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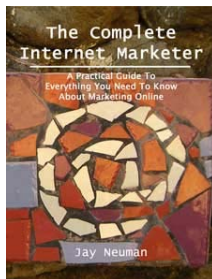


The Complete Internet Marketer

How To Be Successful With Search Engine Optimization *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
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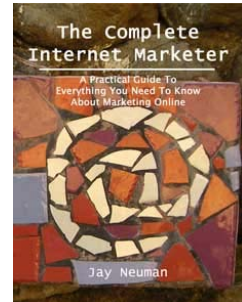
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Getting Started With Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization is the most important thing you can do to bring traffic to your website. In the “Search Before the Purchase” report of 2005, DoubleClick and ComScore Networks found that roughly half of all online buyers perform a related search before they make their purchase. If your website does not show up in the search, then you have missed the opportunity to reach that customer. But how do you make sure your website gets listed? It does not have to be a mystery.

Search engines have programs called *spiders* that scour the Internet looking for web pages to list in their search results. *Search Engine Optimization* is web-speak for organizing content on your website so the spiders will find your web pages and list them in the top search results. Professionals in the field usually just call it *SEO* for short.

The secret to successful SEO is found in following these seven easy steps.

- Step 1:** Make it easy to spiders to find your site
- Step 2:** Make it easy for spiders to “crawl” your site
- Step 3:** Optimize keywords
- Step 4:** Create content pages optimized for different keywords
- Step 5:** Get linked to from other sites
- Step 6:** Create a “Robots.txt” file
- Step 7:** Monitor and improve





Step 1: Make It Easy for Spiders to Find Your Site

The first step in getting listed by search engines is to make sure they find your website to list it. Luckily, search engines help with this. They will allow you to submit your website to them to be spidered. The easiest way to be found by a search engine is to submit your site to them. Identify the search engines you want to be listed on, go to their websites and find out their submission requirements.

Submitting your website to search engines will get you listed. But, it can sometimes take a long time. In addition to submitting your web pages to search engines, it is also important to optimize your website so it is easy for search engines to find it. There are really two things that search engines do that affect them finding your site. First, you must have URLs that are easy for spiders to read. This is discussed in the next section. Second, you should try to get your website linked to from other popular websites. Since spiders find websites by following links, they will find your site as they are crawling other sites.

***Spiders find
websites and
pages by
following links
from one page
to another***

Step 2: Make It Easy for Spiders to "Crawl" Your Site

Once a spider finds your home page, it will follow the links on the page to other pages on your site. Then it will evaluate each of those pages. This is called *crawling*. An easy way to make sure the spiders crawl the pages you want listed is to create a site map page linked to the home page. If this page contains links to all the pages you want crawled, then each page is only two links away from the home page.





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In addition to having a site map of links that spiders can follow, it is also important to have URLs that spiders can read. Many websites dynamically generate URLs for some of their web pages that rely on information pulled from a database. This is a very good idea for efficient website design, but it throws up a roadblock for spiders trying to crawl your website. Spiders are designed to read words and phrases. They often will completely ignore parameters that appear in dynamically generated web pages. For large, dynamically generated websites, this can be a complex issue. However, if you follow two simple rules, you will be ahead of the game:

- ✓ A fixed path is easy to read. Dynamically generated URLs with parameters are hard for search engines to read.
- ✓ English words are easy to read. Numbers and alphanumeric codes are hard for search engines to read.

Step 3: Optimize Keywords

People find what they are looking for on the Internet by entering keywords into a search engine. The search engine finds your web page by matching those keywords to words and phrases on your site. The next step to getting your web pages listed is to learn what keywords people are most likely to use to find your site. Then make sure those words and phrases are strategically placed in places the search engines look. Optimizing keywords on your web pages is the heart of search engine optimization.

There are three critical things you must do with your keywords, once you have decided what they are:

***Three ways
keywords can
work for you:***

- 1. Keyword density***
- 2. Meta tags***
- 3. Position on the page***





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1. Keyword Density

Keywords should appear more than once on your web page to get a high ranking by the search engines. However, if they appear too often on the page, the search engine will see it as a way to trick the search engine and will push the page into a lower ranking. Search engines look at the amount of times the keyword appears on your page as a percentage of total words on the page. This is called *keyword density*.

2. Meta Tags

Each web page can contain a title, keywords and a page description. These are placed in hidden locations on the web page called *Meta Tags*. They do not show up on the page, but the search engine can see them. The Title, Description and Keywords meta tags give web developers a way to categorize their own web pages. So, this is the first place search engines look to determine what words are most relevant to the page. The keywords that are most relevant to the web page should appear in these meta tags.

Many people try to trick search engines by loading their meta tags with keywords that are not directly related to the content of the page. As with keyword density, putting too much into your meta tags will push your search results listing down. Your search engine ranking may also be reduced by having words in your meta tags that do not also appear in the body of the page.

The Title and sometimes the first few words in the Description will show up in the search results listing. These two meta tags should be considered as advertising copy. Care should be taken to provide wording that people will want to click on.





3. Position on Page

Third, search engines look for the location of words on the page to determine how relevant they are to that page. The HTML code on your web page can identify titles and subject headers. Keywords appearing in these are considered important to the page. Also, keywords appearing closer to the top of the page are considered more important than words appearing lower on the page.

By identifying which keywords you expect your target audience to be searching for and then following these three guidelines, you will obtain high search result rankings for your most important keywords.

