SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING 101

A Beginners Guide to Search Engine Marketing

Clear Stage

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What is Search Engine Marketing?

You've heard the word before or simply the term "SEM". Your co-workers mention it. You know your competitors are doing it. But what exactly is it?

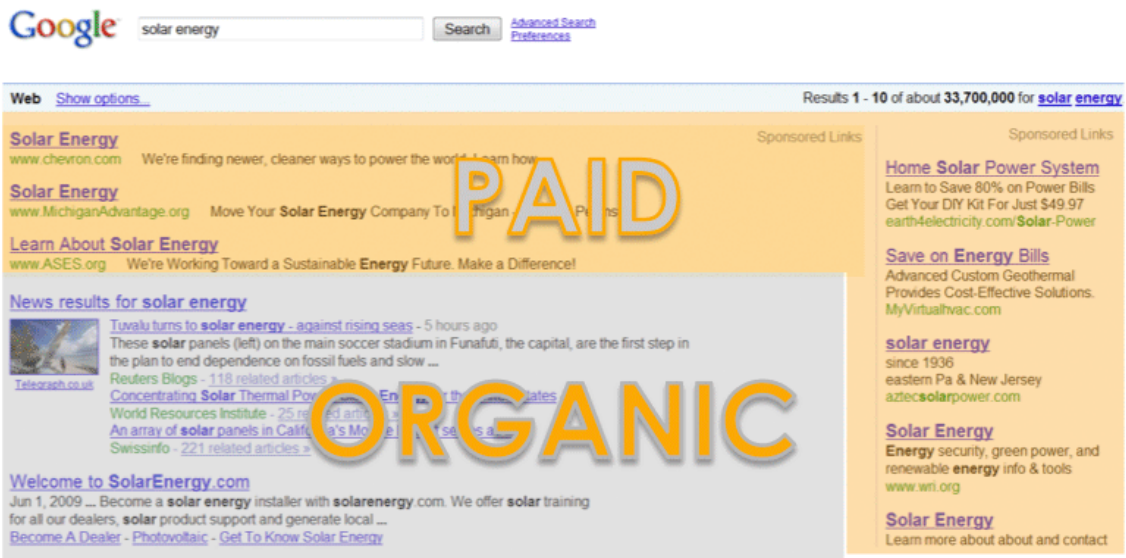
SEM stands for "search engine marketing." It is the process of gaining traffic from or visibility on search engines. The phrase is sometimes shortened to "search marketing".

It is important to know that SEM is at times a general umbrella term that covers (2) general areas:

- **Gaining traffic through free, organic SEO efforts**
- **Gaining traffic through paid search advertising, also referred to as PPC (pay-per-click)**

SEM TERMINOLOGY

Organic: Free Search Engine Listings
Paid Search: PPC Search Listing
PPC = Pay-Per-Click
CPC = Cost Per Click
CTR = Click Through Rate
QS = Quality Score
SERPs = Search Engine Results Pages
White Hat = Ethical SEO Techniques



Components of Search Engine Marketing (SEM):

SEO:

SEO stands for “Search Engine Optimization” and refers to the basics of:

- Optimizing your website to improve organic (free) traffic from search engines by improving a sites overall ranking on the various engines.

- Working to improve the visibility and popularity of your website to increase the likelihood that other reputable websites will link to your site.

- Providing fresh content to your website to further improve it’s “popularity”.

PPC:

PPC stands for Pay-Per-Click and refers to the basics of:

- Running paid ads on the various PPC networks to target potential customers using the search engines.

Now that you understand the basic differences between SEO and PPC, it's time to introduce something important about the industry…

When working within a search marketing department, most people consider the term *SEM* to mean gaining traffic solely through paid ads (PPC) and *SEO* for organic search.

So when we refer to "SEM" as a general means of traffic acquisition, "SEM" or "Search Engine Marketing" will be the terminology used when comparing to Display (online banners), Print (Magazines & Newspapers), Television and Radio. SEM is the term used to differentiate ALL search engine work from these other channels.

