

SEO Best Practices

The centrality of search engines in how we discover what is on the Internet has led to a variety of tactics – some natural and some requiring payment – to improve placement in order to increase exposure and increase visitors. The ways to increase traffic are dependent on a number of factors such as competition for specific key words, web history, and the organic inclusion of SEO in the site construction. This article is about SEO best practices and how the little steps you can take to improve your website and web practices will result in big results.

The best practices Tudog recommends in this article are not ours alone, but rather the culmination of tactics being used by just about every SEO expert (and there are many) selling their services to companies seeking to make the most of their websites. To be sure, SEO is a necessary and critical part of a company's web strategy, as the efficacy of a website is severely restricted when there are no channels driving visitors. The search engines are the most effective channels because they are they primary way people get sent to sites (affiliate sites is also useful, but less so).

The use of SEO best practices will not lead your site automatically to the number spot on Google, Yahoo! and MSN. In fact, if you in a competitive set of keywords, your SEO will only serve to rank you higher than your natural ranking, but not necessarily into a spot that will drive non-targeted traffic. This limitation of SEO, basically because your actions are being duplicated by many other companies seeking the same preferential spot on the engines, does not mean SEO is a waste of time. Quite the opposite – it demonstrates its importance because without SEO your website will get buried and rapidly become irrelevant.

The SEO best practices Tudog recommends are:

1. Do Your Research

You may think you know which keywords your market is typing into the search engine query box, but you will be sure you know if you do the research. The search engines provide ways for you to determine which keywords are most likely to be used when a searcher is seeking your products. These are the words you need to use on your homepage and throughout your website.

2. Be Simple

We understand the temptation to use the latest and fanciest technologies that allow you to flash animation or great graphics in front of your visitors. For some sites we even understand the logic in that the site is for a high tech or design company and the flash beginning serves as a marketing tool to show off your capabilities. However, flash and graphics do not get picked up as well as HTML on the search engines, so what you are gaining from a marketing perspective once people arrive at your site you are losing in the channels you need in order to get them there in the first place. This makes the flash a net loss from a marketing perspective as well.

3. Compromise

Sometimes search engine best practices and marketing best practices collide. For example, the text of your homepage and website need to be carefully constructed in order to maximize your search engine appeal. This will include the repetition of certain keywords and phrases you want the search engines to pick up on. From a marketing perspective, the text may be compromised, but when you weigh in the improved attractiveness of your website (to the search engines), chances are you can find a way to satisfy your marketing integrity and meet the repetition needs.

4. Focus on Title Tags and Text

There was a time when conventional wisdom directed web designers to meta tags as a way of getting select text (keywords) picked up by the search engines. The meta tag structure – both a brief summary description of the site and the keywords you want people to use in order to find your site – is less critical to the search engines than the title tag and the structure of your text. Meta tags are useful, not for ranking, but rather for description as some search engines will use the meta tag as the narrative accompanying your site listing.

5. Recognize the Importance of Location

Your website text needs to respect the rules of location and you need to make sure your text provides visitors (and search engines) the information they need without roaming around too much to get it. Like a magazine article, you want your text to have a headline that gives an indication of the subject and draws further interest. Then you want to present the facts in a direct way, and only then can you delve deeper into the less relevant but equally interesting points. By doing this you are making certain that your website will be picked up by the search engines and engaged by visitors once found and entered.

6. Submit Your Site

Ranking on the search engines is a combination of having your keywords match and being deemed by the search engines as being “most relevant” for the specific search. The criterion for keywords is based on matches of the words you inject into your website and/or submit to the search engines. Some engines use processes that require human interaction with your keywords, while others use “spiders” that crawl the web looking for keywords. On the spider generated sites you need to make sure you have the keywords positioned right on your site or they will not get picked up (the importance of location). The criterion for relevancy is generally how many websites are linked to yours, indicating some degree of importance. You can enhance your positioning by linking to websites that are relevant to yours.

7. Monitor and Adjust

Just as Tudog advises with every marketing tactic, you should always make certain to monitor the performance of your efforts and make adjustments as necessary so you can maximize your results. In the case of your website and its attractiveness to search engines, you want to monitor keywords and what your audience is searching for, and how. Then you can use this information to adjust the keywords you are using, driving better results.

The search engines are the gateway to your website and your website is a key component in your marketing infrastructure. Engaging in search engine optimization is an important part of positioning your company for greater exposure and higher sales. Leveraging the power of the Internet is nearly impossible without SEO. Doing all you can to gain solid ranking will bring the power to you.