



The Quick Guide to Search Engine Optimization

A white paper by Savant Consultants LLP
June 2008

Copyright © 2008

All rights reserved.

Published by Savant Consultants LLP

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopied, recorded, scanned, or otherwise, except as permitted under Canadian copyright law, without the prior written permission of the author.

Notes to the Reader:

While the author and publisher of this whitepaper have made reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the information contained herein, the author and publisher assume no liability with respect to loss or damage caused, or alleged to be caused, by any reliance on any information contained herein and disclaim any and all warranties, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy or reliability of said information. The publisher and the author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation. It is the complete responsibility of the reader to ensure they are adhering to all local, regional and national laws.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that neither the author nor the publisher is engaged in rendering professional services. If legal, accounting, medical, psychological, or any other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

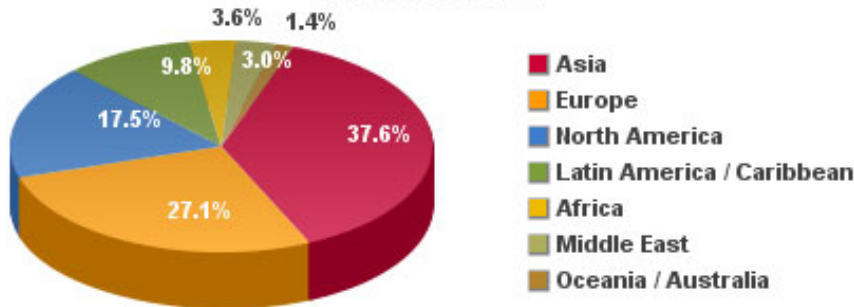
The words contained in this text which are believed to be trademarked, service marked, or to otherwise hold proprietary rights have been designated as such by the use of initial capitalization. Inclusion, exclusion, or definition of a word or term is not intended to affect, or to express judgment upon the validity of legal status of any proprietary right which may be claimed for a specific word or term.

The fact that an organization or website is referred to in this work as a citation and/or potential source of further information does not mean that the author or publisher endorses the information the organization or website may provide or the recommendations it may make. Further, readers should be aware that the websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.

Proliferation of the Internet

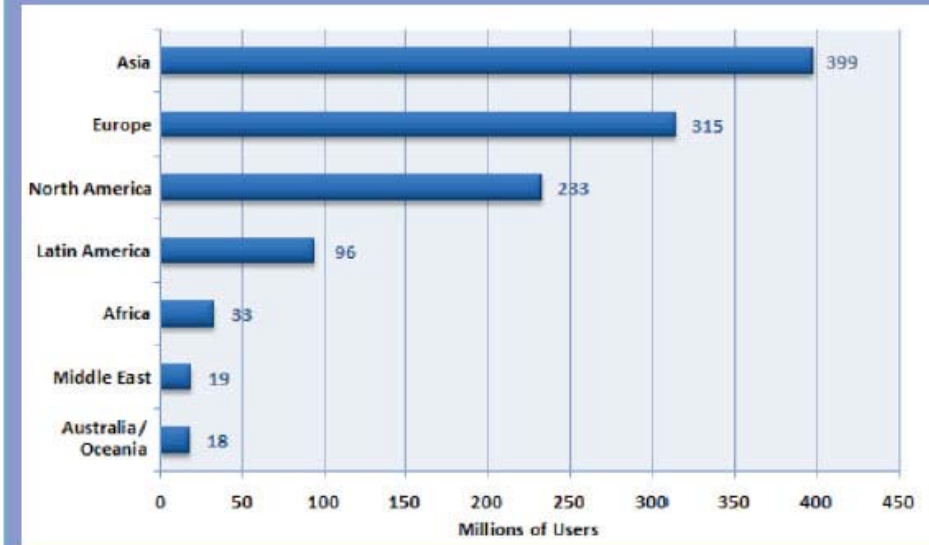
The internet has grown by leaps and bounds over the years and it has become a huge part of our daily lives. And it is there to stay, growing substantially every second and minute. With that, it has provided a whole new platform for companies both big and small to reach out to their targeted prospects and consumers.

