



A GLOBALSPEC **WHITE PAPER** FOR
ENGINEERING, TECHNICAL AND
INDUSTRIAL MARKETERS

Search Engine Optimization for the Industrial Marketer

GLOBALSPEC[®]

Introduction

Many industrial marketers devote resources and effort to Search Engine Optimization (SEO), a group of techniques to help a company's Web pages rise higher in the search engine results for specific keyword searches. When done correctly, SEO can drive relevant traffic to your Web site, which can be converted into qualified leads and sales. The business benefit is certainly attractive, but there is a misconception that SEO is "free" because you don't pay for the traffic that gets sent to your Web site from organic search results.

In reality, SEO is not free. While the basics can be performed at low cost, advanced SEO techniques require time, expertise and budget. Therefore, any investment you plan to make in SEO should be measured against the benefits you could achieve investing in other marketing programs.

This white paper will help you understand how SEO can fit into your marketing strategy, calculate the resources required for SEO, and become familiar with the range of basic and advanced SEO techniques you can implement. You will learn what SEO can and can't do and you will be able to weigh an investment in SEO vs. other marketing programs, which will help you make the best use of your marketing budget to achieve your objectives.

Founded in 1996, GlobalSpec invested early on in SEO. We have our own internal team of SEO professionals. They make sure GlobalSpec is found by engineers, technical and industrial professionals using search engines to locate products, services and suppliers. Our team manages a database of more than one million keywords to help drive qualified traffic to suppliers represented on our site. In addition, we manage paid search campaigns in both major and niche search engines and can help you understand how paid search and SEO might fit in your marketing portfolio.

How SEO Fits into an Overall Marketing Strategy

SEO may belong in your overall marketing mix, but it shouldn't be the only marketing tactic you employ; nor should it be the only online marketing tactic you employ. The reason is that your customers and prospects in the industrial community use multiple online resources to research information and locate products, services and suppliers. To make your presence known to your target audience and generate qualified leads, you must use a mix of online marketing resources: your own Web site, e-mail marketing, e-newsletter sponsorships, banner ads, SEO, paid search, directory listings and presence on authority sites such as GlobalSpec.

Most marketing can be classified as "push" or "pull" marketing. SEO is an example of pull marketing: you pull motivated prospects in real-time as they proactively search online for products and services like those you offer.

You also can push your message out to prospects and customers through tactics such as direct mail, online advertising, e-mail marketing and e-newsletter sponsorships. Both push and pull marketing belong in your mix, helping you to build brand awareness, broadcast messages and generate qualified leads.

The SEO Benefit: Non-Branded Search Traffic

What's the difference between these two search terms: "Acme Company D-Laser" and "Diode Laser"?" One is a search term with a brand name, and one is a non-branded search term.

Unless your company is well-known in the industry, the majority of potential buyers don't know about your products and services, and will not use your brand names in their search queries. A much larger volume of searches are non-branded than branded, meaning the user types in words and phrases that describe products or services they are looking for rather than using specific brand names.

If your Web site is optimized for non-branded keyword search terms, such as "diode emitting laser," you increase opportunities to drive prospects to your site who may not know about your company, products or services, yet may be interested in what you have to offer.

If your site is not optimized for non-branded search, the Web site loses out on the much larger volume of search traffic. You can overcome this problem and drive non-branded search traffic by targeting non-branded search terms with your SEO tactics.

Search Engine Friendly Pages: A Checklist for Site Designers/Web Masters

- ❑ *Do you use JavaScript navigation? If you do, search engines might not follow those links and therefore will not have access to your pages/content. The solution is to convert to straight HTML*
- ❑ *Do you regularly run a scan to find & fix broken links on your Web site?*
- ❑ *Do you have keyword text links between pages? Keywords are better than generic text such as “click here” or “more info.”*
- ❑ *Do you require users to login to view some of your Web site pages? If you do, the pages beyond the login are likely not accessible to search engines.*
- ❑ *Are any of your pages bigger than 150K in size? Search engines prefer smaller pages.*
- ❑ *Do you have a site map that provides a direct, text-based hyperlink to the important pages on your Web site? If not, build one.*

