

# Are you being scammed by your SEO provider?



BY ERIC CAWLEY

Search-engine optimization, or SEO, is a collection of strategies, tactics and techniques to increase the number of visitors to your website.

The theory is, the higher you rank in search engines (espe-

cially Google), the greater the chances people will want to check you out. By and large, this theory is true.

The desire for businesses to be ranked as high as possible in search engine results has spawned a whole new industry that, like any, can be filled with frauds.

Many times, I've seen business owners lament having paid thousands to an SEO consultant who hadn't really done what it takes to propel a

website higher in search-engine results.

Be wise. Be smart. Know what to ask for and look for in SEO providers:

- Are they regularly writing fresh, original content? SEO is not just a bunch of metatags (special programming codes). Google says that webpages need to provide "substantial value to users." "Content quantity/quality/relevance" and "content length" and readability are among the most important factors

in ranking your website.

- Are their writings compelling? Have them describe their education and experience as writers. Review their writing samples and see whether portions were plagiarized. Time and again, do their samples persuade you to buy the referenced product or service?

- How will they improve your search-engine rankings? Understand the process they use to boost website rankings.

- Ask about back-

links. Links on other websites, which link back to your website, are a big part of search-engine algorithms. Good SEO consultants will exert overwhelmingly more effort getting you listed on other websites than they will on programming code.

- Are they good communicators? Do they proactively stay in contact with you? Do they share and explain SEO results with you? Do they give you smart recommendations that are not just based on

website programming?

You've invested a lot of money developing your website. It's your first impression to the public. You may be staking all or a large portion of your company's prosperity on it.

SEO is too important to leave chance. Do it the right way.

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*Eric Cawley is president of Complete Marketing Solutions, Meridian. eric@completemarketing.us; 440-6754*