When referring to all work WITHIN the general channel of "Search Engines", including both SEO and Paid Search, SEO will only refer to organic search while SEM will refer to Paid Search.

So going forward, you will only need to remember:

SEO: Free, organic listings on a search engine results page.

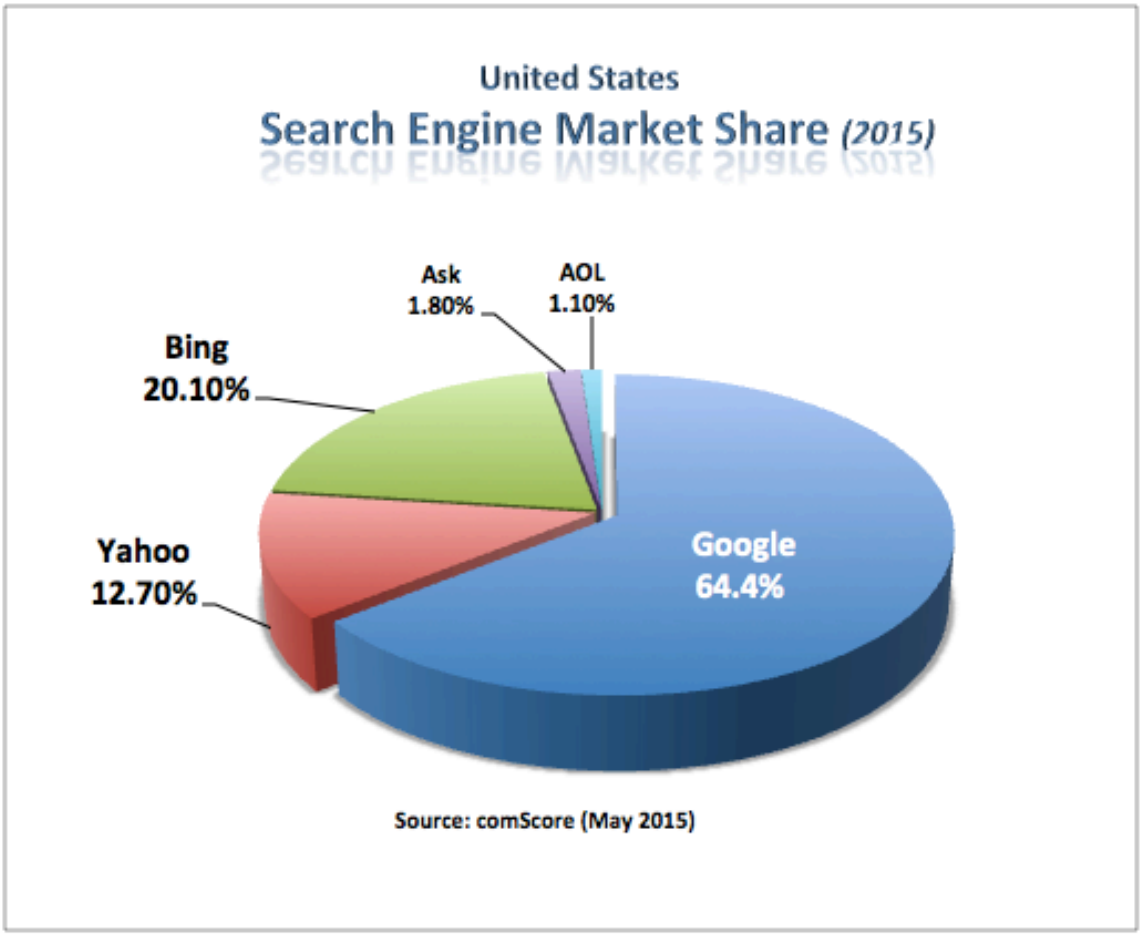
SEM: Paid Search listings that will appear on a search engine results page

Who Are the Major Search Engines?

Now that we have covered the basic differences between SEO and SEM, we'll now take a look at the various search engines that are considered the major players.

