

Search engine optimization for rubber industry websites

When someone is online, looking for “multi-cavity injection molding” or “silicone filler” or “elastomeric extrusions,” does your site pop up? Is it well-positioned when they look for your specific rubber industry products?

You may believe that your website is beautiful and informative, but does it appear when the engineer types in “polychloroprene gaskets,” or have you created a beautiful, informative internet brochure that just sits in the back closet where no one can find it?

A website that needs positioning is more the rule than the exception. Websites are built by website designers, who, like most graphic designers, are not the techies who feast on source codes and talk in acronyms like SEO, SERP, ISP and AJAX. These are the techies who can get your website high in the rankings, where your customers and potential customers can find it.

For most rubber industry websites, the Google search engine is the leading driver of traffic. A full 70% of all new traffic starts with Google, and the chances are that if customers are not finding you on Google, they are not finding you. You, or someone in your company, may be smart and technically adept enough to build the site and make it discoverable for someone looking for your products; but if someone is not looking specifically for your company, will that person find the site? Google changes its algorithm, the way it ranks websites, over 200 times per year. Do you or your in-house designer have enough time to keep up with the changes? Your time might be better spent overseeing a techie who spends his free time playing video games and browsing blogs about web positioning.

The person who built your site could be your daughter, who is smart and technically capable; but maybe she really wants to concentrate on her degree, or her job, or her new baby. She's too busy for full-scale combat with everyone else seeking top spots on Google.

Your role is really to find the techie, and possess the know-how to supervise that person. To do it well, you need to know the general topography of the battlefield and the right strategy questions to be asking. Here is enough background to make you dangerous:

Paid campaigns

The quickest way to improve search engine results is to set up a paid, cost-per-click Adwords campaign on Google. Basically, you create a short text ad, select the keywords you would like to target, set a maximum bid per click and a monthly budget, then let Google do the rest.

If your bid is high enough, your ad will show up at the top

or on the right hand side of the Google results page. On the positive side, you pay only when a user clicks through to your site. On the negative side, some keywords are pricey and competition is often fierce, especially for top positions. Others will try to outbid you. The auction is on!

Your campaign should be monitored at least monthly. Check the budget and the ad's position to ensure it is on the first page for each keyword. Make sure your campaign filters out negative, overpriced, overly general and useless keywords. Are you spending a small fortune on a “molding” ad because you are reaching everyone who wants to mold ceramics, remove mold from the cellar, or buy crown molding for his living room?

Question the number of pages that paid viewers visit, their time on the site, the time of day they visit, their geographic location, and their IP addresses. Serious visitors spend time on your site and visit a lot of pages. If they always visit between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., stop running your ad evenings and weekends and cut out some waste. You can limit your ad geographically, running it locally or only in certain regions of the country. You can use special apps to identify keywords that are used when people search for your products or services, words that you might not think of. You can sometimes identify not only a visitor's IP address, but his company, too.

Create different ads for the same keywords so Google can rotate the ads. If one ad is performing better than the others, run it more often.

These are good practices, but remember that many users simply don't click on sponsored ads. If you put all of your eggs in this basket, you won't reach your entire market. You need organic site improvement.

Organic site improvement

Organic positioning, or search engine optimization (SEO), is getting your site to show up near the top in unpaid search engine listings. Unpaid listings are the main body of listings, not the ads surrounding them.

Unlike a paid campaign, you don't pay Google or Microsoft for a good position; but organic improvements do cost in the work, money and patience necessary to improve the site and get the better positions.

Start by analyzing the structure of your site. Are the pages titled and the URLs named with commonly searched, appropriate keywords? Are the terms specific to what you are offering?

Google positions sites largely because of background information that for the most part a visitor never sees. This includes directory structure, system architecture, domain registration,

keyword density, keyword proximities and alternative content (alt tags, link title tags, screen reader tags, long descriptions and more). Were these controllable, internal factors maximized for positioning when the site was organized and built? If not, do it now.

In addition to the site's structure, think of its content. Fresh, unique, informative content is extremely important for a high search engine ranking.

