

Top 10 Search Engine Positioning Mistakes

When it comes to search engine optimization, there are certain common mistakes that I see people making over and over again. Here's a list of the 10 most common mistakes that I see people making. By avoiding these mistakes, you can avoid a lot of anguish and frustration in the long run.

1. Optimizing your site for the wrong keywords

The first step in any search engine optimization campaign is to choose the keywords for which you should optimize your site. If you initially choose the wrong keywords, all the time and effort that you devote in trying to get your site a high ranking will go down the drain. If you choose keywords which no one searches for, or if you choose keywords which won't bring in targeted traffic to your site, what good will the top rankings do?

In order to learn how you can choose the correct keywords for which you should optimize your site.

2. Putting too many keywords in the Meta Keywords tag

I often see sites which have hundreds of keywords listed in the Meta Keywords tag, in the hope that by listing the keywords in the Meta Keywords tag, they will be able to get a high ranking for those keywords. Nothing could be further from the truth. Contrary to popular opinion, the Meta Keywords tag has almost completely lost its importance as far as search engine positioning is concerned. Hence, just by listing keywords in the Meta Keywords tag, you will never be able to get a high ranking. To get a high ranking for those keywords, you need to put the keywords in the actual body content of your site.

3. Repeating the same keyword too many times

Another common mistake that people make is to endlessly repeat their target keywords in the body of their pages and in their Meta Keywords tags. Because so many people have used this tactic in the past (and continue to use it), the search engines keep a sharp lookout for this, and may penalize a site which repeats keywords in this fashion. Sure, you do need to repeat the keywords a number of times. But, the way you place the keywords in your pages needs to make grammatical sense. Simply repeating the keywords endlessly no longer works. Furthermore, a particular keyword should ideally not be present more than thrice in your Meta Keywords tag.

4. Creating lots of similar doorway pages

Another myth prevalent among people is that since the algorithm of each search engine is different, they need to create different pages for different search engines. While this is great in theory, it is counter-productive in practice. If you use this tactic, you will soon end up with hundreds of pages, which can quickly become an administrative nightmare. Also, just imagine the amount of time you will need to spend constantly updating the pages in response to the changes that the search engines make to their algorithms. Furthermore, although the pages are meant for different engines, they will actually end up being pretty similar to each other. The search engines are often able to detect when a site has created such similar pages, and may penalize or even ban this site from their index. Hence, instead of creating different pages for different search engines, create one page which is optimized for one keyword for all the search engines. In order to learn how to create such pages, see my article on this topic.

5. Using Hidden Text

Hidden text is text with the same color as the background color of your page. For example,

if the background color of your page is white and you have added some white text to that page, which is considered as hidden text. Many webmasters, in order to get high rankings in the search engines, try to make their pages as keyword rich as possible. However, there is a limit to the number of keywords you can repeat in a page without making it sound odd to your human visitors. Thus, in order to ensure that the human visitors to a page don't perceive the text to be odd, but that the page is still keyword rich, many webmasters add text (containing the keywords) with the same color as the background color. This ensures that while the search engines can see the keywords, the human visitors cannot. The search engines have long since caught up with this technique, and ignore or penalize the pages which contain such text. They may also penalize the entire site if even one of the pages in that site contains such hidden text.

However, the problem with this is that the search engines may often end up penalizing sites which did not intend to use hidden text. For instance, suppose you have a page with a white background and a table in that page with a black background. Further suppose that you have added some white text in that table. This text will, in fact, be visible to your human visitors, i.e. this shouldn't be called hidden text. However, the search engines can interpret this to be hidden text because they may often ignore the fact that the background of the table is black. Hence, in order to ensure that your site is not penalized because of this, you should go through all the pages in your site and see whether you have inadvertently made any such mistake.

6. Creating Pages Containing Only Graphics

The search engines only understand text - they don't understand graphics. Hence, if your site contains lots of graphics but little text, it is unlikely to get a high ranking in the search engines. For improving your rankings, you need to replace the graphics by keyword rich text for the search engine spiders to feed on.

7. Not using the NOFRAMES tag in case your site uses frames

Many search engines don't understand frames. For sites which have used frames, these search engines only consider what is present in the NOFRAMES tag. Yet, many webmasters make the mistake of adding something like this to the NOFRAMES tag: "This site uses frames, but your browser doesn't support them". For the search engines which don't understand frames, this is all the text that they ever get to see in this site, which means that the chances of this site getting a good ranking in these search engines are non-existent. Hence, if your site uses frames, you need to add a lot of keyword rich text to the NOFRAMES tag.

8. Using Page Cloaking

Page cloaking is a technique used to deliver different web pages under different circumstances. People generally use page cloaking for two reasons: i) in order to hide the source code of their search engine optimized pages from their competitors and ii) in order to prevent human visitors from having to see a page which looks good to the search engines but does not necessarily look good to humans. The problem with this is that when a site uses cloaking, it prevents the search engines from being able to spider the same page that their users are going to see. And if the search engines can't do this, they can no longer be confident of providing relevant results to their users. Thus, if a search engine discovers that a site has used cloaking, it will probably ban the site forever from their index. Hence, my advice is that you should not even think about using cloaking in your site. For more information on what page cloaking is, how it is implemented, and why you should not use cloaking, see my article on this topic.

9. Using Automatic Submission Tools

In order to save time, many people use an automatic submission software or service to submit their sites to the major search engines. It is true that submitting your site manually to the search engines takes a lot of time and that an automatic submission tool can help you save a lot of time. However, the search engines don't like automatic submission tools and may ignore your pages if you use them. In my opinion, the major search engines are simply too important for you not to spend the time to submit your site manually to them. In order to speed up the process of submitting your site, you can use our free submission tool which allows you to submit your site manually to all the search engines, without having to go to the "ADD URL" pages of the individual engines. It is available [here](#).

10. Submitting too many pages per day

People often make the mistake of submitting too many pages per day to the search engines. This often results in the search engines simply ignoring many of the pages which have been submitted from that site. Ideally, you should submit no more than 1 page per day to the search engines. While many search engines accept more than 1 page per day from a particular domain, there are some which only accept 1 page per day. Hence, by limiting yourself to a maximum of one page per day, you ensure that you stay within the limits of all the search engines.

11. Devoting too much time to search engine positioning

Yes - I lied. There's another common mistake that people make when it comes to search engine optimization - they spend too much time over it. Sure, search engine placement is the most cost effective way of driving traffic to your site and you do need to spend some time every day learning how the search engines work and in optimizing your site for the search engines. However, you must remember that search engine optimization is a means to an end for you - it's not the end in itself. The end is to increase the sales of your products and services. Hence, apart from trying to improve your site's position in the search engines, you also need to spend time on all the other factors which determine the success or the failure of your web site - the quality of the products and services that you are selling, the quality of your customer service, and so on. You may have excellent rankings in the search engines, but if the quality of your products and services are poor, or if your customer service leaves a lot to be desired, those high rankings aren't going to do much good.

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