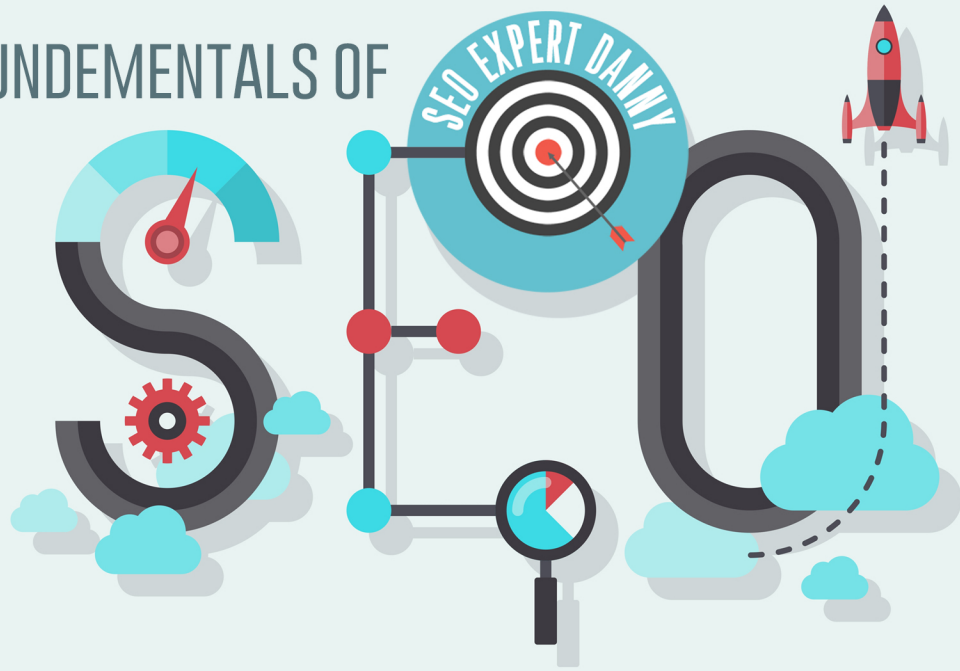


THE FUNDAMENTALS OF



Introduction

You hear SEO all the time. But do you actually understand it?

How can your site rank higher in the search engines? Although for some, SEO sounded like it's a voodoo magic. The reality is that it isn't a rocket science. Even so, you can still learn its fundamentals in a few minutes but it takes time to master its subtle nuances.

When marketers think of SEO, they have the mistake of considering it as just a source of free traffic. Although it's true that free traffic is the end result of your SEO efforts, it's not how it exactly works.

The real goal of it is to help people in finding your site. To achieve it, you have to match your content on your site to what your target market is trying to find. For example, if you're selling a bunch of tea on your website, you may use your blog to talk about the different ways to drink this tea and other things related to it. When you target the right keywords and concentrate on those keywords in publishing great content, sooner or later, your site will have front page rankings for those keywords.

But is this really your goal?

The people who visit your site may not likely to buy the tea you're selling but they're just interested in just knowing it. Your site will receive lots of traffic but none of them will convert. The reason for this is that your visitors have different goals than yours. That said, you should make sure that your goals must match your visitors' goals.

This is how you want SEO to work for you.

Optimizing the search engines is about figuring out what you truly want for your website and maximizing the keywords that will bring in more visitors who always want the same things as yours. So, how should you start your SEO effort?



Keyword Research

Researching for the right keywords to use is a little tedious. However, it's an essential part of getting the right keywords.

When conducting a keyword research, you must cover those keyword phrases with high search volume and low competition. This will ensure your chances of ranking higher in search engines. But make sure that your keywords are relevant to your site.

Google Keyword Tool

It's the most popular tool to assist you in finding the right keywords. This is Google's keyword tool that can provide you results based on the actual Google searches. Then, if you have Adwords account, you can use it to give you a list of keyword ideas that are customized to the site on the account.

Long-Tail Keywords

They're keywords that can send you more traffic than when you use short-tail keywords. One great example is the word "DVD." Are you looking for individual DVD titles. The individual titles are long-tail keywords that can make your keyword volume larger than any keyword.

Long-tail keywords are also considered as unpopular keywords. They should make up the majority of your traffic. Thus, when you research for the right keywords to use, make sure that you focus on words that don't get tons of traffic. Instead, consider taking the less popular ones and include them in your overall strategy.

When finding long-tail keywords, you should come up with a list of keywords that you could use within your site and keep them all in one spreadsheet. Having a list will help you write about the best topics that you can discuss and avoid choosing things without planning.

