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**JULY 25, ISSUE #361**

⌘ Search the Web

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⌘ Tip of the Day

**Seeking a Search Engine Optimization Company? You Better Shop Around**

By Michael Pedone (c) 2003  
[www.eTrafficJams.com](http://www.eTrafficJams.com)

Most online businesses arrive at this point sooner or later - the point where they decide it's time to bring in a search engine optimization company.

Maybe you've tried the "do-it-yourself" approach and found it just too time consuming and/or ineffective. Or, worse still, you paid a search engine optimization service and they let you down. Many of eTrafficJams.com's clients come to us only AFTER shelling out big bucks to an SEO pretender who has no business being in the business.

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So here are the questions you should ask to save you from hiring the wrong search engine optimization firm.

**QUESTION 1: How Do You Propose To Optimize My Site?**

This is a crucial starting point for any screening process. It will help you weed out the "**wannabes**". Your prospective search engine optimization company needs to do the following and do it right:

If you would like to spice up your web site, you can add a nice mouseover navigational menu to the top of each page. When you place your mouse over the main menu, a drop down menu will appear. As you move your mouse over the drop down menu, each selection is highlighted. Nice effect. You can find it at [BrainJar.com](http://BrainJar.com).

Today's tip by Shelley Lowery, taken from her acclaimed [Web Design Mastery](#) series.

#### ⌘ SPN Site of the Day

[AffiliatesDirectory.com](http://AffiliatesDirectory.com) is, as the name suggests, an affiliate programs directory with more than 5,400 listed affiliate programs with ratings and reviews. The site also offers a useful info for both affiliates and merchants, including an affiliates academy, forums and more.

Does your web site qualify as a SPN Site of the Day? Webmaster resource sites can apply via email: [sotd@sitepronews.com](mailto:sotd@sitepronews.com)

#### ⌘ SPN App of the Day

[WinMorph 3.01](#) (4.3 MB) is a morphing app that enables the smooth transition from one image to another; e.g. a young woman into an old woman, or a man into a lion. Downloaded by more than 400,000 users. The program can work as a stand alone or as a plug-in for Adobe Premiere, Vegas Video and Wax. Wax is included in the download. Freeware. For Windows 98/ Me/ XP.

If you have a Webmaster App that you would like listed on the SPN site, send us an email with details to: [wapps@sitepronews.com](mailto:wapps@sitepronews.com)

#### ⌘ Fr-e-e Newsletters

- Keyword marketing research: Finding the optimum keyword phrases for your product/services and target market.
- Web design consultation: Making sure your site has no spider booby traps.
- SEO copywriting: Using your keywords in well-written, persuasive copy.
- Web page optimization: Making the visible content and HTML code spider friendly.
- Search engine submission and registration.
- Link building: Finding and negotiating with appropriate link partners.
- Monthly maintenance to ensure continued high rankings.
- Guaranteed search engine optimization results.



### QUESTION 2: What Search Engine Optimization Techniques Won't You Use?

Almost as important as Question 1, this inquiry can expose the search engine spammers and rookies. You should politely hang up the phone if they say they use any of these tactics:

- Hidden text or links.
- Misleading or repeated words (known as keyword stuffing).
- Cloaked pages.
- Deceptive redirects (keyword-stuffed landing pages that quickly redirect to the real page).
- Doorway pages.
- Duplicate sites or pages.
- Monthly submissions to search engines (a waste of time and money).
- Mainly Optimizing Meta keyword tags (ditto).

### QUESTION 3: Tell Me About Your Guaranteed Search Engine Optimization.

Guarantees in the SEO field can be deceiving. Many search engine optimization firms appear to offer an air tight guarantee that's actually full of holes. Here's a typical example:

"If your web site is not ranked in a top 10 listing within 90 days of submission of

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<a href="#">I Love You</a>	18174

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your optimized site, you will receive a full refund."

Sounds good, right? But let's take a closer look. "If your web site is not ranked in a top 10 listing..." means the search engine optimization service only has to get ONE keyword phrase in ONE search engine's top 10 to fulfill their promise and avoid refunding your money!

**WebPositon GOLD 2** Submitting Alone is Not Enough!  
**Put Your Site in the Top 10 Search Results**  
 Check out the award winning product that optimizes pages, submits to the major Search Engines, tracks your traffic and much more!  
**New Version 2** 100+ Additional Features **Free Trial!**  
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Let's examine the rest of our sample guarantee.

"Our Top 10 program guarantees placement of your web site in the top search engines: Alta Vista, HotBot, Iwon, AOL Search, Ask Jeeves, Teoma, Fast/All The Web, Google, LookSmart, Lycos, MSN, Netscape, Open Directory, Overture and Yahoo!"

Notice how HotBot, Iwon and Lycos are included? It's not hard to get top rankings in these engines since very little traffic comes from them.

A more effective guarantee, like the one eTrafficJams.com offers its clients, would say something like this:

"We guarantee your rankings will improve in Google, Yahoo!, MSN, AOL Search, and Alta Vista. These are the five most important search engines and directories. As well, your rankings will go up in the other engines and directories."

"Although we cannot guarantee a specific ranking in any particular search engine or directory, we will always strive to get and keep your site ranked in the highest possible position. Our clients have obtained top 10 rankings in Google, Yahoo!, AOL, MSN, Alta Vista and more. For proof, please see our testimonial page."

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[FindMyHost.com...](#) Review detailed Report Cards of web hosts who made the grade.

[Web-Source.net...](#) Your Guide to Professional Web Site Design & Development.

## QUESTION 4: Can I Speak To Your Clients?

Don't be shy about asking for references. Speaking to someone who has actually paid out their hard-earned money to the search engine optimization company you are considering is just being a good consumer.

However, before you do so, make sure you know the cost of the SEO services in question and be ready to sign up if their references check out. There is no sense wasting your time, the SEO's time, or their reference's time unless you are ready and can afford to take the plunge.

**QUESTION 5: Check The Rankings.** (This isn't really a question, it's homework for you.)

Check out the Google rankings of references provided by the search engine optimization firm. Just type in their main keyword phrase and check the top right header area of the Google search results page to find out what their competition is like. You'll see something like this:

**"Results 1 - 10 of about 345,678"**

If the number is less than 100,000 web pages, ask the SEO company to give you another reference or show you more results. It's just too easy to get rankings when there's so little competition. (Yes, it's really not that hard for respectable SEO companies to get good results when up against 100,000 web pages or less.)

Besides, you want an SEO that can help you get ranked with your more competitive keyword phrases, not just the unpopular ones!

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now that you've asked the questions and done your homework, it's time to assess the results. This will take a bit of time on your part because prices and packages do vary from SEO to SEO.

If you need a tie-breaker, listen to your gut feeling. Often just speaking with the SEO representatives will help you determine if they know what they're talking about and if you'll work well together.

## About The Author

Michael Pedone is founder of [eTrafficJams.com](#), a professional search engine optimization company that specializes in getting targeted, eager-to-buy traffic to your site! Want some tips on how to improve your web site's optimization? Call 877-785-9977 or click to request a free search engine optimization analysis. You can also email us at: [sales@etraficjams.com](mailto:sales@etraficjams.com).



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