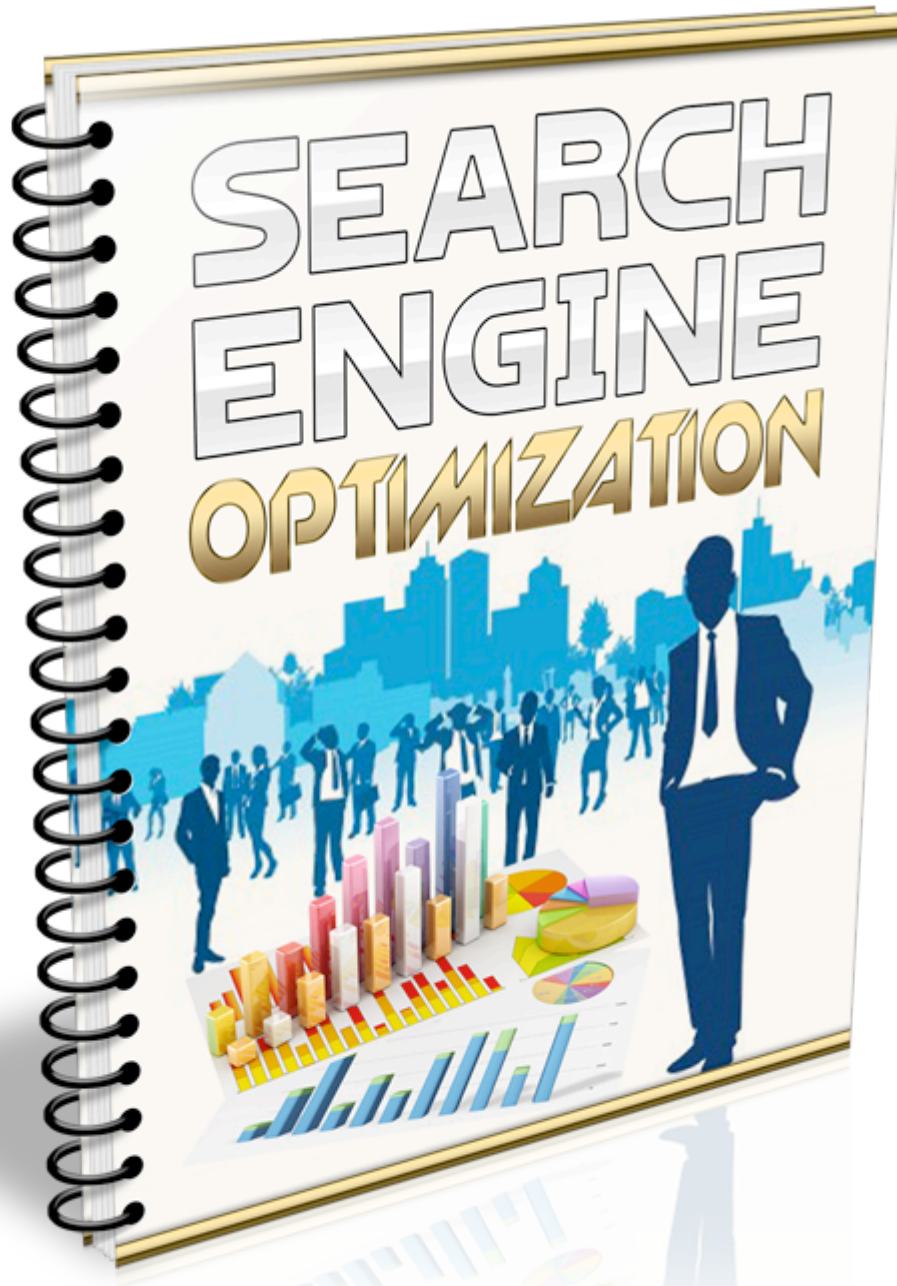


# SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION



# What Your Local Business Needs To Know About SEO

Forward-looking businesses are increasingly turning to online marketing over more traditional TV, radio, and newsprint advertising. The internet is a fast moving global marketplace which billions of people interact with on a daily basis. SEO (search engine optimization) is a method of improving the visibility of a website or page within search engine rankings. If you are looking for a way to boost your business's income potential, SEO can help you to improve your online profile and reach out to customers more effectively.