Now, you can start listing more meta topics that are related to your website. These topics or keywords should be longer so you can have more in-depth topics to write. Doing it this way will likely give your site higher SEO value.

It's one of the reasons you must sell products that you're already passionate about so you can easily come up with keywords and topics.



Crafting Content

Creating content for your website can be tricky as each search engine has its own webmaster guidelines.

For Google, it recommends making your pages designed specifically for users and not just for search engines. You must avoid presenting different content to search engines than what you display to your users. It's a practice known as cloaking, which is condemned by Google.

Then, make sure that your site has a clear hierarchy and text links. Each page of your site must be reachable using one static text link. Other recommendations will include information-rich site and creating pages with clear content. It recommends the use of the "title" element and ALT attributes for accurate description.

Bing, Yahoo, and other search engines have almost the same webmaster guidelines in creating content.

Now, with the use of your list that you made in Chapter 1, you can pick up to 10 topics that you can write for one month.

The Bots

To crawl your site, search engines utilize bots. They read your site and decide which keywords each page of your site should rank for. You can influence the bots' decisions by optimizing your content for certain keywords. This is one of the reasons you should pick the right keywords for your website.

Unfortunately, there are some contents of your site that bots can't read. For example, they can't watch videos or listen to audio. But you can let them understand and rank your pages by entering appropriate keywords.

The SEO Value

When choosing which topics to use for the first month, you should compare the SEO value of the keywords you've researched. By comparing their SEO value, you're actually assessing the number of visitors you could potentially obtain from the search engines.

What you'll do is use Google's Keyword Planner. Then, take the keyword phrase that you came up with and start knowing its search volume data. Sometimes, you'll need to insert some variations into the keyword until you can find words with a high volume traffic.

While you use the Keyword Planner, you're also creating more ideas or keywords that you can use for your website's content. For instance, if you're looking for a keyword for "weight loss teas," you'll notice that there are plenty of searches for weight loss in specific types of tea.

To know which top keywords or topics to include, you should disqualify keywords with tough competition. The Keyword Planner of Google will give you ideas of which keywords are so competitive and don't use them as you'll never rank higher with those keywords.

The keyword volume that you see when you use the Planner isn't an absolute. Rather, it's only an indicator. This means that the monthly keyword volume can be higher or lower than the actual visitors per month. In addition to Google Keyword Planner, you may also use MozToolbar, a Chrome and Firefox extension. This tool will give you ideas on how highly your pages will rank.

A few of your articles will receive significantly more traffic than others. When you choose topics, pick those that could have massive chances of getting popular.

Once you've chosen the topics you will discuss on your site, make a schedule for how often you will publish. It's highly recommended that you opt to post at least two articles per week. Whatever schedule you make, you have to stick to it. You must add new content regularly, even if you publish content that doesn't age.

Keywords and Other Elements

When crafting your content, make sure that you pay attention to the headlines or titles of your content. Eye-catching titles will raise your reader's interest.

The quality of your content must always be high. Search engines are getting smarter. They know whether or not your content is unique or with quality.

But having a quality content doesn't only prompt search engines to rank your site higher for certain keywords. Your users, too, will visit your website because your content can't be easily found anywhere else. Then, don't forget to use the right keywords that will help bring visitors to your site. To ensure that they will convert to customers, you must use relevant keywords. It's also necessary that you link to other quality websites to compliment what your content is all about. This will also encourage other sites within your niche to link to your website.

Warning

All site owners want their websites to be crawled and ranked higher for certain keywords. But you must heed to search engines' webmaster guidelines, i.e. not to write solely for their bots. You may ask why. But writing for search engines and not for your visitors will make your content boring. As a result, they won't convert into customers.

This is why Google emphasized on making content for the users first before optimizing it for search engine bots without having to sacrifice your content's persuasiveness.

It's also important to remember not to include duplicate content on your site or publish someone else's content. Google and other search engines will penalize your site for doing it.

Optimize the Code

The most important aspect of SEO is to make your site easy for users and the search engine bots in understanding what your website is all about. Despite the fact that search engines have been advanced and smarter, they have limitations. One of them is that they can't read and understand certain elements of your page the same way a human can.



This is where SEO comes in. It helps the search engine in figuring out what every page is about and how the content is useful for others. By adding clues to the bots and proper structure to your content, search engines can understand your content.

When you know the abilities and limitations of the search engines, your website can be properly understood by the search engine and your content will not be invisible for them.

To help the bots in understanding your site's content, there are several tags that you must pay attention to.

Title tags

It's crucial that you insert the main keyword and its variations in the title tag of your page. But don't try to trick the bots by optimizing the many pages of your website for the same keyword.

