



## ***How To Win The Website Traffic Stakes With Content***

Search engine visibility is an essential component of online branding. Being found on the top of the search engines for your target keywords, both in the natural and paid search results has been proven to boost branding online.

When you conduct a search, how many pages of results do you go through?

If you're like most people you won't go further than the first three pages, unless you didn't find what you were looking for in the first three.

To get your site placed in the first three pages requires what is called **Optimization** - or in plain English - making your site search-engine friendly.

If you don't include search engines as a significant focus of your marketing strategy, you are truly missing out on one of the most important and responsive means of reaching your target audience.

So if you've been spending tons of money on advertising or purchasing leads, without getting the returns you hoped for, its time you understood why search engines, with their enormous reach and usage, are truly the most important source of traffic for your website.

The next article explains all the factors that go into making your SEO campaign a success.

## ***SEM and Branding Are Not Mutually Exclusive***

By Pete Larmey

Mention the term “search engine marketing” (SEM) among those who engage in it and you’re likely to get the same three or four responses. It’s about being on page one of all the search engines. It’s about being #1 on Google. It’s about increasing brand recognition among prospects and customers.

Um, wait a second...repeat that last one again?

Increasing brand recognition among prospects and customers is not something that one typically gives as a reason for implementing an SEM campaign. In fact, it can be argued that SEM can be a very powerful tool for enhancing a company’s brand image among its target audiences.

This is supported by a recent study by the Dieringer Resource Group, which surveyed 3,000 respondents regarding their online purchasing habits. Interestingly, 60% of these respondents’ brand opinions were changed or enhanced as a result of online research (American Interactive Consumer Survey, June, 2004).

Another report by the Interactive Advertising Bureau and Nielsen NetRatings suggest that “27 percent (of survey respondents were) more likely to name a specific brand if it was in the top spot of the search results page.” (Sponsored Listings Effectiveness Study, July, 2004).

### **Getting Your Brand to the Top of the Heap**

The Web is huge, with millions of sites competing for attention (yeah, I know, you’re thinking, tell me something I don’t know. Please, bear with me.). Chances are that a good portion of those sites are competing with your company’s offerings in one category or another.

While getting to the top of the heap on the engines may be enough to make people clickthrough, it may not be enough to make people buy from you, let alone develop a long-term customer relationship.

People buy because they associate particular companies with specific concepts. When people think reliable automobile, they might think Honda. When they think fast microprocessors, they might think Intel. They form an impression. They associate. They buy.

This is the core of all marketing programs; your SEM campaigns should be no different. Consider that all SEM campaigns are based on possibly the most important and valued

resource for any marketing campaign: words that accurately describe what your company does and what it offers.

## **Keywords are Key**

Marketing campaigns begin very innocently, in the form of concepts, which are then boiled down to messages, which are then dispersed -- at times ad nauseum -- across all possible marketing channels.

The same marketing messages pop up in advertisements, news articles, and more, engraining themselves in people's consciousnesses. These messages are comprised of keywords designed to reinforce the company's brand: "best toothpaste"..."most cost-effective staffing services"..."best tasting diet soda."

And what is an effective SEM campaign based on? Yep. Keywords. Choosing them is both an art and a science: companies want to select keyword terms that are popular, but they should also keep in mind that the keywords they select are representative of the products and services they sell.

Thus, these terms are also representative of the company, which makes them representative of the company's brand. They give customers and prospects an idea of what a company stands for, how it provides a benefit, and how it can help meet someone's needs.

**By choosing keyword terms that reflect your brand positioning, you can both enhance your brand and increase your chances of getting noticed by web searchers.** In fact, keyword terms offer an excellent chance to reinforce your brand through simple and direct terminology that can help your customers and prospects identify your company with certain terms.

For example, a Web hosting service may not just want to be known for Web hosting, but "affordable Web hosting" (which, according to [Wordtracker](#) -- a tool used by many search marketers -- is searched on over 200 times a day).

Tying SEM into branding could be particularly important for companies whose sole marketing efforts revolve around SEM; for them, this is their only chance to truly brand themselves to the world at large.

Keyword selection should be used in such a way as to reinforce a company's branding just as a traditional advertising or offline marketing campaign does. For example, among the more traditional keywords found on IBM's homepage (words such as "technical support," "linux," etc.) can be found "On Demand Business."

On Demand Business is an initiative that IBM developed to capitalize on the burgeoning popularity of on-demand computing. On Demand Business is an IBM term that the

company has driven into the public lexicon through ads, articles, and case studies. As it turns out, they've also put it in their keyword selections.

The reason for this is three-fold:

A) they know that people associate On Demand Business with IBM, and a search on that term will drive customers to the IBM website;

B) the topic of On Demand Business is prominently displayed on the homepage; and

C) the company wants to reinforce the term On Demand Business in any way they can, including via their keywords.

In effect, they are using SEM, through their keyword selections, to promote and reinforce a brand image – IBM as the pioneer in On Demand Business.

