

TRIDENT WEBSITE 2007 ONLINE MARKETING PROPOSAL

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INTRODUCTION

With this proposal we intend to give you, the client, all the information you need to market your new website online. So that you can maximize an appropriate user base, we will outline useful services available to you and point out features we have already implemented in the production of the site to aid you in this pursuit.

As the web is so vast and so much information encountered carries the danger of being misleading, we will weed out all the unnecessary and irrelevant information and provide you with a practical and useful guide to making your presence on the web known.

ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGY

EXTERNAL AND RECIPROCAL WEB LINKS

Since Google is the most widely used and influential web search facility, it is a good idea to tailor any online marketing strategy primarily to it. With this in mind, not only does Google order its search results by relevance to given keywords but also filters the results by listing the sites or pages by order of those which are most linked to by other sites which contain similar content or are within a similar subject area whilst giving highest priority to the sites which provide mutual links to each other respectively. For example, if a user makes a request for Google to search for 'cars' and Google only finds two pages, one of them with 100% relevance to the keyword but with no trace of mutual linkage and the other one with only 60% relevance but with ten mutual links to other pages concerning the same type of content, Google will display the latter page before it does the former. For this reason it is extremely important that you encourage other websites to link to you.

As Trident works with some very high profile clients, it would be advisable to persuade some of them to link to your site from theirs, offering a reciprocal link in return. This will create meaningful relationships which Google greatly values. If only one link is obtained with one of these high profile sites, Google will recognise Trident as a considerably higher quality search result and subsequently rank the website higher in its listings.

Google also regards external links from online directories such as the Yahoo! Directory and the Open Directory Project as good quality links which add value to your website. For a \$299 annually recurring fee, Yahoo! will guarantee a site listing in its directory¹ automatically raising your profile and status in the eyes of the Google search robots. Although this is a considerable expense for just one link and as the website is standards compliant and will contain original and meaningful content giving it a very good chance of being listed via the free 'Suggest a site' option which the Yahoo! Directory also provides, as the Trident site is a commercially orientated

¹ Web link for more information: <https://ecom.yahoo.com/dir/reference/instructions>

website, the paid option is the only one available in order to get a listing in the directory.

The Open Directory Project has a much more, indeed, open approach to website submission. Its requirements are fundamentally that the website has worthwhile content and is submitted in the correct category. On researching the categories of the directory, it would seem the Business: Marketing and Advertising: Branding² category is most suitable as the majority of the descriptions of the sites listed there contain many of the suggested keywords that you have provided. Once the most appropriate category is found, it is just a matter of clicking 'suggest URL' at the top of that page to submit your website for consideration. For more information, refer to the site's 'How to suggest a site to the Open Directory' page³.

ADWORDS

Adwords is Google's answer to online marketing. Because of its ubiquitous nature and almost undeterminable reach, Adwords is also the most widely used online advertising service available. Due to it being available to anyone who owns a website it is a highly accessible and usable application which offers all the most detailed as well as the most easy to use features one would expect from such a service. It can be set to work with Analytics, details of which are also included in this proposal.

The way it works is quite simple. As you sign up to the service, you create a short advert (which can be altered later) which consists of a headline, two lines of description and the URL to the specified website (130 available characters in total). You then choose which users around the world you would like the ad to be seen by. You can choose to show the whole world, individual countries or select a list of key cities and regions around the globe.

Next you choose which keywords you would like to use so that when a user from the location(s) you have specified searches for one or more of those particular keywords, your advert appears next to their search results. It is important to choose

² Web link for suggested Open Directory category: http://dmoz.org/Business/Marketing_and_Advertising/Branding/

³ Web link to 'How to suggest a site to the Open Directory': <http://dmoz.org/add.html>

keywords which best describe or affiliate with your product or service so as to target the correct audience and get the best out of the service. At this stage, Google offers a useful range of features to guide you through the selection of your keywords. It can scan your site for relevant suggestions or you can type a word into a box and it will return relevant alternatives.

