

# Search Engine Marketing

## *The Basic Topics You Need to Know*



By Chad Buckendahl

My name is Chad Buckendahl and I am an Internet Marketing professional. One of the disciplines I know a good deal about is Search Engines.

I've been in the industry for over ten years and have witnessed first hand the growth of Search Engine Marketing. Many people can say that they have "witnessed the growth" but few can say that they have "capitalized on the growth" in the way that I have. I have made multiple companies a lot of money through Search Engine Marketing and by following very basic principles.

The purpose of this document is to provide my family and friends advise in one shot without having to spend a lot of time on the phone and sending e-mails where I have to go through the basics of how search engine marketing works.

I have a lot of people call me asking for advice. I love to help but don't always have the free time to talk about Search as much as I want to or my friends and family need. This document is the same document I share with family and friends. I hope you enjoy it and I hope it helps you. You will not be a Search Marketing Expert after reading this document but you will have the fundamentals you need to begin to understand search.

I have three pieces of advice to give before you read this document that will help you as you grow your knowledge beyond what I've written here.

- ***Be humble from the beginning.*** Don't think you'll be a search expert over night. Search Engine Marketing is not complicated but it does have a lot of moving pieces and parts so be patient and most of all is; be careful about what you think you know. Search Engine Marketing is not a black and white discipline. If you say something as fact, you may be wrong. Speak from experience, not from what you've read (including this document). This document is my experience and it's not possible to include all of my experiences in here.
- ***Know whom you are talking to.*** As you seek our resources and people to grow your knowledge of Search, be careful. You may get information that leads you in the wrong direction. If you talk with someone that says, "I am a Search Engine Marketing Expert," be cautious. I have talked to countless individuals that have introduced themselves as experts in this field. Some of them have been legit but many more have not. Don't trust everything you read or everyone you talk to that know search. The best rule of thumb is to take the information with a grain of salt and determine if you can support or deny findings through your own experiences.
- ***Don't be unethical.*** I try to be ethical in every part of my life but when it comes to Search, I am downright conservative. I don't take any risks that could get the companies I work for blacklisted. Just follow the basic principles and be patient. Results will come if you follow the rules. One of the best sites I have found that cover many of the pitfalls one can fall into is <http://www.joe-whyte.com/2007/02/03/google-filters-how-to-get-around-them-and-exploit-their-loop-holes/>.

## Now to the fun part – getting to know Search Engine Marketing. Here are the topics I'll cover

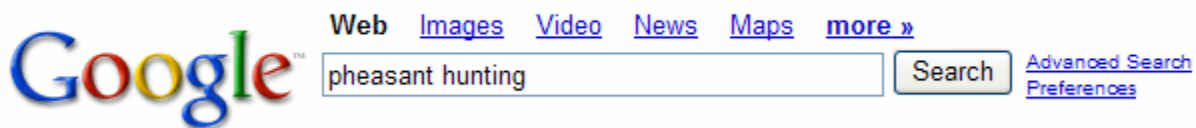
1. Search Engine Marketing Basics
2. The Top 5 Factors of Search Engine Marketing
3. Resources for the Search Engine Marketing Professional

### Search Engine Marketing Basics

When I first speak with people about Search Engine Marketing, I distinguish between Organic Search Engine Marketing and Paid Search Engine Marketing. For me, it's easiest to think of Search in these two distinct disciplines.

- Organic SEM → Rankings on search engines that you don't pay for.
- Paid SEM → Rankings on search engines that you do pay for.

To show the difference in the two disciplines, I did a search on Google.com for the key phrase "pheasant hunting."



As you look at the listings below, you will see Organic Listings and Paid Listings. Again, you pay for the "Paid Listings" and do not pay for the "Organic Listings."

A screenshot of search results for "pheasant hunting" on Google. The results are categorized into "Paid Listings" and "Organic Listings".  
**Paid Listings:**

- Pheasant Hunting Resort** (Sponsored Link): Unforgettable Hunting Experience! Beretta, McAlister & Danner Apparel. URL: www.glaciallakesresort.com
- Granite Springs Offers** (Sponsored Link): South Dakota Pheasants Comb with Waterfowl and Rainbow Tro. URL: www.GraniteSpringsSD.com
- North Star Outfitters** (Sponsored Link): Waterfowl & Pheasants Combo Hunts Available in 2007! URL: www.HuntNorthstar.com
- S Dakota Pheasant Hunt** (Sponsored Link): Private Ranch, Wild & Released Small Groups to Corp. Booking URL: www.GSSafaris.com
- South Dakota Bird Huntin** (Sponsored Link): South Dakota's Foremost Upland Pheasant Game. URL: www.SouthDakotaBirdHunting.com

**Organic Listings:**

- Pheasant Country - Home**: South Dakota's #1 source for pheasant hunting and pheasant hunting related ... Includes pheasant hunting guide and outfitter directory, news, photos, ... URL: www.pheasantcountry.com/
- South Dakota Pheasant Hunting including Ringneck Pheasant and ...**

**Image results for pheasant hunting:** Three small images showing pheasant hunting scenes. The first image has a date stamp "4.9.2005".

The first question many people ask is "Why would you pay if you can get it for free?" There is an easy answer to this question and a complicated answer. First... the easy answer.

- You want to be where consumers are going to see you. Some consumers are more likely to click your organic ranking and some are more likely to click your paid ranking. So, in order to get the most people clicking through to your site, in an ideal situation, you should put your ads in both spots.

- You don't have organic rankings for the terms relevant to your product. Gaining high organic rankings takes time. Some companies never achieve all of the organic rankings they need so an option is to pay for ads listed on the search engines with the hope that the consumer will click-through and purchase.