If good content is correctly formatted, or coded, good results are highly probable. Ensure that the code meets web development standards, known as W3C. In general, these standards set acceptable scripting formats. There are several layers of standards set by the World Wide Web Consortium. You don't have to meet the strictest, but it is a good idea to meet at least one of them. A more recent one is best. A few things to watch:

- Ensure that all possible tags, even hidden tags, are filled.
- Make sure that you have style sheets optimized for mobile devices.
- Ensure that everything is done to speed up page loading.
- Meet Section 508 standards, coding for the impaired.

In addition to site content, don't forget to register your domain properly. When you renew domain registration, do it for three years or more. Google likes to know you're going to be around awhile.

Another organic improvement, easy to do and very effective, is splitting up pages on your site. This increases the URLs, titles and the amount of content that get spidered.

Another easy improvement is having a prominent address and phone number on all your pages. Google respects this transparency; you are not anonymous.

Do not engage in any "black hat" optimization techniques that would worsen your positioning or even get you blacklisted. Like everyone else, you have undoubtedly received an email from someone who "happened to see your site and can make it rank much higher" with the search engines. This is very likely someone using black hat techniques. These techniques include keyword stuffing, duplicate content, installing content that is the same color as the background, and using multiple gateway pages, each page designed to meet the preferences of a certain search engine. Sometimes these techniques are temporarily beneficial, but they will come back to haunt you.

Perhaps the worst black hat technique is using a link farm. Everyday, a company somewhere with a high search engine ranking neglects to renew its registration and loses the name of its site, which is then bought by a link farm agent.

The agent may operate his own link farm or may sell the site to others who run link farms. In either case, the link farm's proposition is made to you, and to thousands of others, to buy backlinks from that high ranking site, for, say, \$100. (They don't tell you all this, but this is what they are doing.) The backlinks show up on these high ranking sites every time they are visited. You pay the \$100, the link farm puts up backlinks to your site, and Google increases your ranking because it sees all your new visitors. Google, however, is not dumb. It sees your backlink, along with hundreds of others, on a page

totally unrelated to your business, finds the link farm and stops spidering its sites, effectively putting it out of business. There goes your \$100. Something else happens, too. You are an accomplice and your site is showing false popularity. The search engine will certainly downgrade your site's ranking and may blacklist it. This doesn't happen every time, but do you want to chance it?

Social media

Social media is hot in 2013. Do you need a Facebook page for your business? LinkedIn? Are you on Google Places?

Creating and maintaining social media takes time. A blog is meant to establish pertinent conversations about specific topics. What good is a blog if you set it up and never engage in conversation? It has some benefits, but maybe not all that you were hoping for.

Even more important is the targeting question. Are your customers on Twitter? If not, why bother?

If you decide your market may be spending time on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, is there a link from your website to your Twitter feed, and is there one in the opposite direction, from Twitter to your site? If you post a news release on your website, is it posted on Facebook, too? When using social media, remember to keep tabs on posts, so content detrimental to your business does not stay up.

One social media vehicle that requires little or no maintenance is YouTube. Videos on YouTube increase search engine rank because Google owns YouTube and trusts itself to provide reliable backlinks from this high traffic, highly ranked site. When someone plays a YouTube video that is embedded on your site, you get Google points.

Although YouTube is great, it is by no means the only site for backlinks. Look for legitimate sites that will link to your site, creating a backlink. Industry association websites, trade media online buyers guides, DMOZ.org and the original (and still working) Yahoo Directory are all places where backlinks can be found. If you participate in the program, check your company listing in Rubber World's Hot Links (<http://www.rubberworld.com/hotlinks.asp>). Does the description accurately describe your services? Is the link to the right page? Legitimate backlinks are good, but don't use paid backlinks unless they are from organizations or publications directly involved in the rubber industry and other industries that you may supply.

Uncontrollable factors, and how to control them

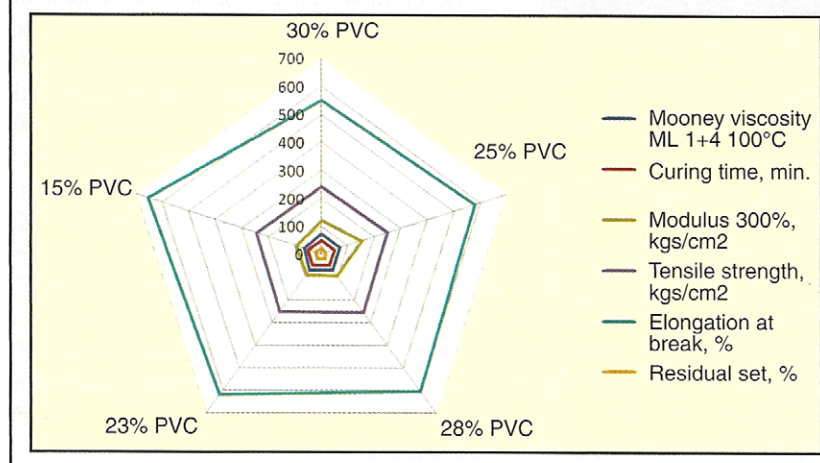
Certain factors in search engine optimization are out of your control, but some can be influenced.

