

# Intro to SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

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## What is SEO (Search Engine Optimization)?

In a nutshell, SEO is a term used when Web site owners format their Web site to rank high in the search engines for specific keywords. What is a keyword? The term "Keywords" is used to describe words or phrases that people use in search engines.

Each search engine uses its own proprietary algorithm to determine the rankings of a Web site. These rankings are often called "organic" results because the ranking is naturally generated and not paid for. Basically the search engine decides if a Web site is relevant to the keywords.

If you understand which factors a search engine uses to determine your Web sites ranking, then you can use this to emphasize those factors to achieve higher search engine rankings.

## SEO: So What Is The Big Deal?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is an important technique in Internet Marketing. There are many reasons why SEO is important, but the main ones are:

- 1) Low Cost: When people visit your Web site from an organic search engine result, it doesn't cost you a thing.
- 2) Almost 80% of Internet users start with a search engine
- 3) Studies show that people tend to click on organic search results more often than paid search results.

SEO has been around for quite some time. Back in the day (1995), techniques like keyword stuffing (where you repeat a keyword over and over) were quite common. This technique is considered search engine spam, and search engines will now penalize Web sites that do this.

## Sounds Simple Right?

Well, in theory it is very simple. Find out what the search engine wants, and give it to them. However, the search engines algorithms are constantly changing. Think about it, in order for a search engine to provide you with relevant results, and to beat their competition, they must constantly refine their algorithms. On top of that, many times people try to trick the search engines (like the keyword stuffing example) and the algorithms must account for these tricks.

The factors that a search engines' algorithm uses is constantly changing. What works one day, may not work the next. In addition, the search engines don't tell you everything that the algorithm looks for. They provide guidelines, but in order to really get the edge over your competition, you need to figure out what the algorithm looks for. This takes time and is done through trial and error testing.

This is why an entire industry has been created around SEO. It is a full time job to figure out the factors, track changes, and to test what techniques are effective. SEO companies have people dedicated to doing this type of research. If you tried to do it yourself, it would take away time for you to run your business. That is not to say that you can't do SEO yourself, however there is just no way you can be as effective as a quality SEO company, unless you devote a significant amount of time to it.

OK, Got it, Now Give Me Some Examples

- Keywords:

Since this is what people use to find Web sites. This is the single most important factor. Determining what keywords your target audiences uses is paramount to a successful optimization project. The more specific the keyword or phrase, the better.

For example, let's say that your company sells dog food. For keyword phrase "dog food" there are over 114,000,000 web pages listed in Google for this term (at the time of this writing). If you optimize your Web site for just this key term, there is a good chance that your Web site will not rank high. Why? There are too many competitors.

Using keyword research tools such as Wordtracker, will help you determine targeted keyword phrases so that you have a better chance of achieving higher rankings. Wordtracker has a free e-book that describes how to use keyword research to your advantage. You can get a free copy [here](#).

- Keyword relevancy:

This one is simple. The more times a keyword appears on your page, the higher you will rank. However, do not take this to an extreme. Do not repeat words over and over. Search engine algorithms are savvy enough to detect this and will penalize your Web site. Focus on creating quality web content that is rich in your keywords.

- Meta tags:

These are HTML tags that your visitors never see. They are "hidden" tags that you use to describe what your page is about.

Typical meta tags are &ldquo;Description&rdquo; and &ldquo;Keyword&rdquo;. Using these tags, you can describe your Web site and the relevant keywords. These tags are used by search engines to get an &ldquo;idea&rdquo; of what your Web site is about. It used to be that the search engines placed high importance on these tags. However many clever programmers abused the tags and repeated keywords over and over. Currently, most search engines do not place as high of an importance on these tags as they used to. However it is thought that some search engines still do. Therefore don&rsquo;t ignore these tags, but use them exactly how they are intended. Then when you see your competition over stuffing their meta tags, just sit back and chuckle, and know that they are not on top of their SEO game.

- Don't Forget to Track!

One of the most important components to a successful SEO campaign, is tracking your results. There are many programs out there that automate this for you. The best one by far is WebPosition, it has been around for quite a long time and has a great reputation. [Effective-Internet-Marketing.net](http://www.effective-internet-marketing.net) readers are eligible for a free trial here.