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The Essential Guide to B2B Search Engine Marketing



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INTRODUCTION

Help customers find you

In 80% of B2B purchases today, the customer finds the supplier – not the other way around. If you are not actively engaging in search engine marketing, your website is not reaching its potential and you're leaving money on the table.

B2B search engine marketing can seem confusing, but it doesn't have to be. To put you on the right path to search engine marketing success, I created this B2B search engine marketing guide.

This guide will provide you with a step-by-step plan to:

- Discover your search engine marketing strategy
- Uncover your most important keyword phrases
- Optimize your website to improve search engine ranking
- Attract inbound links to boost your link popularity
- Run a results-focused paid search campaign
- Measure your search engine marketing success

Let's get started!



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WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM)?

Help your customers find you

Search engine marketing is the art and science of attracting motivated customers to your website by increasing your site's presence within the search results of major search engines (i.e., Google, Bing and Yahoo). Search engine marketing is crucial because 80% of customers begin at a search engine like Google when researching products and services online, according to research from Pardot.

Effective search engine marketing begins with a thorough understanding of the keyword phrases your customers are searching for most often, and then leveraging a combination of Search Engine Optimization and Pay-per-click advertising to be found during those searches.

- **Search engine optimization (SEO):** Techniques that help you achieve better rankings for your website in organic search results.
- **Pay-per-click advertising (PPC):** Internet advertising technique used to direct traffic to websites, in which the advertiser only pays when the ad is clicked.

The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of Google search results for the query "pneumatic portable magnetic drill".

Left Screenshot (Organic Search Results): Shows the search bar with the query and the Google logo. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs (All, Shopping, Images, Videos, News, More, Settings, Tools) and a result count of "About 758,000 results (0.53 seconds)". The first result is "Hougen Rotabroach Cutters - Cutters & Mag Drills In Stock" from mrmtool.com. The second result is "AIRBOR™ AB-4300 Portable Pneumatic Magnetic Drill | CS Unitec" with a URL starting with https://www.csunitec.com. The third result is "Magnetic Drills | Portable Magnetic Drills | CS Unitec" with a URL starting with https://www.csunitec.com. A red speech bubble labeled "Organic Search Results" points to the first result.

Right Screenshot (Paid Search Result): Shows the same search bar and navigation tabs. The result count is "About 758,000 results (0.53 seconds)". The first result is "Hougen Rotabroach Cutters - Cutters & Mag Drills In Stock" from mrmtool.com, which is highlighted with a yellow background and a red speech bubble labeled "Paid Search Result". The second result is "AIRBOR™ AB-4300 Portable Pneumatic Magnetic Drill | CS Unitec" with a URL starting with https://www.csunitec.com. The third result is "Magnetic Drills | Portable Magnetic Drills | CS Unitec" with a URL starting with https://www.csunitec.com.

Search engine optimization

Search engine optimization, also known as SEO, is the ongoing process of making your website's pages attractive to search engines. Webpages optimized for SEO achieve better rankings in organic, or unpaid, search engine results. According to research, approximately 75% of searchers will click on the organic results because they consider them more genuine. Google dominates B2B search with a 90% market share, according to research done by Optify, so most SEO campaigns focus on improving a site's ranking in Google.

Your SEO campaign should focus on getting your website on the first page of the search results. The higher you are listed on the page the better, since most searchers prefer to click on the first few links. You can improve your rankings in search engines by focusing on two tactics:

- 1. Improving your website's relevance.** Your website needs to leverage your most important keyword phrases in a way that is relevant to your website's copy and coding. The more relevant your website is to what a person is searching, the higher your ranking will be in the organic search results.

Note: The words or phrases you think might be the most relevant to prospects' searches may or may not be what they're using to find the products and services you provide, something I'll explore later in this guide.

- 2. Improving your website's link popularity.** You need to attract quality inbound links to your website on an ongoing basis. An inbound link is a link into your website from a third-party website. The more quality links coming into your website, the higher your ranking will be in the search results. These days, Google is placing greater emphasis on link popularity over site relevancy when determining a site's ranking in the search results.

SEO is very similar to public relations. It requires an ongoing, consistent effort to achieve results. Significant results can be achieved within a three- to six-month timeframe, and you will continue to build from there while laying a foundation to build upon.

Pay-per-click advertising

With pay-per-click advertising, or PPC, your B2B company pays a predetermined amount to have text-based advertisements listed in paid search results. You will only be charged when a searcher actually clicks on your ad and visits your site, regardless of how often the listing is displayed. This makes pay-per-click advertising a results-focused advertising vehicle as compared to traditional print advertisements. With traditional ads in a print magazine, you are paying to be included in the publication regardless of the results the ad produces. With PPC, your ad can show up on the first page of Google all day long and you will not pay a dime unless someone actually clicks on your ad.

About 25% of searchers will click on the paid search results if they consider the ad relevant to what they are searching for. In essence, it prequalifies leads at a reasonable cost.

Your ranking in paid search results can be improved and optimized by focusing on three tactics:

- 1. Increasing your bid amount.** The amount you are willing to pay per click determines your ranking. The more you choose to pay per click, the higher your ranking will be in the paid search results.
- 2. Improving the relevancy of your advertisements.** Google wants to make sure the most relevant ads appear at the top of the search results. The more

relevant your ads (and the corresponding landing pages on your website) are based on the search terms, the higher your ranking will be in the paid search results.

- 3. Increasing your budget.** The more you choose to invest in pay-per-click advertising, the better your chance to have ads that are consistently displayed. By using research tools like the [Google AdWords Keyword Planner](#), you will be able to determine the approximate budget you will need to pay per click. Budgets can be managed on a daily basis, and they are very flexible. You can start a PPC campaign with a \$50 budget just to see what kind of results you can produce. I have clients who spend more than \$25,000 per month on PPC ads because they can tie the campaign to leads and sales they are generating.

Where search engine optimization takes months to start seeing results, pay-per-click advertising takes minutes. Your ads can start attracting targeted traffic immediately, but your campaign will require attentive management to ensure you are receiving the highest return on your pay-per-click advertising investment.

STEP 1: DEFINE AN EFFECTIVE SEM STRATEGY

Begin with the end in mind

Many companies dive into search engine marketing without clear goals. Don't make that mistake. Spend some time identifying the key elements of your search engine marketing strategy. The following steps will walk you through the process of defining that strategy.

