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So where's my ranking?

Your new site is live and you're ready to take over the search engines

By Keli Etscorn, keli@etscorn.com, ©2006 Keli Etscorn

You just launched your brand new Web site. You put in a lot of time, thought and money into making it the best site you can. It's been about a month and you can't find your new site in the search engines, in fact, no one has placed an order or called you. Now you're asking yourself, "where's my ranking"? If you can't find your site in the search engines you doubt that anyone else can. What happened?

So where's my ranking?

Search engines are a wonderful thing when they're driving targeted traffic to your Web site; otherwise they're a big mystery that can cause a lot of frustration. To get you on your way to understanding how ranking works let's go through the checklist below:

- 1) Was your site properly optimized?
- 2) For brand new sites on the Internet, have you waited at least 9 months? (4-6 months, at the most, for existing Web sites that have been optimized.)
- 3) Has your site been indexed?
- 4) Did your search engine optimization (SEO) professional observe and follow the rules of the search engines?

Now let's go over this list.

- 1) Did your SEO Company perform proper SEO that abide by each search engine's TOS? Investigate who your SEO Company is. Does their site show up in the search engines for their targeted phrases? Do they have a client list that displays live rankings? Was keyword research performed? Does your SEO Company do SEO "on the side" or are they a firm that has been practicing SEO for a few years? Did your SEO firm target high traffic phrases or did they target phrases that no one types in? Make sure you do your homework before selecting an SEO company. You get what you pay for in this industry and most experienced, full-time SEO companies can be fairly expensive.
- 2) A site will typically not get instant ranking no matter how well of a job your SEO company did. In fact, for brand new sites it can take at **least** 9 months for targeted traffic to trickle in (research "aging delay filter" and "page trust" to learn more about this particular topic). An old site that has been on the Internet a while can take up to 4-6 months sometimes to get good ranking after an SEO campaign.
- 3) For your site to get evaluated for ranking consideration, it must be in the index of that search engine. Having your site indexed by a search is not the same as



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getting good rankings – they're two very different things. Being indexed by a search engine simply means you are in their database. You can be in a search engine's database and never have any rankings. To find out if your site has been indexed by Google, type in the following in the Google search field:

site:www.YourDomain.com

The result of this command will return the pages of your site that have been indexed by Google. If you want your site indexed by the search engines have someone add a backlink to your site (a link from their site to yours). This allows your site to be crawled and indexed by the search engines. Make sure that the site that is linking to you is indexed by Google.

- 4) There is white hat SEO and black hat SEO. Black hat SEO companies perform "tricks" to get your site ranking high in the search engines. While this may work in the short term it won't in the long term. Search engines eventually catch on to these tricks and will penalize sites if caught. Make sure your SEO Company performs ethical SEO practices that abide by the search engine rules. This is one of the keys to long term rankings.

If you feel pretty good about the list above, then be patient as SEO is a patience game.

What can I do while I'm waiting?

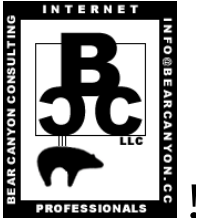
It's important to stress here that having a Web site is **not** a marketing plan. Any serious business should have a marketing plan and budget in place that addresses both online and offline marketing/advertising. Putting all your eggs in the search engine basket is simply not enough nor very wise.

Other marketing ideas:

- 1) If you're looking for instant traffic, Pay Per Click (PPC) is probably your best bet while you're waiting for Web site optimization to kick in.
- 2) Offline "traditional marketing" such as newspaper ads, attending tradeshows, putting your domain name on all your print material are some common ideas to get your name out there. Visit <http://www.kelie.com/articles/MarketingTips.pdf> for an article on easy to implement marketing ideas.
- 3) Hire a marketing firm.

About the Author

[Keli Etscorn](#) is a search engine optimization specialist who focuses on organic search engine tactics. Former founder of a fiber optic ISP, she now runs her own company,



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[Bear Canyon Consulting, LLC](#). Keli has created nationally featured Web sites and Ecommerce sites since 1997. Her work is featured in publications such as PC Magazine, Parade Magazine, The New York Times, Hamptons Magazine, US Weekly and APC Currents magazine, just to name a few. She started concentrating on [search engine optimization](#) in 1999 and uses her master's degree in mathematics to get her clients top rankings in the most popular search engines.

Her endeavors include starting and managing the SEO unit for one of the biggest attorney portals online, including overseeing the optimization and design of over 2000 nationwide attorney Web sites. Her biggest projects to date are daughter Sage and son Seven, both future UNIX system administrators.

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