

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Guide

General Information on Search Engines

How Search Engines Work

Search engines have programs called “SPIDERS” that comb the web looking to add sites to their database. This is called Spidering or Indexing. The spider takes note of the title of your site, the meta tags and first couple hundred lines of text. When a search is requested from their site, it looks in their database of previously spidered pages to find matches between the keywords searched for and the text on the pages they indexed.

Each search engine uses complex formulas to determine which site gets listed first on any given search. Only a select few employees working for a search engine know the exact formulas. Many factors come into play with these formulas. Simplest is looking for a match between the text on a page and the searched term. Other factors may include; where is the keyword placed in the title, the number of times the keyword is repeated, where is the keyword placed in the body of the text, is there a link on the page containing the keyword, etc.

A search engine spider typically starts at a given page, indexes it, and follows all the links on that page. It then indexes each of these pages, and follows their links to continue the process.

How Directories Work

Directories differ from search engines in that they only list sites they review and are deemed appropriate to their theme. Some directories like Yahoo are very large and pretty much have categories for every conceivable topic, others are much smaller and only contain sites matching a certain theme.

Directories often rank sites alphabetically. The larger directories tend to mix alphabetical ranking with some search relevancy formula.

Directories do not have web spiders. A webmaster must hand submit their site to get reviewed for listing.

Search Strategies

Keyword Searching

There are several META tags which can be embedded within an HTML document to specify keywords which a web page author would like to be indexed under on a search engine.

These META tags proved to be an easy way for some authors to be listed under categories to which they really did not belong. Most search engines now try to determine themselves which keywords should be stored in a database for indexing.

Some of the rules that are applied include only including words that are mentioned toward the top of a document, and words that are listed between a minimum and maximum number of times.

Concept-based Searching

Unlike keyword search systems, concept-based search systems try to determine what you mean, not just what you say. In the best circumstances, a concept-based search returns hits on documents that are "about" the subject you are exploring, even if the words in the document do not precisely match the words you enter into the query.

Excite is currently the best-known general-purpose search engine site on the Web that relies on concept-based searching.

How does it work? There are various methods of building concept-based systems, some of which are highly complex, relying on sophisticated linguistic and artificial intelligence theory that we won't even attempt to go into here. Excite sticks to a numerical approach. Excite's software determines meaning by calculating the frequency with which certain important words appear. When several words or phrases that are tagged to signal a particular concept appear close to each other in a text, the search engine concludes, by statistical analysis that the piece is "about" a certain subject.

Relevancy Rankings

Most of the search engines return results with confidence or relevancy rankings. In other words, they list the hits according to how closely they think the results match the query. However, these lists often leave users shaking their heads on confusion, since, to the user, the results often seem completely irrelevant.

Why does this happen? Basically it's because search engine technology has not yet reached the point where humans and computers understand each other well enough to communicate clearly.

Most search engines use search term frequency as a primary way of determining whether a document is relevant. If you're researching diabetes and the word "diabetes" appears multiple times in a Web document, it's reasonable to assume that the document will contain useful information. Therefore, a document that repeats the word "diabetes" over and over is likely to turn up near the top of your list.

If your keyword is a common one, or if it has multiple other meanings, you could end up with a lot of irrelevant hits. And if your keyword is a subject about which you desire information, you don't need to see it repeated over and over--it's the information *about* that word that you're interested in, not the word itself.

Some search engines consider both the frequency and the positioning of keywords to determine relevancy, reasoning that if the keywords appear early in the document, or in the headers, this increases the likelihood that the document is on target. For example, Lycos ranks hits according to how many times your keywords appear in their indices of the document and in which fields they appear (i.e., in headers, titles or text). It also takes into consideration whether the documents that emerge as hits are frequently linked to other documents on the Web, reasoning that if other folks consider them important, you should, too.

Meta Tags

Most search engines use the <TITLE> and <META> tags to index your site. For a search engine to properly index your site, use the following most important meta tags (note that paragraph separation is not required):

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
```

```
<TITLE>Your Company Name ~ define page title using desired
keywords</TITLE>
```

```
<META NAME="description" CONTENT="describe your site using
exactly the same desired keywords as in <TITLE> and some flowery marketing
language">
```

```
<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="put comma-separated keyword-
phrases that are relevant to your site; about 20-30 key phrases, arranged in the
order of priority, starting with exactly the same ones as in <TITLE>">
```

```
< META NAME ="robots" content="noarchive"> - this helps ensure that
old or removed pages on your website do not get archived by Google and
later displayed to users.
```

