Search Engine Optimization
by Martha Carrer Cruz Gabriel

1. Strategic Analysis

Before starting the optimization, it is necessary to make a preliminary analysis about which pages must be optimized and also about the need of creating additional specific pages with relevant content to your website business.

a) Determine the objectives for the optimization (traffic, subscriptions, sells, downloads, etc.)
b) Check your pages context, business area, determining your competitors websites rank in the search engines
c) Check your pages and your competitors relevance
d) Make comparative analysis
e) Check your Landing Pages – marketing and design analysis focusing in the business objectives

2. Keywords

Keywords are the most important part of a SEO strategy (in sponsored links strategy as well).

Search always starts with a person typing a keyword!

Marketing + Business + IT → need to research to find out which keywords are really used by the target audience to find you.

Quality keywords = quality traffic

3. On-page Optimization (simultaneously with off-page optimization)

Page Code

- URL
  • each page must be created with the main keywords appearing in its URL.
- Meta Tags
  • meta tags are considered by several search engines, specially:
    - meta-tag Keywords – the more words in the tag, the less each word is worthy.
    - meta-tag Description – determine the text that is shown for your page in the search results.
- Title Tag
  • must BE the keyword or at least contain the main important keyword of the page.
  • the keyword must be in the beginning of the title text.
- Sub-title Tags: h1<h2<h3...<h6
  • the keywords must be in the sub-title tags and as near of the beginning of the phrase as possible.
  • Keywords in the tag h2<h3 is more worthy than in h3, that worth more than in h2, and so on.
- img Tag
  • texts in the “alt” parameter is considered page content.
  • the keywords must appear in the “alt” text when possible.
- Top of The Page
  • it is a privileged place and considered important by the search engines.
  • most important keywords must appear as near to the top of the page as possible.

3. Internal Links
  • the anchor text must include the keyword related to the linked page.
3. Keyword Frequency
  • very important criteria for page ranking.
  • keywords must be repeated the most possible, WITHOUT spamming the search engines and GUARANTEED the text meaning.
  • frequencies between 3% and 8% are relatively safe.
3. Scripts in the Page
  • use external script files (js, for example)
- Navigation Menus
  • avoid javascript or other code for creating navigation that can not be understood by the search engine crawlers.

Page Content

- Relevance
  • To be relevant, be relevant!
  • Bad content is poorly written, with no keywords, no updates, no relevance.
- W3C Standards
  • pages complying to W3C standards usually are search engine friendly
- Flash Content
  • Google “sits” all flash content, therefore Flash files must be optimized too.

3. Dynamic Content
  • dynamic pages, created on the fly, usually can not be searchable by search engines.
  • create strategies where important pages don’t get lost inside the databases.

3. CMS
  • use CMS that creates search engine friendly URLs, individual pages meta-tags, compiles pages (instead of creating them on the fly), allows creating internal links and template pages manually.

Website Structure

- Design & Structure
  • page depth - isolated pages are less worthy than pages that link to other pages (outbound links).
  • navigation between pages must favor crawlers visit.
  • heavy images must be avoided.
  • configure properly the robots.txt file.
  • submit your sitemap to the search engines.
- Age and Updating
  • the older a page, the more trustworthy it tends to be → time favors ranking.
  • the page updating pace affects the search engine crawlers visit pages.
- Website versus Individual Pages
  • search engines classify each page individually but also use their internal links and keywords to classify and categorize the whole website.

4. Off-page Optimization (simultaneously with off-page optimization)

- Sponsored Links
  • sponsored links go where SEO can not:
    - Testing the best keywords before SEO optimization
    - Optimizing for Mistyping and Misunderstanding
    - Temporary Advertisement / Campaign
    - Optimizing for many keywords, at once (fiddling)
    - Quickness – the results start just after starting the campaign
    - Highly demanded keywords
- Link Building
  • the more ranked inbound links are, the better:
    - Legal methods for getting links PONTING to your page:
      - Press Release
      - Affiliated Programs
      - Be listed in human managed directorys: Dmoz.org, for example
      - WHOIS (Who is Who’s Who), WHOIS Social books like My-SOS (Social Media Optimization) – increasing presence in social networks into Delicious, Digg, YouTube, etc.
      - Link Banks [see frame on the right]

4. Ideas for Link Baits

Link Baits are based on 5 types of hooks: a) news; b) opposition; c) attack; d) resources; e) humor.

4. Make an interesting picture
  • Be the first to research and document something
  • Make a scheme, graph or piece of software
  • Make a tool that others can put on their sites but that belongs to you
  • Make a joke about a known person
  • Make a reference that is just in time for a major event
  • Write an extraordinary article and link it up with logos
  • Write useful comments and something that is happening
  • Give something valuable for free
  • Lea some news acroos your niche and get people to talk about
  • Become an expert in your niche and write valuable information

5. Measurement, Monitoring, Control & Adjustments

Measurement and monitoring of the following factors are essential for controlling the optimization process to get the desired results and also for adjusting the plan when needed. The main parameters for measuring are: a) page views x unique visits; b) rejection rate; c) which crawlers visited the pages and when; d) how many visits each search engine drove to your pages; e) which keywords brought access to your pages.