



NETTRACK

Website Marketing Services



5 Essential Tasks

for Evaluating the Effectiveness
of your Website Marketing

5 Essential Tasks for Evaluating the Effectiveness of your Website Marketing

“Having a website is not marketing. Getting people to and through your website when they are ready to buy is marketing.”

Website marketing recognizes that **the greatest likelihood of selling your products/ services exists with a targeted, well-qualified, motivated buyer.** A manufacturing company’s best prospects today use the “search-ability” of the Internet to refine their information gathering and lead them to qualified suppliers.

Your website offers the most cost effective, direct route to a qualified lead/sales opportunity – bar none. However, the Internet is a very fluid landscape on which to build your marketing. On a VERY regular basis, search engines, directories, and linking partnerships are consolidated, change their method of inclusion or disappear entirely.

An effective marketing campaign recognizes that **continuous changes take place** on the Internet and has a **strategy in place to deal with those changes.** Presented below is an outline of 5 key tasks to define your marketing efforts and keep track of change over time.

1 RESEARCH BEST TERMS

When starting your website marketing campaign, it is critical to conduct research to determine which phrases that relate to your product area or company name are most frequently searched by a broad selection of ACTUAL Internet searchers?

Building or redesigning a site around phrases, themes and concepts that are not identical to phrases people type in as queries on the search engines cannot achieve your goals.

While this seems very straightforward, there are sometimes substantial differences between what an industry insider (you and your staff) and an outsider (potential customer) may call the same service. (e.g. blow off system vs. dry off system). Likewise, often there are striking differences between the frequency of use of plural and singular phrases **when prospects conduct searches for a solution to “their problem”** (e.g. air knife vs. air knives; refractometer vs. refractometers).

The KEY concept here is **frequency of use.** While clearly there would be examples of people looking for both “air knife” and “air knives,” it is important to identify the fact that the plural is searched 5x more frequently. This leads to the proper focus and use of the plural term in writing copy for the site. This is critical because the search engines will index the singular and plural differently.

NOTE: The search engines assign relevance or matching criteria based on the words and themes on individual pages and site-wide. Lack of visibility on the search engines indicates the pages on your website are not considered a “match” to the queries conducted via search engines.

There are a **variety of databases** that can be useful for conducting this type of research. Among them, the **Wordtracker** database of Meta searches, **Yahoo Search Marketing’s keyword suggestion tool** and the **Google AdWords** administration panel all offer insight into frequency of use for specific keyword phrases.

The 2 key metrics that can be derived from key phrase research are:

- A **rough count** of how many times your keyword phrase has been searched over the **last 30 to 60 days**.
- A **prediction of the estimated searches** for this keyword phrase across all search engines, directories and pay per bid sites **during a single 24-hour period**.

In addition, it is often desirable to conduct a micro-test of various phrases on a Pay per Click (PPC) site over a short period of time to determine how frequently actual Internet searches are conducted, using a selection of phrases.

2

BENCHMARK SITE VISIBILITY

After determining the important keyword phrases, you should **establish a series of benchmarks** against which to measure. **The baseline of the marketing campaign is your website’s current “findability.”** A matrix should be developed to chart about 15 key phrases as found (or not) within the most important 4 search engines and directory sites. This will give you a **grid of approximately 60 search terms/locations**.

Each month, a replicated search conducted across this baseline matrix will show exactly where your website currently ranks on the major search engines and directories for key phrases worth monitoring. Use monthly reporting and analysis to evaluate the progress of your marketing efforts. It should be noted that we are all inundated with emails promising to register websites with hundreds if not thousands of search engines. In reality, almost 90% of ALL Internet searches are conducted through the results of 4 or fewer search locations.

3

MODIFY SITE’S CONTENT

While establishing a benchmark of “findability,” it is the marketing manager’s job to scrutinize the website. Look for reasons your website IS NOT ranked well on specific terms. Are there **elements of your site that are interfering** with the ability for pages to be recognized by the search engines?

