



Strategic Marketing Services
Marketing Strategy Planning ■
Offline Promotion ■
Search Engine Optimization ■
Internet Advertising ■
Website Design & Maintenance ■

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SEO Services FAQ

SEO Services by Steve Ebner Marketing, Inc.

What exactly is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

What's the difference between organic search engine rankings & sponsored listings on a search results page?

Why SEO is critical to any Internet marketing program?

What makes Steve Ebner Marketing's SEO services unique?

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How long after SEO services begin will it take to see a difference in rankings?

How much will the SEO services cost?

Q: What exactly is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

Steve Ebner: "SEO is the multi-dimensional process of boosting a website's ranking in Google, Yahoo, and other search engines for a particular "search term" (e.g. keyword). The aim is to rank high for target keywords that will attract the right group of website visitors aligned with a company's business goals. This involves identifying the right keywords, properly configuring website content, validating a website's popularity and keyword relevance, and making specific website content accessible to search engines."

Q: What's the difference between organic search engine rankings & sponsored listings on a search results page?

Steve Ebner: "The first thing to know is that both are effective in generating website traffic, and both benefit from Search Engine Optimization. The myth is that organic rankings are free unlike pay-per-click ads. Since top organic rankings typically require some extent of SEO services consulting, both cost money and have their own valid roles in a marketing budget."

When a user types in a keyword (e.g. "denver seo services consulting") into a search engine, the result page includes both organic results and "sponsored listings". Typically, users will click on the organic search results more frequently than a sponsored listing. However, since advertisers don't pay anything unless a user clicks on their ad and visits their website, both can be effective. The sponsored listings are placed directly by an advertiser for a specific keyword. Sponsored listings are ranked depending on the advertiser's website's relevancy to the searched keyword and other factors. Advertiser websites enhanced through Search Engine

Optimization will boost the success of pay-per-click advertising campaigns. Please visit our website section on PPC marketing management to learn more about paid advertising through the search engines.

Organic listings are compiled by the particular search engine's (e.g. Google, Yahoo) own proprietary indexing methods. The ranking for a particular keyword is determined by a complex and frequently-changing algorithm defined by the search engine. The algorithm's objective is to accurately rank websites by their relevancy and popularity to a particular keyword. Search Engine Optimization aims to help search engines accurately index and rank an organization's website.

The figure below is an example of the positioning of organic rankings on Google's results page."



Q: Why is SEO critical to any Internet marketing program?

Steve Ebner: "There is more and more websites vying for the top rankings of virtually any keyword. This growing amount of competition means that search engines like Google are increasingly challenged with the task of matching website content with particular keywords. Businesses can no longer sit back and hope for the search engines to accurately interpret the content on its webpages. Instead, companies must take steps to help search engines properly index their website."

Q: What makes Steve Ebner Marketing's SEO services unique?

Steve Ebner: "I tend to view SEO services from a unique perspective compared to many SEO consultants in Denver and across the country. First of all, Steve Ebner Marketing does not exclusively perform SEO services or web design work. My 18-year business background is deeply rooted in building corporate marketing strategies, which includes a ton of offline and integrated campaigns. I have also earned my M.B.A. in Market Strategy with Summa cum laude honors. I'm not simply a web developer that transitioned to SEO work. More accurately, I'm a marketing strategist that now specializes in SEO and Internet marketing. This empowers me to understand how best to leverage Internet marketing within a company's broader corporate business strategy."

Q: What are “black hat” SEO tactics?

Steve Ebner: “Steve Ebner Marketing adheres to a ‘white hat’ code of SEO ethics. This means we will not recommend or implement search engine optimization tactics that are meant to ‘fool’ the indexing and ranking methods of search engines. These include cloaking, link farm campaigns, keyword stuffing, duplicate page structures, excessive cross-linking, and immediate redirects. While these may produce favorable short-term results, they are typically uncovered and corrected by search engines within a few months. More significantly, these fraudulent/borderline practices risk your business from being banned completely from Google and other directories. The biggest bang for your buck will be implementing legitimate SEO strategies aimed at results that will endure over time.”