**Now, the complicated answer...**

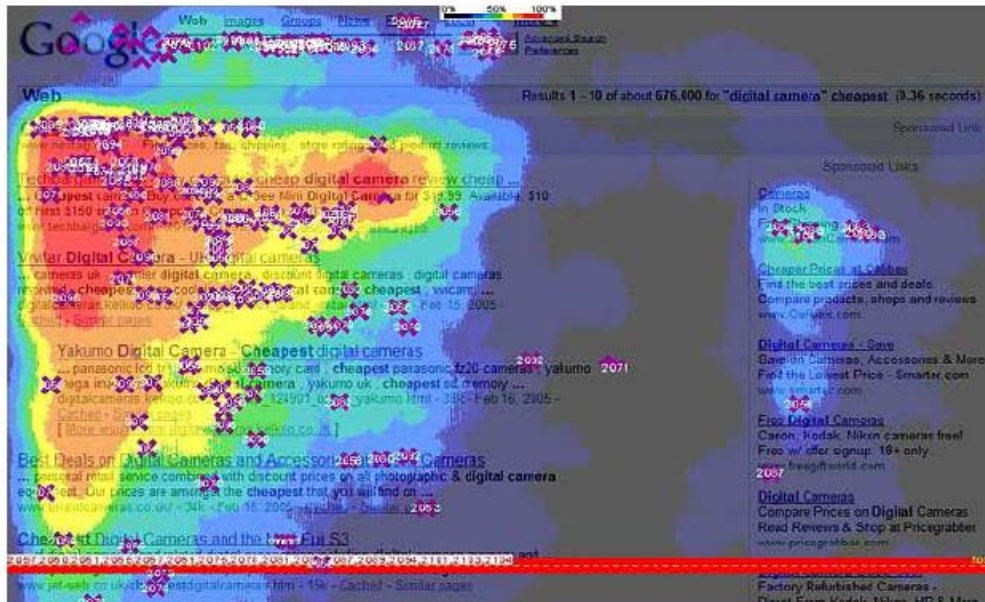
There are studies that show that consumers are more likely to click on the organic listings than the paid listings so you want to work on gaining organic listings for all of the potential keywords that are relevant to your product.

However, you may never gain the rankings you need organically so you it may be profitable to pay for the listings. They key point here is that IF you do choose to pay for keywords, know the rate of return on your investment for each keyword you are buying.

There are a many takeaways from eye tracking studies. I'll list some that I have but you can draw your own conclusions to help create the soundest search program for your product.

Eye tracking studies show consumer eye patterns while searching for terms. The test conductors have several consumers sit at a computer and perform a set of tasks, while they have special glasses on that track eye movement. Over time, eye movement patterns appear and we can draw conclusions from these patterns.

This research is the foundation for eye tracking studies. See an example of an eye tracking heat sensitive report below.



You can see that the hot spots or key locations on Google include:

1. Top paid listings.
2. Top organic listings.
3. Google's alternative results, including shopping, news or local suggestions.

Visibility dropped quickly with organic rankings, starting at a high of 100% of consumers looking directly at the top listing, and then dropping to 85% at the bottom of the “above the fold” listings. Fewer and fewer consumers have the patience to look below the fold and even fewer have the patience to look at page 2.

- In searches where top sponsored results are returned in addition to right sponsored ads, the top ads received much higher visibility, being seen by 80 to 100% of participants, as opposed to 10 to 50% of participants who looked at the side sponsored ads.
- On side-sponsored ads, the top ranked results received much more in the way of both eye activity and click through. About 50% of participants looked at the top ad, compared to only 10% who looked at ads in the 6, 7 or 8th location on the page.

Understand the differences between paid and organic listings and figure out the combination of rankings you need in order to get the biggest bang for your buck. If you don't have a ranking on a word you think you could convert consumers on, buy it and see if you do convert. If you don't convert, stop buying the word. If you do, build content to support organic rankings for that word. Play around with the CPC (Cost per Click) price until you see the best ROI.

The most important advice I can give to the newbie search professional is to put your time in. Specifically, make sure you know (by keyword) what your ROI is and keep on top of it everyday. Don't get lazy or your will get burnt. Being good at Search isn't hard; It's a lot of work. It just takes perseverance and a strong commitment. If you're not a detail-oriented person, SEM isn't going to be for you no matter how bad you want to be a Search professional.

### ***The Top 4 Factors of Search Engine Marketing***

1. Meta Information → There are many Meta tags one can use. The most common are Title Tags, Description Tags and Keyword Tags. The most important is Title Tags but make sure you have all three on each page of your site. To learn more about meta tags, go to, <http://searchenginewatch.com/showPage.html?page=2167931>.
2. Keyword Density → Your text should be visible and readable. Don't hide text by assigning white values to your words. This will only get you in trouble.
3. Link Popularity → Sometimes this term is referred to as “Trust Rank” or “Page Rank.” Simply put, it is the amount of inbound links and sites that link to you over time. More does not mean merrier. The content of the sites that link to you must be relevant to the words you are trying to optimize for. If the sites linking to you are not relevant to the topics related to your product, it will not help you and could hurt you.
4. Domain → The age and name of your domain and site have HUGE influences on the rankings of your site. If you have a domain and site that is less than 8 months old, you will be challenged to achieve high and numerous rankings.

### ***Resources for the Search Engine Marketing Professional***

- A glossary of Search Engine Marketing Terms (<http://www.positioning-search-engines.com/glossary.htm>)
- If you want to go to a conference to learn more about Search Engine Marketing, go to <http://www.searchenginestrategies.com/>. I highly recommend it.
- Leverage past experiences of others in the search field by going to <http://www.searchmarketingstandard.com/>. You will find very interesting content related to the topics you're trying to know.

I hope that this information gets you start and that you will find the same passion I have for Search Engine Marketing.

***Good luck and Keep it Simple.***