

SEO: An Inconvenient Truth

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If you expect to get noticed in this global connected world, you are going to have to embrace something called **Search Engine Optimization** or SEO. It seems every year someone declares SEO is dead. Yes, SEO



“Before we decide that SEO is dead, can someone tell me what SEO is?”

is very difficult and it does require a serious commitment of time and money. But take a hard look at your competition and see how effective they are over the internet. They haven’t updated their website in over six months, they still have fixed tables for presenting content and they continue to ignore the mobile world. Also think about the fact that there are over a half a trillion web sites online. So even if you do just **basic SEO**, you are bound to realize some big benefits that can help your company in the long run.

Some of the SEO fixes are not that hard. Here are a few examples:

1. Join those professional organizations that are respected and include a link to your website. Google is looking to see if other “quality” sites are linking to your site – this is part of what goes into ranking your website. A good example is having your local business join the local chamber of commerce or paying to have your company listed in a **respected** directory (not a low quality directory).
2. Get the title of your pages right. You should have a string of five or seven words that describes the content of the page so Google can properly index this page.
3. Include H1 titles in your web pages – Heading 1 is the highest level heading for a page and Google indexes your H1 lines to help categorize your content for searching.
4. Include the vital key words that represent your value proposition into the text of your web pages. Do it in a conversational way and bold these words or do something so they stand out so Google can index these for improved search engine ranking.
5. Test your website and make sure you can pass the Google Load Test and Mobile Test. Your site has to load quickly and be mobile friendly if you expect to rank high with Google. The link for the Google load test is <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/> . The link for the Google Mobile Test is: <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/>
6. Update your content and provide useful information. Your site should not be just a marketing brochure - Google seeks to index quality content that others want to find and use for making decisions.
7. Include a Call to Action on your website. Ask visitors to do something. Complete this form for a free initial consultation – you want to have conversions: Visitors convert to some outbound action (submit a form, order a product, book a reservation, etc.). It’s all about conversions!

8. Don't forget to include some **video content**. After Google, the second place people go to conduct searches is You Tube. People prefer content in the form of videos. If you are not doing videos, then you are not paying attention to online users. *This was affirmed by Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook in February 2016!*
9. Include two site maps: HTML site map for your visitors and XML site map for the search engines. You can learn more at www.sitemaps.org

“Having an SEO-compliant website entails tailoring your website so that it follows search engine guidelines and communicates clearly what it’s about and in a way search engines can understand. Basically, you want search engine spiders to easily digest all the juicy content in your website and not find any red flags along the way. Communicating well with search engines includes optimizing your page titles and metadata so that they contain relevant keywords for your subject. Also, make sure that your web pages contain searchable text and not just pretty images, and that all your images contain an Alt attribute with brief text that describes the content of the image.” – Search Engine Optimization for Dummies by Bruce Clay

Fortunately, there are a wide range of tools to help you do SEO. Here are a few good links:

www.backedlinks.com | www.bruceclay.com | www.majestic.com | www.moz.com | www.semrush.com | www.seoclarity.net | www.similarweb.com | www.yext.com

So getting it right is not as difficult as you might think. So why do so many people not do SEO? Part of the problem is a lack of understanding of SEO and not recognizing why SEO is important to the business? It reminds me of a recent interview on CNBC with the CEO of Home Depot who explained that over one-third of people who visit our stores study and evaluate our products by visiting our website. More and more sales are led or touched by what you do online. You should not under-estimate the power of a great digital presence in helping your customers. Also think about how you acquire customers in the future – most of your new customers will be Millennial’s who are all about being online.

SEO should be an on-going process led by people who keep up on the latest algorithms. Keep in mind that Google now changes its algorithms once every 8 hours. The bar continues to get raised because there is so much junk on the internet. If you can somehow present high quality content that takes into account SEO, then you are going to reap some real benefits that so many others are clueless about.

“Google analyzes unimaginable amounts of data from millions of websites and whittles it down to 10 to 20 results that are most relevant for your search. As a website owner or marketer, you don’t need to worry about the more arcane data points that Google analyzes. You should focus instead on the two most important factors for ranking on Google: Links and Page Title.” – SEO Made Easy by Evan Bailyn