About 15 years ago, the term "search" was used to define using a search engine. But by 2002, the term "Googled" had replaced it, as Google had a dominant market share.

While Google still has a huge market share (64.4% as of May 2015), the term "search" has worked it's way back into the prominent term for the use a search engine. Bing (a Microsoft product) is the #2 search engine at 20.10% market share, followed by Yahoo at 12.70%, Ask at 1.8% and AOL at 1.1%.

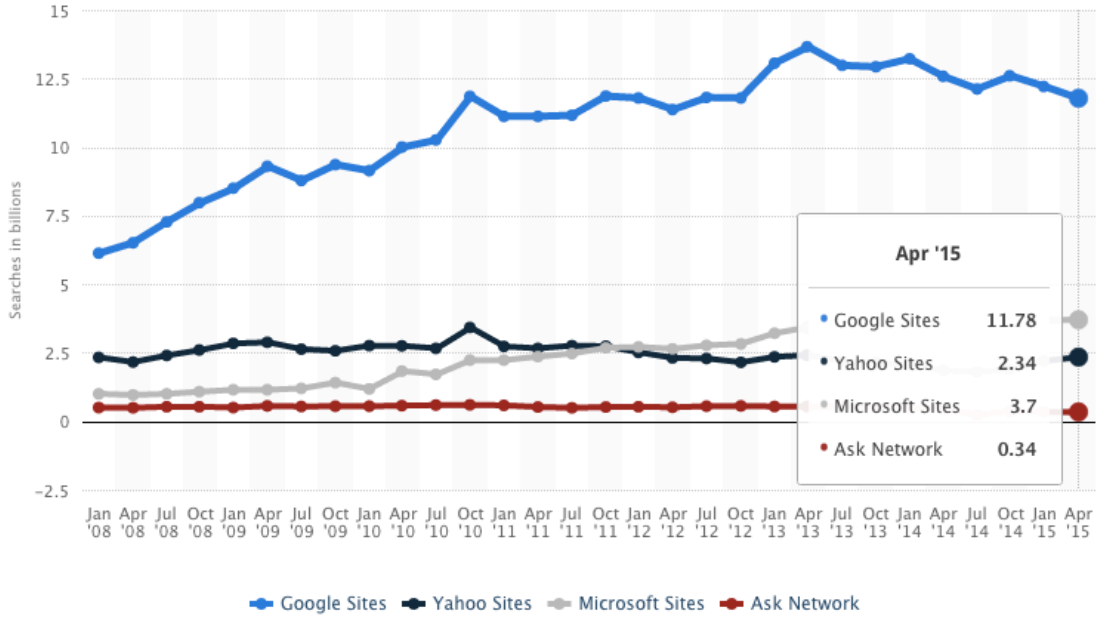


Search Engine Usage:

In the section above, we showed you the market share for each search engine. But it's not just the market share that needs to be noted, it's the overall use of search engines in general.

Gone are the days when a potential customer would look up a store or product in the Yellow Pages. Instead, the majority of people will simply consult a search engine.

In April of 2015, there were a total of *18,160,000,000* search engine queries in the United States alone. Of those over 18 billion searches, almost 12 billion came on Google.



With so many people using search engines, search engine marketing is not a luxury to supplement your existing marketing campaigns, SEM and SEO are necessities that need to be addressed.

Search Engine Marketing Networks:

Now that you know the specific search engines responsible for the estimated 18 billion searches made per month, we will look at the major players of the *SEM/PPC advertising networks*.

Google is the PPC market leader through its network Google Adwords. In addition to providing the PPC results on all Google searches, Adwords also provides the paid results on AOL properties and Ask.com, the #4 and #5 used search engines in the United States. Adwords also branches out its network into a number of other partners including other search engines and most Internet service provider homepages.

Microsoft is the other major player in paid search via Bing Ads, which provides all paid search listings on Bing and other Microsoft owned search engines. Through their partnership with Yahoo, Bing Ads also provides all paid search listings on Yahoo properties.

