

WHY PAGE RANK MATTERS

If you are reading this, you have a website or would like to have one. You may be an Internet marketer or you may be someone that is just getting his/her offline business online. Your goal is to get customers.

To get customers, or visitors, to your website (which is called traffic), you need to let the world know that your website is there and that anyone can stop by and see what you have to offer. The problem is, the World Wide Web is huge, and in fact, there are millions of websites up. How will people find you?

INTRODUCE THE SEARCH ENGINES

Search engines are not something that you should be afraid of. In fact, they are one of the best tools that you have available to you online. Search engines that are most readily known include Google, Yahoo!, and MSN. AOL is another large one, but it is powered by Google. Another popular choice moving up in the ranks is Ask.com (former AskJeeves) In any of these options, one thing is common.

Search engines hold the power of your website's success in their hands. Without them, your website will struggle simply because people will not know it is there. The good news is that you can alert the search engine spiders (as they are often called) that you are there and that you want their attention. In fact, more website owners than ever are taking search engine ranking in their own hands.

So, what is search engine ranking? That is the answer to the initial question about why page rank matters. Let's explain. Search engines have to determine which websites are important. To do this, they have to browse through the millions of other websites and organize them. They do this in a process we will cover in just a minute.

What is important to know is that after organizing these websites, the search engines can then respond to the requests submitted by their users. You have used them in the past, most likely, so you fully understand the importance of giving the user the most accurate results possible. If you want a stove, you want a stove, not a lawnmower, for example.

To do this, search engines use the words that people type into search engines to help them. If you were looking for a stove, "stove" is the word you would type into the search engine. Search engines call these search terms "keywords." Keywords are their method for ranking websites too.

When a person types one of these keywords into the search box, the search engines go into action to find websites that are relevant to the

user, based on these terms. What you end up getting after that is called a search engine ranking page, or an organized list of links pointing to various websites. Your location on these pages matters.

So, why does all of this really matter to you, the simple website owner who just wants people to find you online? In short, the answer is that if you cannot place well in these pages, people cannot find you online.

70 PERCENT

Did you know that these search engine pages have both paid for and natural (or sometimes called organic) search results? At the top of this page, you will notice a number of companies, sometimes listed in a box or a colored section. The links at the top are paid for by companies who want to be positioned at the top of the results page.

See, these companies know that being on that first page is quite important. If you are not there, chances are good that people will not find you since most people only view the initial page, rather than moving on to others. Being at the top is critical, so they often pay a premium price to have their ads listed there.

But, the key that you should know is that 70 percent of website users who search for something will forgo these paid-for ads and click on those website links that are listed just below, in the naturally ranked pages. They are often a better choice and they are more specific. If your website is listed in this region, you are likely to get many more visitors to your website.

Therefore, if you want to get as many visitors as possible to your website, you need to work to have your website listed in the first positions that are naturally in the search engine results page. Anything else may not give you the location and the traffic you could potentially get.

The question has changed now. Now that you know the importance of being positioned at this point, it is critical to know how to get there. The good news is that there are a number of ways that you can successfully pull this off. In fact, you should have a plan that includes a number of methods.

Before getting into that, let's explain a bit more about how search engines work so you can tailor your methods appropriately.

SEARCH ENGINES AND HOW THEY WORK

The next step in understanding how to rank well in search engines is by understanding how they work. Many people simply buy into various plans and the “ultimate secret” thinking that there is some unseen method to ranking well in the search engines. The problem is, Google and the other search engine companies have a very difficult and nearly impossible to rank algorithm that helps to organize websites. There are many aspects of it that no one will be able to hack into and learn.

On the other hand, there are many things that you can do that Google and other search engines tell you to do, if you want to be successful in ranking well in the search engines. More appropriately, they tell you how to create a quality website that responds to inquires (search engine searches) well enough to get results.

HOW SEARCH ENGINES RANK WEBSITES

How does a search engine rank these pages? The question is one that many ask. Here is the method that is most commonly used by these search engine spiders as they crawl through sites.

