

# Search Engine Marketing: Algorithm Driving Customers Behaviour

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## Abstract:

Marketing by search engines guides clients through their search criteria to your website. This non-intrusive Internet marketing approach is unique in that at the moment they are finding information or a solution, it taps a customer. That brings a new level of complexity and customer touch to marketing. Search engine websites like Google and Yahoo have become popular when looking for websites and information for Internet users to use. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) requires that the search engine on the web is helpful. This approach optimizes the ability of a site so that search engines in their rankings rate the Web site higher. Nonetheless, most online sellers do not invest in search engine optimization (SEO) to get higher search results rankings for their listings but choose paid placements instead. We demonstrate that SEO is more costly than paid placements, yields results that do not justify their cost, and does not reliably result in high rankings of search results. Even though SEO and paid placement cost the same and SEO still generated high rankings, pay placement will still be the search engine marketing strategy of choice for most online sellers. The paper gives a bird's eye view of search engine optimization and further an online retailer survey was performed to find out how they will be using the SEO in the near future.

**Keywords:** PPC, Search Engine Optimization, Search Engine Marketing.

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## I. INTRODUCTION:

The responses are remarkably consistent over the course of a year among 10,000 people from hundreds of groups as diverse as college students, marketing professionals and executives. Between 80 and 100 percent of people raise their hands to show that they are using a search engine to find a solution to a question or to study a product, or that they are linking to a website as a result of a recommendation from a relative, colleague or family member. Clearly, using search engines to be identified, and providing people with valuable website content until they are vital to any company. Unlike non-target, interruption-based, in-your-face ads, the material that appears in search engines when

someone types in a sentence is content that they really want to learn [1], [2]. Instead than trying to persuade people by dreaming up messages and marketing campaigns to pay attention to your goods and services, search engines deliver interested customers right at the virtual doorway of your business. Many marketers don't know how to use this exciting method of marketing though. Marketers spend way too much time thinking about the keywords and phrases they want to prepare for and not enough time producing excellent website content, which the search engines would reward with lots of traffic, educating and informing visitors. Most organizations do a good job gathering search phrases and being indexed by the engines,

but almost all of them are bad when creating a landing page, the place people go after clicking on a hit search results. Many small businesses (77 per cent) still advertise through print and online Yellow Pages, but search engine marketing now ranks seventh among the advertisement and promotion tools that small businesses use. The advent of search in the advertisement mix for small businesses may very well have an impact on the \$25 billion global yellow pages industry [3]–[5]. Specifically, 17 per cent of the small businesses that advertise use search engine keyword advertisement and/or paid inclusion ads as a way to attract potential customers. In addition, almost 50 percent of these small businesses now link to the Internet via some form of high-speed access — a 67 percent rise from a year ago.

## 2.0 SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING:

A novel method of marketing has evolved with the exponential growth of the Internet over the past decade; it takes advantage of the entirely new possibilities available by search engine technology. Search engine marketing (SEM) refers to a range of strategies that allow organizations to advertise based on the behaviors and interests of target audiences [6]–[8]. Over the last few years, Search Engine Marketing (SEM) has emerged as a mini-industry of its own, particularly with Google's emergence. Compared with conventional ads it is still not considered to be a mature industry. SEM is part art, and part technology/science.

### Why should you care about search?

According to data from Nielsen / Netratings Megaview Quest, there were 5.6 Billions of searches during the month of July 2006. The search figure includes local searches, image searches, news searches, searches for shopping and other vertical search activity. People are searching for information, searching for goods to purchase, finding the latest news or maybe looking for local destinations for a weekend retreat [9]–[12]. The argument is search is important because search will bring your site to targeted tourists. According to Nielsen / Netratings figures from July 2006, Google

actually dominates the search volume at 49.2%, followed by Yahoo! at 23.8% and MSN at 9.6%. 82.6 per cent of all searches make up the top three search engines! That's why most of the SEO efforts are focused on these three engines to get visibility.

