



# ***3-Step Search Engine Optimisation***

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## **3-Step Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)**

You could have the best looking website on the internet or be paying for the most expensive and most comprehensive web hosting package but none of this makes any difference if your clients cannot find you!

### ***So how do I make my website more visible on the Internet?***

Through Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)! Basically SEO is a set of methodologies aimed at improving the position of a website in search engine listings such as Google, Yahoo and MSN.

### ***So how does it work?***

Driving a large amount of traffic to your website is best achieved by gaining top positions on the Google search engine. While Google's algorithm is very complex, the essence of what they are trying to achieve is quite simple - reward popular sites with good content.

Web site popularity is measured by the strength of the links that point to a page. Basically Google regards links to a page as 'votes'. Essentially, the more votes you have, the higher you will appear in the search results. Votes do vary in strength, so it's not just a numbers game. For example, a link to your site from the Google.com home page will provide a boost that may carry be equivalent to 100,000 votes from average web pages.

Building up good quality linking is the key to success on Google. Web sites that have already established good linking may find that a few simple changes to their web site could result in an immediate boost to their Google traffic.

In addition to its analysis of your links, Google will be assessing your web site for its quality and relevance to a requested keyword search. There are 3 easy steps that can be taken to help Google understand what your site is about as well as showing that your information is of value to users.

## **Step 1 - Optimise your Page Titles, Link Text and File Names**

There are many areas of your site that Google will be assessing; however three of the most important in my opinion are Page Titles, Link Text and File Names. It is vital that these components are connected and that they contain your target keywords.

For example, if you were to use a Page Title "Contact Us", it would be beneficial to use the file name `contact_us.html` and link to the page from other pages using the text "Contact Us". I've found that web sites will be rewarded by Google on a usability level if this direct connection is made. In regards to the link text component, the prominence of the link on the web page is a major factor to Google calculation of value. If the text appears closer to the top of the page you will score more points.

In addition to matching these 3 components together, you may need to insert some keywords to boost your website's relevance for a specific search. If your company was called "Leather Boots R Us" and you were wanting to rank for the keyword search "leather boots" you could then go ahead and rename your "Contact Us" page to be "Contact Leather Boots R Us". It would then be beneficial to change your file name to `contact-leather-boots-r-us.html2` and your link text to

"Contact Leather Boots R Us". Keep in mind that the insertion of keywords needs to be balanced as too many occurrences will have a negative impact on your search engine positions.

## **Step 2 - Provide quality content**

Providing your visitors with great content will be rewarded by the major search engines. You will need to keep in mind that a search engine is simply a program and as such will judge content quality differently to that of a human visitor. When a search engine looks at content, it will be looking at the amount of content displayed and the formatting that has been used. Using headings, large text and user friendly colours will all contribute to a higher ranking with search engines. It is highly possible that Google also considers the content from pages that are linking to the page being assessed. In this respect increasing your content quality is best carried across your entire site. Make sure that you are consistent with your formatting as this may be a variable in Google's algorithm.

Once your good content is available, keywords need to be checked to make sure that a search will recognise your focus. Keywords placed towards the top of the page will have more weight. However, it is important to maintain a natural feel to the page. Do not repeat keywords within your content (eg, Inserting "boots, boots, boots and more boots" would probably be penalised). Again, do not add too many keywords on the page. If it reads funny because there are too many occurrences of the same word, then you've probably overdone it.

## **Step 3 - Refresh your content**

It is a great idea to refresh your content as much as possible. This will communicate to search engines like Google, that your site is active and current. A good tip for refreshing content easily throughout your site, is to use a web design template. Making a change to your template will affect all pages using that template. A good suggestion is to add a news section to your template. You can then update your news regularly to keep your site refreshed. It is preferable to update your content on a weekly basis, however if you can manage at least one change per month, the search engines should be happy.

## ***Conclusion***

If no one knows your website exists, then there's no point in having a website. Now that you understand the basic principles that Google follows when ranking websites you should be able to make a start with re-structuring your site (and start getting some links pointing back to your site). It will take time, but it is definitely worth it.

If you don't have the time or technical capabilities to make the above changes but now realise the importance of having a well optimised website Ingenuity can help. We focus on the above 3-step SEO approach when optimising any of our client's websites, but even though we can assist with the structure, link building and layout, we would still need your help to make sure the information on your site is relevant and well maintained.

## ***About the author***

Peter Newsome has extensive experience with the Australian web hosting industry and is the Manager of Ingenuity Hosting Pty Ltd - Please visit his website for other great articles and web hosting resources: <http://www.ingenuity.net.au>.