

Rank higher on the search engines with these tips....

By Chris Kalaboukis

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I get a lot of questions on how to go about optimizing and submitting sites to search engines. Here is a short to do list of items which can help in that quest:

1. Review

Review recent log file reports of the existing site to determine where the majority of current customers are being referred to the site from. From this list we can determine the most effective search engines to target in the optimization. Focus your efforts on these engines. If the site is new and has no traffic, you can skip this step.

2. Create

Create a list of search words and phrases. This list should include a minimum of 3 words and or phrases, and a maximum of 10 words and/or phrases in order of preference. The selection of these keywords is critical. The following criteria should be used in the selection of the words/phrases:

- The more key words (phrases) stressed, the less each one will become emphasized
- Review customer demographic studies to ascertain which words a customer interested in your site would type into a search engine.
- There is intense competition for keywords – more generic terms will not yield better results – you should use field specific jargon if your customer is likely to use it as well.
- Perform a baseline test of these words/phrases by searching the top 10 search engines and recording the results using software which tracks the position of the site on these engines, or can do this manually.

3. Optimize

- Craft a description that will provide optimal search results to manual search engines (Yahoo, LookSmart and DMOZ). This description should be crafted to be manually readable and simultaneously provide an optimal search result, using as many keywords and phrases as possible, and remaining within manual search engine length limitations. Please note that you should :

- + keep your description down to less than 20 words
- + load the description with keywords, but don't over do it
- + make sure that it is grammatically correct
- + try to keep it to one sentence, a period is a natural edit point for the editors

+ try to write the description the the style the editors like, for example, the Yahoo description tends to start with verbs like offers, provides, gives, etc.

- Craft META tags that will provide optimal search results to automated search engines (all others).
- Update your web site META tags to reflect the new description
- Review and rewrite body copy of home page

4. Submit

- Update the manual search engines with the manual search engine description. Here you only need to submit to three major engines, unless you are targeting a niche market

- Yahoo: \$199 for a business site
- Looksmart: \$199 (inlcudes excite, iwon, msn etc)
- DMOZ: free (but be nice to the moderators)

- Update the automated search engines with the current URL

- Google
- AltaVista
- AllTheWeb
- HotBot

... and any others. A good place to do this in an automated fashion is <http://www.jimtools.com>

5. Test

On a weekly basis, test your rankings, for 4 weeks, the relative positioning of your web site in relation to its baseline position to determine the effectiveness of the optimization.

6. Start all over again

After 4 weeks, start with point 1 and begin again, except for the work with the manual engines.

Its a slow process, but you should make steady progress higher up the listings.

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