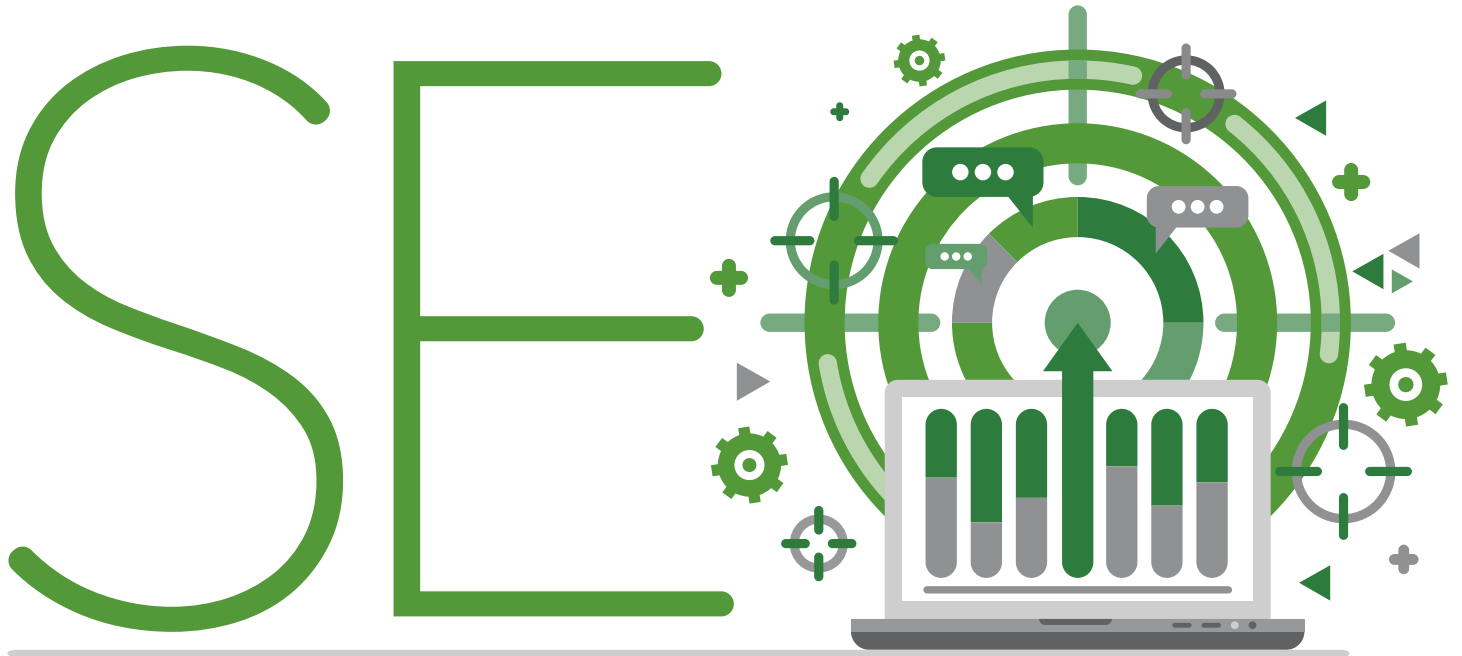




KOMPANIGROUP

GET AHEAD. STAY AHEAD.



WHY IT MATTERS & HOW TO LEVERAGE IT



ANALYSIS



PLANNING



IMPLEMENTATION



RESULTS

SEO TRUTH #1 - SEO IS ALWAYS CHANGING

Search Engine Optimization - everyone talks about how important it is, you know it's a big deal for your business... but you're still not sure exactly why, what, and how to implement it for your company or brand. Sound familiar? It's a more common situation than you might think... allow us to help shed a little light on the topic.