```
</HEAD>
<BODY>
```

It is advisable to place the Title tag and meta tags directly between <head> and </head> tags, and place all Java script after </head> (even though it is somewhat against good coding practices that require that Java script be at the top). Some search engines won't use meta tags at all, but index your site by looking at the first 255 characters on your HTML page.

Some search engines will use your Title and description tags to display your listing, but it won't help you with increasing your ranking. Because of this, it's important to put some descriptive text before all graphics on your page. **If you're trying to please all the search engines, use both meta tags and descriptive text at the top of your page.**

It's a good idea to plan ahead when developing a site and think of the keywords you should target. A web design site might target the words "web design" as their keywords. If that's the case, they should ensure "web design" is in the <TITLE>, each <META> tag and repeated a few times on the page, particularly near the top.

NOTE: repeating the keywords too many times will often get you kicked off a search engine. **How many is too many?** In most cases you're safe as long as you don't the

repeat the keyword(s) more than 50 times on your page (for larger pages); about 10 times for smaller pages) and **do not place the same keywords twice in a row.**

Some hybrid search engines, those with associated directories, may give a relevancy boost to sites they've reviewed. The logic is that if the site was good enough to earn a review, chances are it's more relevant than a site that was not reviewed.

Meta tags are what many web designers mistakenly assume are the "secret" to propelling their web pages to the top of the rankings. HotBot and Infoseek do give a slight boost to pages with keywords in their meta tags. But Lycos doesn't read them at all, and there are plenty of examples where pages without meta tags still get highly ranked.

Search Engine Optimization & Positioning

This section describes the most important issues pertaining to the Search Engine Optimization and Positioning (SEOP), with specific examples based on real-life projects. At the end of the section, you will find resources and references considered to be the most reputable in the SEO world as well as some additional information on Web marketing.

The readers are requested to understand that the SEOP is not an exact discipline, therefore all "numbers" are best perceived as general guidelines.

Overview

The overall SEO process includes the following 10 steps, in the order of importance:

1. Conducting proper competitive analysis
2. Defining targeted keywords based on user popularity)
3. Creating a highly relevant semantic structure, i.e. your navigation structure
4. Optimizing individual pages, i.e. making sure that every page reflects proper keywords and displays keyword-rich content
5. Creating a large website based on your semantic/navigation structure (menu items, sub-menus, sub-submenus, and individual pages). The size would depend on the market value of your semantics
6. Interlinking your site's pages
7. Creating back links (focus on related website with high Page Rank of 4+)
8. Advertising on Google through AdWords to supplement your SEO efforts
9. Growing your website on a monthly basis, with a proper keyword strategy (through press releases, white papers, in-site directories, etc.)
10. Conducting Social Media Marketing campaigns: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Delicious, Digg, Technorati, Blogspot – as the basic combo

Step-by-step Process

This section describes methodology of the SEOP, i.e. it provides detailed instructions for each step of the SEOP process.

1. Analyzing your competition

- It is important to note that the competitive analysis should be performed prior to settling on your main keywords. You are strongly advised to do this analysis yourself. Do not hire a consultant, as it is crucial that you know what your competition is doing (however, I won't turn you down, of course!)
- List your major competitors. Read their white papers and dig out what exactly they consider to be their areas of "specialization" and pay attention to the wording (e.g. '**web design Ottawa**' or '**website design Ottawa**', etc.). Check their keyword metatags (right click and 'View Source').
- Type these words one by one on Google and other search engines and see what comes up. Check for your competitors on the right-hand side to see what they advertise for, this would indicate their major focus. Create a detailed table and record all findings for 15-25 keywords. Spend at least a day doing it. Agonize over pluses and minus of each of your major competitors, one by one. Do not rush, a few extra days of careful consideration will only help ensure excellence to your strategy.

A quick example:

Keyword #1: Web Design Ottawa

Keyword # 2: Your Next Most Desired Keyword

1. Web Design Ottawa: Keyword Value > 2 million SERPs

Competitor Name	Google	Yahoo	Major Keywords	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes
Competitor #1	1:7		Web design Ottawa			
Competitor #2	1:6	3:8	Joomla web design			
Competitor #3	1:7		Joomla website design			
Competitor #4	1:9		Search engine optimization Ottawa			
Competitor #5						

Keyword Value:

of page results returned by a search engine.

Positioning on Google & Yahoo:

First page, second place is presented as "1:2"

Major Keywords:

Pay particular attention to the 'Title' metatag

Strengths:

Size of the site, appropriate content, links to and from, etc.

Weaknesses: Poor metatags, no content optimization for keywords, bad navigation structure, etc.

Notes: Do they advertise on Google Adwords? Where else (check their contact and registration forms)?

2. Defining targeted keywords

- **Good news:** Your success depends in large on Semantics (i.e. the way search engine structure semantic categories, e.g. directories and the like), rather than on what keywords users type in the search engine (although this is important too, of course!). This is especially true for directory-based search engines like Yahoo. Your success also largely depends on the size of your website, i.e. number of pages, links, and functionalities. The bigger the better.
- So get your Semantics in order. Based on your competitive analysis and your business needs, **define your main semantic category, i.e. your main business area of specialization, by selecting 2-3 keyword phrases**, each containing no more than 2-3 words.
- Having defined your main semantic category, define as many sub-categories as possible, i.e. come up with more keywords describing your business in general and areas of expertise in particular. Try to make sure that these words are “highly” relevant to your **major Semantic field, i.e. main area of specialization** and – preferably – not used by your competitors. Select the most appropriate ones for your needs. Make sure that your semantic structure is scalable, i.e. you can easily “grow” each sub-category (in other words, you can easily add items to each menu and sub-menu). **The more logical yet encompassing your semantic hierarchy is, the more Google will like your site. agonize over which phrases to select**, consider various points of views (business, SEO, competition, etc.). Record all your thoughts and rank each sub-phrase, so that in the end you feel good about selecting just 5 or 6 of them. These 5-6 phrases will be YOUR BUSINESS, i.e. your money. Later, you will need to create individual pages for each keyword phrase with proper optimization in place. *Repeat* keyword phrases and their variations as often as you can, but without sacrificing your content and style (about 30 times per page that would be 5 pages long when printed).

EXAMPLE: You’ve determined that your competitors focused primarily on “web design Ottawa”. We can argue that this phrase belongs to a larger semantic category of “Web Design”. This is a large category and it is highly competitive (there are more than 20 million pages shown by Google for this phrase), and it will take a lot of work to optimize your website for it. However, because it is a large semantic category, there exist many sub-categories which inter-relate and even overlap with one another.

So, to out-smart your competition, you can come up with another sub-category within the large “Web Design” that would be the closest neighbor to your competitors’ “web design”. You should make sure that this phrase is also quite popular, i.e. likely to be typed by users in the search engine. Check to see how competitive it is, if it gives under 4M results, it is a good candidate. **This is a very**

important step and it is crucial to do it right.

In this situation I suggest using two phrases: “website design Ottawa” and “web designers Ottawa”. These phrases both belong to (or you can argue that one of them overlaps with) the same category of Web Design Ottawa; they are in many ways synonymous with “web design Ottawa” and both of them are quite likely to be typed by users in the search engine bar.

3. Creating a highly relevant and encompassing semantic structure & navigation

In the above example, a website would contain something like the following:

- A menu tab called *About us* or *Company* or similar (first level)
- A sub-menu called *Areas of expertise* (second level)
- A sub-sub menu *Automated software analysis* (third level)
- The *Automated software analysis* page would further contain two sections: “Automated code analysis” and then a sub-section “Automated defect detection”. This page should be very long and contain exhaustive information with relevant outgoing links to academic resources, associations, societies, etc. Alternatively, you can have two separate pages, instead of two sections, but each web page should be at least 5 printed pages in length. All headings and subheadings should contain **exactly the same keywords** as well as their variations and should be either bolded or marked as headings. You would also need to place relevant white papers there, perhaps on the right-hand side; these white papers should all contain the desired keywords. Use as much *stuffing* and *repeat* your keywords as much as possible, but without sacrificing your style and content (i.e. user-experience).
- Do not use more than 3 levels in your navigation structure. If you feel you need more, add an additional 1st-level item. Many search engines don't go below 3rd level, and neither do users. Do not place more than 5-7 items in 1st-level menu bar; do not place more than 7-9 items in the 2nd level and 3rd level. Small sites (under 100 pages) are advised not to have a 3rd level at all.

4. Optimizing individual pages

Your selected keywords should be incorporated through:

- Domain name (if possible)
- First-level menu items
- Second- and third-level menu items
- Folder Names & File Names
- Page content:
 - a. Metatags (especially, your title tag)
 - b. Headings
 - c. Subheadings
 - d. Outgoing links (with keywords, not simply “click here”)
 - e. Links to other pages on your websites (the same way)
 - f. “Bolded” keywords in the text (repeated exactly)

g. White papers, product demos on the right-hand side

Note: You may need to rename all files and folders so that to include major keywords. E.g. instead of 'Services' use '**Services_Web_Design_Ottawa**' (make sure to use underscore, because some browsers do not like empty spaces, still).

Example: <http://www.annatulchinsky.com> . File name:
http://www.annatulchinsky.com/SEO_Ottawa/Services_SEO_Ottawa_Joomla_Website_Design.htm (the file name itself contains at least target keywords) This page was optimized for '**SEO Ottawa**' & '**Joomla website design**'.

Note: The whole site belongs to a major semantic category of "SEO", this ensures that the sub-sub-category "seo ottawa" will be ranked very high, if optimized properly. Also notice that the page is placed as a third-level menu item, i.e. high in a hierarchy.

- **The higher the page is located in your navigational hierarchy, the more important it is considered by Google.**
- The target keywords should be repeated "exactly" the same way in all metatags and throughout the body of the page and as often as possible; also use synonyms and grammatical variations (in headings, subheadings, etc. Use "bold" formatting tag periodically to ensure better results).

