The Efficacy of SEO as a Strategic Marketing Tool for Brand Promotion and Product Advertising

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Abstract. This article is devoted to the study of the role of SEO optimization in the promotion of the company's brand and products on the market. The purpose of the study is to study the effectiveness of using SEO in promoting the company's brand and products on the net. The main directions and ideas of the work consist in the analysis of SEO methods, consideration of examples of successful practice in various business sectors and identification of the main factors affecting the effectiveness of SEO. The scientific and practical significance of the work is to identify the features of using SEO to promote the company's brand and products on the Internet and to establish the effectiveness of various methods of SEO in practice. The research methodology includes an analysis of the literature, consideration of the stages of the implementation of the tool and a comparative analysis of SEO methods. The main results and analysis of the work show that the use of SEO is an effective way to promote the company's brand and products on the Internet, and to achieve maximum efficiency, it is necessary to take into account the specifics of the business and the audience, as well as constantly monitor changes in search engine algorithms. The value of the conducted research lies in the development of theoretical knowledge about the effectiveness of SEO for the promotion of the company's brand and products on the Internet, as well as in the practical application of the research results in the development and implementation of SEO strategies in various business sectors.

Keywords: SEO · Browser · Keywords · Links · Website · Promotion.

1   Introduction

Every day millions of users search the Internet for information or products they are interested in, and in 90% of cases they view the first three sites recommended by search engines for their target query, because these sites have been optimized for the needs of the target audience. For commercial purposes, this is due to the fact that getting into the top of search engines in most cases leads to a large number of visits. Consequently, the number of sales is also growing, so many companies and brands are optimizing their content to increase traffic [1].

A website without SEO promotion will not bring its owner a lot of income, so simply creating a web resource without search engine optimization is not enough for business. If the owner of the company plans that his products will bring a stable income, it is necessary to take care of finding target visitors who will later become potential customers. According to a study by Forrester Research Inc., more than 80% of people find the right web resource using search engines, therefore, the high role of SEO as an Internet marketing tool is undeniable.

To understand how SEO optimization works and what is the importance of this tool, you should define this term, as well as define its goals and functions [2]. What is SEO optimization? The word SEO is an abbreviation of Search Engine Optimization, which translates from English as search engine optimization. A search engine is a software and hardware complex with a user interface designed to search for and display information at the user's request.

The following definition for a more detailed description of search engine optimization is a set of measures for internal and external optimization aimed at increasing the position of the site in the search engine results for certain user queries, in order to increase traffic and visibility of the web resource, search for potential visitors to the resource [3].

The article uses the method of comparative analysis of SEO optimization methods to compare which methods can be used when optimizing websites. Comparison of information systems is carried out according to the following criteria:

1. Pros and cons of methods
2. Efficiency
3. Terms of implementation
4. Safety of use
5. Direction of work

The purpose of search engines are:

– Increased traffic. Search engine optimization methods are an integral part of any business aimed at increasing the company's profit. At the moment, SEO promotion is the leader in attracting potential customers along with other marketing methods, such as advertising on social networks and others. Research shows that about 30% of buyers come to online stores using leading search engines. The higher the position of the site in the search results, the more interested visitors [4].

– Improvement of user indicators. Search engines optimize the content of the site so that the user can find as many answers to his query as possible. Therefore, one of the main goals of search engines is to create an informational and structural resource for users, the more informative a web resource is, the higher its indicators in search results.

In the mid-90s, the first search engines began to appear, when search engine algorithms were simpler, the relevance of the text was evaluated by keywords, tags and other internal factors. In addition, the first SEO optimizers appeared, who used the well-known "black" optimization in their work: they inserted a lot of keywords into various parts of the site code. But experts quickly realized that such a spam page is not interesting to the user [5].

SEO optimization methods are divided into three groups – white, black and gray. In many browsers, artificial settings management is prohibited in the license, as this negatively affects search results. Table 1 shows a comparative analysis of all three methods.

