



Why Doesn't My Site Show Up on Google?

This is a common question I get asked from people who've had a web site for any length of time. As an example, someone -- let's call him George -- has a site on which he's selling his Okanagan-grown Fuji apple trees (my favorite). George can't understand why, when he does a Google search for the word "trees," his site is not showing up in the results.

Getting good results on Google (or any other search engine for that matter) is generally considered showing up in the top 20 (or, maybe 30) listed sites, i.e., in the first two (or three) pages of results (unless you've sneakily changed the default setting from 10 results per page). It's these first two or three pages that get most of the clicks from people doing a search. Most people don't bother looking past this point if they haven't found what they're looking for.

1. Be Realistic

The problem is that there are literally millions and millions of web sites out there. And many more web pages. (To be clear: a web site is composed of one, or usually several, web pages.) So, every time someone does a search for a word or phrase in Google, your site is competing with many millions of other pages. I just did a search for the word "trees" and Google is telling me there are close to 36 million results found. George would have better luck buying a 6-49 ticket than having his site come up amidst that sort of competition!

Now, if we narrow down our search to the phrase "apple trees" we've cut the number of results to around 8.5 million. Still very high, but we've cut out 75% of the competition. Going to "Fuji apple trees" brings the results down significantly, to 130,000. We've now cut out an additional 98.5% of the competition. Finally, narrowing the search down to "Okanagan Fuji apple trees" diminishes the number of results to 332 -- another 99.7% of the competition out of the way. In fact, by making our search specific like this, as opposed to the original "trees," we've eliminated 99.999% of the competition!

So, you're asking, what's the point of this exercise, other than to prove that your degree in Math has the occasional use? The point is that your web site doesn't have a snowball's chance in Tahiti of being ranked highly by search engines when using a very general term, especially if it's a single-word term. Just like if you were to try to find next-door-neighbor Fred's auto repair shop's web site, you wouldn't search the word "car" and expect to find his site. You would probably use 3 or 4 specific words, possibly including the geographic location of Fred's shop, and hope to see his site pop up then.

So, what is reasonable for George and his homegrown Fuji apple trees? Well, if his site is well constructed, he can reasonably expect to have good results for specific search phrases, such as "home-grown Fuji apple trees" or "organic Okanagan apple trees."

2. Include Relevant Copy on Your Page

Now, I'm not going to go into all of the details of what I mean by a well constructed site, but one of the most important things is that the copy (i.e., the text on the web page) actually includes the words that you want to be found for. How else are the search engines supposed to know what your page is really about? You'd be surprised how often I've heard people complain about getting poor search results for a web page of theirs that doesn't even mention the word(s) they want it to be found under.



3. Get Linked Up

Another key factor is to have relevant links to the page. Essentially, this is like a popularity contest where Google wants to see how many of the cool kids have your phone number in their little black books. The more links you can get to your site the better, but it's really the number of relevant (there's that word again) ones that matter the most. Having a link from your Aunt Jane's personal web site to yours won't really do you much (if any) good (although it doesn't usually hurt). But, for our friend George, he'd be much better off having links from web sites about apple sauce or apple cider producers, other fruit tree growers, gardening shops, etc. They bear far more weight than good old Aunt Jane, well meaning as she may be.

How do you get these links? Ask the site owner or Webmaster. Often they'll want a return link to their site, which you can decide if you want to do or not. Also, you can probably find at least a few directories or associations you may belong to, which will gladly list you at no charge. It just takes a bit of searching. Keep in mind it's the quality, rather than the quantity of these links that matter most.

Finally, remember that most search engines take a while to index new or updated web sites. It might be a few weeks or even a few months until you see the "fruits of your labor."

To summarize, keep these three points in mind:

1. Have realistic expectations. Your odds of being found in a search engine for a specific phrase are much better than a very general term.
2. Include text in your page that talks about the term(s) you want the page ranked for.
3. Get good quality links to your site.

These three things, and a bit of patience, should get you far better results and save you a lot of frustration!

Source: http://www.nrichmedia.com/net_results_0101.htm#google