

Interested in Working at Home? Consider a New Career as a Search Engine Marketer!

By Robin Nobles

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With the advent of the Internet, more and more people are looking for full- or part-time jobs in Internet-related industries. Needless to say, being able to work at home is ideal for those who can't find work in their location but who don't want to relocate. It's also ideal for those who need to work from their homes, such as mothers with small children or physically challenged individuals.

One such industry that's ripe with possibilities is search engine marketing. Before we learn more about this exciting and relatively new industry, let's find out what "search engine marketing" is all about.

Search engine marketing, also known as search engine optimization or Web positioning, deals with strategies for boosting a site's chances at top search engine rankings. In other words, it's a specialized area of online marketing that deals with visibility in the major search engines and directories.

Now, let's look at why this field is particularly attractive, especially in these tough economic times.

Virtually endless possibilities for clients --

Web sites spring up by the thousands every single day. Each one

of those new Web sites, as well as millions of existing Web sites, want and need top search engine rankings to insure the success of the site.

Every online business wants traffic from the search engines. But how do they get that traffic? By learning and applying search engine marketing strategies.

However, many online businesses don't have the time or desire to learn the strategies themselves. That's why search engine marketers are in such demand.

But where can you find clients? Targeting niche markets can be a great way to build a local, small business. Join your Chamber of Commerce and target local businesses with Web sites, such as realtors, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, limo services, local hotels, and more.

You can also partner with local Web developers to offer the SEO piece to them and have them build it into their proposals for new Web sites. Simply offer a commission to the developer for referral traffic, and you're off and running in the local market.

Numerous avenues for employment opportunities --

With search engine marketing, you can work for a professional search engine marketing company, or you can start your own company as we mentioned above. You can work part time to supplement an existing income or to bring in additional funds for the family. Or, you can work full time.

Many search engine optimizers work part time in the industry until they build a strong client base, and then they switch to full-time search engine marketing work.

Whereas large online businesses may want to employ their own search engine optimizer or hire a professional SEO provider, smaller businesses may be interested in hiring part-time individuals to work on their sites.

So, the employment opportunities can vary greatly.

Relocation often isn't necessary --

One major advantage to a search engine marketing job is that you can often work from your own home in your own location. After all, you can do almost anything you need to do for a company's Web site from your home on your own computer system.

Some search engine optimization companies do require that their optimizers work in the company's location, but other companies hire optimizers that live anywhere in the world.

Large outlay of cash isn't needed --

Unlike many "stay at home" careers, with search engine marketing, you don't have to spend thousands of dollars in necessary equipment or supplies in order to get started. In fact, the largest expense you'll have is a computer, and if you're reading this article, you've probably already met that expense.

Other expenses include software and training:

* HTML or text editor, such as HotMetal Pro, Dreamweaver, or NotePad Pro. Visit Stroud's (<http://cws.internet.com/>) to download trial versions of many of the popular HTML or text editors. This software is what you'll use to make changes to Web pages.

* Ranking software, such as WebPosition Gold. In fact, WebPosition Gold is an excellent software that fills quite a number of needs in the search engine marketing industry. Use the program to submit pages, to check rankings, to track visitors, and more.

* Page checking software, such as Search Engine Optimizer (SEO). SEO is an easy-to-use program that runs your pages through a series of over 60 checks, then offers suggestions on how to improve the page's chances at top rankings.

To find the URL's for Gold, SEO, and other optimization software, visit: http://www.acws.com/resources_tools.html . At the top of the page, you'll find links to additional resources for training, marketing, and e-commerce.

Training is offered online --

One of the most effective ways of learning search engine marketing strategies is through a training course at the Academy of Web Specialists (http://www.academywebspecialists.com/more_info).

The Academy offers beginning and advanced courses in a variety of different formats to fit the needs and pocket books of everyone. Beginning courses start at \$99 for a PDF download, and the advanced courses begin at \$129.

Can you learn search engine marketing strategies without taking formal training? Yes and no. There are certainly free sites that offer information on how to position sites in the search engine rankings. However, the information is often not presented in a basic "how to" fashion. So, while you may be able to read and understand the concepts, will that information actually teach you how to do the work yourself?

Plus, it's crucial to make sure that you learn search engine

marketing strategies through a company that keeps up with the constant changes in the industry. In other words, if you read a few articles on search engine marketing that were written a year or two ago, chances are excellent that the concepts presented in those articles have changed considerably since written.

You need to learn the latest strategies - what's working right now - versus what was effective last year.

How long does the training last? If you take an instructor-led course with the Academy, you have up to 16 weeks to complete the training. However, you can work at a faster pace and finish much sooner. The choice is yours.

After the beginning course, you'll know the basic strategies for search engine marketing. By taking the advanced course as well, you'll be able to apply those basic strategies and learn more focused skills that will benefit you greatly in an online career.

Networking possibilities are also available online --

By "networking" with others in a particular industry, you can learn tips from those who have become successful as well as learn about job opportunities and the latest industry developments. In the search engine marketing industry, you can network online without leaving your home!

For example, numerous sites offer excellent online forums where you can meet with others in the industry and learn from their expertise. Examples of the forums are:

Search Engine Forums (<http://searchengineforums.com/>)

Spider-NetForums (<http://forums.spider-food.net/>)

Webmaster World (<http://www.webmasterworld.com/>)

MarketPositionTalk (<http://www.marketpositiontalk.com>)

For the benefit of their students, the Academy of Web Specialists offers five or six chat sessions every week on a variety of topics. These sessions are led by experts in the industry, and guest speakers are frequently invited to lead various discussions. To see the current month's chat schedule, visit: <http://www.onlinewebtraining.com/chat/schedule.html> .

Enjoy a good challenge?

If you enjoy challenging work, search engine marketing is a perfect career choice for you. It's a constantly changing and evolving industry that requires keeping up with the latest developments and a willingness to change tactics when new strategies come along.

One thing for sure: it's never boring!

In conclusion . . .

If you're in the market for a new online career, or even a career to supplement your existing occupation, consider search engine marketing. With little expense and some specialized training, you'll soon be ready to venture in to this exciting new industry.

Robin Nobles is Director of Training for the Academy of Web Specialists. Robin has taught close to two thousand students in her online and onsite search engine positioning courses during the past several years. Her latest books, Web Site Analysis and Reporting and Streetwise Maximize Web Site Traffic, can be ordered through Amazon. Visit the Academy's site (http://www.academywebspecialists.com/more_info) to learn more about their search engine ranking courses and software solution.

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