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**Know more about Do-It-Yourself: SEO**

Ever felt intimidated at the convoluted, jargon-ridden information about Internet marketing for small businesses available on the Net? Ever been horrified by the huge fees the experts charge, putting search engine optimization beyond your own means? Ever thought: What exactly is search engine optimization anyway, and can I do it myself?

The answer is: Yes, you can! The basics of search engine optimization in applied web marketing are simple. It's all to do with the keyword content of your text copy, and can be summarized in seven points.

1. Register a good domain name which reflects what your site is about. Rather, you want to register something like Best Widgets because that would inspire confidence in people looking for quality widgets who would not necessarily have heard of Fred Jones the widget-maker.
2. Name your page URLs based on reasons similar to the above for your web promotion, except now you can be more specific. Search engines like to know what your page is about. Name a page after a product (BigYellowWidgets.htm) or a service or action (Buy-Widgets-by-Post.htm) on one of the sales pages.
3. The text in the title tag is crucial in letting search engines know what each page is about. Put your important keywords in your title tags, using both the singular and plural versions (people will search for both) and make these tags different and specific for each page. For example, "Widgets and After Sales Widget Services". Whatever you do, don't call the home page "Index", but treat it almost as a mini-description.
4. The other tags (at the top of the html page) between the two "HEAD" tags are not as important as the title tag, but the description tag is still used by some search engines in displaying what you would like web users to see when they scroll down a page of search results. Some search engines don't use the description tag at all; others, like Google, sometimes use part of it together with part of the main body text surrounding prominent keywords on your page. So you may as well treat the description tag seriously; make it brief (about 25 to 30 words) and as comprehensive as possible in the short space allowed. Make sure you have your popular keywords included within your description tag. The ALT tag is used for a very short description of an image or graphic file, and is what is displayed if you allow your mouse pointer to hover above a graphic. These days it is not considered important for search engines. The COMMENT tag is never displayed on the body page, and is used by coders and designers as an instruction or reminder to themselves about what that section of html coding should be doing; in the past, some webmasters in their quest for website promotion and search engine ranking used to stuff keywords in the comments tags, but now it is generally acknowledged that the main search engines pay little or no attention to these.
5. Keyword density. Each search engine has its own preference as to how many times a keyword phrase appears on the page in order to signify the relevance of that keyword phrase (in other words, in order to help the search engine understand what the page is about). Around 5 to 8 per cent is a rough guide as to the optimal level. Don't overdo it, otherwise it will be seen as spam or keyword-stuffing. Also use your keywords in the headings tags H1 and H2. There is an H3 tag as well, but it is doubtful whether search engines bother with that, as it is perceived as less prominent on the page, therefore less relevant to what the page is about.
6. Don't forget good linking in your website marketing. Search engines will judge the importance of your web pages to some extent on the number and quality of incoming links from other sites. Ask other webmasters with sites on similar themes to yours for a link, in exchange for a link back. These sites should not be in competition with yours, but should be similarly themed. You may occasionally be asked by other webmasters if they can link to your site. If this is so then have a look at their site; make sure that their site is relevant, that it has at least some Page Rank, and that it just "feels" good, and has no nasty surprises like redirects or unexpected popups. You don't want to be associated with a "bad neighborhood"!
7. Make sure that important keywords are included in the anchor text within inbound links from other sites. This is crucial to search engines when they try to figure out the relevance and importance of your pages. The inbound link from the other site should take the form of something like this (I'm using normal brackets instead of angle brackets so as not to use compromising html): your important keywords included here(/A). You should definitely avoid something like click here(/A), which tells search engines nothing except that your site is about "click here".

Be careful!

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