

Search Engine Optimization Wizard Website Evaluation

Evaluation Method

Ask yourself the questions listed in the pages that follow and rate your website and your Web Marketing strategy on a scale from 1 to 10, wherein '10' represents 100%. Record your score in each category and then calculate your average. To "pass", your total score should be 75%.

Please note that this evaluation form is generic in nature, and some entries may not be applicable to your particular business. Disregard entries that do not apply to you. Please also note that due to overlap in meaning, certain entries are repeated in various sections.

Recommendations

For applicable categories, we recommend that you obtain the opinion of outside independent parties (excluding family members, close friends, suppliers, and partners).

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the evaluation process, make sure your subordinates are able to submit this form completely anonymously (having 4 people fill out the form and then submit it to you would not be considered anonymous). If you are conducting this evaluation within your own company, have as many people as possible fill out the form, place it in a sealed envelope and then drop it off in a box located in a high traffic area. Make sure to instruct them to use pencils and not to include any comments.

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COMPANY NAME AND DOMAIN NAME

In this section, you should aim at getting 85%

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Does your company name reflect the essence of your business?										
Is your domain name exactly the same as the company name?										
Does it have a nice sound to it?										
Is your company name easy to pronounce?										
Would a sales person find it easy to use it when cold calling and leaving messages?										
Does it avoid potential unpleasant associations with other languages? Check the following languages: Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, German, Russian, Bengali, Urdu, Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese										
Does it avoid potential spelling confusions? (klocwork vs clockwork; kinaxis vs kinakis)										
Does it begin with a capital letter (imagine a press release where you cannot see your company name, because it is buried among all other words in a paragraph, imagine a paragraph in a newsletter starting with a lower-case letter. You can try to be different in some other ways)										
Does it avoid using slang, colloquial terms and substandard language (supertek; Xtreme design)?										
Does it avoid using professional jargon?										
Is it <u>not</u> consisting of (or does it avoid using) a single generic term that may be applicable to other areas unrelated to your business? (Elation, Ocean - but not Oracle, for example).										
Does it avoid being an abbreviation (not applicable to large companies)?										

Is your domain name parked under the .com extension (unless your business is geographically grounded by nature)?

Does your company name and domain name contain any of your desired keywords (only if possible)?

If you have upper- and lower-case variations in the company name (Epiphan SYSTEMS), do you use it in exactly the same way consistently throughout all your printed and web materials? Note, not only it is important to obey this rule to look professional but there are legal implications connected with this as well).

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

COMPANY MOTTO

In this section, you should aim at getting 100%

Does your motto facilitate an understanding of what you do and why it has value?

Does it sound serious and professional or is it "cheerleadery"?

Unless you are a very large and known company (Microsoft, Oracle), do you avoid using vague mottos, such as: 'Design. Connect. Go' or 'The Proven Leader. Software Security. Software Quality'. Unless you are a very large company, you risk looking silly by trying to force the "big guy" image onto yourself. Instead, be specific and show value.

Do you avoid using professional jargon? 'Experts in VGA Signal Processing' (but what's VGA?)

Do you include "value" in your motto? For example: Advanced Solutions for Perfecting Chip Design and Verification.

Do you "include" who your target customers are in your motto? Advanced Productivity Solutions for Perfecting Chip Design and Verification (as opposed to simply '...Perfecting Design and Verification' - design of what?)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

NAVIGATION STRUCTURE

In this section, you should aim at getting 100%

Does it follow your industry standard? (check to see how other companies have it. Check a few of them, do not stop at 2 or 3. Be critical to see how you can be better).

Does your structure have a maximum of 3 menu levels? Ideally, you want to maintain a good "gravitational" balance between menu levels, i.e. not to be top-heavy or bottom-heavy. Draw a diagram of your menu structure on paper to get a bird's eye view.

Does your structure show respect for users (contact info available from every page, logical hierarchical arrangement of sub-menus, etc.)?

Did you go through at least 3 reviews of your navigation structure (note, reviews, not versions)?

Do you avoid using expandable menu items? Use simple Java script or HTML instead to create a point-and-view effect. This allows users to easily "grasp" your entire architecture and helps them navigate faster.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

First-level Menu

In this sub-section, you should aim at getting 100%

Do you have from 5 to 9 first-menu items (7 is often optimum, you want to leave room for potential expansion)?

Do they contain not more than 2 words each, in most cases, just one?

Are they arranged in good logical order? ('Contact' should be last, 'Home' first, 'About' second, etc.)

Do the menu items demonstrate respect for users (provide a site map, follow a hierarchical classification method, do not use unclear terms)?

Does your first-level structure allow for potential addition of a few more first-level menu items, if necessary (scalability)?

