

Our latest blog post

The cleansing of SEO

SEO is a dirty word. Ok, perhaps that isn't entirely accurate (aside from the obvious reason that SEO is an acronym, not a word). But it's fair to say that SEO is a term which now comes with a shadowy question mark looming over it.

The search engine optimisation frenzy, which led to SEO being a buzzword bounced around the marketing team of every business in the land, has created a situation where this one solitary marketing technique is now dominating entire marketing plans.

This demand for all things SEO has even spurred the creation of SEO agencies - companies, whose sole purpose is to make your business rank higher in the Google search results page. Which does seem slightly extravagant.

If an effective marketing plan is a puzzle then SEO is just one piece of that puzzle - so why should you as a business owner pay an SEO agency for just one piece to a puzzle? When you could spend your valuable resources on putting the entire puzzle together, in the form of a comprehensive marketing plan. A plan which would certainly include SEO, but not ignore all of the other pieces to the puzzle, such as ROI measurement, data capture, email marketing and social media.

The new age of SEO

Despite not having said one positive thing about SEO thus far, the purpose of this article isn't to drag SEO's name through the mud. If carried out well, search engine optimisation is a useful technique for driving more people to your website, which in turn leads to the prospect of an increase in business.

However, the current SEO obsessed climate means that people are trying to reach the holy grail of a high Google search ranking through any means possible, and such desperation inevitably leads to underhand tactics. But Google, being the all-seeing all-hearing force that it is, has watched these underhand SEO techniques being deployed and taken a disliking to them.

Google's response? To change the rules of the SEO game entirely, the name of the game is now 'quality'. Let's use backlinks to illustrate this, whereas before the number of backlinks to your website was likely to push your search ranking higher, it is now the quality of any backlinks which you have.

For example, one single link to your website from a reputable site, such as the BBC, will push your ranking higher than multiple links from unrecognised sites. Furthermore, the quality of your backlinks (or lack of quality) could actually be detrimental to your search ranking. If you have backlinks from a site which Google thinks is of poor quality, your site could even slip down the search rankings.

The best way to improve your website's chances of a glory spot high up in the search rankings isn't to try and 'beat' Google's complex algorithms, but rather to keep things very simple, and focus on making your content and website of the best quality possible. Google is now recognising and prioritising quality more than ever when ranking its search results.

What is quality SEO?

The idea of everybody filling their website with quality content and earning their places in the search rankings accordingly is all very nice - but what exactly is quality content in Google's eyes?

Well some of the more technical techniques include:

- custom URLs
- relevant page meta descriptions
- properly formatted HTML heading tags
- keywords within your content
- relevant 'alt' image tags

However, simply producing and publishing content that is relevant, useful and engaging to your target audience will prove highly beneficial in your SEO efforts. Once your audience have discovered your site, if the content is genuinely relevant, useful and engaging to them those people are likely to interact with your content further by sharing it with their connections on social media, which presents the obvious benefit of extending your audience.

Reformed character of SEO

The future of SEO? The grand vision for the future is one where a focus on quality content will flush out the dubious techniques being used in desperate bids for SEO success. Blackhat techniques such as keyword stuffing, invisible text, aggressive link-building and doorway pages will fade further and further into insignificance as Google focuses all of its attentions on scouting out good quality content which aims to be beneficial to the people who read it. The SEO strategies will be long term ones, where sites gradually build a reputation for quality content over time rather than aiming for short term SEO success for a quick financial gain.

These developments are key to cleansing the name of SEO, so that we can all look forward to a time in the near future when the term doesn't conjure an image in our heads of shady tricksters desperately clawing their way to the top of the search rankings.

If you need help or want to discuss how these changes will affect your business contact Six Serving Men by calling **(0115) 837 2663** or emailing **help@6sm.co.uk**, we're just around the corner.