

THE TRUTH ABOUT SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

THE BIGGEST SEO “RIPOFFS” TO WATCH OUT FOR WHEN CHOOSING AN SEO CONSULTANT OR FIRM

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INTRODUCTION

Thanks for taking a few minutes to read through this short report. As a search engine optimization (SEO) and Internet marketing consultant, I'm often appalled and amazed at some of the so-called "offers" for SEO services I see being promoted.

Quite frankly, it puts a bad stigma on the entire industry even though most business owners could truly benefit from having a knowledgeable expert help them create an effective SEO campaign. This is especially true for local business owners with local customers who are increasingly relying on the Internet to find businesses in their area for various products and services.

Trends are shifting from the days when the phone book was the main method for finding a local business as more and more people enjoy fast, high speed Internet access from home or at the office. In fact, you might have noticed a decrease in the number of calls from your ad in the phone book, newspaper or similar

traditional media. I'd be willing to bet that was one of the reasons you ended up with this report in your hands or on your screen.

But before you decide to go out and hire a consultant or search engine marketing firm to help get your site better ranked in the search engines and more profitable for your business, let's talk about a few of the common myths and questionable practices you'll find out there as you survey the SEO landscape. What follows are a handful of the biggest ripoffs you'll find when it comes to SEO services.

1. WE'LL MAKE SURE YOUR SITE HAS SEO (a.k.a. my web designer already did SEO)

Oh really? And what exactly does *that* mean? Are they just creating a search engine friendly site? Are they just saying that the search engines will be able to find your site, read it and add it to their database? Here are a few basics to keep in mind regarding SEO.

An effective SEO plan includes the following steps:

1. Understanding your business, who you sell to, and what the purpose of your site is in your overall business strategy.
2. Doing keyword research to figure out which keywords or phrases people are using as they search online for the types of products/services you offer.
3. Doing competitive research to see which sites are already ranking well for the keywords most likely to bring you the most profitable website visitors.
4. Making changes to your site (possibly changing some of the code, links, etc.) and adding content to your site to improve its rankings for profitable keywords.
5. Getting links from other sites - experts agree that this is the most critical factor affecting your site's rankings (and the most time consuming and costly part of the process).
6. Tracking the rankings, traffic and conversions as your site's rankings improve.
7. Making improvements to your site to increase conversions or to target more profitable keywords if needed.

So as you can see, SEO is a pretty involved, ongoing process. For the most part, this isn't something you just "bolt on" as you're building the site. Granted, for some sites in less competitive markets, you can probably get by with some key changes to your site and getting a few links from other trusted websites. But how many businesses do you know of that are in a non-competitive market?

Exactly! So you can see that this "SEO stuff" is probably going to take some work. If someone told you that your site "had SEO done to it" or

something similar, your rankings, level of traffic and bottom line income from the site should be the true judge of those statements.

2. WE'LL GET YOU 1000'S OF LINKS TO YOUR WEBSITE

As mentioned in bullet #5 above, getting links to your site is a time consuming, costly, but ultra-important aspect affecting your rankings. Because of that, often times you'll see ads or offers stating things like "We'll get you thousands of links to your site", usually for some dirt cheap amount that your gut tells you is too good to be true.

Do yourself a favor, trust your gut and stay away from those sort of shady offers. If they're legitimate links at all, they're probably coming from online directory sites. There are a handful that are worthwhile, but most of them (especially the free ones) are pure junk and not worth the effort. They simply don't have the authority in the eyes of the search engines to really do your site that much good. It's much better to get a smaller number of good, strong links from authoritative websites in your market that indicate your site is also "a player" in that space.

3. WE'LL GET YOU TOP 10 RANKINGS IN NO TIME

Depending on your keywords the statement above might be true. If you have an online store selling baby clothes, you'll probably see

faster rankings for less frequently searched terms like "unique baby clothes", "cool baby clothes", or "funky baby clothes" than for the generic term "baby clothes". But even with the less frequent searches, your rankings probably won't come overnight.

Most reputable SEO consultants and SEO firms suggest a timeframe of 3 to 6 months before expecting to see really strong rankings for more generic terms. However, keep in mind that the less frequently searched terms often lead to more sales since they represent online searches for more specific information. So while you await high rankings for the generic terms, you could still be getting traffic and making sales with rankings from the more specific terms, despite their lower number of searches.

The other thing to keep in mind about statements like "We'll get you ranked in the top 10" is that they give no indication of which keywords you'll be ranked for or how those rankings will be obtained. A lot of times, the way this is done is by using pay-per-click marketing, which isn't necessarily a bad way of marketing online. But if you're paying for organic search engine rankings, you should be getting what you paid for, not a quick fix that uses pay-per-click marketing to make it look like the company is actually achieving success.