2   Analysis of foreign works on the research topic

In modern economic literature, foreign marketing specialists show great interest in the topic of product promotion and use various forms of marketing activities to achieve it. Philip Kotler, Jean-Jacques Lambin, Hans Herschgen, Rossiter and Percy are well-known marketers whose marketing work is widely recognized. I analyzed several articles devoted to the promotion of company brands and identified the main features of marketing activities based on the works of A. Romanov, V. Demidov, N. Krylov and other authors. In their research, these authors studied the methods of brand promotion taking into account strong competition, using various research methods to reveal the specifics of these methods.

Many foreign and domestic practices have shown that enterprises that have lost their positions can become leaders if timely marketing strategies are applied and their exact execution is monitored. This study was based on the work of domestic and foreign scientists and practitioners who studied the issues of marketing and the organization of relations between market participants.

The study of the problem of search engine optimization methods is also part of this study. Egeria and Bayrak studied how to keep users on the site by determining the length of stay and exit time on a certain web page, taking into account the speed of opening the site. Their research showed that search engine optimization is influenced by two features: the ratio of page views and the frequency of hits. They also noted that the result of the visit and the time associated with it affect the results of search engines.

Butet and Quoniam researchers stated that search engine optimization is a strategic discipline that aims to create visibility, internet traffic and maximize the use of publishing sites. They also noted that search engine optimization has become a convenient tool for those who want to increase the number of clicks to their website through a search engine.

3   Characteristics of the state of study of the studied problem in Kazakhstan

There is currently an increase in the importance of marketing in the market of Kazakhstan. Companies are increasingly ceasing to focus only on the sale of goods in large quantities and are beginning to ask questions about how to promote their brand and sell goods more effectively. This is due to the fact that brand promotion is a key factor for long-term sales prospects and allows the brand to take a higher place in the market. However, for the successful development of an organization, it is important not only to develop and produce a quality product, but also to ensure its effective promotion and distribution among end consumers. Thus, brand promotion becomes one of the key factors necessary to achieve the strategic goals of companies. In order to create a stable image on the market for itself and take a strong place, any company should use all available marketing communications to influence every consumer and society as a whole. It is important that the message conveyed by the organization is unified and integral, regardless of where it sounds. Forming a comprehensive promotion strategy is a difficult task for many companies that seek to create a good image for themselves, and as part of this strategy, it is necessary to create an effective marketing communications system to increase brand awareness. The ultimate goal of a company that strives to take a firm place in the market is to meet the needs of the consumer. The master's thesis has theoretical and practical significance, as it examines the features of the necessary professional skills in the field of marketing in the market of Kazakhstan, as well as the optimization of the promotion of the company's products and brand.

4   Comparative Analysis of SEO Optimization Methods

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- Improvement of user indicators. Search engines optimize the content of the site so that the user can find as many answers to his query as possible. Therefore, one of the main goals of search engines is to create an informational and structural resource for users, the more informative a web resource is, the higher its indicators in search results.

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Table 1: Comparative Analysis of SEO Optimization Methods

Methods	Direction of work	Effectiveness	Safety	Result
White	Internal work on the resource itself	Effective	Safe	Long-term
Gray	It is associated with the addition of a large number of keywords to the text of the page, often to the detriment of human readability.	Effective	They are not officially banned by search engines, but still do not comply with their rules, there is a risk of getting banned.	Long-term
Black	Using pages and resources specially designed for search engine robots	Black promotion methods can show effectiveness in the short term, but more often they do not even have time, as they fall under the sanctions of search engines	They use methods of promotion that are officially banned by search engines, there is a risk of getting into an eternal ban.	Short-term

Let's take a closer look at SEO optimization methods:

– **The white optimization method** is the most positive of all SEO optimization methods, since this method works without using officially prohibited promotion methods. White optimization includes work on the site content and internal navigation, also with the external environment of the site, promotes the web resource through press releases, advertising on social networks. The white optimization method assumes a safe and long-term result. White SEO involves working on the site and its internal optimization, in accordance with the recommendations of search engines. As part of white SEO, all external links to the site and mentions in social networks should be placed by visitors on a voluntary basis without any participation of the site owner. For example, a person liked an article, retweeted it or gave a link to it on his blog or somewhere on occasion on a thematic forum [5].
Otherwise, white SEO is aimed at working with the internal factors of the site. White's promotion methods include areas such as:

- creating interesting and useful content for visitors (including photos, videos, PDF documents and infographics);
- easy navigation and thoughtful menu;
- optimization of meta tags, titles, and texts on the site;
- internal binding;
- acceleration of site loading speed;
- elimination of technical problems on the site in order to facilitate its indexing by search robots (removing duplicates, closing unnecessary pages and sections in robots.txt etc.).