Define Your Search Engine Marketing Goals

Search engine marketing will help drive targeted traffic to your website. Think about the goals and objectives for your website and online marketing efforts. Your search engine marketing program should be designed to support these goals.

Some common search engine marketing goals include the following:

- ❑ **Selling products online.** Customers purchase products on your website.
- ❑ **Selling products offline.** Customers research products online and purchase at your physical location, over the phone or through your distributors.
- ❑ **Generating leads or inquiries.** Prospects research products online and submit questions or information requests via your website.
- ❑ **Building a marketing database.** Prospects and customers request to receive future online and offline communications from you.
- ❑ **Improving brand or company awareness.** Prospects learn about what you do or engage in an activity supported by your brand.

Define Your Search Engine Marketing Audience

If you don't know who you're trying to reach, you won't be able to figure out how they search in order to help them find you. Begin by brainstorming about your target audiences.

Consider the following when defining your search engine marketing audience.

- ✓ What specific industries and/or market segments do you serve?
- ✓ Describe a typical company in each industry and/or market segment you serve.
- ✓ Where are your target customers located geographically?
- ✓ Who will be going online to search for your products and services? What is their role within the company? Are they the end-user of the products and services?
- ✓ What product or service categories are they interested in?
- ✓ What information will they be searching for?

Define your top competitors

Your search engine marketing program must also focus on your competition. You want to make sure you clearly identify your top competitors, so you can continually evaluate how your company's search engine presence ranks relative to the competition.

For each company or website you compete against, please define the following elements.

- ✓ Who are your top five competitors in order of priority?
- ✓ Do they engage in SEO or paid search?
- ✓ What product or service categories do you compete in?
- ✓ What makes your company different and/or better than each competitor?
- ✓ What keyword phrases do they appear to be focusing on?

Define a Measurement Strategy

How will you know if your search engine marketing strategy is a success?

Identify specific success metrics from the list below that will allow you to measure the impact your SEM strategy will have on your business. Be clear about what you want to achieve and make sure your goals are attainable.

Some common search engine marketing success goals include:

- Increase website ranking for target keyword phrase from X to Y.
- Increase traffic to your site from X to Y or by X%.
- Increase in online sales from organic search traffic from X to Y or by X%.
- Increase in online leads from organic search traffic from X to Y or by X%.
- Decrease bounce rate from X% to Y% from organic search traffic.
- Achieve a target cost-per-lead from paid search advertising:

- Achieve a target cost-per-sale from paid search advertising:



STEP 2: CHOOSE THE BEST KEYWORD PHRASES

Get inside customers' heads through keyword research

Keyword research, the process of strategically selecting the most important keyword phrases for your company, is the most critical step in search engine marketing. If you do not perform this step properly, there is no way that your campaigns will be successful.

When choosing the best keyword phrases, it is critical to choose phrases that are not only relevant to your business, but also ones that are searched for most often by your customers. The keywords have:

- **Strong relevance to your company and website.** Niche terms related to your products or services that your website has content to support.
- **Reasonably high search volume.** They are terms your most likely customers are searching on a regular basis.
- **Relatively low competition.** Terms with relatively low number of companies competing in the search results.

There is an art and a science to the keyword research process. The art of the process focuses on brainstorming about the phrases you think your customers are searching. The science portion of the process will tell you the estimated search volume by phrase, based on recent search history.

Keyword research services can help you with these steps. The following exercises will help you leverage this process to identify the best keyword phrases for your company.

Brainstorm Potential Keyword Phrases

Begin your keyword research with the art of the process and brainstorm phrases you think customers use when searching for your products and services.

Get all of your customer-facing team members involved and consider the following questions:

- ✓ What problems are our customers trying to solve?
- ✓ What terms or phrases do they use to describe their needs or problems?
- ✓ What terms or phrases do they use to describe the solutions we provide?
- ✓ How would we describe our products and services to a beginner in our industry?
- ✓ What do customers do with our products? (e.g., applications, etc.)?
- ✓ What terms do industry magazines and industry analysts use to describe our products and services?
- ✓ What 10 phrases do we associate most with our company?
- ✓ What 10 phrases do we associate most with our products and services?

To assist your brainstorming process, you can leverage a number of online services that allow you to peek at what keyword phrases your competitors are focusing on with search engine marketing. Using [Spy-Fu's](#) free search, you will be able to learn their approximate pay-per-click budget, best paid keywords, top organic keywords and other useful information. While Spy-Fu is primarily fee-based, you can perform a free search to preview the research details.

Compare Your Brainstorming List to Actual Search Volume

After completing the keyword brainstorming exercise, you will have a seed list of keyword phrase candidates. Next, turn to the science of keyword research to determine how frequently people search these terms.

Keyword research tools that aggregate and estimate search volumes are available to take the guesswork out of the research process. These tools will reveal the keyword phrases on your list that are frequently used, as well as . expand your list by showing variations, qualifiers and alternative spellings that are also searched in high volume.

The following tools are great resources that can be used during the keyword research process:

- [Moz Keyword Difficulty](#)
- [Wordtracker](#)
- [Keyword Discovery](#)
- [Google AdWords Keyword Planner](#)

Prioritize Your Keyword List

At this stage you will know the most popular phrases by search volume, but you should not focus on popularity alone. You must also focus your efforts on popular phrases that are most relevant for your website's content and product offering. Review your keyword list and assign a priority for each keyword phrase, using the following grading scale:

- **Grade A - Top Priority:** This group of keyword phrases is very relevant to your website's content, has a high search volume and relatively low competition.
- **Grade B – Medium Priority:** This group of keyword phrases is very relevant to your website's content and has a moderate search volume or moderate competition.
- **Grade C – Low Priority:** This group of keyword phrases is very relevant to your website's content and has a moderate search volume, but it is not a desirable term to use on your website or has too much competition.

Grade A and Grade B keyword phrases are good candidates for your organic search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising efforts. Your Grade C terms are not good candidates for organic search engine optimization, but can work well for pay-per-click advertising. When optimizing your website for organic search traffic, begin with your most popular Grade A terms and work down the list.

