

The *bwired* 10 Search Engine Commandments

Fact Sheet 11
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And it came to pass that search engines ruled the ether universe. And heaven became known as that place at the very top of search listings and verily did any listing below the first two pages become known as purgatory. And the people cried out, "How do I ensure my web pages are accessible to search engines and strategically focused on the ranking criteria and algorithms they apply?"

And the lord of the ether declared, "You must use Search Engine Optimisation to get to Heaven!

Here's how to do it:"

Thou Shalt:

1. Have A Keyword Identification Strategy

Your objective is to help your audience find you. You need to identify the specific keywords your target market uses to find what you are offering. Your whole strategy relies on getting this right.

There are keyword tools available or you may opt for a "Pay Per Click" (PPC) campaign to identify top-converting keywords.

2. Have Sound Site Architecture

When designing your site, structure your directories and urls so the information is well organised and the urls are keyword rich. Create links to reference other sections of your site and use a sitemap. If you ensure ease of navigation, then both users and search spiders will know where they are and where they are going.

3. Build On Strong Foundations

Search engines take text copies of your pages and store them in their databases for reference.

Help the search engines by building your site on foundations which they can logically navigate.

You can certainly use Flash elements but don't build your site with them; use well formed html as the bedrock for your structure.

4. Pay Homage To Content

You may have heard that "content is king" and wondered if this is true. It is. Search engines do not recognise graphics or pictures, only written content. Write clear, concise, active, specific, personal, purposeful and relevant content based on your keyword strategy and always look to drive the reader forward. And proofread your site! If you are not using web-copy professionals to supply accurate and SEO optimised content, the very least you can do is to check it thoroughly. Readers may notice errors in your content and still understand you (although not respect you) but search spiders will simply leave you behind.

5. Use Keywords Wisely

Don't just lump your keywords all over the page. Your strategy will be most effective if you can creatively weave the business specific keywords you have identified into your content with direct relevance to the

page they are on. Keep the use of keywords concise: use the top 6 words and their synonyms and use prime keywords and keyword phrases in the heading tags.

6. Give Each Page A Home

Keep each page specific and focused on a single topic and ensure the keywords and main page title are relevant to that page. Most search engines index the contents of the title tag and factor it highly in the ranking process, so always optimize the title tags by making them perfectly keyword enriched and unique for every page. Include text for your image ALT tags and keyword phrases and write a short blurb for the meta-description tag with targeted keyword phrases that will entice users to click through.

7. Be Well Linked

Link-popularity can place you higher on some search engines so be sure to secure reciprocal links between your site and others in your industry. Consider registering your site in topic directories, offer a link exchange with associated sites, register your site on any trade sites and ensure incoming links contain your targeted keywords in the anchor text. Try to be central to a community based around your products or services.

8. Submit Websites Wisely

Do not submit your website to search engines more than once a month. If you do, you run the risk of the search engine



classifying your site as SPAM which is definitely the road to purgatory. If you keep heading down this path, you will find your site will be banned from search engine rankings. It's a long way back from there.

9. Update Regularly

Treat your site like a fruit bowl. Always keep your information fresh. Search engines will notice if you are unchanged. They don't like stale sites. Use the news areas on your site to change and update

your content regularly. You don't need to re-write every word; just ensure that there are new items moving within your content regularly.

10. Be Patient

In the SEO universe, patience is a virtue and will get you into heaven. It is not possible to achieve the top search ranking overnight. The important thing is to devise an effective strategy, implement it and be persistent. It takes work to maintain a site at optimum performance. SEO is an ongo-

ing process of monitoring your ranking, analysing your competition, reviewing your tactics, revising your plans and reapplying your knowledge.

Good luck!

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