```
<head>
<title>SEO Ottawa: Professional Search Engine Optimization services in the
Ottawa area since 2001: Anna Tulchinsky Web Marketing Consultancy</title>
(the title metatag should always contain your company name and your desired
keywords; the keywords will be different or slightly different on each page).
<meta name="description" content="Anna Tulchinsky Web Marketing provides a
full range of search engine optimization services"> (the description metatag
should sound like a marketing pitch but should have as many target keywords as
possible).
<meta name="keywords" content="seo ottawa, search engine optimization
ottawa, seo services Ottawa, seo consulting, seo seminars, seo training, seo
site audit, seo web design">
```

- Make sure your title tag and meta tag are all directly between `<head>` and `</head>` tags, place java script after that (even though it is somewhat against good coding practices).
- **Put your most important keywords on the first part of your Web site (home page including).** People shouldn't have to scroll or surf very far to find the keywords they're seeking on your Web site. Many users won't have the patience. You want them to land on a page that provides what they are seeking, but also offers a representative view of what your site is all about.
- Make sure that every file has its own keyword-rich 'Title' tag. This is the main tag for Google.
 - Include other meta tags, such as "keywords" and "description";
 - Arrange keywords in the order of priority (the first few will be different on each page; the rest can be repeated from page to page)
 - Use 15-20 keyword phrases per page;
 - Accommodate for various spelling and usages (e.g. health care and healthcare; biotechnology and biotech, include some common misspellings)

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Search Engine Optimization Guide for Absolute Beginners with a New Website

- Do not repeat identical phrases, change word order, use singular and plural forms, use synonyms.
- In each file, include a 'noarchive' metatag, so that Google does not cache your pages, i.e. does not display a link to the archived pages on your website that no longer exist (viewer sees an error message after clicking on the link).