Here are two other examples:

- [www.intel.com](http://www.intel.com) – keyword example: “Intel Inside”
- [www.swatch.com](http://www.swatch.com) – keyword example: “swatch internet time”

All of these companies are marketing themselves not just on their pages, but in their source code. They are optimizing their sites in a way that reinforces the power of their brands.

There's no reason why online marketing should just be relegated to banner ads or email marketing campaigns. Consider this when developing an SEM program and its keywords in particular.

SEM provides ample opportunity to project a brand image, and thus should be considered an organic (excuse the pun) extension of your marketing efforts.

*About the Author: Pete Larmey has over 10 years of marketing communications consulting experience. As a business consultant with [KeywordRanking](#) (a division of Websourced, Inc.), Pete helps clients develop effective search engine marketing programs designed to increase brand awareness and drive revenue. Prior to KeywordRanking, Pete was an independent consultant, helping companies build successful public relations and interactive marketing campaigns.*

## ***How To Start Getting Targeted Traffic To Your Website In As Little As 15 Minutes***

The best way to get top rankings in the natural search results is by optimizing your website and its content according to search engine guidelines. But search engine optimization, though cost-effective, can take months to show results.

There are two ways of getting targeted traffic from search engines or directories.

- FREE Search Engine Traffic
- PAY-PER-CLICK Search Engine Traffic

### **FREE SEARCH ENGINE TRAFFIC**

Why is Search Engine Marketing so important?

The statistics speak for themselves:

- 91% of Internet users use search engines to navigate the web
- 9 out of 10 searches are done from the top 20 search engines
- 85% of search engine users do not look past the first 40 results.
- 77% of Internet users employ search engines more frequently than any other online media as the leading vehicle for discovering Web sites, surpassing banner ads, Web links, e-mail links, etc.

When you do a search, how many pages of results do you go through?

If you're like most people you won't go further than the first three pages, unless you didn't find what you were looking for in the first three.

To get your site placed in the first three pages requires what is called Optimization - or in plain English - making your site search-engine friendly.

Although "[Search Engine Optimization](#)" or SEO is a very specialised field and takes a lot of time to excel at, there are the THREE ESSENTIALS that you need to make your website more search engine friendly.

### **#1 USEFUL CONTENT**

This is what users want and what search engines would like to offer - sites with good, useful content about the topic of the search.

Even a few pages of useful content about your product will get you into the search engine's good books - but it is unlikely to get you in the first three pages.

## #2 RELEVANT KEYWORDS

Describing your site simply by adding a Page TITLE and DESCRIPTION that contains your main keywords.

In SEO jargon, these are called "Metatags" and they must be placed in the "Head" of your document - i.e. they are the FIRST thing the search engines see when they visit your site to index it.

Guidelines for Metatags:

- TITLE (not more than 60 characters long)
- DESCRIPTION (not more than 150 characters long)
- PAGE COPY (as long as necessary).

Your Title is also the most important because its displayed in the search results. A good title would be one that contains your main keywords AND is inviting or interesting enough to make a potential customer/lead click on it.

## #3 LINKING

Search engines like Google, give more emphasis to sites that are POPULAR. So if you have many sites linking to you by a method called "Reciprocal Linking," - providing a link back to a site that also links to you - you will get a higher search engine ranking.

You can see this in practice here on my links pages:

[Health and Wellness Resources](#)

[SEO Search Engine Optimization Directory](#)

\*\* Reciprocal links from sites related to your site topic or to the products you are selling, count more than unrelated links.

In time, these links themselves could become an excellent (and more permanent) source of traffic than search engines.

You'll find some excellent tools to help you find new link partners and build your link popularity here:

[Boost Link Popularity and Pagerank with Reciprocal Linking](#)

Here is one of the best resources on link-building:

[131 \(Legitimate\) Link Building Strategies](#)

## **DESIGN YOUR OWN WEBSITE**

If you would like to create a completely new site, and have no website designing experience, you could learn to do it yourself. You'll find a lot of website creation tools and resources at the bottom of the page here:

[Website Design Tutorials, eBooks](#)

[Website Design Software, Tools](#)

## **HIRE A PROFESSIONAL DESIGNER**

Or if you don't have the time, you could consider hiring a professional to do it for you. You can find a professional designer to suit your budget at the links below:

[Elance.com](#)

## **SEO RESOURCES**

If you're interested in spending the time and energy required to optimize your website, you will find a LOT of useful resources here:

[Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\) Tips](#)

But if I were to recommend just ONE tool to do all of the above, it would be this one.

## **TIPS FOR SEARCH ENGINE PROMOTION:**

With human-edited directories like Yahoo and the Open Directory Project (from where Google takes some of its results), having your own domain name is also very important. Yahoo is notoriously difficult to get into and your site must have very good content to even be considered.

