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SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING - SEM

Definition

Internet search engine activities associated with

- free search listing (Search Engine Optimization - SEO) and
- sponsored links (Pay Per Click - PPC)

that enable web sites to be ranked according to relevant keyword and phrase searches entered by customers who are either conducting research or looking to purchase goods and services.

How it works

Search engines use algorithms to rank web sites according to their relevancy to keyword searches. They do this by crawling web sites contextually - by written content and the code used to describe images and graphics. The greater the relevance, volume of information and association with experts and authorities contained within a website, the more likely your website will be ranked above others vying for greater visibility.

Benefits

- primary method of finding web sites
- qualified visitors ready to enquire or purchase
- highly ranked listings are perceived to be major brands

Free search listings

In order to achieve a valuable position in a search engine's free list, such as the top 5 listings for a relevant keyword search, a number of actions need to be taken to ensure your website is highly ranked.

These include relevant:

- title tag keyword description
- alt and meta tag descriptions of images, graphics and roll overs
- list of keywords and phrases
- website description
- keyword densities
- links to other web sites
- site map of structure

Once your website is SEO'd it can be submitted to the search engines and directories.

Paid search listings

Competitors bid for keywords relevant to their business offer. The more competitive the market segment the higher the price to achieve a desired ranking toward the top of the list where visitors will most likely see your advertisement and click on its link. Each click constitutes payment of the bid to the search engine in question. Conversion tracking enables companies to determine the results of their campaign.

Measuring results

Your website hosting services provider can provide access to statistics and analysis updated on a regular basis enabling companies to monitor the success of their strategies and make modifications to their free or paid search campaigns.