The problem areas that exist are most often related to **copywriting** issues on the site. Do you need to consider **content additions** to the site? Would **condensations of themes** within your website improve your ranking for specific phrases? In this method of improvement, you simply break longer, flowing pages that cover a number of topics, into a series of shorter pages that are more topic-specific, and therefore more relevant to the search engines.

Another frequent area of concern is ineffective use of the website's **Meta Data**. Meta data or metatags are contained "behind the scenes" within the HEAD content of each page of the website. The **TITLE and DESCRIPTION Metatags** are each important in their own ways and should be **uniquely tailored** to the specific page on which they are found.

A third "likely suspect" that may be the culprit if terms are not being found is the **site structure** itself. Problem areas of this type typically fall into one of these profiles:

- Relevant **content that is locked up in an "image"** or picture on the site. In other words, a human can read the text but a search engine cannot. This is often the root problem with sites that are built using primarily FLASH programming.
- The site structure breaks down portions of a page into **individual "frames."** These separate frames are seen by humans as a single page when displayed but may not offer the content needed by search engines when and where they are looking for relevance.

4

REVIEW KEY PHRASES

The fourth assessment method also needs to be evaluated on an ongoing basis. **Exactly which key phrases do searchers use to access your site?** And in what frequency are those key phrases used? This information comes from referencing the log file data on your website's server. Log files continuously record information about visits to and through your website. Recorded information includes the exact search term visitors to your site typed in **before accessing your website**.

Rather than looking at this data in "raw form," a marketing professional can **review a simple spreadsheet showing both quantity and variety of search terms** used.

In addition to the "top 15 likely suspect phrases," you will see many (even hundreds) of single-time-use, very specific phrases that are leading to the site.

As long as these phrases describe your company's capabilities, this is very good. The above-mentioned pattern of one-off phrase access means your website contains a depth and breadth of content capable of attracting visits from sophisticated searchers. More experienced searchers typically use more complex and specific search terms (e.g. phrases like "glycol measuring in-line refractometer.") Monthly reporting and analysis should be used to further refine and, if needed, add content to your website.

5

EVALUATE REFERRAL SITES

Your website should receive **traffic from a variety of sources**. This is an overall indicator of the breadth of your marketing program. Sources include **links from other websites, directories and paid online marketing such as pay-per-click (PPC) or pay-for-inclusion advertising**. Each of the methods has its own advantages over and above the fact that it provides valuable traffic.

Google AdWords and Yahoo Search Marketing offer the two highest volumes of searches. The strongest **advantage of using PPC** advertising as part of the marketing strategy is the **ability to “instantly” stop or start traffic**. Advertisers control what specific phrases trigger showing your ad. You pay if-and-when an ad is clicked. Daily and/or monthly budget caps can be set to control spending.

Pay for inclusion advertising offers the ability to guarantee review of your site for inclusion (Yahoo Directory or Business.com are examples.) Alternatively, paid inclusion provides the ability to have your site listed within specific categories for a fee (examples would include thomasregister.com and machinetoolbuilder.com). Fees are generally charged annually and are based on traffic that passes through an individual directory/portal. A strong factor in evaluating these advertising opportunities is whether or not they offer the ability to monitor inbound links from their site. I.e. can visitors to the ad portal connect directly to your company’s website for additional detailed information – or is all information presented at the ad location?

Marketing analysis examines which links are most successful at driving traffic to your site. To be successful, linking sources must be cost-effective and produce a **verifiable number of high-quality leads**. Similar to the key phrase reports described above, a spreadsheet showing linking sites and associated traffic can be viewed by the marketing manager to evaluate this metric. Look at **which links are frequently used; which are cost effective**. Monthly reporting and analysis should be used to evaluate and refine relationships.

SUMMARY

Effective marketing follows planned steps. Begin by assessing your current situation and use the guidelines discussed to improve upon your effectiveness. By completing and monitoring the 5 key tasks presented, your website will become a much stronger marketing tool.

NetTrack Marketing, based in Cleveland Ohio, develops comprehensive search marketing strategies for industrial manufacturers who sell business to business. For help in this area please call 216.321-8894 (Toll-free 888-517-2269) or visit www.NetTrackMarketing.com.