Rate your hosting service. If you are on a shared server with thousands of other sites, you will be ranked lower than if you were on a server with dozens of other sites. Even better would be to be on a dedicated server with no other sites. Remember to back it up.

Join Google Plus. This will get your site on Google Maps and Google Places and will prevent the hijacking of this social media outlet. This hijacking could consist of someone telling Twitter that he represents your company and then posts what-

(continued on page 20)

Figure 6 - properties of NBR/PVC with varying PVC



consumption; and high temperatures are not needed for processing, unlike rubber composition milling.

Compounds produced at the coagulation stage have good processing properties, while industrial rubbers have high physical and mechanical performance (higher breaking strength, elongation) and higher ozone resistance at high deformations.

There are two techniques of adding PVC at the coagulation stage, i.e., suspension and latex addition. The diagram of comparative tests of rubbers made by these two techniques shows that properties of test composites made on the basis of the suspension prepared from the PVC commercial powder are identical to properties of the sample where PVC latex was used (figure 5).

However, the latex method is better in terms of processability, as PVC in this case is distributed more uniformly.

Results of studies focused on determining the optimum PVC content in the blend with NBR in the latex form are dem-

onstrated in figure 6. It can be seen that the level of properties tested is sufficiently close for compounds with the PVC content within the range of 15 to 30% by weight.

NBR-26-PVC30 grades with the PVC content of 30% are most popular among customers.

Unfilled rubbers made of the NBR-26-PVC30 blend, compared with similar products made of the NBR-26, have higher breaking and tear strength, stress at 300 percent elongation and higher hardness at satisfactory resilience. Carbon black filled rubbers have outstanding ozone resistance, weather resistance, aging resistance, tensile strength, apparent elongation stress, breaking strength, heat resistance, ignition resistance, oil resistance and chemical resistance.

NBR-26-PVC30 is more easily extruded and calendered, self-curing risk is mitigated, shelf stability is improved and any coloration can be assured. Meanwhile, compound Mooney viscosity is increased, bending strength and elasticity falls at low temperatures and compression set is increased.

Besides, NBR-26-PVC30 rubber is recommended for producing light-colored items. NBR-PVC compounds can be used in combination with SBR, polybutadiene and polychloroprene.

Nitrile butadiene rubbers modified with polyvinyl chloride at the latex stage are used to manufacture electric cable jackets, outside layers of common and oil-resistant pipes, rolls, leather hoses, stamped automotive parts, foamed heat insulation materials and protective coatings.

The latex and suspension modified rubber performances were compared, and the influence of PVC content on rubber properties was demonstrated.

Tech Service

(continued from page 17)

ever he wants in your company's name.

After getting yourself up on Google Maps and Google Places, sign up for Mapquest, too.

If, for marketing reasons, you don't want to publicize nationally the location of your company, you can put the address in the header metadata. Google will find your metatags.

Final important suggestions

Set realistic goals and realistic timeframes. Try first to be on page one, not necessarily to be number one, and don't expect to get there overnight. Give your changes three months to take effect, then look again.

Check competitive sites. Are they providing more content and are the sites more easily navigated?

Watch your back. Your number one ranking only lasts until somebody takes it from you. Check your position regularly.

Use metrics. Being listed number one for a key phrase that is never searched is not so good as being number ten for a phrase that is searched often. Where do you want to put your money for paid advertising and which words do you want in your page titles?

Look at your site, and this very important, too-often-ignored advice goes for all your marketing communications, from a user's point-of-view. The customer should want to click on your site because he sees something interesting there. What is it? Why should he do business with you?

Annual
Chemicals & Materials
Company Profiles
Page 33