Grade A and Grade B keyword phrases are good candidates for your organic search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising efforts. Your Grade C terms are not good candidates for organic search engine optimization, but can work well for pay-per-click advertising. When optimizing your website for organic search traffic, begin with your most popular Grade A terms and work down the list.

For organic search engine optimization, focus on 30 to 50 Grade A and B phrases at a time. I recommend limiting yourself to that number because optimizing your website takes a significant amount of time and effort, and I don't want you to spread your efforts too thin. Achieve a top ranking for your top phrases, then move on to the next set of phrases, always driving more targeted traffic with each initiative.

For pay-per-click advertising, it is relatively easy for you to focus on an extensive list of phrases without harming your campaign.

STEP 3: OPTIMIZE YOUR SITE FOR ORGANIC SEARCH

Make your website attractive to Google

Once you have uncovered your most important keywords, make sure your website's content is optimized to drive qualified traffic to your website.

Begin with your website copy. Make sure it effectively markets your company while using your important keyword phrases in a relevant fashion. If you do not have creative writers in-house, you can contract many talented and affordable freelancer writers on websites like [Upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com) or [Zerify](https://www.zerify.com), or you can hire a professional marketing copywriter to create your content. After the copy is optimized, your Web team should focus on optimizing your website's coding – the HTML “under the hood” or behind the scene pages of your website that search engines see when they crawl your website. The optimization process includes planning, writing and coding.

Create a Keyword Plan for Your Website

After ranking your phrases by search volume, try to get a handle on your chances for search engine optimization success. Most likely there are millions of pages competing for the searcher's attention for a given keyword phrase. If the phrase is very competitive, you may be fighting a long, uphill battle to get on the first page. Begin by creating a keyword plan for your search engine optimization campaign.

- **Assign keywords to the most appropriate pages.** Review all of the pages on your website and determine the best page for each of your keyword phrases. If an ideal page does not exist, create one. Be sure to begin this process with your Grade A phrases and then move down the list.
- **Focus on no more than one or two keyword phrases per page.** There are only so many phrases you can work into one Web page. Ideally, you should focus on one phrase per page with each phrase assigned to a unique page on your website.

Write Compelling, Keyword-rich Copy

Keyword-rich copy is critical to SEO success. Unfortunately, a lot of web copy is poorly written because the people placed in charge of Web copywriting do not understand how to write for search engine success. There are a number of successful strategies for creating compelling, search engine-friendly copy for your website.

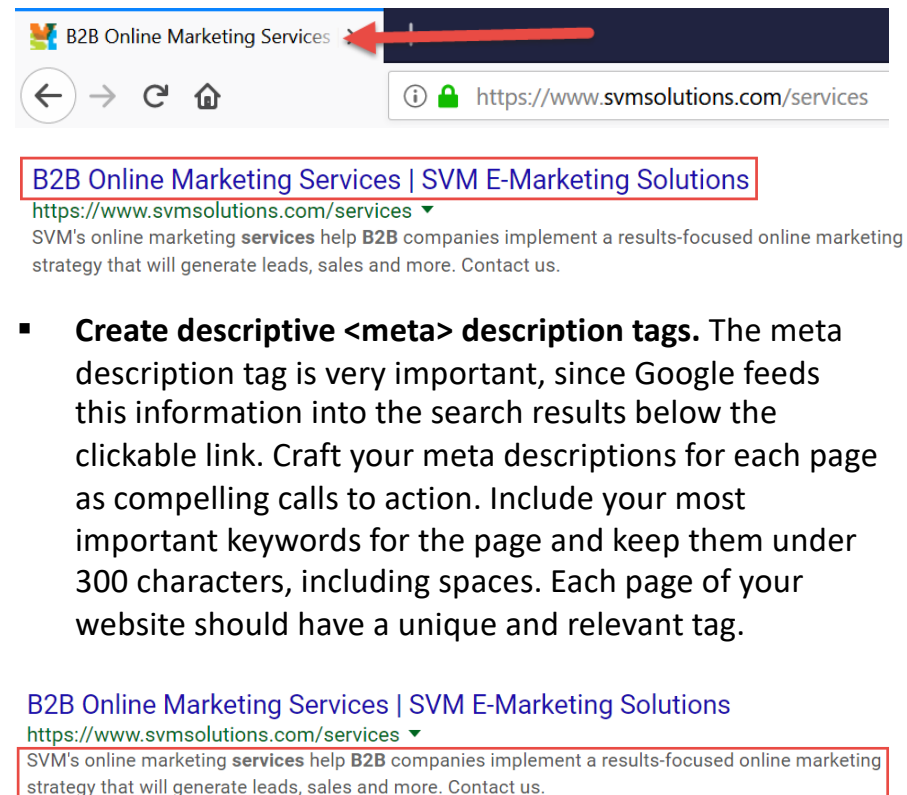
- **Use keyword phrases throughout the entire page in a natural way.** Your keyword phrases need to be used throughout the entire page. Preferably, every page should have about 250 to 300 words of copy, and variations of your keyword phrase (i.e. singular, plural, etc.) should be used approximately 5% of the time. That equals about five times for every 100 words of copy. Do not use the phrase over and over in an unnatural way. If you do, your website ranking will suffer.
- **Write for people, not machines.** Don't write for Google at the expense of your prospects and customers. Create a customer-focused copy that addresses the needs of your customers, provides a solution to their problems, and is easy to read and understand.
- **Optimize each page's headline to stress your keyword phrase.** For each Web page you are optimizing, include the keyword phrase in the page's headline or title. It is more effective if you use the keyword phrase in the front of your title, rather than in the end.
- **Be descriptive.** Since you need to use your keyword phrases often, be as descriptive as possible when crafting your website copy. Avoid using generic words that do not tell your customers and prospects anything. Replace these generic terms with keyword-rich descriptive terms. For example, if you are optimizing for the phrase "bandsaw, blades" don't say "our product" when you can say "our bandsaw blades."
- **Avoid excessive repetition of keyword phrases.** I'm saying this again because I know it's tempting. Make sure you do not repeat the keyword phrase too many times on a Web page in an unnatural way. Not only is this a red flag for Google, but it will not read well to your target audience either.
- **Use bold, italics and underlines.** When you emphasize a word with *italics*, underline or **bold**, search engines assume that it is an important keyword on the page. Use this to your advantage to identify to Google the important keywords for the page. However, make sure that you only use these formatting tags on keywords or you will confuse the search engines and weaken the effect.
- **Link between pages.** Whenever possible and practical, link to other pages from within your content and use keyword phrases for the target page. Avoid using generic "click here" links.

