StarLink Agency

Technical Requirements for SEO
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It's true, traditional marketing (telemarketing, cold calling, print ads…) is being replaced by Social Media strategies that generate inbound marketing traffic.

Technical SEO First Steps

Organic search engine optimization (SEO) is one of the most cost effective ways to generate new business and build a loyal customer base. The following steps build a technically competent website to facilitate the search engines bots when crawling and indexing your website for purposes of search queries.

For effective search engine optimization, the following Technical SEO steps should be complimented with a sound Social Media. If done right, your strategy will provides low cost marketing and lead generation with measurable ROI. But mainly, you will engage your user-community in meaningful and relevant ways that builds social loyalty and participation.

Search engines such as Google do not release their coveted algorithms. However, a smart webmaster should include the following attributes in an effort to build a technically efficient website for organic SEO.

Once the website's technical architecture is in place, it should be complemented with a sound Social Media strategy to ensure a dynamic interaction with the potential user-community.

1. **Web Analytics Code**
      i. Set-up a Google analytics account to measure website traffic and marketing effectiveness.
      ii. Install the Google script on your website
      iii. http://www.google.com/analytics/

2. **HTML Validation**
      i. All pages of the website should be validated with W3C HTML standards.
      ii. What's it all about:
            1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W3C_Markup_Validation_Service
      iii. Free validation:
            1. http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/
            2. http://www.javascriptkit.com/linkcheck/

3. **CSS Validation**
      i. All pages of the website should be validated with W3C CSS standards.

4. **Page Speed Tool**
      i. Page speed tool (if available) to reduce the website downloading time and webpage size. (PDF and graphics need to be within Google's new guidelines)
            1. http://code.google.com/speed
      ii. Slow page loads will affect Google's rankings and provide a poor customer experience.

5. **Keyword Analysis**
   i. Keywords should be searched for the website, based on factors like keyword popularity, search count and keyword competition. Keywords s/b included in content, meta, and ALT tags, etc.
   ii. Use Google's Adwords Tool to identify your page keywords and make intelligent decisions on popular key words.
   iii. Learn what keywords are popular in search queries to better define your brand offerings.
       1. https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal

6. **URL Optimization**
   i. *Canonical URL*: List of preferred URLs. As preferred URLs, all other versions will be redirected to it. Example: Various URLs all need to be directed to the preferred URL.
       1. http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=139066

7. **Title & Meta Tags**
   i. Title & Meta tags should be prepared for the entire site pages based on the keyword analysis mapped for individual URLs.

8. **404 Error Page**
   i. Need a customized error page to inform search engines that the page is broken and should not be indexed.

9. **Robots.txt**
   i. Robots.txt file s/b, deployed on server for all search engine robots defining crawling permissions.

10. **XML Sitemap**
    i. XML feed s/b created with all the URLs of website.
    ii. XML sitemap s/b updated on regular basis as per changes in the website.
    iii. Sitemap link s/b at bottom of page.

11. **Heading Tags**
    i. Use heading tags from <h1> to <h6> s/b prepared for increasing site visibility and individual page relevancy for desired keywords.

12. **Anchor Tags**
    i. Anchor tags for important keywords s/b prepared to enhance relevancy of the targeted page and keyword density.
    ii. All pictures (JPEG, PNG, etc.) s/b properly tagged (ALT Tags) and include keywords.

13. **Dedicated Pages**
    i. Products and services specific pages s/b created increasing visibility. Could act as a landing page with a call to action from the PPC campaign.

Quick Tips:

- Company transparency is key when designing a Social Media program.
- Shameless marketing and self-promotion is a no-no.
- The Social Media strategy should be interactive - regular updates and dynamic participation is required.
- A continual effort is required to monitor search engine algorithms, keyword trends, competition etc.
- Need to keep an eye towards IPv6, which is designed to succeed IPv4. There is rumbling that URLs need to have the ability to run both IPv4 (now) and IPv6 (coming). For more information: www.getipv6.info

Once the technical SEO components are in place, developing and planning the following attributes enhance organic SEO:

1. Blog (Strongly suggest WordPress)
   a. http://wordpress.org/
2. Join Digg, StumbleUpon, Technorati as your social bookmarking sites
   a. http://digg.com/
   b. http://www.stumbleupon.com/
   c. http://technorati.com/

3. Twitter: http://twitter.com (need to set up a company account)
   a. Include Twitter feed on website

4. Facebook:
   a. http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php
   b. Add the "Like Button" to your website

5. LinkedIn Company page
   a. http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=what_is_linkedin

A Few Last Tips:

Search engine optimization is a contiguous process.

Analyze, analyze and analyze. Then course correct.

Make sure to have your Webmaster set-up a Google Analytics account to analyze web traffic and find potential leads. This is a free solution. There are other paid solutions that can be considered once the foundation is in place.

For more information, contact the StarLinkAgency.com at info@StarLinkAgency.com