

Social Media Optimization (SMO)

Social media optimization (SMO) is an imperative ingredient of your SEO campaigns. In the past, social networking sites were little more than an oddity. Today, several have acquired enormous ranking authority from top search engines. If you are not leveraging these sites to improve your exposure and communicate with your niche market, your search engine positions are vulnerable to your competitors.

The Influence Of Social Media Optimization On Search Marketing

Search marketing has always relied upon exposure in the search engines to drive targeted traffic. For years, gaining that exposure was based solely upon the development of your site and generating links pointing to your site. Both are still important today. However, social media optimization has shifted the landscape of search engine marketing.

Google once maintained several disparate search platforms for blogs, videos, news, and similar types of "social" content. Each functioned as a separate search engine with its own set of natural listings. A few years ago, Google blended the listings from each platform into a system called Universal Search. Yahoo and Bing have since incorporated similar systems. Universal Search is now used as the primary index. That means blogs, videos, and news have been incorporated into the natural listings, pushing many sites off the first page. This is one of the reasons social media optimization has become a critical piece of search.

Another factor that has influenced search marketing is the increased ranking authority given to Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, and similar sites. These too, have quickly gained control of a significant amount of search territory.

Social media optimization preserves your current natural listings while helping you to gain even more search exposure. By using blogs, videos, and social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, you can capture a greater number of organic positions.

Social Media Optimization Campaign Strategy

There are several rules of engagement for launching and executing a social media optimization campaign. If you ignore them, your SMO efforts will be far less effective than otherwise.

First, you should do everything possible to encourage your audience to link to your site. Integrating a blog is valuable because your content can be updated over time, attracting loyal readers. Encourage readers to bookmark, tag and "Tweet" your blog posts by installing a button plug-in.

Second, link liberally as a resource for your visitors. Social media optimization is heavily dependent on helping others accomplish what they're trying to do. Once you engage your audience, help them find the resources they need by linking to them. Eventually, your site will become regarded as a resource hub, which will help you attract inbound links. That's a vital component of SEO.

Third, you must be able to identify your market. Social media optimization relies upon the connections you establish with niche communities. You need to target them properly in order to generate content and engage them. This is true whether you're engaging them through YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, or your blog.

Fourth, integrate tracking tools to measure and monitor the success of your social media optimization campaign. Track mentions of your site and company. Watch your site's progress in the

natural listings for your main keywords. Generate linking reports showing inbound links pointing to your domain and specific pages. Tracking your metrics is critical in order to determine whether your SMO campaign is effective.

SEO Social Media Optimization Explained

Each of the elements of a social media optimization campaign that we have described thus far dovetail seamlessly with SEO. The ongoing content creation, tagging and bookmarking, attracting inbound links by being a resource for your audience - these are essential for pushing your website higher in the search engines' listings. SEO social media optimization leverages a new set of tools to accomplish the same goal as SEO: more exposure for your site on Google, Yahoo, and Bing. The challenge is knowing how to use those tools effectively.

The days of launching a basic SEO campaign within a competitive space and watching your site rise in the search engines' results are long gone. SEO has become far more complex than it was a few short years ago. Social media optimization has transformed SEO from a relatively straightforward strategy into a complicated science.

If you want to boost your exposure in the search engines' listings, consider social media optimization a priority. - *Rostin Reagor Smith*