World Internet Users March 2008



Source: www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

Internet Users by Region



However with the myriad numbers of websites being created everyday, the internet is littered with millions of websites that do not receive any traffic at all. Just like how important a location for a retail shop front is. Building a website online which does not receive any traffic is akin to opening a shop in a rundown shopping mall without any shoppers.

Unfortunately this is the current situation for most corporate websites. The expensive costs for designing the website is not leveraged when the website is not used to generate more potential prospects for the business.

With growth of internet users growing exponentially everyday, your business is simply at a disadvantage if your website is not tapping on this growing market.

Numerous industries, businesses and corporates have been trying to figure out how they would be the first few to get the attention of potential prospects, and you too will learn how to shortly.

Consumer Empowerment through the Internet

We call them the new breed of consumers. The intelligent consumers. Be it whether your business operates on the B2C or B2B model. Everyone is spoiled for choice because of the internet.

With a simple search on Google or other search engines; Consumers can now check through the internet for solutions or products and compare them without leaving their computer. Businesses' whose websites are not easily found online will then lose out to others as prospects would never be exposed to their offerings.

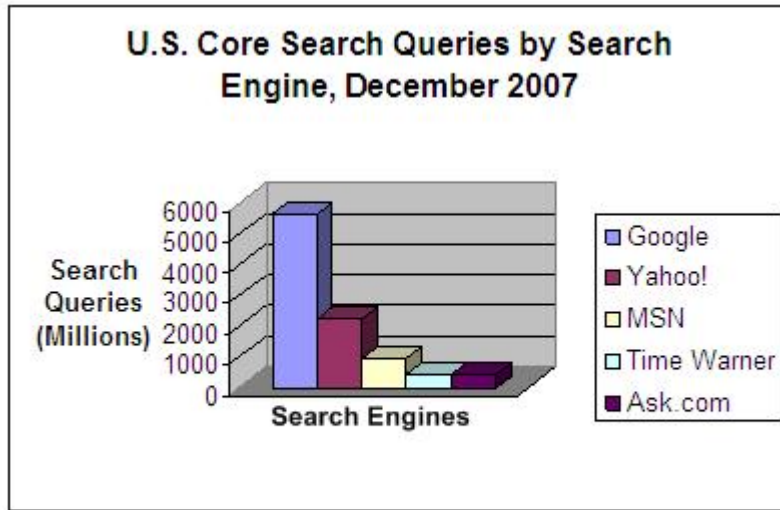
While this might sound scary, it actually levels the playing field for smaller companies. With proper techniques in place, smaller companies can actually achieve similar if not great brand exposure of their company's products or services online. And all this can be done without incurring expensive and massive advertisement bombardments that bigger companies use.

Why Search?

“ Search engines take advantage of reverse broadcast networks to help save time and money. They are instant answer systems that provide ultra-targeted advertising.

Search allows you to sell what your customers want, when they want it.”

- www.SEOBOOK.com



Data Source : U.S. Search Engine Rankings, December 2007,
By Enid Burns, Search Engine Watch, Feb 5, 2008

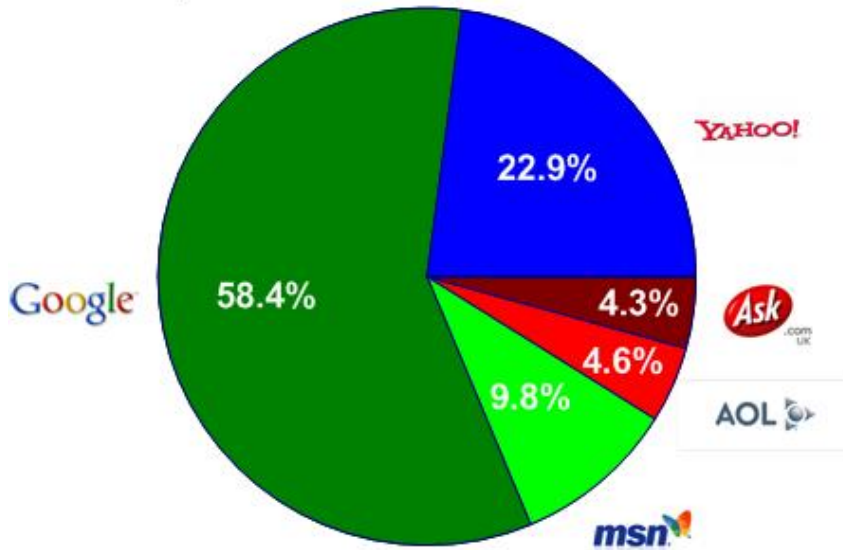
85% of Internet users find websites through search engines.

