

# SEO Firms: Fakes & Rip-offs

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is about getting potential customers to visit your website. It is also about building a quality website full of great content. It uses keywords appropriately and gets links "naturally" because people love what you have on your site. SEO companies can provide very useful services including keyword research, site review, providing technical advice on your website development and also management of online business marketing campaigns. They can also help with content development, article marketing and article distribution. Although it's not brain surgery, it is hard to do and usually requires a lot of thought and real work.

Some unethical SEO firms attempt to manipulate search engine results in way that could get your website ranked lower or even banned. When looking at SEO - either to optimize yourself or if you are looking to hire a company, here are some things to take into account.

## **Getting Thousands Of Links To Your Site**

It is not the number of sites that make the difference - it's the quality of the sites. When firms promise huge numbers of links, or say that you will become part of their "network of sites", it usually means a link farm is involved. A link farm is any group of websites that all hyperlink to every other site in the group. Search engines don't like this and it can lead to penalties. Instead, practice reciprocal linking with legitimate and related websites for better search engine ranking.

## **Guaranteeing A High Ranking On Google**

No one can guarantee a high ranking on Google. Some SEO companies provide a guarantee on their services. This is fine. What's not fine is guaranteeing high ranking in an incredibly short period of time. When these unrealistic results fail to happen, the company will balk at giving a refund, suggest other services instead and start to become unreachable or disappear.

## **Sending "Spammy" Emails**

These emails are unsolicited and usually begin with "We've noticed that you are not listed in some search engines..." You should be searching for a high-ranking SEO company; they will not be searching for you. Spam means scam. You don't buy your medications from spammers so why buy SEO services from them?

## **Not Clearly Explaining What They Are Going To Do**

Most reputable SEO firms are upfront with their clients and like to share their knowledge. They are confident that even if their clients understand their process, they won't leave them. If the SEO firm claims it's too complicated for you to understand, or if they say they have trade secrets and proprietary technology, it's a sign that they may not be ethical in dealing with your website.

## **Submitting Your Site To Thousands Of Top Search Engines And Directories**

Besides the small fact that there aren't that many search engines, consider that the guidelines of the search engines themselves tell you that it doesn't do any good anymore. Search Engines are good at what they do - searching for sites - and you don't need to pay someone to submit your site to a search engine. If they make this claim, they will probably use Free For All (FFA) junk sites that might damage your site's standings.

## **Optimizing And Promoting Your Site For A Low, Low Monthly Fee**

Not all monthly SEO or SEM (Search Engine Management) service contracts or monthly fees are a scam. There are real reasons to pay a monthly fee to an SEO expert. These would include conditions when you would require SEO management: when you or someone else is constantly generating new content or new features for your site; implementing link-building campaigns; implementing PPC (Pay Per Click) campaigns; or starting a brandcasting campaign. Press release distribution, email campaigns and article marketing campaigns could also require a legitimate monthly fee.

Not-so-legitimate fees could include monthly re-submitting of your site to search engines, "tweaking" your code to keep up with changes and regularly submitting your site to hundreds of useless free-for-

all directories. The worthwhile companies that charge a monthly fee will usually be able to tell you exactly how much it is per month to generate blog entries or generate and distribute articles or press releases.

### **Choose Your SEO Company And Services Carefully**

Do your research and don't make the decision lightly. If you were hiring a contractor to remodel your kitchen you would want to see other kitchen projects they've done and speak with the owners about the company's business practices. You should do the same thing when hiring an SEO company. Get referrals and really speak with them.

There are many online tips about choosing and hiring SEO firms that you can check out as well. Remember, SEO is a long-term strategy and you should take the time to do your research before buying or you'll probably be buying again. - *Enzo F. Cesario*

