

# Engines and Spiders and Surfers, Oh My

By Aimee Cremasco

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Aimee Cremasco  
jennifer@ecombuffet.com

GuaranteedTopRankings.com <http://www.GuaranteedTopRankings.com>

(Why search engine optimization is alive, well, and kicking –  
and as crucial as ever to the success and profitability of your business)

By Aimee Cremasco, President, Word Associates

“If you build it, they will come...”

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While this is a great line from one of my all time favorite movies, “Field of Dreams,” it is frighteningly also a principle that far too many web site owners inexplicably live by.

Let’s face it. In the world of online marketing, “building it” means nothing. The new mantra must be “If you PROMOTE it, they will come.”

So what’s the best way to promote it?

Virtually all credible third party statistics would suggest search engine optimization.

Consider the following statistics, courtesy of [www.GuaranteedTopRankings.com](http://www.GuaranteedTopRankings.com) :

- In a study released by ActivMedia Research, Search Engine Positioning was ranked the #1 web site promotional method used by eCommerce sites.

- Search engines create more awareness about Web sites than all advertising combined including banners, newspapers, TV and radio (IMT Strategies, a division of the Meta Group).

The cold, hard truth is that if you’re not successfully optimizing your site (and if it’s not search engine friendly), you’re losing hundreds and thousands of hits from the very people you most want to visit your site – people who demonstrate a serious desire for what you have to offer, by proactively typing keywords related to YOUR business into the engines.

So what SEO (search engine optimization) techniques are working and producing results in 2003? While an entire book is probably needed to fully answer this question, here are a few useful components of search engine friendly sites:

- Less is more—avoid using frames, java script and database-driven text.
- Professional copywriting

- Keyword-rich text (in your tags as well) will make or break your site.

Simply put, here's what search engines do. They have "robots" that scour the Internet and gather up standard keywords, titles and descriptions. This knowledge is a powerful tool for webmasters, giving them some control over how their pages are ranked, which in turn determines how they appear in the search results.

We can't stress enough that content is king! The single most important aspect of your web site is how and where you've placed keywords and phrases — and which keywords you've chosen for your keyword tag. Think about what your prospects would type into a search box of an engine to find you. Those should be your keywords. The description tag follows closely on the heels of keywords, as it helps engines determine if the site is relevant to the search.

The page title tag is next in line of importance. It influences where your web site will rank within an engine. Keep it down to a maximum of 60 characters (including spaces), and place it at the top of the HTML code between TITLE and /TITLE.

Search engines also use hyperlink popularity to determine your ranking. This means that it's important to have as many links to and from as many other sites as you possibly can. Talk with other reputable web sites —that relate in some way to yours —about a link-swap campaign, wherein each of you will provide a link to the other's site. The bonus to this is that each time someone visits this web site, they'll see the link to your web site, which can increase your traffic results.

Needless to say, search engine submission is vital to your online campaign as well. Your primary focus should be getting listed with the top 20 search engines, which are the most heavily trafficked. More than 97% of all search engine traffic comes from the 20 most popular engines and directories. Once you've accomplished that, you can move on to some of the smaller engines. Being listing with the little guys will actually help boost your rankings with the bigger guys.

Why focus specifically on the top 20 placements? Rarely will anyone look any further — and if your prospects don't find what they're looking for in those first 20 spots (and what they're looking for is you), they'll simply try again with a different search.

As the public becomes more educated about the importance of SEO, the competition for top-20 rankings becomes fierce. If your web site is not search engine friendly, better step to it —without one, you'll be left in the dust... leaving your competitors to snatch up what could have been your profits!

If you're thinking that getting these elusive top 20 placements on your own seems quite daunting (if not downright impossible), I don't blame you. Which is why a wise and logical investment for many businesses is to outsource this important task to a full service SEO firm who makes it their full time business to optimize sites and achieve top placements.

After all, shouldn't you let your SEO expert worry about these arcane (but very important) issues; and focus your own time where it's most valuable...growing your business and serving your customers?

Aimee Cremasco  
President - Word Associates

Aimee Cremasco founded Word Associates in 1999. She has been writing for various industries online, and has experienced many SEO companies. Aimee recommends [GuaranteedTopRankings.com](http://GuaranteedTopRankings.com), to all her clients. Aimee is not compensated for this

recommendation; it comes solely from complete satisfaction in working with GuaranteedTopRankings.com due to their level of professionalism and up to the minute SEO knowledge.

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