You must always write your title tag in a natural way. This means that it must be found at the start but include some variations at the end.

Meta Descriptions

They're not as important as they were before. But they can still provide an important role for your on-page optimization as they're the first thing that your potential customers will see. So, it's still necessary that you get them right.

Meta descriptions are essentially a sales pitch for what the page is all about. But, just like the title tags, never over optimize them. You must always think about what works for your users.

Heading Tags

H1 is an important heading tag that your content must have. It's where your main keyword must be. You can split the rest of your content with other H tags in ascending order. But you must only use one H1 tag in your page.

The Structure

It refers to your site structure. How you link your web pages together will create a significant effect on your site's rankings. Thus, you must ensure that you strategically use links within your content as they carry more weight than those links found on your sidebar or footer.

You should also limit the number of links on every page to less than 100 links. Now, for outgoing links that aren't relevant to your site with no quality content, you should add the no-follow syntax.

```
<a href="http://seoexpertdanny.com" rel="nofollow">No Quality Content</a>
```

Unfortunately, page rank sculpting doesn't work like it used to be. To block those pages with no relevance, you should exclude it in your robots.txt file.

How about the URL structure?

Your overall site structure is necessary but so is your URL. Oftentimes, webmaster and marketers overlooked this part. Thus, it's crucial that your URL's structure is as organized as possible so that search engines will have an easier time in crawling your website.

If your URL structure is messy, the search engines will have a hard time crawling and indexing your site. As a result, your site will not rank higher in search engines. Or worse, it will never rank.

When fixing your site's URL structure, make sure that it doesn't have extraneous characters, like \$, %, ! and several others. Compared with longer URLs, shorter ones rank better. So, think about this carefully.

The URL of your site must only use numbers and letters. It should never use underscores as search engines prefer dashes. Then, as regards to sub-domains, they rank better than when you use sub directories. However, it would still depend on what your goal is and how you're going to use it.

What are Alt Tags?

They're essential for search engine robots in properly indexing the images of your website. Alt tags are added to every image on your site as they include a brief description of that image. If your image is an infographic that includes SEO tricks, you should tell the search engine through the alt tag that the image is an infographic about SEO tricks.

Apart from alt tags, it's also vital that the image names are relevant to the image. Thus, the infographic should be infographicseotricks.jpg, rather than just using image1.jpg.

Links



The SEO before was very easy to manipulate, especially the links. A decade ago, search engines had a way to personalize the search results based on your friends and your location. The more sites linking to your website, the better it was.

But that was before.

Nowadays, search engines have become smarter and more sophisticated. If the links aren't relevant to your niche, they won't affect your website's ranking. Then, if the sites linking to your websites are of no value, they can do more harm than good to your site.

However, when a trusted website links to your site, it tells Google that your website is a good company based on that link. Now, if several trusted websites link to your website, Google will have an idea that your site is a quality, trustworthy website.

For that reason, marketers spent a lot of time on getting links in a process known as link building. It's easy for website owners to research and create content but it's difficult to persuade thousands of websites to link to your site.

You should consider link building as one of your priorities. But make sure that your effort is worth it. You must only target websites that are trustworthy and non-spammy. By getting links from high-quality websites that are related to your niche, the more authority your site will have on a certain keyword.

How to build better links?

Just because you earned a link from, say, forbes.com, doesn't mean that your site will rank higher. You must remember that links that are related to your site are better than getting links from non-relevant sites. This means that when you receive incoming links from a financial website when your niche is of health, then the links may mean nothing to search engines.

It's also important to remember that the links within your content are more effective in ranking higher than the links found in your site's sidebar or footer. Furthermore, anchor text plays an essential role in SEO's link building. If you want other related sites to link to your website, you should encourage the owners to use an anchor text with the keyword phrase you're targeting to. For example, if your site's main keyword is "SEO tips and tricks," ensure that the anchor text of the link has to be that phrase.



Links

What are the things you must avoid when building links?

As mentioned earlier, you should never get links from irrelevant or spammy websites. It's also essential that you avoid site wide links.

Although anchor text is useful, you should not overdo it. Getting all of your links rich in anchor text can only hurt your website's ranking.

Reciprocal links are no longer effective with the current algorithm of the major search engines. Then, it's also not a good idea to buy text links. When you get caught, your site will be banned from Google and other search engines.

How to increase your link count from authority, high-quality websites?

One of the first things you must do is to gather links from social media. You're not only driving tons of traffic from them but you're also increasing your site's visibility, thereby, improving your site's chances of getting linked to.