90% of Internet users do not go past the top 30 search engine results. They simply type something else in if they can't find a relevant site.

75% of Internet users have the intention of purchasing a product or service when using search engines.

The web has become a direct marketer's dream. In its infancy, the web was based around the core idea of sharing knowledge. The closer your ideas are in some way aligned with this idea, the easier it will be to promote your site.

Data Source : U.S. Search Engine Rankings, December 2007,
By Enid Burns, Search Engine Watch, Feb 5, 2008



To make achieve greater brand exposure for your business online, you need to start a search engine optimization campaign.

If you aren't in the top 10 for your market, you are unlikely to get much traffic from any search engine. And Google is the most important search engine in the world today as it dominates a huge percentage of search engine traffic as you can see in the diagram above.

Some other interesting facts...

Fact 1:

Google supplies search results to some of the largest Internet search firms. This means if you have #1 ranking on Google, you most likely will have a #1 ranking on Yahoo, AOL, Netscape, and Earthlink too!

Fact 2:

Google is the most popular search engine in the world today. Google indexes over 3 billion pages, has more than 150 million daily searches, and more than 60 million unique monthly visitors.

Fact 3:

Google allows you to achieve a Top 10 ranking for FREE, without needing to pay for advertising or to have your site "reviewed". Yahoo now charges \$300 every year to be "considered" in their search directory.

Appearing on the Search Engines

There are mainly 2 forms of ways to appear on the search engine rankings. One is through paid advertising and another is through search engine optimization to appear on the organic searches.



Pay Per Click (PPC)

PPC, also commonly referred to as “paid search advertising”. Basically PPC functions as a small text advertisement placed near to the organic listings with similarity in the keywords and key phrases defined. Some PPC ad ranking and placements can be controlled dependent on search engine. This is sometimes looked upon as a more convenient way of listing though it comes with a cost and ads are labeled as paid advertisements.

PPC can be looked upon as the paid ad spaces in various media channels. The only difference is that the conventional method of such ad insertions requires payment for the listing, whereas PPC payment is in relation to results. In general, PPC campaigns are charged only when the potential prospects click on the ad that you have placed.

For a successful PPC campaign to get its desired results, optimization is extremely necessary as only with a properly structured campaign with proper research and analysis carried out, ads created will then be correctly positioned.

Though we will not be touching much on PPC in this whitepaper, we have to note that consumer behavior towards paid advertisements would be different from organic listings.

Organic Searches

Organic searches are free listings that turn up whenever a person uses a search engine to search for something. And the search results returned are actually based on relevancy. The goal of the search engine is to provide high-quality content to people searching the Internet.

Hence search engine optimization is a way to persuade the search engines that your website is relevant for keywords searched related to your business.

What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

To put it simply, its about the method and logic used to construct your website pages in a way that search engines will decipher and notice, which then relates to your website rankings for relevant searched keywords and phrases on the search engines.

With proper optimization, your website pages will be listed within the search engines' organic listings which are also commonly referred to as "natural listings".

Most people outside the SEO industry – equate SEO with getting the #1 ranking for their website in Google.

But SEO is so much more than that. There are 3 main steps in the SEO process:

First, like any business, you need to identify your audience (your target market). Not only are you setting your website's goals and profiling your audience, at this stage you are also scouting your competition and evaluating what you need to do in order to 'dominate' this particular sector.

Second, you take steps to get your website rank as high as possible in the search engines for those keywords that this audience is most likely to use. This involves things you do to the site itself (if you are setting up a new website then you should ensure that it is search engine friendly from the ground up). It also includes off-site activities which are all geared towards the process of having other websites link to yours.

Third, you constantly track your website's progress in the search engines and make adjustments to your SEO strategy as necessary. While we define SEO, it is important to also clarify that SEO does not encompass other online activities that are designed to bring traffic to (or promote) your website.