1. You post a website. Over time, eventually, search engine spiders from each of the search engines will make it there (later we will mention a method of helping this process along).
2. Once your website is found by the search engines, they simply crawl over it. Imagine a large spider crawling over the page, reading what you have written there, and learning more about the site.
3. The search engines then grab the important details about the Web page. For example, what are the most important terms used on this Web page? What value does this page add to the consumer who is looking for it? It ranks this based on the types of content it finds, how valuable it is, and which terms it is best suited for.
4. This information gets stored in an index. That index is like a huge file cabinet that has each website as a folder. It stays there until someone calls on it by using a search term that corresponds to the website’s “important terms” or keywords.
5. When someone types in a search term that corresponds to your website’s important terms, the search engine goes to work quickly, locating all the files that may match the inquiry. Your file may be

one of them if you have optimized your pages properly. It brings all of these files back to the reader in the form of a search engine results page, or SERP.

6. The order in which your website is placed on that search engine results page is dependent on how valuable the search engines think your website is. The more valuable it is, the more likely that you will rank higher in the results pages, and that is why people often say, "content is king." Quality content is critical to ranking well in the SERP.

As you can see, this method of organizing pages is all done automatically, without your input or any other person's actual input. The only way to rank well in the search engines is to know what causes them to value pages and to know how to make sure that the words you use on your website are valuable enough to the search engine to consider your website as being important.

SUBMITTING YOUR WEBSITE

Although these methods are still used, you may not want to wait for a long time before the search engine spiders find your website (no one likes to wait and it can be a long time!).

Rather than wait for the search engine spiders to find you, you can submit your articles to the search engines. There are various ways to accomplish this. You can pay a company to do the work for you (since there are so many different search engines that you may want to be indexed in).

If you do decide to pay someone to do the work for you, be sure that they are a high quality company and that they come recommended by other people who you know within the industry. There are many scams that can hold you back from actually getting any usable results here.

There are also free services that you can use. Free services are an excellent tool so long as they are quality websites to work with. Again, do some research here so that you are only getting the very best results possible.

Do not forget about the big guys! While many of these services will help you to submit your website to the smaller search engines, you can also submit your website directly to Google and other larger search engines. In fact, you can do this with most search engines, but that can be time-consuming. Simply visit Google.com to learn more about doing this.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

One thing that most website owners have heard of is search engine optimization or SEO. It is the process of helping to boost your search engine results by knowing what the search engines are looking for. Does it sound hard to do this? It can be, but as soon as you know how to do it, you can implement it on all of the websites that you create, and in fact, on all of the pages that you create within your website's design.

OLD METHODS DO NOT WORK

When search engines first started this process, many people thought they could cheat the system to a degree. They knew that keywords were important, so they designed websites that were so keyword-dense that they made little actual sense to the human reader. More so, they thought that placing every word related to the term that they were hoping to index for was just as important. This is simply not the case.

Search engines see websites like this as nothing more than spam and they keep it from getting any sort of real ranking in the Internet's search engines ranking pages. If you pack your content full of keywords, your website may even be degraded in these term rankings rather than increased.

Another common method that website owners tried to pull over the eyes of the search engines was their method of putting tons of links on other websites. Called "link farms," these websites hoped that all of these extra links pointing into a website would mean that the website was valuable. Usually, these websites contained little to no real information, and in time, they were a waste of space. Google and others warned website owners that using such services would cause them to be dropped in their rankings.

Still another way that people tried to one-up the search engines was through the use of generated or fake traffic. The website owners would pay people to visit websites and to click ads, which today is a sure-fire way to get booted out of ad programs where you can earn money.

So, what does all of this mean to you? In short, it means that you need to commit to designing a website that is effective, useful, unique, and designed for the reader rather than for the search engines. When you put all of these factors together, the end result is promising.

KEYWORDS

The question is, then, how do you do it the right way? The good news is that there are some very good answers to that question!

One of them is the use of keywords. As mentioned before, keywords are those words that are most often typed into the search box. What you need to know as a website owner is what words people are typing into their search boxes to get to the types of information, products, or services that you have on your site. To do this, you need to do some research.