Required Resources for SEO: Basic to Advanced

SEO techniques range from simple to complex, from low cost to resource intensive. The basic techniques are relatively straightforward and can be performed by you or your company’s Web master or Web design firm. Every company should work on the basics. They include:

- Integrate keywords into page copy
- Add internal links among pages
- Keep the content on pages updated
- Build a site map
- Use meta description tags in the page code

More advanced techniques include:

- Re-design of site navigation, if needed
- Establish, grow and manage a database of keywords
- Add new pages and content to your site for specific keywords
- Perform ongoing analytics to evaluate the performance of SEO efforts, and then make necessary changes to improve results

The more advanced techniques are resource-intensive, requiring SEO expertise and an ongoing commitment to continually make necessary changes to your Web site. In all likelihood, you will need an experienced person dedicated to the job or an outside consultant or agency to do the work for you.

Make Your Pages Search Engine Friendly

The first and most basic SEO tactic is to make your Web pages accessible and friendly to search engines. This will allow software programs that roam the Web—called search engine crawlers—to find your Web pages and index them in their search engine database.

Your primary task in making your Web site search engine friendly is to provide basic HTML links to all the pages on your Web site. A site map with HTML links will help make your Web pages accessible to search engines, which will follow the links. It is important to link relevant pages on your site, also referred to as ‘cross linking’. Using keywords as your link text, such as “centrifugal pumps,” is recommended rather than generic terms like “click here.”

Navigation that is based on images or drop-down navigation menus coded with Java script is difficult for search engines to follow. Re-programming the navigation menus to straight HTML will take time and money. If you can’t do this, you should at least repeat the navigation as text links at the bottom of pages on your site, such as in a footer area.

Resources to Help with Keyword Research

A number of paid and free resources are available to help you perform keyword research in support of your SEO efforts.

Paid Resources

- Wordtracker (<http://www.wordtracker.com>)
- Keyword Discovery (<http://www.keyworddiscovery.com>)
- HitTail (<http://www.mylongtail.com>)
- Outsource: You can hire a third party to build a keyword list on your behalf

Free Resources

- Google Keyword Tool (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>)
- SEOBook Keyword Tool (<http://tools.seobook.com/keyword-tools>)
- List generator for permutations (<http://tools.seobook.com/keyword-list>)
- Generate misspellings (<http://tools.seobook.com/spelling/keywords-typos.cgi>)
- Clean a keyword list (<http://tools.seobook.com/keyword-list-cleaner/stripper.php>)



Here is a partial view of GlobalSpec's site map, with links that are easy for search engines to follow. A site map that includes HTML links to the pages on your site is an important SEO technique.

The screenshot shows the GlobalSpec website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text 'Find:' and a 'Search' button. To the right of the search bar, there is a link for 'Advanced >>'. Below the search bar, there is a 'You are here:' section with a breadcrumb trail: 'GlobalSpec.com > Site Map'. To the right of this section, there is a 'FREE GlobalSpec e-Newsletters' sign-up box with the text 'Receive the latest news, trends, and technology relevant to your work. (See Titles)'. Below the 'You are here:' section, there is a 'Site Map' section with two columns of links. The left column is titled 'Product Categories' and lists various engineering-related categories. The right column is titled 'Search the Web for Engineering Resources' and lists search-related links. Below these columns, there is a 'Company and Site Information' section with links for 'About GlobalSpec', 'Contact Us', and 'Terms of Use'.

Establish, Grow and Manage a Keyword Database

The idea behind managing a keyword database is that if you know what keywords users are typing into search engines to look for products and services like yours, you can tailor the content of your Web pages to include those keywords, which can help your Web pages rank higher.

The number of keywords you must manage largely depends on the size of your product or services portfolio and the competitive landscape you operate in. If you have a broad and deep product portfolio, or compete with many companies for the same keywords, the list of potential keywords grows and the work becomes harder. GlobalSpec, for example, manages more than 1 million keywords and has full-time, expert resources focused on keyword management to drive qualified traffic to our site and our advertisers.

The first step in keyword management is to discover the keywords that users are typing into search engines to find products and services like those you offer. Here are some ways to discover keywords:

- Conduct internal brainstorming session among employees
- Ask customers how they describe your products and services
- Analyze competitor Web sites and the keywords they use
- Review Web server log files for search terms used to find your site
- Use keyword research tools

After you generate a list of potential keywords to target, you should prioritize the list based on relevance to your products and services and the fit with your marketing and business strategy.

