



Keyword Selection

This is an extremely important process, as you will need to determine the keywords which are most important to your website. They should be keywords that reflect your site content and are high-traffic keywords for your industry or sector.

There are a number of ways to determine what these keywords are if you do not already know them. One of which is trial and error. Do searches through Google, Yahoo! And MSN on keywords you feel are relevant to your website and see what type of results you get, as well as how many results. This will give you an idea as to the amount of competition you will have for those keywords.

Another tool you can make use of is the Keyword Selector Tool offered by Overture or Yahoo! Search Marketing. This is a very handy tool that will provide you with alternate keywords for the one you enter in the Keyword Selector Tool. In addition to this, it will give the estimated monthly traffic for that keyword in the Yahoo! Search Engine.

I would recommend compiling a list of at least 30 keywords. You can then narrow down your list to the top performing keywords and move on to Stage Two. Be sure to keep all of the keywords you come up with however, as they will come in handy should you ever decide to start a Pay-Per-Click campaign with Google or Yahoo!, for example.

Content Optimization

Content optimization is the optimization of the entire websites' written content, as well as alt attributes. The **alt attribute** is used in HTML documents to specify text which is to be rendered when the element to which it is applied cannot be rendered. In HTML 4.01, the attribute is required for the image and area element types. It is optional for the input element type and the deprecated applet element type.

Alternative text is especially useful in the following situations:

- For people with low bandwidth connections, who may opt not to load graphics
- For people using handheld devices
- For people with disabilities who use assistive technology, such as refreshable braille displays or screen readers
- Search engine optimization. Many search engines can only interpret the meaning of objects by analyzing their alt attribute

In the early years of Internet development, alternative text was particularly helpful to people using text-only browsers (like Lynx). Nowadays, even when graphical capabilities are taken for granted alternative text is still highly appreciated by users with accessibility requirements and users looking for ways to optimize their network bandwidth use.



The use of *meaningful* alt text is necessary to comply with accessibility standards, and is good practice when optimizing a website for Search Engine Optimization.

With the top search engines now compiling image indexes, alt tags are important because you can saturate them with key phrases which will assist in search engines ranking your website more highly in organic searches.

Optimization of a website's written content can be a time-consuming process depending on the size of the website itself and how much content they currently have. It is always important to keep in mind that a website should never be optimized for more than 10 keywords. The reason for this is that you want to keep your content as relevant as possible to your target demographic. When writing page content you must consider the type of people who will be purchasing your products or services, and gear your efforts towards them.

These are the people who will return to your site time and time again in order to purchase additional products and services. By not appealing to their intellect, you risk missing out on a sale. You must also be wary of telling a potential customer to buy. People do not like to be told what to do. They cannot be coerced into making a purchase, but instead must be gently guided in the proper direction. When you keep this in mind during the copy writing process, you should be able to finely hone your sales process and convert more traffic into sales.

Another very important reason not to optimize your website for more than ten keywords or phrases is that you may run the risk of losing page rank in the search engines. When it comes to SEO, you cannot have the best of all worlds. Focus on getting traffic to the website and obtaining a satisfactory page rank. The goal at this stage is to get as many of your pages indexed as possible. Once this has been done, you can begin to optimize each page for a different product or service.

When planning SEO for a website, you should always bare in mind that Search Engines were originally created as a research tool for universities and colleges so that students could find information more swiftly for term papers and reports. Due to this fact, search engines are still content biased, meaning; the more relevant written content you have, the better your position in the search engines will be.

Link Building Campaigns

The goal of a link building campaign is to have as many quality links pointing to your website as possible. This is often the most difficult part of any SEO Project. The reason for this is the unique challenge presented in finding high-quality links from websites that are willing to link back to you. One of the ways we do this is by offering a reciprocal link