There are various paid and free services available online that can help you to find keywords to use in your website. Use them, research them, and get to know them personally.

GO LONG

One thing you should consider doing with keywords is going for the long tail keywords instead of focusing on the shorter ones. Consider this:

If your website promotes a debt program, one of the most popular topics on the Web, you will face a huge amount of competition from other websites for ranking if you choose keywords like "debt" and "debt program." Rather, get more specific and make those one- and two-word keywords three or four words long.

In this instance, you may want to consider "debt management programs in Maine" or keywords like "how to get out of debt fast" instead. There are fewer websites targeting these keywords, and therefore, you have a better opportunity to rank higher in the search engine results pages. That is your goal. Think long tail whenever you consider keywords for your website, if it is possible to do so.

USING KEYWORDS

Now that you know what the keywords are that you need to use, exactly how do you use them? There are actually several ways to use them and you should use them all!

Before you get to that part, though, realize that keyword stuffing (adding too many keywords to articles, blog posts, etc.) is not a good thing. Rather than do this, concentrate first on good quality blog posts or articles that are reader-friendly first.

Most search engine optimization experts say that in terms of density, you should keep your keyword density under three percent; otherwise, the quality of the text is diminished. Remember also what was mentioned about trying to use too many keywords. The search engines frown on this.

To use keywords at your website for search engine optimization, consider these methods:

1. Be sure that you use keywords in your titles. Whenever you create a title, try to have it start with the keyword you are targeting in the article.
2. Use keywords in your meta tags. Meta tags, including those that will show up when people search for their keyword terms, are likely to be the ideal place to use keywords that are more specific, since these will attract a larger audience.
3. Use keywords in the content of your articles. Start a sentence with a keyword for the first sentence of the article. Or keep the keyword within the first 90 characters of the start of the paragraph. This alerts the search engines directly to your goal.
4. Use the keywords, focusing on just a few per article, throughout the article. Keep this in line with a density of about two percent for the best results.
5. Use keywords in any descriptions you enter for the content as well, as this can also help with results.
6. Also, realize that you can use various pages of your website to target different keywords. That way, some of the best keywords for your niche are accurately represented.

Using keywords is an excellent way to boost your website's ranking naturally. When the search engine spiders roam across your website, they will find these keywords and index your website for you. This is a critical step.

What should you use keywords in?

- Use them in your home page
- Use them in your page descriptions
- Use them in the articles that you write for your website or blog
- Use them in blog posts
- Use them on each of your other Web pages.

As you can see, you can use them anywhere. Keep your overall density in line though. Overdoing it can cause lower rankings.

METHODS OF INCREASING RANK

As mentioned, there are many ways to increase the ranking of your website using search engine optimization, but that is not all that you have to think about.

Search engines do put a lot of weight in search engine optimization, especially in keywords, but they also put a lot of weight in the actual quality of a website. They want to know that the website is valuable. The more valuable it is, the more likely it is to provide enough information or the right value to the user who is searching for information on it.

That is why there are additional things you can do to rank well in the search engine rank outside of SEO. What is more important, though?

SEO OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Initially, when constructing your website (or even your blog), do focus on search engine optimization. Anytime that you create a new page of content or structure a new blog post, do keep in mind the importance of search engine optimization. It should be something you always think about.

Once you have those pages on your website, though, then you can focus on other aspects that can help to drive your page ranking up. Getting quality traffic to your website will help as will having other websites point to yours with links. That means that they have included a link from their website to your own. Search engines think, "This website is linking to the other. That one must be valuable."

And, it gives you at least a slight bump up in your search engine ranking. Remember, no one knows the exact formula, so it takes doing a lot of small things to see a big return. The good news is that all of those little things that you can do are not necessarily difficult things to do either. You do not have to pay a lot of money for them nor do you have to invest a lot of time (though some of these tasks can greatly increase your time online if you allow them to get the best of you, which happens often to many people, it seems!)

BUILDING TRAFFIC AND LINKS

Increasing traffic and building links pointing to your website is your goal. You want to concentrate on doing both. The good news is that the more traffic you build to your website (which means the more people who come to your website), the more links you are likely to have. The opposite is true too. The more links you have pointing to your website, the more traffic you will have coming to your site.