Code Your Website for SEO Success

In addition to content people can read, your website must be optimized “under the hood” and programmed to adhere to current SEO coding best practices. To do this effectively, your Web team should have SEO masters on board, or work with third-party consultants with this special skillset. There is an art and science to this SEO coding process, and the science side can fill a book. Here are some important coding elements your technical people should focus on.

- **Make sure your website is “crawlable” to ensure all content gets indexed.** To be found online, you must make certain that all pages on your website are fully indexed by the top search engines Google and Bing (Yahoo is powered by the Bing search results). Search engines send out programs called “spiders” to crawl your website to record and categorize its content. You must make sure your website is crawlable or it will not be included in search results. Use clean HTML that complies with W3C guidelines and avoid dated Web development tactics like Flash-only design or frames. Offer accessible navigation that works for both humans and machines. Finally, include a sitemap to provide search engines with a roadmap through your website.
- **Include relevant keywords in your page <title> tags.** The title tag – visible in the tab of your Web browser – is one of the most important components of an optimized Web page.

Search engines consider page titles very important when evaluating page content, and it is used as the blue clickable link people will see in the search results. Title tags must be written to include the most important phrases for the page, as well as the name of your company, so it will appear compelling to the searcher and they will know what website they will be visiting. Make sure to keep them below 65 characters, including spaces. Each page of your website should have a unique title tag that is relevant to the page content.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the following elements:

- Browser Tab:** B2B Online Marketing Services
- Address Bar:** <https://www.svmsolutions.com/services>
- Page Title:** B2B Online Marketing Services | SVM E-Marketing Solutions
- Meta Description:** SVM's online marketing services help B2B companies implement a results-focused online marketing strategy that will generate leads, sales and more. Contact us.

A red arrow points from the browser tab to the page title in the search results. A red box highlights the page title and meta description in the search results. A second red box highlights the same information in the browser window.

- **Create descriptive <meta> description tags.** The meta description tag is very important, since Google feeds this information into the search results below the clickable link. Craft your meta descriptions for each page as compelling calls to action. Include your most important keywords for the page and keep them under 300 characters, including spaces. Each page of your website should have a unique and relevant tag.

- **Create useful <meta> keywords tags.** The keyword meta tag has been exploited over the years by site owners stuffing it with keywords. As a result, this is largely ignored these days. Still, it may have some minor impact, so use it only to list the keyword phrase being focused on each page.
- **Leverage heading tags.** Search engines consider heading tags <h1> more important than normal text. Use headings on every page to highlight the most important keywords and the headline for each page.
- **Use targeted keywords in directory and file names.** Just as you can name folders and file on your computer to describe their contents, you can name directories and file on your website. Search engines will look at directory names and file names when reviewing the content of a Web page to determine the keyword focus. Where it makes sense, use your most important keyword phrases in these file names.
- **Use relevant keywords in <alt> tags for images.** Search engines cannot read text included in images. However, every image can have an <alt> tag with a brief description that can be read and indexed by search engines. Only include relevant keywords that are important for the page and relevant to the image.
- **Create a robots.txt file.** A robots.txt file tells search engines what you allow or don't allow them to add to their indexes.

You can learn how to create this file at www.robotstxt.org. Add your sitemap location to the robots.txt to help index your website. Your robots.txt file should be uploaded to the root directory of your server.

- **Create an XML sitemap.** To search engines, an XML sitemap is like a road map for your entire website. You can build a sitemap for your website using products like [XML Sitemaps Generator](#). Upload the sitemap to the root directory of your server and then tell Google and Bing where it is located (e.g., domain.com/sitemap.xml). A quick way to do this is with your robots.txt file. Also, update your sitemap.xml file each time you add new pages to your website.
- **Set up Google and Bing Webmaster Tools account.** Both Google and Bing allow you to set up a Webmaster Tools account, which provides you with detailed reports about your website's visibility on its search engine. You will be able to see how each search engine crawls and indexes your site and learn about specific problems with accessing it. In addition, you will be able to share your sitemap.xml file, as well as tell them how you would like the URLs, or Web addresses it indexes to appear.
- **Avoid "black hat" techniques.** Black hat techniques are schemes designed to fool search engines to get higher rankings. Search engines know all of these tricks and if you're caught you can kiss your rankings goodbye.

STEP 4: EARN INBOUND LINKS TO YOUR WEBSITE

Attract quality links to your website

Link building involves earning quality links to your website from other websites that are frequented by your customers and prospects and that are important in your industry. The more quality inbound links you earn, the more popular your website is in the eyes of Google and other engines. The links can have an huge effect on your search ranking.

Don't confuse this with outbound links (links from your website to other third-party websites). Outbound links can have a negative impact on your search ranking if they are misused.

Why Link Building Works

Link building is the most impactful – and most neglected – SEO strategy. Recently, I talked to a company that learned this the hard way. They completed a sizable investment in a new website with a great design that was optimized for top search engine position. However, they couldn't get a ranking higher than a competitor who had a very poor website with an old, outdated design. After reviewing their situation, I determined that link popularity was the reason. Although the competitor's website was poorly designed, it had thousands of natural inbound links to a number of articles posted on its website. The company I was advising had fewer than 100 inbound links that were not from reputable websites.

I like to use the "fill the bucket" metaphor when describing link building. Think of your website as a bucket where each relevant inbound link is a stream of water into your bucket. We want your website bucket filled with as much water as possible. Each outbound link is a leak in your bucket. To keep your website bucket full, you need to have many more quality inbound links than outbound links.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Link Building

By consistently applying the following link-building strategies, you will significantly impact your ranking on search engines and boost your online popularity.

