Why Ethical SEO Techniques are the Way Forward by Trevor Southwold

Article published on April 16th 2012 | Seo

The world of SEO is rapidly expanding. As more and more businesses recognise the importance of having strong on and off-page SEO in order for their sites to rank well in search engines, the need for staff who have knowledge of SEO tactics and practices has never been greater.

In a results-based environment, some SEO agencies or departments within large corporations can sometimes to tempted to use tactics that give great results fast but run afoul of the 'Terms of Service' that search engines like Google and Bing operate under. This method of getting results is known as unethical or 'black hat' SEO.

A company that uses 'black hat' techniques will often use devious and sneaky ways to trick search algorithms into bumping up the ranking of sites it is responsible for.

Ways to do this include the use of hidden text and links, where text is entered on a page but then changed to match the background colour- visitors to the site cannot see the text or links but search engines can. Luckily this method is easily detectable so many 'black hat' organisations no longer use it.

Duplicate content is another 'black hat' calling card. While of course press releases that get syndicated will appear in searches multiple times, the search algorithms that search engines use are now so comprehensive that they can tell the difference between subject-relevant listings and ones designed to trick it into improving the rank of a different site. Those tasked with SEO in your organisation will have to consider whether or not they want to chance falling afoul of the search engines they are looking to rank well in. A company or SEO specialist that prides themselves on their ethical methods should never even consider taking such a chance.

'Black hat' SEO firms also 'spin' articles or feed information into 'content generators'. While not strictly outside the Terms of Service (TOS) that most search engines operate under, 'spinning' a large amount of content out of a single article or blog post is a poor way of generating traffic to you website. This method relies on quantity rather than quality and will not gain your site any improvement in the rankings.

While ethical, or 'white hat' SEO requires more thought and planning before implementation, the results it can achieve can be extremely effective in a long term online marketing strategy for any business, be it a small or medium enterprise, or a multi-national conglomerate. High quality and ethical backlinks help to build traffic to your website as well as protecting your business' reputation online.

So if you are considering employing an SEO company to handle the search optimisation for your business, consider how important quick results are in comparison with a robust plan that will get results for a long time to come.

Article Source:
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Article Keywords:
link building company, SEO services

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