THE BIZ

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Generating sales leads through Google search

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It is generally accepted that websites have become a critical marketing tool in reaching your target market. Today, over 80% of website visitors use search engines such as Google to find them.

If your website is not generating qualified sales leads, you may want to consider optimising it to appear higher up in Google searches. Whilst this can be quite a technical subject, there are some basic steps that anyone can take to improve the performance of their site.

Start off by researching keywords that people might use to find your services or products. Make up a list of the obvious ones, but you can also find the actual words that people have used in Google. Search for "google keyword tool" and you will find a link to the Google keyword research tool.

Once you have developed your keyword list you can optimise your web pages. Ideally you should dedicate a single keyword or phrase to each page, but if this is not practical you can group words relating to the same subject.

The actual page URL name is an important area where your keywords must be presented e.g. mywebsite.co.nz/keywords. Most content management systems allow users to customise URL's, however you could get your web developer to do it for you.

Hidden in the source code of a website are a number of Meta tags that are also important elements in optimising your site. The title tag is the phrase that appears in the top blue bar of your browser window, and should include your keywords.

The description tag is a short paragraph about the page and appears in search results. Although not an important element for Google, you should always include your keywords in the description tag as this shows people that the page result presented is relevant to their search term.

The placement of keywords within the actual page content should not be overlooked. The rule of thumb is to insert your keywords once in the opening paragraph, repeat them in the body text and again in the closing paragraph. Don't be tempted to overdo it otherwise Google may penalise your site for 'keyword stuffing'.

Finally, you should create 'alt tags' containing your keywords for images on your site. Not only do alt tags improve your keyword spread, but they increase the likelihood of being found in Google search.

By implementing these basic improvements, your website will become more visible to Google and your ranking should start to improve over the ensuing weeks and months.

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