

## SEO - Get the Most Out of Your SEO Consultant

If you are considering SEO and are looking for an SEO professional, it is critical that you get the right solution the first time. As with any service inquiry, you should a) communicate clearly what you require and b) ensure that you understand the services being offered and the expected results for the price. In short, make certain that both parties have the same expectations. "Top of Google" is a broad statement that can be made by either you or your supplier. "To rank on the first page of Google search results for [X]" is much better: it is more specific and can serve as an excellent goal for the upcoming SEO work. However, you must exercise caution here as well: if your prospective SEO professional begins making guarantees about Google rankings, this is not a good sign.

### Clearly define your SEO strategy

According to Google, no one can guarantee rankings in Google search results. It is critical to identify the keywords for which you want your website to rank in Google search results, and this list should be agreed upon by both parties. More specific, targeted phrases (e.g., "seo sunshine coast") are easier to rank well for on Google than more generic phrases (such as "SEO"). Furthermore, there are a number of technical aspects of your website that make it more "friendly" to Google and easier for your SEO provider to optimize. These are the things that should be discussed and understood before beginning with your website's search engine optimization. During those crucial discussion stages, here's what I recommend you consider and discuss with prospective SEO suppliers.

### How you can assist your SEO company?

Do you know what phrases you must rank high on Google for? Do you want your SEO expert to figure this out for you? Your SEO professional will have access to a variety of specialized tools that will allow him or her to research what keywords your target market uses on search engines to find your services and products. Because you are thinking from your own perspective as the seller, you naturally use terminology and jargon related to your industry, and it can be difficult for you to truly put yourself in the shoes of your potential customer, these phrases frequently differ from those you might intuitively think of.

### Find the perfect SEO expert

Your SEO professional, on the other hand, will welcome your input on which keywords to begin with and will be able to research and develop a pool of keywords for which you need your website to rank well on Google. Look at your competitors and make a list of the keywords they use or are found to be ranking well on Google for. Send these lists and ideas to your SEO provider. Describe your target market to your SEO Expert. Who are they (demographics) and where do they live (geographic targeting)? This will determine the terminology, grammar, and phrases, among other things, to be used on your website, as well as the correct phrases to include in the SEO (e.g. "optimised" in UK, Vs "optimized" in US). It will also assist your SEO professional when formally telling Google where to geographically target your website. Allow your SEO professional access to your website's Content Management System (CMS - the area where you login to manage your website) so that an assessment of how SEO (or Google) friendly your website is can be made. If some critical SEO requirement is not possible with your current CMS, it is best to identify this early, and a website rebuild may be recommended at this time. Where and by whom is your website hosted? Google can determine the physical location of the servers on which your website is hosted and use that information to target your website in country-specific search results (i.e. "pages from [country]").

## Choose a right SEO agency to work with

There are several other factors that contribute to this, but it is critical information that you should provide to your SEO professional. It's also critical to make sure your website isn't hosted in a "bad neighborhood." This could be with a webhosting provider or on servers that also host low-quality or shady websites like spam sites or link farms. Being associated with these types of websites can harm your Google ranking. What domain names are associated with your website? Do you only have one domain name pointing to your website, or do you have several? If your site has multiple domain names and the management of these is not done correctly, Google may penalize one or more of the domain names. This is because Google, of course, does not want multiple copies of the same website or web pages to appear in search results (called duplicate content).

## Have you previously performed any Search Engine Optimization (SEO) activities on your website?

Importantly, have you or anyone else done anything like "submit your website to many search engines for cheap/free" for your website? These are frowned upon by Google, and if penalties are imposed or the website is held back on Google as a result of them, your SEO Professional's job becomes much more difficult, and results are more difficult to achieve.

What you should ask your SEO provider You will want to hire an ethical SEO Professional who will only perform proper and legal SEO work on your website. Unethical or bad SEO work,

where efforts are made to artificially or falsely increase the success of your website on Google search results, is strongly discouraged by Google and may result in penalties or, in the worst-case scenario, banishment from Google. This is extremely difficult to recover from, and in the worst-case scenario, the domain name must be dropped. These practices include purchasing links, participating in link farms, cloaking domain names, making text on your web pages visible only to Google, and creating content for Google only, rather than humans.

## How to pick the right SEO service

As with any service provider, you should request references from your potential SEO provider. Check for SEO testimonials on their website and call these clients to confirm the success of the work that your potential supplier has done. Request a list of activities that your supplier will perform as part of the SEO of your website, and ensure that no unethical activities are included. If you are unsure, please contact me. It is also preferable if they adhere to some sort of SEO code of ethics. Discussions along these lines with your SEO Professional before beginning SEO work can really help to ensure the smooth operation of your SEO program and the achievement of agreed-upon goals. Regular progress updates or questions from your SEO supplier are beneficial to your understanding of the work completed, as is your thoughtful response to questions and feedback when requested. An effective SEO solution is one in which the SEO provider and the client collaborate.