

Marketing Your Product or Service

5 Things You Can Do Immediately to Help Customers Find You Faster Online

It's a small-business owner's dream, but landing at the top of an online search results page isn't something that happens overnight. And unfortunately, there's no single thing you can do to make Google or Bing or any other search engine suddenly take notice of your business. Search engine optimization, as it's called, is a complex, ongoing process that will vary from one business to the next. But no matter your industry, there are a few things you can do to help customers find you faster online. Keep reading to learn more.



1. Sign up for Google's Places for Business.

One of the fastest ways to get your business on Google is to sign up for Google's Places for Business. Available as a free or premium service, Google's Places for Business provides companies with a local business listing on search, Google Maps and Google+. A basic listing includes up-to-date hours, location and other contact information. You also can add photos and video. Customers can leave reviews, and Google lets you respond to them as the official business owner. After you sign up, it can take a couple of weeks for your listing to be verified and show up on Google.

2. Start a paid search campaign.

Many businesses buy their way to the top of a search results page. It's called paid search advertising, and can be a cost-effective way to quickly increase your online visibility. But buyer beware—it also can be expensive and futile. If you don't know where to start, consider working with a paid search expert. If you're set on doing it yourself, Google offers support for its AdWords online advertising program.

3. Update webpage titles.

Search engines "read" the text that appears at the top of a browser window. Update your titles with search keywords (the terms that customers would use to search for a business like yours). For your homepage, don't just use your company name—also describe what your company does.

4. Clean up URLs.

Can you look at one of your website URLs and know what that page is about? Or is it a long string of letters and numbers? Short and easily identifiable URLs can help boost search engine rankings, not to mention help with site navigation.

5. Create a content strategy.

A successful search engine optimization strategy almost always includes adding keyword-rich, relevant, helpful content to your website on a regular basis. Creating a content strategy can help you pinpoint the types of content you need to post to your website and how frequently.