- **Assess and improve your current inbound links.** Do you know how many inbound links you currently have? If your answer is no, this is the best place to start your link-building efforts. Take advantage of [Moz's Open Site Explorer](#) to find a list of sites and pages that already link to you. Then, make a list of the sites that should be linking to you, including trade associations, customers, vendors, suppliers, online magazines and other business partners or industry resources. Send a thoughtful, personalized request to the owner of each of these sites and respectfully ask them to add your link.
- **Fix link-free references to your company online.** If your company has been around a while, you may have many references online without a clickable link back to your site. This is low-hanging fruit for link building. Perform a Google search for your company's name with quotation marks around the name (e.g., "SVM E-Marketing Solutions") and visit each page. If there is not a clickable link back to your site, reach out to the website owner and ask them to add the link. Don't forget to search for online references to your company's logo. Perform a Google Image search for your logo by searching "your company name + logo" and visit the pages in the results.
- **Create link-worthy content.** One of the best ways to attract scores of inbound links is to make your website's content link-worthy. Websites with compelling and targeted content will earn links from quality third-party websites. This is another area where your content marketing efforts will pay dividends. Pack your website with great blog posts, articles, videos, guides and other content. Continually update your website with new content each month. Over time, you will see your inbound links, search ranking and search traffic continue to grow.
- **Share content on social network sites.** Social media marketing executed properly can be an effective link-building strategy. Tap into your content marketing arsenal once again and start sharing content on social networks. Post status updates featuring your great content to your company's Facebook page, Twitter feed, LinkedIn and Google+ profiles. Include a compelling, brief abstract with a link back to your website. Not only will you gain a link from your social network properties, but if your fans, followers and connections start sharing your content, you will pick up many more inbound links to your website.

- **Guest post on legitimate industry websites.** If you have expertise to share, there are a number of legitimate websites that are looking for content from experts like you. Look for websites of industry publications, associations and popular blogs and make an offer to write content for them. At the end of your article or blog post, put a short “About the Author” section with a link to your website. As long as you focus on legitimate industry websites that people actually use and your content is compelling, you will gain a valuable link with each posting.
- **Make the most of your business relationships.** Most likely, the vendors, suppliers and dealers with whom you do business have websites. They offer a great opportunity for you to gain relevant links. Offer to provide a testimonial for their website that will include a link back to yours. Since they value their business relationship with you, they will likely agree.
- **Review your competitors’ links.** Take advantage of [Open Site Explorer](#) to find pages that link to your competitors. Also, perform a search on Google for your most important keywords. Anyone in the top 10 listings is your competitor, whether you know them or not. Chances are they each have great inbound links to achieve that ranking. This is a great way to determine what sites you should be targeting for your proactive link building efforts.
- **Avoid link-building mistakes.** Almost as important as following the best practices for link building, avoid the worst pitfalls. Don’t load up on reciprocal links. Unfortunately, trading links with other sites will have minimal impact on your link building efforts. Don’t buy links from link farms, sites that do nothing more than list links to other websites. Google will penalize your site if they find you on these sites. Don’t spam sites requesting links. It does not work and often causes more problems by tainting your online image.

STEP 5: RUN A RESULTS- FOCUSED PAID SEARCH CAMPAIGN

Turn pay-per-click advertising into a money-making machine

Organic search engine optimization is great, because effort and investment will result in traffic to your website that you don't have to pay for. However, there are many reasons why you should include pay-per-click (PPC) advertising in your marketing mix:

- **Results are immediate.** Unlike organic search engine optimization, which can take three months or more to see results, PPC can begin driving traffic within minutes of launching your campaign(s).
- **You only pay when someone visits your website.** Unlike traditional advertising where you pay for exposure regardless of the results, with PPC you only pay when someone clicks on your ad and visits your website, providing a compelling pay-for-performance model of advertising.
- **You can reach a targeted, motivated audience.** Your ads will only display for people that are actively searching for your company's products and capabilities. You can also focus your ads to show up only in front of searchers that reside within the territory you do business, as well as restrict the days/times your ads are displayed.
- **PPC is inexpensive and flexible.** With PPC advertising, you can start with a budget as low as \$10/day to test your results. You can spend as much or as little as you wish, and you can change any aspect of your campaign almost instantly. In my experience, you can expect to pay \$0.50-\$5 per click, depending on the competitiveness of the keyword phrase.
- **PPC is extremely measurable.** Leveraging PPC analytics, you will be able to measure and optimize your campaign to increase your leads and sales while lowering your PPC ad investment.

The key to pay-per-click advertising is to make sure you are running a results-focused campaign that tracks your return on investment (ROI). I like to think of it more as a financial model than an advertising model. You are paying for specific visits to your Website, and want to make sure you are getting a sizable return on that investment.

