

Black Hat SEO Techniques Will Cost Your Hotel Big Time

2008-02-13

Your ultimate goal from your investment in search engine optimization is to gain the best possible organic rankings on as many search terms as possible on as many search engines as possible to help increase the potential for a website visitor and the opportunity for an online or phone sales conversion. Pretty basic, huh? Well, can you imagine the impact on your hotel's business should your search engine results page (SERP) rankings be reduced or eliminated by the search engine?

It can happen! The competition for page one or two organic listings on Google and Yahoo is very competitive, even Google and Yahoo are offering local search and mapping services to enhance the relevance of their organic search engine results pages. The value to top rankings is to be able to compete or enhance the online travel agents, social media websites and brand listings that tend to dominate the search engine ranking pages.

Our company works with hundreds of hotel clients and potential clients. On occasion, we find some serious 'black hat' marketing techniques being applied that can be costly to the hotel. This occurs sometimes because the method was once acceptable and is no longer and sometimes it is a blatant effort to improve search rankings short term with disregard for the potential long term results.

Search engines will penalize websites when and where they discover the use of black hat search marketing methods, either by reducing the website's rankings or eliminating their listings from their databases altogether. Such penalties can be applied either automatically by the search engines' algorithms, or by a manual site review. This can actually happen when your website contains content that is determined by the search engine as black hat optimization technique. Black hat optimization techniques are defined as the following:

Breaking the search engine's stated rules and regulations

Creating a poor user experience directly because of the black hat SEO techniques utilized on the Website

Unethically presents content in a different visual or non-visual way to search engine spiders and search engine users.

Fundamentally black hat optimization is when content and other website elements are created for the search engine spiders as opposed to content that enhances the website visitor's experience with rich information and visuals.

There are many elements that go into effective search engine optimization and occasionally some elements change or are omitted due to abuse by marketers. The benefit of each optimization element varies due its direct benefit to helping make your website as relevant as possible to the search phrase it is related to. Examples of these optimization elements are banner text, site map format, meta descriptions, meta keywords, alt keywords, page count, update frequency plus a number of other website content elements. These all affect how your website is registered and ranked on the different search engines.

The two most important search optimization elements are, optimized text and incoming links. Optimized text is rich informative text where repetition of certain words, terms and phrases are naturally repeated in an effort to provide the best possible information for the search shopper. These phrases will generally match the all or part of a search phrase entered by the shopper. When a webpage is filled words and phrases with no relevance the website's core business and sometimes no grammatical structure, it is clearly spam and it is not acceptable to the search engines.

The worst black hat practices we have encountered are in link development. The goal is to create relevant incoming or reciprocal links because the traffic on the site linked to your site is considered in the ranking calculation by the search engines. Some optimization services are building link relationships by creating incoming or reciprocal links with irrelevant link partners just to capitalize on the linked site's traffic volume.

Don't buy into promises of short term search engine rankings. Don't expect a guaranteed ranking position because as good as the optimization may be search algorithms change and these changes affect search rankings. Search rankings can also vary based on where you are located when searching because the search engines respond from different data centers with different source data. We strongly advise you to visit your website site map and verify that any reciprocal links are directly related to your hospitality, restaurant, spa or travel business. The key word here is 'direct', a loose relationship like insurance companies or guide services for some far away destination, even sports equipment retail stores are not relevant links for a hotel website.

Blatant black hat link development practices will cost you in the long run. Your website may be dropped from the search engine or at best reduced in your optimization rankings and both actions will cost you. It is not easy to reinstate your website's credibility.

Search engine optimization is a critical marketing tool and its value will only increase with time. As the term 'organic' implies search engine optimization grows and improves with nurturing management and time.

About Lodging Interactive

Lodging Interactive is a leading provider of Internet Marketing Services to the hospitality, spa and restaurant industries. The company provides a portfolio of effective Internet Marketing Services to hundreds of hotels, resorts, timeshares, spas and restaurants. Clients included branded hotels from nearly every major brand as well as prestigious, landmark independent hotels.

The Company offers effective online tools and services: ChatterGuard.com, an online social media monitoring and reputation management system, CommentCards.com, a full-service business-2-consumer comment card service, eProposalSystem.com, an online RFP response system hotel Sales Managers, RFPLink.com, a group RFP lead generation and reporting system, HotelDirectBook.com, a consumer hotel portal site and DiningClick.com, Internet Marketing Services for the restaurant industry.

Lodging Interactive is a proud member of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), The California Hotel Association, and a supporter of the Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI). For more information contact Richard Walsh, Vice President of Business Development at rjwalsh@lodginginteractive.com or at 877-291-4411. The company's website is located at www.LodgingInteractive.com.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article31176.html>

© 1998 - 2008 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

Distribute your news on our Network

See what all the buzz is about at:

http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html