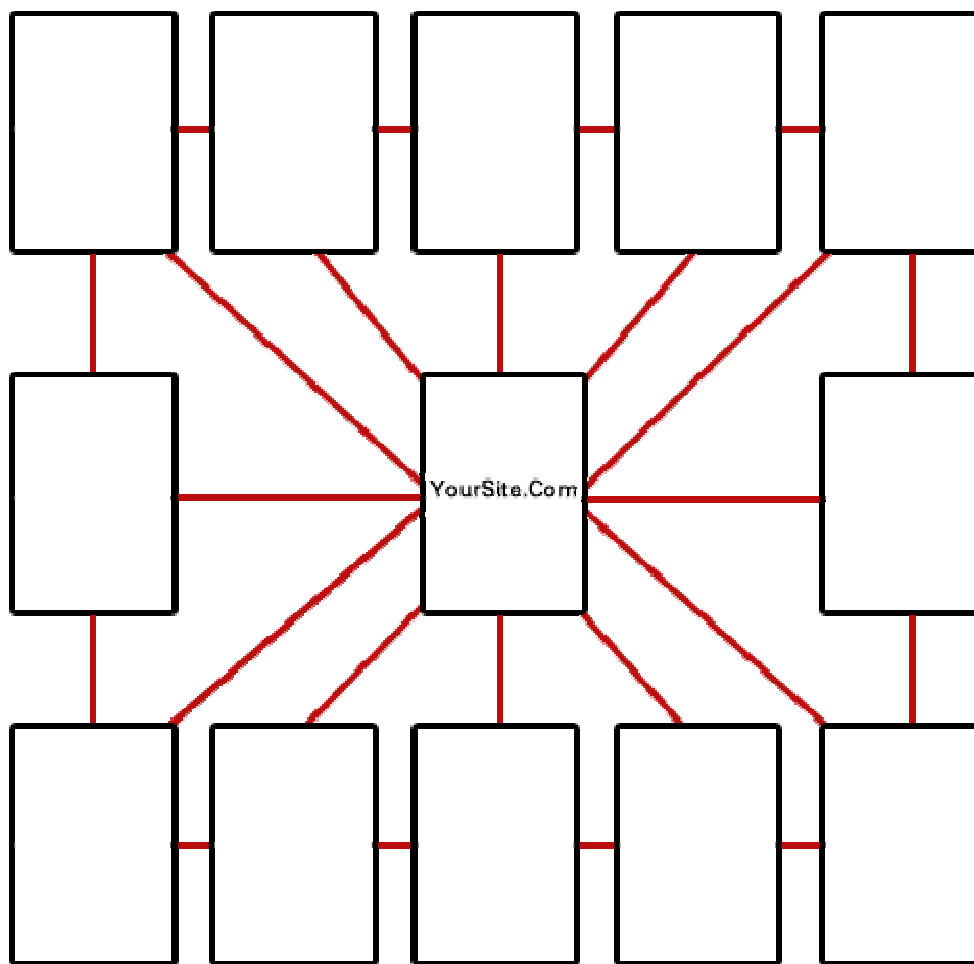


process. What this means is; you need a link to your site, and you are willing to link back to *their* website in exchange for it. Everyone benefits.

Now, not everyone will be willing to link to your site, even though you are willing to link back to them in turn. What you should ideally search for is a website which offers products or services that go hand-in-hand with your own. You are not in direct competition, but your products or services compliment one another nicely. This makes it mutually beneficial to link to one another.

You must be careful in choosing which websites you provide links to however. Linking to a website which is irrelevant to your own may hurt your own ranking. The ultimate goal of a link building campaign is to have an extensive link network with your site as a nexus point. The image below will illustrate what a link nexus is.

Link Campaign Nexus





As you can see from the image above, multiple sites link to one another forming a tightly knit network. All of these sites then link to your own, making it the nexus of the link campaign. By becoming the focal point of so many links, your page rank will increase, provided the sites linking to you have a suitable page rank.

There are many tools you can use to determine the page rank of a website and whether or not they are capable of providing a quality link to your site. There are two tools that I recommend using. One of them is Google Toolbar, which will embed a bar in your web browser and measure the page rank of a website. This tool can be found for both Internet Explorer, and Mozilla Fire Fox. Another tool which I highly recommend is a Mozilla Fire Fox extension called "SEO Quake". This is a very useful add-on, as it will automatically gather information from the search engines of your choice, displaying the amount of incoming links to the site you are browsing, the amount of internal-links, the site's position in the search engines and also how many pages of that site are indexed. SEO Quake can also show back-links not only for the sites you visit, but for your Search Engine Results as well. The best part is the option to "line-through" no-follow links. It's an easy way of checking to make sure reciprocal link partners are behaving themselves, and also a great tool for SEO in general.

This is not the limit of SEO Quake either. It has many other functions which you may use. It is simply a matter of preference in the way you use the add-on and which information it is you require. SEO Quake is an easy to use add-on and there is an abundance of information available on it.

