

# **TECHNIQUES USED IN SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING**

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**Abstract:** : Search engine marketing (SEM) is a generic term covering a variety of marketing techniques intended for attracting web traffic in search engines and directories. SEM is a popular tool since it has the potential of substantial gains with minimum investment. On the one side, most search engines and directories offer free or extremely cheap listing. On the other side, the traffic coming from search engines and directories tends to be motivated for acquisitions, making these visitors some of the most probable clients for the services and goods to be sold on-line. In the on-line environment, all promoting activities involving search engines fall in the category of search engine management. Our paper attempts to perform a study on techniques used in search engine marketing.

**JEL classification: M15, M31**

**Key words: Search Engine Marketing, Search Engine Optimization E-Marketing, Pay-per-Click**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In marketing, the impact of the Internet represents an innovation which brings about major changes in the company culture, the disappearance of classical management hierarchical models, spectacular changes in relationships among partners, a radicalization of information and contact opportunities, a shortening of economic cycles.

The products can be offered from anywhere on special selling sites, on a global market, the buyers can be anywhere in the world, the distribution process being controlled by virtual shopping sites.

Marketing specialists use the Internet as a research instrument with critical importance in acquiring and maintaining success on the market. It is employed mainly by companies producing marketing research chiefly based on questionnaires, surveys and panels. The global producers, transporters and great on-line media agencies competition creates better and cheaper services for virtual clients. Companies can select suppliers in any corner of the world, integrating themselves in global e-commerce and e-business systems.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

Unlike any other technique or solution, e-commerce allows the practice of high performance marketing, focused on the client. High performance marketing cannot be

achieved only as a consequence of understanding specific instruments and the way in which they are used. The Internet represents not only an instrument and a technology, but also a world in itself, a special culture.

Internet marketing has the following specific features: an interactive and direct character, being a more dynamic environment than classical ones; promotion via the Internet attracts clients towards the product or service; in Internet marketing there is a permanent exchange of detailed and specialized information; Internet marketing offers other information and opportunities; there is not a real obstacle directly connected to the size, scope and level of the transactions via the Internet due to marketing research; it is an instrument for globalizing marketing research, in its personalized global marketing variant, which proves to be an alternative for the future.

### 3. ANALYSES

In a network society, marketing is mainly a digital one, it does not take into account space, it is interactive and dialogue oriented, and creating market strategies is directed towards clients. These are the effects of an extended market transparency to become gradually dominant by means of direct communication, on-line marketing and finally cyber-marketing.

The main problem with the Internet is not represented by access to information anymore, but the way in which it is filtered and selected in an optimum way. Since the Internet is a vast reservoir of information which does not have a librarian or a catalogue, a growing importance in selecting information is placed upon search engines. Statistics show that over 80% of the entire traffic towards Internet sites is generated by search engines. If 8 out of 10 resort to a search service to find the desired information, almost the same number claim to be frustrated by the inability to get them. Hence the growing importance of search services in selecting information, together with filtering the informational content by the user.

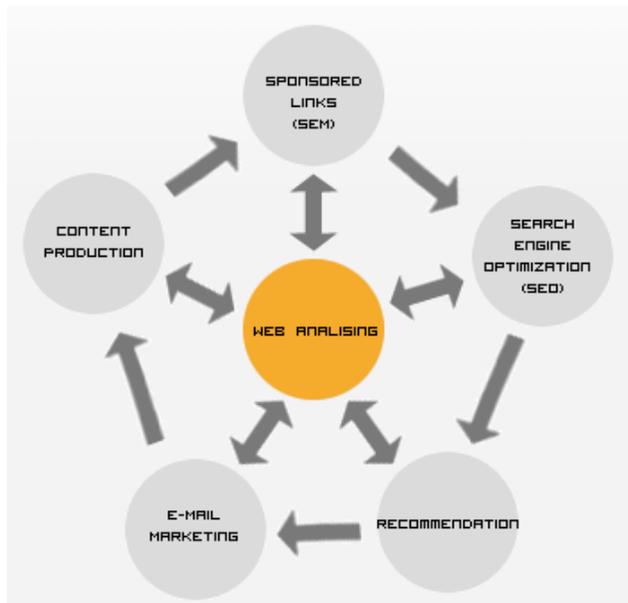


Figure no. 1

In the on-line environment, all promoting activities involving search engines fall in the category of Search Engine Marketing, in short SEM. Promoting an organization, product, brand by means of the search engines is first of all important because it is a non-intrusive on-line marketing method: it does not disturb whatsoever the activity of the ..... (the guests receive what they are looking for, at the moment when they are looking for it). Secondly, it is a method based entirely on the volunteer action of the Internet user. The later decides about what follows. Thirdly, it allows an easy identification of the organization, product or brand, offering the opportunity to ask for details. SEM is used both for attracting new clients and guests and to determine them to come back, it implies supplying useful and good quality information, a permanent actualization of the content, easy search, rapid loading and feed back.