- **Gray search engine optimization** is associated with the addition of a large number of keywords to the text of the page, often to the detriment of human readability. At the same time, optimization consists first in selecting key queries for a specific web page, determining the size of the target "SEO text" and the required frequency of keywords in it, and then in formulating sentences and phrases containing a certain number of phrases in different cases, singular and plural, with different forms for key queries. verbs [6]. These parameters can then be adjusted based on the search engine results. At the same time, the task of an SEO copywriter is to write the original text in such a way that such optimization is as little noticeable to the reader as possible.

  Gray optimization differs from black in that it is not officially prohibited, but its use can be considered as an unnatural promotion of the popularity of the site. Some search engines, such as Google, may temporarily or permanently block such a site. That is, the final decision on whether the methods of promotion are legitimate is made by the moderator of the search engine, not the program. This method offers moderate speed, low risk, with a competent approach there can be long-term results. Gray methods are a compromise between black (the use of which is officially prohibited) and white (when work is done with the content of the site and the process takes longer). Gray optimization methods include:

  - placing links manually on thematic forums and in blog comments;
  - placement of paid links;
  - posting articles with links to your website;
  - paid posting of blog posts;
  - manual average exchange of links to topics;
  - deception of behavioral factors;
  - registration in catalogs;
  - placing ads on bulletin boards;
  - adding site pages to social networks;
  - promotion through the publication of press releases.

- **Black optimization** includes all methods prohibited by the rules of the search engine. Among them can be noted: the use of pages and resources specially designed for search engine robots, the adoption of so-called cloaking (the user is provided with one page that is easy to read, and for the robot optimized for any query), the use of hidden text on the pages of the site [6]

For black optimization, hacking of high-traffic sites or many low-traffic sites is often used in order to place hidden links to promoted resources on them. In most cases, such links are automatically changed every few days or a week due to malicious code that can be detected using free online site scanners for viruses [7]. The black optimization method is malicious and poses a risk of blocking the site and short-term results.

Black methods include:

- mass spam (in forums, comments, guest books, social networks, etc.);
- mass placement of articles in catalogs of free articles;
- placement of invisible text and links on the site;
- automatic text creation;
- websites or pages with automatically generated text and high keyword density;
- cloaking (when visitors and search robots see different content);
- automatic creation of blogs and satellite networks;
- automatic creation of hundreds and thousands of videos (as well as PDF documents) to attract traffic.

Effective SEO helps to place a web page on the search engine results page. According to the survey, Google is the most frequently used search engine in the first half of 2018, its share in the search engine market is about 70% [8]. Since Google is the most popular search engine, effective SEO techniques are aimed at being displayed on the first page of Google results. Google has listed effective SEO factors and methods. Google has proposed two parameters: the first is the search engine optimization of the page (on-page), which provides good and original content, carefully selecting keywords and topics. Secondly, it is off-page SEO, where methods such as creating links, attracting factors of influence on visitors are used [8].

The optimization process consists of four stages (Figure 1):

1. Setting a goal
2. Building the site structure
3. Creating links
4. Site analysis

Brand promotion is a rather laborious process [8]. It will take a lot of time, deep knowledge and sophisticated analytics to climb to the top positions of search engines. SEO includes several areas. Priority of the task the order of work can be adjusted, since it depends on the specifics of the project being promoted. The necessary nature of the changes is determined by analyzing the resource itself, the thematic niche and competitor sites. There are several tools that help optimize queries in search engines:

- Keyword research
- Monitoring of search results
- Competitor analysis
- On-page audit

Fig. 1: Four-step process of SEO-optimization

4.1 Goal setting

SEO is considered the main source of profit in e-commerce. Its mechanisms help to attract targeted traffic, monetize the site and increase the profit received [8]. Compared to other traffic sources, Google has a much larger target audience. Everyday millions of users from all over the world enter queries into the search bar. Ignoring such a promotion channel, a businessman voluntarily gives potential buyers to competitors and provides them with excellent opportunities for further development.