Also, top 10 rankings are meaningless to a large extent. We like to tell our clients we'll get them more traffic, conversions and sales rather than just "top 10 rankings". You can't

cash "rankings" at the bank or use "rankings" to grow your business.

4. MANUAL SEARCH ENGINE SUBMISSIONS

(or submitting your site to 1000's of search engines)

If you EVER see any of the above...RUNNNNNN! First of all, for the most part you don't need to submit your site to the search engines. By getting a few links to your site from other websites, the search engines will find you on their own. It rarely helps to submit your site to them manually, let alone paying someone to do something so meaningless on an ongoing basis.

Also, according to web stats and tracking firm [Compete.com](http://www.compete.com), there are only 5 search engines that the majority of people use and arguably only 2 that get a sizable amount of traffic (see the image below for details). So the whole premise of submitting your site to 1000's of search engines has to call into question the ethics of a company that's offering such a "service" (with "service" in quotes quite on purpose!).

Web Search Market Share and Volume (without Club Live)

(Top web search engine's share of searches, volume, and performance)



Engine	Market Share			Query Volume (millions)			Volume Change	
	Jul-08	Jun-08	Jul-07	Jul-08	Jun-08	Jul-07	M-O-M	Y-O-Y
Google	70.4%	69.0%	59.4%	6,609	6,296	4,579	5.0%	44.3%
Yahoo!	18.1%	18.5%	25.8%	1,700	1,687	1,987	0.7%	-14.4%
MSN/Live	7.5%	8.2%	9.2%	707	750	707	-5.7%	0.1%
Ask	2.5%	2.7%	2.8%	234	250	214	-6.4%	9.2%
AOL	1.1%	1.1%	2.0%	104	102	157	2.0%	-33.9%

5. GUARANTEED RANKINGS

You'll have to look at the details of what exactly is being "guaranteed" but if a company is guaranteeing you a certain ranking for a certain keyword(s), you have to question the ethics of such an approach.

For a great article on this, check out this link to search engine optimization industry leader SEOmoz.org titled:

[Why Reputable SEO Firms Don't Promise Guaranteed Search Engine Rankings](#) ¹

Some of the more important reasons for being wary of firms that guarantee search engine rankings as pointed out in this article include:

- The search engines warn against it
- Rankings are inherently unstable and can vary depending on where the person is located when they do a search, which datacenter that search pulls from (for Google), and other factors
- Making guarantees about something you can't control is inherently "shady"
- Rankings do not equal performance

By following SEO best practices, your site has an excellent chance of achieving solid rankings in the major search engines. But for the most part, promises of guaranteed rankings are either a pitch used as a marketing hook (look for the fine print) or a questionable practice from a company you'd probably be better off not working with.

¹ <http://www.seomoz.org/blog/why-reputable-seo-firms-dont-promise-guaranteed-search-engine-rankings>

6. HIGHER RANKINGS MEAN MORE MONEY

This touches on the last bullet mentioned in the previous item. One of the biggest myths regarding SEO is that higher rankings equal more money. After all, isn't that the point for getting higher rankings for most business websites? But there's nothing to say that higher rankings for certain keywords are going to bring in more profit.

The keywords could be obscure and not get that many searches...but you could still have top rankings.

The keywords could get tons of searches but your website might not do a good enough job of converting those website visitors into new leads or paying customers...but you could still have top rankings.

It's a much more complex problem than just "getting top rankings" though higher rankings are a step in the right direction in most cases. Those rankings serve as a means to an end and along with a website or sales process that does a good job of closing the sale, those rankings could lead to increased profits.

P.S.:

If you found this report useful, then you'll get even more value from our free competitive analysis. Request a free competitive analysis and you'll find out:

- Exactly where your site is ranking in the search engines and for what terms...
- What your site is doing right and what it's doing wrong (and how to improve)...

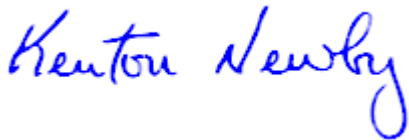
- More importantly, you'll get a behind the scenes look at the websites for your top competitors...
- Discover exactly how they're able to beat you in the amount of traffic and sales they get online...
- PLUS you'll learn where their biggest weaknesses are and how you can exploit them to pull ahead....

Contact me for a free consultation to discuss.

You can contact me several ways:

- 1 Complete the contact form found on our website at: www.MaxResponseMedia.com and I'll follow-up via email or phone in the next 24-48 hours.
- 2 Email: info@maxresponsemedia.com
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Thanks again for reading,



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