

# Attract Customers

Know How Guide to Web Optimization



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# ATTRACT CUSTOMERS

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RELIABLE FAST



Whether you are planning a new website or you already have one in place, web optimization is vital for its success. This guide provides an overview of why optimization is so important and offers five keys to success when optimizing your marketing and sales efforts on the web.

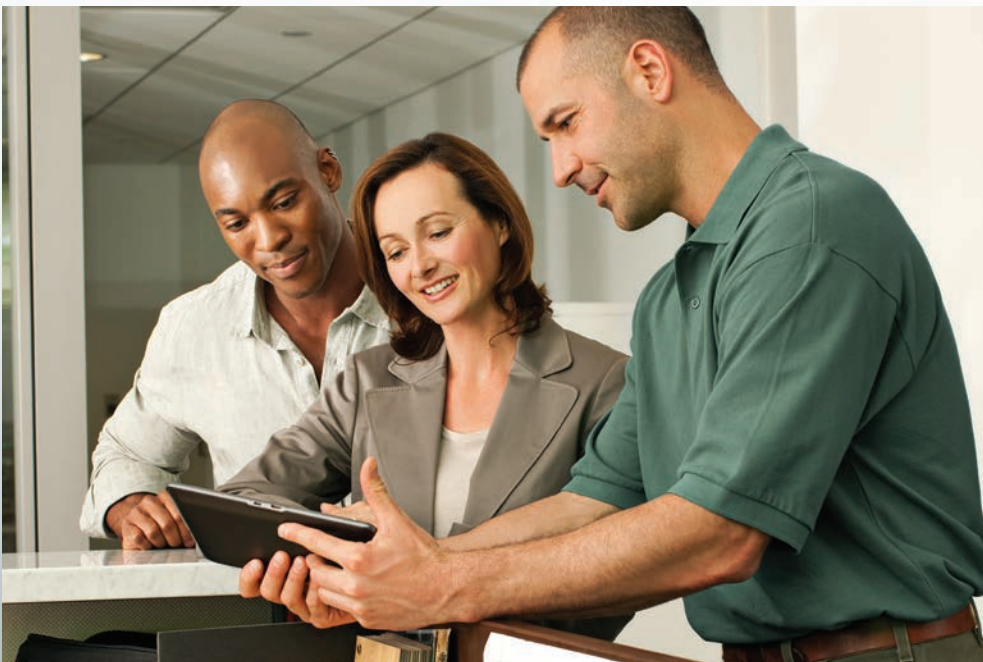
## WHAT IS WEB OPTIMIZATION?

For most businesses, the primary goals of a website are to generate business leads and increase sales. Web optimization is the umbrella term for a set of activities designed to improve those results. Web optimization includes activities like search engine optimization, PPC marketing, and lead generation, but regardless of the term used or the particular focus, the goal is always the same: improving web performance and getting more out of your online marketing investment.

Web optimization involves two primary activities. The first is maximizing your presence on search engines, which is the chief source of traffic for most of the web. The other main focus of web optimization is improving the ability of your website to convert traffic into leads and customers.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF SEARCH ENGINES TO WEB OPTIMIZATION

Search is a critical part of the equation for any web optimization effort. Search engines have been the starting point for the majority of web traffic for nearly two decades and they play an increasingly important role in purchases. Today, nearly 90% of consumers use search engines to research products and services prior to making a purchase<sup>1</sup>. Consumers are also going online to find places to shop, with 97% using the internet to find local businesses<sup>2</sup>.

The situation with search engines today is not unlike that of the *Yellow Pages*<sup>TM</sup> directory of twenty or thirty years ago. Back then, businesses knew that a *Yellow Pages* listing was essential for getting in front of customers who were actively involved in making a purchase. Search engines today are a similar kind of marketing “table stakes” – without a solid presence there, businesses simply aren’t in the game!

There are certainly other tools to increase traffic and grow sales from your website, including social media marketing and online advertising. However, because of the dominance of search engines, they are the most fruitful place to start for many businesses.

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## TURNING YOUR WEBSITE INTO A CONVERSION MACHINE

In tandem with a search engine strategy, web optimization involves making sure your site effectively converts traffic into business results. To do this, you need great content and offers, and you also need to make it easy for visitors to do what you want them to do. Whether that means calling you, providing their contact information, downloading content or making a purchase, a website needs to be designed with those goals in mind. A website that is optimized for conversions will feature clear calls-to-action, prominent contact information, and forms that are easy to complete. It will also minimize the number of steps visitors have to take to convert. If your presence on search engines is all about getting visitors closer to you, the job of your website is to move them across the finish line, turning those visitors into leads and customers.

<sup>1</sup> <http://fleishmanhillard.com/2012/01/31/2012-digital-influence-index-shows-internet-as-leading-influence-in-consumer-purchasing-choices/>

<sup>2</sup> [www.google.com/placesforbusiness](http://www.google.com/placesforbusiness)

## FIVE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL WEB OPTIMIZATION

For businesses that are interested in web optimization, where should you start? While there is no single approach, the following five guidelines will help you on your way and ensure that your web optimization efforts are a success.

### 1. PUT THE BASICS IN PLACE

Web optimization can involve some complex tactical activities, so it often makes sense to start with the basics first. Once these are in place you can monitor the results and use them as a baseline as you move into more sophisticated web optimization programs.

