



20 Things You Need to Know Before Optimizing a Web Site

One of the most important aspects of a search engine optimization project is also one of the most overlooked – preparation! There are some important steps to take in advance of optimizing your site that will make sure your SEO is successful.

Before You Start

Before you start any search engine optimization campaign, whether it's for your site or that belonging to a client, you need to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the overall motivation for optimizing this site? What do I/they hope to achieve? e.g. more sales, more subscribers, more traffic, more publicity etc.
- 2) What is the time-frame for this project?
- 3) What is the budget for this project?
- 4) Who will be responsible for this project? Will it be a joint or solo effort? Will it be run entirely in-house or outsourced?

Answering these questions will help you to build a framework for your SEO project and establish limitations for the size and scope of the campaign.

Ready: How Search Engine-Compatible is the Site Currently?

Something I find very useful before quoting on any SEO project is to produce what I call a Search Engine Compatibility Review. This is where I carry out a detailed overview and analysis of a site's search engine compatibility in terms of HTML design, page extensions, link popularity, title and META tags, body text, target keywords, ALT IMG tags, page load time and other design elements that can impact search engine indexing.

I then provide a detailed report to potential clients with recommendations based on my findings. It just helps sort out in my mind what design elements need tweaking to make the site as search engine-friendly as possible. It also helps marketing staff prove to an often stubborn programming department (or vice versa!) that SEO is necessary. You might consider preparing something similar for your site or clients.

Steady: Requirements Gathering

Next, you need to establish the project requirements, so you can tailor the SEO campaign to you or your client's exact needs. For those of you servicing clients, this information is often required before you are able to quote accurately.



To determine your project requirements, you need to have the following questions answered:

- 1)** What technology was used to build the site? (i.e. Flash, PHP, frames, Cold Fusion, JavaScript, Flat HTML etc)
- 2)** What are the file extensions of the pages? (i.e. .htm, .php, .cfm etc)
- 3)** Does the site contain database driven content? If so, will the URLs contain query strings? e.g. www.site.com/longpagename?source=123444fgge3212, (containing "?" symbols), or does the site use parameter workarounds to remove the query strings? (the latter is more search engine friendly).
- 4)** Are there at least 250 words of text on the home page and other pages to be optimized?
- 5)** How does the navigation work? Does it use text links or graphical links or JavaScript drop-down menus?
- 6)** Approximately how many pages does the site contain? How many of these will be optimized?
- 7)** Does the site have a site map or will it require one? Does the site have an XML sitemap submitted to [Google Sitemaps](#) ?
- 8)** What is the current link popularity of the site?
- 9)** What is the approximate Google PageRank of the site? Would it benefit from link building?
- 10)** Do I have the ability to edit the source code directly? Or will I need to hand-over the optimized code to programmers for integration?
- 11)** Do I have permission to alter the visible content of the site?
- 12)** What are the products/services that the site promotes? (e.g. widgets, mobile phones, hire cars etc.)
- 13)** What are the site's geographical target markets? Are they global? Country specific? State specific? Town specific?
- 14)** What are the site's demographic target markets? (e.g. young urban females, working mothers, single parents etc.)
- 15)** What are 20 search keywords or phrases that I think my/my client's target markets will use to find the site in the search engines?



16) Who are my/my client's major competitors online? What are their URLs? What keywords are they targeting?

17) Who are the stake-holders of this site? How will I report to them?

18) Do I have access to site traffic logs or statistics to enable me to track visitor activity during the campaign? Specifically, what visitor activity will I be tracking?

19) How do I plan on tracking my or my client's conversion trends and increased rankings in the search engines?

20) What are the client's expectations for the optimization project? Are they realistic?

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About Hotel Traffic Builders (HTB):

We are a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to the boutique hotel & residential resort industry.

Our mission is very simple: ***"To maximize sales success by providing our clients with exceptional internet marketing results"***.

Our clients consistently enjoy industry leading success because of our dedicated focus and experience. Our use of state-of-the art tools, best in class technology and wealth of industry experience enable us to provide full solution applications. We recognize that our clients are experts at running their hotels, and our role is to develop and maintain online marketing leadership for our client hotels.

We differentiate ourselves through:

Industry Expertise

We have a singular specialized focus on boutique hotel, resort and vacation home e-Marketing. Our sole goal is to be the best at what we do by ensuring maximum success for all of your e-marketing activities. Our 52 person design and development technology team delivers unparalleled quality and results. Our sole focus is resort marketing.

Individual Customized Creative Approach & Solutions

Every client has unique needs, opportunities and priorities, our e-Marketing plans are always custom built and based on in-depth research of your specific hotel.

Cutting Edge Technology

We use proprietary state of the art tools and applications that enable project efficiency, measurability and success of your e-marketing. We not only promise success, we document it in a 24/7 real-time secured private reporting platform that we create for every hotel client. Our clients never wonder about how hard their marketing dollars are working because they always know!

Return On Investment

The true measurement of our success is our proven ability to deliver reservation bookings. We grow booking results year over year, and we grow advance bookings, which result in higher occupancy levels and ADRs.

Contact us at: www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com or call us **954- 421-6399**