

# Search Engine Optimization Overview

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*Good Search Engine Optimization (SEO) represents a careful balance that ensures web sites are successful with search engines and appealing to customers. Search Engines operate based on surprisingly complex algorithms, which usually include significant rules, incentives, and limitations. But while these conditions must be met to achieve high search engine ranking, the customer experience must also remain a priority.*

*The following are the five major elements in our approach to SEO. While many people understand that keyword analysis, search engine submissions, and link building are essential to SEO, we believe that close attention to your website and to your specific business model are just as critical. While we offer each of our services on an individual basis, we consistently find that combining all five of the elements below produces by far the most effective results in terms of high search engine rankings and customer traffic.*

- I. **Research and Strategy.** Every industry has its own search engine presence. This presence must be evaluated so that a strategy can be developed to compete for top rankings on major search engines.
  - We work with you to understand your business goals and objectives, focusing on your internet presence. We determine what kind of customers you want to target, and how broad a range of services you wish to advertise via major search engines.
  - We use special tools to research the keywords and keyword combinations that are used most by your potential customers.
  - We evaluate the competition in your industry to determine the search engine presence and strength of local, national, and directory sites.
  - We develop a multi-part strategy to focus our efforts and improve your search engine ranking.
  - We produce a report detailing our findings and objectives for the optimization project. Some prefer to begin with this first phase, using our report to help decide whether to continue with a complete optimization. Please let us know if you are interested in this option.
  
- II. **Site Plan and Page Copy.** The most easily controlled (and arguably the most important) factor in search engine-optimized web design is making sure the layout, design, structure, and content of a site reflect the search terms that will lead visitors there.
  - The structure of a site is more important to search engines than most might think. Site elements like page layout, filenames, and link text play a major part in search engine success, because they indicate to search engines what a site is about. We make sure the structure and layout of your site maximize search engine effectiveness.

- Many sites benefit by having certain pages target certain keyword combinations. This is usually a natural reflection of your business model. We determine whether existing or new pages might help you benefit from this strategy, and set them up for you.
- Meta tags on each page of a website are invisible to users, but still read by search engines. This code should contain your important keywords, while conforming to several search engine guidelines about length, keyword density, etc. We make sure all the html code in your site is fully optimized.
- The written content of a page should contain a healthy density of search keywords. But page content must also provide logical information to visitors, and keyword density and other factors are restricted by search engine guidelines. We edit the content of your pages to make sure they take full advantage of search engine opportunities, or write original page content for you (for an extra fee). In either case, our wealth of experience in creating snappy marketing content that targets keywords means that your site can be successful with search engines, but still useful and attractive to your visitors.

III. **Presence.** Search engines and online directories must index a site in order for it to be found at all.

- Many search engines require that a site be “registered” in order to be indexed. This submission process is compounded because it is different for every search engine. Major search engines include Google (the most frequently used search engine), Yahoo!, MSN, AOL, AltaVista, Iwon, HotBot, and more. We completely handle this submission process for you.
- Web directories, including the Open Directory and the Yahoo Directory, are extremely important for two reasons:
  1. Major search engines often refer to these directories as a measure of a site’s authenticity. If a site is not listed in a major web directory, search engines like Google will consider the site less important.
  2. Web directories are maintained by humans, not search engine spiders. Thus if a site uses search engine “tricks” that are not caught by spiders, it is unlikely to be validated by a listing in a major web directory.

Again, we handle all directory submissions and correspondence.

IV. **Popularity.** Finally, perhaps the most important factor in search engine ranking is the measure of a website’s popularity. Search engines determine a site’s popularity by what relevant sites have links to it, as well as by how many visitors a site receives.

- We make sure that your content will help make your site popular, drawing visitors in a natural way.
- We investigate the full range of sites that might be approached for links or for a link exchange, avoiding the competition while targeting popular sites with relevant information.
- We generate a list of sites to approach based on popularity and likelihood of success. We may post links to certain sites as a preliminary to a request for exchange.
- We determine the url of desired incoming link(s) and develop the link text. Incoming links are critical in indicating to search engines what

area your web site specializes in. We make sure that incoming links will highlight the services or goods for which you most want to draw customers.

- We correspond with dozens of websites in the effort to generate as many high-quality incoming links as possible.
- We add or delete links as necessary based on the responses received.

V. **Maintenance.** The search engine world is extremely dynamic. Major search engines are constantly updating their listings and making small changes to the way they rank sites. Google is famous among webmasters for the regular updates that can send some sites plummeting in the rankings and bring other sites up from nowhere (since Google does not publicly share information about changes to its ranking system). Ongoing maintenance of a web site is therefore essential to maintain and improve its position in search results.

- We offer "SEO Webmaster" services on an ongoing basis. Once the initial optimization project is complete, we will monitor your site's performance and do the work necessary (usually 2-6 hours per month) to maintain and improve rankings. Part of our work is to stay informed about how search engines change their algorithms, so we know what adjustments to make to keep your site on top. This work can include generating more incoming links, adjusting keyword density, rewriting html tags, adjusting the internal linking structure of a site, and more.
- If someone in your organization is qualified to work with websites, we can also set up a separate project to train them to be an "SEO Webmaster." This can provide significant savings in the long run. Please talk to us if you would like to set this up.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us by visiting:  
<http://www.quakerconsulting.com/contact.htm>.