```
<meta name="robots" content="noarchive">
```

- If you use pop-up windows, make sure to insert "noscript.../noscript" tag, to let the browser see what's in the pop-up. The same principle can be applied to all hidden or dynamically generated pages, if that's what's desired.
- Make sure that **content on each individual page fully corresponds to the selected keywords** (as specified in the file name, the title tag, description tag, etc.).

5. Creating a large website

The second most important thing for Google (after links) is the size of your site and its specialization. The size of your website should depend on the market value of your desired semantics. For example, the phrase "source code analysis" generates more than 20 million pages on Google; it has an extremely very high market value. **The market value of 2 million is okay to deal with.** Anything over it will take a lot more work (it would take about a year of work for it to come up on the first two pages for values over 2 million). There are no official rules on this, but here is what I found by analyzing my competitors and their ranking. Please note that this is a rough guideline, not a specific measurement:

- Market value of 2 million – your site should have at least 50 large pages
- 2 – 4 million – about 80-100 pages
- 4 – 6 million – 150 pages
- 6 – 8 million – 200 pages
- 8+ million – 250+ pages

Make sure to create **as many pages as you can with a lot of relevant keyword-rich content and outgoing links.** Create many (dozens) of pages with information containing **relevant keywords repeated in over and over** (e.g. calendar of events in the industry; white papers; engineering tips; directories, etc.).

It is crucial and imperative that your website content and links are HIGHLY relevant to your main semantic i.e. business areas (main keyword phrases), from the user point of view. Make sure that all pages on your website relate to each other, i.e. all individual pages should all be within the same large semantic category (e.g. "recruitment of foreign nurses" belongs to a larger semantic category: "Health"). This ensures that you site is ranked as "specialized", and that's a bright green light for Google.

6. Placing a lot of outgoing, interconnecting links, and bookmarks

Google loves links more than anything. **Any link, including a bookmark, is a link, as far as Google is concerned.** There are 4 basic types of links:

- Incoming links – pointed at your website from other sites
- Outgoing links – your links pointed at other website, and
- Interconnecting links – your links pointed at another page on your website
- Bookmarks – your links pointed at another place on the same web page

Incoming links are “valued” higher than outgoing, interconnecting or bookmarking links, but they are time-consuming and often costly to create. Outgoing, interconnecting links and bookmarks are still links, and it is free to create them (as long as you are prepared to do the leg work).

- Analyze educational resources on these topics to see what they list on their websites. Later, place links to the most important ones on your website (associations, societies, encyclopedia, info portals, etc.). Create as many **outgoing links** as possible. Make sure that these links also contain relevant keywords and lead to keyword relevant destinations (business-wise). Do not say “For more info, click [here](#)”. Instead, say: [See more info on Joomla web design](#), etc. You would need to aim at 15-20 links per page, but the more the better. You should surround each link with a few sentences of text which would also contain your target keywords. Links alone are ranked lower than links supported by text – makes sense, doesn’t it?
- Place a link to Google somewhere on your website. **Use their toolbar.** Forget about other search engines. They all feed off Google anyway (this can change with time, though).
- And finally, create a “[Site Map](#)” file which would contain simple HTML links to all pages on your website. Place a link to the site map file on each page. This will “interconnect” all your pages, which is considered very good by Google. This is especially important, if you are using ‘includes’. Often, the first page Google goes to is the Site Map.

7. Creating in-coming links

Register your website (home page only) in as many relevant directories as possible. These include software associations, universities, user groups, business directories, etc. Place paid banner-ads on highly relevant sites only. About 20 incoming links from highly relevant websites is already good enough.

8. Advertising on Google through AdWords

- Enroll in Google’s AdWords campaign, but DO NOT accept their suggested price per click (PPC). Google is trying to generate as much money as possible, of course!
- Read Google’s AdWords Guide:
- Read our suggestions for [PPC campaign management](#)

9. Growing your website on a monthly basis

- Add pages to your website every month (1-2 pages with keyword-rich copy every month is a MINIMUM until you reach 500 pages on your website in total; then you

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can relax and add one page every 6 monthd). [Grow your website through press releases, white papers, resources, engineering tips, product demos, directories of various types, etc. but place them cleverly in the hierarchy, and use your keywords smartly \(see #5\).](#)

- Update your main pages often (republish). On average, Google visits every month, so new changes should be implemented on a monthly basis. If you want Google to visit more often, include the "revisit" metatag. Note that some consider this counterproductive, if you do not have a lot of activities on your website