As with all aspects of digital marketing, the importance of defining and setting tangible, measurable goals cannot be overestimated. Goals help you make plans, direct everyday tasks and, of course, motivate you to rise above your competitors.

To determine the goals, it is necessary to perform the following points:

– Analysis of the basic needs of the business under study
– Converting these needs into clearly defined goals
– Assigning key performance indicators (KPIs) to these goals — to assess whether you are on the right track to achieve them.

4.2 ON-PAGE optimization

After defining the goals and related key performance indicators, it's time to move on to the second stage of the SEO process: page optimization [7].

External SEO optimization consists in:

– registration in catalogs;
– publishing meaningful comments on forums and blogs;
– placement of press releases;
– purchase and exchange of links;
– maintaining active profiles in social networks.

How is internal SEO optimization carried out?

1. Optimization of the internal content of a web resource begins with the compilation of a semantic core. The selected keywords are the basis of technical improvements of the site, its promotion in search engines, content is written for them. In order for the resource to attract a large number of visitors, it is important to order a site optimization service from specialists who will carefully work out the keywords.
2. Optimization of the HTML code of pages, URLs, filling in meta tags. Thanks to properly compiled code, pages load faster, become more convenient for users and are ranked higher in search engines.
3. Compilation of the file robots.txt and site maps for better indexing of the resource and all its pages.
4. Placement of optimized, unique and useful texts on the site. High-quality content is highly appreciated by search engines.
5. Linking internal pages for high search results in the search engine of the main page and other sections of the site [9].

4.3   External SEO optimization (OFF-PAGE optimization)

"External SEO" refers to actions taken outside of your own website to influence your ranking on search engine results pages (SERP). Along with on-page SEO, they include several major SEO factors that help the site rank.

Optimization of external ranking factors includes improving the perception by search engines and users of the popularity, relevance, reliability, and credibility of the site. This is achieved at the expense of other reputable places on the Internet (pages, sites, people, etc.) that link to your website or promote it [10].

Internal links define links in the content of your own website from one page to another. They are a vital element of the SEO process. They help to scan your website and reach pages, create digital footprints, improve user experience and promote ranking.

All links lead to internal sections of the website itself, and the binding text is descriptive. Customers know exactly where they are going, search engines can use the link and the anchor text to understand the content of the page, and you, the site owner, benefit from a higher ranking.

An incoming link is a link that comes from another website and directs the user to your website. This is considered a determining factor in the ranking of your site. Search engines believe more what others say about you than what you say about yourself, and they measure it by incoming links [11]. Think of them as votes of trust and popularity — the more a site has, the more authority and

trust it will receive. This makes their links more important and worthy of higher rankings in search results.

It is necessary to support each created content with the help of sharing buttons on social networks. They facilitate free advertising of your website, increase your digital footprint and increase brand awareness among your customers. The Share buttons on X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and LinkedIn should be conveniently located throughout the site so that customers can quickly and easily share your content on their networks [12]. Algorithms are paying more and more attention to popularity as a ranking factor to help them distinguish high-quality content from bad.

Figure 2 clearly shows the difference between external and internal optimization.
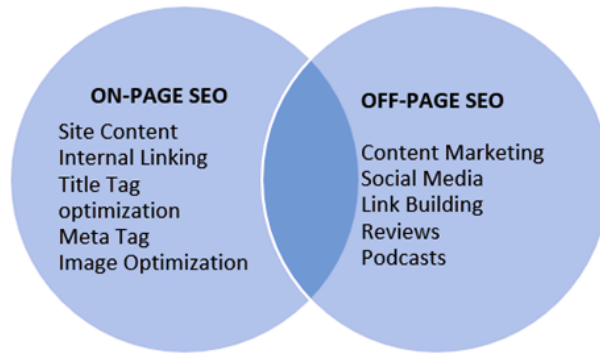

