

Web site marketing report

I was asked to do another web site report recently for an online supplier of business cards.

They were already using an SEO company, so I thought things would be pretty well sorted. I was surprised to find a number of sub-optimal "on page" factors that would have a very detrimental effect on ranking, traffic and hence sales. So you can avoid the same problems, here is my basic checklist for an initial site assessment. Check ALL these things before you consider doing any SEO work. In no particular order:

- Site Mechanics View the site in the top three browsers for problems. (IE, Firefox, Chrome.) There is STILL a fair bit of discrepancy between how browsers render a page, and any problem in layout will knock visitor confidence.
- Check page headers . You need a special tool to do this such as the one on our web hosting site . You are looking for a 200 (Okay) message, not 302 or 301 codes. These are redirects and send out confusing messages to search engines and mean that your server set up is flaky.
- Check keyword balance . Use our keyword balance tool to see what your pages are actually saying to search engines
- Incoming links. Very difficult to accurately assess, as Google does not reveal this information for obvious reasons. Try the Link Popularity Tool.

Conversion The following items relate to conversion rate, the critical factor in making your site a success.

Remember to increase sales by 100% you can either get 100% more visitors (tricky and slow) or increase conversion rate from 1% to 2%. (Easy and quick)

- Usability. You want your site to be teflon slick. You'll be too close to your site. Get external people to assess usability.
- Ascetics. Again, get external people to help you with the look and feel of the site. It has to appeal to your target audience, and again you are not the best person to assess this.
- Confidence. Use of site seals that proclaim "Satisfaction Guarantee" and demonstrate your site's security can seriously boost visitor confidence and increase conversion.

Measurement How is the site currently performing? Check the Google Analytics data, and if not set up already, set up some goals so you can measure performance of the most important actions on your site, such as a sale or lead generation.