



How to Make Sure the Search Engines Find You

Search Engine Optimization (SEO), simplified

Are you envious of competitors whose names pop up on the first page of a Google search? Following some basic search engine optimization (SEO) rules can help put your results ahead of your competitors and lead customers to your door.

The most important thing is to get started. Here are five steps you can take today to make it easier for your customers to find you through Google and other search engines.

Come up with a list of key words and search terms. Search engines match people's needs and interests with information most relevant to them by crawling the web looking for key words associated with the subject of the search. So think of the key words and phrases your customer targets are most likely to use, write them down, and use them on your site and in all your marketing materials.

Use your key words to develop messages. Articulate your product and company story with a brief mission statement and set of messages that use the key words and phrases. Make your selling messages concise (under 25 words), make sure they articulate a clearly differentiated value proposition, and then use them over and over to reinforce your story.

Search-optimize your web site. Keep the copy concise, and make sure key words and messages are on every page. Ensure that your site developer

or web master has also embedded the search words in the coding of each page. For instance, every page has a title that appears in searchers' web browsers; make sure the titles and page descriptions include your key words. Web crawlers look for these meta-description tags first and often display them in the search result.

Search-optimize your news releases. Make sure your key words and phrases are included in the headline, the sub-head and the first paragraph. Web crawlers look at the first 100 words of a news release first and weigh those results most heavily. If the lead of your news release includes search terms your customers use, they will find you quickly.

Get your news onto the most popular sites on the web. Getting your news release noticed by big news aggregators on the web such as Google News and Yahoo! News isn't as hard as it may seem. Google News may pick up your release from your search-optimized site and broadcast it right away, so use a newswire distribution service. CisionWire puts your release in front of 50,000 direct subscribers and onto more than 3,500 websites, one million financial desktops, and thousands of media outlets – including major wire services.

If you take these small steps today, you should notice an immediate improvement in search traffic coming your way. When you build on these efforts, you'll soon watch your name move higher and higher on search engines' rankings.