



Submitting Your Site to Search Engines

Up until recently, submitting your web site to major search engines like Yahoo and Google was free. All you had to do was go to the site and click on the link marked something like "Submit Your Site," answer a few questions, and within 3 to 4 weeks, you could pretty much count on being listed *somewhere* on the site. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. As more and more people are overcoming their fear of the Internet and taking advantage of the vast source of goods and services available online, search engines have seized the day and are cashing in big time.

Search Engine Ranking

In addition to the cost, there are factors concerning your *ranking* within the search engine's index that have also changed. Your ranking simply means how far near the top of the listings will you be. Studies have shown that most search engine users rarely go past the first 3 pages of Search Results without trying another search or another search engine. At 10 or 20 listings per page, you can see how helpful it would be to your business to be number 400 down on the list.

The first thing you should know is that your Web pages **must contain certain components** in order to have a shot at a good ranking. These are issues that should be addressed by a professional webmaster who can make sure that the pages on your site are *optimized* for high search engine ranking. Once this is done, you're ready to think about whether or not you need to pay money to a search engine for a listing.

To Pay or Not to Pay

Before I continue, let me give you my most important Web Site Marketing Tip. I can't stress this enough;

The best way to promote a Website is OFF the Internet.

Why do you think big Internet-based companies spend thousands of dollars on TV commercials to tell you about their Website? Depending on what your product or service is, chances are that the average customer is NOT going to think *Internet* when they are in need of it. You should think of your Website as a beautiful color brochure, and then ask yourself how much business your brochure going to bring you if you pick it up from the printer, bring it home, and set it on your coffee table? In short, you need a Website in today's business environment in order to be taken seriously, but you should be *advertizing* that Website on business cards, post cards, in the phone book, on flyers and if you can afford it, in print media and on radio.

Now, having said all that, where do search engines come in? Basically, if your target audience is restricted to your local surrounding area, don't spend a dime on search engine submission. Go with the free options listed below and launch a well-thought-out marketing campaign such as I've outlined above. You won't be missing a thing in terms of attracting customers. If however, you seek a national or even global market, good ranking on some of the better known search engines is essential **but it still won't replace the marketing you do OFF the Internet.**

The Top Search Engines (as of today anyway)

Search Engine companies are constantly being swallowed up by bigger fish, but below is an assessment of some of the big boys in today's market.

Yahoo - 28.9% of searches

Up until about a short time ago, the best way to get listed in Yahoo was by paying the annual \$299 fee to be listed in their directory. However, at this time, Yahoo gets its results from the Google, so let's look at them next.

Google - 29.5% of searches*

Google has a submission form on their Website at www.google.com/addurl.html . Submitting your Website this way **does not** guarantee that you'll be indexed. According to Google, most of the sites they index are found by their "web spiders" and not by submissions. These "web spiders" are robot software programs that read the words on Web pages and interpret content in order to determine if they should be added to the Google database.

Other sites linking to your site GREATLY increases your chances of being indexed by Google and by other search engines as well, so one of the best things you can do is to have a Links page on your site that lists other sites that might be of interest to your site visitors, AND to encourage the other sites to link back to you. It's as simple as sending an e-mail to the other site, asking if you can add them to your Links page and requesting that they do the same. You don't need hundreds of links, but 3-5 quality links at this stage will encourage Google to index your site. Google typically updates its full index once a month, so allow up to 4 weeks for your site to be added. If your site has not been indexed by Google within 6 weeks, beef up that "Trading Links" campaign.

In Closing

Using the information above, you have an excellent chance of getting your Website indexed with a marketable ranking. If you are a *TriceNet* customer, all of the free options above will be taken care of as part of your site design.

For more information, or to arrange a consultation, send an e-mail message to info@tricenet.net or call 301-218-1634.