



Ranking Your Website In Google

Once you have a website you quickly realise that the site alone is not enough, people need to be able to find it; and quickly. For you that means developing your position in Google so that you rate as highly as possible. This information sheet will provide you with tips and tricks that may help you achieve this, but in the ever changing world of search engine optimisation (SEO) there are few hard and fast rules and no quick fixes.

Why Google? Well with a 98% share of the search engine market, chances are someone won't 'Bing' you they will 'Google' you, and while the tips and tricks in this sheet will help you rate better in most search engines some are Google specific such as registration, location and analytics.



Getting Started

The first thing you need to do is register your site with Google, this should allow Googlebot (the search engines web crawling index software) to find you faster. You can do this by visiting www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl and adding you URL (web address) to Googles database.



If it is important that customers know the location of your business you should also consider listing your business using Google Places: www.google.com/support/places/?hl=en This will allow search results to contain location specific data and will list you on Google Maps and Streetview. This is also important when considering how people might search you,

if a potential customer searches for 'Garden Centres in Powys' Google will automatically rate more highly those websites whose location data it has stored. This is advantageous when considering how people are now searching; an increasing number of people use mobile devices linked to software which can automatically locate you and direct them to your premises, meaning that they are far more likely to find business listed in this manner.

Once you're registered you need to add some analytics to your website, these will let you collect data and observe how the site is being used by consumers, again Google provide a useful produce here, Google Analytics: <http://www.google.com/analytics>

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This FREE product gives you unparalleled data focusing on your websites traffic and marketing effectiveness.



Analytics are important as they tell you a number of key things about your site:

1. **Keywords:** This will tell you what keywords people are using in Google to find you, this means that you can target your site to respond better to these searches or go after other results.
2. **Stickiness:** How long people are staying on your site for, even on individual pages, this shows you how effective your site is in keeping and engaging customers and where certain pages aren't working.
3. **Traffic:** Who's visiting, where from and when, which should help you assess your marketing strategy more generally and its effectiveness.

Once you've done all of these you need to consider optimisation, things that will convince Google to improve your rating, in this section we will deal with two kinds of optimisation: on page (the Google search result) and off page (on your website) .

Before we begin though a quick word of warning; when it comes to optimisation don't cut corners or believe anyone who tells you that they can get your site to appear on the first page of Google overnight. Good SEO is a slow process of trying things, tweaking them and constantly reviewing your work to check its affects. It takes time for Google to improve your rating and one reason for that is that Google views older sites as more authentic and improves their rating automatically, so be patient. If you rush it or cut corners and do things that Google doesn't like they can

impose sanctions which can be quite damaging to your ability to market online.

On Page, there are three areas key areas of optimisation that are crucial here:

Title Tag: This is the identifying link at the top of your search result; it's one of the first things a search engine looks for. Your title tag should say who you are, what you do and where you are located using relevant key words and phrases. In the case of a Garden Centre a good title tag might read:

'Plants and Co Garden Centre Powys'

This gives Google all the information it needs and is short enough for a customer to understand while quickly scanning search results.

Metadescription: This is the piece of text below your Title Tag, it needs to quickly and concisely describe you and your business with a few keywords and some location data. Remember this is also the first chance you get to make an impression on a customer, e.g.:

'Plants and Co is a family run Garden Centre based in Powys providing high quality plants at affordable prices'

This Metadescription covers all the key information you need to provide to your customers and Google. If you have any specialisms you may want to include this here, but you may find that a little trial and error is required to get this phrasing correct. The only trick here is to keep searching, testing and seeing what works. You can always use the results from your analytics to help guide you in these decisions.



URL: A good URL is crucial, don't make it too long so that it's easily memorable and make sure it's linked to you and your company. Don't have a URL that's totally unrelated to you and what you do, this won't help you at all.

Off Page, this covers a lot of things you can do on your website to improve its chances, these include:

Keywords: These can be drawn from your targets, your analytics or **GoogleAdWords** (Googles own keyword search tool), these terms should be placed in key areas of your site such as text content. **Alt Tags** (the text tags for pictures and images) can be used and you may also want to consider highlighting them in *Italics*, **Bold** or using an Underline, as Google will rank these more highly. The trick with keywords is not over stuff them or to repeat them too many times, a prime example of this would be:

'Red Posey, Yellow Posey, Blue Posey, Orange Posey'

Because 'Posey' has been repeated, Google will actually penalise this result. Simply writing:

'Posey: red, yellow, blue, orange'

would have been just as effective.

Links: Links from other sites are also crucial in making your site appear reputable. These should always be in the form of your web address or the name of the site, but good links will help your site no end. You can get links from anywhere: other sites, blogs, Twitter or FB are all good sources.



Further information

This information sheet is part of a series following a set of marketing workshops led by Horticulture Wales titled Successfully Marketing your business online:

- Successfully marketing your business online
- Developing your web presence
- Ranking your website in google
- Navigating the social web

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