

# ROBERT CHARLTON

## WEB SITE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZING

Robert Charlton is a search engine optimization consultant who advises companies and organizations of all sizes. He consults about search engine positioning strategy, implementation, and search engine friendly information design.

Charlton has optimized sites and achieved top search engine rankings for a multitude of clients. He has provided search engine consulting to companies and organizations in a variety of fields, including publishing, ecology, food, travel, clothing, software, telecommunications, entertainment, corporate training, education, and public utilities. Most recently, he led the optimization of 37 different hotel Web properties for the Kimpton Hotel Group.

In addition to his six years of Web optimizing experience, Charlton brings to his projects a twenty-five year background producing and directing business, entertainment and informational videos for clients like Bank of America, Lucasfilm, Hewlett-Packard, Time-Life Video, Tandem Computer, US Department of the Interior, Bechtel Corporation, NASA, and Chevron.

### ROBERT CHARLTON'S SEARCH OPTIMIZING CLIENTS SAY:

*"Due to your efforts, we were in the top ten in virtually every search engine that our client base used. Our business almost doubled in one year. The new business and new authors easily paid for the site and the optimizing services many times over. This success led directly to our purchase."*

Dr Robert H West, President, Interscholars Publishing Group

*"Overall, Bob's suggestions have resulted in an increase of search engine traffic to GreatSchools.net from 10,000 referrals a month to 630,000 referrals a month, more than a 6,000% increase."*

Blake Thompson, Product Manager, GreatSchools.net

*"In working with us throughout the evolution of the site, Bob has positioned us to maintain consistently high search rankings, achieving the highest in our business, for our most desired terms. He has also secured excellent descriptions and placement for us in the major directories."*

Steve Bettcher, Director, Program Management, LicenseMusic

*"I'm struck by Bob's exceptional intelligence and passion for staying on the leading edge of web search and directory search optimization techniques. But most importantly by his ability to apply this knowledge to achieve real world results in the Byzantine and ever changing world of search optimization."*

David Fauvre, Director of Internet Development, TherapyRightNow

### ROBERT CHARLTON - WEBSITE SEARCH-ENGINE OPTIMIZING

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## A COHERENT SEARCH OPTIMIZING STRATEGY

Search engines are by far the most popular method of finding information on the World-Wide Web. A landmark Commerce Net/Nielsen Media study reports that 71 percent of frequent Web users most often use search engines to find Web sites. Other prominent studies place the figure at between 56% to 85%. Yet most web sites are designed with little or no knowledge of how search engines work, and most sites are essentially search engine invisible.

The term "search engine" is used generically to describe both true search engines and directories. While engines and directories differ in how listings are compiled, many of the underlying considerations are the same. Increasingly, search and directory results are interrelated.

To achieve a favorable long term search position on the Web, a search strategy must coordinate

- marketing goals
- web site search engine optimization
- search-aware directory listings
- external link placement
- and ongoing search maintenance.

This strategy should be used in conjunction with, not instead of, conventional Web marketing techniques that include hard copy advertising, word of mouth, and affinity group listings and networking.

The steps of implementing a successful search strategy are to some extent iterative. They involve the following:

## SET GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Discuss marketing priorities, web site goals, and anticipated site audience. Review current traffic sources. Consider how search can enhance site and marketing objectives. Draw up a rough list of likely search terms. As Web search focus is necessarily limited, prioritize goals from the first stages on.

## ANALYZE CURRENT SITE

Analyze current site structure, page design, source code, and text content for search. Where is the site adequate and where does it have problems? Are there any problems that will get the site banned or ignored by search engines which must be fixed?

Do any current site design elements present particular challenges or opportunities? Where can we best incorporate searchable content? Confer with company Web marketing people, site designers, and webmaster to consider solutions that would be acceptable to everyone.

## ANALYZE WEB POSITIONING

Analyze search and directory positioning on the Web. How does site currently rank? Look at competitive sites. Run test searches. Look at linking patterns online.

Review and refine initial list of search terms. Use online resources to check search term popularity, and evaluate possible search terms by search frequency and degree of competition.

## DEFINE OPTIMIZING PLAN

From above research and discussion, coordinate with marketing people to create a final prioritized list of target search phrases. Decide upon optimizing strategy and how to integrate searchable elements into current site. Plan how best to use additional available domains.

Prepare time and cost estimates. Divide production into manageable phases.

## CREATE SEARCHABLE PAGES

In conjunction with company marketing people and web designers, modify existing pages and/or create new searchable pages focused around target phrases. Elements include optimized body text content, page templates, and internal site linking structure for search engine spidering.

Mathematically analyze page content and adjust accordingly. Make strategic use of multiple domains. Eventual directory submission and hybrid search/directory results are also anticipated at this stage.

## SUBMIT TO SEARCH ENGINES

Hand submit to the approximately six major search engines that feed virtually all meaningful search portals on the Web. Submit gradually and evaluate results as pages are indexed. Note that search results often take several months to crystallize.

## SUBMIT TO DIRECTORIES

Directory listings affect Web search results on virtually all major engines, both positively and negatively. Search considerations for directory listings are vitally important.

Analyze likely directory placement for targeted search phrases, and, where directory inclusion is advisable, choose best directory categories. Create and submit, with great care, customized, search-aware directory listings to major directories. Follow through on directory submissions with directory editorial departments if necessary.

## ESTABLISH EXTERNAL LINKS

Incoming external links are a significant factor in search engine rankings, and they are an important source of traffic in themselves. Ongoing link building is a good investment.

In coordination with company web affinity marketing efforts, create strategic links, optimized for search engine spidering, in business directories and affiliated sites.

## MAINTAIN SEARCH POSITION

With company Web marketing people, create concurrent campaigns to enhance search popularity. Establish company awareness of how off-page search criteria can be affected by the format of all company-related online material and even by the wording of online press releases.

Monitor search rankings and traffic, and, if necessary, adjust pages and search strategy. After initial results, broaden search target terms as desired. Maintain search rankings in response to competitive rankings or changing search engine criteria.