Lesson #13

"Search Engine Optimization for Client-Attracting Websites"

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Foreword

We're just past the half-way mark, and I hope you're learning a LOT. Every single week I attract a client or two using these very methods I'm teaching you. This is the real deal!

Some of the web site stuff we're talking about can be overwhelming. I'm trying to simplify as much as I can, but if you'd like some assistance applying any of this to your own website, just email me. I have a team who specializes in simple, easily updated websites.

Remember, most websites are not attracting any clients at all, so if you just improve a little bit, you'll be way ahead of your competitors.

To your abundant success!

Samantha

Introduction

Search Engine Optimization or SEO is simply helping your site get found by people looking for it in Google, Yahoo, etc. For this lesson I'm just going to say "Google," but the things we discuss will apply to all of the search engines.

There are some important vocabulary words to explore, and that's really the hardest part of this. Because they don't know the lingo, many people think SEO is too complicated to learn.

The truth is, once you can speak the language, you'll find there are some basic things that are easy to understand and apply that will attract perfect clients to your website at no additional cost to you except a little effort.

Let's get started.

Why SEO attracts perfect clients

When your perfect clients have a problem or a need, they go to Google to search for a solution. Sometimes they will type in the problem, such as "my husband is annoying" or "my dog eats poop." Other times they will seek a solution: "how to lose weight fast" or "snoring cures."

What they type into the search engine are called keywords or keyword phrases. It's Google's job to find web pages that are the best match for these keywords.

Your perfect client has a need or problem that YOU can solve. By studying their needs deeply, you can learn what they would type if they were to look for you in Google. You can help them find you by using that same keyword or keyword phrase in your website.

That's how Google helps you and your perfect clients find each other.

How to use SEO to attract perfect clients to your website

Last time I explained that I use Google Analytics and StatCounter to see how visitors are finding my website. These tools can be installed on your site by a webmaster or virtual assistant (or you can do it yourself; it's pretty easy). The same tools can show you which keywords your visitors use to find your site.

Usually, this info isn't too helpful at first, since (a) they're searching your name or site name or (b) you don't have enough visitors. But just in case, check both of these to find some keywords and note them down. Get ready to add more to your list though, because next …

Brainstorm to find keywords

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Yes, brainstorm. Ask yourself, "What would my clients search for if they were looking for my services?" If you're not sure, call a client or two and ask them. Or, go to Google and see what comes up when you search for certain keywords. Do they lead to sites like yours? What other keywords are those sites using?

Now that you have some ideas, you can try out a free service just for this purpose, Google AdWords Keyword Tool. You can use it to find out how many people are searching for your keyword phrase each month. At the keyword tool, enter in your keywords and then click "get keyword ideas."

This will give you a great big list. Some will be totally irrelevant, but many will be a good fit for your site. You can click on the "add" buttons to make a list that you can later download to your computer.
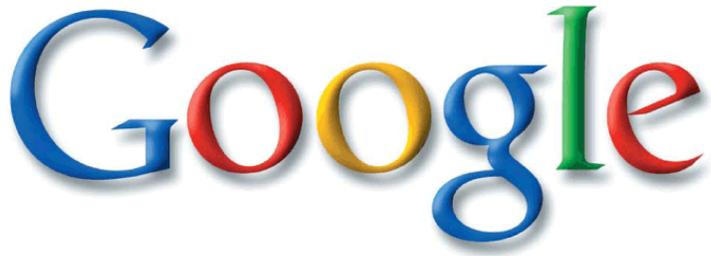
Another seemingly devious but totally ethical thing to do is find out your competitors' keywords. You can do this by choosing a site that appears to have the same audience and services as you do. I like to choose a famous website, so I know they're doing a good job with their keywords. They should have a lot of articles and information.

In the Google Keyword Tool, under the heading "How would you like to generate keyword ideas?" click on the button "Website content." In the box in the middle, paste the url of your competitor's website and then "get keyword ideas." What will appear is a list of the keywords that website is targeting. Add the good ones you like to your own list.

Target competitive keywords

It's no use trying to rank for a keyword if no one is looking for it. Make sure your term has at least 1000 searches per month in Google.

Similarly, you don't want to pursue a keyword when a zillion others are going after it too. An easy way to get a rough estimate of whether it's wise or hopeless to go after a certain keyword is to go back to Google.com and put your keyword into the search bar. Put quotes around your term like this, "keyword phrase," and then hit Search. That will tell us exactly how many sites are going after that keyword phrase exactly.

Google will return searches for you and to the right of the search bar at the top you'll see something like: "About 61,400 results (0.22 seconds)." There were 61,400 results for the search I just ran. Ideally, the lower the better, but you may choose to target anywhere from 30,000 to 200,000 results.

As a guideline, you want to find keywords with at least 1000 searches per month and fewer than 200,000 results when you search them "in quotation marks."

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On-page SEO: Put keyword phrases into your title tags and headings

Select the top three keyword phrases for your home page. Since you should use different keywords for each page of your website, pick the best ones for Home.

Google learns what your site is about by studying two key things on your page: its title and the text, especially the headings. The title is what appears in your browser at the top left of your window. Here's an example from my site EnlightenedMarketing.com:

The red and yellow arrows show you my title tags, which read: "Small Business Consultants | Brand Consulting & Brand Marketing Strategy." (Those are the three keyword phrases I want to rank for on my home page.)

What's circled is the main heading on my home page. For a website it's known as H1 style of heading. That tells Google this is very important text and key to the meaning of my site.

Some people feel very strongly about adding keywords to the "meta tags" of your website. I've heard this is less important but I do it anyway, so be sure to do it too. Your webmaster can do it with the rest of these changes, or you can do it yourself if you're using WordPress or something like it.

