

The Importance of SEO to Small Businesses

SEO helps small business owners become creative when it comes to marketing their products and services. Large corporations have the money to spend heavily on advertising or pay advertising agencies to promote their wares, but small businesses don't have the same luxury. Fortunately, the emergence of SEO has been a major boost for small businesses.

Search Engine Optimization or SEO is creating content that utilizes keywords to help the Web site rank higher in the search results of Google and other search engines.

By nature, Internet users are a fickle bunch. When they search for anything online, they will usually check out only the most visible sites that come out of their searches. If a Web site does not rank among the top 10, chances are it will not get noticed. And if a site is not noticed, it will not get visitors.

SEO is an effective, cost-efficient way to get your Web site noticed. Here are some tips to help you get started:

1. Create a simple but clear design for your Web site

Less can be more, and this holds true when it comes to Web design. Clutter is a no-no as Web users will always prefer sites that are easy on the eyes. This preference is shared by search engine robots that constantly scour Web sites.

2. Organise content

This is a must for sites which list several product categories. Impatient online users scan pages quickly, and, if they fail to find what they want immediately, will just as quickly go to another site. Creating sub-pages will help greatly in making your site user friendly and improving its search engine rank.

3. Position your keywords correctly

In SEO, selecting the right keywords or phrases is one thing, positioning them strategically within your content is another. As a general rule, main keywords should be placed in the meta-tags of pages. They should be in the title, description and within the body. A word of caution here. While plenty of businesses mention their company's name early in their content, this is not always a good thing. For example, if your company is small and relatively unknown, users will not recognize you and may not bother to check your site. It is better to headline keywords related to your products and services rather than the name of your company.

4. Distribute your keywords strategically

This is a basic SEO techniques. Position keywords or key phrases at the start and the end of the document. Depending on the number of words in your content, keywords or phrases should be repeated throughout the text, with a density of around 2-5%. For example, 12 repetitions in 400 words.

5. Insert your keywords in link texts

Another effective SEO technique is in creatively mentioning keywords in text links that you use in your pages.

Instead of using "Click here for more" as your link texts, mention your keywords instead. For example, if your company is marketing DVD players, you can say something like "See more DVD players here." Doing so will make a world of difference in SEO.