Search engine marketing has a series of techniques, some of the most important being as follows:

- a) Search Engine Submissions (SES) – refers to services necessary for enrolling/submitting the site in all major search engines.
- b) Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – refers to top positioning in search engines. SEO is just part of the Internet promoting strategy, but it is the most important one.
- c) Site Linking and Link Popularity (SLLP) – link strategies bring more traffic and raise classification in search engines.
- d) Search Engine Ranking Reports (SERR) – the way it is ranked and what position the website has in search engines.

As for involvement in the business sector, recent studies have revealed that the decision of buying something is based on using search engines, at business and personal level. According to iProspect, the first place for information finding is the search engine Google (65,8%), with some differences according to income, education and sex. The second place is Yahoo! (55,2%), followed closely by MSN (53,7) and AOL with 48,6%.

The data provided by iProspect is close to the ones in the Enquiro study, in which it is proved that Google represents the first choice for 72,4% of low-income users and 86,9% of high-income users. Choosing Google as the first source of information is higher in the case of users with academic and post-graduate studies (86,6%), as opposed to 67,8% of those with high school studies. As for gender, more men, 86,7%, than women (80%) choose Google as the first destination for searching for information. Men spend more time searching through result lists; according to iProspect, 44% of women declare that they do not search the second page of results. The same study shows that the older the users, the more prone they are to spending more time searching the results of search engines. The time spent on-line in search of information is, on average, approximately 4 hours a day and mostly spent at work.

SEM is the key to quality traffic on low costs; it is a popular solution, allowing substantial financial gains with a minimum of investment. Although most search engines and directories offer free or very cheap listing, the traffic created on search engines and directories tends to be motivating for acquisitions.

Web optimization is an aspect of SEM which includes searching relevant terms for your company's profile, the potential clients search for on-line, as well as for classifying it as highly as possible function of these terms or key words in the results of the search.

Apart from search engines, on-line directories are another method potential clients use to find websites which offer the demanded products or services. Therefore, positioning a site in on-line directories is an important aspect for SEM. On-line directories range from

huge sites with general information to directories specific to an economic branch, profession or organization, which means that there is more potential directories for assigning. Assigning directories has a double effect for SEM, since links in high-rank directories can improve their positioning in search engines, being a source of specific traffic at the same time.

PPC (Pay-per-click) advertisements are extremely useful when we want to use key words often employed by competition. They are displayed by some search engines together with the normal results of the search for some key words. Some search engines such as Google display these advertisements in a separate column in order to preserve the integrity of the normal search results on the page.

These are a cheap method of SEM, since the company has to pay only for those who actually reach the site through these links. Usually, a certain amount is offered per click, which determines the position of the advertisement on the page with search results. By using PPC advertisements, companies can achieve an improved exposure for important key words and use some key words that might be too difficult for a natural classification acquired by optimizing the website.

SEM is one of the best on-line selling instruments with minimum investment. Nevertheless, it requires time and effort to produce a content that can gain constant classification in search engine tops, in order to find and assign the site in on-line directories and for the management of PPC campaigns. This where SEO specialists are needed for the management of different aspects of the SEM scheme applied by the company, providing a successful SEO campaign and avoiding possible inconveniences.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is a sub-category of on-line marketing used after 1990, with the apparition of the first Internet sites. It represents the sum of techniques used to shape up a web site in order to boost its position in search engine results list for various key words. The first use of the phrase "Search Engine Optimization" was a spam message posted on Usenet on 26th June 1997.

Webmasters and content suppliers started optimizing sites for search engines. Initially, all webmasters had to do was to add the page to various search engines, which sent "spiders" to "crawl" onto the first page, extract links to other pages and return information on a page to be indexed. The process implies copying the page by spiders and stocking it on their own servers, where a second indexer extracts various information about the page such as words contained and their place on the page, the weight of specific words, as well as links to other pages which are programmed for later processing.

Site owners started recognizing the value of superior classification and visibility, creating an opportunity for SEO practitioners – white hat and black hat.

Among white hats there are those companies using techniques considered to be "legal" for promoting sites in search engines, which is based on optimizations to the structure of the pages on the site in order to be correctly interpreted and evaluated by rank assignment algorithms used by search engines.

Using professional SEO services can lead to increasing the number of visitors from search engines, improving site positioning in search engines, increasing the profit of the investment, attracting audience for a certain subject.

In time, due to site owners' demand to see their pages on a front position in search engines, some less legal methods have appeared. These methods, named "black hats" refer to techniques through which the search engine "sees" a content, which the guests see another one. Search engines penalize and/or eliminate these sites or pages from their index.

Among these there is spam on communication sites with a great number of visitors: YouTube, MySpace etc. this approach consists of publishing a material referring to a subject that attracts visitors and including a link to the site to be promoted with the view that it would be clicked by curious visitors. Besides visitors who create traffic on the site in question, other sites which replicate its content will copy the link too, extending it, creating even more external references to the original site, thus boosting its ranking in search engines.

