



VALUED WEBSITES
Websites for Real Estate Appraisers

www.valuedwebsites.com
info@valuedwebsites.com
866.204.1033

FREE SPECIAL REPORT

“Everything a Website Owner Needs to Know About Search Engines”

INTRODUCTION	2
WHAT SEARCH ENGINES DO.....	2
CHOOSING THE RIGHT KEYPHRASES	3
CREATING CONTENT	3
OPTIMIZING THE SITE.....	4
INBOUND LINKS / PAGE RANK.....	4
LINK PAGES.....	5
DIRECTORIES	6
MYTHS AND SCAMS	7
PART 2: PAID PLACEMENT.....	8
INTRODUCTION	8
CREATE AN ACCOUNT	8
CREATE YOUR ADS	9
SET LIMITS	9
TARGET YOUR KEYPHRASE(S)	9
CREATE A GOOD AD	10
TARGET YOUR LANDING PAGE	10
WARNINGS	10
SUMMARY	11
CONCLUSION	11

This report is © 2006 by Julian Hockings. All rights reserved.
No portion of this document may be reproduced without mention of valuedwebsites.com.

INTRODUCTION

Getting good search engine rankings is part art, part craft. It boils down to this: **fill your website with lots of good written content and get lots of other relevant websites to link to yours.** If you want your website to get the highest search engine rankings it possibly can, then read through this report and follow the instructions. Some of this stuff you can do yourself and some of it can be done for you.

There are two types of search engine rankings: organic rankings and paid rankings. Organic rankings are the search engine results that appear in the main part of the search engine results page. They're what you typically think of as "search engine listings". They don't cost anything to maintain once you've gotten them. **The first part of this report tells you how to get good organic search engine rankings.** This part begins with the *What Search Engines Do* section below.

If you've got a monthly budget to spend on search engine advertising, if you want to supplement your organic search results, or if you need instant results, you'll be interested in paid placement search engine ads. These are the small text ads that appear in the search engine results pages on top of and to the right of the organic listings. **The second part of this report, Paid Placement, discusses this option and starts on page 8.**

WHAT SEARCH ENGINES DO

The typical search engine's job is to be a catalog of all the stuff that's out there on the internet. But not just any old stuff—search engines have a preference for words. Let's use Google as an example of a typical search engine since it owns a good chunk of the search market. Google likes websites with lots of words. The more words your website has the more interested Google will be in it. But not just any old words. **Google is constantly evolving to give higher rankings to those websites that contain useful, unique information.**

Unique is important. If your website's text is just a copy of someone else's website text, don't expect such great rankings for your website. And what constitutes useful? Say your website is about your appraisal business in Pittsburgh. Don't just write one quick paragraph about real estate appraisal. Instead write all about your business' history in Pittsburgh, the areas of Pittsburgh you service, even write some of your favorite stories about times you went out on the job. **Try to think of as many things you can that makes your business interesting, then write about it.**

CHOOSING THE RIGHT KEYPHRASES

Before beginning a search engine optimization (aka SEO) campaign, you need to know what words you're trying to get high rankings for and on which pages of your website. It doesn't make sense if you just ask for high rankings for your website. Instead you should ask for high rankings for your website *on specific pages for specific keyphrases*. This is because the search engines treat every page of your website as its own entity. Generally speaking, search engines give rankings to individual web pages, not whole web sites.

Start a list. The keyphrases you want to get high rankings for should be words that search engine users will type into the search engines when they're looking for your service or product. If you own an appraisal business in Asheville, North Carolina you'll want the keyphrase "Asheville, North Carolina appraisals". You'll also want lots of variants such as "Asheville, NC real estate appraisal" and "real estate appraisals North Carolina". Write all these down as separate keyphrases. Be creative and try to think of substitute words. Some people might not think "appraisal" and might think "appraiser" instead.

Once you have this list ready, Valued Website will go through the list and decide which are the really good ones and which ones aren't worth it. **The good keyphrases are ones that people actually search for a lot, but that don't have much competition from other websites. The bad keyphrases are the ones that people don't really search for a lot, or that have too much competition.** "Appraiser" on its own would be a bad choice because there's simply too much competition. However, "real estate appraiser in Asheville, NC" is a much better choice, and more targeted as well.