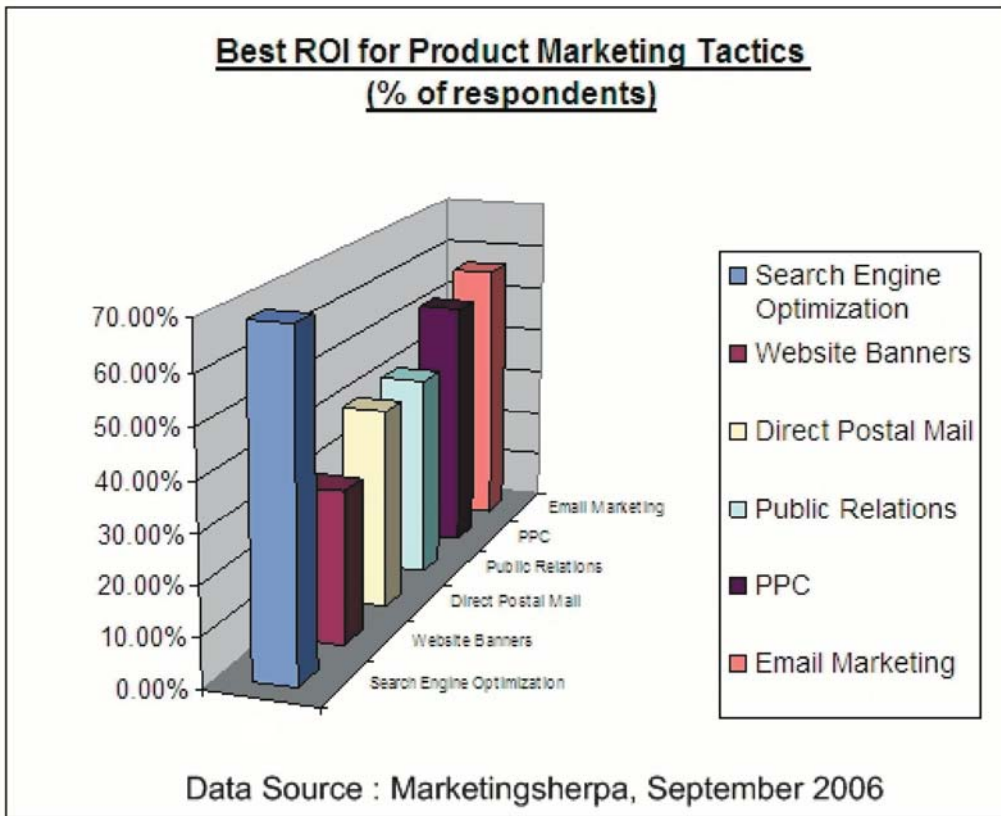
Research has shown that businesses and companies have invested in SEO more than twice the amount in the past year, and more marketers are convinced with the results of SEO and are devoting a larger portion of their search budget to it even though its just a small portion of overall search market spending.

SEO's similarity to conventional marketing relations

SEO is akin to editorials in magazines which is a free process, in the sense that you are not paying search engines to list. Just like the submission of press releases to magazines in the hope that the submission will be noticed by the editorial board and its relevant and attractive enough to be published in the editorials. Media relations consultants will create press releases in a way whereby its optimized for selection and further liaises with the various media channels to facilitate a higher chance of publishing.

SEO expert consultants do the same, they will first optimize the website structure and the copywriting, and then facilitate the listing and ranking on search engines with other strategies and methodologies.

Results for both SEO and conventional media relations can't be seen overnight. Both require long term, ongoing campaigns to get good and sustained editorial coverage. Upon abrupt termination of such ongoing campaigns, there may be no immediate plunge in publicity but over time the results might be drastic.



Paid insertions and their relevance to conventional marketing relations

In conventional media marketing, there are advertorials whereby corporates pay the editors to review their products or services. After which the editors would do a final write-up and publish, of course the content at the discretion of the editors and not the advertiser.

As a part of SEO, it used to function the same way whereby a payment is made to particular search engines to have them review the submitted site and decide on the placement of the site in the organic listings.

Though there is speed in listings but with search engines flushed with such a huge number of sites competing for attention, there is no guarantee of placement in rankings. The website may be listed, but perhaps at the 9th or 10th page of the organic listings, dependent on the level of optimization done on your website. That being said, there are still valid reasons to use this tactic for example; a content platform which is non-crawler friendly and some quick counter tactics to negate negative publicity.

