

# **Search Engine Optimization:**

- **What It Is**
  - **What It Isn't**
  - **Why You Should Care**
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## What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the art and science of making your website appear in a prominent position on the search engine results pages for terms (also known as keywords) that are important for your business.

Let's pretend for a moment that your company, Silver Jewelry Queen ([www.silverjewelryqueen.com](http://www.silverjewelryqueen.com)), manufactures silver jewelry. Silver jewelry is **the** hot fashion item of the year. When people search on Google for "silver jewelry," this is what they find:

**71% of online advertisers agree search is the most effective way to advertise online!!**

-American Advertising Federation  
Nov 2006

Google Web Images Video News Maps more... silver jewelry Search Advanced Search Preferences

Web Results 1 - 10 of about 16,000,000 for silver jewelry. (0.14 seconds)

**Paid Listing**

**Natural, Free Or Organic Listings**

**Sterling Silver Jewelry**  
www.EssAddiction.com Designer Jewelry at Discount Prices Free Shipping and Gift Offer

**Jewelry TV: Free Shipping**  
www.JTV.com Official Site. Risk-Free Return. Offer Ends Soon. Shop Now!

**Sterling Silver Jewelry**  
www.100silver.com Low Prices - Huge Selection America's Favorite Silver Store

**Sterling Silver Jewelry: Silver Messages**  
Sterling silver jewelry and gift items for men, women and children. Free shipping. 20% off when you join our private email mail list.  
www.silvermessages.com/ - 106K - Cached - Similar pages

**Sterling Silver Jewelry From Zulu Moon**  
Sterling Silver Jewelry. At Zulu Moon you can choose from fine silver jewelry available at outstanding prices. We offer secure, no-risk shopping with 100% ...  
www.zulumoon.com/ - 59K - Cached - Similar pages

**Wholesale Silver Jewelry - Sterling Wholesale Jewelry Supplies**  
Importer-wholesaler of handcrafted silver jewelry from all the world  
www.silversource.com/ - 22K - Cached - Similar pages

**Sterling Silver Jewelry | Wholesale Silver Jewelry Online**  
Sterling Silver Jewelry | Wholesale Silver Jewelry Online.  
www.silverbasement.com/ - 9K - Cached - Similar pages

**Wholesale Sterling Silver Jewelry Charms, Rings, Chains, and More...**  
GoldenMine.com offers wholesale sterling silver jewelry, including silver charms, silver rings, silver chains, and more. Your satisfaction with each and ...  
silver.goldenmine.com/ - 24K - Cached - Similar pages

**Free sterling silver jewelry. Free offers from SilverJewelryClub.com**  
SilverJewelryClub.com is the only place where you can get exclusive sterling silver jewelry pieces with genuine gemstones for FREE!  
www.silverjewelryclub.com/ - 73K - Cached - Similar pages

**Sterling Silver Necklaces**  
Save on Fine Silver Jewelry. Buy Online & Save Today!  
JCPenney.com/Jewelry

**Silver Bracelets**  
Find gorgeous \$25 sterling silver bracelets online today!  
www.jsejewelry.com/silverbracelets

**Turquoise**  
Native American Turquoise Jewelry Free Shipping Today & 2 for 1 Sale  
www.altribes.com

**Tiffany & Co. Jewelry**  
Shop the Official Tiffany & Co. site for exclusive Tiffany jewelry.  
www.Tiffany.com

**Silver Jewelry**  
Forbes Favorite Online Jeweler Free FedEx & 30-Day Returns.  
www.bluenile.com

**pieces of a girl**  
free holiday ship on orders \$25+ perfect jewelry & pleasing tees  
piecesofagirl.com

**JEWELRY - The Perfect Gift**  
Unique sterling silver&gold jewelry original design, stunning gemstones  
www.annchadbeauty.com

The Paid Listings show all your competitors who are willing to pay Google every time someone clicks on their listing or ad (see PPC). The Natural, Free or Organic Listings show the sites that Google believes will most likely provide the searcher with the information that he or she is looking for. The top listing goes to the site that Google believes is the best fit, the second spot goes to the site that Google believes is the second best fit and so on (see Relevance).