Consider both methods and notice how some of these methods are even interchangeable, allowing you to accomplish both traffic building and gaining a few links at the same time.

SOCIAL MARKETING

One of the most important ways to increase your traffic and to build links pointing to your website is through the use of social marketing. The question is, what in the world is that? In offline advertising, individuals who wish to market their product or service can paste commercials and banners everywhere, but one type of advertising in the offline world works far better: word of mouth.

Online word of mouth takes on a bit of a different form. Rather than people talking about your website with each other, you can instigate some of those conversations yourself and build on your website time and time again. There are many ways to do this.

The biggest benefit is not having to hard sell your products or services. People come to you because they know you (through socializing with you) or they have heard of you through others they know and trust online. You get more targeted, and thereby, highly interested consumers in this manner than via any type of banner ads or paid advertising methods.

There are several social marketing website applications that can help you to do this. In short, any time that you meet people online, you can increase your ability to get more traffic to your website. Before giving you some websites to look through, first consider how to make this work for your business. Here is a step-by-step look at how the process generally can work for you.

1. You post a blog post that provides some bit of information or something unique, interesting, or otherwise newsworthy to those who will read it.
2. You head to a website and talk with your friends, friends you have met online. You share stories, you talk about the weather, talk about your market, and then, you let them know about the post you just made. This way, there is no hard sell, and those who you

are chatting with do not feel compelled to visit, but only if they want to.

3. Those friends share your message with their friends because, after all, they know and trust you. More traffic comes to your website from just that one post.
4. Then you head over to another of the social marketing websites and you do the same thing again. The same process happens and you get more traffic.
5. Repeat this several times a week and you'll have a steady stream of targeted traffic coming to your website.

In addition to this, though, you may also have a strong amount of links pointing to your website as well. For example, a friend blogs about your special offer at your website, leaving a link for their readers to your website. This allows more people to find you and creates that link-pointing to your website.

As you can see, when this process replicated over and over again, it can be highly beneficial to those who use it properly. Perhaps the most important aspect is not spamming those you talk with. In other words, no hard selling, just communicating. And, try to be a friend to them before being an Internet marketer, since this creates that trust level that you need.

WHERE TO SOCIALIZE

Now that you have a good idea of how you can use social marketing, you need to know where to do it. Below are some of the top locations online for social marketing.

FACEBOOK.COM

Facebook has been around for a long time, and now is an ideal time to start using it for social marketing if you have not done so already. Log in and create a name. Then, post messages about what you are up to. You can locate people you know. Over time, you will grow your following and be able to get more traffic. Fill out your profile, and you'll have yet another source of information for people to find you (be sure to include a link here to your website).

TWITTER.COM

Twitter has grown incredibly in recent months due to the media attention that has been given to it. The good news is that this means that there are

just more people to socialize with! With Twitter, you simply leave brief messages of just 165 characters. These messages update others about what you are doing.

So, to use Twitter as a social marketing tool, simply grow your following of friends (these are the people who will see the messages that you leave) and interact with them. In doing so, you can leave posts with links to your website whenever you think it is appropriate to do so.

DIGG.COM

Use Digg to help you to get more traffic to your blog or to news postings on your website. You can do this rather easily by simply submitting your story from your blog to the site. The more people that read it, the better the traffic numbers you will see. More so, you are sure to also see a number of different links pointing back to your website.

For more websites that work in a similar fashion, consider:

- [Mix.com](#) (formerly [StumbleUpon.com](#))
- [YouTube.com](#) (great for video marketing as well)
- [Del.icio.us.com](#)
- [Reddit.com](#)

There are many more that you can use in the same way. Remember the benefit of doing this. By interacting with groups of people online, you create more people who are interested in learning about what you have to offer. More so, you are also creating a link pointing back to your website.

All of these methods will help you to increase your traffic and your popularity online. Best of all, they will help you to increase your page rank. Combine the methods of search engine optimization and social marketing together, and your website will see the boost you are hoping to see.