

Introduction

- Internet use by organizations offers numerous business opportunities.
- Websites displayed on the first page of the returned results, will enjoy a greater market share.
- Lack of knowledge, time and funds often causes website owners to simply launch their site, do nothing to ensure visibility and wait for hits that could never come.

Problem Statement

The fact that SMMEs are not utilising the full potential of e-Commerce, results in the loss of advantages offered by a highly visible website. This ultimately culminates in a negative impact on bottom line profitability.

Literature

While large enterprises are restructuring and downsizing, SMMEs are playing an increasingly important role in South Africa's economy. The reality though is that between 70% and 80% of these small businesses face failure within the first three years of existence. One reason for this high failure rates is that most SMMEs are often ill equipped to exploit commercial use of the web due to limited knowledge, skills and resources at their disposal.

Information searchers would not only expect the item or content-rich page that they are searching to be in the top hits, but also shown on the first screen. Every web developer should ideally invest in a search engine strategy based on the effective use of techniques and programming tools, for example, meta-tags or alt-tags to increase the chances of the website being listed in high positions in search queries. By ensuring pages that are indexed and ranked high in the search engines, the developer could achieve constant website visibility which, with the help of conventional advertising methods, should generate instant traffic to the website.

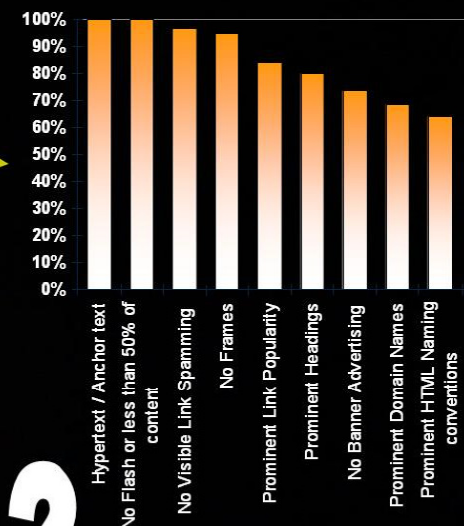
Conclusion

- Businesses big and small push hard to produce websites to be part of the Internet.
- These websites are not worth much without traffic which is achieved through several strategies.
- Many aspects should be considered which are both a time consuming and an ongoing process.

References

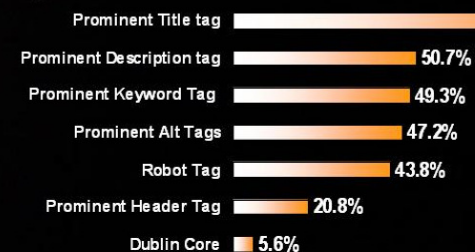
1. BARRON, C. 2000. Brilliant ideas but spectacular flops. *Sunday Times*: 1, April 9.
2. NOBLES, R. & O'NEIL S. 2000. *Maximize website traffic: build website traffic fast and free by optimizing search engine placement*. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corporation.
3. THUROW, S. 2003. *Search engine visibility*. Indianapolis, IN: New Riders.

Top 10 Elements present in Top results

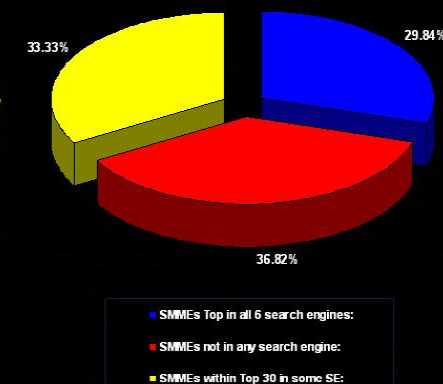


How visible are you?

Top 7 Meta tags used in Top results



SMME Ranking within AOL, Google, Lycos, MSN, Netscape and Yahoo



Methodology

- Data from intensive research + data gathered from an experimental study = Model (supported by research and real current applications)
- Model could then provide valuable methods for increasing website visibility to small business organizations
- Model, should provide essential techniques required to achieve higher website visibility
- Higher visibility should attract valuable customers to organizations putting their business on the web.