

industry advisor

by Randi Thornton



HELP BUYERS AND SELLERS FIND YOU ONLINE

With more than 60 billion searches conducted every month and 90% of online consumers using search engines as their primary source of information, search engine optimization (SEO) has rapidly become the most effective method of online advertising. For consumers and prospects to find your business online, it's critical that your URL rank in the top 20 search engine results. After all, 93% of consumers stop searching after the second page of listings.

I challenge you to do a search right now...go to Google.com and type in your city name followed by the text "real estate." Example: Pittsburgh Real Estate. You will be given the top 10/page-one Google results for this keyword term. Is your site listed? How will someone looking to buy a home in your area find you? How can you tell a potential seller about your great services and why they should list their home with you?

How do you evaluate whether an SEO campaign is working?

- ▶▶ Number of estimated unique monthly visitors
- ▶▶ Number of conversions
- ▶▶ Number of top 10 rankings you achieve
- ▶▶ Number of page views
- ▶▶ Number of search referrals

Optimizing your website is a process with many key components to consider. First, consider your site's validation: how do search engines see your site? Are there site errors? How many road blocks does your site have? What keywords are people searching for? How many landing pages do you have? Are you fully utilizing your metatags?

Not every website designer is an SEO expert and vice versa. Therefore, it is very important to have the right people focused on the right things...just because your website is pretty to look at, does not mean it will drive consumers to your site. The amount of traffic is dependent on how well it has been "optimized."

SilverDoorRealEstate.com, an online Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, real estate website, achieved page-one rankings in Google for highly desired search terms through an integrated optimization strategy, including placing certain "keywords" throughout certain parts of the website.



SEARCH TERMS	SEARCH POSITION	PAGE #	OUT OF HOW MANY RESULTS/COMPETITORS
Lake Minnetonka homes	7	1	365,000 total results
Homes on Lake Minnetonka	9	1	141,000 total results
Homes for sale on Lake Minnetonka	2	1	55,100 total results
Minnetonka homes	10	1	388,000 total results
Lake Minnetonka home for sale	4	1	90,400 total results
Minnetonka home for sale	7	1	468,000 total results
Minnetonka homes for sale	6	1	196,000 total results
Lake Minnetonka homes for sale	2	1	55,100 total results
Minnetonka real estate	11	2	241,000 total results
Lake Minnetonka home	11	2	362,000 total results

These types of results are what "make the phone ring." As tough as the market continues to be, those real estate professionals who are looking for every edge over the competition should be looking at ways to drive more people to their sites. **RE**

Randi Thornton has been active in the real estate and mortgage business for the past 20 years and has extensive experience with search engine optimization. She recently joined PCMS Consulting as their Internet Marketing/SEO expert. For more information, please visit www.pcmsconsulting.com or e-mail rthornton@pcmsconsulting.com.