

Global Leaders Risk Losing Market Share | a white paper with pizzazz by Oneupweb

Executive Summary /:

In 2004, Oneupweb performed a second study of FORTUNE Magazine's Top 100 companies' Web sites.

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use search engine optimization effectively as a part of their overall marketing strategy. Oneupweb analyzed the main corporate Web sites of each of the FORTUNE 100 companies, determining if and to what level of effectiveness that company invested in search engine

optimization (SEO). Oneupweb's first study, done in 2002, showed only three of the FORTUNE 100 were using SEO effectively.

This recent study further details the number of sites using moderate SEO or none at all, comparing usage in 2004 to 2002. Additionally, the data is contrasted against the growth of SEO as an industry. Finally, the study reveals the marketing risks associated with ignoring search engine optimization and marketing, outlining opportunities for the Fortune 100 and all businesses.

Oneupweb Study of FORTUNE 100 Web Sites

2004 /:

In 2004, Oneupweb analyzed the corporate Web sites of the first 100 companies listed in FORTUNE Magazine's FORTUNE 500 list to determine if and to what extent those companies used search engine optimization (SEO). (Information on the FORTUNE 500 list is available at <http://www.FORTUNE.com/FORTUNE>) Of those 100 corporate sites, 9 sites—less than 10 percent—revealed clear optimization campaigns, including ethical techniques (see methodology below) and 7 of these were in the top-10 in Google list of results for their respective primary keywords.

Additionally, Oneupweb's review revealed that 47 sites had some optimization in place and about a third of these are in the top 10 Google results for their respective primary keywords. These efforts range from existing but poor or overly repetitious meta keywords and description tags (spamming), to well-optimized titles and meta tags incorporating primary keywords but without any other on-page optimization.



Finally, 44 sites had no optimization at all, down from more than 50 percent in 2002. Google only listed 7 of those companies' sites in its top 10 listings for their respective primary keywords. These sites typically had title tags with nothing more than the company name, no meta tags, and/or no indexable text.

[The 2004 FORTUNE 100 Newcomers /::](#)

Of the FORTUNE 100 companies listed in 2002, 19 were replaced by new companies on the 2004 list. Of those replacements, none had sites with clear optimization campaigns, while 10 had sites with some optimization in place and 3 of those were in the top 10 in Google for their respective primary keywords. Furthermore, 9 sites revealed no optimization and only one of these made it to Google's list of top 10 results for their respective primary keywords.

[Oneupweb Study of FORTUNE 100 Web Sites 2002 /::](#)

When Oneupweb reviewed the corporate sites of the FORTUNE 100 companies in 2002, 3 sites had clear optimization campaigns, including ethical techniques (see methodology below). All 3 sites were in Google's top-10 results list. While not at the level of effectiveness demonstrated by these 3, there were an additional 44 companies with sites showing some basic

or moderate optimization procedures in place. And like in 2004, these efforts ranged from existing but poor or overly repetitious meta keywords and description tags (spamming), to well-optimized titles and meta tags incorporating primary keywords but without any other on-page optimization.

Of these partially optimized sites, 43 percent were in the top-10 in Google for their respective primary keywords. The 2002 study also revealed that as many as 53 sites had no optimization. These sites typically had title tags with nothing more than the company name,

While three times the number of 2002 sites, Oneupweb expected 30 or more sites to be well-optimized

no meta tags, and/or no indexable text. Plus, 9 of these 53 non-optimized sites were in the top-10 in Google for their respective primary keywords.

[Growth of SEO Industry Overall Versus Growth in Fortune 100 /::](#)

A number of analysts have estimated the SEO industry's revenue growth from 182 to 226 percent from 2002-2004. Even at the lower level, to keep pace with the SEO industry, the number of FORTUNE 100 companies with moderate or good optimization should have passed 95 this year. Oneupweb also feels that the growth in the number of companies with well-optimized sites (moving from 3 to 9) is still paltry. While three times the number of 2002 sites, Oneupweb



expected 30 or more sites to be well-optimized in our 2004 study.

