

Chatter

Buzz

13 TIPS FOR AVOIDING PHONY SEO EXPERTS



SEO INC.

SEO SOLUTIONS

SEO AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

Though it has been around for a relatively long time, the institution of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) got a jumpstart in recent years and continues to grow by leaps and bounds. As is the case with many industries on the rise, many people see the combination of exponential growth and relative newness of this industry as an opportunity to falsely position themselves as experts. It's no secret that many business owners are unfamiliar with the details of SEO, and this allows people to swindle companies into buying their services that are not tried and true.

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While being unethical and disappointing, this practice has cast a dark shadow over the SEO industry as a whole and put legitimate SEO experts in an unfortunate position. It is not uncommon for SEO companies to receive rude emails or have their profession downplayed and dissed at trade shows by people who have had run-ins with the self-proclaimed “experts.” Despite all of this, there are true experts out there who offer legitimate and proven services. Here are some things to steer clear of to make sure you find yourself working with a reliable SEO company.

#1 Guaranteed rankings

The guarantee of achieving a certain ranking is one of the most important red flags to spot when searching for a reliable SEO company. The short and sweet explanation is that the team at Google themselves cannot guarantee rankings. Here is a quick explanation from the [Google Webmasters Guide](#). Pay close attention to the bolded line: "No one can guarantee a #1 ranking on Google."

#2 The SEO company's ranking on search engines

Let's take a second to think about this one. If the company in question is truly an SEO expert, shouldn't its own website be ranked competitively? It certainly would be a good idea to use its own site as an example. That being said, if the company doesn't even have its site highly ranked it's probably safe to call bluff.

Things to know about SEO

- 88% of clicks are on organic results as opposed to PPC
- There are many search engines other than Google, such as Yahoo!, Bing, etc.
- 75% of users never look beyond the first page of results
- Over 90% of Internet experiences begin with a search engine
- The search engine industry is estimated to be worth more than \$16 billion

#3 Link farming

This is the process of submitting your website to thousands of directories, forums, websites, etc. To the left is an example of link farming packages. With the new Penguin update, Google has started to crack down on useless backlinks and will penalize you if your website is caught on these link farm directories.

Directory BABY	Directory LITE	Directory Trial	Directory HEAVY	Directory GOLD
\$99	\$179	\$9	\$299	\$349
Manual submission	Manual submission	Manual submission	Manual submission	Manual submission
1000 directories	2000 directories	50 directories PR4+	4000 directories	5000 directories
30 days delivery	30 days delivery	30 days delivery	30 days delivery	30 days delivery
Guaranteed service	Guaranteed service	Guaranteed service	Guaranteed service	Guaranteed service
Buy	Buy	Buy	Buy	Buy

#4 Company claims to have a relationship with (or be) Google

Simply put, the company is lying. Google not only places its employees under strict Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA), the company states in the above link that it has no special partnerships.

#5 Company's methods are trade secret

Of course many reputable companies have some proprietary methodologies and practices. However, if an SEO company says that it can't explain its link building practices or other services in some degree of detail then don't get into business with them. This means they either don't know what they are talking about or practice unethical SEO methods.

#6 Extremely cheap prices or Cookie Cutter packages

We've all heard it before: if it seems too good to be true, it probably is. This directly applies to the world of SEO. If your budget doesn't allow a whole lot of room for investing in SEO, it's probably a good idea to do some research and then play the DIY game. It won't take much learning to do a better job than some SEO company that charges chump change. If you have no idea what companies charge for SEO, SEOMoz has a [good reference](#).



#7 No SEO case studies or lack of track record



Be sure to check for/ask about:

- Testimonials
- Case studies
- Badges or certifications (left)

All reliable SEO companies should be able to provide these things.

If a company can't, chances are it isn't the best choice to go with.

#8 No affiliations or connections best choice to go with.

Most experts in the SEO field are affiliated with likeminded industries and organizations. One thing to look for is membership with [SEMPO](#), the "largest nonprofit trade organization in the world serving the search and digital marketing industry and marketing professionals engaged in it." Also take note of participation at events such as Search Marketing Expo and SES Conference.

Things to know about SEO

- Google uses a complicated algorithm that takes many things into consideration when ranking sites. This album is constantly changing.
- These algorithms are always given names of animals. The current algorithm is Penguin, and went into effect April 12, 2012.

[SEMPO](#) ::::

#9 Company emphasis on ranking

Many SEO companies put too much emphasis on ranking alone. Yes, it is great to be ranked highly. But many keywords have low competition and low conversion rates that greatly take away from their value. SEO is about bringing more traffic to your website to convert into more sales, and ranking highly is just one facet of that equation.

Notable SEO Industry Events

- Search Marketing Expo
- SES Conference
- Pubcon
- LinkLove

#10 Poor Content

A very common SEO practice known as keyword stuffing is the process of literally stuffing web content with keywords, often to the point where it is barely readable or understandable. In this case, the content is written strictly for SEO purposes and is not intended to persuade or sometimes even make sense to anyone who reads it. Run away from this. Real SEO companies will have an SEO content writer who understands how to efficiently use keywords within effective copy.

#11 Offering free trial services

SEO is too complicated a process to offer unpaid trials. In fact, there are so many facets in the beginning alone that no legitimate company would ever offer a free trial. SEO is a process and takes time to show results. Simply put, a company would not be able to prove its competency through a free trial because the amount of effort put into SEO would not be reflected in the results for longer than any "trial" would last.

30-day
FREE
trial!

#12 Lack of reports

It is important to understand an internet marketing company's reporting procedures before you choose to pay for its services. For example, it is a good idea to ensure that reports displaying where your money is going are provided monthly. Reports should also show what work has been done as there should be no secrets (refer to tip #5).

Keyword Stuffing:

- Planting keywords (for SEO purposes) into content to the point where it is hard or uncomfortable to read.

#13 Hands-off company

The SEO industry is not one where you need to hand over the keys and blindly trust the company you've hired. Your participation should be welcome pretty much every step of the way. In fact, frequent meetings between the customer and company are often considered necessary to discuss new strategies and content.

CONCLUSION

Working with true SEO experts can work wonders in terms of driving traffic to your site and ultimately increasing your bottom line. Search Engine Optimization is a tool that requires consistent attention to remain successful. It is crucial to have a good relationship with your SEO company and this begins with finding one that is not only successful but trustworthy as well. Keep these tips in mind to help you find the right company and see how SEO benefits your business.

ABOUT CHATTER BUZZ

Chatter Buzz Media is your full-service digital marketing firm specializing in website design, SEO, social media and content creation. Founded as a collaboration between an accomplished engineer and a decorated journalist, Chatter Buzz has the largest tool belt in its niche industries of law, technology, healthcare, and fashion. With combined experience of over 20 years, the founders of Chatter Buzz have branched out both nationally and internationally. In doing so they have developed an impressive global network consisting of ad agencies, public relations firms, journalists, and much more. Though experienced, the Chatter Buzz team is young and teeming with refreshing creativity.

A women and minority owned firm, Chatter Buzz has delighted hundreds of business clients who have enjoyed increased brand awareness and sales. We've performed for companies ranging from small business to Fortune 500, all with the same attention to detail and unique innovation we've built our reputation upon.

You and your company are our highest priority, and our success is firmly built upon a strong legacy of superior customer service. When you do business with Chatter Buzz, you can expect to receive fast, courteous customer support via phone, email and in person.

Don't take our word for it, experience Chatter Buzz for yourself!

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