

# {Choosing The Right SEO}

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Great Designs Superior Solutions

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# Tips for Choosing the Right Search Engine Optimization Service

**Deciding to hire an SEO is a big decision** that can potentially improve your site and save time, but you can also risk damage to your site and reputation. Make sure to research the potential advantages as well as the damage that an irresponsible SEO can do to your site. Many SEOs and other agencies and consultants provide useful services for website owners, including:

- Review of your site content or structure
- Technical advice on website development: for example, hosting, redirects, error pages, use of JavaScript
- Content development
- Management of online business development campaigns
- Keyword research
- SEO training
- Expertise in specific markets and geographies.

Before beginning your search for an SEO, it's a great idea to become an educated consumer and get familiar with how search engines work.

## **We Recommend Starting Here**

- Google Webmaster Guidelines
- Google 101: How Google crawls, indexes and serves the web.

**If you're thinking about hiring an SEO, then the earlier you decide the better.** A great time to hire is when you're considering a site redesign, or planning to launch a new site. That way, you and your SEO can ensure that your site is designed to be search engine-friendly from the bottom up. However, a good SEO can also help improve an existing site.



# 8 Vital Points You Need To Consider

## 1. Be Suspicious Of Unsolicited E-Mails

Remarkably, we get these spam emails too:

"Dear ztechmanagement.com, I visited your website and noticed that you are not listed in most of the major search engines and directories..."

Reserve the same skepticism for unsolicited email about search engines as you do for "burn fat at night" diet pills or requests to help transfer funds from deposed dictators.

## 2. No One Can Guarantee #1 Rankings

Be wary of SEOs that claim to guarantee rankings, declare a "special relationship" with Google, Bing, or Yahoo, or advertise a "priority submit". For instance, Google has no priority submit. In fact, the only way to submit a site to Google directly is through their Add URL page or by submitting a Sitemap which you can do at no cost whatsoever.

## 3. Beware Of Secretive or Confusing Explanations

Ask questions if something is unclear. For instance, if an SEO creates deceiving or false content on your behalf, such as doorway pages or "throwaway" domains, your site could be removed entirely from Google's index as well as other search engines. At the end of the day, you are responsible for the actions of any companies you hire, so in your best interest to know exactly how they intend to "help" you. If an SEO has FTP access to your server, they should be prepared to explain all the changes they are making to your site.



## 4. Never Be Required To Link to an SEO

Stay away from SEOs that talk about the influence of "free-for-all" links, link popularity schemes, or submitting your site to thousands of search engines. These are classically useless exercises that don't have an effect on your ranking in the results of the major search engines -- at least, not in a way you would likely consider to be positive.

## 5. Choose Prudently

While you consider whether to go with an SEO, you may want to do some research on the industry. Google is one way to do that, of course. You might also seek out a few of the cautionary tales that have appeared in the press about particularly aggressive SEO's.


## 6. Know Exactly Where Your Money Goes

While various search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo never sell better ranking in search results, several other search engines merge pay-per-click or pay-for-inclusion results with their regular web search results. A number of SEOs will promise to rank you highly in search engines, but end up ultimately placing you in the advertising section rather than in the search results section.

Some even go as far as to change their bid prices in real time to create the illusion that they "control" other search engines and can place themselves in the slot of their choice. With this scam in mind, be sure to clarify which fees go toward permanent inclusion and which may apply toward temporary advertising.

## 7. What Abuses Are You Likely To Encounter?

According to Google, one common scam is the creation of "shadow" domains that funnel users to a site by using deceptive redirects. These shadow domains often will be owned by the SEO who claims to be working on a client's behalf. However,



if the relationship sours, the SEO may point the domain to a different site, or even to a competitor's domain. If that happens, the client has paid to develop a competing site owned entirely by the SEO.

Another illicit practice is to place "doorway" pages loaded with keywords on the client's site somewhere. The SEO promises this will make the page more relevant for more queries. This is inherently false since individual pages are rarely relevant for a wide range of keywords. More insidious, however, is that these doorway pages often contain hidden links to the SEO's other clients as well. Such doorway pages drain away the link popularity of a site and route it to the SEO and its other clients, which may include sites with unsavory or illegal content.

## 8. Other Things You Should Look Out For

It's far from a comprehensive list, so if you have any doubts, you should trust your instincts. By all means, feel free to walk away if the SEO:

- Owns shadow domains
- Puts links to their other clients on doorway pages
- Offers to sell keywords in the address bar
- Doesn't distinguish between actual search results and ads that appear on search results pages
- Guarantees ranking, but only on obscure, long keyword phrases you would get anyway
- Operates with multiple aliases or falsified WHOIS info
- Gets traffic from "fake" search engines, spyware, or scumware
- Has had domains removed from Google, Bing or Yahoo's index or is not itself listed in these search engines

## Were You Taken Advantage Of?

**If you feel that you were deceived by an SEO in some way**, you may want to report it. In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) handles complaints about deceptive or unfair business practices.



To file a complaint, visit: <http://www.ftc.gov> and click on "File a Complaint Online," call 1-877-FTC-HELP or write to:

Federal Trade Commission  
CRC-240  
Washington, D.C. 20580

If your complaint is against a company in a country other than the United States, please file it at <http://www.econsumer.gov>