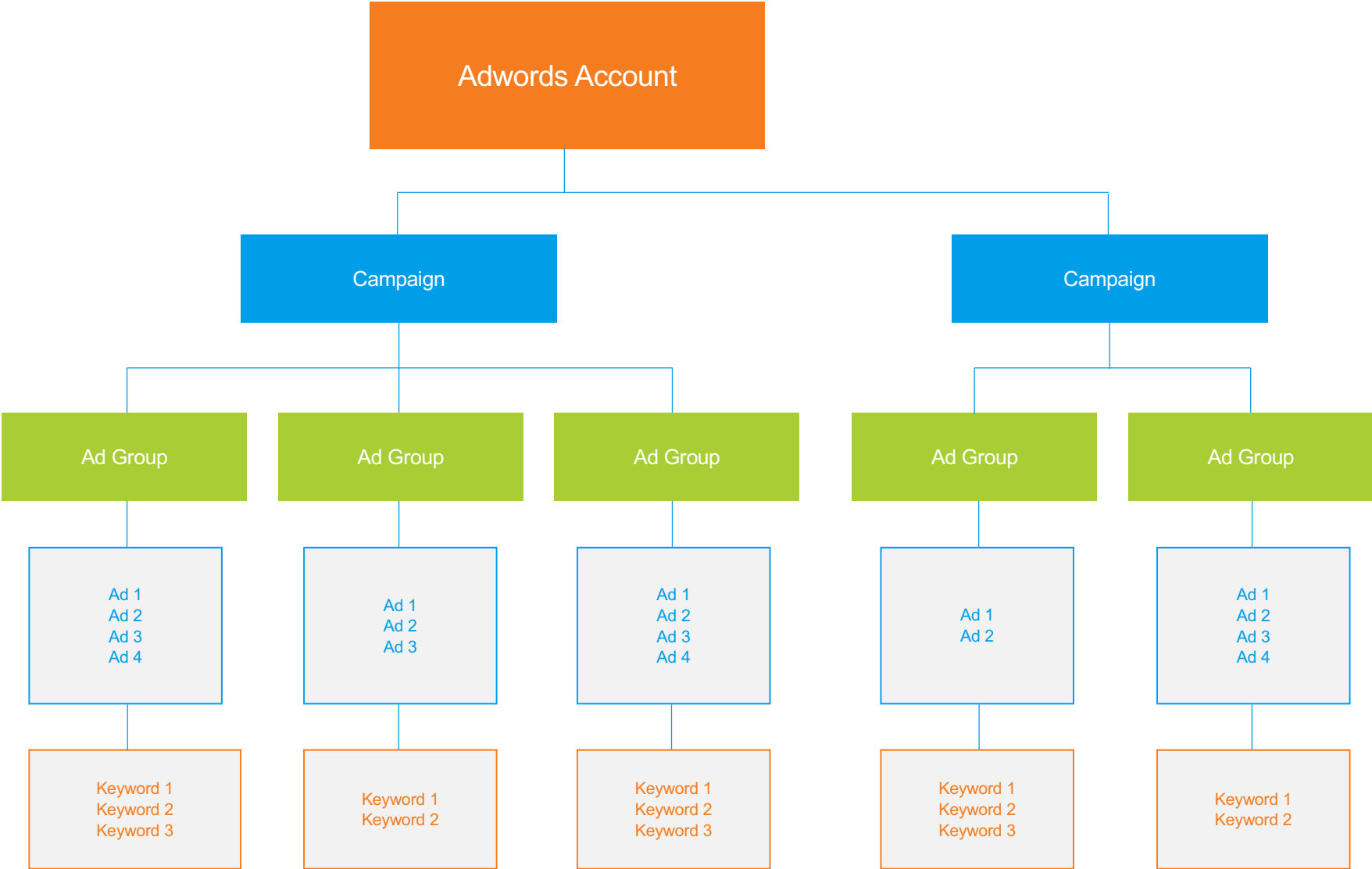
[Google AdWords](#) is by far the most popular pay-per-click advertising platform because Google is the most popular search engine. As mentioned earlier, Google dominates B2B searches with a 90 percent market share. If you are just getting started with PPC advertising, I recommend you focus your efforts exclusively on Google AdWords.

Understand the AdWords account structure

To ensure your Google AdWords campaign gets off on the right foot, it is important to understand the AdWords system structure so you can set up your account properly.

- **Keywords:** The most basic component of pay-per-click advertising is keywords. A keyword determines when your ads will show for a search in Google. So use the keyword "torque tools" in your AdWords account, your ad will show if a searcher types torque tools into their search box on Google.
- **Ads:** Ads are promotional pieces you write that show when a user enters a search term in Google that matches a keyword in your account. They should be descriptively written, with a strong benefit focus and a call to action.
- **Ad Groups:** Ad Groups pair keywords that you use with the ads you write to show for those keywords. Ad Groups should have a singular focus: they should be composed of like keywords grouped together, with one relevant destination or landing page on your Website in common. This enables you to write specific ad text that matches the keywords to the landing pages in a targeted way.
- **Campaigns:** Campaigns combine Ad Groups into related groupings. Those Ad Groups share the Campaign's settings and budget (which is distributed among them by Google's AdWords system). At the campaign level, you are organizing advertisements around a specific campaign goal.
- **Account:** Your AdWords account contains all of your Campaigns and their components. At the account level, you can manage global account variables, such as username and password, billing information, account access, notification settings, and preferences such as time zone.

Visual Representation of the Adwords Structure



How Pay-Per-Click Bidding Works

As you know by the term “pay per click” advertising, you pay Google only when someone clicks on your ad. That’s good news for you if you structure your account well. If you’ve done it correctly, you’ll only pay for targeted traffic to your Website.

Google determines how much you pay for click according to an “auction” model, which is driven by an Ad Rank algorithm based on two key factors: a maximum cost-per-click that you set (so you’ll never pay more for a click than you specify), and your Quality Scores (defined below). By using both cost and quality factors in the algorithm, Google can ensure quality search results for users while still making money.

Google assigns Quality Scores to keywords on a 10 point scale representing Google’s measure of your ads’ effectiveness for each keyword. Quality scores are based on a number of factors, including:

- Ad relevance
- Keyword relevance
- Website landing page relevance
- Historical performance in your account

These factors are determined by algorithms, past account performance, and other factors that Google deems appropriate.

The closer your quality scores are to 10, the more relevant Google thinks your ads are. This leads to better performance, improved ad position, and lower cost per click. By improving your AdWords account, you can improve quality scores and lower costs over time. To see a keyword's quality score, view that column in the “Keyword” tab of your account.

When you set a maximum cost-per-click (CPC) bid for a keyword, you tell Google the highest amount that you are willing to pay for a click on your ads for that keyword. However, your max CPC is not what you'll end up paying most of the time.

If your Max CPC and Quality Scores are high enough to win the auction among all the advertisers bidding on a keyword, your actual cost-per-click (CPC) is determined by the following formula:

The Ad Rank of the Runner Up / Your Quality Score + \$.01

So, you should bid high enough to achieve a good Ad Rank and put your ad in a strong position, but never bid more than you are willing to pay per click.

Ad Rank is determined through this equation:

Max CPC Bid x Quality Score

Choose Your Paid Search Campaign Target

One of the best features of PPC advertising is how targeted it can be. You have tremendous control over where your ads are viewed, including where the visitor is located and the websites your ad displays on, as well as the devices that can be used to view your ad. Specifically, your AdWords campaign can be targeted in the following ways:

- **Geographic location.** Google allows you to set a specific geographic target for displaying your ads. This can help ensure your ads are only showing up in front of your most likely customers. For example, if you are a distributor serving southern California, you can set up your PPC campaign to only show up in southern California. When I perform a search for your products from New Jersey, I will not see your ads.
- **Ad network.** When setting up your AdWords campaign, you can designate the websites you want your ads to show up on. You can show your ads on the Google Search Network, including Google.com and sites that partner with Google search, such as AOL. You also have the opportunity to show your ads on Google's Display Network, which includes third-party websites, online publications and blogs that partner with Google to display AdWords ads. If you are new to AdWords, I recommend you focus primarily on Google's Search Network to produce greater results. On the Search

Network, your ads appear in front of motivated prospects who are actively searching for what you have to offer. On the Display Network, the mindset of the person is more passive and they will have little motivation to click.

