

25 secrets you have to know about Search Engine Optimization for print websites

TRUTH IS... most websites do not work. Printers or print brokers who thought by putting out a website they will instantly attract the right customer and increase their sales flow, get disappointed very quickly. Website building is a multi step approach to covering a lot of bases like domain, hosting, design, presence, targeted traffic, conversions, sales, being able to be found and setting up for repeat business.

SELLING ONLINE. eCommerce is no longer a complicated and mysterious add on to your website. In today's world it seems like everyone is doing it. There are no more fears about credit card information being stolen, as today's consumers

are savvier and can recognize a reputable website from a fake website. Ecommerce websites allow you to take in orders 24/7/365. I can still remember that during one of the print tradeshows in Florida a client that we had built ecommerce platform for, ran up to me to give me a high-five. After 26 years in business, he finally has taken in an order at 3am. He was extremely excited that the order came in without any human intervention, and the website did everything for him. The website got him found online, the keywords he used attracted the right kind of a prospect, content in the website conveyed security and reliability, and the check out form was not threatening, leading to a

sale. His experience gave a new meaning to "overnight success"

ADVANTAGES OF ECOMMERCE are numerous; a famous pizza delivery place states that online orders are generally 8% higher in value, than over the phone, as customers are not being pressured into making a fast decision by a live operator, thus extra order of garlic sticks is an easy decision to add to the shopping cart. Virtual shopping carts can give suggested sales, which a live person may forget. "Would you like fries with that?" or just 30% for rush print and delivery? Or would you like a matching letterhead order to go with your presentation folder?

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With eCommerce, you can choose to only take in prepaid orders. No more chasing customers that tend to pay their bills on a 95th day after they're due.

WEBSITE IS A GREAT SELF HELP TOOL. Two weeks ago, I was chatting with a print broker through an online support form, who sells over a million dollars worth of print online to the SOHO market. This print broker admitted that he hates talking on the phone with customers. Out of his 350 print jobs per month he only ends up speaking to 1 or 2 customers, as the rest of the support is done through online chat and email. Funny thing is, he even admitted to not wanting to talk live ever with me again as he said that he truly despises the phone. And that's after 5 years of knowing me.

Do you have to sell anything on your website? Do you feel that it may take away something from your salespeople or from your brand? If so, there are many other very useful ways to track the performance of your website. Offer sample kits, consultations, emailed newsletters, white papers and anything else that would allow your visitors to leave you with their information for follow up marketing. I have visited a printer, which gets 100% of their revenue from the internet, well over \$30 million worth of orders, which quantifies success by how many sample kits they send out. As they know that every sample kit will return a specific percentage in sales.

WEBSITES ARE GREAT FOR SALES MANAGEMENT... not only for yourself, but you can have your salespeople being tracked by online tools as well. We have worked with a printing company that has hundreds of people selling its products, and the printing company knows through its websites precisely who sold what to whom and for how much. They also know the reorder ratio, leading to satisfaction levels. Inventory, distribution all is being tracked by their website.

Website administration should be easy. It helps if you have an IT person in house, but you shouldn't have to employ one to have a functional website. My suggestion is to outsource for Search Engine Optimization outside of the house, while keeping basics of updates to your website in-house. If you do end up employing a

webmaster and a Search Engine Optimizer, here are the things you should know:

FIND A CLOSET GENIUS. You can find one guy that intuitively knows more about the web than 10 people combined if you were to hire those 10 people off the street. You can spot him easily if he asks for compensation in "pizza pockets". But even in those 10 people, you will have a mix of: good in design, good in structuring, good in marketing, good in blogging, good in search, good guesser, good plagiarizer and good delegator/outsourcer.

So, here are 25 secrets summarized about Search Engine Optimization for print websites:

1. Get a great domain, and make sure it is/it has:
 - .com and a .ca extension
 - Short, memorable and has no dashes "-"
 - Appears trustworthy
 - Has your keywords in it
 - Aged with history
 - Has natural type in traffic
 - Has little chance of mistakes for miss-types if someone heard on a radio.
2. Design a website that is:
 - Not Flash, PDF or a large JPG
 - Has a lot of content, including: lots of text, Video, Podcasts, RSS feeds, Blogs and a lot of fresh, unique content.
 - Sells something, not just displays company information
 - Designed keeping Mac and PC users in mind. A lot of print buyers are using Macs
3. Has a reason for people to bookmark you and link to you from: Delicious, Blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, Digg and other social book-marking sites.
4. Has a lot of links to you.
5. Appeals to most of the 250 parts of Google algorithm (i.e. popularity, structure, content).
6. Keep content fresh (not stale). Don't make changes. Add more content instead of replacing or deleting. Pretend to be your own industry or newspaper.
7. Have search related proper metadata. Have commas in metatags.
8. Have search related keywords, content, bodytext metatitle and description.
9. Have a link with comments about someone else's video on your blog and link to video.
10. Send out newsletters, and then a week later post it on your blog.
11. Add "add to delicious and other social places" functionality.
12. Use Eye tracking research. Make sure users are able to navigate through your site
13. Apply Multi variant analysis of what works on a page to make sure you don't scare visitors off
14. Online reputation management
15. Find knowledgeable SEO employees. 80/19/1 rule. 80% say they know SEO, but only 19% do SEO and 1% does SEO well. If you can't find, take on an advisor or outsource to reputable companies located locally.
16. Find your niche and target it. Don't go broad at first. There are hundreds of things you print, pick one to be your flagship.
17. Use colours that attract the sale. Having site all in black may scare some people off.
18. Use customer's language. Not everyone knows what CMYK is.
19. Get reporting software in your site that reports to you on traffic, Market share reports, ad copy performance reports, competitor reports, trademark use reports, brand buzz reports, email usage reports
20. Track everything, including sales from your sales people online
21. Add a shopping cart that suggests additional products
22. Provide online support via chat.
23. Have more than one websites, so you're targeting many niches or keywords
24. Find a closet genius
25. If you can't do it all yourself - outsource!

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF TO SEE IF YOUR WEBSITE IS PERFORMING WELL.

- Does my website show up for my 10 key phrases in 3 main search engines within top 10 results?
- Does my website have natural

type in traffic from your brand or words in your domain (like “web to print software”)?


- Do people bookmark my site and come back to it often?
- Does my website have a variety of options for your visitors (shop, learn, subscribe, request, etc.)?
- Do people link to my website from their websites?
- Can I track how much money the website is generating you?

QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR USABILITY YOURSELF TO SEE IF YOUR WEBSITE IS PERFORMING WELL.

- Can customers upload their orders to me?
- Can customers design from a template on my website?
- Can customers communicate with

me via online chat?

- Can customers get an estimate in real time?
- Can customer’s soft proof their print job on screen?
- Can customers track their job status?
- Can customers request a quote?
- Can customers order static print from a catalog?

If you answer yes to all, you are doing well. If you didn’t, there is room for improvement. 

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