

GOOGLE THWARTS ONLINE MARKETING SHORT CUTS

By Matthew A. Perosi

Since the dawn of the first public search engine in April 1994, business owners have been struggling to highly rank their website in search results. The search engine optimization, SEO, industry was born to serve this ranking need.

In the mid-1990s, many Internet experts would spend a lot of time figuring out how the engines worked so they could sell website ranking services.

Some early SEO tricks they used, that no longer work, include:

- formatting important words in bold or italic text
- using the same keyword several times on a web page
- excessively hyperlinking many pages to your website using the same words

The SEO experts charged a lot of money to implement these SEO techniques, and they figured out how to build automated systems that did the work for them. Widespread abuse of these ranking techniques from SEO companies, eventually lowered the importance of these factors.

Google has been the target of other types of SEO abuse over the years. Their original method of ranking web pages was by counting the number of other pages on the Internet that linked to your website. They called it PageRank. Google didn't realize that companies would easily abuse PageRank who would simply set up thousands of random named websites to create a massive link strategy. SEO experts could charge a single low fee to have your website listed on all those sites at one time. It took Google years to correct this type of link abuse, and now this type of automated misuse of PageRank is dead. Google recommends that all websites write new content regularly. This request for new content eventually led to another mistreated business model. You can hire someone from another country for \$3 to write a very low quality article of 200 words. This type of writing usually provides little value to your website visitors. Again, Google fought back by creating software that could tell the difference between well-written editorials vs. poorly written blogs, often written by non-native English speakers.

Facebook and Bing also struggle to create an Internet that users can enjoy without the abusive practices of companies that sell SEO services. Any time the Internet community figures out a shortcut to systematize an Internet marketing process, Google, Bing, and Facebook figure out how to shut it down accordingly.

Google now fights back against businesses using those PageRank and content-writing shortcuts. They fight back by



lowering the ranking of websites in search results until all those shortcut methods are removed from your website. That removal process can take more than a year. Historically, every search-ranking shortcut only yields short-term online popularity. If you rely on your website ranking to gain sales, imagine your financial disaster when Google changes your search result ranking for more than a year. We're all looking for a sustainable way to have high ranking. The only method that seems to work is through long-term commitment, listening to what your customers want, and giving it to them. You need to figure out how to show the best product and service on your website.

I recommended that jewelers hire a full time, in-house employee who can manage the website and online marketing. When you consider all the software, hardware, and online service costs involved with online marketing, plus health insurance and payroll, an in-house employee with all the right qualifications might cost upwards of \$75,000 per year. You can also hire an agency as long as they don't use any shortcuts. A retail jeweler should be able to hire a high quality agency for about \$62,000 per year. For that price, they would handle your website and all online marketing for you.

The loss of Google ranking is real. Before hiring one of those alluring, low cost online marketing agencies, ask yourself how they can afford to provide those low cost services. Cutting corners with automation could result in future penalties of your website. Be careful, or drop me an email and I'll give you an unbiased opinion of any agency you are thinking of hiring based on their service plans.



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