

We'll See You in the Top Ten Search Results

Kathleen Dorsey, Founder, Global Results

Your website is finally launched! It was great deal of hard work, with many important decisions to be made, but the moment has arrived. The site looks great!

The first day after the launch: no hits. That's okay; it's just the first day. The first month: a few hits from your immediate circle or friends and family. A few more months go by: now you're asking yourself, "What is wrong with the site"?

The answer is NOTHING, except that there was an aspect of your website's development you didn't incorporate: Search Engine Optimization, or SEO.

An effective SEO process uses various methods to rank a website as high as "organically", or naturally, as possible, preferably within the first 10 results given by search engines such as Google, MSN and Yahoo. Because you didn't optimize your site, it is sitting in its lonely little corner of cyberspace wishing someone would visit.

Why is a high, organic ranking important? Studies have shown that 93% of Internet users DO NOT look past the 3rd page of search engine results. Each day, 80% of all web users find sites by using organic search engine results. The Internet houses more than 4 billion pages, with 30,000 being added each day. The chances of your potential customers and visitors randomly finding your website within this maze of pages are almost non-existent. If your site turns up on page 17 of a search, it might as well be invisible.

High search engine rankings are not an accident. A professional Organic SEO Campaign uses a number of strategies to achieve and maintain high rankings. These strategies may be either "On-Page" or "Off-Page" SEO techniques.

What do we mean by On-Page and Off-Page SEO? On-Page work is quite simply SEO work done on the pages of a website in order to create "friendly" pages for the search engines to find and index for future searches. An On-Page campaign will "fix" any issues with a website's content and architecture which may be deterring the search engines in ranking a site highly. The goal is to have the search engines find the website, understand what it offers, and "file", or index, as much of the content of each page as possible for a future search result.

The campaign can include optimizing your website's code structure, optimizing its sitemap, or creating a sitemap if one does not exist. In addition, the content of individual pages may be rewritten using the targeted keywords which were found to be the most effective for the campaign.

Other opportunities for On-Page optimization include title tags and meta tags. They must be optimized using the chosen keywords in just the right way.

In addition, there are "best practices" in order to make a site SEO-friendly. One of these practices is redirecting the site's address correctly. Try typing a website address with the "WWW" as well as without it. If the homepage appears using both addresses, this is a problem.

Wait – there's more! Directory structures and naming conventions of a site's pages will be analyzed and re-written as needed during an On-Page campaign. The page naming convention is the address section that you see following website's main address; there is a way to use this to help SEO efforts.

An Off-Page Optimization campaign is one which consists of promoting the newly optimized website by linking it to other relevant websites using a variety of methods. We'll discuss Off-Page Optimization in more detail next time.

Aiming for the top search results is like trying to hit a moving target, and with so many web pages being launched daily, time is your enemy. Don't get lost in the Internet's black hole by taking months or years to learn and execute SEO techniques - your business might not live to tell the tale.