

## SEO Course

### *A 15 minute Introduction to Internet Marketing*

This course is a little different than most others. It is designed to give busy people a quick overview of Internet marketing. We show how different tactics are related to each other. You can test your knowledge by taking the [SEO Cartoon Quiz](#). The course is best for people who:

- Want a quick introduction to Internet marketing
- Want to hire an Internet marketing firm and need to know more about the subject in a hurry
- Are working with an Internet marketing firm and want to be more knowledgeable about the subject

### **Why is it called SEO if we are teaching Internet Marketing?**

One of the most important lessons in Internet Marketing is to use the same language that your customers use. This is an old rule that is also true for offline marketing also. Online, however, it is critical. We will clarify this later.

SEO, which stands for search engine optimization, never really was a good description for what SEO is. We are not optimizing the search engines – rather, we are optimizing our web sites. To make things more confusing, web optimization now refers to optimizing a web site for conversions (sales and leads).

A long time ago, SEO was the main technique for driving traffic to web sites. Today, we have PPC (pay per click advertising-usually on search engines), SMO (social media optimization) and many others. However, many people still use SEO as a description for web marketing. This is especially true outside the US. In America, people are quicker to adopt new buzzwords. In the rest of the world, where English is more often a second language, the adoption rate is slower.

SEM (search engine marketing) is a more recent and broader term than SEO since it includes PPC and SEO. Internet marketing is broader still and includes: SEO, PPC, paid ads, email marketing, SMO, web analytics, conversion optimization, affiliate marketing, etc. However, SEO is easier to write into a search engine, easier for many people to use and is a better known term especially for people who are not familiar with the subject. Therefore, it is often used as a synonym for Internet Marketing for newcomers. That is why we called our course: SEO 101.

I hope that this SEO course helps you start your journey in this fascinating subject.

# Internet Marketing Strategy Overview

## *Internet Marketing Plan*

The Internet Marketing Plan is, first and foremost, part of a company's overall marketing strategy. Before starting to develop an Internet marketing plan, review your company's existing overall marketing plan. An Internet Marketing Strategy must work in tandem with the company's overall plans. In many cases, internet research results can help companies improve their offline marketing.

## *4 Step Internet Marketing Process*

**In order to help you remember, we call this process RAIM™ -  
Research \* Analysis \* Internet Marketing \* Monitoring**

1. **Research**, is a multi-phase process. Research includes defining your goals and examining your website in terms of those goals; gathering information relevant to your goals; and defining search terms to direct traffic to your website.
2. **Analysis** includes keyword analysis and analysis of your competition. Synthesize your data and create a report .it in an easy-to-read format.
3. After analyzing the information, create an **Internet Marketing** strategy. This strategy can include various Internet Marketing tools, and implementation of marketing methods.
4. The last phase of RAIM™, **Monitoring**, starts after the Internet marketing strategy has been implemented. The success of the project is monitored closely. This includes monitoring paths to the site, search engine positions, email responses, funnels, etc. Monitoring information and rapid feedback response is used to tweak the Internet Marketing implementation to further improve marketing results right away.

## Internet Marketing Research

Internet Marketing **Research** is the first component of the RAIM™ (Research\*Analysis\*Internet Marketing\*Monitoring) system. Research usually comprises one or more of the following steps, although this can change, depending on the circumstances.

- The first step is to gather relevant research that is connected to your Internet space. This may include information on your client profiles' internet usage, email opt-in lists that are available, web site portals that are relevant to your products, etc.
- **Investigate what your competitors are up to.** Use the Internet and offline marketing research methods to quickly gather information. [Adgooroo](#) is one example of a site that can supply information. An inexpensive (and slower) option is to query the search engines themselves. Pay attention to your competitor's:
  - Ad text
  - Ad positions
  - Keywords used in their ppc campaigns
  - Natural Search Engine Position

Also monitor relevant blogs, forums and Web 2.0 sites such as YouTube and Flickr to find out more information about your competitors and your marketing space.

