



Six Steps to SEO Success
by
Steven Howard

Many readers contacted me after last week's Monday Morning Marketing Memo asking for advice on how to implement successful Search Engine Optimization (SEO) programs. I shared with them these six key elements of basic Search Engine Optimization that need to be performed (and maintained) on any website:

1. Identifying page title, page descriptions and page keywords -- these are the critical elements that the search engines look for when they review a site and log the details of that site. It is this information that is then presented to Internet users in the search results they see.
2. Re-writing and editing the copy on each page of the website for SEO relevancy and sufficient use of keywords and key search phrases.
3. Having internal links between pages of the website using anchor text.
4. Getting listed with online directories and search engines (an important, but tedious process that takes time, some special knowledge, and the right set of software tools).
5. Creating other critical inbound links from websites with authority and relevance to your products and services, including through the use of Social Media Marketing channels (Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)
6. Keeping website content fresh and updated.

As we mentioned last week, since **70% of all "clicks" on Internet searches are for the organic results**, and only 30% are on the paid advertising results, the importance of Search Engine Optimization cannot be overstated.

Additionally when it comes to website writing, a good website writer has to have strong copywriting skills with a marketing background, **a clear understanding of how prospective customers and repeat visitors will interact with a client's website**, and comprehensive knowledge of how Google and the other search engines use spiders to crawl and rank website pages.

Point six on keeping content fresh and updated is now mandatory. Google has changed in recent months and now gives higher rankings to website pages that have recently been updated and changed. Website pages that are static and unchanged for long periods of time (i.e. more than a couple of months) will now suffer in the Google search engine results.

Immediate Results

Doing SEO right can have an immediate impact on your search results. For instance, last week we worked with a company in Singapore whose 18-month old website was nowhere to be found for basic search phrases important to it. I added the required page descriptions and page title tags to their pages and, by the end of the week, this site was at the #3 position on the first page on a Google search for its most important search phrase.

This company, which a week ago could not be found in any basic search results related to its products and services, is now also on the first or second page of Google search results for a dozen other key search phrases. All within a week.

For the Wine Tours Victoria client here in Australia that we mentioned last week, we started working on their website SEO last October. Today, they are on the first page of Google search results for 20 of the 30 key search phrases we work on, with over a dozen of these now as the #1 Google search result. Our SEO efforts have resulted in a 40% increase in website traffic and an increase in the online bookings for their wine tours.

Small Business SEO

Small businesses can actually see greater results from proper SEO implementation than larger organizations. In many instances, only a few (if any) small firms have good SEO programs in place. This means that a well-structured and managed SEO program can catapult your business to the top of the search results, as in the examples above.

Too many small businesses use their websites as digital brochures, which means they are visited only by people already familiar with the organization. However, by implementing and maintaining a strong SEO program , your website will also function as a sales lead generator.

First to market is often a winning marketing strategy. First to SEO prominence is also a winning marketing strategy, giving a smart business an entrenched competitive edge in the all-important search results that prospective buyers and customers see when conducting Internet searches for products, services and solutions to their needs.

Take Action Today

It doesn't matter where you are, where your customers are, how big your business is, or in which industry your business is in. A proper SEO program will make a difference in the returns you gain from your website.

If you are not sure about how to get started, or if some of the terms above seem like foreign words to you, don't worry. Just contact me and I will help you get on the right path.

The Author

Steven Howard is a marketing consultant, author, and professional copywriter. He is also a well-known conference keynote speaker on Customer Retention Marketing, Digital Marketing and Corporate Branding. He operates from Palm Springs (California), Melbourne (Australia) and Singapore.

Visit his web site, www.howard-marketing.com for valuable information and links on marketing, customer retention, branding, and corporate image management or to sign up for his free weekly newsletter The Monday Morning Marketing Memo and his marketing blog.

He is a positioning specialist, whose 35-year marketing and sales career in Asia and Australia has covered a wide variety of fields, ranging from consumer electronics to publishing and from a national airline to personal financial products.

He is President of Howard Marketing Services, which provides consultancy and project management services in the areas of Marketing Management, Product Development, Positioning Strategies, Customer Retention

Strategies, New Product Launches, Event Management and Brand Management.

He consults on a regular basis to companies in the financial services, industrial products, consumer products, restaurants, petroleum, publishing and hospitality fields.

Contact details:

Phone: (760) 327-1463 USA | (61-3) 5428-1388 Australia | 9633-5466 Singapore

Skype: stevenbhoward

E-mail: steven@howard-marketing.com

Website: <http://www.howard-marketing.com>

Blog: <http://www.howard-marketing.com/marketingblog>

Twitter: StevenBHoward

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