Google is a great source of free traffic which should not be ignored by any company. SEO includes **on-page** and **off-page** strategies to gain the best possible positioning in search result lists.

Heatmaps from user eyetracking studies of three websites. The areas where users looked the most are colored red; the yellow areas indicate fewer views, followed by the least-viewed blue areas. Gray areas didn't attract any fixations.

The above heatmaps show how users read three different types of Web pages:

- an article in the "about us" section of a corporate website (far left),
- a product page on an e-commerce site (center), and
- a search engine results page (SERP; far right).

**On-page** optimization includes the following services:

- Competition analysis;
- SERP analysis for intended key words;
- Mark-up tuning
  - o Title tags – the most important positioning factor;
  - o Meta tags;
  - o Alt and Title tags – correct labeling of images;
- Optimizing the internal structure of links
  - o Navigation links – links containing key words;
  - o Content links;
- Optimizing the content
  - o Key words in Header tags;
  - o Improving the density of key words in the content;
  - o copywriting;
- page dimensions;

- optimizing images;
- sitemap for search engines;
- examining the site design and code.

It is advisable to use representative key words for detailed pages and links presenting a certain product in detail.

**Off-page** optimizing includes the following services:

- increasing the number of pages leading through links to the intended site;
- the pages containing the link should belong to the same domain;
- the pages to have a good Page Ranking and good positioning on search engines
- assigning in web directories
- links to as many IPs as possible.

In the early days of the Internet, after a search, search engines displayed pages in whose description the searched word could be found. Since webmaster have been abusing this factor, search engines created more complex algorithms including:

- text between labels <title> and </title>
- domain name
- HTML elements
- HTML labels
- The frequency of a key word
- Synonyms of the key word
- ALT attributes for images
- Title of the links
- Total number of hyperlinks to and from a page
- The quality of sites form which links start to another page
- The age of a site

Some SEO efforts may involve optimizing a site encoding, without making changes visible to the visitors, such as creating a hierarchy for the site structure, avoiding or solving some problems that may prevent search engines to completely index the site.

### **Submitting to Search Engines**

Once you optimize your site for search engines, your next step is to submit it to major search engines. When you submit your site to a search engine, it reads your site, indexes it, and assigns a rank for it according to its algorithm. In short, "Search engine submission" or "Search engine registration" means getting your web site listed in search engines. Remember, submitting your Website to a search engine does not guarantee a high ranking for your site. It simply means that the search engine knows your pages exist.

### **Search Engine Submission**

Of all the tags, Title tag is definitely the most important when used correctly. When calculating your web page's relevance to a search, most search engines consider the content of the title tag as one of the parameters and display that content in search engine results pages (SERP). Title tag therefore needs to be carefully constructed in such a way that it increases your website's position in the SERP, and it is attractive enough to encourage a surfer to click on your link.

- *Get links from quality Websites:* Most of the search engines find new sites by crawling the existing sites and following the outbound links from those sites. Make sure you get links from sites that rank high in search engines.

Never get links from sites that follow unethical practices to increase their ranking.

- *Submit your site to directories:* Search engines consider directories as "expert documents" and pick up URLs from directories. Getting listed in directories also increases your site's page rank. If you follow these two tips, there is a fair chance that most of the search engines will pick your Website. Apart from these two general tips, you can use the following tips to submit your site to individual search engines.

### **Submitting to Google**

The simplest way is to submit your website in Google's Add URL page available at <http://www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl>. The instructions provided by Google are pretty straightforward: submit your top-level page and Google will spider the rest of the Website. However, submitting your Website this way does not guarantee that you'll be indexed.

Usually, Google updates its index once a month. After submitting your Website, periodically check whether your site is showing up in Google. If you do not find your site even after a month of submitting it, consider increasing the inbound links from quality sites and submit your site to more directories.

Don't over submit to Google. If you need to submit a second time let there be at least 30-45 days gap between the first and second submission.

Pay attention to writing your title tag. Don't ignore them, they are a powerful tool and must be used to their fullest advantage. The Title tag helps the search engines decide the theme of the web page being crawled for indexing. When a search for keywords is conducted, the Title tag is given heavy consideration by all search engine algorithms. Also remember, each page in your website is unique and needs a different Title tag. Place the most important keyword phrase for that specific page in the Title tag, and the page will get a certain boost in the search engines. Yahoo and MSN Search are especially influenced by keyword- rich Title tags.

### **Submitting to Yahoo**

Yahoo provides two options to get listed in their search engine: free listing and paid listing.

- *Free Listing:* Submit your site at <http://submit.search.yahoo.com/>. After the submission it may take up to a month or two for your site to be listed in Yahoo, so be patient.
- *Paid Listing:* If you want to submit your site quickly, go for the paid option. But remember you will be charged whenever someone clicks your listing.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, **Web optimization** means creating web pages to correspond from the point of view of their content and functionality, to criteria of the search engines, with the aim of supplying visitors with the desired information and to promote the page in an appropriate manner.

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