- **Device.** By default, your AdWords ads will appear on all devices, but you can alter this setting at the campaign level. Specifically, you can target your ads to desktop and laptop computers, to smartphones with full browsers like iPhones or Android devices, or to tablets. If you select tablets or mobile devices, you have additional options to fine-tune your targeting, such as specific carriers or networks
- **Day and time.** Some companies run AdWords campaigns just to get the phone to ring, but that only makes sense if someone is there to answer the phone. You can modify this setting at the campaign level to designate the specific days and times of day you want your ads to be displayed.

Select the best keyword phrases for AdWords

The keyword research tactics you learned earlier in this guide will be invaluable for your AdWords PPC campaign. However, the way you use and deploy these keywords is very different from your SEO campaign. Since you are paying for each ad click, you want to make sure your ads are showing for targeted, niche phrases that only your most likely customers will be searching.

Begin by understanding keyword match types. Leveraging the appropriate match types can often make or break a PPC campaign. Match types help control the keyword phrases that trigger your ads to display. Generally, Google offers the following match options:

- **Broad match.** Broad match is the most liberal match type and will show your PPC ad if a search term contains your keyword terms in any order and with other search terms. Your PPC ads may also show for singular or plural forms, synonyms and other relevant variations. Broad-match keywords are useful when you are not familiar with searching patterns and want to make sure you show up for all relevant searches. As expected, broad match can also deliver many mishits.
- **Broad match modifier.** Broad match modifier gives you greater control over when your ads are displayed. Add a plus sign (+) as a modifier to your broad match keywords if you want your ads to display when someone searches for close variants of your keywords in any order. Close variants include singular and plural forms, misspellings, abbreviations and acronyms. Broad match modifier excludes synonyms or related searches.
- **Phrase match.** Phrase match adds even more control as to when your ads are displayed. Putting the keyword phrase in quotes converts it to phrase match, meaning the characters between the quotes must appear exactly in the actual search or close variations. Ads won't show if a word is added to the middle of the phrase or if words in the phrase are reordered in any way.
- **Exact match.** Exact match is the most effective way to exclude searches you don't want to attract. By placing [brackets] around your keyword phrase, your ads will appear only when someone searches for your exact keyword or close variants without any other term in the search query. Close variants may include: misspellings, singular or plural forms, stemmings, abbreviations, accents, reordered words with the same meaning and addition or removal of function words.
- **Negative match.** Negative match allows you to filter out irrelevant searches and prevent unwanted clicks. Your PPC ads won't show if a search query contains the keyword term that you define with a minus sign (-) prefix.

How Match Options Will Influence When Your PPC Ads are Displayed

Match type	Example	Ads may show for	Ads will not show for
Broad Match	work boots	work boots buy work boots best boots for work work boot laces black work boots work shoes	No limits
Broad Match Modifier	+work +boots	work boots buy work boots best boots for work work boot laces black work boots	work shoes
Phrase Match	“work boots”	work boots buy work boots work boot laces black work boots boots work	work shoes best boots for work
Exact Match	[work boots]	work boots work boot boots work boots for work	buy work boots best boots for work work boot laces black work boots work shoes
Negative Match	“work boots” -laces	work boots buy work boots black work boots	work boot laces best boots for work

In addition to filtering the types of keyword matches to prevent unwanted – or potentially costly – clicks, Google’s Keyword Planner within the AdWords system will help you manage the AdWords opportunity by estimating traffic and costs by keyword. Enter the phrases on your keyword list into this tool, and it will tell you:

- the estimated daily impressions of your ads
- the number of click you can expect
- an estimate of the daily cost and cost per click

After you have identified your best keyword phrases, organize them into related Ad Groups. Focus on a handful of phrases that are closely related to a common theme. Advertisements are created at the Ad Group level, but keyword phrases are what actually trigger the ads. To ensure the most relevant ad is displayed, the keyword phrases in an Ad Group must relate to that ad. The more specific your Ad Group structure, the better you ads will perform.

Create compelling pay-per-click ads

With so many ads competing for a searcher’s attention, your pay-per-click ads really need to stand out on the first page. Unlike traditional advertisements, paid search ads impose strict character limits. You’ll notice when you write your first ad that there is little room to work with, so make sure each element is clear and concise.

- **Understand the “haiku” of pay-per-click ads.** As with the classic Japanese poetic form, PPC ad text needs to fit within certain parameters.
 - **Headlines:** You have two 30 character headlines to work with. To make the most of this space, use simple words and include the keyword phrase whenever possible. In search results, the headlines will appear next to each other, separated by a hyphen. Depending on the size of your prospect’s screen, one headline may wrap to a second line.
 - **Description line:** The description line is 80 characters. In this brief space, you need to convince the searcher that your offering best serves their needs.
 - **Display URL:** AdWords will use the domain from your final URL and show it as your ad’s display URL. For example, if your final URL is <https://svmsolutions.com/online-marketing-services>, your ad’s display URL will show as www.svmsolutions.com
 - **Optional path fields for display URL:** AdWords gives you two optional, 15-character path fields to help prospects get a better understanding of where they are going to be taken. The text added in these fields should be related to the content on your landing page.

- **Get inside of the heads of your prospect customers.** Your PPC ads are the carrots you can dangle in front of customer to lead them from Google to your website. When writing your ads, make sure you understand your customers' needs and motivations. Include a compelling offer in the ad text to entice your customers to take action.
- **Add sitelinks to your top performing ads.** Ads that appear at the very top of search results are allowed to spice up their listings by displaying up to six additional sitelinks. With those additional links, you can feature multiple products or services and include additional offers to draw people to your website.
- **Send people to relevant and unique landing pages.** With each PPC ad, you can designate a special landing page to direct traffic to. Don't make the mistake of sending paid search traffic to your homepage; that's probably not the most relevant landing page. To make the most of that paid visit, send visitors directly to the most relevant product or service page within your site. If the best page does not exist, create a new one specifically for this paid search campaign. This page should be designed to speak to the needs and motivations of the searcher, provide the solutions they are seeking and make it easy for the visitor to take action.