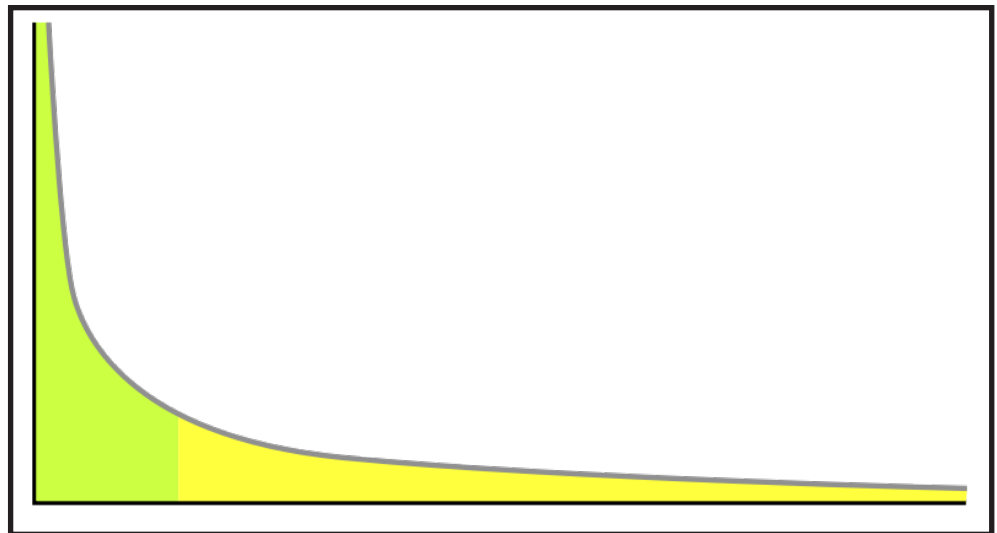
The “Long Tail” of Search

The concept of the “long tail” is important to your keyword strategy. The long tail concept states that the qualified traffic you receive from longer, more complex and less popular keyword queries can collectively exceed qualified traffic from shorter, more popular keyword queries. It’s called the “long tail” because a bar graph of keyword queries would show high bars representing high search volumes for the limited number of popular queries, followed by many short bars representing the longer, more complex queries, therefore creating the long tail.

Here’s an example: A shorter, popular query might be the keyword “bearings” while a longer, more complex query is “angular contact bearings manufacturers.” Think of the many other variations of search terms that could be related to “bearings.” If you are managing long tail keywords specific to your products and services, you could be managing a database of thousands of keywords.

GlobalSpec, in our SEO efforts, devotes resources to long tail keywords for several reasons:

- Long tail queries often convert better because they indicate a user who is further along or more focused in their research process
- Competition is usually lower for the longer, more complex terms
- Optimizing for the long tail can reduce risk because it minimizes reliance on a handful of highly competitive keywords
- Our business and our clients depend on our expertise to drive qualified traffic based on many combinations of keyword searches



To the right is the long tail, to the left are the few that dominate.

Picture by Hay Kranen/PD'

“On page” includes page content, links, link text, HTML tags, etc. “off page” refers primarily to the quality and quantity of sites that link into your Website pages.

Meta tags and URLs

Meta tags and URLs are considered “on page” criteria—SEO techniques you apply directly to your Web pages. Meta tags appear in the HTML code of Web pages. The two important meta tags for SEO are the title and description.

Title Tag

The title tag is generally recognized as the single most important “on page” SEO element. Each page on your Web site needs a unique title tag that describes the page content. While it’s easy to use the same title tag on all of your Web pages, it’s also a waste of time and will not help with SEO. You can add your company name at the end of a title tag, but avoid using title tags that are longer than 20 words. The title meta tag also appears in the browser title bar.

