

SEO BASICS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Please use the '*6-basic-seo.mp3*' file while reading this book

This book presents you with the professional marketeering knowledge you need to bolster your web site into premier league listings with all the major search engines. By using a skill set combo-approach, utilizing proven and highly effective methods, you can increase your sales, your clients' sales or even just gain more exposure for your personal site or blog.

In less than 20 minutes your site will be a supercharged marketing battering ram that's going to blow your competitors out of the water.

In later issues we'll demonstrate how to increase your online sales (yes, by even more!), earn a **passive** income, get to grips with highly profitable Web 2.0 technologies, examine the methods used to switch on a human sales impulse, help you to find a niece, create a strong loyal customer base and look at how search engines (and web sites) work at much deeper, yet easily understandable, level.

In this first book we will focus on search engines, which is how more than 80% of online surfers find web sites. Yet most surfers rarely look past the third page of any search engine. To put it bluntly, if you're not in the first three pages you're not getting hits, and online hits mean sales.

Does this situation sound familiar?

Dave painstakingly put together his web site, learning new technologies and crafting a great looking site that represents his business perfectly. He sits back mightily pleased with his handy work and waits for the customers to pour through his virtual doors and purchase his latest must have product. He waits. And he waits.

The phone doesn't ring and his inbox is empty. What to do?

Dave overlooked one but very crucial factor in his plan that industry insiders like to keep to themselves: The search engines, more specifically 'Search Engine Optimization'.

A closely guarded secret, web marketers place high value on their skills. A typical marketer can charge upwards of around £2,000 per month to wave a magic wand over your web site and transport it to the land of Internet profit.

You are about to learn the very same skills it has taken the professionals over a decade to perfect.

Good SEO (Search Engine Optimization) should be incorporated at the design level of any web site but should allow plenty of room for modification as SEO methods are constantly changing.

If you're site has not been engineered at the design stage, don't worry. It's still very easy to re-engineer a current site but you will probably be missing out on some of the newer techniques. Again this isn't a problem as we will cover them in later issues.

Google is your friend

Google, the biggest and most popular of all search engines, is our friend, we like Google.

We'd like it even more if it listed your web site. So we have to make the first move and say hello to Google, since Google isn't going to find your site if it doesn't know it's there.

Visit <http://www.google.com/addurl/> - just pop in your site address and hit 'add URL'. You're all done.

It can take several weeks for Google to take a look at your site, which is great because it gives us plenty of time to engineer it to Google approved spec. Be patient and only submit your site once. Give it time because there are thousands of new web sites being added every day, sometimes Google can have backlogs up to 6 months, I can understand the frustration of losing potential sales during this period but it's something most web sites must endure.

For those of you who want to strike while the iron is hot and get immediate listings please drop me an email via my web site, it's a beta technique that's not quiet ready for public consumption just yet.

So while we are waiting for Google to have a look at our site, there are a few secret weapons that will ensure it, and other search engines, know where to place your web site.

A few years ago Meta tags were king. Today, while still a crucial part of any SEO strategy, there are a couple of methods which guarantee instant traffic, well instant in terms of the search engines means about a month. So I'll start with the most basic and move towards the newer methods later on. All my techniques are white hat and completely legal - no spamming or cloaking here and soon you could find yourself at the dizzying heights of first place ranking. In this first book we will get to grips with the basics and absolute insider must-knows'.

Things to think about:

How would you like to be seen on the web? Obviously you want quality traffic, so you need the right kind of people to find you. If you're selling for example, "model trains", you could consider using this phrase all over your web site.

You could, but it might be more beneficial thinking about the bigger picture of your industry. If you sell model trains, words like "Railroading" and "Toy Trains" will help search engines like Google gain a better understanding of what your site is about.

You can also engineer individual sections of your site for specific areas of your industry to boost traffic, for example a model train site might have a "Model Railroad Scenery" section or a "Railroad Events" section. Each section behaving as a mini web site in their own.

Now I'll explain the technical side, again this part is aimed at the complete beginner, but don't worry these are very powerful and guarantee results even for the novice marketer that will enable you to pass yourself off as a pro.

Just before we begin, grab yourself a free copy of Core FTP <http://www.coreftp.com>, put in your web site details (host or IP, username and password), familiarize yourself with the structure of your web site and download a copy of it to your hard drive. Open the file called index.htm, .html, .php. (or whatever the suffix of your index or default file) in

Dreamweaver or in Notepad. Alternatively, if using Internet Explorer, you can browse to your web site and go to 'Page' > 'View Source' and save the page to your hard drive, you will be uploading this later. Remember; **always make a back up of your files before you modify them.**

OK, now for the code:

I've highlighted the parts you need to change in red incase you'd like to cut and paste straight into your page code. This is the very minimum every web page needs for basic SEO, **but there is *much more*.**

The Title Tag

Locate the <head> tag near the top of your document, if it doesn't have one, go ahead and pop one in there directly underneath the <html> tag. You will also need to add a closing head tag which looks like this </head>.

