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This intro to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and search marketing is designed to give you a basic understanding of how search engines work and the **work** it takes to achieve rankings and traffic from them.

Intro To SEO

Welcome to the world of search & find

Search engines have been created for one simple quest, to find what an Internet user is looking for. As a website owner/manager, you have the goal of being found by people looking to find your type of service, product or cause.

As a website designer and developer, we build websites that are “search engine friendly”. There are specific ways a site is designed, coded and displayed that enable search engines to understand what your site is about, what each page of your site covers and how it should rank those pages.

In this brief intro to search engines and search marketing, we’ll cover why your site should be built correctly, how to structure and include specific content and most importantly: the work it takes achieve trust and rankings from the search engines.



Overall, here are some important points to remember:

- **Good search rankings take work.** Either by you or by paying us to do the work.
- Google is the major player with over 70% of all search traffic, so we talk about Google a lot.
- Search engines do not like to be tricked, so SEO is not a trick, it’s a process.
- Search engine rankings are based on ranking algorithms and not all factors are known.
- You must determine the keywords you should be competing for. The terms being searched.
- Websites and pages are evaluated online, not by your brick and mortar size, history or sales.
- If the text “Yellow cars” is not on your page, you will not be found for “Yellow cars”.
- Search engines read HTML text on your page more than anything else. Properly structured content on each page enables a search engine to understand and label what your page is about.
- Links from other websites are stamps of approval/trust. They are a key element to top rankings.
- It’s the search engine’s rules; we just try to best play by them. There are NO guarantees.
- Most rankings take time and effort to be achieved. Google’s rankings would be useless if they rated something #1 right out of the gate or without merit. You must build TRUST.

How does Google work and how do they rank web pages?

Search engines hit the Internet and move from link to link on the web grabbing the information on the pages of your website. They start with the most important and trusted sites on the web and fan out from there.

Ultimately, their goal is to understand the pages on your website and what each page is about.

Google only wants to give their searchers great search results. That is their focus and service.

As the search engines index and understand the pages they crawl they apply their algorithm to rank the importance of that page, compared to other pages about that same topic.

Google looks at your page and considers the following in ranking it:

- Your text and content. Your text must have the keywords or phrases you are trying to rank for.
- Meta title or Page title. You have 65 characters to summarize your content, do it wisely.
- Your page name and page URL name. (example: www.website.com/yellow-widgets)
- The structure. What keywords are in headlines, sub headers, bullet points, image tags and links. The headline is more important to Google than the last sentence of your paragraphs.
- External links from other websites. Google evaluates how many links, the type of site linking to you and the text in the link pointing to your page.
- The above listed items are just the main components, there are many additional factors!

Note: 7 years ago, meta tags were a big part of rankings, that is not the case anymore. While we recommend completing your meta-tags, they are not large contributing factors currently.

The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying the homepage of Five Technology. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.fivetechnology.com/>. The page features the company logo, navigation links (Home, Blog, Sitemap, Contact), and a main content area with sections for 'web design' and 'web marketing'. A sidebar on the right contains contact information: 'Minnesota Web Design Firm' and the phone number '763-972-5933'. A footer section lists services like 'Web Design & Website Redesign', 'Award Winning Web Design', 'Web Hosting', 'Website Redesign', and 'Flash Design'. A banner at the bottom right asks 'Free iPhone?'. On the left side, a box contains four labels with arrows pointing to specific parts of the page: 'Meta Title | Page Title' points to the browser's title bar; 'Page Headline (H1)' points to the 'web design' section; 'Sub Header (H2)' points to the 'web marketing' section; and 'Page Content (multiple times)' points to the service list in the footer.

Meta Title | Page Title
Include main keywords here

Page Headline (H1)

Sub Header (H2)

Page Content
(multiple times)

What it takes to rank higher than other websites

So after the first two pages you understand that you have certain aspects to execute to rank well. They are:

- A website that is correctly coded and structured so search engines can understand your page.
- Keyword rich content that is properly structured on each page. Content is king!
- Links from inside your website to the most important pages and links from other websites.

Moving up the ranks

Ultimately it is an open marketplace for search engine rankings. You are competing against the other sites that are “optimized” for the same terms. What you need to do is beat them. You need to:

- **Do your keyword research.** You have to evaluate what users are searching for. Without knowing the right target terms, you may be optimizing for a term no one is searching for.
- Have valuable and trusted content. More so than the other sites/pages.
- Have unique and keyword rich meta titles, tags and descriptions.
- Have better structured content. (strong keyword headlines, tags and internal links)
- **Have more links, better links, trusted links.** This is a big area to leap frog your competition.

While many sites may have great information on “yellow widgets”, a website or page that has 2,000 links pointing to it as a trusted source will rank higher than one with 5 links to it. That said, Google also evaluates the strength of each link. A link from CNN.com or the University of Minnesota will be more valuable than one from a cooking blog.

Note: These are just some of the main items and basics to leverage. Search algorithms are complex and may contain hundreds of elements to determine a ranking. This document is not a coverall, but an intro.



It takes WORK

SEO Basics We Complete

As we have outlined, you must do things correctly to get the trust of Google, Yahoo or MSN. This takes work when building or redesigning your website and once the site goes live. At Five we have specific basics built into our projects that many other companies skip. Here are the base inclusions:

- SEO friendly coding using CSS, HTML and Semantic structure
- SEO friendly URL's (www.website.com/yellow-widgets)
- Access to add and edit meta titles, meta tags and meta descriptions for each page
- Static website site maps with HTML links to all website pages
- XML site map creation and placement
- Semantic structured layouts for content and entry in the SMC (H1, H2, H3 and so forth)
- Suggestions for page names, site navigation, site structure and content
- Website statistic reporting on search engine traffic and keywords generating clicks to your site

We also offer additional SEO services during the web design process and ongoing. These may or may not be part of your recommendation, please review your proposal for specifics.

SEO Services & Add-ons You Can Pay For Or D-I-Y

During the construction of your website or after it has launched live, there numerous services we can complete to continue to increase your websites value. These can also be performed by yourself or staff. A website that wants to rank well will most likely **need continuous improvement** on some level to beat and stay ahead of others in the search marketing competition.

- Keyword research (reports on most searched terms on Google, Yahoo & MSN)
- SEO web copywriting, content consulting and creative consulting
- Link analysis and link building services (getting more links to your website)
- Blog design and coaching (Blogs are a great way to increase SEO friendly content, internal link structure and gain links from other blogs and websites)
- Social media marketing and viral campaign creation

We hope that you've gained insight to the PROCESS of getting higher rankings on Google and other search engines. No tricks, just work and effort from us or you ... you decide!