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CREATIVE. MARKETING. DIRECTION.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Moving Up the Ranking Ladder.

Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

Americans conduct about **15 billion** searches on Google each month. All search engines combined are searched over **22 billion** times a month.

There are two ways to be seen on these pages – **Organic** (or natural) results and/or **Paid** campaigns such as AdWords Pay-Per-Click (PPC).

MarketingSherpa and Enquiro research shows that **75% of searchers click on organic listings** versus 25% clicking on PPC listings.

Google's first page captures **89%** of all clicked traffic. (Most searchers don't even go to the second page.)

The top-ranked result of the first Google page captures **42%** of all clicked traffic.

How Google (and most all search engines) "think" and rank

It is the intent of all search engines to put the the most valuable information forward for it's users.

Ranking is based on a combination of two things – **Relevance** and **Authority**.

All search engines "crawl" and index web pages. They look for **keywords** and text content relevant to your business. And they look for **links back to your site from other sources**. (This gives your site more "authority". Search engines believe that if your site is linked to by others, you must be "good".)

All search engines periodically return and re-crawl sites. They **like to see change**. The more often a site changes, the better the chance of higher ranking. To them, that makes you more "relevant" and "authoritative".

Keywords

When choosing your keywords and phrases (and text content) there are three criteria to balance – **Relevance**. (Words related to your business.), **Search Volume**. (The number of times that word or phrase will be searched for by users.) And **Difficulty**. (How hard is it to rank high with that word based on the strength of your competition and the keywords they're using.)

Choose relevant keywords for **every** web page.

Search engines value the **Page Title** as the most important. It's also important to write this title as appealing as possible as it is seen in the SERP. Page titles **MUST BE UNIQUE and relevant to every page** otherwise Google may flag this as an error.

Earlier words in the title and text carry more SEO weight. Put the company name last in the Page Title.

Tagged headings (H1 coded text) are highly valued areas for keywords as search engines look here for page "content". Keep them short and relevant.

One H1 heading per page. All other headings should be H2 or H3.

Page descriptions don't carry much SEO weight, however, this is the phrase seen in the SERP by user so care should be given to wording. Plus, any keywords are bolded which captures attention.

If using a Content Management System (CMS) based platform you can optimize each page with a keyword-based URL. The advantage here is if a user copies and pastes your URL as a link on their site, the keywords go with it versus a the non-URL optimized title of standard html platform.

If keyword ranking is low for your site, consider using a PPC campaign for a little while until indexing and links move you up organically. There are downsides to relying to heavily on PPC campaigns so the objective should be to move away from that strategy as quickly as possible.

Authority

The heart of ranking pages is the value of the authority of your site. Google calls this PageRank™ (named after Larry Page). Simply stated, **your authority is based on others linking to your site**. The higher the authority of the page linking to you is, the higher value of authority you get. (Much better to be linked from a trade pub than from rbauerdesign.)

Government (.gov) and educational (.edu) sites are given very high authority values and good to be linked from.

To get SEO authority, you need as many links as possible from as many high-authority sites as possible.

You get those links by developing content others want on their site. Content that has value to their customers. Content that they can't pass-up. Content that is ever-changing, new and updated. Content that others want to write about. Content that makes you look like THE authoritative voice of your industry.

You need to create **remarkable** content.