

Search Engine Optimization

What is it?

Did you know that 90% of Internet surfers use search engines such as Google and Yahoo to locate specific products and services? In order for these potential clients to find your Web site, it has to be optimized correctly for the search engine spiders to recognize it. Effective search engine optimization will significantly increase your company's Web presence.

Most people new to search engine optimization are under the false assumption that once they submit their site to a list of search engines, they will automatically achieve high search engine rankings. In reality, search engine optimization goes far beyond simply submitting your site. Below are just a few tips on basic search engine optimization.

Search engines rank sites by relevancy and will consider a variety of factors when ranking a Web site, including:

Meta tags: Meta tags are HTML tags that provide information describing the content of the pages a user will be viewing. In order for meta tags to be effective, they need to correspond to the Web page they are associated with. To do so, your meta tags must equal the content on the page and not over glorify what the site is about.

Web site content: Let's face it, people visit Web sites for content — they want information. Sure, it helps if your site is visibly appealing as well. But, without the right content, the results of the user experience can be fatal to your business. They simply won't come back. Search engines rank Web

sites based on how much content they have and how relevant it is to the search term query.

Site design: Your site should be easy to navigate for users and search engine spiders alike. You can do this by adding static navigation links on each page.

Choosing a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) company

Getting a Web site to the top of the search engine lists is a business in itself, and with many companies out there that claim to specialize in search engine optimization, it is critical that you choose wisely. The wrong SEO company can potentially cause irreversible harm to your company's Web presence. Follow these steps when choosing a SEO company:

1. Check out the search engine optimization firm's past business history.
2. Do some investigating on your own. Where is the search engine optimization company ranked on the major search engines, such as Google,

AOL, and MSN? This practice is often overlooked by people who are in the search engine optimization market. Remember, if the SEO company you are about to contract with can't rank themselves high on the lists, how do they expect to rank your Web site?

3. "Humans do it better." Stay away from companies that are 100% computer automated. With search engine algorithms changing at a moment's notice, computer programs are not always updated with the most current data. Also, computers are great when it comes to assisting a search engine optimization expert, but in order for him to properly optimize your site, he needs to research your company first, something a computer program can't do.

4. Always ask the search engine optimization company how they rank sites. Do they use any unethical practices, such as cloaking, doorway pages or

hidden links/hidden text? These practices are considered taboo by search engines and when they discover these tactics used on your Web site, they may ban your site. Not only will you lose your ranking, but you will also lose the money you put into a search engine optimization service.

5. Make sure you can easily reach the company you hire — whether via email or phone. You want to connect with a human voice to ensure you will get the customer service you deserve. Remember this is your business — get your questions answered BEFORE you buy.

About WorkingDialogue

By combining strategic thinking, creative design, and marketing expertise, WorkingDialogue helps entrepreneurs, businesses, and organizations meet their marketing and communications objectives — creating brand awareness, impacting behavior, and generating new opportunities. WorkingDialogue designs and produces marketing literature, Web sites, corporate identity and print advertising.

WorkingDialogue 1022 Violet Avenue Hyde Park NY 12538 tel: 845-233-4217 www.workingdialogue.com