There are additional Tier 3 PPC Networks, but they offer minimal overall traffic.

Benefits of Search Engine Marketing:

Search Engine Optimization Benefits

Improve SEO Rankings
Improved rankings = better chance of clicks to generate traffic to get users into your customer funnel

Brand Awareness
In ranking well, you are perceived as an authority in your industry. It is difficult to claim to be the absolute best in the business when no one has ever heard of your company. While traffic won't always equate into sales, the brand awareness will help…at a price that can't be beat.

High Value at a Low Cost
A good SEO strategy will have strong long-term effects…and will save your budget. SEO is like building a solid and attractive building: If you take the time to build it correctly, you can cut back on other expenditures. In this case that means other marketing channels. SEO traffic is free, doesn't require a monthly spend unlike display, television, radio and print. You can't beat the price of "free" traffic. But not paying attention to SEO, not building the best-structured site, you will likely have to rely on spending money on other marketing channels to drive traffic.

Traffic Generation
If your website is ranking high for popular terms then you will receive clicks from users. Traffic is the middle man between brand awareness and sales.

Increased Revenue
At the end of the day, marketing has an aim to drive more sales to the business. SEO is extremely effective at a great value for your money

Benefits of Search Engine Marketing:

Search Engine Marketing *(PPC) Benefits*

Excellent ROI
SEM compared to other advertising channels, is very inexpensive with keyword clicks often falling to under $0.15.

100% Opt-in Traffic
The only people seeing your ad listings are people specifically seeking the type of service or product you are advertising about.

Instant Results
When a person clicks a link on a search engine that is one of your ads, they will immediately be sent to the specific landing page you designate on your site. There are no hoops to jump through to gain this potential customers attention.

Budget Control
Unlike other advertising channels, where a test might require a large budget, for SEM, you can run testing with a limited initial test budget.

Measurability:
All search engine generated traffic is measurable. You will know what keyword the user searched for, the ad copy they click on, and the conversion will be recorded.

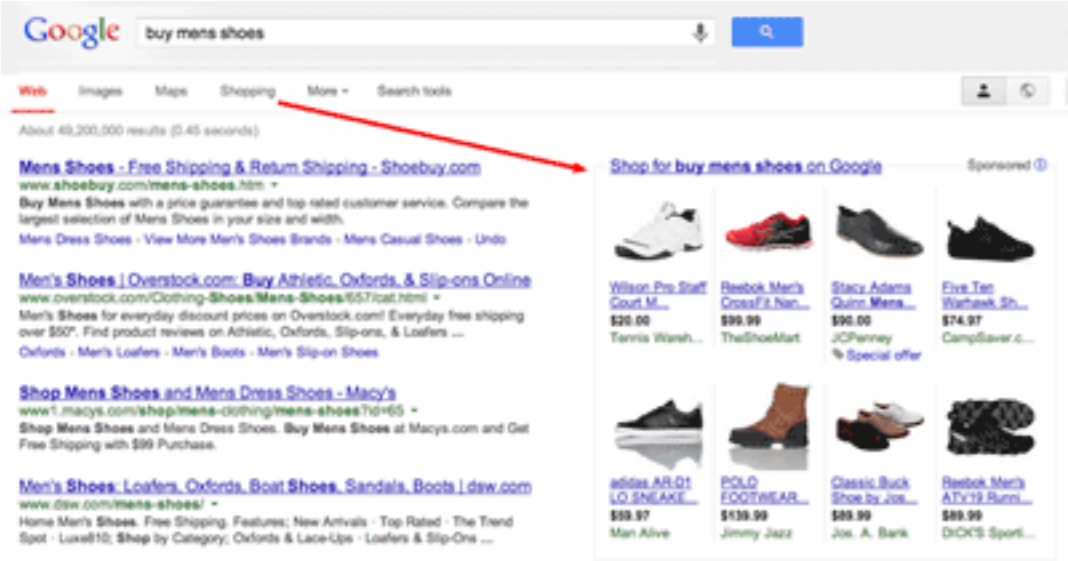
Brand & Traffic Protection:
You might rank well in SEO and feel less of a need to allocate budget for SEM. But your competitors could leapfrog your top SEO rankings by positioning themselves #1-#3 in SEM. They can even do this to your brand name, putting you in position #4 for your own brands.

