

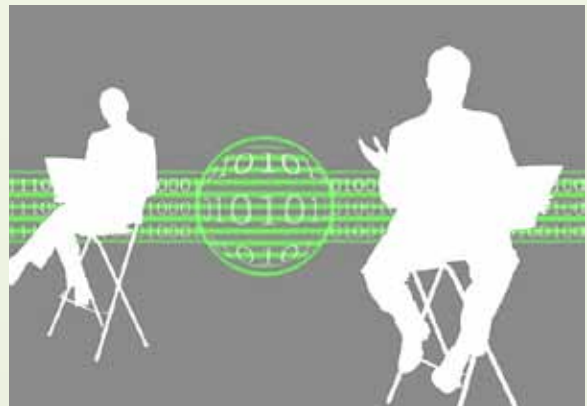
bevelwise whitepaper

Websites & Web Strategy Are Different, but Complimentary. Here Are Some Tips to Make Them More Effective.

What do you do to maximize the potential for search engines to rank your website higher? What should you include in your site's content to ensure that it is found by people searching for your products and services? Do you provide enough information online to build trust and help people to make decisions?

Content is different than design or programming and is crucial to how successful your website can become. Someone who builds a website does not necessarily know how to make it search engine friendly or maximize your ability to get traffic. Taking the time to pay attention to your content can drastically improve your ability to connect with prospects throughout the web. After all, it is probably your only location that is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Here are some tips to help with your website, content, search optimization, and overall web strategy (not in order of priority).

1. Determine what keywords your prospects would use to find your products and services. These would be the words and phrases that someone would type into a search engine when looking for a solution your product /service could provide. Remember to think in terms of your prospect and how they would ask or search for something.
2. Conduct research on keywords and phrases. You can purchase tools or use freeware. Some good ones include Wordtracker, Wordstream, Wordpot, and Google's Keyword Tool. You will want to use a number of tools, as the more sources you receive data from the better your results can be. Another aspect of keyword research to consider is the difficulty of the terms you are trying to rank for. You do not want to focus on a term that is too competitive, as you may not get results for some time. You also need to find terms that will bring enough qualified traffic to your website. If you don't want to spend your time trying to become an expert, you can also hire a search engine optimization firm to do this for you. Keep in mind everyone who builds websites says they can do this. Make sure they provide references. Execution is everything for these results and every business is different. Your strategy should be unique to your business and budget.
3. Your site structure is an important part of your search engine optimization strategy. The more content you develop for your website, the more chances you have to rank for separate keyword terms. Think of each webpage on your website as a chance to rank for 2-4 targeted terms from your keyword research. Each page should be crafted so that it is centralized around the theme of the 2-4 keywords selected. As you build more content, and expand your website you will continue to reap benefits from what SEO's consider the "Long Tail" of search. It's the strategy of bringing in traffic from the search queries that are longer in length that will bring in more qualified traffic. All the 1000's of unique search queries that only bring in 1-2 visitors every month will add up to more than your #1 keyword that brings in the most by itself.
4. Avoid keyword or phrase overload, known as "keyword stuffing". While it is true that search engines factor in how many times a given keyword may appear on your webpage, you don't want your copy to sound awkward because you have tried to cram it with keywords. Make sure you also read what you have written aloud to make sure it sounds good and delivers the right message. Make the copy as natural and conversational as possible. Your true audience is still a human. Not a search engine.
5. What information is needed to take the next step in the sales cycle? Have a clear "call to action" and make it simple and overly apparent for your website visitors so they convert. This often means determining what the objective of your website is, and making that the focal point as much as you can. It's the same reason



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- you may see that huge orange or red button on a webpage asking if you would like a quote. You do need enough content to build trust and provide enough information for visitors to feel comfortable taking action.
6. Implementing keywords from your research into your website and content is what SEO's would call "On-Page Optimization". It's the act of optimizing areas of your webpages that tell search engines what your page is about. Things like the page title, meta data, headings, alt tags, and taking into consideration things like keyword density. Keyword density goes back to how often certain keywords are used around the web page in content areas. Another thing to think about is anchor text. Anchor text are the words that are "clickable" in a hypertext link. Anchor text tells search engines what a link is describing. That is why you want to have keyword rich anchor text. Don't worry if a link is an image, because the search engines use the alt text to replace the anchor text.
 7. On-page optimization will lay the foundation for your SEO efforts, and link building is what will take your rankings to the next level. Search engines take into account domain authority and links that point to your website. Authority on the internet is established by acquiring links. There are many factors to take into account when it comes to link building. First you want to acquire quality links that come from websites that have a stronger authority. Quantity also comes into play, but if you think of each website as having authority and each link as a vote then it would make sense that the website with the most votes would get the best results. This is of course a simplified illustration of this point, but it helps stress the importance of link building as part of a search engine optimization strategy. There are many link building strategies, but the best way to acquire links around the internet is to produce quality content that people will naturally link to.
 8. There are many other ways to leverage your brand on the internet, and they don't all necessarily have to do with your actual website. Let's say that you are a business that is very regional, or geographic in nature. A way for you to drive business on the internet would be to leverage a local approach. This can often be referred to as "Local SEO"; these days every search engine has a map function that is usually displayed near the top, if not on the top of their SERPS (search engine results pages). Having a top listing on a map can be another way to effectively use your internet marketing strategy to drive your business. Other factors could be optimizing things like your videos and images that are often displayed right in the search results. A common strategy that you may have seen businesses using is optimizing their videos on YouTube. You can also use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn as a means to create a buzz about your product or service. Companies use these social media platforms to establish a community of "fans" that can be remarketed to and receive feedback about their products and services.
 9. Your content should constantly being updated so it remains fresh. There are Content Management Systems (CMS) available that allow you to make changes to your copy on demand and without needing to be a programmer. They can be as easy as typing a document in Microsoft Word. Make sure you choose one that you will OWN with your site and that can match your unique design versus having to select from their 'templates'. Keep in mind that your web copy is different than a marketing piece. It takes the place of a salesperson so it had better be likable, effective, and convincing. Along those lines, make it conversational and don't be afraid to use words that are not formal. This is your brand to them so make sure it conveys the right image and message to the reader. When you change your copy, a search engine needs to re-index your page in order to make sure it is returning the searcher the best and most accurate results. Updating content often will help your site's rank on those results, because search engines now index much faster than before.
 10. Keep it simple. This is probably the most subjective point, because everyone has an opinion on copy and how to write it. The Internet is all about instantaneous gratification. Emotion is what sales people play on for a reason. The call to action has to be clear and concise. If they are filling out a contact form only make them fill out what is absolutely necessary to start. You can use follow up to further qualify and gather more information. Less is more when it comes to contact forms. This concept also applies when you are building landing pages for a specific advertisement. If your pages looks too busy then people may feel overwhelmed and you run the risk of them leaving instantly.

For more information regarding these principles and how to integrate them into your marketing strategy, please contact Bevelwise today.