

The Shoestring Marketer's Guide To:

Simple Search Engine Optimization

EBOOK



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Search Engine Optimization Overview

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) can be an incredibly complex and intimidating process for the small business owner. In fact, countless SEO companies have made it their sole goal to make the small business owner feel that SEO is much too complicated to understand and apply to their own business.

However, the good news is that, although SEO *can* be a difficult process (in which the rules seem to change overnight), there are many simple SEO strategies that the small business owner can immediately put into place that ensures more targeted traffic, leads and sales.

This ebook is not designed to turn you into an SEO expert and only covers the very basics of the entire SEO process. However, if you dedicate yourself to applying just a few simple SEO strategies, the effects will astound you.

If you understand the basic building blocks of SEO, you will be ahead of most small business owners within your industry and will undoubtedly realize incredibly profitable results for your small business.

What Is SEO?

If you ask twenty-five people the definition of Search Engine Optimization, you are sure to receive twenty-five different answers.

According to Wikipedia, SEO is "a set of practices that attempts to make a website more attractive to search engines, thereby encouraging higher visitor traffic and rankings."

For the purposes of this ebook, we will explore a simple six-step SEO strategy that you can implement immediately for proven and lasting results.

Therefore, we'll explore the following six key components when it comes to SEO:

- 1) Keyword research**
- 2) Competitive analysis**
- 3) Website optimization**
- 4) Link building strategies**
- 5) Creating relevant content**
- 6) Analyzing your website**

The History of SEO

Obviously, in order to learn how to make a website more attractive to the search engines, it's vital that we have a basic understanding of how the search engines work.

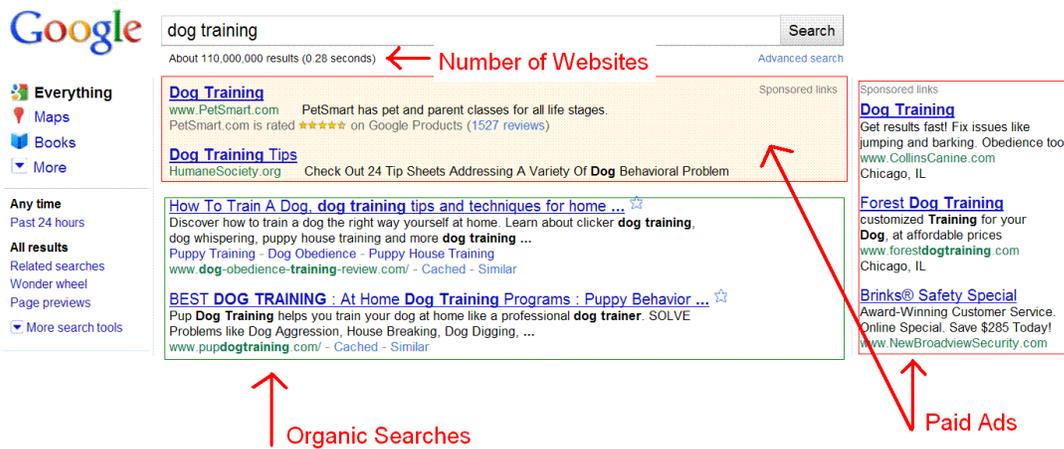
When someone is interested in finding out information on the internet, they typically start by using a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or MSN.

When an individual types in the phrase "Dog Training" into the Google search engine, they're obviously interested in learning relevant information about how to train dogs. Therefore, Google has created a very complex and sophisticated system (known as algorithms) that crawl the internet and determine which sites are most relevant.

The very top 2-3 sites and the sites on the right-hand side are “**sponsored sites**” and have paid for those top positions.

The sites in the middle column (under the paid search results) are the “**organic listings**” and are there, most likely, because they have optimized their website in order to attain this position.

Finally, you can also see how many webpages Google is displaying based on this particular keyword.



Interestingly enough, people who search the internet are becoming much more savvy and don't trust “paid” advertising. (In fact, over 70% of individuals browsing the internet don't click on paid search ads.)

So, keeping that statistic in mind, it's obviously in your best interest to rise up *naturally and organically* through the search engines.

Keyword Research

The very first step in your SEO journey is to begin the process of keyword research.

It's incredibly important that you identify a few different keywords that your potential clients and customers will use when they begin the process of finding your company.

As an example, let's focus on "Sandy the Dog Trainer." Sandy is a local dog trainer who specializes in problem dog behavior. In addition to being a local dog trainer and working with clients, Sandy also has created several ebooks on problem dog behavior that she sells via her website.

One of the biggest mistakes that small business owners make in regards to keywords is that they utilize keywords that are much too broad (thus, too competitive). As an example, if Sandy decides that she wants to bring her website to the first page of Google using the keyword "dogs" she would have 110 million sites to compete with. That's a lot of fierce competition!

