How Does Search Engine Optimization Help Local Businesses?

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Millions of businesses, small and large, clamor to be heard online because they have learned that potential customers now turn to the Internet to find their goods and services.

For small businesses, the challenge of being heard amidst the voices of thousands of other businesses like yours can be daunting.

This is where SEO (or search engine optimization) comes in. With SEO, your business can effectively compete online. The Internet levels the playing field, enabling small businesses to thrive on the Internet amidst tough competition.

Your business can rise to the top of the search engines and achieve a strong return on investment by targeting traffic from your niche market.

What is SEO?

Search engine optimization is a marketing strategy wherein a team of SEO specialists employ sophisticated website engineering methods to give your website a boost in the rankings of the major search engines. Through keyword analysis, strategic copywriting, web site design, image optimization, competition analysis and other methods, an SEO company can make your website front page news!

While a search engine optimization company offering ethical Internet search marketing can boost your web site to the top of the search engines, they don't own the search engines. Your SEO firm cannot control the rankings or ask for favors from the search engines; any SEO company who promises you otherwise may practice unethical SEO methods which can result in serious penalties from the search engines.

Is it Important for Your Website to Rank High with the Search Engines

Since millions of search results may be generated as a result of any given keyword search, major search engines like Google, Yahoo! and Bing use "spiders" to "crawl" through millions of websites to determine which sites are the most relevant to the search terms Internet users type in.

A spider-driven search engine like Google will then rank each result based on a unique algorithm which is designed to determine the site's legitimacy and relevance to that particular user's needs.

If your site doesn't land at the top of the search engine result pages, potential clients will not know that you exist, they will not find your site and they will not have the opportunity to do business with you. By not ranking high in the search engines for relevant key term phrases, you're missing out on a significant market!

What Does this Mean for Your Business?

Higher-ranking websites will appear closer to the top of the search engines. The higher value the search engines place on your web site, the more likely a person is to visit your site. In fact, according to a Penn State study (Jansen & Spink, 2008), 8 out of 10 users will not find your site if it is not listed within the first three pages of results.

Today, businesses must realize that search engines play a large role in connecting clients to businesses — and impacting people's purchasing decisions. Having a strong Web presence is not just for eCommerce businesses. Every business must carefully invest in an online marketing strategy that incorporates SEO since the search engines are the first place people turn when looking for a product or service (WebVisible & Nielsen, 2009).