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Ceonex White Papers

Top Ten Methods to Improve Your Search Engine Rankings

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Ceonex, Inc., 189 Beaver St., Suite #204, North Adams, MA 01247

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is absolutely critical to the success of your web site. BUT... it's not enough to simply have your web site listed by today's most popular search engines. What's absolutely critical is being ranked in their top thirty selections (and ideally, in their top ten) when someone is searching for a business like yours.

And that's where SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION comes in...

Increasing your search engine rankings should certainly be one of your main goals if you are looking to increase your targeted traffic. The reason for this is if you improve your search engine rankings, you'll increase the amount of visitors your website receives, and when you increase traffic to your site you are going to increase customers and sales. All of this potential has companies spending a lot of time and money getting their pages in the top ten results on large, popular search engines like Google. There are only ten spots on the first page of a search and thousands upon thousands of web pages are competing for these top spots. You have to put together an SEO marketing plan and include some of the proven ways to increase your search engine rankings today. Read the following suggestions, implement them in your marketing plan, and watch your traffic increase!

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1. - Get Links

If you do not have links to your website on other sites, you can forget getting a top rating. The reason for this is that many of the top search engines, and even some of the smaller ones, are searching for the amount of links on the Internet that are linked to your website. The more you have means the more popular your website and the higher weight it will be given. However, if you do not have links to your website, it is not the end of the world because it is fairly easy to get links via reciprocal linking. Define where you want these links to come from. Brainstorm every possible topic that may relate to your topic without competing with it. Start today and watch your website rise in the search results.

2. – Define your Target Keywords

Brainstorm every possible word someone might type into a search engine if they didn't know of any website on the topic of their interest. Imagine yourself as new to your topic, not knowing the main words that apply. Think of what your customers / prospects would be likely to type into a search engine in an attempt to find the information / services your site offers.

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3. - Do Keyword Research

You need a keyword campaign if you want to compete with other websites for the top search results. Survey past and potential customers to find out what phrases and keywords they would use. The reason for this is many of the top search engines base their results on the keywords searched for and the existence of these keywords in your website copy. However, it is very important to understand how keywords work and how to incorporate them into your website effectively. The best thing to do is research keywords and how to use them online to adequately incorporate this element into your marketing campaign. By conducting keyword research intelligently you should be able to find quite a few keyword phrases with small amounts of traffic, but more importantly, phrases that contain your main keywords.

4. - Submit Your URL

This might sound obvious, but too many people never submit their URL to the big search engines, then they just sit back and wait and hope the search engine spiders pick up their site and index it. Do not waste time waiting for this when you can submit your URL and get indexed much quicker. However, read the rules and regulations for submitting your URL to search engines and know what they are looking for so you'll be sure to meet all of the requirements.

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5. – Use a simple, yet well-written and concise URL

The URL of a document should ideally be as descriptive and brief as possible. If, for example, your site's structure has several levels of files and navigation, the URL should reflect this with folders and subfolders. Individual page's URLs should also be descriptive without being overly lengthy, so that a visitor who sees only the URL could have a good idea of what to expect on the page. For example, a URL such as http://www.yoursite.com/site_map.html is much more search-engine friendly (and user-friendly as well) than a URL such as http://www.yoursite.com/sm.html or even http://www.yoursite.com/542879.asp.

6. – Have Relevant Content

Changing your page titles is not necessarily going to help your page do well for your target keywords if the page has nothing to do with the topic. Your keywords need to be reflected in the page's content!

In particular, that means you need HTML text on your page. Sometimes sites present large sections of print via graphics. It looks pretty, but search engines can't read those graphics. That means they miss out on text that may make your site more relevant. Some of the search engines will index comment information. But to be safe, use HTML text whenever possible. Your human visitors will appreciate it, also.

Be sure that your HTML text is "visible." Some designers try to spam search engines by repeating keywords in a tiny font or in the same color at the background color to make the text invisible to browsers. Search engines are catching on to these and other tricks. Expect that if the text is not visible in a browser, then it may not be indexed by a search engine.

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Finally, consider "expanding" your text references, where appropriate. For example, a web design page might have references to "designers" and "designing." Expanding these references to "web designers" and "web designing" reinforces your strategic keywords in a legitimate and natural manner. Your page really is about web design, but edits may have reduced its relevancy unintentionally.

7. – Avoid Search Engine Stumbling Blocks

Some search engines see the web the way someone using a very old browser might. They may not read image maps. They may not read frames. You need to anticipate these problems, or a search engine may not index any or all your web pages.

Certain types of navigation may prevent search engines from reaching your websites content. Complex links and deep site structures with little unique content may serve as bumps. Such as pages with more than one hundred unique links to other pages on the site (spiders may not follow each one), or pages requiring a "Session ID" or Cookie to enable navigation, since spiders may not be able to retain these elements as a browser user can. Also, pages that are split into "frames" can prevent crawling and cause confusion about which pages to rank in the results. Data that cannot be accessed by spiderable links qualify as walls. For example, pages accessible only via a select form and submit button, pages requiring a login, or pages that require a drop down menu to access them.

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8. - Submit Your Key Pages

Most search engines will index the other pages from your web site by following links from a page you submit to them. But sometimes they miss, so it's good to submit the top two or three pages that best summarize your web site.

Don't trust the submission process to automated programs and services. Some of them are excellent, but the major search engines are too important. There aren't that many, so submit manually, so that you can see if there are any problems reported.

Also, don't bother submitting more than the top two or three pages. It doesn't speed up the process. Submitting alternative pages is only insurance. In case the search engine has trouble reaching one of the pages, you've covered yourself by giving it another page from which to begin its crawl of your site.

Be patient. It can take up to a month to two months for your "non-submitted" pages to appear in a search engine, and some search engines may not list every page from your site.

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9. – Monitor your content, keywords, and listings often.

Once your pages are listed in a search engine, monitor your content and listings' every so often making sure that your site is always up-to-date. Keep your content and listings fresh instead of letting them go stale and unnoticed. Strange things happen. Pages disappear from catalogs. Links go screwy. Watch for trouble, and resubmit if you spot it.

Resubmit your site any time you make significant changes. Search engines should revisit on a regular schedule. However, some search engines have grown smart enough to realize some sites only change content once or twice a year, so they may visit less often. Resubmitting after major changes will help ensure that your site's content is kept current.

10. – Make Use of a Sitemap

It's wise to have the sitemap page linked to from every other page in the site, or at the least from important high-level category pages and the home page. The sitemap should, ideally, offer links to all of the site's internal pages. However, if more than 100-150 pages exist on the site, a wiser system is to create a sitemap that will link to all of the category level pages, so that no page in a site is more than 2 clicks from the home page. For exceptionally large sites, the rule can be expanded to 3 clicks from the home page.

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About Ceonex

Established in the USA in 1998, Ceonex is a proven global Internet consulting and development company helping clients to create and implement full-service digital business solutions. Combining diverse expertise in business strategy, technology, usability and design, Ceonex produces highly scalable business solutions and online user experiences.

Enabling businesses to heighten brand awareness, Ceonex strengthens customers' competitive advantage and provides them with opportunities to increase revenues and enhance productivity.

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Client Quote

"...outstanding design work and timely implementation... a fabulous website that accurately captures both our mission and spirit..."

W. Michael Draper, CTO, NetworkWorld, Inc.