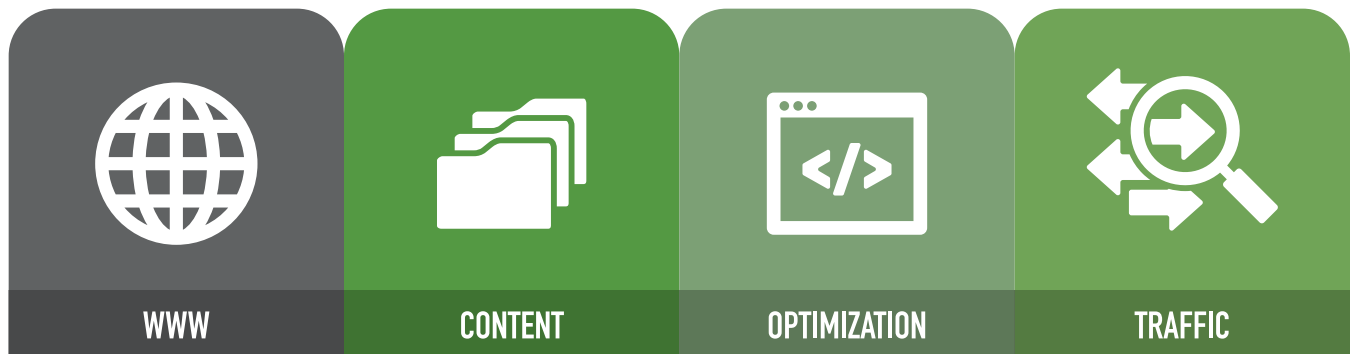
In the early days of search engine marketing, people used manual submission to search engines, meta keywords, and keyword stuffing to boost their rankings. It changed the results for businesses, but didn't really reflect the kind of content people were looking for. So the search engines themselves changed their methodology. Just 10 years ago, links were all the rage to get your site higher up the results list and 'winners' had dozens of links per page, automated comment bots and other sneaky ways to up their ranking without upping the level or value of their content. As social media burst on the scene, connection with those platforms became part of the consideration in evaluating a site's relevancy among search engine results. Today, elements like whether or not your site carries the http"s" prefix are among the many things the search engine 'bots' consider when reviewing and indexing your site.

Why does the history of SEO matter? Well, because if you're using tactics from 20, 10 or even 4 or 5 years ago - you may be doing yourself more harm than good. Understanding the way search engines work is essential to creating an SEO strategy that works for your business and budget.

Today's current standards are designed to serve users with better matches for the actual information they're looking for. Remember, search engines don't want to be your own personal free billboard (they want you to pay for that kind of exposure)... they are there for the benefit of those searching. Google, for example, makes the following recommendations.

- » Make pages for your users, not for search engines.
- » Don't try to trick users or engines by presenting different content for each type of user (this is called "cloaking")
- » Keep your site simple to navigate, with correct, non-broken text links. Every page should be reachable from at least one static text link.
- » Create content with useful, relevant information that is written clearly and accurately.
- » Make sure text related to <title> and ALT are descriptive, concise, and accurate.
- » Use keywords to create smart human-friendly URLs. Provide one version of the URL to reach a document and consider using redirects or other tools to serve the content.

SEO TRUTH #2 - IF YOU'RE NOT USING IT, YOU'RE LOSING IT



Just like putting signage in front of your store or including your address and contact information in advertising efforts, SEO makes sure that:

- » people know your business exists, and
- » they know how to find you (in this case, with links and URLs)

So consider the reality of what happens if you're not actively engaged in SEO. Sure, people might happen upon your site eventually, but in the meantime they've likely made a purchase, inquiry, or taken other action on a different site... perhaps even one of your competitors. By utilizing SEO to your advantage, you effectively flip that scenario to one that drives traffic, interest, loyalty, and your bottom line.

At Kompani Group, we approach this effort as follows:

Start by making sure the site content says what you need it to say. Is it valuable for your site visitors? Since your visitors are prospects, how can you best speak to what they need to hear to get them to request a quote or at least a dialog with a sales person?

