1. Search engines general

Search engines provide a remarkable marketing opportunity for anyone with a website. Whilst we can't promise you top rankings - nor turn you into an online marketing specialist - we can assure you that our system and templates have been especially designed to maximise search engine potential. So here are some basic guidelines to help you optimise your site.

2. Tick our "Publicise site" button

Your site will automatically be submitted to the major search engines as soon as you tick **Publicise site**, which can be found by going to **Site management ❯ Site details ❯** Tick **Publicise site**. Leave blank if you do not want your site to appear in search engines. Please note the following:

- ❯ Once ticked the process can't be reversed.
- ❯ It can take around 8 - 12 weeks before it will start to appear in the rankings.
- ❯ PLEASE DO NOT submit the site yourself or use 3rd party submission services as you may risk being penalised by Google for "submission spam".

3. Complete our "Descriptions" fields

Many of our sections offer the facility to add descriptions and introductory text. These enable the search engines to index/find your site. Add phrases - but ONLY if these also appear in the main text of the page and are relevant. Don't add too many as you will be penalised in the rankings for submission spam.

4. Name your images and add captions

Search engines can't find images, they have to work with text. So if you have both an image caption and your file name is saved with the same/similar caption, then it is more likely to have an effect. Name your image files with words and underscores, eg Flying_osprey.jpg and ensure the caption and description match this. Don't forget if you name your images this way, our **Image bulk upload** system (available to all of our customers) will automatically generate a caption for you based on the file name. This can save hours of time!

5. 10 do's and don'ts for better rankings

- ❯ 1. Ensure you only have one relevant domain pointing to your site. If you have multiple domains, make sure one is set to be the default and the others are set to **Redirect**. (This is done in the Domains/email section of your admin system.)
- ❯ 2. Ensure your site name (the header at the top) has a good, relevant title. Don't use your domain name for this and don't leave it blank, even if you have uploaded a header graphic to replace it.
- ❯ 3. Ensure your site has plenty of text – especially in image captions, descriptions and in the introductions of each of your sections. Remember that search engines can't index/find pictures.
- ❯ 4.Adding keywords and phrases will harm your rankings if they don't match text on the page. A site with no keywords/phrases and lots of text will always outrank a site with lots of keywords/phrases and little text. Limit the number of keywords to 10, although it's much better to use phrases and/or write a description which flows.
- ❯ 5. Target specific, niche phrases – don't try to outrank big sites on generic phrases as you won't be able to compete with the full time staff big sites employ for Search Engine Optimisation. For example, "Motorcycle photography" won't get you anywhere, "British Motocross Championships Photography" may fare better.
- ❯ 6. Build links to other sites and get them to link back to you. The more relevant sites you can get to link to you the higher you'll rank. But keep those links up to date as you will be penalised for having broken or out of date links.
- ❯ 7. Be clear who your target market is. It's all very well getting people to your website, but you'll only be wasting your time if they're not who you need them to be!

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- 8. Be patient! Google only comes through about once a fortnight. It also gives preference to established sites that haven't changed much.
- 9. Avoid spelling mistakes.
- 10. Don't try to be too clever unless you really know what you're doing! Google employ some of the brightest people on the planet to ensure that when people do a search, their system returns the most relevant and applicable websites. If you try to beat their system, you can be penalised, so try to be as relevant and straightforward as you can throughout your site.