

SEO Success: Step One is Good Web Design

Creating a well-designed website is the first step in your internet marketing strategy. Once the website has been created and optimized, there are further techniques to employ that will drive traffic to your website for successful, long-term results. You wouldn't consider opening a retail store in a major shopping mall without signage and you shouldn't consider having a nice looking website designed without expanding your web presence in order to be found on the internet. But unless the website is designed correctly to begin with, follow-on SEO efforts will have limited results at best. The following strategy overview is designed to bring about productive SEO results:

- ❑ Create an attractive website that is complementary to your company image and provides your targeted audience with information about you, your company and your products and/or services.
- ❑ Design a website that has a call-to-action in the form of a purchase or providing you a contact, subscription or other commitment from your visitor.
- ❑ Create a successful marketing arm for your overall business promotion and marketing campaign to promote your business, products and/or services with the many follow-on strategies that drive traffic to your website.
- ❑ Become competitive in your industry and marketplace by meeting or exceeding the industry marketing standards and attracting a qualified audience for your products and/or services based on a strong reputation.
- ❑ Generate and maintain or grow internet traffic to your website resulting in a conversion of traffic into sales of your products and/or services by evolving as your market demands.

This search engine optimization (SEO) strategy is composed of several processes in three stages: 1) Good web design, 2) Attracting attention from search engines and directories, and 3) Creating long-term popularity on the internet. However, it all starts with good web design. Website design is the foundation and beginning of a successful internet marketing strategy. It is true that there are websites on the internet that are unattractive but somehow seem to work. If there are aspects of these websites that work, imagine how well they could do if they simply followed basic design implementation tactics that resulted in a good image as well as simply pushed information out to the viewer.

These basics are essential for Tier 1 success:

- ❑ Good web design will complement and enhance the company image and offline marketing campaign products creating a corporate branding if done well.
- ❑ Easy, logical navigation that leads the viewer deeper and deeper into the web of information provided by the website will keep the visitor on your site longer and give you more time to sell your products or services.
- ❑ Attractive but quick-loading graphics that are pleasing to the eye and meaningful to the website will guide the viewer along the route you decide is important for explaining what you offer.
- ❑ Keyword usage that is search engine-friendly depends on how the keywords are utilized, the placement of the keywords, the frequency of the most important keywords and their relevance to the website.

- ❑ Website coding that is lean, clean and without errors will keep the search engines happy and your viewer seeing exactly what you intended to offer.
- ❑ Relevance of content to the theme of the site is essential. Be concise, to the point and focus on your goals. If you have multiple themes and offerings, consider multiple websites to address the different markets, then tie each website back to the others by linking.
- ❑ Changing content that changes frequently and stays fresh keeps your viewer returning and prevents the search engines from treating your website as if it were stale news. A stale site will be ranked lower by the search engines.

Content is king -- it's all about content, content, content. But how that content is presented is what makes the difference.

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Chesa Keane of TAO Consultants, home of the Computer Goddess®, has been involved with the internet for 10 years through internet consulting, web development and search engine optimization. Go to www.computergoddess.com for a free **Search Engine Optimization Checklist** to make sure that you or your internet SEO specialist are not missing critical steps toward getting your website listed prominently with the search engines.