### Organic SEO vs PPC

Organic SEO needs patience, and a lot of that. Anyone who claims to be able to place your site at the top of the search engines in just a few days, in almost every case, is using some kind of spamming techniques. Developers of the search engine are smart people, and can find out about your site and delete it. If the initial SEO project has been completed, instead of changing the site regularly, it's best to just sit down and wait a few months and see whether and whether the efforts have paid off. If done correctly, organic SEO will have a lasting impact on search engine rankings. That is, if you are that your time or money spent on SEO, your site should not immediately drop out of sight from the search. Organic SEO needs an investment balance (in both time and money) and incentives as well. To achieve top ranking for an extremely competitive keyword needs considerable effort and support when the job is outsourced to an SEO or specialist. And it's really important to make the correct decision about the goals of your SEO campaign. PPC's advantage is that the campaign results are almost instantaneous. All PPC vendors have bid management software for monitoring and managing the campaign (e.g. cost/click, total search term clicks, etc.). PPC wants just like a hungry baby.

#### ➤ How search engines work

You open a web browser, go to your favorite search engine and type in the search box in a few words. Literally within a few seconds, viola, a list of the tests (both organic and paid) is returned. How does that work? The search engines do three crucial things to represent the results:

(1) The search engine analyzes the words typed in by the searcher, and finds the pages that match those words.

(2) Order and rank the pages of the search engine, so that the best matched pages are at the top.

That is where the algorithm for the ranking comes in. This algorithm is known only to the search engine developers, and it is constantly being developed and updated. Many SEOs are chasing the algorithm, or trying to guess it second by trying to boost their ranking. It's a waste in time and not a worthwhile project in most instances.

(3) Show the search results to the searcher. Indeed, the search engine does not scan web pages right after you typed in the search word. The search engine has a special database, named the search index, which includes a list of all the terms on all the web pages which it has ever crawled and indexed. The indexing method can be described as the search engine that retrieves the words from any web page and stores them in a big table.

The table of keywords includes a list of terms and corresponding document identification numbers (the document ID refers to a item on the web page) that have such words. The document table has the document ID containing the details for the respective web page such as URL, Title page and definition. The search index in terms of its search words is populated well before the searcher type. The indexing is the work the search engines do in preparation. That is why it's really important to make the search engines index your website.

The most common of these techniques is pay per click (PPC) [13]–[15]. It involves bidding on keywords that an organization believes its target audience would type in the search bar, when looking for its kinds of products or services. It counts on users to see its ad, click on it, and either inquire about or subscribe to its plan. PPC ads are free to users, and an advertiser pays only when they click on the ad. Per-click prices start at five cents and increase indefinitely.

SEM strategies consist of one or more of the following actions:

- Keyword-related banner advertisements
- Paid submission/paid listing and paid inclusion for regular updates
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Paid placements (PP)

## HOW DOES SEO WORK?

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Effective SEO includes removing architectural or navigational obstacles to search engine spiders that catalog the content of your site, creating an environment rich in relevant keywords and phrases and promoting internal and external links to your site. Many variables work together. Page titles, copy and query string modifications and other adjustments over time can impact rankings and traffic for relevant keywords. Since the search engines do not accept payment for placement within these search results, there are no guarantees of success, only best practices to follow. Implementing a solid SEO strategy provides several benefits and with care and tending the rankings and traffic associated with a well executed SEO program, is likely to last for a significant period of time as content and linking build in the site. When a visitor conducts a search on Google, or another engine, the ranking results are based on relevance to the visitor's search. These are called "organic" or "natural" search results and they are endowed with a high level of credibility because they are ranked by the engine itself - not based upon the highest bidder. The search engines strive for relevancy because that improves the user experience and increases the likelihood that the user will rely on them in the future. Each time a user completes a search, that search engine is creating revenue from advertisers. They have a financial incentive to create relevancy. This creates a leapfrog of technology as the engines make continual changes in search of greater relevancy and revenue and compete for users.

### ➤ ONLINE BUSINESS STRATEGIES: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Here are five things you may do to optimize your website. Remember that you are optimizing individual pages to rank well. Apply these techniques to each of your pages.

