

Make your business fly

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) primer
1.0 Search Engine Optimisation

Over 80% of website visits started at a search engine, making them a key source of website visitors for businesses of all types. On Google alone 150 million searches are made each and every day.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) enables website owners to tap into these streams of internet traffic and increase the numbers of visitors to their selected website.

Increasing traffic to a sites from search engines

To benefit from the huge potential for new customers offered by search engines a site needs to be listed at or near the top of the page 1 search results, for searches related to the products offered. Sites listed lower down simply don't generate the same levels of traffic.

How do websites get to the top of the list

The results of a search are prioritised top to bottom, according to the measured relevance of each site to the keyword search made, with the most relevant site always at the top. By 'optimising' a website to match these criteria, Search Engine Marketers aim to get it higher up the list and so gain a larger proportion of the traffic available.

Won't my site naturally appear at the top for keywords relevant to my products?

For every keyword there is massive competition for a top placing. This means that lots of other sites are relevant too, maybe more relevant than yours. To make the situation more difficult, the criteria used by each search engine to measure relevance are particular, and mechanical. This means that it is unlikely that your entire site, and all of the products in it, would be a good match for even one of the keywords chosen. Add to this the technical barriers to inclusion such as CMS query strings and it is easy to see why expert help can be beneficial.

Advantages of SEO

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| Low cost | - Typical costs are 0.05p per visitor or less. This compares well with typical banner advertising. |
| Long term benefit | - Once your site is listed, new visitors keep on arriving, at little or no additional cost. |
| Huge traffic potential | - With huge numbers of searches made each day, there is significant potential to generate large numbers of visitors. |
| High quality traffic | - The visitors from searches are highly motivated to buy. They have been actively looking for your products and services. |

Search Engine Marketing - Expert knowledge

Search Engine Marketers have expert knowledge of the relevance criteria used by search engines and directories. They use this information to help clients 'search engine optimised' their website. The resulting sites closely match relevance criteria, gain a higher ranking and significantly increase traffic.

What does SEO entail?

Selection of keywords related to the products and services offered

A list of the optimum keyword terms is finalised by examining the recorded number of searches made in a month for a range of keywords selected for their relevance to the products and services offered.

Identification of technology compatibility issues

Search engines can find it difficult to 'spider' or read through websites under certain technical circumstance. There are many solutions to these technical issues.

“ **Researching and selecting the right keywords is essential to gaining maximum marketing advantage** ”

Measurement of content relevance to keywords

The page content is all important in defining the rank, top or bottom. This is examined and optimised to match search engine criteria.

Submission to search engines for inclusion

Once site optimisation is complete it is submitted to PFI and free entry search engines for inclusion on their indexes.

Measurement of success

Reports are provided at the end of each subsequent month detailing the websites position on the key search engines for the selected keywords.

Re-submission and amendments

Where search engines have not listed the site it must be re-submitted until listing is achieved. Search engines regularly change the way they rank websites, so it is important to carefully monitor site positions over the long term, and make whatever changes are necessary to retain position. However it is important not to rush changes in response to minor fluctuations. Patience is essential when dealing with Search Engines.

When should I call in a SEM company?

The best time to start your SEM campaign is before building and programming your site. Then it can be made search engine friendly from the beginning - saving time and money and increasing the potential for success.

But, if you've already built your site - it's not too late! The first step in your SEM campaign is an examination of the current search engine compatibility, from which recommendations can be drawn. At this point you will know exactly what needs to be done to improve your rankings.

More information

Search Engine Guide - www.searchengineguide.com

Google - www.google.com/webmasters/seo.html

Search engine Watch - www.searchenginewatch.com

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