In general, one word keyphrases are bad choices because they're too popular. Exceptions exist, of course, especially if the one word is a brand name or other unique word. For example, a bad choice would be "appraiser in Asheville, NC with a store that sells banana ice cream". No one would search for that and it would be a waste of time and money to try to get good rankings for that (though it would be easy).

So make a list and try to come up with at least three keyphrases, and as many more as you can think of. Be sure to number each phrase in the order of their importance.

Another way of making this list that may be simpler for you is to just write a comma separated list like so: Asheville, NC, North Carolina, real estate appraiser, appraisal. Note that plurals of words should be listed separately.

CREATING CONTENT

Search engines love websites with lots of unique, word-rich content. This means you should write as much as possible about your services. In addition to the typical information that you find on websites (the home page, the about us page), informational

articles (like this one), tutorials, even an online journal of your activities (known as a “blog”) can be helpful in getting the search engines to love your website.

If your website has a lot of competition, creating lots of high quality text content is ESSENTIAL. You may even need to write new stuff on an ongoing basis.

You should try to write your content *for the web*, which isn’t the same as writing for print publication. This means short and sweet. Paragraphs should be 3 to 4 lines long with 12 to 15 words per line. Use headlines and sub-headlines. Boldface important points. Use bulleted lists when possible. Try to write with a personal “voice” instead of a boring voice.

You might want to borrow the AIDA model from the field of copywriting when writing some of your pages. AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. **Start your page out with an attention grabbing headline. Then build up the reader’s interest. Make them desire what you offer. End the page with a call to action.** Obviously some pages more than others can take advantage of AIDA, your home page in particular.

OPTIMIZING THE SITE

Each individual web page can normally be set up to get good rankings for up to three keyphrases. This process is called “optimization”. So what if you want to get good rankings for ten keyphrases but your home page is already optimized for its three phrases? Simple, just optimize other pages of your site. It’s also possible to optimize more than three keyphrases per page, but more than two or three starts to water down the effectiveness of the additional ones.

Optimizing the site involves tinkering a little bit with each web page’s HTML code. For the technically minded, this involves correctly setting each website page’s title, meta description, and h1 tags with your keyphrase(s). It also involves using the keyphrases as link text. For titles, it’s keyphrases first, then the company name.

For the non-technically minded, here’s what you should do: **when you write your site’s content, use your keyphrases in the headline(s), once in the first paragraph, once in the middle of the page, and once at the end.** Valued Websites will do the rest.

INBOUND LINKS / PAGE RANK

Google and other search engines determine how high to rank your web page for a particular keyphrase depending on—in addition to how well it’s optimized—on how popular your page is. Popularity is measured by counting how many other web pages link to your page. These links to your website from other websites are called inbound links. So if you have a web page optimized for “Asheville real estate appraisal” and there’s a competitor’s web page somewhere out there that’s also optimized for Asheville

real estate appraisal”, then the higher ranking will probably go to whichever web page has more inbound links.

Inbound links to a web page in your site include other web pages in your own website! That’s why it’s important to have a Site Map page that links to every page of your website.

In reality popularity calculations are (much) more complicated than this, because it involves not only a count of how many pages are linking to your page but also a measure of how “important” Google thinks each of these inbound links is—importance being based on a closely guarded mathematical formula they call Page Rank.

The important thing to remember is this: get lots of links from other reputable and relevant websites. If your website has a lot of competition, this is critical!

How do you get inbound links? Three ways: (1) ask for them from the webmasters of other sites (see the Link Pages section below), (2) submit your site to multiple online directories (see the Directories section further on), and/or (3) pay for them. People will also sometimes link to your website without you asking them to (and often without them asking you first). This is usually a good thing.

