

# Ask the Experts!

## Search Engine Optimization

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### SEO Should Be Strategy Driven

#### Set Clear Goals for the Site

- Support Your Business Model
- Normally 3 to 6 Goals
- Select Goals You Can Measure
- Don't forget site section goals and campaign goals.

#### Positioning Strategies

- First Impression of Your Brand
- Quality vs. "Cheap"
- Compared to Your Competitors

### Understand Your Customers

- Target Marketing
  - One site can target several segments
  - User Personnas
  - Know What Task They Want to Perform
- Know Where They Are in the Decision Making Process
  - Awareness
  - Information Search
  - Evaluation of Alternatives
  - Purchase
  - Post Purchase Evaluation

### How are your customers using the web?

### Success Depends On Traffic and Conversion

**Landing Page / Destination Page** - The web page at which a searcher arrives after clicking on an ad. When creating a PPC ad, the advertiser displays a URL (and specifies the exact page URL in the code) on which the searcher will land after clicking on an ad in the SERP. Landing pages are also known as "where the deal is closed," as it is landing page actions that determine an advertiser's conversion rate success.

**Conversion Rate** - Conversion rates are measurements that determine how many of your prospects perform the prescribed or desired action step. If your prescribed response is for a visitor to sign up for a newsletter, and you had 100 visitors and 1 newsletter signup, then your conversion rate would be 1%. Typically, micro-conversions (for instance, reading different pages on your site) lead to your main conversion step (making a purchase, or signing up for a service).

## SEO Best Practices

### Key Success Factors

1. Keyword Selection Strategies and Keyword Research.
2. Content Creation That Converts and That Gets Ranked.
3. Designing Search Friendly Web Pages. Standards Compliant Programming.
4. Meta tags. Title tags, description tags and alt tags.
5. Link Building Strategies.

Remember that short term solutions don't work. Patience is a virtue. Wear a white hat.

### A Nine Step Approach

1. Brainstorm. But be specific.
2. Think like a customer. Use customers if you can.
3. Use your website referral logs.
4. Check out your competition. In the marketplace and in the rankings.
5. Cover keyword variations. Misspellings. Plurals. Synonyms. Merged and hyphenated words.
6. Use descriptive words that are true statements of what you offer. Don't forget to look at the opposite of what you do. (You solve that problem!)
7. Use action words. Buy. Find. Purchase. Free Shipping. Guaranteed.
8. Target Local Markets.
9. Use keyword research tools.

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>  
<http://www.wordtracker.com/trial.html>

## To Do Immediately

Each page should be targeted to a specific keyword phrase. Using modifiers, synonyms, related keywords and long-tail secondary keywords is fine but you should always have a primary keyword or keyword phrase in mind for each page you're optimizing.

### Avoid optimizing more than one page for a given keyword.

**Title Tag** - An HTML tag appearing in the <head> tag of a web page that contains the page title. The page title should be determined by the relevant contents of that specific web page. The contents of a title tag for a web page is generally displayed in a search engine result as a bold blue underlined hyperlink.

**Description Tag** - Refers to the information contained in the description META tag. This tag is meant to hold the brief description of the web page it is included on. The information contained in this tag is generally the description displayed immediately after the main link on many search engine result pages.

**ALT Text** – Also known as alternative text or alt attribute. An HTML tag (ALT tag) used to provide images with a text description in the event images are turned off in a web browser. The images text description is usually visible while "hovering" over the image. This tag is also important for the web access of the visually impaired.

### Give each page a unique title tag, and make sure that your keyword appears in the title tag of that page.

The ideal title tag is both keyword-rich and enticing to your customers so they'll click your listing.

**Keep your titles below 65 characters in length.** This is the maximum to use if you want to make sure the complete title gets displayed. A good looking title in the search results is more likely to get clicked on.

**Give each page a unique meta description tag.** Since meta descriptions are not a critical ranking factor, keyword placement is not as important. However, a well-written and customer-oriented description meta tag can greatly increase the number of clicks you get on your listing in the search results. It's all about conversion.

**And don't forget:**

- You won't be indexed unless you have other sites pointing at yours.
- Link farms don't work.
- Busier sites, respected sites and high page rank sites carry weight with engines.
- Use anchor text when you can.
- Look into deep linking when you can.
- Use directories for fast links. Yahoo. DMOZ. OhioBiz.com, WOW. Business.com
- Don't forget clients, customers and organizations you belong to.
- Use a pay per click program for quick links.

## Definitions

### Search Engine

A server or a collection of servers dedicated to indexing internet web pages, storing the results and returning lists of pages which match particular queries. The term Search Engine is also often used to describe both directories and search engines.

### SEO

Acronym for "Search Engine Optimization." This is the process of editing a web site's content and code in order to improve visibility within one or more search engines.

### Search Directory

Similar to a search engine, in that they both compile databases of web sites. A directory does not use crawlers in order to obtain entries in its search database. Instead, it relies on user interaction and submissions for the content it contains.

### Query

A word, a phrase or a group of words, possibly combined with other syntax used to pass instructions to a search engine or a directory in order to locate web pages.

### SERP

Acronym for Search Engine Results Page, the page delivered to a searcher that displays the results of a search query entered into the search field. Displays both paid ad (sponsored) and organic listings in varying positions or rank.

### Robot

Any browser program which follows hypertext links and accesses web pages but is not directly under human control. Examples are the search engine spiders, the "harvesting" programs which extract e-mail addresses and other data from web pages and various intelligent web searching programs.

### PPC Advertising

Acronym for Pay-Per-Click Advertising, a model of online advertising in which advertisers pay only for each click on their ads that directs searchers to a specified landing page on the advertiser's web site. PPC ads may get thousands of impressions (views or serves of the ad); but, unlike more traditional ad models billed on a CPM (Cost-Per-Thousand-Impressions) basis, PPC advertisers only pay when their ad is clicked on.

### Where to get some great information:

A good place to start is Google's Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide. You can find it here.  
<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=35291>