Considering the above, what search terms are your prospects most likely to use to find a solution to the problems you solve or needs you can help them meet? Make a list of those words.

NOTE: *A very smart source of key words is your own sales force. Ask them what kinds of buzz words they hear most often when talking with clients and prospects. What's the shorthand lingo they use (even if it isn't the technical terminology)? What are they saying is their most important need or concern? What has your sales team found to be effective, persuasive responses? Bring those words into the discussion as well.*

SEO TRUTH #2 - IF YOU'RE NOT USING IT, YOU'RE LOSING IT



ANALYSIS



INDEXING KEYWORDS



BACKLINKS



RANKING

Do some market research. What keywords and search terms do your competitors seem to “own”? Can you offer those same products or services in a different or better way? Are the customers they’re attracting the kinds of customers you want? Whether the answer is yes or no, this provides tremendous insight into the kind of content your site needs to deliver.

Now it’s time to make sure that your entire site’s content, on every page a person might read, is doing its best to touch on as many of those keywords as is reasonable for that particular page. This influences a little part of the SEO equation called keyword density and it impacts how relevant your site is in relation to certain searches.

Pay priority attention to the pages that represent the path you want visitors to follow. Home > Services > Request a quote, for example. Start by optimizing those with relevant and specific messaging.

Look also at your web traffic analytics to see what paths users are taking now. Understanding where they are going and why can provide good insights into what kind of value users perceive your site to be offering.

Do you have the right pages to incorporate all the content and keywords you need to have on your site? If so, you can move to the next phase - bringing people back to your site to see the content. If not, you may need to do some more content creation.

What kind of piece would most appropriately facilitate your using specific keywords? A case study? A white paper? A video? A blog entry? An FAQ page? Get those pieces created and posted.

It’s an ever-evolving task (see SEO Truth #1), and as new competitors enter the market, you’ll need to respond to the kind of content on their sites, but it’s one of the most effective ways to keep your site where people will see it, interact with it, and take the action you intend.

SEO TRUTH #3 - EVEN SEARCH ENGINES HAVE LIMITATIONS

As intelligent and complex as search engine algorithms can be, it can be tempting to think that web crawling programs are these all-knowing, all-seeing entities. The truth is different. Search bots only see what they're designed to see - which is primarily text. And while that includes both readable human text and back-end programming text, it's still a finite field of vision.

This presents some important challenges and opportunities for site owners like you.

1. Search Engines Can't Read Images

Challenge: Any text you format into a beautifully designed image field will simply not be read or considered as part of SEO.

Opportunity: This is an excellent place to feature less-relevant content or marketing slogans and language that's important to your brand, but may not be what people actually search. Think of Nike's Just Do It campaign. People searching for Nike are more likely looking for shoes, sneakers, gear, apparel (as keywords). Just Do It would be irrelevant content, but still essential to the brand.

2. Search Engines Don't Listen to Audio or Video

Challenge: If you've got an amazing presentation, it's essentially invisible to search engine bots.

Opportunity: Creating transcripts of audio and video not only create valuable text links within your site, but also keyword-rich content that users can read and review, thus spending longer on your site. The longer people stay on your site, the more favorable search engines regard it as useful.

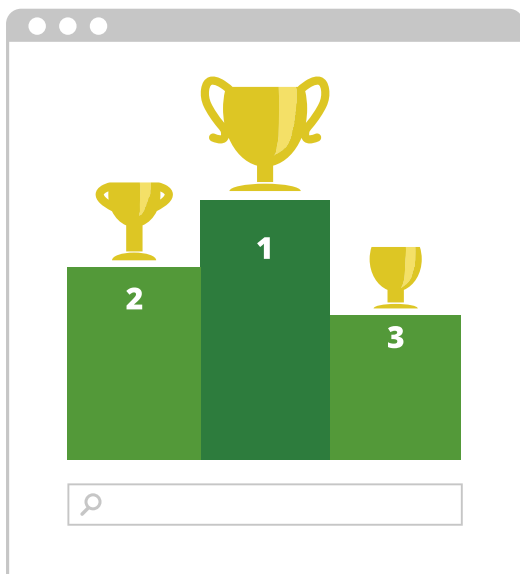
3. Search Engines Don't Read Forms

Challenge: Let's say you have this excellent portal for directing people to your many, many useful services and products. They simply choose from a few survey or form items and they're given answers. Awesome for clients, completely inconsequential to bots.

