

Introduction

This is a presentation given to the Wirral Branch of the Federation of Small Businesses on 14th November 2006. I was invited to talk for 10 minutes so the presentation covers only the basic aspects of promoting your web site. For a more detailed consultation please ring 0151 609 1397. For more information on who we are and what we do please visit <http://www.jkdesignservices.co.uk>

Promoting Your Web Site

I'm here to give you a **brief insight** into promoting your website and the **black art** of Search Engine Optimisation. What I'm going to talk about is not the b-all and end-all, I want to get you thinking about how effective your web presence is.

Having a website for your business is very important, promoting it effectively is **crucial** to its success.

So where do you **start**? One of the first decisions to make is to choose a **good domain name**, your web address is far more **memorable** than your phone number. A well chosen domain name will greatly **benefit** promotion of your web site while a poorly chosen one may be detrimental.

You should **consider** how well your brand is known, how well known is your product or service. You will need to answer the question - should I choose a domain name based on **what I do or who I am**? For example **B&Q** domain name is diy.com

You have to choose **which suffix** to register your domain name with, ask yourself what market are you aiming for? **80%** of the **UK** market will prefer a **.uk** suffix while Americans won't recognise anything except **.com**. You must know your audience but be aware that you may need to register both **.co.uk** and **.com** in order to protect your branding! You can buy a domain name from £5 per year but do remember to renew it!

So you've got your domain name and have a completed web site already. Whether you choose to have a **brochure** style site to promote your services or an **e-commerce** site to sell your products directly on-line, **promoting** it well is the key to its success.

There are ways to promote the site both **on-line and off-line**. Simple off-line promotion should include the obvious, ensuring that all paperwork leaving your office has your web address on it, from business cards and letterheads to brochures and compliment slips.

If you have **vehicles** then make sure they feature the web address, from a single line of vinyl lettering to full vehicle graphics you can make sure your web address is getting seen every day.

But there are many ways of promoting your web site **on-line**. Have you checked if your site is listed with appropriate **directories**? Either paid or free? Are there plenty of **links** to your web site from associated sites? Have you investigated **Pay-per-click** advertising? This is where you pay to have a listing, for example on the right hand side of google, and you pay an **agreed price** each time somebody **clicks** on that link. You can set the maximum budget you want to pay

The main way most people envisage promoting their site on-line is through **natural rankings** in search engines. Getting a good ranking on **Google** is by far the most **difficult** while **MSN** is quite **easy**. You should aim to be listed on all the major search engines.

Being on the first **3 pages** of any search engine means your site has a chance of being viewed, outside these first 3 pages then you're just hoping. This is where Search Engine Optimisation comes into play. Often referred to as SEO it is about getting your web site to as high a placement within the search engines as possible.

There are, in my opinion, 8 key elements to successful SEO.

1. **A well structured Site** – properly structured code means that Search Engine Spiders can quickly find the relevant parts of your site that they require. Does your web site make it easy for Spiders to find your Site Title? Are your keywords reflected in your page contents? Does your content use your chosen keywords near the beginning of the page?
2. **Quality Content** – good quality content benefits not only your human visitors but also your spider visitors. Well written, well laid out content means that visiting your site will be a pleasant experience for both human and spider alike. Is your site content easy to read? Does it flow logically? Does it contain the relevant information?
3. **Useful Tools and Resources** – give people a reason to visit the site again. Giving away something useful gives somebody a reason to recommend you to a friend
4. **Blogs** – Blog is short for weblog. A weblog is a journal (or newsletter) that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. It gives your site fresh new content quickly and easily, again giving your visitors a reason to come back.
5. **Press Releases and Articles** – encourage other people to link to your site, either directly or indirectly through a footer on a Press Release or Article. Lots of people are looking to enhance the content of their own sites by including articles written by others. Writing a knowledgeable article about your industry can only win you brownie points!
6. **Directory Listing** – getting good quality links from relevant directories or from the relevant topic of a general directory gives you simple, quick and easy inbound links. The Human edited directory DMOZ is a must to be well ranked by Google and others like AOL. Which brings me to:
7. **Links** – inbound links are essential to the success of any SEO campaign. These work two fold, by bringing targeted traffic to your site and by engendering trust in these visitors. They have come to your site from a site they already trust. And also the search Engines like lots of links in – they get a sense of relevance.
8. **Sensible choice of key phrase** – is your site optimised to the most appropriate key phrase? Is that key phrase searched on regularly? It is no good ranking at the top of google for a phrase nobody searches on. Choose your phrase carefully, check it is being searched on and that the amount of competition for that phrase is reasonable. Using the key phrase 'photographer' is far too general, but 'photographer Wirral' has almost no searches, 'Wedding Wirral' has 95 searches per day – so if you offer wedding photography in Wirral this might be a more appropriate choice.

Search engine optimisation is an **on going** process, the Search Engines themselves **change the rules**, more content is added each minute and rankings change frequently. You can be number 1 today and number 30 tomorrow. You need to at least monitor how well you are doing monthly.

Tonight's short presentation isn't enough time to cover all the aspects of SEO. If you'd like to learn more then please contact me. And remember – the web isn't just for spiders!

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