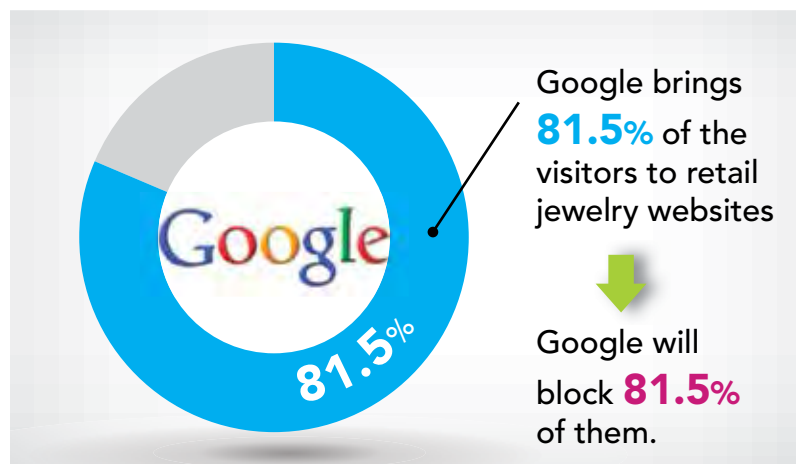


KEYWORD RANKING IS DEAD

By Matthew A. Perosi

According to the measurements from my own data center, Google brings 81.5% of the visitors to retail jewelry websites. Prior to September 2013, you were able to track the keywords people searched for in Google to see how they found your website. Google is now hiding those keywords and we won't be able to see them in reports anymore.

In other words, you can't correctly measure your ranking results for specific keywords because Google will block 81.5% of them.



This is part of an evolutionary step in how the internet works and will continue to grow. Prior to this, you could hire someone with the directive that you "want to rank for engagement rings," and they would use all the latest search engine optimization methods to do that. Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of adjusting words on your website or adding content so search engines understand how to organize your site in their index. The person you hire to do this for you is commonly called an SEO Professional or SEO Pro.

By hiding all keyword data Google is forcing business owners to stop worrying about specific "things" they want to rank for, and instead focus on what the business is passionate about.

What is your passion? Why did you go into business for yourself in the first place? It's this passion that now needs to be portrayed online. You may be passionate about custom design jewelry, or helping a young couple discover their engagement rings, or helping someone pick out the perfect 40th wedding anniversary gift. You should think of each of these passions as "topics" of information that you can add to your website.

Although keyword ranking is now dead, you can still rank for topics. I've been using this strategy of topic ranking for a while, and I find that the best method is to fully explain what you do and how you do it. As an example, don't simply say that you provide jewelry appraisals; instead you need to dig deep and explain why your jewelry appraisal process is different than anyone else's. Different doesn't always mean you have to say



you are "better," but rather, it's how your process specifically works.

You can also tell stories about how you helped one of your customers. For those of you creating your own content, with blogs and videos, you now need to tell those stories so the reader understands why that customer came to you and how you helped them.

If this is starting to sound like a lot of extra work for your already busy schedule then you need to hire someone to help you. But you can't just hire anyone who says they can get your website ranked. With the transition from keyword ranking to topic ranking, the agency you hire will need to learn a lot about you before they can do their job. They now need to be your SEO partner for the long term.

The SEO Pro will do all the creative work as long as you educate them fully about your business, and as long as you've taken the time to find out what they need and actually provide it to them. As your SEO partner, they will work on building your online identity with the same passion you would. This is labor-intensive when done correctly. Ultimately, you'll be able to measure the number of visitors coming to your website based on these new topics. Instead of looking at reports that show keyword popularity, you now need to look at individual web pages. Popularity of a single page means that that page is ranking well for the topic written about.

This new topic ranking strategy is going to take longer, which translates into more money paid to your SEO Pro. Don't be lured in by cheap SEO Professionals because they are either outsourcing to people who will never understand your business or they simply don't understand how much time this will take.

This is something that can't be ignored. With this drastic ranking change, you will eventually lose any search results ranking you currently have. Change your strategy soon before your competitors figure this out too.



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Matthew Perosi is the Founder of the Jeweler Website Advisory Group (jWAG), a research team devoted to reporting how jewelers can use websites, mobile technology, and marketing trends to further personal and jewelry store goals. A library of articles, videos, and an archive of jWAG daily email "Nuggets" is freely available at www.jwag.biz. Matthew invites your feedback at matt@jwag.biz.