Opportunity: Consider placing form directions in plain text on your site, or have a back-up to your form that is rooted in text rather than displayed results of functions.

All of this is to say that SEO should be a balance. If you devoted your entire site towards attracting robots, the odds that it would appeal to human beings would be marginal at best. Gorgeous imagery, compelling stories and video, unique infographics, helpful polls and quizzes, and interesting brand messaging are still very important to people, and are essential to keeping them on your site once they've found their way there. It's helpful to remember that SEO gets people in the door (so to speak), and then it's the brand experience that makes them stay there or return.

SEO TRUTH #4 - NOT ALL RANKINGS ARE CREATED EQUAL



There are two main schools of thought regarding modern SEO strategy - paid SEO placement and organic SEO rankings. The former of course is when you pay to be one of the “featured results” at the top of a results page. The latter is using non-paid efforts to push your position up the ladder.

Some purists out there believe one is better than another, and they each have valid points. Proponents of paid SEO placement enjoy that it takes a lot of the guess work and maintenance out of promoting a site.

Proponents of organic SEO rankings like how budget friendly this approach is, especially if you have resources on your team already that can handle this task.

The downside to paid SEO placements is that it can get very pricey to keep up long term. As your competitors get wise to your efforts, they’ll simply outbid you for top spot, or they’ll make sure they’re right alongside you. If you’ve got an unlimited budget then sure, you could theoretically make this the core of your SEO strategy, but if you don’t, you may want to consider using paid SEO placement for key product launches, innovations in service, specials, and other timely executions.

Organic SEO rankings on the other hand can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months to develop - without a lot of instant certainty about what is working and what is not. This can be frustrating for businesses just starting out, or those in desperate need of a change in buying habits and sales.

At Kompani Group we like to think of websites as rowboats and paid SEO placement and organic SEO rankings as the two oars we have to move a site towards a goal. Sometimes, you’ll need to pivot quickly and will row harder with paid SEO placement. Other times you’ll need to take longer strokes with organic SEO ranking to reach a long-term objective. Most often, however, you’ll use both in a mix that allows your business to have a steady stride in the marketplace.

SEO TRUTH #5 - IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOUR SITE



Yes, we're aware it sounds crazy to give you all these tips for optimizing your content and user experience and then tell you that some SEO tactics don't even live on your site. The reality is that search engines realize that people have many methods by which they access information. Social media, email marketing, press coverage - these are all important factors in your SEO equation, and smart marketers make use of them whenever they can. You can also work the strategy of backlinking.

The more links in cyberspace that lead to your site, the better (in general). Again, you don't want the wrong people coming to your site, but building a network of sites that will link back to you will certainly help your rankings. This can be achieved through strategic networks, blogs, industry publications, and similar relationships.

After all, you don't have to rely on search engines alone to tell the world that you have content that they may want to come consume. And the more people that come to your site, the longer they stay there, the higher up in search results your website will be positioned. What happens outside of the search engine world does matter when it comes to rankings.

These are the basics of course - but should get you well on your way if you've never implemented SEO as part of your overall marketing strategy. You can also take any SEO efforts further by dedicating resources or attention to it on a steady, regular basis. This is one of the key services Kompani Group offers its clients, and we bring more than a decade's worth of expertise, insight, and experience with even more advanced SEO tactics to the mix as well.



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