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Ten Tips for Achieving Website Visibility

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Blink and you might miss something. The world of search engines is fast-paced and ever-changing. With innovations like Universal Search from Google, it's important to keep the latest developments in the evolution of search engines in sight. What can you do to promote your website? Optimize.

Here are some tips I've learned to help boost your website's chances of being discovered:

1. **Do some research.** Determine the keywords/phrases that your target audience(s) will search for to find you. This is the cornerstone of a successful search engine marketing program, and your strategy has to be reassessed frequently. First, think of that target audience. Use popularity, offerings and search behavior to narrow the list. Launch the program, track conversions, optimize and repeat.
2. **Advertise keywords.** Place keywords in either the subdirectory or file name of your URL (and not both) to help search ranking. One mention of the term in the URL is the best way to avoid search-engine spam triggers.
3. **Stay accessible.** Allow for multiple means of navigation to your website. This will give search engines quick access to your webpages. Interlinking – whether through a navigation menu, links within the content of the page or both – is especially effective when keywords are used in the links.
4. **Share your 411.** Don't forget to add a footer to your website. Including your company's contact information supports local searches. Also, some search engines look for a "privacy policy" link to qualify your site as trustworthy.
5. **Keep it simple.** Page copy is critical. Aim for at least 200-250 words per page, and be sure to use keywords throughout. Place high-priority keywords in the top third of the page. By crawling keyword-rich copy, engines understand how to classify the site (just don't overdo it!). Making copy too dense in any one keyword raises a spam flag to search engines and could get you blacklisted.
6. **Target searchers through meta tags.** Develop customized, keyword-rich meta data for each page of your site. Meta tags provide behind-the-scenes information about a webpage's HTML specifications and content. Keep titles to 63 characters (including spaces). Because some major search engines use descriptions when displaying search results, include a call to action that encourages searchers to visit your site.
7. **Stay safe.** Place a robots.txt file on your server to completely prevent engines from indexing your site, to stop certain areas of your site from being indexed or to issue individual indexing instructions to specific search engines. This simple text file can be created in Microsoft Notepad and saved to the root directory of your site.





8. **Create an XML site map.** Doing so informs the search engines about pages available for crawling. By placing one on your Web server, you provide search engines with the following information: what pages exist within the site, when the URL was last updated, how often the page changes and how important a specific page is in relation to others.
9. **Gravitate to Google.** Take advantage of a free opportunity to market your business locally with Google Maps. It allows you to create, display and edit your business listing, which includes a link to your site. Reach qualified prospects, and reward both loyal customers and new ones by offering coupons in your listing.
10. **Encourage incoming links to your site.** Generally, the more inbound links a webpage has, the more popular it is. Engines like popular pages. The most important thing to remember is that they like natural link structures, not artificial ones, so inbound anchor text should vary. Only link to reputable pages, and keep reciprocal links to a minimum. One tactic to encourage inbound links is to optimize your press releases and submit them to PR sites that feed search engine news sites.

To be worthy of high rankings in the eyes of search engines, ongoing optimization of keyword strategies and updates to various areas of your website are required. Don't be daunted. More resources exist today than ever before for developing a successful search engine optimization program. Take advantage of new technologies — you'll find yourself rewarded with increased visibility and website traffic.

