

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

“Get Found” Online

One of my recent clients, a best-selling author in the nonfiction genre, needed a website overhaul that would boost her ability to ‘get found’ online. She has been a published author for over 15 years, and one of her books boasts readership exceeding 2 million copies.

While my client focused on doing what she loves (writing), the online world continued to evolve - *fast*, becoming highly competitive and much more difficult to “get found” in search.

Optimizing for the Giants

To complicate matters for authors, search not only involves the major search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo, but it also involves the giant online book retailers Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble, among others. Getting found on the book retailers’ sites requires a complementary strategy, further challenging our SEO work.

Google alone serves 1.1 billion unique visitors each month, followed by Bing (345 million), Yahoo (300 million) and Amazon (164 million). My client’s online presence needed to be very carefully search engine optimized in order to be positioned to achieve page one placement on the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) and attract readers from all these sites.

Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

Google, the most-used dedicated search engine, conducts about 17 billion searches *each day*. Their search algorithm constantly changes as they makes about 5 tweaks each week to their search algorithm, which currently has over 200 elements that determine what content gets returned on the SERP. While the exact algorithms are closely guarded secrets, analysts have quite successfully identified the algorithm elements by studying the patent filings by search engine companies and testing specific elements real time online. This [Google 200 Infographic](#) gives startling insights to the complexity of elements considered during each and every search. So optimizing an online presence – a website or blog - in order to get page one placement on Google’s SERP, or that of any search engine, is quite a challenge. But I’m up for it.

As with any effective marketing campaign, we put our heads together and carefully plan the goals, scope, tactics, and monitoring of all online activity - starting with a fully ‘optimized’ website. The website must be search engine optimized (SEO) in order to get found online in search.

The first order of business for my author client’s SEO work is to be sure that the website includes those important ‘behind-the-curtain’ elements in the search engines’ algorithms. This involves specific site programming techniques, handled by marketing savvy web designers. Together, we ensure that these techniques are fully customized to my client’s unique business and our SEO goals. I check over 50 technical elements that impact the website’s ranking by search engines.

Keywords - Search Engine Juice

Next comes competitor analysis and keyword research – critical to any SEO effort. For my client, like most small businesses, keywords and competitors go hand-in-hand. My research reveals the number of searches that are conducted each month for our chosen terms, and which books currently come up on page one for the terms being searched. That’s our keyword challenge – which terms do we optimize, in order to come up on page one?

Long Tail Keywords

With online competition escalating, we have the best success achieving page one ranking in search (as well as search advertising - another story), when we focus on “the long tail”. That means drilling down to find very specific key phrases in a niche - those three and four word phrases that are very, very specific to the business or product being sold.

It’s been proven that when a potential customer uses a highly specific search phrase, they tend to be looking for exactly what they are actually going to buy. In virtually every case, such very specific searches are far more likely to

convert to sales than generic searches that tend to be the type of research that customers typically do prior to making a buying decision.

For my author client, using long tail keywords in the book titles, as well as all online content, is critical to getting found by search.

Keywords & Image Tags

One last quick take-away: By inserting keywords in your image tags (code that describes images), they can be found in [image searches](#), leading to more clicks on your website – increased traffic and *increased sales*. Keywords, keywords, keywords!

Effective SEO work goes way beyond these examples, as online competition gets fierce. But all things considered, it's still early in the game.

Every site with an effective strategy can rank first page Google!