```
<meta name="revisit-after" content="15 Days">
```

10. Synchronizing your design and formatting

- In design, avoid frames. If frames are used, make sure to implement proper coding to let the browsers 'see' the framed content.

So the code on your page should actually look something like this:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Your keyword-rich descriptive title goes here.</TITLE>
<META NAME="Description" CONTENT="Your one- to two-sentence keyword-
rich marketing description goes here.">
<META NAME="Keywords" CONTENT="Your important relevant keywords and
keyword phrases go here.">
</HEAD>
<FRAMESET>
<FRAME SRC="navigation.html" NAME="nav">
<FRAME SRC="main.html" NAME="main">
<NOFRAMES>
<p>
Here is where you should copy all the HTML code for what I have named
main.html. Be sure that you have all your navigational links to the rest of the site
also in here for the search engines to follow.
</p>
</NOFRAMES>
</FRAMESET>
</HTML>
```

The same principle applies if using flash or other animations, implement required coding to let search engines see the content of the page.

- Use a lot of text formatting – such as header tags, **bold**, *italics*, color, bullets, etc. – all should contain your desired keywords. Have fancy tables & fancy GUI. Make sure your formatting principles are consistent throughout the website. Google gives points for all that.
- Things NOT to do:
 - do not use white font on white background or similar tricks, as Google detects them instantly and penalizes the site;

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- do not create identical pages (doorway pages).
- **Do not panic, if your website suddenly appears way lower than it used to be, after you've put additional work in it.** It happens occasionally and nobody knows why. Wait a month, your site will be ranked properly again. If in doubt, DO contact the Google people. Send them a few emails and then make a few calls; they WILL reply to you – eventually, but it may take a few weeks.

