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The ABCs of Web site promotion >

Executive Summary:

Being first on a Google search list is desirable and attainable. Here's how.

By Janeson Keeley

Having your Web site appear on the first page of Google search results may be your virtual Holy Grail if you're a business owner wanting to increase traffic to your Web site. Search engine results pages (SERPs) show two categories of listings: unpaid "organic" rankings and paid ads. Because different techniques are used for each, and the jargon can be confusing, here are some tips for

decoding the acronyms you're likely to hear when you talk with a Web site promotion professional.

Search engine optimization (SEO). Roanoke SEO specialist Marty Martin describes search engine optimization as "the methodology and modifications made to a Web site's architecture, content, code base and link patterns to improve its organic [unpaid] rankings in search engine results pages (or SERPs)."

- In order to optimize your Web site, changes must be made to your site's
- It can take as long as eight weeks for these changes to affect search engine results.
- There is no quarantee that you'll get a first page ranking for your desired terms.
- There are many types of SEO services, so the cost may be a one-time fee or an on-going contract.

Pay-per-click (PPC). Pay-per-click ad campaigns generate ads that are displayed above or to the right of the unpaid results and labeled "Ads" or "Sponsored sites." Your ads are displayed when a search is made on a keyword on which you have bid.

· Ads can be implemented almost immediately and require no changes to your Web site's coding.



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- You are charged only when a visitor clicks on the ad, which takes her to a page on your Web site.
- Zach Thompson, senior partner at RYP Marketing in Daleville notes, "These results are positioned based on two main factors: the price being paid for the clicks and the percentage of people who see that ad that then click on it." In order for an ad to appear on the first page of the search results, your keyword bid must be competitive with others', and the ad receive clicks.
- The cost is ongoing and dependent on the cost-per-click for each term and the number of clicks each ad receives.

Search Engine Marketing or Management (SEM). This is relatively new term and does not have a universally accepted definition.

- Thompson uses the acronyms SEM and PPC interchangeably to refer to paid ad placement.
- Martin defines SEM as an "umbrella term" that includes SEO, PPC, and other types of paid inclusion.
- Pamela Hall, a Roanoke-area campaign director with AdzZoo, views SEM as including "multiple digital outlets available including Web site search engines, GPS devices, directory service listings, smart phones, [and] social media sites."

All of these techniques can be effective ways to get your site on the first page of Google search results, and they can be used separately or in combination. A knowledgeable Web site promotion professional can help you select the ones that are likely to be most effective for you.

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