

Why Small Businesses should use Search Engine Optimisation

“SEO can be played on a level playing field no matter what size your company.”

I often talk to small business people who are frustrated at how they believe that marketing on the internet unfairly favours large companies over small and medium sized companies. The big companies have the connections, the money, and the brand name. "How can I compete?" I hear them asking. I always have the same answer - Internet marketing, especially organic search marketing.

But when I tell them this, often I get disbelief. These small business owners have painfully learned over the years that marketing is for big companies, not for them. They're wrong.

A recent report stated that the top 500 companies in the UK are "woefully unrepresented in natural search." Just 8% of those companies got high grades for their search rankings. "The group as a whole," the report says, "had extremely limited natural search visibility for the terms in which they have the greatest investment in paid search."

"With very few exceptions," the report says, "our research found that the 500 companies are doing an extraordinarily poor job of ensuring that their 'money' keywords are even moderately well represented in natural search."

So, if the big companies aren't there, guess who is? That's right - small-to-medium size companies. Paid search still goes (mainly) to companies with deep pockets, but organic search goes to the relevant. If your business has the relevant answer for the searcher, you can get that high ranking, too.

I've seen it over and over again - big companies getting outranked by their own, distributors, partners, and affiliates for their branded keywords. This shouldn't happen, because clearly the manufacturer should have the best answer for that product's search. It happens because the smaller companies do a better job on their information.

And because large companies find search far more difficult than small ones. For organic search success, every piece of the equation must be in place. If you fail to do

any one piece, your organic search results suffer. Because large companies have so many more people to coordinate, organic search becomes far harder for large companies than for small ones. So, small companies take note: for organic search, more resources make the job harder, leaving an opportunity for you.

Sure big companies always have some kind of edge in anything. But big companies have far less of an edge in earned media than they do in traditional marketing channels. If you've been making excuses about how you're doing in search marketing, maybe it's time to realize that any small business that wants to succeed in search has the opportunity.