This information can then be used to formulate internet marketing strategies. However, this must be done carefully since your competitors are not always doing the right thing. Keep an open mind. Many times you can uncover extremely useful information. Although not necessarily relevant to the Internet marketing strategy, this information can be used in other ways.

- **Examine your existing site in light of your goals.** For example, if you are trying to increase marketing leads and it is difficult to find the Contact Us information or you force people to fill out a form, you need to correct this before you start Internet marketing.
- **Check log files.** It is not unusual to find companies that rarely, if at all, examine the log files of their site. These files show much useful information that can be utilized when implementing an Internet marketing strategy. In many cases, companies use statistics packages which don't analyze the information which is critical for determining where future efforts should be focused. Make sure you have a procedure in place that can supply you with actionable items to improve your conversions. In many cases you will have to [take the information you get from your web analysis program and export it to a spreadsheet for further manipulation.](#)

- **Choose your keywords carefully.** Since improving positions in search engines is part of the Internet marketing strategy, you must research which keywords are relevant to the site as well as which keywords people are actually using to search. The [Google Keyword Tool](#) can give some basic information although it is not always as accurate as we would like—especially with low volume keywords. This step is extremely important as it doesn't help to implement search engine optimization for a keyword that no one is using or that won't result in conversions. The keywords must be relevant to those people who are looking for the kind of product/information that you are offering. Otherwise, if they arrive at the site when searching for something else they will leave the site fairly quickly.

## Internet Marketing Analysis

### Keyword Analysis

When analyzing keyword importance consider the following:

- **Amount of search engine traffic**  
You can earn more from a keyword that has many people using it than a keyword that is rarely used.
- **Amount of competition for both natural search and PPC ads**  
If two keywords have the same amount of traffic but one has less competition from other sites, you can more easily obtain a higher search engine position for the one with less competition and thereby make more sales.
- **Where the buyer is in the sales cycle**  
The sales cycle consists of research, shopping, and purchasing. A person looking for a cell phone is just starting to research and will be less likely to purchase it than someone searching for a specific brand name and model number cell phone..
- **Your required profit margin**  
Not all products have the same profit margin or conversion rate. An expensive, high profit product with few sales or an inexpensive product that is selling like hotcakes can justify large marketing resources such as high bids or more SEO efforts.

### Competitor Analysis

When analyzing ad text and site text you must be very critical. In many cases your competitors might not be doing the best thing. It is easy to get a feel for how much they are on top of things. Notice if they are using:

- Tags to track ads
- Landing pages
- [Conversion and lead optimization](#)

Internet research can quickly produce lots of information. It is very important to organize information from research in an easy to read fashion so an Internet Marketing Strategy can be formulated. Presentation graphics are also important.

## Internet Marketing Plan

After completing your research and analysis you need to formulate an Internet marketing plan. The Internet Marketing Plan must clearly state the objective of each Internet marketing tool, including: web sites, SEO, Internet advertising, and email campaigns.

For example: the goal of offline advertising may be to drive traffic to the web site whereas the goal of the website may be to have people download a free 30 day trial.

Budget constraints must be considered at this early stage to ensure that the Internet marketing plan is executable and matches available company funds. Internet marketing plan implementation is a process that can be accomplished even with limited budgets if resources are known and prioritized wisely from the beginning.

Time constraints must also be considered early on. **Many Internet Marketing Plan components such as SEO or building up an in-house email list, can take a long time to show results.**

Highly focused paid positions on carefully chosen search engines can often jump-start a time critical campaign, although this method's ROI must be constantly analyzed as prices tend to rise as more and more companies see the benefits of Internet marketing.

It is important to keep in mind that the goal of an Internet Marketing Plan is usually to increase sales or leads. Search engine rankings and traffic are only methods to reach that goal. You must put in place methods to monitor the success of each tool as well as goals. **If traffic is up but sales are down you must be alerted to this early on so you can find the problem and correct it.**

The methods used in Internet marketing are constantly changing with new methods added all the time. Let's now go through the major SEO strategies and tactics.