Step 4: Create Content Pages Optimized for Different Keywords

You may want your website to appear in the search results for many different keywords. If you have an online store, you would probably want to appear for all of your best selling products. If you offer a service to business clients, you may want to appear in listings for all of the target industries you service. The challenge is that you cannot optimize one web page to rank high for all of these different keywords. The answer is to create content pages relevant to each of these keywords. Then optimize these content pages to rank high for their targeted keywords.

An online store could create buyer guides for each of their top product categories. A business-to-business supplier could create custom pages tailored to the needs of each target industry. Another common practice is to create an area on your website for archived articles you have written. These pages will be rich in keywords related to the topic at

Archive old newsletter articles on your website. They are rich in keywords for search engines to find





hand. If you further optimize these pages for those keywords, search engines will direct traffic to them. Then, design the layout of your article pages and other custom pages to draw people from those pages into the main areas of your website.

Step 5: Get Linked to from Other Sites

Getting other sites to place links to your site is another essential part of your search engine strategy. Search engines look at the amount of times your website is linked to from other sites when ranking your web page. In general, the more links you have coming to your site the better it is for your ranking. If your site is linked to from other high ranking sites, that will do even more for your ranking.

To get links from other sites, the basic rule is to have content that users on other websites will find useful. Then, find those websites where your content will make a contribution. Once you find those sites, you will pursue getting both *reciprocal links* and *one-way links*.

1. Reciprocal Links

Reciprocal links are links from websites that you also link to. This is a tit-for-tat situation. When you have compiled your list of websites, look for websites with content you would like your website to link to. Then place a link to their website on your own site. After you have linked to them, contact the owner of the website directly and ask to have your link placed on their site. All websites are in the same boat. They all need to be linked to in order to get higher rankings. So most will be open to your request. There are also services that specialize in helping you find reciprocal links.

***Reciprocal
Links (good)
One-Way
Links (better)***





2. One-Way Links

Reciprocal links are important. However, to get a high ranking, you must also have one-way links. These are links from sites that you are not also linking to. Search engines look for both types of link when determining their ranking. The basic rule applies. Have web content that is worth being linked to. If you are targeting your website to a niche audience, then create content that is especially useful to that niche. Other sites serving the same niche will want to link to your site. It helps them serve their customers. This process can take time, though. As your site obtains higher search ranking, more sites will find you and want to link to your content. But, of course, you need to get those links to get the higher ranking. To get beyond this, you can look for websites that allow you to submit content to them that will contain links back to your site.

A good way to get one-way links is to find websites that publish and archive articles related to the content on your site. Once you find these, submit articles to them. When they publish your article and store it in their archive, you will get a link back to your site.

Also, look for websites that act as information clearinghouses, with links to other sites. Find business directories that cater to your industry or niche issue. Then submit your website to be listed by them. If you have created content that can be offered as a free download, you can submit it to download sites. If you have a blog on your website, submit it to be listed in blog directories.

It used to be a common technique to try and trick search engines by creating a variety of websites,





then having them all link to each other. This is called *crosslinking*. As with most ways people have tried to trick search engines, this one has been found out also. Crosslinking is not prohibited by search engines. It is only natural for a family of websites to link to each other. However, too much crosslinking will be noticed and hurt your ranking.

Step 6: Create a Robots.txt File

The main reason for search engine optimization is, of course, to get search engines to find and list your web pages. However, there are often pages that you do not want them to find. You may have an area of your website for customers, that you do not want the general public going to. You may have pages that simply serve as redirect pages which record click stream information on the way to other content pages. Some websites have pages that run interactive software which do not work with automated robots. There are many reasons why you may not want a particular page listed.

The search engines do not want to go to these pages either. They would like for you to tell them which pages they can skip. You can do this by creating a small text file called the *robots.txt* file. This file sits at the root directory of your website. It is the first thing search engines look for when they arrive at your website. The *robots.txt* file contains instructions to search engines on which pages to skip over.

Some search engines will not spider a website if a *robots.txt* file is not present. You should create one even if there are no pages to exclude. Search engines will see the blank file and proceed to spider all of your web pages.

Arachnophobia ?

To block spiders from crawling a page on your site, list the page in your robots.txt file



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Step 7: Monitor and Improve

Getting your website to show up in search results does not need to be a mystery. By following these seven steps, your web pages will appear in your customers' search results. It is an iterative process. Your first pass at it may not yield the results you were hoping for. Keep at it. Think of these seven steps as seven levers you keep adjusting until you find the right balance. When you find that balance, your site will consistently appear in the first page of search results for relevant keywords. Then, keep tracking your results. Things will change over time. SEO is a process you should expect to repeat periodically. It is a relatively small investment in time that will yield you big results.

Each search engine has things it looks for when finding and ranking web pages. Things like the format of your URLs or the optimal keyword density vary from engine to engine. Research what the search engines you want to be listed on are looking for. Optimize your site for those search engines. This changes over time, so you must repeat this exercise periodically.

Conclusion

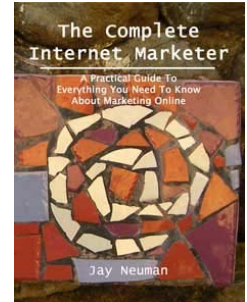
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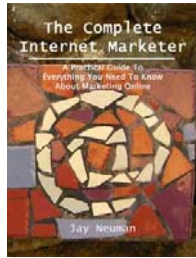


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