In the end, you will have created a very nice website with a great and consistent GUI, user-friendly logical navigation, a lot of useful and free information, clear visual guidelines, and hundreds of great links to other valuable destinations – and that's what Google likes.

Time Lines

Expect to spend 1 weekson making decisions about keywords (semantics). If you already have an existing website, then re-structuring design, file re-naming as well as content optimization usually takes at least a couple of weeks (longer for larger sites). Google will reflect differences within 1-4 weeks, sometimes sooner. If you are building a new site, your SEO will take longer (2-6 months) to stabilize. In this case, it makes sense to use paid search engine inclusions, but make sure you pay the search engine company directly (Yahoo, for example), not the third-party marketing firms. If you are not in a hurry, it is better to wait until Google and other search engines rank your site independently. This will also give you time to structure and optimize it properly.

A Few Hints on Submitting Sites

Submit your site to human-based directories first, then to spider-based engines. First thing to know is the difference between "human-based" directories and "spider-based" engines. Search directories such as Yahoo!, Open Directory Project and LookSmart are edited by humans. Search engines such as Google, AltaVista, Fast Search and Teoma employ high-tech "spiders" that crawl across the Web to collect keywords matched, based on frequency and relevance, for the most part.

It's not only the first page of your site that will get listed with a search engine; ensure each page of your site has meta tags and a link back to your main page (through Site Map).

Pages that get "found" by a search engine, instead of being listed by hand, tend to get a higher ranking. Because of this, ensure your first page has as many links as possible to the inner pages of your site.

Search engines are starting to get smart to tricks used to get a higher ranking. Tricks you might try to use that mostly will no longer work are repeating keywords over and over, using text with the same color as your background or text with a very small font size.

Some engines will use the alternate text of an image tag in their indexing.

While good coding dictates you put your JavaScript at the top of your page, it could eat up the first 255 characters resulting in a bad ranking with a search engine, so put your metatags first.

If you submit too many pages too quickly, or repeatedly submit pages that break their submission rules, your domain or even IP number can be blocked from further listings.

Additional Information

1. Sign up with Google Analytics and Google Verify. Conduct regular analysis. Also use Yahoo Site Explorer to monitor the real number of your back links.
2. Do not let your users download your content without registration. It is a standard practice at this point to require a basic registration before letting users download your white papers, demos, product info, etc. Make sure to ask the right questions and store this info in Access or Salesforce or other similar database for future follow-ups. Everyone coming to your website is already a "warm lead".

The most important questions to ask:

- First & Last Name (two separate fields, to search them better in the future)
- Company
- Job title
- Work Phone & Extension
- Work Email (make sure to disallow yahoo and other consumer accounts)
- Company website address (will save you time)
- Geographical location (Country, State, Province)
- How this person found out about your company (check this with your web log)
- What their main areas of interest are (pre-qualification)
- Would they be interested in seeing a WebEx demo (Yes, No) – a great way to get your foot in the door.
- Would they be interested in participating in user-surveys (Yes, No). Surveys are a good excuse to ask more questions, to find out what's going on in their internal politics, determine whether there can be a sales opportunity or not, and finally, create a relationship. In return for participating in a survey, promise a free reward (e.g. an iPod or some other cute gadget like a USB key).

On the registration page that goes to your sales/marketing people (email notifications), ask your webmaster to include **a reference from the web log page**, so that your sales people know right away where this user came from, what keywords they used, etc. It only takes a couple of lines of script, but will greatly help with qualifying leads, screening out competitors and ensuring that your sales people do their job properly.

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Search Engine Optimization Guide for Absolute Beginners with a New Website

SEO References & Links

To learn more about SEO, please use these popular resources:

- <http://www.searchguild.com/> - Search engine positioning forum recommended by SERGEY BRIN himself: CO-FOUNDER OF GOOGLE.
- Subscribe and Unsubscribe at <http://www.highrankings.com/advisor.htm> - an excellent free newsletter with over 250,000 subscribers. It is also very entertaining.
- www.marketleap.com is another excellent resource: it lets you compare the popularity of your site (measured in number of links) against three other sites, or verify how well your chosen keyword combination places in the various search engines.
- www.wordtracker.com can help you to identify how often 'your' keywords are being searched for and also how many other sites use the same keywords. While wordtracker is a pay-for service, it does offer a free trial.