### SEO Strategies

An SEO strategy (search engine optimization) is needed to ensure that a site will be ranked high on various popular search engines to increase traffic to a company's web site. Increasing traffic to the site is only part of the job. Once people arrive at a website, they must be convinced to ask for more information, browse the site, buy an item, etc. More on this later.

The search engines are continually updating their algorithms to produce better search results. However they keep the algorithms a secret. Therefore, you need to continually test everything you know and everything you read in this SEO course as well as everything you read elsewhere.

## SEO process

There are basically, two methods to improve search engine positions:

1. Acquiring links
2. Optimizing the web pages—also known as on-site SEO

## On-Site SEO

On site SEO involves improving the HTML code. For example, carefully write tags and optimize the text on the site to include your keywords. Different search engine preferences must be taken into account. For example, some take into account keyword metatags and some don't. A search engine optimization strategy must prioritize which engines and/or keywords by search engine are most important and focus on those. Google has the most traffic by far, so in most cases you should concentrate on their algorithm.

It is critical not to do anything that is considered spam by the search engines as this can get you banned from the engine. Once this happens, it is not easy to get back in.

## Optimizing Text for Search Engines

Although we are now discussing search engine optimization, web site text must be optimized for three types of visitors: search engine spiders, directory editors and potential clients. Of course, each visitor segment is composed of many different types -- each of which must be accommodated. The SEO strategy should determine which are the most important and prioritize accordingly.

Text optimization includes:

- Making sure your keywords appear in the text
- Repeating keywords more than once (some people believe keywords should be a certain percentage of the total text)
- Placing keywords in prominent positions such as headlines
- Using keywords in the title tags, and description tags

Some people believe that if you make your keywords too prominent and repeat them too often your rankings may suffer.

Even if you do not place your keywords on the web pages, you may still rank high in the SERPS (search engine results page). Such are the power of links.

One of the easiest ways to get links is to submit the site to directories.

## Internet Directory Strategy

Many times, links from directories can help your rankings in the search engines. In addition, directories can drive traffic. In many cases, industry specific directories are more important than [general directories](#) for driving traffic.

An Internet Directories Marketing Strategy is much different than search engine strategies because we are dealing with human editors who actually look at your site and decide its fate rather than a search spider crawling through your code. Hidden tags (including metatags) aren't going to help much with human editors. However, directories which don't use editors and accept all sites automatically do not usually provide good links. "Under construction" signs embedded in graphics which are invisible to search engine spiders are frowned upon by most Internet directory editors.

It is of utmost importance to register your site properly, since it is difficult to correct any mistakes. Thought should be given to which category is best -taking into account:

- Relevance of category
- Important keywords in the category name and on the page
- Number of links on the page (less is better)
- Ranking rules (alphabetically, rated, etc). The higher you rank on the page, the more traffic you will get.

### Internet Directory Description

The description is crucial. In addition to showing up under the site title, the keywords included will be used to activate the site in directory searches. All directory rules should be followed carefully and grammar and spelling mistakes must be avoided. Well-worded descriptions will reduce the dreaded editing by the editor who may edit out your carefully chosen keywords.

### How to Choose Which Internet Directories to Submit to

Registration for each directory should consider these factors:

- Number of pages spidered by search engines (more is better)
- Ratio of number of page spidered to number of pages not spidered (higher is better)
- Undesirable links to adult, gambling and similar sites
- Number and quality of links to the directory

- Frequency that pages are spidered (click on cache link in Google's search engine results to check this)
- Amount of directory traffic

Directories are only one way of obtaining links.

