself only as a 'home designer'. The word 'architect' did not appear one time.

Why was this a problem?

When most people need to have blueprints designed for a new home or addition, they are likely to look for an 'architect'. If they are searching for your very services, which most people know as an 'architect', but you are only listed as a 'home designer'.... There is nothing to match you up with

what they are searching for. This equals missed opportunities for business!

If you are selling 'dog collars' but list your products as something less obvious, such as 'fabric restraining devices for canines'... no one is going to find you when they search for dog collars.

**Golden Rule of SEO:** Don't make it hard for your audience to find you online! Make it easy to find you by using keywords that will match up with the searches that your audience is doing! *Sometimes it takes an outside perspective to point out how we might structure our content differently, and how to use keywords to get found.*

## Quick SEO Glossary of Terms

- Content Marketing** Online resources that promote your brand indirectly by providing information and discussion about the services that you provide.
- PageRank** A calculation of your sites authority and quality, according to Google.
- Keyword** A word that describes or alludes to your business, and that helps your audience to find you when they do searches for that word.



#### Conversions

When your audience becomes a lead or client. Typically, we consider a 'conversion' to have occurred when a visitor accepts a Call to Action.

#### Call to Action

Invitation to do something or take an action on your site. Can include filling out a form or downloading a content marketing piece.

## Top 5 Drivers of SEO Traffic

Did you know that there is more to driving traffic to your site than just making the most of the words on your pages? The following are considered 5 of the Top 5 drivers of traffic to websites.

- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Instagram & Pinterest, for businesses that have great imagery.
- Blogs
- e-books

## Pay Per Click Vs. Organic SEO

Did you know that there are two distinct types of SEO? While there are many strategies to building your SEO, most of those activities fall into the following two categories.

**Organic SEO** typically entails the words on the page that are present to snag visitors when they actively search for your keyword.

There are numerous techniques for Organic SEO processes, from improving the quality of your content and keywords to building backlinks on directories and other websites.

**Pay Per Click, aka PPC** is when we purchase the opportunity to come up early in the search results when someone searches for your keywords.

What if you aren't gaining enough traffic to meet your goals with Organic SEO methods? Do you want to jump start bringing traffic to your website? Do you not have time to wait for an Organic process to begin working? Then a PPC campaign may be just the thing you need to start getting traffic to your site quickly!



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## SEO is not a sprint. It's a marathon.

Can we help you achieve your SEO goals for your business?

Contact us for a free SEO assessment and discussion of potential techniques to meet your goals. We'd love to support making your business goals a reality!

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