business performance

advantage

CFO *Plus* LLC

Our Business is to Improve Your Business

Our mission is to provide information and strategies to business owners and managers for improvement in the effectiveness of its business management so that key objectives can be realized.

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All Web Sites are Not Created Equal
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Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is big business these days. SEO is the science/art of tweaking websites to achieve the highest ranking (closest to the top of the pile) in search engines. Companies spend thousands of dollars creating and re-creating their websites, then thousands more optimizing them. Use the tips below to get it right the first time.

Keywords
Simply shoving a keywords list into meta tags doesn't work. The spiders (programs that search the internet and catalog pages) get smarter every month. Spiders actually read the content on the page. If the keywords are nowhere to be found within the page content, meta tags will help you very little, if at all. The goal is to write content packed with the keywords your visitors will use to search for products and services of the type you are offering.

Choose your words carefully. Many tools exist to help you decide which keywords will attract the most targeted traffic to your site. These programs tell you how many other sites are using a particular word or phrase versus how many searches are performed daily for those keywords. Choose keywords with a higher "daily searched for" value but a lower number of sites competing with yours for the phrase.

Site Design
Design may not seem important to search engine ranking, but it is. Spiders read all of the code making up a page, not just the content. If a page has more HTML code than content, the keywords you spent so much time putting into your text will lose much of their value. Ouch.

Here are a few ways to optimize site design:
- Use CSS instead of tables for design.
- Keep JavaScript code out of the page and in external files.
- Use external style sheets to style all elements of the page. Do not use FONT tags within the body of the document.
- Load images from the style sheet. This will allow you to use relevant text on the page itself that can then be replaced by an image, such as your logo.
- Use the H1, H2, H3, etc. tags as they were intended. Those tags were never meant to be used simply to make some text bigger. They denote importance.

Pages should be easy to read without the style sheet. This practice will not only assist in future updates of the site, but is also a good benchmark for determining that a page will be friendly to spiders.

Home Page
The site's home page should be a snapshot of who your company is, so new visitors will know they have come to the right place … or not. It should include small blurbs linking to content on other pages of the site. Also include information about your company's top two or three products or services, and links to pages with detailed information about these services. Spiders weigh the home page heavily when deciding how to categorize a site. Make sure the page's content and title contain a heavy dose of the keywords you've chosen.

Links
Incoming links from pages (not just sites) with complementary content boost site ranking considerably. Do not participate in "link farms" where a hundred or more sites are listed on a single page. Link farms will only hurt your site ranking.

The quality of the link does matter. Links from pages with content relevant to yours and where your link is one of no more than three or four are quality links.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC)
Paying for ads is expensive. Companies spend BILLIONS of dollars per year on PPC and banner advertising. If you decide to market your site in this way, choose carefully and be aware of the downfalls:
- PPC ads may be targeted by competitors or marketers to either drive up your cost or create revenue for themselves.
- There is no long-term advantage with PPC advertising. Once you stop paying for the ads, the traffic goes away.
- Make sure the copy written for those little PPC ads attracts attention, but only the right attention. "Win $1 Million" may get people to click on the ad, but you are then paying to attract people who have little or no interest in your product or service.

PPC advertising can be a wonderful tool but it doesn't replace creating a great website and a solid web marketing and promotions strategy.

When you hire a company to create your website, discuss all of the items above. If they aren't willing to work within your guidelines, find someone who will. ■