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The Complete  
Internet Marketer

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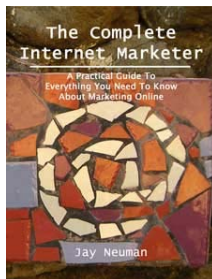
# How To Be Successful With Search Engine Marketing

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*In Seven Easy Steps!*

Jay Neuman

This eBook is an excerpt from:



## The Complete Internet Marketer

A Practical Guide to Everything  
You Need to Know About  
Marketing Online

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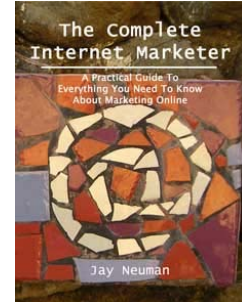
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## Getting Started With Search Engine Marketing

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Search Engine Marketing is the most effective way to advertise online. When people want to find something online, they start with a search engine. Getting a link to your website and a few words of promotional copy displayed on the first page of their search results reaches them at the most opportune moment. Customers have just described what they want by entering the search term. They are actively seeking something they can respond to. It is the best case scenario for targeted marketing.

Buying sponsored links on search engines is easy. Some search engines have automated bidding tools to make buying keywords as easy as placing a bid on eBay. On the other hand, very small differences in your click-thru rates and conversion rates can make the difference between positive and negative return on your investment. It is a balancing act.

The secret to successful search engine marketing is found in following these seven easy steps.

- Step 1:** Choose search engines
- Step 2:** Choose keywords
- Step 3:** Balance your budget with desired ranking
- Step 4:** Write effective link copy
- Step 5:** Use deep linking
- Step 6:** Create effective landing pages
- Step 7:** Monitor and improve





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## Step 1: Choose Search Engines

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Which search engine should you advertise on? This is the first decision you must make once you have decided Search Engine Marketing is right for you. The simple answer to this is start with the big ones. As of the writing of this chapter, 73% of all online searches in the United States are performed on two search engines, Google and Yahoo. If you do nothing else with search engine marketing, you should advertise on these two. After Google and Yahoo, there are two more that account for another 15%, MSN and AOL. Almost 90% of all searches are performed on these four search engines. (source: Nielsen NetRatings July 2006)

After you have bought keywords on the big search engines, you can look into specialty search engines that focus on the niche you are targeting. For example, if you have a restaurant or live music venue, you may want to get listed on Citysearch.com. If you are a Business-to-Business supplier, you may want to list on Business.com.

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## Step 2: Choose Keywords

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The second, and most critical step is to determine which keywords you will buy. There are two parts to this decision. First, you must identify the words and phrases that best describe the content on the web pages where you want to direct traffic. Next you must identify what words and phrases web users are most likely to enter as search terms when they are looking for content related to your web pages. The basic rule is to find as many variations as you can on the words and phrases you identified as being

***A good keyword is not the one that drives the most traffic but the one with the highest conversion rate and ROI***





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relevant to your web page. Then try to figure out which are the most likely variations web users will search for. These are the keywords you want.

Some search engines will show you suggested variations to the terms you've selected. They also may be able to tell you which terms are most popular.

Now here is an important point. You do not necessarily want the most popular search term. If the term being searched most is a very general word or phrase, then you may get a lot of clicks on your link (which you pay for), but they may not convert to sales. It is better to be more specific in your keyword choice. This way you will get clicks from searchers who are more likely to be interested in the specific things you offer on your site.

For example, you may have a business offering legal assistance for small businesses. You could advertise on the very popular search term, "legal services." However, this would be likely to bring a lot of clicks from people who did not need help with their small business. You could also advertise on the popular term, "small business." But then you might get clicks who do not need legal services. On the other hand, if you advertise on the specific phrase, "small business legal services," you will get clicks from searchers who are in the market for your specific services. You will get fewer clicks, but they will convert at a higher rate.

It is not possible to tell exactly what the right keywords for your business will be up front. The best approach is to start with a larger set of keywords as a test. Measure the results in clicks and conversions. Then stick with the ones that yield the best results.



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## Step 3: Balance Your Budget with Desired Ranking

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Once you decide where you want to advertise and what keywords you want, the next step is to decide how to make the best use of your available budget. You will pay more money for a higher rank in the search results. The top listing will cost more than the second listing, which will cost more than the third, and so on. The general rule is that you want to be *above the fold* on the first page of search results. The fold is the area of the page displayed without scrolling down. However, having the number one listing does not necessarily gain that much over the number two or three. You will only know by testing. You may also find that you get better overall results by paying less for a listing below the fold, or even on the second page.