Does it allow for easy addition of second-level menu items wherever may be necessary (scalability, modularity)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Is your terminology careful and precise (or is it sloppy and leads to misinterpretation, as in 'Online Sales Info'? - rephrase to avoid even a trace of confusion, use simple meaningful words, such as 'Making a Purchase Online' or 'Purchasing Online')

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Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

Second-level Menu

In this sub-section, you should aim at getting 100%

Do you have from 5 to 9 second-menu items (7 is often optimum)? If you have more than 9 items in your second level, you need to re-think your classification or re-structure your navigation

Do they contain your most desired keywords (only if possible)?

Are they arranged in a good logical or business order?

Do the menu items demonstrate respect for users? (do not make your users guess and do research before they can know what you are selling. Wrong: list your products by their code names or numbers under 'Products': TCIX23, TCIX2333)

Is your terminology careful and precise (or is it sloppy and leads to misinterpretation, as in 'Online Sales Info'? - - rephrase to avoid even a trace of confusion, use simple meaningful words, such as 'Making a Purchase Online' or 'Purchasing Online', or 'Buy Now')

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

Third-level Menu

In this sub-section, you should aim at getting 100%

Do you have from 5 to 12 third-menu items (9 is often optimum)? For large sites, if you have more than 12 third-level menu items, re-structure to move excessive items up to a new second-level menu item.

Do you use short but coherent phrases instead of clumsily truncated ones?

Do you use your most desired keywords for menu titles?

Are your menu items arranged in a good logical or business order?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do your menu items demonstrate respect for users? (do not make your users guess and do research before they can know what you are selling. Wrong: list your products by their code names or numbers under 'Products': TCIX23, TCIX2333 without giving some kind of information about these products)

Is your terminology careful and precise (or is it sloppy and leads to misinterpretation, as in 'Online Sales Info'? - rephrase to avoid even a trace of confusion, use simple meaningful words, such as 'Making a Purchase Online' or 'Purchasing Online')

Do you avoid priming your visitors? Do you avoid using marketing terms, such as 'Technology Leadership' (unless you are a huge company, you first need to prove to your visitors that you have the leadership. Instead use 'Technology Description' or 'Technology Overview' or if you really want to be pushy 'Technological Advantage').

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

SITE OPTIMIZATION

General

In this sub-section, you should aim at getting 90%

Did you properly familiarize yourself with what's involved in Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization, i.e. purchase an SEO brochure, enroll in a seminar, subscribe to a newsletter and follow it for a few months, hire a consultant, etc.)?

Have you conducted proper competitive analysis?

Did you use tools to analyze your competitors' sites?

Did you create a report on your competition?

Did you analyze your own site the same way?

Do you know your 'official' semantic category (dictionary entry)?

Do your menu items reflect it, at least partially?

Do you avoid using Flash or other type of animation (unless you are in the entertainment or media industry)?

Do you avoid using frames? Alternatively, if you use frames, have you incorporated proper coding to let search engines "see" the framed content?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Did you incorporate proper coding to let search engines "see" your dynamically generated content (when it can be beneficial)?

Do you have a large site (if the market value of your keywords is between 3-7 million results on search engines, aim for approximately 500 web pages, each containing a minimum of 500 words,)?

Do you interconnect your pages with links as much as possible, creating loops (using keywords)?

Do you have a large number of outgoing links to large reputable sites within your semantic category (academic institutions, licensing bodies, etc.)?

Did you register your site in various relevant Internet directories (paid and free)?

Did you register your site in relevant local Internet directories (paid and free)?

Do you have a Site Map placed as a link on each and every page of your website (consider not using "include files")

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

Home Page

In this sub-section, you should aim at getting 100%

Does your home page remind you of a book cover instead of a newspaper front page (unless you are a portal)?

Do you tell your visitors in the first 2 sentences what your site (and your business) is all about? Or do they have to look, click around, do research, and think to figure this out?

Does it contain a "time capsule" of your business?

Can an absolute outsider get an understanding of what you do and why it is valuable after glancing through your home page? For technology companies, note that if you think that your technology is too complex to be briefly described on your home page, then you have not agonized over this description enough.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

Page-by-page Optimization

In this sub-section, you should aim at getting 90%

Do your file names contain your most desired keywords? (Example: Services_SEO_Ottawa.htm).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do you use header tags, such as H1 and H2 that contain your most desired keywords?

Do you include a line at the bottom of each page with your most important keywords (preferably, in **bold** or *italics* or a **different color**)?

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

Content Reuse

In this sub-section, you should aim at getting 80%

Do you provide a 'print this page' option for each page on your website, including a second Site Map (legal duplication of your content)?

Did you include all your METATAGS with keywords in these pages for print?

Did you remember to use headers and other paragraph formatting in print pages?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

Demonstrating Expertise

In this sub-section, aim at getting 80%

Do you provide a wealth of reading resources within your semantic category free of charge (.pdfs, links to manuals, articles, journals, etc.)?

Do you have a large white paper section?

Do you provide an abstract with keywords for each paper before prompting for download (unless you block them purposefully, search engines see your papers, regardless of the registration requirements)?

Do you have a large number of outgoing links to reputable large sites within your semantic category?