Not only is the competition fierce, but Sandy is targeting a much too broad audience. Individuals who are typing "dogs" into the search engines, may be looking to purchase a dog, may be looking for information on dog food or dog-related health problems. There are only a few who are searching for Sandy's specific services: dog training.

It's in Sandy's best interest to identify *keyword phrases* (or longtail keywords) that are much more *specific and appropriate to her particular niche*.

If Sandy narrows her keyword to "dog barking problems" she is competing against 998,000 websites. That's a little bit better.

However, the longtail keyword phrase "dog problem behavior barking at neighbors" only competes against 52,400 websites. Now, that's doable.

Identify 25 Keyword Phrases

Start with identifying **25 keyword phrases** that are specific to your industry. If you are having trouble, try answering some of these questions while you brainstorm relevant keywords:

1. What search phrases will your prospective clients and customers use to find you?
2. What is your company name? Your website URL? Your name? These are keywords that may be used when people are searching for you.
3. What products and services do you offer?
4. Where are you located? (i.e. If you are a realtor out of Chicago, IL, you will want to use your specific location in your keywords.)
5. What problems do your potential customers and clients face? Use these problems as possible keywords.
6. What solutions can you offer? Use your solutions as specific keywords.
7. What is your mission statement, company vision and/or marketing message?

Google Keyword Tool

Once you have identified 25 keyword phrases, you are going to use Google's free keyword tool to refine which keywords will work best for you and your SEO efforts.

You can find the Google keyword tool at:

<https://adwords.Google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

This keyword tool allows you to investigate the popularity of certain keywords and how much competition they have.

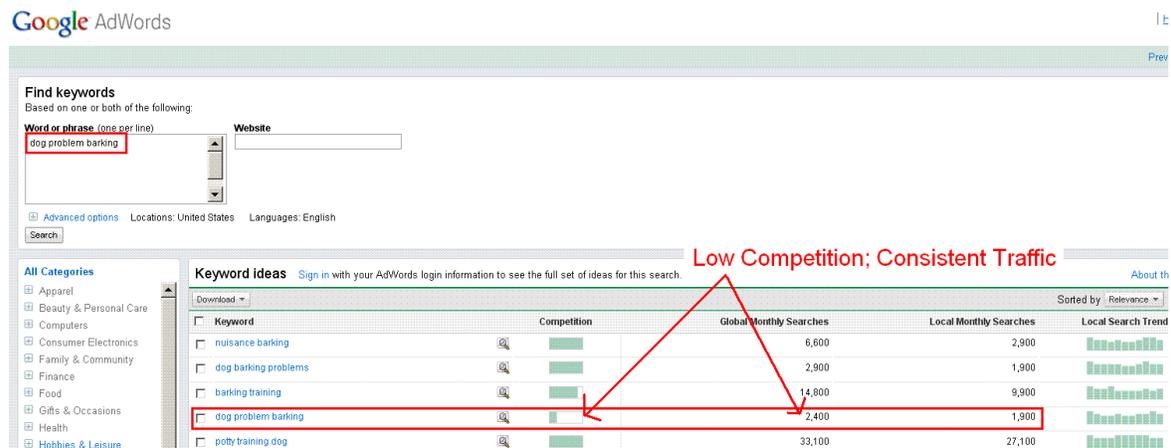
Your ultimate goal is to identify several keyword phrases that generate consistent and regular traffic, but do not have a lot of competition.

Here's an illustration of the process using a keyword phrase from Sandy our dog-trainer.

One of Sandy's keywords is **"dog problem barking."** She then goes to the Google Keyword tool and types the phrase into the search function.

As you can see from the illustration below, Sandy is able to ascertain which keywords generate consistent traffic and which keywords contain light, medium or heavy competition.

Sandy decides that one of the keywords that she will focus on is "dog problem barking," since it has low competition and consistent traffic.



Competitive Analysis

Once you have identified a few good keywords through the Google keyword tool, it's time to research your competition.

Start by typing ONE of your keywords into Google's search engine. You are going to focus on the top five *organic competitors* associated with that particular keyword. (At this point, you're not interested in the sponsored sites.)

First, identify competitor #1 and look "behind the scenes" of their website homepage in order to analyze their website **title**, **meta description** and **keywords**.

Websites that are interested in moving up organically through the search engines always have relevant and focused website titles, meta descriptions and keywords for each page of their site.

- The **title** of a website tells the search engines what that particular webpage is about.
- The **meta description** describes the contents of the webpage.
- The **keywords** alert the search engines to the important keywords contained within that particular page.

To look "behind the scenes" of your first competitor, pull up their website. Next, click on **View > Source** on your top toolbar and a complicated page of code (looking much like a foreign language) will pop-up. This is the language known as HTML and it is the language of the search engines.

Fortunately, you don't need to understand HTML when it comes to researching your competition. You simply need to know where to find your competitors' **title**, **meta description** and **keywords**.

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