A link campaign is something that you never really stop working on. It is a time-consuming and on-going initiative. You must regularly review the links coming into your site and make sure that people who are a part of your reciprocal link initiative are providing the promised links to your website.

Stage Four: Black Hat SEO Practices

Now, at this point some of you may think there just has to be an easier way of getting good positions in the search engines. Well, there is an easier way! These are normally "Black Hat SEO" methods. What this concept truly means is often a subject of debate among SEO experts. There are some SEO experts who claim that ethics have no rightful place in Search Engine Optimization. SEO is the deliberate effort to manipulate the results given by a search engine and therefore the burden of determining exactly what qualifies as "acceptable optimization" should be on the Search Engines.

Black-hatters often maintain that the point of commercial websites is to make money, so naturally they need to show up high in the search results. To do this, Black-hatters will implement underhanded SEO practices such as the following:



- Keyword, Anchor Text and Domain Name Stuffing
- Using hidden text or links. These can be hidden in the ALT attributes of images or made the same color as the page background so they appear invisible to the end user. Style Sheets (CSS Spam) can be used in an attempt to hide these manipulations from search engine's anti-spam filters.
- Using techniques to artificially increase the number of links to your page, such as link farms or buying and selling links with the main aim of increasing rankings in results pages
- Excessively cross-linking sites to inflate the apparent popularity
- Cloaking, delivering different pages depending the IP address and/or agent who is requesting it
- Doorway/Gateway/Jump Pages - pages designed as an entrance to a website, each one of them optimized for a different keyword but which have no real content. These automatically redirect the user to the main website. This tactic is heavily used by adult content sites. Often with a Javascript *mouseover redirect* that sends the user to the new page as soon as the cursor hovers over the page content
- Duplicate Content. Identical or very similar pages that can be accessed from different URLs. Examples would be copies of the Open Directory Project listings or online books taken from Project Gutenberg. Someone could even steal the content of your website! Google has registered patent number: 6,658,423 aimed at detecting duplicates.
- Auto-generated content of no value to the end user. The aim being to either target keywords or to create excessive internal links
- Misuse or cyber-squatting of competitor domain names or name typos, for example: Microsofr.com
- Spamming Forums and Weblogs (Blogs)
- Excessive outbound links to websites that use high risk techniques or Spam
- Hiding outbound-links either with Javascript or by redirecting to a gateway page blocked by a robots.txt file
- Link Hoarding, getting as many inbound-links while giving out few outbound-links

These are only some of the tools of the Black Hat SEO Expert. All of them techniques listed above are definitions of what Google, MSN and Yahoo! view as unacceptable forms of SEO, or "spam". Websites using commercial SEO services should be wary of anyone suggesting the use of any of these methods. They are sure-fire ways to get your website pulled from the indexes of Google, MSN and Yahoo!

Some Black Hat methods are far more subtle however. You should always question the people handling you SEO. If they try to dodge your questions about what it is exactly they are doing, you may want to consider finding a new SEO firm. An SEO expert who practices clean optimization techniques is always proud of the work they do, and will be more than happy to explain his methods to you if you do not understand. A Black-hatter



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will try to avoid the questions knowing that while their methods may deliver results, it also severely jeopardizes the longevity of your website's position in the search engines.

Black Hat SEO methods can, and normally do, lead to a websites' removal from search indexes. Don't let it be your site it happens to. Be sure to practice proper optimization!

Scouting the Competition

During any SEO campaign, you always need to monitor the competition. When have an online presence, you should quickly determine who your competitors are, and what they are doing to get their position. Read through the content on their website, check their meta-tags. You should always thoroughly analyze your competition. Knowledge is a powerful thing in the SEO community and you will need it maintain a strong position in the search engines. Aggressive SEO tactics are sometimes needed when dealing with an e-Commerce site. Do not confuse this with Black Hat SEO.

Aggressive SEO tactics can include some of the following:

- Writing a strong title and good page copy, making excellent use of your keywords
- Using good internal linking strategy
- Registering a site at a directory
- Creating a resource directory and exchanging reciprocal links
- Sponsoring information sites which have large amounts of relevant content in exchange for a banner link

These are only a few of many tactics you can employ to give your website an edge over the competition.

For any additional information on Search Engine Optimization and what it can do for your business, feel free to contact Lone Wolf Internet Consulting Inc. at the following email address: info@lonewolf-consulting.com

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