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The business-boosting power of Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

May 26, 2010 - Front Section

Like most business owners, real estate agents recognize the value of building informative, interactive, and customer-friendly web sites. But how can you ensure that your prospective and existing clients find your site before landing on the home page of a competitor? The answer is Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

It is a known fact that the majority of web users only click on links provided on the first page - and usually just on the first few links - of search engine results. Also, according to iProspect, 61% of users believe the natural, or organic, search results on the first page are more reliable than paid ads (<http://speakingofrealestate.blogs.realtor.org>). Focusing on SEO can markedly improve your web site's performance by increasing its rank in search engine results pages, effectively expanding the amount of visitors to your site.

Improving your site's search engine rankings can be achieved with some simple changes. Think about the keywords that the majority of prospects in your market would enter when searching for a real estate firm or agent. Google AdWords has a keyword tool that can assist you in discovering popular search terms in your area (Realtor Mag, <http://www.realtor.org/rmotechnology>). Integrate those keywords into your site's content, but not to the point where your site would be considered spam. Keywords, such as "Boston area condo listings," should be linked to external sites so that they become indexed by search engines. It is more beneficial to your site's rankings to link keywords rather than linking non-descript phrases, like "Click here for more."

Keywords should be incorporated into your site's URL address, page titles, photo captions, and blog posts. Another effort to embrace is linking your site to top industry-related and trusted sites, and requesting reciprocal links from them. Additionally, with the rise in popularity of social media, linking to your site through your interactions and posts via Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, will prove to be a rankings booster.

The effectiveness of your SEO strategies can be easily tracked and measured by periodic test searches for your keywords in major search engines. If you don't have the time or inclination for tackling SEO - but want to improve your site's rankings - an integrated marketing firm can design and manage a plan that will bolster your online presence and bring in those coveted leads.

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