Luckily Google (today the KING of search engines) doesn't discriminate against free hosted sites and all you need do is follow the three essential guidelines above and add some valuable content to your product pages. A few things to remember: - DO your research and use the right keywords

Here are two resources that will help you find the best and most popular keywords for your site:

[Overture's free keyword suggestion tool](#)

[WordTracker](#)

- DO use DIFFERENT METATAGS (Title, Description and Keywords) for EACH PAGE of your site.
- DON'T do anything that will get your site BANNED by the search engines.
- DON'T submit your site more than once a month, unless you have made a lot of changes.
- DON'T use automatic submission services that submit to "thousands of search engines." Some search engines will view this as spam.
- DON'T submit your link to FFAs or you may be "demoted."
- DON'T use methods to artificially boost your link popularity, like joining "link popularity farms."
- DON'T use link generating software that queries Google for links. It may get your site penalized.

While you're waiting for your search engine rankings to increase, we recommend using Google Adwords as a way to start getting targeted traffic to your website almost instantly. It takes as little as 15 minutes to start generating leads and sales through an Adwords campaign.

## ***How To Stay Ahead Of The "Google Dance" Or Any Other Search Engine Algorithm Changes***

***FACT: Search engines love sites that give their users the most relevant results possible.***

Search engines like Google update their algorithms every so often in an attempt to improve the relevance of their search results. Some of these involve major changes that affect tens of thousands of online businesses.

Search engines care more about providing relevant search results than about how well your site is optimized. And they sure as hell don't like anyone fooling around with their math. So if you try to fool them with "doorway" pages or spammy pages that have little relevance to their customers, you can be sure they'll crack down on your site soon enough.

Some SEO services are known to use unethical techniques and have got many of their clients banned from search engines. So, when selecting an SEO service, keep the following tips in mind.

- \* Make sure your search engine optimization expert or company uses ethical search engine optimization techniques.
- \* Check out a list of their past clients to make sure they use effective search engine optimization techniques.
- \* Don't let price be the only factor when selecting a search engine optimization company. Cheap SEO services may use questionable methods and get you banned.
- \* Remember no one can give you guaranteed top 10 rankings. SEO firms who make such claims should be avoided.

The most important rule of search engine optimization is to start by giving search engines what they want - a site with useful, relevant content that comes highly recommended by other sites. We recommend that you use only ethical, "white-hat" SEO techniques that are proven to work and will never get you banned from search engines.

## ***The \*Expert\* Way To Build Link Popularity And Boost Traffic To Your Website***

***FACT: Search engines like sites that come highly recommended.***

You'll earn brownie points with search engines if you have links pointing to your site from a lot of other, important, similarly-themed sites.

For a long time, writing and publishing articles to boost link popularity was a secret known only to the "gurus" and big players. But now anyone can use it to drive a FLOOD of targeted traffic to their site.

Writing articles can help you -

- Brand yourself as an \*expert\* in your field
- Get free advertising through your author resource box
- Build link popularity and give your site high ranking in the search results
- Get more traffic to your site, when your article gets published on other websites or in newsletters

A well designed content marketing campaign can turn your content and articles into a relentless flow of eager prospects and buyers.

## ***Types Of Website Content And How You Can Use Them To Boost Traffic***

***FACT: Search engines like sites that are "smart" and full of useful information.***

Search engines like to give their users what they came looking for - relevant content.

With search engines, now more than ever, content is king. The more relevant content your site has, the better it will rank in the search results.

Here are the different types of content your site can feature:

- Articles
- Reviews
- Special Reports
- Industry Whitepapers
- Blogs
- Newsletters or Ezines
- Forums
- Newsfeeds

You need to learn how to leverage your content to boost your search engine rankings, build your brand and drive traffic to your website. But you also need to keep your site content fresh and updated.

Search engines love FRESH, UPDATED content and are known to index sites updated on a regular basis more frequently. Updating and adding to the content on your website regularly will give you an advantage in the search results.

There are various tools and resources you can add to your marketing arsenal that will make the process of updating your content easier, draw traffic to your site and keep it coming back.

Here are some ways to add fresh content to your site:

- **Blogs**

A blog is basically an online journal or a series of posts arranged by date. Several blog programs allow your users to create an account and post their comments to your blog, thereby adding more fresh content for you.

- **Newsletters**

Starting a newsletter is an excellent way to add content at regular intervals and get repeat traffic to your site. When you archive your newsletters online, you are automatically adding fresh content to it.

- **Content Management Systems**

Content Management Systems (CMS) allow you or your website users to add, edit or delete content to your website without having to create and format the pages manually.

- **Forums**

A forum is an excellent tool for building content and creating an online community that will bring repeat traffic. However, it does require time and energy, and some technical knowledge to setup and maintain forums. The best part about a forum is that it allows your visitors to build your content FOR you.

- **Reviews**

Reviewing and publishing a write-up on new products or resources in your field is an excellent way to get found for the keywords related to the product you review, and become an expert source of information on your industry .

- **RSS or Newsfeeds**

RSS allows syndication of \*expert\* news and content that is regularly updated at the source. Using RSS feeds you can build links to your website through syndication of news and content, or even update your site content regularly without the need to write a single line on your own.

Combining and integrating your content mix can give you a formidable advantage in search engine rankings. Request our whitepaper on how to "[Boost Your Search Engine Visibility With Blogs And RSS](#)"

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