Example of a title tag in the HTML code of a page on GlobalSpec’s site for hydraulic equipment and components.

```
<html><head><title>Hydraulic Equipment and Components - Hydraulic power sources, actuators and accessories, such as pumps, cylinders, motors, control valves, accumulators, and reservoirs. </title>
```

Description Tag

The description meta tag is often used by search engines as the snippet of text presented to users in search results pages. Write the description meta tag to entice potential visitors to click on your search result. As with title meta tags, the description meta tag should be unique for each page.

A listing on a search engine results page often includes the snippet of text from the description meta tag.

```
Engineering & Scientific Links - Hydraulic Equipment and Components
GlobalSpec offers Hydraulic Equipment and Components for engineers. You can also
Search engineering/technical components and equipment using SpecSearch.
engineering-tools.globalspec.com/TechArticles/Articles?categoryId=109 - 36k -
Cached - Similar pages
```

URLs

A URL, which stands for Uniform Resource Language, is the address of a Web page. Keep URLs as short as possible and include target keywords directly in the URL itself. Here’s an example of a URL on GlobalSpec that includes keywords:

http://video-equipment.globalspec.com/ProductFinder/Video_Imaging_Equipment

Search engines have an easier time following URLs that are not dynamically generated from a database. Dynamic URLs usually include “?” followed by several parameters based on the user’s request. If your pages are dynamically generated based on database queries, you may want to create static copies of the most important pages and give them simpler URLs.

Manage a Link Strategy

Getting other relevant Web sites to link to your Web site is an SEO technique called link popularity, designed to improve the rank of your Web pages in search engine results. Originally pioneered by Google, today link popularity is used by all the major search engines to determine the relevance of a Web page. The philosophy of link popularity is that important Web sites will have relevant links pointing to it. In essence, an incoming link is a “vote” for your Web site.

Link popularity is referred to as “off-page” criteria—a search engine ranking criteria that is outside the bounds of your actual Web pages. Links relevant to your business, products, services and industry are high quality links, and these are more important than getting a high quantity of links. But what really counts—and will make the most positive impact on search engine rankings—is a high quantity of high quality links.

So how many is a high quantity of high quality links? To give you some perspective, GlobalSpec has tens of thousands of relevant, incoming links. These links help increase GlobalSpec’s search engine ranking on keywords and drive qualified traffic to supplier product and service information on our site.

Establishing incoming links is the one of the more important SEO strategies; it’s also one of the most resource intensive in terms of hours and effort. Here are some ways to generate relevant links to your site:

- Write articles and submit or distribute them to industry directories or other Web sites related to your business. Most sites will include a link back to your site.
- Distribute press releases through news feeds such as www.prnewswire.com or www.businesswire.com. Be sure to include a link back to your site in the press release.
- Begin a campaign to ask your business partners, distributors, resellers and key customers to link to your site.
- Join relevant industry organizations and get listed on their Web sites with a link back to your site.
- Read industry blogs and comment on the postings with a link back to your site.
- Start a blog for your company, which can often lead to incoming links from those who read your blog.
- Publish articles on your own Web site and submit them to social media sites such as Digg (www.digg.com), but make sure they fit into one of the categories offered.



It is work to get 10 or 20 relevant links to your Web site. This is one of those cases where you have to weigh the benefits of devoting resources to link popularity versus using those resources elsewhere in your marketing efforts.

Keep Content Fresh and Relevant

The quality of the content on your Web site is another important factor in determining SEO success. The higher quality and more relevant your content, the more likely external Web sites will link to yours. Those links will contribute to your link popularity and improve your site's ranking in search engines.

Also, the more keyword-rich content you have, the more search traffic you will drive to your Web site. This may require that you create and maintain many unique Web pages, each devoted to a specific keyword phrase.

One way GlobalSpec keeps content fresh and unique is through Product and Service Announcements on our Web site. All of our clients can create and post their own announcements on GlobalSpec. The announcements are unique to a given product or service, typically are keyword rich, and take advantage of the GlobalSpec domain to drive highly relevant, targeted traffic to our supplier clients.

