

seo success for small business

The Search Engine Optimization Guide
That Puts Your Website to Work
For Your Online Success



Chris Young

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1: SEO Is Key to Your Online Success

What if I told you your website was invisible on the Web? You'd tell me I was wrong, send me a link to your beautifully designed site, and wait for me to eat my words.

Let me save you the trouble.

Many people make the mistake of assuming that their website can easily be found on the Web. They either think that their Web designer optimized their site for the search engines, or that the search engines will automatically return their site in every search query relevant to their business because . . . well . . . isn't that what search engines are supposed to do?

Those are easy assumptions to make.

When you worked with your Web designer you likely spent months making decisions about the copy and images you wanted to use, while he or she was busy doing all that mysterious coding. Why wouldn't you assume that the coding included search engine optimization?

It doesn't.

And while the search engines appreciate your unwavering faith in their powers, they actually depend on your website to tip them off as to how relevant it is to a given search. Unless your website is

search engine optimized, the search engines may not even know it exists.

Surprised? You're not alone.

“That’s not the case with my website,” you might think. “Clients and colleagues go to my site all the time. In fact it returns in the top spot every time I search for it.”

Think again. Plenty of people may go directly to your website, but it’s because they type in your business or domain name, not because they found it in a general search. When you search for your domain name, it will always return in the top spot. But so what? You have to remember that new customers have to be able to find your website based on the way *they* search for your product or service, and when they do, it can translate into success for your business.

Get Found on the Web

Just as in the offline world, the success of your business on the Web depends on new customers and clients finding you. If your website isn’t attracting new business, there is likely only one reason: It isn’t search engine optimized. Without SEO it’s either buried in the search returns, or, as we explore in the real-life website examples in **Chapter 4, I Thought My Site Was SEOed!**, it may be completely invisible to the search engines.

The good news is search engine optimization is something you can control. In fact, as you learn how easy it is to help search engines

find and return your Web pages in relevant search queries, you're going to see your site—and all of your competitors' websites—through new eyes.

So what is SEO? It's simply a way of structuring your website and its content to ensure it is found by the search engines, and returned prominently in the unpaid search results (referred to as “organic” or “natural” returns) when people search on words or phrases (keywords) that are relevant to your business. With approximately 80% of click-throughs going to those sites listed at the top of the natural search returns, SEO is something your business can't afford to ignore.

You have two goals in learning and implementing the best SEO strategies, also known as White Hat SEO:

- 1. To have your website pages return as prominently as possible in the search engine return pages (SERPs) for those people most likely to buy your product or enlist your services.**
- 2. To provide an excellent user experience for visitors to your site.**

With the proper SEO strategy your website will be working 24 hours a day to attract new customers who, just moments before they typed a search query, never knew your business existed.

Can even a small website like yours return well in the SERPs? If it

is properly SEOed, yes it can.

Can a site that's already on the Web be SEOed? Yes! In fact the most successful websites are continually refining their SEO strategies.

Even better—you don't need an expensive consultant to SEO your website. **SEO Success for Small Business** takes you step-by-step through the same SEO process professionals use, and provides links to extremely valuable and *free* site analysis tools that tap into the same wealth of information professional search engine optimizers depend on.

By using the tools listed throughout this book, you'll soon have more information than you thought possible on every aspect of SEO that impacts your site and, yes, even your competitors' sites.

SEO takes both thought and time to achieve the results that will work for your website for years. But the effort is well worth it when you see that even small changes will noticeably improve your Web pages' visibility in the search returns.

Can I Buy Some Online Ads and Skip SEO?

Sure you can—if you have the budget for it. But all the major search engines make it clear that a website that is properly SEOed does not need to buy ads to return well in the organic returns. Studies have shown that many searchers ignore sponsored ads because they believe that sites that show up in the natural search returns

are more reliable because they didn't pay to be there. Think of your own search history and how often you click on the sponsored returns.

That said, ads may be an excellent addition to your online strategy, particularly for seasonal businesses that want to be sure they are found. However, you still need to know the best practices of SEO to create the most effective ad strategy for your site.

Think of sponsored ads as an addition to—not a replacement for—SEO which, when done well, will work for your website for the long term. After all, you want to ensure your site continues to return well even when your ad budget runs dry.

Because SEO involves editing your website's HTML files, if you're not familiar with making changes to these files (which I promise is easy to do), you may choose to work with your Web designer when your site is being built or edited.

If you are determined to be hands on, something I strongly encourage, the resource section at the end of this chapter lists helpful online tutorials and books that will demystify what's going on behind your Web page.

By the time you finish **SEO Success for Small Business**, you will:

- **Put your website to work 24 hours a day to attract new customers and clients.**
- **Stand out from your competition by easily learning**

your competitors' SEO strategies.

- Discover more than 75 free professional online tools that make it simple to analyze your and your competitors' sites.
- Optimize your site using the best professional practices to attract targeted Web traffic.
- Learn how to track the success of your SEO efforts.

Ready for success? Let's Get Started!

SEO Success for Small Business

is available for purchase on

Amazon.com

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