

We'll See You in the Top Ten Search Results – Part 2

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Last month, we discussed “On-Page” Search Engine Optimization, the first challenge to tackle in your quest to attract relevant leads from your website. In this article, we'll look at stage two: your “Off-Page” campaign.

In an Off-Page Optimization campaign, your newly optimized website is promoted by linking it to other relevant websites using a variety of methods. Maybe you've heard the term “link building.” Link building is an example of Off-Page Optimization.

Bring in the “votes.” Each time your website's URL is listed with an outside source, such as a relevant directory or through an optimized press release or article, it is obtaining “votes”. Google and Yahoo give the most “weight” to these votes.

Let's say your website promotes insurance products. To have a successful Off-Page campaign, it will be listed in as many relevant online directories as possible. These might include the local Chamber of Commerce, local and national insurance associations, and other directories for your service area. If your service area is confined to a city or state, look for directories which list businesses for that area.

There are free as well as paid directory services available. Some of the best directories are those of search engines like Google and Yahoo. You can add your website's information directly with them (as well as on their mapping listings) for free.

Another strong link to create is with www.dmoz.com. This directory is highly regarded with the search engines since it is hand edited. Because of that fact, it can take months to be listed with them, but it will be worth the wait.

There are plenty of free listings available to start an Off-Page campaign, but eventually you may have to pay for stronger links.

There are three things to keep in mind when searching for prospective links. First, make certain your potential link is as relevant as possible to your product or service.

Second, do not agree to reciprocal links. This is when a directory or website will list you only if you list them on your site. This used to work a few years ago, however, this process was abused and Google knew that the links were not natural. Google and Yahoo will now negate this kind of link.

Finally, make sure the links which you add occur naturally, and are with strong, relevant sites. There are companies which promise to add hundreds or even thousand of links each month for you for a fee. Adding that many links is not a natural occurrence, and the search engines know this. Your best bet is to seek a professional opinion on link building procedures before you begin an Off-Page campaign.

Leverage the potential strengths of participatory websites, AKA Web 2.0. Active involvement in social networking sites like Facebook or LinkedIn, creating a blog or podcast, or becoming an ongoing contributor of online published articles, are all ways to get more “votes” for your site when you include your site's URL.

Before you dive into these more advanced techniques, first understand and fix any On-Page issues, then begin your link building, and finally, start looking into WEB 2.0 ideas.

Welcome to the 21st century of marketing!