If we are to do the study again next year, certainly all the FORTUNE 100 should have moderate to well-optimized sites.

[How Can the FORTUNE 100 Benefit from Search Engine Optimization? /::](#)

At first glance, one might think that the largest brands shouldn't need well-optimized sites because consumers, investors, journalists and any other important audiences are already familiar with Pepsi, Shell Oil and GM. In theory those who want information about General Electric appliances would intuitively go to GE.com or searching for, "General Electric," find GE.com in the search results.

As an example of the potential loss of sales, Cardinal Health (FORTUNE #17) provides medical lab products to doctors' offices and doesn't appear in Google's top 10 results for the search keyword, "medical lab products." It does appear at position 16. Just one line higher on the FORTUNE list, McKesson is one of Cardinal's key competitors and it doesn't appear at all in the top 30 results for, "medical lab products." While

Cardinal is positioned better than the larger McKesson, neither is positioned to reflect its global stature.

Another instance: AutoNation, new to the FORTUNE 100 list since Oneupweb's 2002 study, touts itself as, "America's largest automotive retailer of both new and used vehicles on and off the Web." And yet, AutoNation doesn't appear in the first 30 Google results for the keywords, "pre-owned vehicles," "used cars" or "used car." AutoNation is #97 on FORTUNE's 2004 list.

[The Opportunity Revealed By the Study /::](#)

The Oneupweb study raises questions about missed sales opportunities, lost market share and brand erosion. The Goliaths of business leadership risk being unseated by their smarter (and possibly smaller) competitors who realize the benefits of effective SEO strategies financially and from a branding perspective.

A Forrester Research report, released in 2000, states that more than 80 percent of Internet users seek information through search engines. Plus, US online retail sales will reach \$316 billion by 2010—more than doubling—according to another Forrester report. Internet sales are expected to be 12 percent of total retail sales in 2010, up from nearly 7 percent in 2004.



By making use of natural site optimization, not only does a company improve its position in search engine results pages, but also improves the relevancy of its site's content, which is a better experience for consumers. In a natural (or organic) campaign one would develop a robust list of key words and review the site's use of those keywords in title tags, meta tags and content. Also, one would review the site's technical properties for extensive use of Flash or other barriers to search engines. Finally, one would review the use of links both to and from the site to make sure that those are relevant relationships, improving the site's overall reputation to search engine review.

Based on Oneupweb's experience tracking client results, companies with well-optimized sites build brand equity, in

Oneupweb.com

(For more information on search engine optimization and marketing services, case studies and other information, please visit Oneupweb.com.)

The Study Methodology /:

Referencing the FORTUNE 500 list, Oneupweb physically analyzed the primary corporate Web sites of the first 100 companies listed. Oneupweb looked for both ethical and unethical methods of search engine optimization.

Ethical methods include:

- Unique title tags, including primary keywords/phrases relating to the company and its business, on pages throughout the site
- Unique meta description and meta tags containing keywords/phrases relevant to the company and site
- Relevant body text, indexable by search engines, containing primary keywords/phrases
- Anchor text containing primary keywords/phrases, including inter-site linking
- And others

Unethical methods:

- Comment tag keyword-stuffing (or spamming)
- Invisible text and/or image links
- Spamming with non-relevant keywords/phrases to the company and site
- Cloaking
- And others

For a general measure of the correlation between the level of optimization and search engine positioning, Oneupweb looked to see if each company was positioned in the top-10 or top-30 in Google for their primary keywords. Primary keywords were determined by each company's industry/primary operation (e.g. phone service, credit card, life insurance etc.)



To learn more about these SEO techniques, visit [oneupweb.com](http://www.oneupweb.com) or look at our Guide to Search Engine Optimization and Marketing at http://www.oneupweb.com/search-marketing-library/Oneupweb_Guide_To_SEM_2004.pdf.

Notes: FORTUNE is a Time Inc. publication celebrating 50 years of the FORTUNE 500; Forrester Research, Inc. is an independent technology research company that provides

pragmatic and forward-thinking advice about technology's impact on business.

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Comparison of FORTUNE 100 SEO Usage 2004 to 2002

