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## Your new website and Google

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### Introduction

This document is to help you understand how your new website relates to the popular search engine - Google. Even though I mainly use "Google search results" in this document the same applies to any and all other search engines like Yahoo, Ask etc.

This document is not only designed to manage your expectations of your existing and future results in search engines but also some practical steps to increase your chance of gaining popularity and relevancy in Google searches.

### Background

Having a website and it being made available on the world wide web has two fantastic advantages. 1) You can mention your website address to anyone that will be interested as well as pointing to it using traditional advertising. 2) People who need your services can find you using a search engine which saves you money. These two points, however, should work in conjunction with each other as you will have more chance of increasing sales if an equal amount of effort and money is spent on both.

If you expect that all you need is the website itself and then people will automatically find you then you might be in for a disappointment. It's far more affective to work on promoting your business by pointing people to your website using traditional media and methods AND perform the necessary tasks to increase your rankings in search engines. Either of these doesn't happen automatically without some effort and money.

### My website is up and running – Now What?

Whatever you do, don't just sit back and wait for the phone to ring or check your e-mail every 10 minutes expecting instant customers. A website can be a powerful tool but if nobody knows it exists then it's not being utilized at all. Here are the 2 steps you need to take.

Step 1) Once you have a website address you MUST advertise it in all and every place open to you. These include all correspondence that goes out from your business like e-mails (as a signature at the bottom of all e-mails), invoices, cards and of course all traditional advertising that you decide. This step is just as important as the step 2.

Step 2) Setup a long term plan to increase your ranking in Google and other search engines by creating as many incoming links into your website as humanly possible (this means links that are on other websites that, when clicked, the visitor will end up on your website. Google absolutely LOVES incoming links, it values them highly in the formula it uses to determine "Popularity" which is directly related to your ranking. Remember – **"The more incoming links into your website – The better."** (more on this below)

### **What are keywords and why are they so important?**

Keywords are certain words or phrases that you think people will use to find your website via Google. These words also determine what your ranking is, you are competing with ALL other businesses who have those same words / phrases in their website.

If your market is geographically dependant then it becomes a lot easier because your keywords should include your location (eg Port Stephens). For instance when typing in Google "Shoe Shop" you are competing with other Shoe Shops around the world. Narrowing down your search to websites in Australia will bring you further up the list (because there is a less number of competitors) but your competitors could still be in the hundreds.

However if you had "Shoe Shop Port Stephens" as one of your key phrases then the possibilities of getting high on the list is increased dramatically.

It's very important to decide on your keywords early in the website design process. This is because your website name, title and internal links can reflect these keywords giving these words more relevancy and thus improve your google ranking.

### **Be patient and keep those incoming links coming**

Once a website is completed, first it has to be found by Google. Googlebot is a program that searches the internet for new websites by following links (another reason why incoming links are important). Once found, which could take up to 4-6 weeks, it indexes your web pages and compares them to other similar websites and ranks them according to "importance". When people enter in a certain keyword then your site will rank amongst other websites with those same keywords.

Googlebot indexes your website on a continuous basis and constantly analyses the incoming links into your websites. For you to appear above somebody else means you need to be more relevant and "important" than they are.

Working your way up the list depends on how many incoming links you have over time and how many hits your websites take (again over time). For popular keywords it might take some months to rise up the list. Remember, everybody in

your line of business wants to be at the top of the list and the winners are usually somebody that constantly focuses on incoming links into their website AND their website has gained popularity over TIME. Also please note that you might be 250<sup>th</sup> on the list when searching world wide, 55<sup>th</sup> on the list if you narrow it down to Australia only, and 2<sup>nd</sup> if you include "Port Stephens" as part of your keywords. Like traditional advertising the more competitors you have the more effort and money you need to get noticed and appear before more people.

### **How can I create incoming links?**

There are a number of ways to create links from other people websites.

1. Search for a register yourself with as many "Online Directories" as possible. Eg MyPortStephens, Hotfrog, Dlook and a host of others. Some are free to register and some charge a small fee to register or enter in your website address. Find as many as you can and then go and find some more.
2. Become part of online communities, like Facebook, twitter and industry specific forms etc and promote your website with every post or entry. This not only helps your ranking but giving advice to people freely helps promote your business generally.
3. Reciprocal links are a great source of incoming links. Talk to your partners, suppliers, friends and acquaintances and let them know that you are prepared to add a link to their website if they can include a link to yours. Again the more reciprocal links the better.
4. Pay an SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) business to improve your ranking. Be careful, though of people that "Guarantee" your business to appear at the top of the Google Search as NOBODY can guarantee that because of the nature of Google. Also these businesses can charge a lot of money (\$1000's sometimes) to focus on your websites and keywords / incoming links.

### **What else can I do to get to the top of Google.**

There is only two ways to get to the top of the Google list. 1) Have a set of specific keywords that not many websites are focusing on. Eg "Shoe Shop Port Stephens" or 2) Spend time and money creating many incoming links and promoting your website to as many people as possible.

### **Google Adwords – A strong recommendation.**

There is one other way that costs a bit of money but is quite simple to set up. It's called "Google Adwords". This is a sponsored list on the right hand side of the normal Google organic list. Basically you set up an "Ad" and you tell Google what your keywords are.

Once it's active your "Ad" will appear on the right when people are searching for those keyboards and every time somebody clicks on your "Ad" you will be charged a small amount (Usually cents). You can determine your monthly quota with a minimum of \$30 per month (you can choose a larger amount if you wish). When

this amount is reached your "Ad" will no longer display. (until the next month). This is a great way to start being at the top of the Google list and only requires a relatively small outlay each month.

This benefits you in two ways – 1) Drives people to your website which is great and 2) increases your hit count and therefore increases your sites popularity.

### **Summary**

So just to recap, having a website does not mean it will appear at the top of Google automatically. It will require some effort and/or money to compete for the same keywords / phrases as other websites.

The best chance of increasing your ranking is to constantly find ways to promote your website through incoming links, community and industry forums and traditionally based advertising.

Start a Google Adwords campaign (just search for "Google Adwords" and follow the links). This is the quickest way to get exposure in Google and drives people to your website.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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