

Warne's Marketing

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Winning the Game of Getting Noticed Online

Increasing search engine visibility brings prospects to your website.

IT PAYS TO BE SEEN. LITERALLY. When it comes to the Internet, showing up when people search is crucial to developing new sales leads and customers online. People use search engines to find products and services every day. If your company shows up when they search, you are on your way to acquiring new customers. If your company doesn't, you are losing out.

How Search Engines Work

Search engines send out "spiders," or programs that go out to the Internet and index all the new sites on the web.

sites that are already indexed. This type of search result is called "organic," meaning the results are indexed in a search engine's database, and are not from paid advertisements or paid listings. Your website will likely show up in search engines several weeks after it's posted to the web – without any effort from you. But that doesn't translate into customers. For that, you need to rank well for terms your potential customer is using.

Prospects are looking for a company like yours, but they don't know your name yet. They are searching using

search terms, links into your site from reputable sites, optimization of your site for search engines to see you. Increasing the site ranking has taken on paramount importance. After all, if people don't find your company when they search, you lose valuable prospects. Searches typically return millions of matches. Studies have shown that over 80% of people usually look no further than the first 30 matches, or the first three web pages of search results. So the target of any search engine optimization campaign is to get your site to show in the first 30 matches, for your optimum keywords. Ideally, in the top 10 results if possible.

Finding the most popular keywords is the first step in a search engine optimization campaign. "Search Engine Optimization" (SEO) is simply discovering the keywords that people are using to search for your product or service and then optimizing your site for those keywords.

How do you start? Begin with an analysis of your business, target markets, products and a site review. It's important to define your core business and customers.

Finding Relevant Keywords

To rank well, find the keywords used by people who are searching for companies like yours. Through research and analysis, the keywords

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New websites will typically show up automatically for the company name, and may show up for terms you have included in text on your site, like product names or categories. This happens with all search engines, all the time. They are in the business of making sure their engines are up to date. Also, they are very proactive about updating sites on a regular basis. So the "spiders" go out and check on

"keywords," which are the words they type into the search bar, that define what they perceive will give them a good list of options. They will get a list of companies, which will lead them to those companies' websites.

Website Ranking

Your rank in search engines is based on many factors – the copy on your site, the relevance of your site to the

that people are using can easily be determined. This means getting into the mind of your customer, doing the online research, and constantly reviewing the terms to ensure they are the best ones. Any keyword can be made to rank high in search engines. If potential customers are not using that term to look for your product, then you are wasting time and money. Finding the right keywords means results.

Search engines are constantly changing the way they index sites to discourage abuse of their ranking methods. Methods for optimizing search engine rankings change on a regular basis, and so do the methods for optimizing the site. Search engines provide guidelines for setting up and submitting the site. Ignoring these guidelines can mean being removed completely from a search engine. If it is a major engine like Google, this

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The analysis yields a rich set of information that is used as the basis of keywords. From here, research and refine terms to ensure they are in active use through online tools, proprietary search term reviews and just plain common sense.

The next step is to optimize your website – to have your site rank high for chosen keywords. This involves going through the programming of the site, and adding code that helps your terms work. In addition to keyword optimization, review your marketing message, website copy, product category and all aspects of your site from a marketing perspective. Be sure your site is fully prepared when the prospects arrive.

You are now ready to submit your site to search engines and track the results. There is no point committing to a campaign that will later get ignored – results need to be fine tuned and updated regularly. If you were doing print advertising, you would make sure that your ads are in constant view of your target customers. The same is true for your search engine campaign. A little maintenance goes a long way.

Finding a Partner

It pays to work with a company that has experience in this area. Many companies make outrageous claims to get you to sign up, or use outdated methods for getting results. This can hurt your business and your search ranking.

can be a devastating blow to your marketing efforts. The key is working with a marketing partner who keeps on top of the latest trends in the search market and knows the search engines well.

Be wary of companies that promise you number one rankings in search engines. They may be able to have you show up number one – but are the keywords you show up number one for really relevant? Are your customers searching those keywords? A guaranteed number one ranking doesn't take into account the changing face of the web. And it could cost you listing on search engines.

When planning a search engine optimization campaign, do your homework. Choose a partner that will work with you on all your Internet marketing. Once you get the leads, you need a further plan for converting those leads into customers. Search engine ranking is a big part of an overall Internet marketing campaign. And a very important one, because it's your first impression. Make it count.

To find out how you can create an Internet marketing plan and increase your business online, call Scott Warne at 416-927-0881, ext. 209.



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