## What Is Search Engine Optimization?

Search engines are the easiest, fastest, and most convenient way to navigate around the internet. Sites like Google, Yahoo, Ask, and Bing use complicated algorithms to rank results based on how useful they will be to users. The methods that search engines use to determine the order of search results is continually updated and evolving. By implementing a SEO strategy on your website, you can ensure that your site receives the best search ranking possible.

## So Why Is SEO Important?

The number of people using search engines is growing by about 20% each year, and in 2011, Americans alone conducted over 20 billion searches every month. The placement of your site within search results can have a huge effect on the likelihood that it is selected by a user. Google released the following data on the percentage of click-throughs that each search rank receives:

- The site listed 1st in Google search results receives an average of 38.2% of the overall search traffic.
- The 2nd site gets 30.1% of click-throughs, the 3rd gets 17.2%, and the 4th gets 14.8%.
- All results below 4th get less than 2% of the traffic each.
- In total, the first page of Google results get 82.3% of all click-throughs.

This data clearly shows that the placement of your website in search results has a huge impact on the amount of traffic it receives.

## How To Implement SEO

For a website to be successful it needs to be structured to suit both users and search

engines. The engines use very complex methods of indexing results, and by understanding and adapting to these you will be able to boost your website's placement. Here are just a few SEO techniques:

#### - Site Design

The layout of your website is just as important as the content you place on it. To maximize your ranking, search engines need to access and index every page, but poor link structure can prevent this from happening. If a search engine struggles to reach a page, it may consider it unimportant or fail to register it at all.

There are a range of reasons why a page might not be accessed. Search engines cannot fill in online forms, so placing content behind a login page or registration form can make it difficult to see. Search engines will follow a set number of links on each page so having too many in one place will cause some to be missed.

#### - Keyword Research

Keywords are one of the main aspects search engines use to match gauge how relevant a site is. When choosing the right keywords it is important to consider what search terms users will type in when looking for something related to your website. Choosing more specific keyword phrases means that you will have less competition. Using additional words related to your keyword phrase is also useful.

#### - Site Content

Your keyword phrase should be included in all indexable content (the content that can be seen by search engines). This includes titles, text, tags, and links. Stuffing your text full of these keywords to improve your rank is unwise, as search engines are able to filter out the sites which do this. It is best to use keywords naturally but strategically.

#### - Backlinks And Inbound Links

Another feature that search engines assess is the number and quality of backlinks and inbound links your site has. By promoting your site across a range of different media, such as social networks, you will find that these links build up naturally as customers share information and promote your site.

#### - Regularly Updating Content

The more up-to-date your content is, the more relevant it is likely to be. As a result, Google and other search engine take the age of content into account. The easiest way to update your site on a regular basis is to create a 'blog' or 'news' section.

## The Results You Can Expect From Effective SEO

Implementing a SEO strategy quickly boosts your site's search engine rank which can have a wide range of knock-on benefits. Here are some of the key advantages:

### - More Sales

Websites are used by customers to buy products, make bookings, and research companies. By increasing your traffic through SEO, you can improve and diversify your revenue.

### - Build Trust

Being listed in the first few results of a search engine not only ensures more traffic, but it also instills a certain amount of trust in users. The higher up a site is featured, the more important and successful it will appear to potential customers.

### - Wider Customer Base

A PEW study indicated that in 2011 on an average day, 59% of internet users used a search engine. By implementing SEO and increasing your visibility, you can widen your customer base to include some of the billions of people that use Google, Yahoo, Bing, and other search sites on a daily basis.

## How To Get Started

Using tried and tested SEO techniques on your website can have a huge effect on your site's traffic and ultimately on your business's profits. However, with such a complex system of tools and practices to navigate, implementing SEO effectively can be difficult. Overusing keywords can cause your rating to plummet, and building your site to suit search engines can make it less useful for customers.

For time-pressed local businesses that have limited experience working with SEO, hiring an online marketing specialist could be the ideal way to boost your website's visibility while avoiding any potential problems. A specialist can help you to design your site, create keyword optimized content, and successfully set up backlinks and inbound links. Putting your website in the hands of marketing experts can help to ensure your company's future.

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