

5 Keys to an Optimized Web Site

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a necessity for successful online marketing. Your business or organization should have a presence on the Internet that is quickly and easily found by prospects and customers alike. Recent studies show that more than 40 percent of those looking for local businesses search online, and that number is growing. Here are five steps for improving your search engine rankings, enhancing the odds that your business will be easily found on the Web:

1. **Have a Web site. Sounds basic.** But, to have a solid online presence, you must have a Web site. According to a Nielsen Global Online Survey, 875 million consumers worldwide have made purchases on the Web, up 40 percent from 627 million just two years ago.
2. **Clarify your goals.** Who do you want to visit your site? Once they arrive, what do you want them to do? Defining your goals will give you a roadmap to developing the right content and functionality for your site. An objective of educating prospects will yield a different site than one designed for direct orders of products and services.
3. **Include keyword-rich content.** Once you've determined the goals of your site, you can determine how to make the information most relevant to your target audience. More than 40 percent of consumers that spend time online are looking for content.* For search engines like Google and Yahoo to find your Web site, you'll need to use keywords and keyword phrases. (These are the words someone types into a search bar.) When you are writing the content for your Web site, develop the content first. Strive for 5-7 percent keyword density, or 5-7 keywords and/or keyword phrases per 100 words of text. They should be seamlessly incorporated into your Web site copy.
4. **Create a local listing.** It is quick and easy to create a local listing for your Web site. A local listing allows customers and prospects searching for your products and services to view your contact information quickly, determine your hours of operation, get directions to your location, read reviews of your company and learn about products and services you offer.
5. **Participate in social networking sites.** Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are three of the most popular social networking sites. Research suggests that \$3.1 billion will be spent on social media by 2014.** By participating on social networking sites, your Web site will move up in rankings on search engines. The more your Web site is linked to social networking sites, the more optimized it will be. Plus, social networking sites allow you to communicate one-to-one with your customers, allowing you to manage their perceptions of your business.

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