

Getting Better Search Results

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What do search engine results show?

Whenever you do a search you will see two kinds of results. Some will have the word “ad” and others will not have this designation. “Ads” are what you would guess; these are paid placements. Generally, at least four will appear at the top of the first page. On high traffic searches, you will see two more at the bottom and one at the top of subsequent pages.

Additionally, you may see additional ads in the margins.

The only way to appear in these areas is to pay the search company. The other listings are referred to as “organic”. They are based on a formula used by the search company. What these search engines do is try to determine two things, how popular the site is and does the site appear to be a legitimate site or are things being done to make the site appear more popular than it is or to have different content than what the site is about.

So how do I rank higher in search engines?

After a new website is created for a business or nonprofit the next thing the organization needs to do is help the website to be more visible in searches. There are two things that drive visibility:

1. Popularity. Nothing beats popularity. If you have a small business that sells clothes it will be virtually impossible to beat Amazon.com due to the massive traffic that Amazon gets. However, there are things that you can do to increase your competitiveness to other similar businesses
 - Backlinks – There are more details in the article link in the next section, but getting vendors in your field to your site is important. For example, if

The screenshot shows a Google search for "women's apparel". At the top, it says "About 66,100,000 results (1.06 seconds)". Below this is a "Sponsored" section with five product listings from Venus, Soft Surroundings, and Boston Proper. A red arrow points to the "About 66,100,000 results" text with a green box labeled "Total Number of sites matching search parameters". Below the sponsored section is a "Women's Clothing by VENUS® - Work Clothing & More - venus.com" listing. A red arrow points to this listing with a green box labeled "Paid Ads or Placements". Below that is a map showing locations for dressbarn, JCPenney, and Christopher & Banks. A red arrow points to the map area with a green box labeled "Organic (Free) Placements". At the bottom, there are more organic listings for Neiman Marcus and Macy's.

www.nehemiahcommunications.com

Nehemiah Communications is a company that specializes in growing nonprofit organizations and small businesses by providing customized communications and operational services.

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you own a home painting business, register with Angie's list and Home Advisor. These links are not only fantastic for SEO purposes, but you may get business from their site as well. So for whatever industry you are in, register with industry portals

- Adwords/online marketing – If you have a new site or in a dense market you need to do online marketing. If you do a search on terms that you think are important. Once you run the search, directly below the menu bar you will see a number after the "About" which gives you the number of search results that meet your criteria. If this number is over 100,000K, you are in a dense market that will require running an online marketing campaign if you want to improve your results. The more exotic the search terms/content the better the search opportunities as this will reduce the number of results.

2. Backend (What your web designer should do and this is what Nehemiah Communications has done for you.)

- Registered Sitemaps with Google/Bing – Not included in the above article to create a sitemap which makes it easier for search engines to understand the structure and content of your site.
- Meta tags and descriptions. In the early days of the web, sites lived and died by their meta tags and meta description (a short description of the website). They still have a role to play, but modern search engines pay less attention to them and read the content of the entire site.
- We previously did a white paper on SEO (search engine optimization) which has additional information which you can find at:
<https://nehemiahcommunications.com/images/resourcedocuments/Nehemiah-RE-Three-Quick-SEO-Tips.pdf>

Things you need to do to increase visibility after you have a correctly formatted website:

- Register with industry portals. These can be vendors, associations or frankly anything directly related to your work.
- Make sure your business is registered with Google and Bing, especially in their map programs.
- Do an online campaign with words that you want to rank highly in searches. Restrict the radius as much as possible. The more specialized the search terms you want to rank highly in, the less of a budget you will need.
- Be active on social media and link back to your website. I do not have time to be active in all social media, but I have picked three and try to post every two to four weeks with links back to my website.
- Have special content that may be specific to your area. Going back to our painter's example, if there is a large subdivision in your area and you do a project in that area, get pictures on your website and tag them with the name of that subdivision. You can then make mention of the project and use the pictures in social media (with a link back to your site).

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- Increase content including pictures. Adding more content both words and pictures that reinforce key search terms is helpful, but do not try to fool the search engines. They have specific methods for detecting websites that randomly repeat terms or hide keywords (usually using white font). If the search engine thinks your site is fraud they will dump your site in search results.
- Make sure to register all URL's at least three to five years out. This is a lower search parameter, but interviews have indicated that search engines know this information and assume that a business that only registers its URLs for short periods of time may not be legitimate.