Paying third parties for links typically costs \$20 to \$100 per month, depending on how much Page Rank the inbound link has. If you need a “quick fix” of search engine ranking and have money to blow, this might be an option for you to consider. Be advised that the search engines are hard at work trying to figure out how to give your webpages benefits from paid links. So if you pay for a link now, sometime in the near future Google will figure out a way to discount that link.

LINK PAGES

No doubt you’ve seen websites with link pages. A well-built links page can be a benefit to your site as well as every site you link to. If Google sees that your links page is authoritative, it will reflect well on the authoritativeness of your own website (more authority equals more Page Rank). So try to link to the “big players” in your industry if possible. Of course, you may not want to link to your direct competitors.

Once you have a links page, you’ll find that people will email you out of the blue saying they’ve already linked to you and would you please link to them. **There are some types of websites you must avoid link exchanges with:**

- Websites that have absolutely nothing to do with the subject matter of yours.
- Gambling, pharmacy, or pornography sites.
- Websites that are simply collections of random links not organized in any meaningful way. These are sometimes called free-for-all (FFA) sites.

If you want to build up your links, you can certainly go ahead and start putting links to other websites on your links page. Be sure that sites that you link to are relevant to the subject matter of your own site. It would be a good idea to also send an email to the webmasters of each of the sites you link to and ask them to link back to you in return. You can use an email like this:

Dear [Webmaster],

My name is _____ and I'm the owner of www._____.com. I think our websites could really benefit from linking to each other since both our sites are about real estate appraisal. I've already gone ahead and listed your site on my links page at www._____.com/links.html. If you don't want me to link to you, please let me know.

If you'd like to list my site on your links page (or anywhere else on your site), I'd really appreciate it. Please use the following code:

```
<p><a href="http://www._____.com">My most important keyphrase</a> -  
My website provides information and resources for _____.</p>
```

Thanks, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Name

etc.

That little paragraph there with the HTML code, Valued Websites will tell you what actual HTML code to put in once your site is built.

If you have more than 25 links on your links page, it would be a good idea to break up the page into multiple pages. If you have a ton of links, you might even want to create different categories and make a page for each category. But remember, all links should be relevant to the topic of real estate appraisal. Doesn't have to be a perfect match, but at least within the same "realm of knowledge". For example, real estate is close enough.

DIRECTORIES

Web directories are like search engines in that their job is to catalog what's out there on the internet, but the difference is that they're human-edited and they sometimes limit themselves to a certain topic or region. **Their value to you lies in the fact that if you get listed with them, that will result in an inbound link to your website, with its attendant increase in Page Rank.**

The most important directory to get listed in is dmoz.org, but there are several hundred more, smaller directories out there. Valued Websites can submit your site to 100 or 200 directories for you for \$100 or \$150, respectively. Submitting your site to a directory is not a guarantee that it will be listed, but these directories generally have a 90%+ acceptance rate, though it may take a few months with some of them to get around to doing anything with your information.

MYTHS AND SCAMS

Scam: those spam emails about your search engine rankings.

Toss out any emails you get about submitting your website to “thousands of search engines”. There are only a small handful that matter.

Myth: your “meta tags” are all-important.

They were all-important ten years ago. These days they’re hardly noticed by the search engines. You should set your “meta description” tag on your home page and perhaps a few other main pages, but don’t give it much more thought. The exception is if your webpage has *absolutely no* text content (as in a Flash website). In these cases a meta description tag is useful.

Scam: you can get guaranteed top rankings for X amount of money.

No one can get you top rankings for all keyphrases all the time. Especially not in competitive industries unless you’ve got thousands of dollars to spend. Be leery of anyone who guarantees top rankings.

More information on search engine facts and fiction, do’s and don’ts can be gotten straight from the horse’s mouth at:

<http://www.google.com/intl/en/webmasters/facts.html>

<http://www.google.com/intl/en/webmasters/guidelines.html>

PART 2: PAID PLACEMENT

INTRODUCTION

If you've used Google, Yahoo, AOL search, Ask, or most any other search engine, you've seen paid placement ads in action. They're the "sponsored links" that appear above or to the right of the regular search engine results.