[A word about "webmasters": I live near a college and found an intern who made websites for school and community organizations. He worked for them for no charge and did great work, so I offered him a

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paying part-time job. Check local universities and Career Services offices in your community. Often there are cheap and good helpers right there at home.]

Off-page SEO: Inbound links and anchor text

The next thing Google looks for when deciding what to think about your site is inbound links (IBLs). Those are links coming to your website from others. Google believes the more sites link to yours, the more useful your site must be.

It's true, actually. If there's a cool article or a neat video online somewhere, a lot of people share the link with their friends, who go look at it. All that traffic is flowing through hyperlinks that people click on to go see the cool thing.

So, what you want to get are IBLs for your website. How? Great question!

During this whole series of lessons we have been talking about sharing information and expertise – your brand value – with your clients through articles, free gifts, ebooks, videos, etc. An effective website is filled with compelling information that your perfect clients need.

When you provide that info in your site, you'll find people naturally begin to link to it. Whether on social media or their blogs, your perfect clients and others who like your work will begin to share links to your site.

Warning: not all IBLs are created equal! Do not purchase links to your site.

 A link from a site like CNN or *The New York Times* is much more valuable, in the eyes of Google, than one from a small site. While it's not too common for people like you and me to get links from those sites, it's not impossible.

Google also highly values links from .edu or .gov sites, so publishing an article for your university or a government site could do wonders for you.

Speaking of articles, this is the perfect way to get IBLs to your site. Publishing in article directories or as a guest post on another blog is very easy. You get links from this by having a resource box in your article that says something like, "Samantha Hartley of Enlightened Marketing helps socially responsible entrepreneurs who are struggling with peaks and valleys in their businesses to generate a consistent stream of new, profitable clients. For FREE marketing tips sign up for our ezine at Enlightened Marketing."

This brings up a useful point and our last vocabulary word for this lesson: anchor text. In the previous paragraph there were two hyperlinks (they're in blue). The words you see in blue and underlined are the "anchor text," which is another way Google figures out what a page is about. When I hyperlink the anchor text "article directories" to EzineArticles.com, it teaches Google what that site is about. Same thing with Enlightened Marketing.

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However, what would be better for me, instead of hyperlinking Enlightened Marketing, the name of my site would be … what? If you guessed "my keyword phrase," take a bow!   Ideally, that same paragraph would be improved to read:

Samantha Hartley of Enlightened Marketing helps socially responsible entrepreneurs who are struggling with peaks and valleys in their businesses to generate a consistent stream of new, profitable clients. For FREE brand marketing strategy tips sign up for our ezine at Enlightened Marketing."

A good place to see effective use of anchor text (which matches keyword phrases I'm targeting on my website), check my profile here: http://www.selfgrowth.com/experts/samantha_hartley.html By the way it's free to post your profile, so just choose a category at SelfGrowth.com and build yourself an expert page. You'll get some very valuable IBLs!

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One day I checked my keyword statistics in Statcounter and
saw that a visitor to my website had found me through
Google using the keyword phrase "solopreneur branding."  I
had just published a blog post about this topic.

I could see from Statcounter that this person had signed up
for my free teleseminar and later joined a group I was
teaching. She has continued working with me to this day and
has, so far, had a client value to me of nearly $2,500.
All from a single blog post, optimized for the search
engines.

It was the first example of someone becoming my client
purely through SEO.  A milestone!

This is so easy it seems unbelievable, but if I can do it,
so can you!
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Frequently Asked Questions about SEO

Q. "I don't have a website yet. What should I do?"

A. Lucky! You haven't wasted thousands of dollars on a site that doesn't work. Save these lessons until you're ready, and then follow the instructions step-by-step. Remember that many of these principles will work on a Facebook page or a free blog.

Q. "I'm overwhelmed by all this information. Where do I start?"

A. Having a website means learning a lot of new stuff, including strategies and vocabulary. These are the tools of a 21st century business. It's not easy, but it is

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something you can learn if you take your time and do it one step at a time. If it seems too hard to do on your own, get a friend and work through these lessons together.

Q. "How do I put update the title tags on my website? How much of this can I do myself?"

A. As a beginner it will be hard to do it all yourself. It's best to find someone you trust to help with your website. I found a college student who had experience building websites. You may check your colleges, ask around for recommendations or go to elance.com.

Q. "How do I know which are the best keywords?"

A. The information I've given you here is enough to get you started and is intended to be simple but not comprehensive. I knew about this stuff for years before I used it because it seemed too complicated. The fact is, just using keywords in your title tags and headings will make a big difference in your site's performance. If you get some IBLs using proper anchor text, you'll see even better results. You could make it WAY more complicated, but why? Simple and easy-to- implement is my preferred approach.

This week's assignment:

1. Check your stats program (Google Analytics and/or StatCounter) to see which keywords your visitors are using now to find your site.
2. Update the title tags on your home page (and others if you have the time and energy). Weave your keywords into your home page heading.
3. Brainstorm some places to get inbound links to your site. When possible, change the anchor text of those IBLs to match your keywords.
4. Make a short To Do list of other SEO improvements you can make over the next three months and add these to your marketing calendar.

This is advanced marketing stuff that most people are not doing (not because it's hard, but because, well, I don't know why). It can make a HUGE difference, and I'm very proud of you for working on it.

To your abundant success,

Samantha

Samantha Hartley
Publisher, *Attracting Perfect Clients*

Coming Up Next Week...

We'll wrap up the web stuff by talking about blogging, an awesome way to get way more clients through the Internet. Look for me at the usual time … ☺

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