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Proven Experts: Search Engine Experts Gets Results

When you're sick, you go to a doctor; when you need a contract, you go to a lawyer; so where do you go when you need help with your search engine marketing?

To **Search Engine Experts**, of course.

Search Engine Experts provide search engine marketing services to companies in the BtoB and BtoC spaces. **Ken Saunders, founder and president**, says the company will do what is necessary to gain better visibility for clients' websites in search. "Our job is to make a website more attractive to the search engines so it is ranked more highly. It's important to stay on top of changes in the industry and then apply this knowledge to our clients' websites – getting a high ranking is not a 'one-and-done' effort."

In fact, it does take experts in the industry to do Search Engine Optimization (SEO) correctly, and Ken takes this charge seriously. "Many companies claim to do SEO," he says. "However, we are the only certified search engine marketing strategist in the Central Midwest. There are less than 200 certified strategists nationwide – and two of us are at Search Engine Experts."

Ken decided up front that his company would do more than "hang a shingle" – he used the word "Experts" in the company name for a reason: "We have industry certification from the Search Engine Academy in Mississippi, founded by two professors who are on the cutting edge of SEO. Our certification gives us access to the latest research from the industry. Combining this with the work we do to keep up with industry changes leads us to understand better than most what search engines are looking for."

In 2007, when he decided to start the company, Ken knew there was a need for quality SEO consultants. He had been working as Director of Marketing at a software firm, responsible for their website and SEO. He explains, "When the Internet started to become a force, companies were told, 'You need a website – it'll bring you more business than you know what to do with.' However, with the growth of search engines, they now understand that getting found in search is critical to driving traffic to a website."

Feeling there was a broader business need for services like he had been performing, he decided to strike out on his own. “I saw the opportunity to change a company’s website from an expense item to a revenue generator – to attract more customers, to put more items into shopping carts, or to attract quality leads and make the website a valuable extension of the sales team,” Ken explains.

He also felt he truly wanted to be a “partner” with his clients. “A true partner takes risks, and is rewarded when things work, he says. Therefore, he decided to structure Search Engine Experts’ compensation on a pay for performance model. “We are compensated based on the value we bring to our clients, based on how well we get them ranked. If we can’t get a website ranked in the top three pages, we don’t charge; there’s no value there. Our fees are tied directly to the value we bring to our clients.” Ken feels this puts them on the same side of the table as their clients: “Our clients want their rankings as high as possible; so do we. We have incentive to get their websites up there.”

In tight times, this is even more valuable – especially since Search Engine Experts can come in and “do their magic” with little time commitment required from employees who are already stretched thin. “We’re also less expensive than training your IT people in SEO,” Ken asserts. “With budgetary concerns, it’s difficult to spend time and resources to have people trained initially, but it’s even more difficult to keep them up to date and ensure someone is constantly paying attention to SEO.” He stresses SEO is an ongoing process that a company must commit to in order to maintain rankings. “If you take your eye off the ball,” he says, “your rankings will start to erode – very quickly.”

Search Engine Experts provides both the expertise and the resources to ensure your eye is continuously on the ball. “We do the ‘heavy lifting,’ just requiring input to understand the business and goals, and then to get approvals at key junctures,” says Ken. This makes them a seamless addition to the team. “Once we understand what you want and need from your website, we work on keyword research to determine the keywords and phrases potential customers are using to find products and services like yours.”

Once those keywords are determined, Search Engine Experts updates the website to correctly utilize those terms, making the website as attractive as possible to search engines. “This can sometimes involve changing the appearance,” Ken says, “depending on the structure and how up to date the website is.” It also includes adding proper meta tags, updating copy, and other behind-the-scenes items.

The process usually takes two to three months, but the team stays engaged with the website and rankings on an ongoing basis. Ken says they watch every month and “adjust as necessary to keep the rankings improving, or nice and high if we’re already there.”

Search Engine Experts certainly has an interesting model – and their successes prove their clients agree. “We have a very nice client base that has continued to grow through the recession,” Ken says. “We enjoy what we do and the results prove it. It’s the difference between running an organization professionally and just being out there, trying to make a buck. We are committed to the industry and our clients – and we intend to stay that way.”