On the next screen you specify your daily budget and your maximum cost per click (CPC). This determines which position amongst other ads of a similar nature yours will take. For example, a low CPC set for a generic keyword which is searched for all the time will mean your ad will be presented as one of the last adverts within a set of results whereas if the CPC is set higher, your advert will appear higher within the results. Google provides a useful estimation tool so that you can get a good idea of how far your set budget and CPC will reach. It is important to get a good balance for each keyword to maximise effectiveness. And remember, Google never charges you for displaying your ad, but only when a user clicks on it so you have to be sure you are targeting the correct user.

All of these features can be fine tuned and observed at any time via your account. It is a good strategy to keep a close eye on what is happening with your advert(s) so that you can see what works and what doesn't and subsequently moderate and modify accordingly.

SEARCH ENGINE SUBMISSION

Google is extremely important in online marketing today. However, this doesn't mean one should disregard all other search engines. Therefore, it is important to submit your website to the most commonly used search facilities. At present, these include Google, Yahoo, MSN, AOL Search and Ask. Instructions for submitting your site to these search engines are as follows:

- Google - Navigate to <http://www.google.co.uk/addurl/?hl=en&continue=/addurl> and enter the URL (for example, <http://www.sonoco-trident.com>) and a short description of the site including as many relevant keywords as possible. Verify you are a human

being by entering the 'squiggly letters' into the next box and click 'Add URL' to send your submission. Google will then queue the submission for indexing which could take a few days to a few months (a time scale which is common with most search engines).

- Yahoo Search - Navigate to <http://submit.search.yahoo.com/free/request>. You will need to sign in to Yahoo to submit a site. If you do not have a Yahoo account, simply click 'Sign Up' and fill out the registration form. Once this is done you simply enter your URL into the appropriate box and click 'Submit'.
- MSN - Navigate to <http://search.msn.co.uk/docs/submit.aspx>, enter the 'squiggly letters' and type your URL into the next box. Then click 'Submit URL' and that's it.
- AOL Search - Because AOL Search is powered by Google, once your site has been indexed by Google, it will appear in search results via AOL.
- Ask - This search engine does not provide a facility to submit your website. Instead, once the site's robots recognize that your site is worth including because it has valuable links to it from other sources, it will be included in Ask's search results. There is therefore no need to worry about Ask indexing your website as over time this will occur naturally.

It is important that these search engine submissions are done manually rather than by using any other means such as mass search engine submission applications which are available. Most search engines can recognize these mass submissions and disregard them on the grounds of rules violation. In the most extreme cases, sites can be black listed by search engines for using unsanctioned means of site submission but as long as you read each search engine's submission recommendations all will be well.

ANALYTICS

Using this Google tool, you can analyze many aspects of your website, this includes the number of visitors to your site. To gain truly representational results this tool must record data for at least 3 months previously, which allows realistic trends in visitor number etc, to be seen.

GOALS

Within Google Analytics, there is the ability to set goals and we have previously stated that this would be beneficial once the site was up and running but further research into this has shown that this aspect of Analytics will not be relevant to the website at this moment in time. This is due to the fact that goals are meant to be created in order to track sales etc of an online company in which products are sold from the site. Therefore, setting Google Analytic goals would not be required.

KEYWORD DENSITY/INTEGRATION

There are both positive and negative effects which are dependent on the number of keywords used (density) and how relevant the keywords are to the actual content of the website (relevancy). This is done by the integration of keywords into the content of the pages of the site, in particular the home page. The optimum number of keywords is a fine balance, as having too many could be seen as keyword spamming, having a negative effect on the sites ranking, and too few will mean that a potential audience may not be reached.

KEYWORD CONSIDERATIONS

The choice of Keywords is the key to success, especially when paying for them via Google Adwords. A major aspect of this is the specificity of the keywords. Again there needs to be a balance between how specific a keyword is as the more focused it becomes, the possibility of reaching new and other avenues of custom becomes less. When paying for Adwords, the specificity of the keywords is directly correlated with their cost. For example, using “packaging” as a keyword would be relevant to the company but would be very expensive due to how general the term is, but “pre-press packaging” as a keyword would be just as relevant, if not more, and would be less expensive due to it being more specific.

PAGE TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS (INC. META + IN SEARCH RESULTS)

All pages within the website must be named appropriately and with relevant descriptions to ensure that searches internally (via the search box on the site) and externally (via meta search engines) give users the largest number and most relevant results possible.