The best way to proceed is to start with a test using only a small budget. Test a large number of different search terms, on different search engines and at different list order. Run this test for a few weeks and see how your various options perform. Pay special attention not only to click-thru rates but also to conversion rates. With this information, you can run your full program with those terms, search engines and rank orders that performed the best for you.

## Step 4: Write Effective Link Copy

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The best keywords will only work for you if people want to click on your link when they see it. The next step is to write effective link copy. You have only a few words to make people interested enough to click. This is critical advertising copy. Make those words count.

***The general rule is to be above the fold on the first page of search results. But only testing can tell your optimum placement***





Link copy should be closely related to the keywords the user entered. Generic sounding links are not very good at enticing clicks. Separate copy should also be written for different variations of your search terms.

Link copy should match the needs or wants of users entering the given search term. When writing link copy, consider why a person might be entering one term versus another. Then tailor your copy to that. Take the example of small business legal services above. Someone entering the term, “small business law” may be looking for general information. On the other hand, someone entering, “small business lawyer” may be looking to hire a lawyer. Both may be good prospects for your business. But they will respond to different messages.

Link copy should be clearly related to the content of your website without turning off potential customers. This is a balancing act. Your link should act as a filter that draws in only people who are likely to convert on your website. On the other hand, you may also want to bring in potential customers who do not know yet that they want what you are offering. Once again, you will only find the right balance by testing a variety of options and sticking with the best performers.

***If people find themselves dropped onto a homepage, they are likely to just leave***

## Step 5: Use Deep Linking

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When people are looking for something on the Internet, they are impatient. They want to be sent directly from the search results to information related to the topic of their search. If people find themselves dropped onto a home page they are likely to just leave and go to the next search result listing until they find what they want. In other words, they expect to be sent from the search results





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directly to a page deep in your site where they instantly see what they are looking for. This is called *deep linking*.

Deep linking is especially important when you are buying keywords. Make sure the listings you put out there go directly to the content on your site related to the keyword being searched.

## Step 6: Create Effective Landing Pages

In some cases, deep linking is not enough. You may want to create custom pages for people coming from your link. You customized the copy of your link to match specific needs and interests of people who would be entering a given search term. You may also want to customize the content on the first web page they see. Custom landing pages like this are sometimes called *doorway pages*.

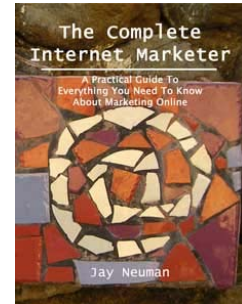
Making a copy of your web page with alternate versions of the messaging, images or offer is easy and inexpensive. This can greatly increase conversions from your search engine traffic.

## Step 7: Monitor and Improve

Finally, it is absolutely essential that you monitor the results of all keyword spending and continuously improve your program. This is easy to do. The search engine will provide simple reports showing all keyword buys with details about the results each generated. You can then fairly easily set up a report from your Web Analytics software to show the conversions resulting from each.

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Behavior on the Internet is constantly changing. Keywords and copy that perform well this month may not next month. You should be constantly monitoring for drops in performance and make adjustments. Also, continue to try new search terms. Slight changes in click-thru or conversion rates can make a big difference in your bottom line.

There are seven core metrics for Search Engine Marketing campaigns.

## Key SEM Metrics and Typical Areas for Improvement

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. # of Impressions               | → Measure the reach of your ad spend<br>Optimize spend for most effective keywords                      |
| 2. Keyword Ranking                | → Measure results by rank to optimize budget  |
| 3. Click-thru Rate                | → Targeting the right keywords<br>Effective copy  |
| 4. Conversion Rate                | → Targeting the right keywords<br>Effective landing pages / deep linking                                |
| 5. Cost Per Conversion            | → Optimize spend for most effective keywords  |
| 6. Variable Results (by keywords) | → Targeted versions of link copy<br>Custom landing pages by source<br>Eliminate non-productive keywords |
| 7. Decreasing Results             | → Freshness of keywords targeted<br>Updated content on landing pages<br>Broken links                    |

By collecting information about these seven metrics, you will know what is working and what is not working. You can then use this information to continuously improve future Search Engine Marketing efforts.

*It is impossible to know if your SEM efforts are successful unless you measure both click-thurs and conversions*



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## Conclusion

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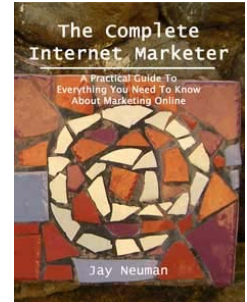
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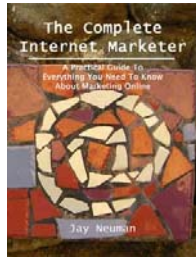


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