Q: Can you highlight the steps (or SEO checklist) Steve Ebner Marketing uses for SEO campaigns?

Steve Ebner: “The following checklist runs through the various steps of a full SEO campaign. The natural sequence is to gather data, analyze information, set goals, develop strategy, implement strategy, measure results, and then make ongoing adjustments. Since every company will have unique SEO needs, Steve Ebner Marketing will develop a customized SEO proposal prior to initiating work.

Here’s an overview of our Search Engine Optimization (SEO) checklist:

1. Identify Role of Website

Too often, SEO campaigns kick into high gear without understanding how a company’s website is being used to fulfill the needs of stakeholder groups, such as prospective & existing customers, partners, vendors, employees, and/or investors. This analysis is critical for many reasons. Most significantly, it will be the foundation for prioritizing and defining target keywords and website conversion goals.

2. Analysis & Benchmarking of Current Website Traffic

It’s recommended for clients to have a website analytics application that enables a comprehensive dive into a website’s traffic patterns. We’ll need to understand what’s working and the areas of greatest need in relation to SEO and website conversion goals. A great free web-based analytics application is available from Google...Steve Ebner Marketing can even setup and configure this as part of your SEO program.

3. Competitor Website(s) Traffic, Target Keyword, & Inbound Link Analysis

Prior to selecting your primary target keywords, it’s helpful understand what keywords your competitors are targeting. What are the big channels they use to drive website traffic? How many monthly visitors come to their website? What websites are linking to their website? Are your competitors running pay-per-click ads on Google? This information can help your business discover a keyword niche, inbound linking prospects, counter a competitor campaign, avoid an expensive keyword bidding war, or perhaps discover a reportable “black hat” maneuver used by your competitor.

4. Identify Website Traffic & Conversion Goals

This is where all that research and analysis starts to pay off. The baseline for website traffic, usage & navigation patterns, eCommerce storefront sales, website ad revenue, website contact form

submissions, and other website metrics have been established. Now it's time to set some quantifiable goals for the website. These goals will be the foundation for the SEO campaign. All SEO tactics will be implemented to achieve these goals.

5. Target SEO Keyword Analysis & Identification

With specific goals in hand, it's now time to select a handful of target SEO keywords. Too often, businesses will try to optimize a website for 25 different keywords, or simply choose a keyword because it gets a ton of search engine queries. Steve Ebner Marketing will work with your management team to identify the right SEO keywords, aligned with your target audience demographic, existing & planned website content, your marketing budget, and other internal & external market factors.

6. Search Engine Rank Benchmarking

We will research and set the baseline for current target keyword rankings in Google, Yahoo, and a host of other key directories. If we're lucky, there will be one or two within the top 20...but most companies hire an SEO consultant because their website is not even indexed for a particular keyword. No worries, this is where the fun stuff starts.

7. Website Content Needs Assessment

This is the 'meat & potatoes' of any SEO campaign. We'll thoroughly review your website page content, navigational structure, and coded scripts. This means examining and optimizing things like metatags, keyword density, page layout, internal linking structure, and other elements. Most likely, there will be some need to add new pages or redesign older pages to better align with your SEO goals.

8. Server Configuration & SEO Files

We want to make it easy for the search engines to access and index your website content. The search engine send out automated cyberspace 'robots' to surf the Internet and catalog websites. Each search engine (or at least the handful of big guys) maintains a database of website content and uses proprietary algorithms to spit out ranked results to a user's keyword search. There are a few files that Steve Ebner Marketing will create and add to your website server. These files will help the robots access all your webpages or tell them which ones not to index. These are like visitor maps for the robots.

9. Inbound Linking Tactics

Another critical piece of the SEO puzzle is getting other websites to validate the quality and significance of your website content related to a target keyword. This doesn't mean getting the most links to your website. Instead, it means getting as many 'quality' and 'keyword relevant' links to your website. Do not get talked into paying a service to register your website to 10,000 search engines. There are only a handful of broad-based U.S. directories that should be targeted, while the rest are either duplicate directories or link farms.