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
|  | <p>Spectrum Instruments Ltd. Shimpo Model DT-326 LED Stroboscope</p> <p>The Saberscope (DT-326) is an all one LED stroboscope utilizing super bright light emitting diodes (LED's) in an appealing, durable all metal design. The DT-326 unique LED array provides an accurate and stable strobe light. Innovative industrial design allows for a longer flash life - 5X longer than traditional xenon flashtubes.</p> <p>With its intuitive "ONE HAND" controls, wide and adjustable f... (read more)</p> <p>More product announcements from Spectrum Instruments Ltd.</p> | Save to My Parts |
|  | <p>Olympus - NDT WeldROVER Fully Automated UT Weld Inspection</p> <p>The WeldROVER™ is a perfect addition to the Olympus family of scanners for customers that require a more stable inspection than can be provided by manual scanners, and in a more economical package than the high-production zone-discrimination systems typically used in offshore pipeline construction. (read more)</p> <p>More product announcements from Olympus - NDT</p> | Save to My Parts |
|  | <p>Fischer Technology, Inc. / Coating Thickness Gages Copper Thickness Measurement - PHASCOPE PMP10</p> <p>PHASCOPE® PMP10 measures copper coating thickness using phase-sensitive Eddy current method. It is a user-friendly instrument providing reproducible and accurate measurement of copper thickness on PC boards and metallic coatings on ferrous and non-ferrous metallic or electrically non-conductive parts. Depending on the probe it operates at the frequencies of 60 kHz, 240 kHz or 1.25 MHz. (read more)</p> <p>More product announcements from Fischer Technology, Inc. / Coating Thickness Gages</p> | Save to My Parts |
|  | <p>Aeroflex Incorporated Expansion of XTS-5000 Auto-Test II Option</p> <p>Aeroflex has announced the expansion of the XTS-5000 Auto-Test II Automated Test and Alignment Option for the 3920 Digital Radio Test Set. This option provides automated test and alignment of Motorola XTS and XTL Series Radios. (read more)</p> <p>More product announcements from Aeroflex Incorporated</p> | Save to My Parts |

Here's an example of a Product Announcements page on GlobalSpec. This is just one way we keep content fresh and relevant to help in search engine rankings.

Ongoing Analytics and Optimization

SEO is not a discrete marketing initiative with a defined end date that you can complete and check off your list. It is an ongoing process involving analysis of your rankings and results, followed by making necessary SEO adjustments to improve or maintain rankings.

Gaining and maintaining high rankings on search engines is a challenging task. You may achieve first page ranking one day and be bumped to later pages the next; remember, your competitors are fighting for the top spots as well.

To achieve the full benefits of SEO, you must measure and make decisions based upon a number of key metrics, including:

- The volume of traffic to your Web site from organic search results
- What users do once they land on your Web site: where they go, the path they take



- How well you convert traffic from search engines into qualified leads for your sales team
- Which keywords perform best and which keywords you need to add

There are many free and paid analytic tools to help you track these and other metrics. One thing about analytic tools is that the volume and categories of statistics they present can be overwhelming. Most of the data are useful to some extent, but if you're just starting out with analytics, focus on the statistics that tell you which search engines are referring traffic to your Web site and what keywords users are typing into those search engines to find your Web site.

Analytics also can tell you which other Web sites are referring traffic to yours, helping you measure the performance of your external linking efforts; which pages users land on and the paths they take through your Web site; visitor demographics; conversion rates and much more.

Ultimately, you need to know who your visitors are, how they find your Web site, and what they do when they get there. Focusing on these three areas are critical to measuring and improving your SEO strategy.

What About Paid Search?

Paid search primarily consists of keyword ads that you pay for every time someone clicks on your text ad and goes to your Web site. You bid the price you're willing to pay for a click. If you are going to invest in paid search, here are four tips to keep in mind:

1. *Analyze the performance of paid search to know exactly where your money is going. You need to know which keywords are working and deserving of further investment and which are not and should be scaled back or eliminated. You also need to know the quality of traffic from different sources, such as the search engine's results listings pages versus contextual ads that appear on partner sites of the search engine.*
2. *Create specific landing pages for each keyword ad, rather than send users to your home page. The more focused and relevant your landing page is to your keyword ad, the more likely your visitor will find what they are looking for and convert to a lead.*
3. *The costs of paid search can escalate quickly if you don't monitor it closely. Avoid getting into bidding wars just to get your ad listed higher on the search engine results page. Let ad performance dictate your spending limits, or take advantage of search engine tools that let you put a cap on your spending.*
4. *Your goal shouldn't be to just get clicks from your paid search ads. Focus instead on converting clicks to customers. Is your paid search delivering the type of qualified and motivated prospects that will become customers?*

Our SEO expertise drives web traffic for our clients.

