

How much should I spend on internet search engines and what will I get in return?

Sorry, no easy answer to that question. No set prices....it depends on what your competition is spending and several other factors.

SEO (search engine optimization) is something every company should do if you're trying to attract new customers and not just providing an information supplement to your business cards and other printed material. A web site you don't advertise in a search engine is like having an unlisted phone number. Sure, your friends and whoever you tell about the site will know about it....but not the general public. Registering your website with search engines is like having your phone number and description added to the local yellow pages. For this, you need to pay somewhere between \$50 to \$500 to get your website registered with the search engines. The more you pay, the more search engines you can get registered into...and there are hundreds of search engines. You can save money by doing it yourself....but it's boring, tedious online paperwork that has to be done just right or you'll be wasting your time and the search engines won't tell you if you did it wrong. And it takes patience....weeks can pass before your registered site goes public in just one search engine so you can see if you filed it correctly. And you need to make sure you have corresponding keywords in your HTML tags.

However, just as it's easy for a phone number to get overlooked in a huge phonebook, a website can be easily missed in a search engine if there are tons of other sites selling the same thing. So even if you register, you might not ever get noticed by your potential customers. And like a phonebook, the more you pay, the bigger/better your ad can be in the search engines. This will increase your chances of getting noticed.

SEO is the art of maximizing your internet marketing ROI (return on investment) while trying to get customers to see your site in search engines. Unlike a phonebook, most search engines don't have set fees per listings. You must out bid your competitors for better placing in a Pay-Per-Click game...like bidding on an item on ebay....except your bidding on website visitors.

In other words, if a realtor, let's call him Mr. Realtor, is paying \$5 per customer that enters "Colorado realtors" (called a keyword phrase) in Google.com and sees Mr. Realtor's ad and clicks on Mr. Realtors ad just to visit his site, if you want to appear above Mr. Realtor's ad, you must pay more than \$5 per customer to get your listing featured higher in the search engine.

But, keep in mind, on average for any company online, it takes about 100 visitors to a website before 1 visitor will actually buy a product or call a number on a website. So, if you're willing to pay something like \$5 per visitor to make sure every person who uses Google and enters the word "Colorado realtor" sees your website...you would have to spend approximately \$500 dollars to get one person to actually email you or call the phone number on your site.

Most top ranking websites spend anywhere from \$1000 to \$200,000 a month on SEO. Mid-size companies spend a few hundred a month. But you can spend as little and \$50 a month if you like....but keep in mind, at about \$5 a visitor, and 1% visitor to customer conversion...it would take an average of 10 months to get one customer. If you find a good key phrase few others are using, you can pay something more like 25 cents per visitor. This would mean your 50 dollars a month would convert to

200 visitors a month, or potentially 2 actual phone calls or emails from potential customers a month. Better...but not great.

So, as you can see, there is no set pricing – it's whatever your online advertising budget can afford against whatever your competition is spending. You could spend \$1000 and get nothing if your competitors are spending more and using better descriptions for their site....or you could spend \$1000 and get tons of traffic if you happen to find key phrases your competitors aren't using or you have a more appealing description....like "FREE STUFF CLICK HERE" (but you better really have free stuff or your listing will get kicked out of the search engines).

Stay away from anyone who tries to sell you on Link Farming (they may call it something else) or other tactics/tricks to get good listings in search engines. Short term, such tricks may help, but cheating the search engines will cause you big headaches when they catch you.

There are also ways to get Organic (Free) listings in search engines, but this depends on your popularity...how many other websites link to you. Many SEO service companies will offer to charge you huge fees to try to fake a website's popularity, but it won't last as the major search engines have ways of figuring out when they are being tricked. Getting legitimate popularity is another thing SEO companies like us can help with....like building sites that offer popular things, free info, viral (funny) videos, that all mention your site. This gets expensive fast....but it can work.

There are also things like Affiliate Links (paying other websites to advertise your services), and Blogs (methods for getting other sites to talk about you...and if they say good things....it can lead to free traffic).

Also, a good SEO company will give you tips to improve upon the average 1% conversion rate....but that figure is mostly determined by the product's appeal, supply and demand, etc.

Here's some links that offer more tips and explanations.

SEO tips

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35291>

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Tips-For-Understanding-SEO&id=395999>

SEO online classes

<http://www.seoresearchlabs.com/seo-training.php>

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US!