

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a website from search engines, such as Google, via “natural” (organic) or paid search results. The key to SEO is adjusting and rewriting website content to achieve a higher “ranking” in search engines results pages. The great thing about SEO is that it’s organic and free.

SEO takes two different forms: external and internal. **Internal SEO** refers to whether a website has relevant, useful and unique text made up of user-specified keywords, is well-coded and pleasantly designed, and whether best practices are implemented. **External SEO** refers to the practice of using articles, press releases, blogs, links, and social media to drive people to a website.

The following information is intended to help you better understand how SEO works and how you can use it to increase your website’s visibility on the web and attract current and future clients.

How does SEO work?

Search engines use algorithms that rank the content of a page based on how many visits it receives, how long visitors remain on the website, how visitors interact with the content (clicks, “shares,” etc.) and more. In short, if your website appeals to people, it will appeal to search engine algorithms as well.

Search Engines

The three major search engines currently on the web are **Google, Yahoo, and Bing.**

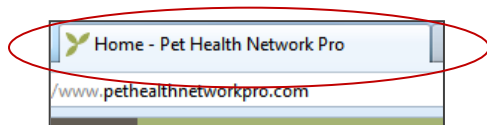
When a user searches for something, a program scans existing web pages for the specified keywords and returns a list of pages, documents, images, and videos. These programs have two parts: spiders, or bots, and indexers.

A **spider** “crawls” and reads your pages, ultimately creating entries that a search engine then indexes. The spider looks at aspects of your website such as the source code and the page’s HTML code and indexes what is found. **Pet Health Network Pro takes care of this part of SEO for you, meaning your content – all of the text you write on your website – is extremely important.**

An indexer reads the documents on your website and creates an index based on the words and tags in the documents. The indexer also ranks pages based on page content, page titles, meta tags, and design.

SEO Components and Best Practices

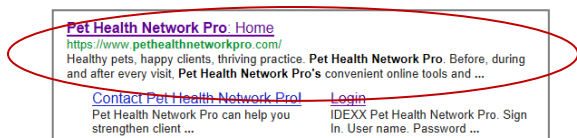
There are different components to SEO as they relate to your practice. The biggest of these components is metadata, the text that is used by search engines, along with your site content, to improve your results ranking. There are different components of metadata:



Meta Titles:

This is the text that appears at the top of a browser window or tab. For example, if your practice was ABC Animal Hospital, meta title would be displayed at the top of the browser would be “Home - ABC Animal Hospital.”

What you should do: We have taken care of this feature for you.



Meta Description:

This is a short paragraph that is often displayed by search engines as the text below your link in the search results.

What you should do: A well-written meta description is a great opportunity to advertise your unique offerings and compel searchers to visit your website. Keep yours short and concise, but let your practice shine through by listing some of the features and people that make it unique.

Meta Keywords:

Some search engines use meta keywords to influence your search ranking.

What you should do: Include keywords relevant to your practice, such as the town, city, or region in which you are located, names of your veterinarians, services offered, and more.



SEO Tips, Tricks, and Best Practices

1. Invest in real, valuable content. Make sure everything written on your website is something of substance, whether it involves advertisements for services, educational content for clients, or announcements about hours or new staff members. Make it interesting for your clients and visitors.
2. Think about using keywords strategically in all of your text. What are other veterinary websites doing? What search terms might your current or future clients use when searching for information about pet health and services on the web? Include these keywords in everything, from your “About Us” section to your staff biographies.
3. Provide access to, and actively promote, industry thought leaders such as the Pet Health Network. Provide links on your website to relevant webpages.
4. Use social media – Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest – to drive website traffic. Urge your followers and fans to visit your website for more information about your unique offerings.

Always remember: design your website for human beings, not for algorithms. While it’s important to include keywords to show up in search results, it’s even more important that your website makes sense to its audience – your current and future clients.

Where do I submit my domain name to make sure the search engines search my website?

Google: <http://www.google.com/submyyourcontent/website-owner/>

Bing/Yahoo: <http://www.bing.com/toolbox/submit-site-url>

Local Directories: There are several local directories to which you can submit your website, including citysearch.com, yellowpages.com, local.yahoo.com, and maps.google.com.