When you generate high traffic from social media, it can be a high level of social proof, which Google and other search engines like.

In addition to social media, it's also ideal that you submit your site to directories that compliment your content. Yahoo! Directory, DMOZ, and Best of the Web are just three of the directories that you must consider submitting your site to.

To rank better for a certain keyword you're targeting to, it's best that you get links from the top 100 search results for that keyword. It's true that some of them are your competitors, so they'll never link to your site. However, some of them aren't a competition. Thus, you should consider emailing their webmasters asking them to link back to your website and you'll do the same.

You may also get links from the links of your competition. Gather those links and write them an email. Encourage them to link to your website and tell them the benefits of doing so than when they do to your competition. Unfortunately, only a few of those websites that you'll email will respond and add your link to their sites. Nevertheless, it's a good way to get a link juice.

Multi-Device Friendly

Making your site be multi-device friendly means that you make it mobile-friendly. Google's latest algorithm emphasized on providing users with better mobile-friendly experience. With the increasing popularity of smartphones, more and more users are using their mobile devices in accessing websites. Your site's focal point is no longer about how your site performs on either laptop or desktop but it also tackles how it performs using a mobile device.

With these changes, the challenges that Internet marketers and SEO experts face have become more complex that they were before.



No matter how tough the changes are, you'll have no choice but to cope with them. Thus, it's always best to choose a responsive design for your website. This type of design will automatically resize your site based on your user's device.

Better performance is another advantage of a mobile-friendly website. Websites that aren't optimized for mobile devices can take a minute or so to load. This may result in your visitors leaving your site with unhappy experience.

Making your website mobile-friendly will also improve your SEO efforts. If your website isn't multi-device friendly, you may make the mistake of creating multiple versions of your site to fit different screen sizes. But doing so will only result in duplicate content. And, as we all know, Google and other search engines penalize sites with duplicate content.

For your SEO to come to fruition, you should make your site work on all screens and go for responsive websites.

Mobile-Friendly or Mobile App

When it comes to deciding whether to have a mobile-friendly site or build a mobile app, your choice will still depend on your end goals. If your goal is to develop an interactive game, then a native app is going to be your better option. Now, if your goal is to offer your audience a mobile-friendly content, then a multi-device friendly website is the way to go.

However, in some cases, you may decide that you need both. Then again, it's safe to say that you must have a mobile website first before you build a native app. Thus, a mobile website must be considered first when developing your web presence. An app can be useful for a specific purpose that you can't accomplish through a web browser. For example, a mobile app is a better option if you want a more interactive engagement with your users or you wish to have an application that must work more like a computer program.

Page Speed



Page speed impacts your SEO efforts. In 2010, Google announced that a page speed of a website would be considered as one of the factors in determining its search ranking. But the exact meaning of a site speed is still open to speculation. Matt Cutts of Google announced that mobile sites that are slow-performing would soon be penalized in their search rankings.

It's clear that Google emphasizes on providing users the best performance when visiting a site. That is, if your site is poor-performing, it would result in a poor user-experience. Thus, for Google, it deserves less promotion in its search results.

Content Relevancy

Even though Google has announced that page speed is a determining factor, the search engine has been intentionally unclear about the particular aspect of a page speed that truly impacts search ranking.

It's clear that Google emphasizes on providing users the best performance when visiting a site. That is, if your site is poor-performing, it would result in a poor user-experience. Thus, for Google, it deserves less promotion in its search results.

Content Relevancy

Even though Google has announced that page speed is a determining factor, the search engine has been intentionally unclear about the particular aspect of a page speed that truly impacts search ranking.

But Google has been quite clear that content relevancy remains to be the king. Thus, even if it said that page speed affects search ranking, no one can prove a causality relationship because other factors that can't be measured are still at play.

Nevertheless, we can make an assumption that any type of factors that may influence search ranking is still worthy of consideration. Thus, as a website owner, you must explore ways to improve your site's page speed.

To measure your site's speed, you may use [Google's PageSpeed Insights](#).

Conclusion

If you implement our advice in this eBook, you'll soon see a traffic surge from search engines. But be patient. It takes time before you see significant results. Remember that search engines have to update their records and they have billions of websites to crawl.

It's also worth noting that it takes time for you to figure out what really works for your site. What works for your friend's site might not work for your site. But you must never do anything shady just to improve your site's rankings quickly. You'll get caught and your site will be punished. It's never worth it.

Your better approach is to follow our advice, know what your target market is looking for, create a site that provides things that your audience wants, and optimize your site for search engines so your target market will find you. This is what search engines want you to do.

By sticking to the points we've mentioned in this eBook, your effort will soon pay off.