The following steps are fairly easy to do and ensure that your website has a solid foundation for further optimization:

- Google is the dominant search engine in Canada (responsible for almost two-thirds of search traffic<sup>3</sup>!), so it is a great place to start strengthening your online presence. If you haven't already done so, [claim your free listing on Google](#). When entering your profile information, be sure to follow Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices such as including target keywords in the "description" and "category" fields. And don't forget to include your phone number and upload photos. Creating a separate [Google+ Business Pages](#) will also help ensure a more favourable ranking on the search giant, especially with local searches. Be sure to also check your local rankings with Yahoo! and *bing*<sup>™</sup>.
- Investigate key online directories to list your business, including both national listings and industry-specific directories. Most directories offer a free, basic listing that can help expand your sources of web traffic. Some directories also help boost your rankings on certain search engines.
- Update your website contact information. One of the easiest steps you can take to turn your website into a conversion machine is to put your contact information front and centre. Instead of listing contact information only on your Contact Us page, make sure that at least your phone number appears in the header area of your website.



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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.marktheglobe.com/seo-canada/>

## 2. FOCUS

Many websites and web pages underperform because they try to be all things to all visitors. Here the 80/20 rule often applies. Consider what most customers want most of the time and design your website around those products or services. Generally, these will also be the items that are searched most frequently, increasing your chances of attracting web traffic. Devoting too much of your website to less popular, lower-volume items can have the effect of “watering down” its effectiveness in generating traffic from search engines.

A related option here is to focus your website on the products and services that are important for future growth. For example, if a dentist has recently invested in a teeth-whitening machine, the home page of the website could be focused on whitening services to help kick-start that side of the business. A law office branching out into a new real-estate practice could include a write-up on its home page to promote the new offering.

When you have several different offerings to promote, you can use dedicated “landing pages” to provide focus. For each offering, create a unique web page that is rich in related keywords and content. Because each of your website pages is tracked separately by search engines, landing pages give you a chance to rank highly for many different search terms. Instead of displaying your home page for a particular search phrase, the search engine can point visitors to one of your more relevant landing pages. Landing pages not only help with search rankings, they help increase conversions; the more closely your landing page matches the visitor’s search term, the higher the conversion rate.

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### 3. EVALUATING YOUR BUDGET

Before embarking on a web optimization project, you'll need to establish a budget. This can seem daunting since there are many different ways to go about web optimization. The best starting point for budgeting is to size it up the same way you would any other investment: how much you are prepared to pay for a certain return.

Before soliciting any quotes for web optimization work or deciding how much time to devote to it, a simple funnel model is a great way to determine whether you have set an appropriate budget. You can start by calculating or estimating the average lifetime value of one new customer – in other words, how much profit they generate in the average time they remain a customer. Based on that, you can work out how many new customers you would need to generate enough ROI for a given investment in web optimization. Working back even further, you can estimate how much new traffic your web optimization program will need to generate in order to create that many new customers.

As an example, let's assume that a business generates an average profit of \$500 per customer, and its average monthly spend on web optimization is \$1000. From that, the business knows that the web optimization project must generate an average of two new customers per month to be successful.

Whatever assumptions or numbers you use to set a budget, there are two things to keep in mind. The first is to treat web optimization like the investment that it is and evaluate performance based on the business return. The second is to check and update your assumptions as the program unfolds. The more you can learn about your actual conversion rates, average customer spending, etc. the better able you are to set the right level of ongoing investment.



#### 4. MEASURE YOUR RESULTS

This last point leads naturally to the importance of measurement. Successful web optimization depends on your ability to monitor results and see what's working and what's not.

Probably the most important measurement tool is a web analytics package like Google Analytics. Web analytics provides a wealth of insight into the activity on your website: where visitors came from, which search terms brought them there, and which pages they visited. This information helps you assess the effectiveness of both your search engine presence and your website as a conversion machine.

Other important measurement tools include special tracking numbers that can be routed to your phone, and your website search data. If your website has a search box, the log of search terms entered by visitors provides helpful insights into what content or products they are interested in.

When measuring results and evaluating your web optimization program, it is also important to look at the results over the right timeframe. For example, with many web optimization projects, especially those relating to search engine optimization, it can take as much as 45 to 60 days for your efforts to start bearing fruit. Web optimization can be a quick route to growing your sales, but it is also a long-term strategy that involves an ongoing commitment to reviewing results and adjusting as required.

Web analytics provides a wealth of insight into the activity on your website: **where visitors came from, which search terms brought them there, and which pages they visited.**





## 5. GET A PARTNER TO HELP

For business owners and marketers, two of the biggest challenges with web optimization are the time and complexity involved. While some of the activities involved are straightforward and easy to learn, web optimization does involve a degree of specialized knowledge – and time – to make it work. Many businesses that try the do-it-yourself approach find that it leads to long hours and uncertain results.

The surest route to success with web optimization is getting the help of a partner that specializes in the field. When choosing a partner, there are two important things to look for. The first is comprehensive expertise in the field of online marketing and web optimization. At a minimum, this should include web design expertise and search engine marketing expertise (which covers search engine optimization and paid-search marketing, also known as pay-per-click marketing).

It also helps to look for partners that are accredited in search engine marketing. Web optimization is not a regulated field, but several programs do exist to ensure that partners meet a minimum professional standard. Specific accreditations to look for include Google Adwords Certification, Google Premier SMB Partners, and the Accredited Professional program for *bing*, the *Microsoft*® search engine.

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## ROGERS CAN HELP

For business owners who have been in the dark about what their website is doing for them, web optimization not only helps deliver results, it ensures that those contributions are clearly understood.

If you are interested in a web optimization program and need more advice or assistance, Rogers can help. Our Google accredited *OutRank*™ program offers a complete web optimization service with several benefits:

- *OutRank* acts as your marketing team in a box, providing everything you need to help your website drive more business.
- With the *OutRank* service, your website becomes a true the conversion machine, delivering 3 to 4 times the average number of calls and emails of a do-it-yourself web optimization program.
- *OutRank* provides you with a marketing specialist dedicated to understanding your business and delivering the best results for your program.

To learn more, visit the [OutRank website](#), or [contact an OutRank representative](#).

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