

Transforming Google's Evolution into Lead-Generating SEO.

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It's the verb that was once just a noun - "just Google it." It's the source for every search, every researched product, service, news, info, review, map, address, shopping, and price comparison. It's the best way your business can place themselves directly in front of the people looking for your services, but it has also become like an over-stocked store. Require your consumer to sift through Google's infinite layers of information and risk being entirely left out of the decision-making process altogether.

If you want to be found, you need to create the right content, that shows up for the right key phrases, at the right time. Implementing a smart Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy is the way to make this happen.

But you can't cheat SEO or use loopholes. Gone are the days of madly backlinking and using volume-based techniques to rank quickly and consistently. And don't even think about hiring an overseas company to manage it for you. Google will stay the path of rigorously defending the quality of its SERPs.

For marketers, website designers and entrepreneurs, only one course of action remains. Either educate yourself on the new rules of SEO or watch as your competitors devour your market share. Building a site that meets all the criteria doesn't happen overnight, but the long-term investment is worth it when considered with the many benefits.

The Evolution of Google and SEO Strategy

PANDA - FEBRUARY 2011

Google's Panda algorithm update reduced rankings for what they deemed low-quality websites. Sites with thin or duplicated content that added little value to readers began receiving lower rankings than sites with original and informative content.

Panda Takeaway:

RELEVANT KEYPHRASES: Locating the phrases that people are searching for will initiate your SEO efforts, but paid ads, promoted listings, and images leave only a limited space on the SERP for organic rankings. Google needs to be able to index and gauge the relevance of your content, and the most obvious step is to make sure key phrases surface in the right places. Page titles, headings, body copy, meta descriptions, and page URLs are weighed most heavily in determining the rank for a site page.

INFORMATIVE CONTENT: But remember, patching in the right key phrases (even in the right places) won't ultimately undermine your SERP competition. Will people be satisfied with what they discover when they search for your target phrase and find your content? Make sure the answer's yes by creating informative content.

PENGUIN - APRIL 2012

Google's Penguin algorithm reacted to webspam and lowered the rankings for websites that violated Google's Quality Guidelines, particularly websites engaging in link schemes, keyword stuffing, cloaking or "doorway" pages, or using copied content.

Penguin Takeaway:

QUANTITY OF LINKS: On a hypothetical level, Google regards the number of backlinks your content has received as if each one is a vote in a popular election: the more you have, the more credibility your content earns, and the greater its potential to deliver the high-quality content that visitors are searching for. (Fortunately, Google hasn't yet formally enacted an electoral college-like system, or nobody would have a clue what to expect from their SERPs.)

QUALITY OF LINKS: While quantity is vital, it's the quality of those links that inevitably impacts your content's mobility up (or down) in the search rankings for relevant informational key phrases. Honestly, you don't just need SEO to bring more links to your domain; you need it to attract links from pages that already earned the respect of Google rank-bots (i.e. RankBrain).

HUMMINGBIRD - SEPTEMBER 2013

Unlike the algorithm updates of Panda and Penguin, Hummingbird changed how Google processes each individual search, focusing not on a few keywords but on the meaning of an entire search query. It's all about providing a better user experience by providing more accurate search results.

Hummingbird Takeaway:

SEMANTIC SEO: Keyword research and key phrases are not irrelevant to an effective SEO strategy, but they are no longer even remotely enough to drive significant traffic to your site. Instead, work with terms that are semantically related (i.e. related in meaning) to your target key phrase.

BUILD OUT QUERY-DRIVEN CONTENT: Uncovering highly popular supporting phrases centrally relevant to your business should certainly be incorporated into your existing content. But choosing content topics based on these phrases means even more. Your content will be driven by user queries and will be semantically related to your original key phrase.

Questions to ask yourself before creating content:

- What general knowledge base can we share?
- What expertise can we give away?
- What questions do our prospects desire answers to?
- What are our prospect's fears and doubts?
- What can we teach our prospects about?
- How can we entertain in a way that doesn't disconnect from our brand?

Guide your content and generate ideas based on these questions. Your website should inform first and foremost about your products and services, deliver insights into your business, and establish credibility and expertise within your field.

MOBILE FRIENDLY ALGORITHM - APRIL 2015

The latest search algorithm update penalizes websites that are not mobile friendly and increases the rankings for those optimized for all devices. Avoiding software uncommon on mobile devices, using text readable without zooming, sizing content to the screen, and appropriately spacing links for accessible clicking are now best practice for the best possible user experience.

KEY TAKEAWAY: Build a mobile-friendly website. Choose a responsive design (as recommended by Google), dynamic serving or distinctly separate mobile site to compete on the SERPs.

Stay Fresh, Stay Relevant

Based on Enquisite search metrics quantifying the effectiveness of SEO vs. PPC, organic results were found to be 8.5 times more likely to be clicked on than paid search results. A competitive optimization strategy focuses on improving the user experience and delivering the most valuable search results. SEO never ends. It's always changing. It requires ongoing monitoring, testing and analysis to remain more relevant than the other website working to rank higher than you. Leverage your analytics to make informed decisions and create relevant content for strong SEO.

Is your SEO strategy making you money?

We can develop a solid strategy from the start, so you'll see leads and sales increase just by being found at the right time, in the right place in the search engines' results.