## Linking

### Your most important SEO tactic

Most Internet Marketing Linking Campaigns include having other sites link to your site. Establishing links from other sites has two major benefits:

1. The obvious, but sometimes overlooked advantage is that the link itself may help direct focused traffic to the site.
2. In addition, the important search engines place importance on links. Links from well ranked sites are usually best. Be careful not to link to or from link farms or other sites which have dubious goals. Good outbound links can also help an Internet marketing campaign.

Some sites may grant a link to your site on the condition that you link back. There is nothing wrong with this, however, links of this type should not be the only kind of you have. Site linking is the most important Internet marketing tool for improving search engine positions and should be combined with on site optimization which was covered previously.

Here are a few linking ideas:

- Create content that people will want to link to.
- Write articles or white papers that other sites will post with a link to your site
- Distribute Press Releases with links to your site
- Add your site to Web 2.0 social sites such as Del.icio.us, YouTube, etc
- List your site on relevant professional sites
- Submit your site to relevant government resources
- Ask your partners and distributors to link to your website



A good way to pick up more ideas is to watch what others are doing. One way to get this information is to use the [Yahoo link tool](#) to see who is linking to a particular site. Analyze the results and you may find some good insights.

## Paid Links: Google Adwords, Yahoo Search Marketing, MSN, and 3rd Party Sites

Many times it is worthwhile to pay for high positions on search engines. All major search engines use a PPC (pay per click) model. This means you don't have to pay whenever your ad is seen; you only pay when your ad is clicked on.

Many people start with a PPC campaign because SEO work takes longer to bear fruit. You can consider phasing out your paid positions as your site's organic positions improve, although in many cases it is best to do both.

### 3rd Party Sites

Many of the search engines have programs where they will place your ads on 3rd party sites. Google Adwords, for example has two options for this:

1. You pay per click as you do for the ads on the search engine
2. You pay per impression and you can pick and choose which sites you want to appear on.

Google Adwords also gives you the option of placing graphic and video ads on some 3rd party sites.

**In addition, many sites accept advertising directly.** There are many pay schemes including:

- Set fee for a specific period of time
- Number of impressions
- Number of click-throughs
- Number of conversions
- Free for reciprocal banner

In addition to advertising on sites, many discussion groups and ezines (electronic magazines) accept ads at very reasonable rates. The important thing to remember when placing paid ads is to monitor the results closely. Besides the importance of knowing where your leads are coming from, click fraud (people or robots fraudulently clicking on ads to inflate your costs) is a growing concern.

## International SEO

International SEO, otherwise known as Global SEO or Multilingual SEO can refer to one or more of the following:

- Localizing the web site for cultural and/or linguistic reasons
- Marketing the site using local search engines in each country and other country specific resources
- Marketing the site to a global audience

One important factor to research is whether or not the target audience uses local search engines and if so, which ones. Here is a resource for [local country search engines](#). [What's the resource?] You can also check your referrals in log files--although this will only help if the site has respectable positions in country specific search engines.

### Country Specific Search Engine Optimization

Most standard well-known engines and directories have local versions in many different countries. However, they are not always the most popular in terms of use. Also, different engines have different criteria for inclusion. Some may demand that the site (or parts of a global site) be in the local language, others demand a local URL and still others expect the company to be incorporated locally.

It is important to note that results from Google may differ from country to country. For example, if you check your positions in Google from the US that doesn't mean you will have the same position in England.

### Multilingual SEO

Even if you decide not to submit the site to local search engines it may be worthwhile to translate the site into local languages. Some major search engines will spider the site in many local languages irrespective of the country URL.

You also need to consider that English needs special treatment. There are many differences in how you approach English. Two examples are the differences between native speakers vs. English as a second language visitors, as well as American English speakers vs. British English speakers.

One overlooked fact in a global SEO campaign is that if there is a localized site and it is successful, the company will receive inquiries in these local languages and should prepare itself accordingly.

# Email Marketing

## Email Marketing Strategies and Tactics

Sending direct email messages to people who are interested in your product or service can be effective. The trick is to determine who these people are. Sending out large quantities of email to people who don't appreciate the message you are sending - known as spam - can be counterproductive.