GOOGLE WEBMASTER TOOLS

These free tools from Google will give detailed information into how Google has indexed the website within its search engine. One of the features of this is its ability to give information on your website that would not be obtainable otherwise, for example, the number of links to your website, that Google has recorded from other websites (the higher the number of links from other websites, the higher the rank in Google of the website).

PRACTISES ALREADY IMPLEMENTED IN WEBSITE PRODUCTION

SITE MAP

A site map is a list of all the pages on a site which is linked to from every page and is essential in terms of both Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and usability. It allows search engines and users to get to just about any page within 2 clicks. This gives search engines a higher chance of finding each page so they can include them in their search results. Also, if a user doesn't know where to find what they are looking for, they can go to the site map to see an overview of the site to help them locate what they are after.

The site we have developed includes a site map for each language, so the page is kept relatively small and usable by not having all the different language pages listed all on one page.

SEARCH ENGINE FRIENDLY NAVIGATION

The main navigation along the top of the web site is image based, but this remains accessible as alternate text has been defined for each of the menu items. This allows users with images turned off or those with screen readers to see what the menu item is. The same method of defining alternate text is used for normal images throughout the site also.

The sub-menu along the left hand side of the page is formatted as a bulleted list in the HTML source of the page. This allows search engines to see it as a list of links and is therefore likely to follow these links when indexing the web site. The menu is then enhanced using unobtrusive JavaScript to make the menu interactive. This means that the JavaScript is separated from the content and the menu is still fully accessible even if a user has JavaScript turned off.

Unlike our implementation, many web sites with interactive menus become useless if JavaScript is turned off as the links are placed on the page using the JavaScript and completely disappear when JavaScript is turned off so neither users or search engines will be able to follow them.

CLEAN URLS

Clean URLs make web site addresses easier to read and understand. For example, an address left unchanged would appear like:

<http://www.sonoco-trident.com/display.php?slug=about-us&locale=en-gb>

However with URL rewriting this can be transformed to:

<http://www.sonoco-trident.com/en-gb/about-us>

This is a lot more user friendly as it is kept simple without any, ?, & or ='s in it and you can tell what the page will be about just from looking at the URL.

DUPLICATE CONTENT

One of the biggest problems in search optimization is that of duplicate content. Showing the same content under multiple locations can cause problems with search engines and can cause a site to rank poorly in results page or may even lead to the removal of a web site listing. If we look at all the possible ways that the about us page can be accessed on the site:

1. *<http://www.sonoco-trident.com/display.php?slug=about-us&locale=en-gb>*
2. *<http://www.sonoco-trident.net/display.php?slug=about-us&locale=en-gb>*
3. *<http://www.sonoco-trident.co.uk/display.php?slug=about-us&locale=en-gb>*
4. *<http://www.sonoco-trident.com/en-gb/about-us>*
5. *<http://www.sonoco-trident.net/en-gb/about-us>*
6. *<http://www.sonoco-trident.co.uk/en-gb/about-us>*

Search engines would see this as 6 pages with exactly the same content. The solutions to do is to re-direct all requests to the above list to just one of them. E.g. if you tried to access any of the above, you would automatically be re-directed to:

<http://www.sonoco-trident.com/en-gb/about-us>

RSS (REALLY SIMPLE SYNDICATION)

RSS allows users to be alerted of new content on a web site via a desktop client (e.g. Microsoft Outlook, Thunderbird, Firefox Live Bookmarks, etc) or a web based service (e.g. Netvibes, Google Reader, etc).

By providing a RSS feed of the latest news on the web site, users can be alerted of new news items. They then simply click the link in their feed reader to be taken to the full article on the web site.

Search engines may also be able to read RSS feeds in order to find new pages on your web site to include in their index.

WEB STANDARDS

The web site was built with standards in mind. It validates as both valid XHTML & CSS which means that it meets the standards set down by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) so that it is more likely to display correctly and consistently across a wide range of web browsers.

However, some of these browsers fail to implement these web standards correctly and will therefore display the web site slightly differently to others. We have tried to combat this by using conditional comments to include styles sheets specific to various browsers to override problematic properties in order to achieve a consistent display across the major browsers.