You should now have <head> </head>

So our code should look something like this:

```
<html>  
<head>  
</head>
```

Next we need an opening and closing <title> tag in between our <head> tags. They will look like this: <title> </title>

Following the same pattern as before, we now have:

```
<html>  
<head>  
<title> </title>  
</head>
```

In the middle of the tags, describe your web page in around 6 - 8 words. Something like this would do:

```
<title>Model Trains and Model Railroad Toys</title>
```

This is how our code will now look:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Model Trains and Model Railroad Toys</title>
</head>
```

What we've done here is create a browser title tag. Search engines view this as one of the most important elements of any web page and this is what they will display to surfers looking for a web site like yours in the SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages).

The Description Tag

Another very important tag is the Meta description tag. Meta tags work in a slightly different way to head and title tags, there is no need to close them. Underneath your closing </title> tag, place this code:

```
<meta name="description" content=" ">
```

So the rest of our code now looks like this:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Model Trains and Model Railroad Toys</title>
<meta name="description" content=" ">
</head>
```

We need to include some descriptive information in the content=" " area. For best results make it easy for a human to read but contains enough trigger words to help the search engines find you.

Something like this for example:

```
<meta name="description" content="Online internet model train hobby store for the model railroader. For the collector of toy trains and model scenery, plus regular events.">
```

Be creative and try out many combinations.

So our code will now look like this:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Model Trains and Model Railroad Toys</title>
<meta name="description" content="Online internet model train hobby
store for the model railroader. For the collector of toy trains and model
scenery, plus regular events.">
</head>
```

When your site is found in a search engines, chances are this is the text that will appear underneath your title link in the SERPs.

Keywords

Huge debate has raged for years over the need for keywords. I'm including them here because, although they are not as effective as they were six years ago, they are still used by the majority of the smaller search engines.

Much in the same way a <description> tag works, we fill in the content=" " area with carefully selected words and phrases. Here's what it looks like:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="trains, model railroading, model trains,
hobby, hobbies, model scenery, railroading events">
```

Turning our code into:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Model Trains and Model Railroad Toys</title>
<meta name="description" content="Online internet model train hobby
store for the model railroader. For the collector of toy trains and model
scenery, plus regular events.">
<meta name="keywords" content="trains, model railroading, model
trains, hobby, hobbies, model scenery, railroading events">
</head>
```

The Body

Every web page has a <body> tag and a closing </body> tag. Inside these tags we place the main content and layout for our page.

An important but often overlooked tag which search engines love is the <h> or heading tags. For the greatest impact <h1> tags should be used but anywhere from <h1> to <h6> can be used, depending on your preference. A combination of <h1> and <h2> can be powerful.

Near the <body> tag we place an opening and closing <h1> tag, like this:

```
<h1>This is a heading</h1>
```

Recommended use for this is to put in the same text that you placed in your <title> tag, for example:

```
<body>  
<h1>Model Trains and Model Railroad Toys</h1>
```

You can also repeat some of your description tag within a <h2> tag underneath. Such as:

```
<body>  
<h1>Model Trains and Model Railroad Toys</h1>  
<h2>Online internet model train hobby store for the model  
railroader</h2>
```

Search engines place importance on words within these tags and will increase your SERP placement. This will skyrocket your listings if used in conjunction with your Meta title and Meta description tag.

Alts

Giving your images a title, or 'alt' tag can be very influential on the SERPS. It basically tells the search engine what your image is.

```

```


Nice and easy and again a powerful technique. Insiders know the importance of including targeted keywords, but not too many, one or two will be enough.

Good Copy

Every marketer understands the need for quality copy. Don't 'spam' your copy with keywords, place them throughout the page by all means, and use them for headings and at the beginning and end of paragraphs but never get too carried away.

Going a Bit Further

Another handy meta tag is the Robots tag:

```
<meta name="robots" content="index, follow">
```

This makes sure the search engine robot, once it's found your web page, will read, index it and follow all links on your page. Place anywhere in your <head> and </head> tags.

While on the subject of search engine robots, a slightly more advanced technique can be used if we step out of our web page code for a second.

Every search bot checks your site for the existence of a '**robots.txt**' file. Most web sites never use these so we will have to create one manually. This isn't as scary as it sounds, it is only a few simple commands which you can cut and paste.

For best results, allow the search bot to crawl all areas of your site, unless you want to prevent it accessing a CGI bin for example.

Open a blank Notepad document and put in:

User-agent: *

Disallow:

Save the file as robots.txt and upload it to the same directory as you index file.

If you want to block access to your CGI bin put:

User-agent: *

Disallow:

Disallow: /cgi-bin/

You can block access to any directory, such as images by adding a command like Disallow: /images/

Why would you want to block a directory? Some might contain sensitive information or content you do not wish a search engine to find.

Going Beyond

Now we've touched on just one or two of the advanced techniques, there's plenty more tricks of the trade that can be quickly and easily implemented in your web site. As this is just a beginners guide, in the next section we'll examine how search engines and humans function when it comes to making that all important decision to place you above your competitors and create a loyal user base of customers that can't resist to come back for more.

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