Research has shown that people who receive messages in which they are interested do not regard the message as spam. There are many ways of obtaining email addresses of potential clients who will not regard your message as spam:

- Build your own list by asking people who visit your site to sign up for an ezine or periodic updates
- Use your own list of existing clients' emails
- Buy a quality list from a REPUTABLE source
- Outsource your email campaign to a REPUTABLE vendor who has a list which is relevant to your product or service.

Always give people the option to opt-out of your list.

## Preparing the message

Writing an email message requires great care and forethought. The subject line is especially important as it determines whether or not someone will open the mail or not. In any case, it is wise to send tests to a small number of recipients to test their reaction. At this point the message can be improved based on their reactions.

Email is relatively inexpensive compared to traditional mail. In addition to text - photos and multimedia can also be sent. One of the big advantages of email messages is the monitoring which is possible with this method. For example, if there are two links in a message, each one could have a different address making it possible to monitor which one is more effective.

## Conversion Optimization

### Increasing Leads and Sales After People Come to the Site

Increasing focused traffic to a company's web site and sending emails to appropriate potential clients are important tactics. However, they are just the first step. **The goal of online marketing is to start a conversion process.** A conversion can be defined in many ways:

- An inquiry initiated by a potential client by telephone, fax, email, or filling out a form for more information
- An on-line sale
- A potential client bookmarking the site for a return visit
- A visitor emailing the site to a friend or colleague who would be interested in your product/service
- Downloading a white paper
- Filling out a form for a newsletter

In other words, your goal is to initiate a relationship between you and the person you've successfully reached through your online marketing. If he or she just clicks to another web site, they are lost to you.

[Leads and Sales conversion optimization is an involved process that includes 3 major steps:](#)

- **Creating Personas.** On a website you cannot react or adjust your approach to each visitor as a salesperson would do. However since different people have different concerns you can create personas which act as metaphors for different types of concerns. The next step is to address those concerns.
- **Removing obstacles to converting.** This can include answering questions that you anticipate will be asked such as advantages over other products, prices, or return policy. Each persona has to have their concerns answered. Different click through paths may be used to achieve this so one persona doesn't have his momentum slowed down with material that doesn't interest her
- **Testing and optimizing further.** A/B and multivariate testing should be used to optimize the site continuously

# Monitoring

## Web Analytics for Monitoring Internet Marketing Strategies Results

Monitoring results is the 4th key phase of the RAIM™ system.

Typical web analytic reports include:

- Search engine positions by keyword
- Total traffic
- Keywords used to reach site through search engines and PPC ads
- Referral sites - both free and paid
- Conversion rates

The problem with many of these reports is that they are too general to result in actionable items. Therefore, it is important to use a web analytics package which will allow you to segment visitors and dig down into the details. For example, finding out how much traffic you have is nice to know. However, that metric won't tell you much. Increasing traffic could be from:

- Spammers
- People who come and leave immediately (high bounce rate)
- People going to your less profitable products whereas your high profit items actually have a decrease in traffic

Web analytics has come a long way but it is still in its infancy. In many cases in order to produce easy to read reports with the information you need to make accurate decisions - you will have to export the information to a spreadsheet where you can manipulate the data. Make sure your web analytics package has this capability.

You should also make sure that you are monitoring your A/B page tests, A/B advertising copy tests and any other tests that you are conducting. This is essential in order to make sure your results are always being optimized.

This is the end of the 10 Minute SEO course. You now have a basic overview of many of the main concepts and methods used in SEO and Internet marketing. If you need to know more there is no lack of information on the web. Good luck!

This is the end of our 15 Minute SEO Course. You now have a basic overview of many of the main concepts and methods of SEO and Internet marketing. **Test yourself by taking our [SEO Cartoon Quiz](#)**. Good luck!



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-16-

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