- 1. Create a keyword rich title.**
- 2. Add a keyword rich description and Meta tags.**
- 3. Include your keywords in the file name.**
- 4. Write keyword rich content.**
- 5. Build backlinks.**

#### **4.0 WHERE DOES PPC (PAY-PER-CLICK) COME IN?**

Search engines use a combination of organic and paid listings results to fulfill search queries by visitors. This mix delivers content judged relevant by the individual search engines as well as listings from advertisers who are willing to pay a premium to appear in the top sponsored listings. The engines need to strike a unique balance of the two to satisfy searchers as well as maintain their revenue source from paid advertising.

##### **➤ HOW DOES PPC WORK?**

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising allows advertisers to bid on keywords and phrases in search engines that may increase traffic to their respective websites. Advertisers place small text ads that will show above or next to the organic results of the search engines and pay only when searchers click on their ad. This gives advertisers in highly competitive industries a chance to buy placement they may have been crowded out of in natural search. PPC advertising allows for a very high degree of budget and campaign control. You can control the total budget, set daily budgets and a maximum cost per click. Smart PPC campaigns segregate keywords into adgroup buckets that can be managed to specific budget, timing or audience requirements. PPC campaigns also allow for a great deal of creative control, as ad content is written by the advertiser and modified at will, subject to search engine editorial guidelines. If your website doesn't rank consistently high on the natural search results, a good PPC campaign can provide prominent placement among the top search results. Google and Yahoo! offer options to not only advertise on their search results but also on their networks of content sites that make it easier for advertisers to extend the reach of their campaigns. PPC campaigns provide immediate and measurable results. Within minutes, your advertisements may be live and displayed in the search results. Tracking metrics such as the number of impressions and clicks, leads or sales, makes PPC search engine marketing one of the most measurable types of marketing available. Consider, however, that just as quickly as you can

see business grow from the creation of a PPC campaign, it also disappears when that campaign ends (when the budget is exhausted). The search engine marketplace is getting increasingly competitive, driving bid prices higher requiring more strategic planning as well diligent optimization and monitoring to maintain a positive ROI.

#### **5.0 MARKETER BENEFITS:**

For Example: Healthcare in particular is a multifaceted vertical—encompassing prescription and over-the-counter drugs, medical procedures, health insurance, research, and other subtopics. Each of these categories will have different goals and performance measures, but it wouldn't be out of the question to see a 10- to-1 return on investment for some of them. Marketing goals in PPC can be very broad (e.g., promoting the talent of a high-profile surgical field) or specific (e.g., increasing prescription orders by promoting a certain drug to doctors and patients). What is extraordinary about SEM is the amount of flexibility it provides marketers, which produces a large degree of success. With all the details and concepts involved in PPC marketing, it is often a challenge for traditional organizations to know where and how to start. They should realize that most search engines take this into account; many user-friendly aspects are built into AdWords and other programs. It is in the search engine's best interest to make it easy to begin and operate a campaign, so it tries to provide resources for marketers to accomplish their goals. A first step is simply signing up for an account and attempting to make it work using those available resources. If the proposed campaign is large enough to require a fulltime employee to manage it, or tolerance for mistakes is low, then there is frequently an economy in hiring professional ad agencies. They have developed and tested successful strategies that might be unknown to people outside the SEM industry.

#### **6.0 SEARCH-ENGINE MANIPULATION: A WINNING INGREDIENT IN THE MARKETING MIX**



Search-engine manipulation is extremely important when selling on-line. Not only is it important to build the right type of website for your industry and your audience, but you've got to commit the resources to market it. In my opinion, you're wasting your time and money to launch a website on the cheap and just see how it does. The Internet Retailer survey also asked e-retailers whether they preferred paid key-word or natural-language searches; how many key-word searches they manage; whether they manage search-engine marketing in-house or rely on outside vendors; how much they pay on average for key-word searches; and which search engine produced the best results. Fifty-seven percent of respondents said they use both paid key-word and natural-language searches. The rest were split evenly, with those using natural language- search marketing only level only reporting a higher level of on-line sales. With regard to the number of key words managed, 21 percent of respondents said search engines contribute to more than 60 percent of sales when they manage 5,000 or more key words. The most popular level of spending on a key word is 10 to 25 cents per click, according to the survey. Interestingly, those who spent more per click -some as much as \$1 - did not significantly increase their sales. Those respondents that manage their search programs in-house tend to outperform other e-retailers that rely on outside vendors or search-engine management. Google is number one because it has such a commanding share of the overall search market - almost 73 percent of respondents said Google is the best search engine when it comes to producing online sales.

