Increasing Your Web Presence

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Site Linking Tips

1. Search Engine Optimization

- Your URL should be registered with multiple search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Ask, and Bing, etc.

- Site title and description must be Meta-tagged in order for the Web spiders/robots to pick -up the site. This does not necessarily impact the order in which the site will appear in the search. It only assists the search in identifying that the sight has a match to the search request.

- Submitting your sitemap is an easy way for you to submit all your URLs to the search engine index. With Sitemaps, you can automatically keep search engines informed of all of your current pages and any updates you make to those pages. Please note that submitting a Sitemap doesn't guarantee that all pages of your site will be crawled or included in their search results.

- Search engines sell placements such as Google AdWords as part of a marketing/advertising offer. These are usually pay-per-click offers (so they are not free).

2. Site Linking

- Link building is indeed a tactic with direct benefits via rankings traffic from search engines and direct traffic from *high profile sites*.

- Purse links that will differentiate your site from competing sites in a way that produces a natural ILP (inbound link profile).

- Choose the sites you link to wisely, they can have a positive or negative effect on your users' opinion of your organization. If linking sharing is part of your promotion strategy, it is important to consider developing a *Website Linking Policy* to guide your choices.

www.association-resources.com

Headquarters: 1901 N. Roselle Road, Suite 920, Schaumburg, IL 60195   Phone (847) 885-7400   Toll-Free (888) 705-1434 Fax (847) 885-8393

1701 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20006   Phone (202) 626-0044   Fax (202) 580-6659

Some Site Linking Guidelines

- Don't link to other sites "blindly" or without their knowledge. Similarly, make sure that the other site is adding value to your site and your content. Make sure that there is a strategic match.

- Don't link to every Web site that interests you. Your links should not simply represent "cool stuff". You want to add value and interactivity.

- Don't be afraid to link. If you have a good site, it is smart to provide both internal and external links. If you are creating a useful experience for your users and your content is good, they will come back.

Do Consider Linking When You:

- Are not the *subject matter expert* about a topic
- Need the backing of an authority
- Your site does not focus on the topic at hand
- Have a reciprocal agreement with a strategic partner
- Want or need to diversify your content
- Your page or your site needs complimentary content
- Can help your user make an important decision

Some Site Linking Strategies

- Request permission to link to other sites. When requesting, you should do two things: convey your interest in their site and what they have to offer and also give them a reason to provide a link to your site as well. This is good business and it encourages reciprocal linking.

- Look for information, products, and services that provide extraordinary value for your users. Try to supplement your content. If you can't provide (or don't want to provide) help your users with a link. Be sure to ask your users where else they visit online. Gather feedback about sites they like and visit often. Use it to create better links.

- Consider grouping links together by subject matter or integrate them within the other content of your site. Do this on a *Useful Websites* page and a *Recommended Reading* page.

- Remember to link to email addresses, auto-responders, newsgroups, and FTP sites. These links can go a long way. If you are asking for feedback, e-mail links are critical.

- Be liberal about linking to your own pages. If you are going to link, link to yourself first. Keep users at your site if you can. Otherwise, be sure to send them where they can find what they want and need.

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- Provide more than the name of the site when you link. Describe the link in such a way that your user doesn't have to waste time guessing. Context is the key; this is why having links in sentences and paragraphs is so much better than "stand alone" links or generic lists of links.

- The best place to link to is usually not the home page of the other site. Send your user directly to the information they want: an article, an index, a page of interest. Don't make them guess where they should go from the home page of another site.

- Always include a link to your website in your e-mail signature. This is a great way to send folks to your site with very little effort.

3. Site Promotion

Too often website owners and search marketers get caught up in tactics, forgetting the short and long-term objectives of the website. For example, generating spikes of social news and book-marking traffic makes for a good PowerPoint slide, but it's not a final outcome and is not always a viable long-term tactic for business websites. Measuring those signals that influence what search engines and users do to arrive at a website when looking for answers/resources/relevant content are nothing more than short and medium-term performance indicators. Rankings, traffic and links are not final outcomes. Conversions, sales and measures of engagement are what feed website marketing budgets with the best results coming from a long-term focus.

The great thing about enhancements like Google Universal search and Ask 3D is that they enable those websites producing and promoting content in multiple media formats a distinct advantage. At the core of today's most effective website promotion strategy is the creation and distribution of content. With a combination of coordinated text, image, video and RSS feeds, a company can dramatically increase its ability to promote its message to audiences that are looking. Leveraging multiple media and data types provide direct marketing benefits as well as augmenting standard search visibility.

Effective and persistent website promotion drives qualified visitors and also increases the link footprint of a website. That byproduct of a quantity of quality links over time will also deliver desired traffic to your site. There may also be the added benefit of improved rankings on standard search engines. The importance of using links to improve rankings and the traffic they generated should be considered part of a long-term strategy rather than an immediate goal.

The Internet is not a static space, but rather a dynamic and ever-changing information highway. Getting the most out of your Web presence requires developing a Web strategy that includes realistic goals based on immediate and long-term needs, and a clear understanding of your intended audience (users) and their expectations. Tactics should be determined and evaluated base on experience (what has worked), a study of the longer-term effects of Web trends and practices, and those newer trends such as Social Media that provide more exposure and opportunity.

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