Brand Awareness
Search engine marketing also has a residual effect. For expensive keywords, one can bid a lower price, gain fewer clicks, but get their ad and brand in front of more eyeballs. This will improve the chance that a user might see your brand and revisit using a search of your brand name, which will be much less expensive than a more general keyword.

Product Listing Ads:

If you are selling a product online and not using Google PLAs (Product Listing Ads), you are at a serious disadvantage. Gone are the days when an online vendor could rely solely on PPC and SEO. Now, in any search for a product, you will find virtually all of the traditional "PPC" spots occupied by Google Product Listing Ads.

Below is an example result from a search using the keywords "buy mens shoes". In this particular search, there are (8) PLA results and (0) PPC listings.



How We Can Help with Your Search Engine Marketing Needs:

With over 15 years of experience in the search engine marketing space, we offer an array of services to assist in your search engine initiatives in the areas of *PPC, SEO, Social Media, Link Building, Local Search Engine Marketing, and Search Engine Marketing Training*.

Pay-Per-Click Management:

SEM is the most important area for your overall search engine needs as it fairs much more measurable than SEO and provides a means to protect your brand while enhancing your site traffic and conversion objectives.

We will use our expertise in pay-per-click management to bring the highest quality traffic to your website. You'll get in-depth keyword research, bidding strategies, copy writing and campaign building, adding improvement to your ROI.

Search Engine Optimization:

One of the biggest problems with websites is that while trying to implement the most creative form and most reliable function, often the basic structures of the sites are not “search engine friendly”. You wouldn't spend your money decorating a building that wasn't fully completed, would you? Well, that is how you need to look at your website. With each redesign you need to factor in the "searchability" of your site.

We will work with your marketing and IT staff to take your site to the next level while preserving the design, feel and intent of your site.

Social Media Marketing:

So you have a blog, a Facebook page and a Twitter account for your company. But are you reaching the maximum and most targeted audience? Have you developed a system to add fresh content to all of your social networks without having to spend too much of your valuable time and resources?

We will work with you to maximize your brand exposure, creating systems to more easily get additional potential customers to interact with your site and engage with your brands.

Link Building Campaigns:

One of the most important factors in organic search engine rankings is your "link popularity"…and most business owners don't know how popular their websites "links" are.

We will create a link building strategy for you through white-hat SEO techniques, researching and targeting sites with the goal of increasing the number of quality links coming to your site.

Product Listing Ads:

When PPC sales are maximized, it's time to expand with Google PLAs.

We will create and maintain your PLA campaigns, providing you the best opportunity to increase your sales.

Local Search Engine Marketing:

In addition to your general SEM needs, there is also the area of local search engines, including many of the popular map search systems such as Google Maps.

We will arrange for your sites to be included in local search engines and optimize your copy to meet the individual engine guidelines. We will also manage any paid inclusion programs on any other local search engines while concentrating to improve your sites ROI.

Search Engine Departmental Training; Get Trained and Take Control of the Search Engines:

Search marketing is a relatively new field and an important one in today's business world. The level of search engine experience within your company might vary but one thing is a guarantee: search engine marketing is extremely important for your company.

The top question that is addressed by companies regarding search engines is whether to outsource your campaigns to a third-party or to create an in-house staff to handle all campaigns. We have a solution for you.

If you are ready to try to bring SEM in-house, we will work WITH you and your team to launch the campaigns, optimize them, and teach you the industry of search. When you feel that you have it within grasp, you can reap the benefits of having your own search engine marketing staff.

To learn more about our services and how we can help you, feel free to contact us.

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