## **7.0 SEARCH MARKETING, ESPECIALLY OPTIMIZATION, FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE:**

Retailers have been looking for any competitive edge they can find to grow sales—or in some cases maintain sales at a level that keeps the company afloat. During this highly volatile period, paid search and natural search optimization are two strategies that have been helping retailers achieve their goals, according to a survey of 50 web-only

retailers, chain retailers, catalogers and consumer brand manufacturers. 41.9% of retailers say paid search advertising has been outperforming all other forms of marketing, the survey finds. 35.6% say it is performing at least as well as it had been prior to September, while 22.5% say it is performing worse. This recession has forced many retailers to be more efficient with search and its integration with other online activities. This provides a partial explanation of why 42% say they're getting better results with paid search. Another reason paid search is serving retailers well in the sour economy is because it's highly flexible and scalable.

**TABLE-I**

<b>DO YOU PLAN TO INCREASE OR DECREASE SPENDS ON SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION FOR NATURAL SEARCH?</b>				
	ALL	Store	Catalog	Manufacturer
Increase	55.3%	38.2%	36.4%	70.6%
Decrease	8.8%	5.9%	15.2%	5.9%
Keep about same	35.9%	55.9%	48.5%	23.5%

**TABLE-II**

<b>WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY BUSINESS</b>	
Store Based Merchant	17.0%
Catalog	16.0 %
Web Only Retailer	58.7%
Consumer Brand Manufacturer	8.3%

**TABLE-III**

<b>DO YOU PLAN TO INCREASE OR DECREASE SPENDS ON SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION FOR NATURAL SEARCH?</b>	
Increase	55.3%
Decrease	8.8%
Keep about the same	35.9%

**TABLE-IV**

<b>WHICH FORMS OF MARKETING DO YOU EXPECT TO PERFORM BETTER THAN PAID SEARCH?</b>	
Email	55.2%
Affiliate	25.6%
Online Display Ads	8.9%
Social Networking Presence	30.5%
Text Messages to Mobile	5.9%

Phones	
None, Paid search will perform better	23.6%

**TABLE-V**

<b>HOW MUCH DO YOU PLAN TO INCREASE YOUR NATURAL SEARCH SPEND</b>	
5% or less	10.7%
6% to 10%	16.1%
11% to 15%	8.0%
Social Networking Presence	30.5%
Text Messages to Mobile Phones	5.9%
None, Paid search will perform better	23.6%

Paid search is very quick and responsive. More retailers are investing in search engine optimization as the economy worsens. Moving forward through the severe recession, 55.3% plan to increase spending on search engine optimization to achieve better natural search results. 35.9% will keep this spending about the same, and a scant 8.8% plan to decrease spending. Only 24.2% plan to increase spend on paid search; 45.9% plan to keep it about the same while 30% plan to decrease spending. Retailers are turning their attention more to optimization to improve natural search results than focusing on getting the best keyword mix in paid search. The reason in part is because natural search is reaping rewards for retailers: In the past year, 46.3% of retailers say their natural search conversion rate went up. Paid search enables retailers to change search strategies at the drop of a hat while search engine optimization is a process that takes time to build and hone. In paid search, you get that sense of what the next dollar is doing for you both very quickly and through experience. One way or the other, retailers view search engine marketing as a key strategy during the hard times ahead. At the same time, though, some have greater faith in other forms of marketing to boost sales—some of which astonish the experts. 55.2% of retailers who responded to the survey say e-mail marketing will perform better than search during the severe recession.

## CONCLUSION

SEM provides unique opportunities that are unavailable in other forms of marketing. It is important to understand the aspects of both SEM and a particular business, to find synergies between them for the best possible use of ad dollars. Organizations have run many successful campaigns themselves. Additionally, full-service firms can manage SEM for organizations that seek greater expertise in the field. Overall, SEM's benefits far outweigh the costs and management hassles. Organizations that take advantage of it early will gain competitive advantage, which will bear fruit far into the future.

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