Search Engine Optimization
with
AccuNet SiteBuilder

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Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

SEM can be defined as any and all efforts to drive traffic to your website. This includes paid directory listings, pay-per-click ads, and efforts to improve your free search engine listings.

Free search listings are known as 'organic' search.

This document deals with methods for optimizing your SiteBuilder website for better placement in the organic search results pages, or Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

On-site SEO is not complicated – in fact much of it is easy and can be quickly done within the SiteBuilder administrative area. Even a few hours of your time, can yield big returns.

Another area of SEO is known as external link building, or getting others to link to your site. A link coming into your site is called an incoming link. We will not cover incoming links, except to say this: Every organization you belong to, every professional affiliation you have, are perfect candidates to provide you with incoming links. Contact them and if they have your name and address listed on a website somewhere – make sure they also include your website address.

Throughout this document we refer to Google by name, but it implies all search engines in general, such as Yahoo, MSN or Ask.com. These are the major players in the search arena, and Google is by far the largest.

Note:
For the most part, this document will speak in generalities. While the more experienced may find an exception to the examples given, it does not mean this information is incorrect, but simply that it is meant as an easy to understand primer to help with your own SEO efforts. It intentionally leaves out some detail for the sake of simplicity.

SEO with SiteBuilder

What you can do to optimize your site today.

Depending on the amount of time or resources you have available, this document includes a good, better & best methods of doing on-site optimization within SiteBuilder.

The goal is to ensure your keywords are actually used in your website, both in places your visitor sees, and in places Google pays attention to.

The effectiveness of your efforts depends greatly on the quality of your keyword list, as that can also be used to drive the actual content in your site.

Optimization Preview

Minimal Optimization (*good*) (1-2 minutes per page)

Keyword list not required for this level of optimization.
At a minimum, your Search Engine Result listing will look better.

Minor Optimization (*better*) (7-10 minutes per page)

Keywords are from an "Educated Guess" list
This will not only help the appearance of your listing, but should go a long way towards increasing your rank – especially compared to no optimization at all.

Major Optimization (*best*) (30 minutes per page)

This requires that you do some keyword research first. (See Keyword Overview). The more pages you set out to do, the more efficient you will be. At this level you will be writing some new text content for your site, and perhaps creating a new page, depending on the outcome of the keyword research.

We recommend that you read the next sections about How Search Engines Work (pg 4) and Keywords Overview (pg 6).

If you already know the basics of how Search Engines work and already know your keywords, you can skip ahead to the **SiteBuilder SEO – How to Guide (pg 8).**

How Search Engines Work

The Google search:

A visitor to Google.com enters a search phrase and clicks the search button. Google returns a list of 10 results. Each result is a link to a webpage with a description.

How does Google know?

They visit your website at night and starting at your Home Page, they copy every bit of text on that page. Then using any links they find, move on to another page and repeat until they have a copy of every page.

Later, they then determine what the page is about, by looking at how often a word occurs, where on the page it is (beginning , middle, end) what is the title of the page, any extra data about the page (called meta-data, or meta-tags), such as the description tag. Other things are considered, such as links from within your site to and from that page, links from other websites. The analysis applied to each page in order to determine relevance to a specific keyword is complex.

Clearly it is difficult for a machine that cannot "comprehend" what it is reading, to know which page is more relevant for the requested search phrase. We can help it by keeping pages focused on only a topic or two.

(See example on the following page)

Gift Shop Website Example:

If you own a gift shop website and you have one page that lists the top 10 gifts you sell, compare that page to a gift shop site having 10 pages, each describing a gift.

Consider it from two points:
-Which page would be easier for Google to comprehend?

-Which search result would you be more likely to click on?

Music Boxes of all Styles
Welcome to our music box catalog. We feature music boxes from many countries and can special order boxes. Free overnight shipping of music boxes

Gift Shop for Every Need
Welcome to the best gift shop in the world. We carry dog Sweaters, Power Drills, Pocket Knives, Music Boxes, Adult Slippers & Leather Gloves

This example illustrates:
1) You are helping yourself to a higher position in the search engine results, because your content was more focused and easier for a machine to understand.
2) You also have a better, more effective listing, which helps out with the ultimate goal- **having the Google user end up at your site** ! Having a top position is worthless if nobody will follow the link to your site.

Keywords Overview

It is impossible to talk about Search Rankings & SEO without reference to a keyword. After all, there can be no search without a keyword.

Keyword Defined:

A Keyword can refer to a single word, but most often is a group of 2, 3 or more words, also known as a key phrase. In this document "keyword" means both; a single word or a phrase.

Of course you want to have top search rankings, but for which phrase? Is it your organization name, product name or service? Depending on how unique your organization name is – this is usually an easy one to get a first page listing. If your product or service is offered by hundreds or thousands of other websites, then getting a decent ranking will be more difficult, take more effort and more time.

The first step in effective SEO is to develop a keyword list. You can start by writing down the keywords you want your site to be found by.

If your business is Landscaping, your keywords might be: landscaping, landscape design, lawns, lawn mowing, lawn maintenance… and so on.

If you offer regional services, be sure to include this info in your keywords: Southeast Michigan, MI, Oakland County, Milford, Brighton, Ann Arbor, etc. This will help you to localize your content to your area, as more search users are using localization terms when they search.

How do you know what people will search for?

While you are likely an expert at your own business, your potential customers may use different terms to search for your products or services, than you would.