You're not surprised that you don't have an ad in the Paid Listings, because you know that you're not spending any of your advertising dollars on PPC. But how could Google classify your site as being "less worthy" than your competitors? After all you're the Silver Jewelry Queen.

The complicated part is that none of them will say what all the variables are in their formulas or equally as important, how much weight they give to each one. What the search engines will tell us is that both On Page and Off Page factors play a part in your Natural Rankings.

On Page factors that could affect your rankings include:

**Coding**—sloppy, verbose, code that makes it hard for the search engines to “read” your site quickly is not productive.

**Missing Tags**—you need to tell the search engines what your site is supposed to be about. They won’t take the time to guess.

**Content**—it’s not simply enough to tell the search engines what your site is about. The text on your pages needs to support your assertions.

**Freshness**—if you haven’t made any changes to your site in the last 3 years, who wants to visit it, including the search engines?

**Site User Behavior**—do users tend to spend a lot of time on your site? Did the user bookmark your site? The more visitors who vote for your site, the better.

**Usability**—a site that is hard for a real person to navigate through will also be challenging for a search engine.

Off Page factors that could affect your rankings include:

**Links**—how many other sites link to your site? Quality, age, content of linking site, type (free or purchased) all affect your Links factor, so choose wisely.

**Directory Listings**—DMOZ, Yahoo! and other **respected** directory listings can be a plus.

So back to our original question—What Is Search Engine Optimization? In the case of Silver Jewelry Queen, it’s the art and science of continually combining, monitoring and re-combining all of these elements, and many more so that [www.silverjewelryqueen.com](http://www.silverjewelryqueen.com) is listed prominently on one or more of the major search engines when someone types in the term “red tennis shoes.”

## What SEO Is Not

Now that we’ve developed a broad framework for what SEO is, let’s discuss what SEO is not.

**A Quick Fix**—SEO takes a lot of time and tweaking to get desired results. If you’re looking for a more near term boost in sales, consider a paid search campaign.

**A Bronze, Silver or Gold Package**—there are too many variables in the SEO equation and in individual sites for the one-size-fits-all packages to be effective.

*Let IT Staff and SEO firm work together to obtain the optimal results from your campaign!*

*Remember, success is in selling your product or service, not in getting ranked on top!*

**Guaranteed Placement**—no one can guarantee placement because the search engines change their ranking formulas frequently.

**Optimized Pages Added to Your Site**—these “doorway” pages are often part of the package solutions mentioned above. They can get your site banned from the search engines.

**Site Submission**—this circa 1995 tactic of submitting your site to hundreds of search engines is no longer necessary. Links make the search engines notice your site.

**Quick Link Building**—massive link exchange programs, paid links, rapid accumulation of links etc. can all be bad news for your site.

**Secret or Proprietary**—this often means using less than ethical methods to exploit temporary holes in the search engine ranking formulas to achieve short-lived gains. More bad news tactics for your site.

So now that we’re clear on what SEO is and isn’t, let’s address our remaining question.

## Why Should You Care?

Show me the money! This is a company’s dream. People go online and tell you exactly what they want to buy at that instant via the keywords they type into the search engines. Your job is to make sure that your company has a chance of being selected as the potential supplier of the desired product or service. And that’s where both SEO and paid listings are successful.

Remember our fictitious silver jewelry manufacturer? According to Yahoo!, 58,863 people were online searching for silver jewelry last month. Let’s assume a designer jewelry pendant runs \$90. If Silver Jewelry Queen can get 25% of these searchers to visit their site (an average return on a listed site), and then convert 25% of these visitors into satisfied customers (an average return), that’s \$331,104.37 in additional revenue every month.

That’s why 71% of all marketers consider search marketing to be an important part of their marketing and sales strategy. The right combination of Natural and Paid Listings can mean significant dollars for your company. That is why you should care.

## About Us

The siteEDGE agency team ([www.siteedgeagency.com](http://www.siteedgeagency.com)) combines insight, creativity and technology to deliver online marketing campaigns that improve clients' key operating metrics such as sales, leads and customer acquisition costs by a minimum of 25%. From major franchise groups to telecommunications companies, to national and regional service businesses, our team has helped some of the world's most successful brands and companies harness the power of the Internet to drive bottom line results.

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