Here is just a sampling of tactical categories for SEO linking campaigns:

- a. Manual registration with key broad-based directories & search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo, DMOZ)
- b. Link-baiting content campaigns

- c. One-way link acquisition campaigns aimed at websites with relevant content (primary focus versus reciprocal links)
- d. Local online business listings
- e. Links on trade/industry websites
- f. Links on partner and vendor websites
- g. Social tagging and bookmarking campaigns
- h. Hosting campaign for RSS content feeds
- i. Article reprint campaigns
- j. Publicity and press release distribution campaigns
- k. Affiliate advertising program
- l. Offline link integration campaigns
- m. Reciprocal link campaigns (secondary focus)

10. Ongoing Measurement & Adjustment

SEO campaigns must continue to evolve. The search engines continually change their process for ranking websites. Internet marketing campaigns by competitor websites may impact your own rankings and marketing activities. SEO campaigns need a long-term focus to be successful. Therefore, website traffic analytics reports, keyword rankings, competitive analysis, and other regular measurement data should be used to make ongoing adjustments to your SEO campaign.”

Q: How does SEO differ from Search Engine Marketing?

Steve Ebner: “Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, is a subset of Search Engine Marketing. And, both SEO and search engine marketing are subsets of Internet Marketing. SEO activities are pretty well outlined in this FAQ. Search engine marketing also includes advertising on search engine results pages as well as thousands of independent websites through one interface. These programs include Google AdWords, Yahoo Search Marketing, Microsoft AdCenter, and others. The most popular is pay-per-click marketing, but you can also purchase ad space by cost per impression (CPM) and other means. These search engine marketing programs enable advertisers to dictate who, where, when, and how users see the ads.

Like many industries, the Internet and Marketing worlds have their share of acronyms and jargon. I do my best to explain to clients what will be done, why it’s important, and how much it will cost...without all the jargon. Let me know if I can help explain something in more detail.”

Q: How long after the SEO campaign begins will it take to see a difference in rankings?

Steve Ebner: “Successful SEO campaigns take 9-12 months to see enduring results. Remember, it’s not just getting more visitors to your website. It’s getting more target visitors to your website, and efficiently converting those visitors. Some pieces of the SEO campaign will begin to produce tangible results within a few weeks, while others will need to evolve over many months.

Depending on your goals, Steve Ebner Marketing will work with you to get results within your timetable demands. For example, if you’re a startup launching a new website the search engines will be unlikely to give you a top ranking immediately. Search engines feel more confident with older websites that have new content. Therefore, it may be very effective to run a lot of search engine advertising (e.g. PPC marketing) and other Internet marketing simultaneous to the SEO campaign.

Again, successful SEO campaigns will require continual monitoring, analysis, and adjustments to remain viable. Therefore, your annual marketing budget should allocate some expenses for SEO work every month.”

Q: How much will the SEO services cost?

Steve Ebner: “The good news is SEO campaigns are scalable to available budgets. However, unless you have internal staff that can be dedicated at least part-time to regular SEO work, you should setup a monthly budget to outsource SEO work. Successful SEO campaigns will not be a one-time project. Instead, they require consistent monitoring, analysis, and adjustment. Steve Ebner Marketing can help you estimate these costs, which may include a mix of consultant hours, third-party service fees, and software fees.

The first step is to sit down with your management team, discuss your corporate business and marketing strategies, and make some initial assessments on the SEO work requirements. Then, Steve Ebner Marketing will develop a customized proposal for an SEO campaign. Typically, we’ll consolidate the work into two package levels; a ‘bare bones’ starter package, and a premium package that includes a deeper set of proven SEO tactics. Each will include an estimated range of consulting hours and a series of packaged service discounts. Prior to initiating SEO work, we’ll get client approval and sign-off. The actual work and client payments can be spread into monthly amounts to better accommodate Internet marketing budgets.”