Fig. 2: ON-PAGE and OFF-PAGE SEO

4.4   Research

It is important to be aware of the volume of traffic coming to your site, where it comes from, what users are doing there, which keywords or content attract them, and which pages stimulate or displace conversions. There are a lot of analytics tools out there, such as Moz and HubSpot are great, but Google Analytics is by far the most respected [13]. It is free, contains a huge variety of highly detailed data and is easy to digest. In summary, it is necessary to answer the following questions in order to improve SEO efforts and understand customers:

- Can I find the website? How noticeable is it?
- What position does the site occupy in the search results?
- Has the technical optimization on the page been completed?
- How many web pages are indexed?
- Which traffic comes from general keywords, and which traffic comes from more targeted keywords?

– How many conversions occur for each keyword?

On a typical dashboard page in GA, tracking goals and events is one of the most important functions. Make sure you have them enabled, as these are tools that will allow you to see where traffic is coming from and whether you are getting conversions. Events vary in user engagement, such as watching videos, uploading documents, sharing on social networks, and the like. Goals are actions such as subscribing to a newsletter, sending web forms, shopping, and so on [13].

Diagram 3 describes the actions that are performed during the issuance of search engine queries: the user enters a query in a search engine (Google, Yandex, etc.), then there is a keyword check and comparison with the database, after that the search engine displays the most suitable queries in the top of the page.
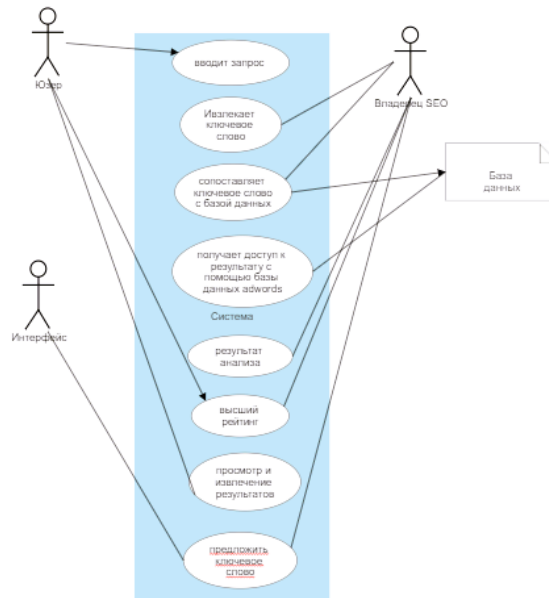

Fig. 3: UML diagram of the SEO promotion process

5   Results and discussion

The results of a scientific article on SEO optimization as a key tool for promoting a company's brand and products show that white optimization methods are the most effective and long-term, while the use of black and gray methods can lead to temporary success, but has a greater risk of negative consequences, such as a downgrade of search engines and deterioration of the company's reputation. In addition, various optimization methods, such as the use of keywords, content

optimization and technical optimization, were considered, and their pros and cons were described.

The discussion of the results showed that SEO optimization is an integral part of the company's brand and product promotion strategy. It allows companies to attract more visitors to their website, improve the rating and create brand awareness. At the same time, for effective SEO optimization, it is necessary to use an integrated approach and combine various methods, such as content optimization, creating high-quality backlinks and using social networks. In addition, it is necessary to monitor changes in search engine algorithms and adapt your strategy in accordance with them.

In general, the article emphasizes the importance of using ethical and long-term optimization methods for the successful promotion of the company's brand and products.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that SEO optimization is one of the Internet marketing technologies, but its isolated use is ineffective in the modern Internet space. This is due to the constant improvement of the requirements and criteria for evaluating web resources by search engines and users. To achieve maximum efficiency, SEO optimization should be used in combination with other Internet marketing tools. Web resources with a good reputation are more respectable and preferable, so it is important to use non-prohibited optimization methods to form a positive image of the web resource and the organization it represents on the Internet. An integrated approach to website promotion guarantees the achievement of the expected results and the preservation of stable positions in the long term in conditions of high competition in the field of Internet promotion.

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