As for search engines that allow paid insertions, Yahoo! seems to be one of the few major engines accepting paid insertions. Google, Ask.com, MSN, etc. have never accepted such paid insertions or dropped them due to search quality issues.

Constant Changes of the Search Engines

Search Engines have continually been changing their algorithms to maintain the quality in user searches. Why the need of such drastic changes you may ask?

Their main concern which is of utmost value to the search engines is to maintain their quality standards by showing or displaying extremely relevant results to their audiences. In addition, with the ever evolving technology advancements in RIAs (Rich Internet Applications) and media online, the methods that the search engines track their websites evolve as well.

With SEO, more and more sites are ending up in higher positions in the organic listings than they deserve. This affects the search result quality of the search engines, therefore requiring constant adjustments and streamlining to maintain quality.

Another reason is that the mainstream revenue of search engines are from paid advertisements by customers, this reason would alone suffice for the constant changes to create obstacles for those who optimizes to list high in the organic searches.

Hence, to be topping the charts on the organic listings for their clients, SEO consultants are expected to stay abreast of such changes. However this doesn't mean that SEO strategies and tactics are to be changed everyday or fortnightly, though tweaking of details will be apparent due to the changes. We believe that the current structure of the strategy or tactic by the SEO consultants will still be the deciding point in the long run.

That being said, we at Savant Consultants still advise that better on-page optimization such as a more optimized page layout and structure, relevant copywriting, etc. to be the crux of SEO so as to achieve better results and most importantly better sustainability. Combined with off-page optimization, this presents a formidable SEO campaign that your competitors cannot keep up with.

How do we determine if SEO is making a difference?

A website ranked in the top page does not necessarily relate to higher conversion rates or increased number of potential prospects.

As mentioned previously, SEO is about listing your company's website in the top pages for RELEVANT keywords/key phrases search results that your prospects actually searched for. This requires in-depth research, analysis, monitoring and tweaking from time to time to achieve proper optimization and goals.

This being said, how do we measure results?

SEO results will be impossible to gauge without the analysis of web metrics of the optimized site before and after optimization. The Web Metrics will provide data for a quantifiable analysis with a myriad of indicators so as to understand your web traffic and understand its impact on ROI (Return on Investment).

These metrics reveals information each and every corporate needs in order to get a true picture of the site's impact and at the same time stay competitive. This analysis can drill down to details or events hindering conversions show if the surfing experience has been a good one to encourage return visits and engagement and even show if visitors are "bouncing" off the website after viewing a particular page or just after visiting one page.

Why Savant Consultants?

With our carefully structured strategies and tactics, we promise results through quality services and professionalism.

Quality Service

Savant Consultants being a Six Sigma orientated company, apply the methodologies of Six Sigma to the design and operation of management systems and business processes which enable employees to deliver the greatest value to customers.

We believe in improving customer's value and ROI through the quality of services that we provide. Savant Consultants adopts Six Sigma performance improvement models in our operations hence delivering quality and innovative results to our customers which we pride ourselves in.

Six Sigma focuses on customer requirements, error prevention, cycle time reduction and cost savings. Thus, the benefits from Six Sigma go straight to the bottom line of our clients achieving quality results from our implementations.

Savant's SEO Approach



Savant Consultants developed our SEO approach in relation to our performance improvement model adopted from Six Sigma – DMAI²C & DMADV

D = Define goals of the Search Engine Optimization

M = Measure Client Website's current standing with web metrics

A = Analyze the existing metrics and keywords to identify ways to eliminate the gap between current performance and goals

I = Innovative Strategic Planning aligned with goal of SEO

I = Implementation & Improvement of system

C = Control & Maintenance of Search Engine Rankings

Professionalism & Experience

The staff at Savant Consultants are highly proficient and experts in the field of Internet Marketing. Having went through rigorous professional training and numerous projects, our SEO and PPC teams never failed to meet up to our clients' expectations.

Contact Details



Savant Consultants LLP
40C Hongkong Street S059679
Tel : +65 6536 2056
Fax : +65 6536 1241
Email : enquiries@savantconsultants.com