What is SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) aims to draw the greatest amount of traffic possible to a website by bringing it to the top of a search engine's results. SEO is used by businesses and individuals to maximize the visibility of their websites and content in order to boost traffic and therefore business. Companies often hire SEO specialists to implement such strategies with the goal of maximizing organic traffic, which is the traffic that arrives at a website naturally and not as a result of paid search efforts, such as pay-per-click (PPC).

Breaking Down SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

SEO is a type of digital marketing that focuses specifically on driving a website higher in search results on sites such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Search engines are the most common vehicle in bringing organic (non-paid) traffic to a website, which makes SEO highly competitive: A successful strategy can bring a business a high level of exposure. Search engines can often see through an attempt to cater to the search engine instead of the user and will rank the site lower as a result. This process, called cloaking, uses all the necessary key words and strategies to make a site look information-rich and valuable on the surface in order to attract attention but doesn't actually offer value for the user.

SEO: Basic Strategies

The first search engines were relatively ineffective, as they couldn't do much more than search for pages that included specific keywords. Search engines have evolved over time and are complex enough to use hundreds of factors in their search algorithms.

Search Engine Optimization, or simply SEO, when successfully implemented, uses a combination of hundreds of methods and strategies to draw users to a website. They including the following:

Use of keywords or widely used phrases related to a site's purpose. When a user types a phrase into a search engine, the search engine combs through the sites that contain that phrase.

Consistent website updates. Sites that haven't produced new content in a while will be seen as less relevant. Any broken links or similar flaws will bring down a site's ranking.

Attention must be paid to the basic usability and design of a website. Search engines take into account the website's hierarchical structure and ease of navigation, as well as the quality of information and content it contains. Simpler sites with clear, concise and useful language tend to rank higher in search results.

Find ways to have other websites link to yours (linkbacks). A search engine views this as an indication that your site is valuable enough to be referenced by others. The higher ranked the site that links to you, the better.

Don't display your company's name or other important marketing material as part of an image, as the text in an image won't be included in a search engine's indexed results.

SEO Specialists vs. Generalists

It's often advisable for websites to hire an SEO specialist rather than use a generalist to handle such efforts, especially as a site grows more complex and its popularity increases.