"We get several hundred full contact leads a month, and about 1,900 hits a month on our Web site because of GlobalSpec. Plus, GlobalSpec is also used by all of our current big customers: Boeing, Northrop Grumman, TRW and so forth. That helps keep our name in front of our customers on a daily basis. That's important."

– Tim Mullally, Sales Representative, ValveTech Inc.

"Since revising our Web site and expanding our Internet presence, monthly traffic on our Web site has grown significantly. GlobalSpec is certainly a big contributor to that."

– Martin Eichenberger, President, PlastiVac

"We're also taking advantage of GlobalSpec....to build our brand recognition and provide more traffic to our site. GlobalSpec is a powerful means of marketing for Measurement Specialties."

– Angela Watkins, Global Marketing Communications Manager for Measurement Specialties, Inc.

To read more of GlobalSpec's success stories, go to www.globalspec.com/advertising/success-stories.

Conclusion

It's easy for a company to generate traffic to their Web site through branded search. A user simply types in search terms that include your company and product names and you appear in the results. But branded search represents only a fraction of the universe of people who may be good prospects for your products and services—especially if your company is not a "household" name in the industrial sector.

A few people may search for "Acme Company D-Laser" but a multitude might search for "diode emitting lasers." It's this non-branded search traffic that's harder to get, and that's where SEO comes in, to capture the searchers who don't know about your company, products or services yet. These non-branded search queries represent an enormous opportunity. Your target audience has an infinite number of ways to search for products and services like those you offer, and the vast majority of searches have nothing to do with brand names.

SEO Benefits without SEO Expertise

The basic SEO techniques have a place in every marketer's budget. Your level of investment should be determined by analyzing the tradeoffs of different uses of your budget. You have other options for generating qualified prospects through search and gaining some of the benefits of advanced SEO techniques even if you don't have the expertise.

For example, establishing and maintaining a presence on GlobalSpec offers an excellent way to gain visibility for your company, products and services. As a recognized authority site and experts in SEO, we drive a significant volume of engineering, technical and industrial professionals to GlobalSpec where suppliers can feature searchable product catalogs, banner ads, technical articles, company information and more.

We are SEO experts, so our clients don't have to be. We manage a vast universe of keywords, perform extensive page optimization, and drive more than 3.9 million visits to the companies on our site each month. What's more, GlobalSpec can deliver qualified leads and relevant clicks to your Web site. Our user base is registered with us and we provide leads with contact information to our clients—not just anonymous clicks.

When considering your investment level in SEO, be sure to talk with us first. We can help you make the right decisions to achieve the goals you have for SEO and your overall marketing strategy.

About GlobalSpec

GlobalSpec.com is used regularly by engineering, technical, manufacturing and industrial professionals worldwide to search for components, products, technical information and services. GlobalSpec users benefit from domain-expert search engines, a broad range of proprietary and aggregated Web-based content, 60+ e-newsletters, and online events—helping them search for and locate products and services, learn about suppliers and access comprehensive technical content. SpecSearch®, GlobalSpec's trademarked search technology, allows users to search by specification from more than 38,000 supplier catalogs.

For manufacturers, distributors and service providers, GlobalSpec offers tailored marketing solutions that put you in control and expert online marketing advice to help you find new customers. We provide highly filtered sales leads and marketing opportunities, qualified Web traffic to your site, product promotion and brand advertising platforms, and a wide range of e-media advertising and marketing solutions including keyword ads, e-mail marketing, banner ad networks, online events and industry-leading e-newsletter advertisements—allowing you to choose the options that fit your unique business needs.

The ability to find customers...to tap into new markets or new regions that are actively seeking your products...to understand what prospects are looking for... to gain an integrated marketing program and a wealth of practical advice about online marketing—this is the GlobalSpec approach. And it's why many manufacturers and suppliers choose GlobalSpec to help their businesses grow.

For more information on GlobalSpec's comprehensive marketing solutions please call 800.261.2052 or visit <http://www.globalspec.com/advertising>.



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