

The Myth of Search Engine Optimization

Google is now an institution. The word can now be used in any grammatical form and has become synonymous with web searching. And what is driving a good portion of its revenues is a mad rush by companies to occupy the first 10 spots (page one) of a search. To this end people are buying keywords, the value of which goes up as demand for the keywords increase, and paying firms sometimes thousands of dollars a month to maintain high search engine placement. It all boils down to lead generation, and it has gotten out of hand.

There are only 10 spots in the top 10 spots. This might seem like a repetitive statement, but it is making a point. For companies to be selling the availability of 10 spots to thousands of companies makes for a mathematical anomaly that all the keyword buying in the world won't be able to solve. The danger of all this madness is that, like with the original internet boom, the SEO (search engine optimization) boom will go bust as more and more companies get tired of spending money for results that somehow always seem to get replaced by excuses.

There are ways to naturally secure a reasonable position on search engines. They include:

- **Embed Keywords in Your Content** – the placement of keywords (words you want your website to be categorized as and words you want the search engines to pick up on) in your page title and throughout your content will allow the search engine spiders to identify your site as you wish to be identified and place your site as part of searches for the words you select. The placement of the most critical keywords in the title tag will result in a higher search placement because the search engines place the title as the clickable link on the search engine results page. Once upon a time meta tags and meta keywords were used by search engines to evaluate content and search relevancy. This is not done anymore, partly because spammers abused it, and partly because the search engines could not figure out a way to monetize it (as they have with keyword purchases). The use of meta tags and keywords within your content is still helpful though in that they are often what is used in the description of your company on the search engine results page. By the way, make sure that while you are creating content that will be noticed by the search engines you don't wind up creating content that is either incomprehensible or irrelevant to your readers. It makes no sense putting all this effort into getting people to visit your site if they can't understand a word of what you've written once they get there.
- **Have a Proper Architecture** – search engines cannot index pages that are more than two clicks away from your homepage, which is about the same distance the average web user is willing to travel to get at your information. It is therefore necessary to make certain that the structure of your website is constructed to maximize both search engine indexing and usability. In this case the two converge, so it is an easy condition to agree to execute.
- **Generate Link Relationships** – to some extent, search engines rank according to some estimation of your site's popularity. One of the parameters they use is how many other sites are linked to yours. So you need to develop affiliate and other relationships that link their website to yours. This too is consistent with general good web marketing, and therefore should not arouse too much resistance.

Search engine placement cannot come at the expense of your traditional and online marketing programs. It could, perhaps, be a component of your integrated plan, but you need to make certain it does not take over your other activities. The lure of the search engine – this idea that leads are generated by the lead itself – is very seductive, and the reason why so many companies have forsaken much of their other marketing activity for the full time management of their keyword purchasing and search engine optimization activities.

There have always been preferred places to advertise and there have always been preferred ways to generate leads – and often the only companies able to avail themselves of these top-tier opportunities were those with the financial resources to do so. Just as Time magazine has but one back cover to sell, Google has but 10 top spots for the keywords you want. If you have the means to purchase your place on that page, and you deem it to be a productive use of your marketing dollars, then you should do it. However, if you do not have the resources, and you are nonetheless spending money because some web marketing firm is promising you better placement, you are most likely throwing your good money away. Even with the pay-per-click model, which serves to reduce some of your risk, you are still paying for keyword purchase services and most likely other related services. Without spending real money you are either getting sub-par keywords or you are being placed well after the first three pages - and very few people bother searching after the third search engine results page.

If you don't believe us, google it. You'll see.