You can greatly increase the flow of traffic to your website by using Google's AdWords program and/or Yahoo's Sponsored Search program. These two advertising programs that the two biggest search engines offer are also known as pay-per-click (or PPC).

But you don't just want more traffic. **You want more qualified traffic, and that's the great strength of these programs. They take people who are looking for exactly what you have to offer and bring them to your website.** Some online businesses have found their sales increased many times over when they effectively took advantage of these advertising methods.

And while these advertising programs will cost you money, if you use them correctly your return on investment can more than justify the costs.

But what about other types of search engine optimization? Regular search engine listings don't cost money, right? True. It's still very important to optimize websites using the techniques mentioned in the first part of this report. But since there's often great competition for most of the profitable search terms, it's sometimes necessary to augment your search engine optimization by buying good results with AdWords and/or Sponsored Search. If you have little ongoing advertising budget or if your site has little or no competition, then regular search engine optimization will be a primary marketing tool for your website. But if you have some dollars a day to spend on advertising, keep reading!

CREATE AN ACCOUNT

In order to start profiting with AdWords or Sponsored Search you'll first need to create an account. For Google's AdWords go to <https://adwords.google.com/select/> and for Yahoo's Sponsored Search go to <http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/srch/?mkt=us>. You'll create your ads, enter your personal and billing information, and within minutes your ads can be online.

Which one should you use? Google has more market share so you'll get by just using Google, but for maximum saturation you should also use Yahoo's program.

CREATE YOUR ADS

Let's say you own a website that advertises your appraisal business in Peoria. Let's assume that the website was search engine optimized and it ranks well for a few important search terms like "Peoria appraisals" and "Peoria real estate appraiser". That's great! But say you have twenty competitors, and some of them rank better than you do. How can you get more people to visit your website?

If you have an AdWords account, you can set it up so that any time someone does a search for "Peoria appraisers" your ad will pop up at the top of the search engine's results page! How? By paying for the privilege. **You tell AdWords that you'll pay 5 cents for your ad. But AdWords doesn't charge you 5 cents each time it shows your ad. It only charges you when someone actually clicks on your ad to go to your website. Compare that with printing a thousand flyers of which only fifty get read. Less wasted money!**

But say you have a competitor, and they've already set up an AdWords account. They said *they'd* pay 5 cents for "Peoria appraisers". Are you out of luck because they were there first? Not at all. You just say you'll pay ten cents. Then, the next time someone searches for "Peoria appraisers" your ad will appear above your competitor's.

In "real life", some search terms are very popular and so you'd have to pay a lot to get a top listing. Recently I read about the term "mesothelioma" costing \$51 per click! But **most search terms cost in the range of 10 cents to a few dollars**. It's generally regarded that a top listing isn't all that much more effective than a number two or even number three listing, so it's OK to get the number two listing and pay a little less.

You may be thinking to yourself, "this sounds like a great way to lose a lot of money very quickly." Well, yes. But there are ways to do this wisely, and following these guidelines will make the difference between getting involved in a profitable advertising venture and throwing your money away. Here's what you need to do:

SET LIMITS

Both AdWords and Sponsored Search allow you to set daily limits. Say you've calculated that you can afford an ad budget of \$90 a month or \$3 a day. Within your AdWords account options, you can set your daily limit to \$3 a day. Say your bid is 5 cents. Once your ad(s) has been clicked on 60 times in one day (60 x 5 cents = \$3) it will no longer appear, and you can no longer be charged for your ad on that day. **By using the limit feature, you can advertise exactly as much or as little as your budget allows.**

TARGET YOUR KEYPHRASE(S)

If your website advertises your Peoria, IL appraisal business, don't trigger your ad with the keyphrase "San Francisco appraiser". Your keyphrases should also not be

“appraiser” or “real estate appraisal”. Those types of phrases are way too generic. You’d be bidding lots of money for those phrases since they’re so generic, and a high proportion of the people who’d click on them probably wouldn’t be interested in what your site had to say. Instead use phrases like “Peoria appraiser”, “Peoria real estate appraiser” and “Peoria IL appraisals”.