In order for your SEO efforts to be effective, you need to use the same keywords in your site that people are using when they perform the search. If you owned a landscaping business – it wouldn't do a lot of good to optimize your site for "lawn maintenance" if everyone was searching for "grass cutting"

Fortunately, you can find out what words are being used to perform searches by performing (or purchasing) keyword research. There are several free tools available to help you to verify your list and to find new phrases.

Keyword Research Tools

Google Adwords Keyword Tool (free).

Simply go to google.com and search for "Adwords Keyword Tool"

Wordtracker Free Keywords

Again, go to google.com and search for "Wordtracker Free"

To use these free services, start by entering one of your keywords, then review the results to see if any new keywords might apply to you. If you're on the right track you'll see the results will match the keywords already in your list.

Paid Keyword Analysis

AccuNet Web Services offers Keyword Research Analysis which takes your starting list of keywords and returns a list of at least 200 similar words or phrases that have been recently used in actual web searches. In addition the research will also indicate the uniqueness of a certain phrase, determined by the approximate number of other websites using a phrase, so that you can further increase your odds of being found by targeting unique words. Please contact us for more information about this service.

If you enjoy rolling up your sleeves and learning new things, you can use some of the same tools we use to do our research, including the paid version of Wordtracker, or another great service called Keyword Discovery at www.KeywordDiscovery.com

So you have your list, now what?

In a perfect world you have your keyword list before writing a single sentence of content. More often than not, a website already exists, so you'll be modifying existing content and/or creating additional pages to address search traffic opportunities that were revealed during the keyword discovery phase.

For optimization purposes, Keywords are used in the main content of your site, the text that visitors read, the titles of pages, browser titles, text of links between pages.

SiteBuilder SEO – How To Guide

With your keyword list in hand, (or in your head) you can edit your site today to help your search engine listing in the days to come.

You will need to begin by logging in to your website, and clicking the link "Show Editor Buttons" Then browse to the page you'd like to optimize. You will be using the blue "Keyword" tab, and the blue "Title & Layout" tab. After selecting one of the blue tabs, you will be taken to an administrative screen where you can input your keywords and edit your titles. When you have finished editing, click the "Save & Continue" button to return to the webpage.

Field names on the Keyword Screen.

Browser Title:

This text is displayed at the top left of the browser window, above all the menus and buttons. It is opposite of the red "X" (if you use Windows) you use to close a window. Google pays special attention to this field and the words in it. It should be 5 to 10 words long and include the keyword or two that describe this page. You can go over 10 words, but beyond that the text simply isn't used. Note that this text is what Google uses for the header of your listing in the search results, so it needs to be catchy and to the point. (See the previous Gift Shop Example)

Description

In this field should be the description of the page. It can be roughly 30 words long and also should include some of the keywords for this page. Some search engines will use this verbatim, as the description for your search listing, so again, it needs to draw the users attention to entice them to click through to your website.

Keywords

This area is pretty much useless from an SEO standpoint. Too much abuse from webmasters in the past means the search engines ignore this field. It is useful to paste in or type the keywords for this page, for your own purposes – to keep track of them.

Field names on the Title & Layout Screen

Page Title

This is the large text that appears in each web page above the main content, and below the graphics in the header. The Page Title is used to indicate the overall title and meaning of the page to your visitor, and because of that, is given additional attention by Google. Where appropriate, try to use a keyword here.

Link Name

This is the text that appears in the main site navigation menu (generally on the left side or top of the page), and optionally in the footer links or sitemap page. Because the text of a link in a menu would naturally describe a page it links to, Google will pay special attention to it. Keep in mind that the text in the Link Name field is generally a shorter version of the Page Title, and that putting too many characters in the Link Name field may cause the navigation menu to look strange or uneven. If this happens, simply re-edit it to a shorter version.

Browser Title

This is the same Browser Title field available through the "Keyword" tab. See description on the previous page.

Editing Content on the Page

If you wish to edit the content of the website to include your keywords, you will need to use the orange "Text & Images" tab, then click either "Simple Text" or "HTML Editor" to begin editing.

Optimization Level Summary

Minimal Optimization (good) (1-2 minutes per page)

At a minimum, your Search Engine Result listing will look better.
Keyword list not required for this level of optimization.

- Keywords are determined from the content on the page (scan the page, and jot down one or two keywords that represent this page)
- Fill in the Browser Title, edit the Page Title (using keywords)
- Paste some existing content from your website into the Description field

Minor Optimization (better) (7-10 minutes per page)

This will not only help the appearance of your listing, but should go a long way towards increasing your rank – especially compared to no optimization at all.

- Keywords are from an "Educated Guess" list
- Review content and add keywords where possible
- Fill in the Browser Title, edit the Page Title (using keywords)
- Write a new description for this page
- Find or create internal link opportunities, where the link text is one of the keywords, not your typical "click here"

Major Optimization (best) (30 minutes per page)

This requires that you do some keyword research first. (See Keyword Overview). The more pages you set out to do, the more efficient you will be. At this level you will be writing some new text content for your site, and perhaps creating a new page, depending on the outcome of the keyword research.

- Keywords are based on research of actual search terms
- Create new content and either add to, or replace existing content
- Fill in the Browser Title, edit the Page Title (using keywords)
- Review & Revise the Link Text used in the navigation menu
- Create additional pages if a new topic or subject is discovered during the keyword research.
- Examine the new & existing content for internal link opportunities.