Do you have a newsletter and newsletter archives section?

Do you have a press release section?

Do you have a resources or library section?

Do you have an industry overview section?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do you have a technology overview section (different from products)?

Do you provide resources free of charge (open-source downloadable code for non-core business areas; newsletter, etc.)?

Do you provide a summary paragraph underneath each listing in all of these sections, using keywords that are most desired for a particular page, or do you simply list them as links?

Did you use rich formatting (tables, headers, bold, italics, bullets, colors) to create these sections?

Did you use keywords consistently and repeatedly (in an identical manner) throughout these sections, at least 10 times per page?

Did you use varying tags and keywords on each page?

Did you use a keyword-rich line at the bottom of each page?

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

RESPECT FOR USERS

In this section, aim at getting 100%

Did you carefully monitor repetition of your keywords, so that it does not jeopardize quality of your content (do not repeat keywords more than twice in each paragraph, focus on headings, subheadings, bookmarks, and hyperlinks)?

Is your terminology careful and precise (or is it sloppy and leads to misinterpretation, as in 'Online Sales Info'? - rephrase to avoid even a trace of confusion, use simple meaningful words, such as 'Making a Purchase Online' or 'Purchasing Online')?

Do you use proper professional English (hire a graduate student in Linguistics, Syntax and Semantics preferably)?

Do you use an outside editor for review of your website content (non sensitive information)?

Do you avoid priming your visitors? Example: *Exciting* News (linking to your press room section). Do you avoid using marketing terms, such as 'Technology *Leadership*' (you first need to "prove" that you have the leadership. Instead use 'Technology Description' or 'Technology Overview' or if you really want to be pushy - 'Technological Advantage').

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SALES MECHANISMS

In this section, aim at getting 100%

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Do you have a registration/order form (as opposed to an email address or a link to your email address)?										
Does your registration form collect market data adequately and in good detail (geographical metrics, industry metrics, decision making, etc)?										
Did you incorporate proper coding in the form to see where users are coming from (customized web log)?										
Do you pass this information to your sales people as an email notification?										
Is this email notification detailed enough so that your sales people don't have to login to your CRM application to find out relevant metrics?										
Do you CC this notification to a sales/territory manager (and inside sales rep, if appropriate)? Do you have alternative monitoring means in place?										
Do you flag leads coming from website registration in your CRM system (or use some other type of lead classification)?										
Do you synchronize your CRM (salesforce.com), your email marketing (Vertical Response) and your internal database systems (MS Access)?										
Do you <i>appropriately</i> prompt users to go to the registration/order forms on various pages throughout the site?										
Do you provide a warning when registration is required (white paper downloads, surveys, etc.)?										
Do you offer contests with rewards (register to view our demo and win an iPod)?										

out option. Make it easily visible.

If you do not state prices on your website, do you openly state "contact us for a quote"?

Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

GRAPHICS AND LOOK-AND-FEEL

In this section, aim at getting 90%

Does the look-and-feel of your website fit the mentality of your end-customers (nurses versus chip designers; general consumers versus stock brokers, etc.)?

Do you avoid using excessive graphics and animation effects (unless you are in the entertainment or related media industry)?

Do you gravitate toward a generic look as opposed to a "currently popular" look?

Did you consult image consultants before settling on color choices and layout for your website? Your colors and layout send a certain message to your users. Some colors that you might like personally, may not fit your business model. Likewise, a page layout that is appropriate for a portal, is not appropriate for an attorney office.

Do you use cascading style sheet (.css) files to control your fonts and other paragraph formatting styles?

Do you synchronize your graphics on all pages across your entire site?

Do you provide one menu bar consistently for display, for easy navigation?

Do you make sure your graphics assist with getting the right perception of your business rather than "dominate" your website?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Do you use the same writer and editor to write content for all your pages (consistent style)?

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Web Marketing and Search Engine Optimization: Evaluation Wizard Subtotal:

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT FACTORS

In this section, aim at getting 100%

Did you provide sufficient training to people handling your customer relationship management (CRM), e-Marketing, and off-line databases?

Do you have a procedure for updating records across all databases?

Do you have a mechanism for enforcing this procedure?

Do you hire knowledgeable people to be your chat representatives (or are you using telemarketers)?

Do you make sure user requests get answered within 24 hrs (CC website registrations to managers and then send them notification with follow-up info, after it took place.)?

Do you attach follow up info to the lead record across your databases? Make sure all people who can potentially communicate with the lead get notified by email, do not rely on them to login and check for potential new information)

Do you make sure to establish proper group dynamics in your lead-generation and sales teams (achievers should be rewarded, managers cannot have the same quota as their subordinates, etc.)

Do you provide sales commission to your lead generation and marketing teams?

Do you provide sales commission to your professional services team?

Do you avoid using fixed bonus structure for your lead generation team? If using fixed bonus, make sure it has a highly sensitive scale to acknowledge achievement and provide proper incentives.

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