Sure, these phrases will get a lot fewer searches than “appraiser”, but the searches they do get will be highly targeted for exactly what it is you offer and where it is you offer it. And these keyphrases will cost much less than the more generic ones. Your ad headline should read “Peoria, IL Real Estate Appraisal” (in this case it’d probably be OK to use just one ad in conjunction with all three of your keyphrases), and the ad content should read something like “Need an appraiser in Peoria, IL? Peoria Appraisers offers fast turnaround and low rates.” Then of course your website should say something like:

PEORIA, IL REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL

Get accurate appraisal work with a fast turnaround and low rates...

A good source for keyphrases to use can be your hosting server’s search engine statistics log. Valued Websites can help you access and/or decipher this log.

CREATE A GOOD AD

When creating your ad, use the keyphrase trigger as the ad headline. If your keyphrase trigger is “Peoria appraiser” and your ad headline is “Peoria Appraiser”, that inspires more clicks than if your ad headline were more generic, like “Appraisers”. **And for the body of the ad shortly and sweetly tell the viewer what they get when they click your ad.** For example, “Get appraisal services in Peoria, IL within 48 hours.”

TARGET YOUR LANDING PAGE

Let’s say your keyphrase trigger is “Peoria appraiser” and your ad headline is “Peoria Appraiser”, what do you think the headline should be on your webpage that the viewer lands on when they click your ad? That’s right! “Peoria Appraiser”!

You can spice it up a little. Maybe something like “Peoria, IL Appraiser Want to Help You Out!” **The point is, from keyphrase trigger to ad headline to your web page, the wording should be as much the same as possible.** This will inspire trust in the viewer and encourage follow-through (i.e. actually contacting you).

WARNINGS

Pay-per-click programs can be a great money-maker. For the search engines! But if you learn the lessons of this report and implement them, you’ll be spending your money wisely and making a great ROI. Thousands of online businesses rely on AdWords and/or Sponsored Search as their primary or sole marketing method for generating sales leads.

One thing you may be wondering is, “What if my competitors have nothing better to do with their time than click my ads all day, thus costing me money, depleting my account and allowing their ads to display unchallenged?” The search engines have systems in place to detect this kind of activity, and your account should not be debited for it. Every computer on the internet has a unique identifying code, and **if the search engines detect that your ad is being clicked multiple times from the same computer, they’ll assume that someone is messing with your ad and they won’t debit your account.**

SUMMARY

An AdWords or Overture ad campaign is something you can set up and maintain yourself if you have a good grasp of your target market, how they use search engines, if you’re good at crafting classified ads, and if you know how to make website landing pages. If you need assistance with any of this, you can also ask Valued Websites to help you. **Valued Websites can set it up for you and then hand the reins over to you.**

CONCLUSION

Once you’ve put your website online, written lots of great text content for it, optimized the content, gotten links to your website, submitted your website to lots of directories, it can take a few months before you see any results from your efforts. This is normal. You may see some results within a few days, some better results in a few weeks, and then after three or four months you’ll probably see the full picture. If you need instant results, you’ll need to use paid placement.

Search engines are constantly refining the formulas they use to determine how to rank pages. This usually goes un-noticed by the public and website owners, but sometimes they change their formula so radically it can completely knock your website out of its accustomed spot. This is unfortunately normal, and you can minimize this “dropping out” by making sure your site has followed the instructions in this report:

- It has lots of great, unique text content.
- It has lots of reputable, relevant websites linking to it.
- It’s listed in the dmoz.org directory and possibly others.

And this is an ongoing process. **You should always be adding more relevant, useful, unique text content. You should always be trying to get more inbound links.** Web logs (blogs) are great for this. People with websites that dominate their field spend some time every day working on adding content and links.

Valued Websites builds small and large real estate appraisal websites that rank well in search engines. Get a free estimate and proposal for your project by calling Julian at toll free 866.204.1033 or by sending an email to info@valuedwebsites.com. Also visit www.valuedwebsites.com for more information.

This report is © 2006 by Julian Hockings. All rights reserved.
No portion of this document may be reproduced without attribution to valuedwebsites.com.