

You Can't Nail A Spider To Its Web

Some planks need replacing on my back porch. Nailing each board makes certain it stays secure for years. However, when trying to nail down the Internet, search engines, email, or any marketing tool, you can't. Whether we like it or not, the Internet changes faster than New England weather, and with more subtlety than politicians. We'd all like to fasten our hopes to a few ideas that will work perpetually, and then sit back waiting for the fortune to stream to our bank accounts. Unfortunately, life just does not work this way.

Although somewhat moralistic, recognizing that the easy way out does not exist softens expectations. Many Internet marketers suggest they work few hours to make huge sums. Frankly, I don't believe them. Working from your desk at home requires great effort, continuous focus, deliberate planning with plenty of creative adjustment.

Yesterday, a colleague from India and I mused about whether or not Yahoo penalizes because Google AdSense Ads appear on a site. What options exist if this is true? We considered eliminating the AdSense Ads, but that cuts off any potential revenue even if it does limit the links from Yahoo. On the other hand, we could create a second site, similar to the first, without the Google AdSense Ads. This involves a lot of work, and who knows if it will work. All we can do is try, and having done one site, what could be so difficult about adding a second with some subtle changes?

Spend some time eavesdropping at major search engine optimization forums to see what the "big guys" have to say on the subject. Unless something has changed since writing this article, no one offers a conclusive opinion. For some webmasters, one idea works and another fails. What the algorithm geniuses do remains mysterious as Google and Yahoo get drawn from their primary missions by the quest for revenue. Google's initial public stock offering, augmented by AdSense and Gmail seems to support this premise. Observe Yahoo's paid inclusion and you get the picture. Whenever reading conflicting opinions, intuition and reasonable choices lead me further.

Some even suggest that optimizing a site for search engines can be penalized because it looks like a "professional site". The alternative is to create an "amateur site" with spelling and html errors to avoid the "optimization penalty". Others state that adding content or articles to a site buries your site to searches because those articles may be all over the Internet, and your site offers nothing unique. Of course, you may write articles for reprinting by other sites, which means you get a link back to yours.

My thoughts suggest that all of the above is true. Every idea has merit, except rude concepts like SPAM, or sneaky search engine manipulation like cloaking. Link farms, once considered by web gurus as effective, now become part of the sleaze factor while being duly penalized by spiders. Maybe all these methods work, but they represent sleazy marketing tools.

On my desk, a two volume stack of marketing tips by a well known Internet success collects dust. Although I've read it from one end to another, I've not implemented all of the suggestions. One consideration seems obvious from these three ring binders: every rational and ethical concept should be tried and tested at least once.

Rules may change, flux, waver, but your commitment to offering valuable information and product assures your success. I'll bet the basics will always work: carefully written HTML, limited graphics, lots of content, products that work, and resources that serve. Avoid getting flummoxed by all the changes, just read, adjust, and proceed with passionate confidence. All of your effort will pay-off; just don't expect it to be too easy because you can't nail a web, and remember, "No matter what the statistics say, there's always a way" (Bernard Siegel).

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About the Author

Ray Randall is an investment advisor. Ethos Advisory Services <http://www.ethosadvisory.com> offers investing guidance and financial planning services. Echievements.com: <http://www.echievements.com> offers self-improvement and money-making articles with web site resources. Call Ray (617-275-5565)