Tie Your Bidding Strategies to Results

Make sure you let results drive your bidding strategies. Don't fall short like so many companies do and focus on the amount you're paying for each click. Think cost per lead and cost per sale instead of just cost per click.

You'll notice that I called them "bidding strategies." That's intentional. Everything in this process should be thought out, monitored and adapted as necessary. In other words, it needs to be approached strategically.

- **Don't always shoot for the #1 position.** Unless you want to show that you are the top brand in the category, it's usually not smart to bid for the top spot. It can be very expensive to get there. Often a lower-positioned ad will produce a better ROI because the cost per click will be lower.
- **Bid on relevant keyword phrases.** Resist the urge to bid on keyword phrases based on popularity alone. Instead, focus on the most relevant keyword phrases for your company and products. With PPC advertising, popular phrases are often expensive. Your money can be better spent by focusing on relevant niche phrases that are directly in line with your offering and used by your target audience.
- **Test, test and test again.** With PPC advertising, you can measure everything. Performance data is critical for fine-tuning your paid search campaign to improve results. Test different bidding strategies. Test different ad copy. Test different offers in your calls to action. Test different landing page designs. There is always room for improvements that will increase your paid search ROI.

STEP 6: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GOOGLE'S SERVICES FOR QUICK RANKING

Turn pay-per-click advertising into a money making machine

In addition to the strategies mentioned earlier, Google offers a number of services that allow you to quickly boost your company's exposure in the search results.

Place a listing on 'Google My Business'

If you've got a brick and mortar retail location, there's another online tool you can use to your advantage for SEO. Visit [Google My Business](#) and use the tools there to manage your business listing on Google. This listing affects how people see your business when searching on Google.com, Google Maps and Google+.

You can use Google My Business to:

- Help Google understand your location and business details like phone numbers, opening hours, address, etc. These details will enhance your search listings in some cases. You can also edit them as needed.
- Help aggregate and respond to any reviews of your business.
- Connect with customers using Google tools like Google+, Google Hangouts and more.

Even if you don't have a retail location, you should take advantage of Google My Business for your office address. It could still help your customers, and it will help enhance your website's profile on Google.

Market Your Salable Products on 'Google Shopping'

If you've got products that you can assign prices and photos to, you'd be wise to use Google Merchant to get on Google Shopping. With this tool, you can create a data feed of your products to Google via a spreadsheet, XML or API-accessed upload. While the requirements and specifications are strict, an effort to create an accurate data feed could pay big dividends.

- Go to <https://merchants.google.com>.
- Follow instructions to create and submit your data feed of products.
- Link your Merchant account to your AdWords Account to create Product Listing Ads.
- Product Listing Ads appear in the Google search results (above or to the right of the organic results, like regular paid ads). They also appear at Google.com/shopping.
- Pricing works like the pay-per-click model; you pay when someone clicks on your Product Listing Ad.
- Follow instructions at www.google.com/retail to configure ads according to the abilities of your data feed.

While your presence on Google Shopping will not affect your organic results, it can be a very effective form of pay per click advertising because it drives visitors directly to your site when they are searching for specific products.

STEP 7: MEASURE SUCCESS

It's all about the ROI

Measuring the success of search engine marketing activities helps identify the actionable insights for improve future marketing activities.

Although every business is unique, and every website has different metrics that matter, the following suggestions for measuring your search engine marketing success are nearly universal:

- **Measure the success of your website.** Since search engine marketing is all about attracting targeted traffic, begin by leveraging web analytics to monitor traffic increases from organic and paid search. [Google Analytics](#) is the best tool available to help measure and understand ROI.
- **Measure your organic ranking.** To make sure the volume of targeted visitors continues to increase, monitor your position (or ranking) in organic search results; most importantly Google and Bing. You can keep track of your progress manually by performing searches for your keyword phrases in each search engine while logged out. However, I recommend using a software like [ProRankTracker](#) to automate this process.
- **Measure ROI from your paid search campaign(s).** To measure success of your PPC advertising efforts, harness the measurable nature of the web to track the cost-per-visit, cost-per-lead and cost-per-sale for all your PPC ads. You can keep track of this information manually using Excel spreadsheets. However, we recommend you take a look at [Google Adwords](#) reporting and [Google Analytics](#) to help automate this critical reporting process.

NEXT STEPS

Do something!

This search engine marketing guide outlines a proven approach to getting more high-quality leads.

Now it's time to take action to profit from these principles. Assemble a team of qualified web designers and online marketing strategists to take your company's search engine marketing to the next level.

We hope this search engine marketing guide has helped simplify the process of attracting profitable traffic to your website.

A great next step will be to [setup a free consultation with me](#), Bob DeStefano, to discuss your B2B online marketing strategy.

I guarantee I'll provide you with tips and ideas you can use immediately to boost your search engine marketing results.

Call me at **(877) 786-3249 x234** or click the link below to schedule your free consultation.

[**SCHEDULE CONSULTATION**](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob DeStefano, B2B Online Marketing Strategist & Speaker

Bob DeStefano is an internet marketing pioneer with over 25 years of experience helping B2B companies leverage online marketing to produce bottom-line results.

Through his speaking, writing and consulting, Bob makes online marketing understandable and empowers business leaders with actionable tips and strategies they can put to work immediately to:

- Increase sales & profits
- Generate new business leads
- Strengthen relationships with customers
- Boost marketing results on a limited budget
- Measure marketing ROI



Bob's online marketing career began during the birth of online marketing in the early 1990's serving as a strategic planner for Dean Witter, Discover & Co. At Dean Witter, Bob spearheaded the creation of the company's first Dean Witter and Discover Card websites.

As president of [SVM E-Marketing Solutions](#), a leading B2B online marketing agency, Bob has worked with a wide variety of companies, from Fortune 500 companies to small family-owned businesses, to help them leverage online marketing to produce bottom-line results.

Bob is the author of the [Old Dog, New Clicks: Online Industrial and B2B Marketing Know-How for the 21st Century](#), a step-by-step plan to transform your marketing practices from past decades to ensure your company's success for the next decade. In addition, Bob is a regular contributor to a variety of publications, including Modern Distribution Management, Contractor Supply and MarketingProfs, on the subject of actionable online marketing strategies.

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