

A DUMPSTER MARKET RESOURCE

Local SEO for Waste Haulers

How improve your ranking in Google's search
results

Intro

If you have a business and a website, you have undoubtedly been contacted by companies offering you SEO services. They probably made SEO sound super complicated but promised you that for a handsome fee they could get your site in the top spot on Google. SEO can be a lot of work, but it does not need to be complicated. In this guide, we'll be giving you the tools you need to understand what these companies are offering so you can negotiate better, or to even take on a lot of the work yourself.

What is SEO?

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. It's the process of refining your presence on the web in a way that results in your website becoming more visible on search engines like Google for the keywords that are important to your business. These search results can't be bought like with Google Ads; they must be earned. Because they must be earned, any company that is promising a #1 ranking for a keyword is lying and you should avoid doing business with them. No one can guarantee rankings. SEO is the process of organizing and presenting information with your website in a way that Google feels is most useful to search engine users. This sounds simple enough, and in some ways it is, but there can be a lot that goes into it.



Keywords

One of the most important parts of SEO is choosing the keywords that you'll be using to optimize your site. Keywords are the phrases that people type into Google to search for something. Once you know which keywords you want to use for SEO, you'll start to incorporate those keywords into your site in specific ways to tell Google what your site is about. Obviously, some keywords are going to be better than others for your website, so we want to be strategic in choosing them.

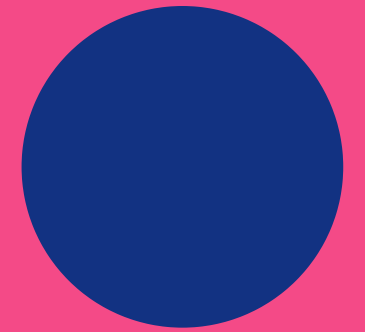
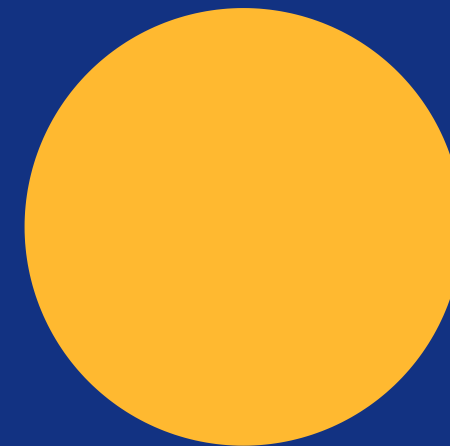
You might be tempted to use a keyword like "dumpster" to get the most traffic possible, but that is a very general keyword. You want to choose keywords that have the kind of competition you can beat. SEO does no good if you're trying to show up for keywords that are already dominated by sites like Wikipedia- you'll never outrank them. However, something like "dumpster rental Peoria IL" is a lot more specific and has much easier competition. Because you're a local business, including your location is a great way to make sure the traffic you're getting is from people that want to and can rent a dumpster from you. Using your location to modify them, you can probably come up with a list of 10 keywords around terms like dumpster, dumpster rental, and junk removal.

On Site SEO

When we talk about on-site SEO, what we mean is changes you can make to your website to improve your search engine rankings. Some of these changes are going to sound pretty technical, but depending on what you use to run your website, it doesn't have to be. We're going to review some of the basics and spare you the really technical stuff. These will be the biggest bang for your buck, without requiring any special know-how. Different website systems, like Wordpress, have special plugins that handle or help with a lot of these.

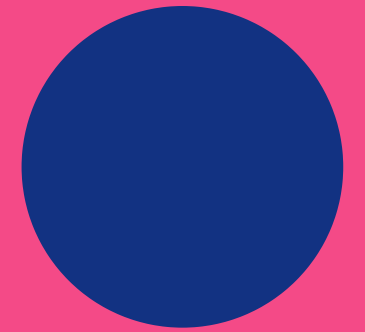
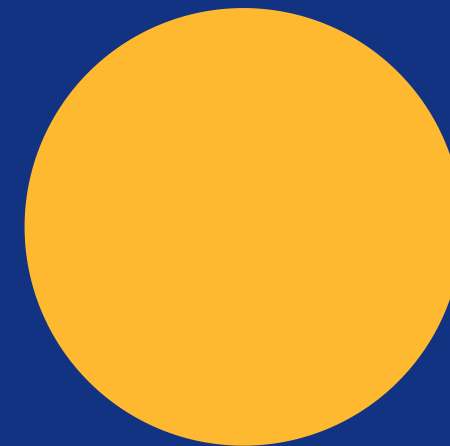
Title Tags

Title tags determine what search engines use as the title of your website listing in the search results. Besides the appearance of your search engine listing, this is also one of the most important places to use your keywords. Each page should have its own unique title and, while it is important to use your keywords here, you don't want to just stuff them in. Write a page title that makes sense for the page you're working on. For instance, your home page should be something like "Dumpster Rental, Peoria, IL". You also want to keep it pretty short. You may have seen titles in the search results for some sites getting cut off at the end with a "...". That means the title is too long. We've found that keeping it around 55 characters seems to work best. This setting is usually changed in the Title field of the webpage editor. If you are using an SEO plugin on your site, there may be a special field in the editor called something like SEO Title.



Meta Description

This is another one that should be different for every page. Like the title tag, the meta description affects how your listing shows up in the search results. Rather than the title of the listing, the meta description determines the body of the listing. This is an area where keywords have no effect on ranking, so your goal should be to write a description of the page that will entice people to click on that listing. This is your sales pitch. Once again, space is limited before you get cut off with a "...", and we have found that around 155 characters works best. A lot of website editors don't have an easy, built-in way to edit this, but look for fields in your webpage editor called things like Description, SEO Description, Summary, or Excerpt.



Heading Tags

These are special tags that format the text on a webpage. You'll only need to do this if you use the different heading sizes in the text editor when writing your webpages. This is when you choose something like Heading 3 because you want to make the text bigger. These are actually intended to help you organize information on a page. Think of it like you're back in school writing a paper. Your paper has one main title- that's Heading 1, the largest text on the page. This is usually edited in the Title field, the same field you used to change your title tag, unless you use an SEO plugin that has a separate SEO Title field. Now let's say you have three sections of info you want to write about on that page, like Quality, Service, and Price. You could use Heading 2 for names of each of those sections. Have subsections in those sections? You guessed it, use Heading 3 for the section names. This helps organize the text, which is something Google loves. Definitely try to incorporate a keyword in the main title, but it's much less important to use them in Heading 2, 3, etc.

Image Alt Tags

This one gets overlooked or ignored a lot, even by professionals. Alt tags are text that is included when you put an image on the page that is intended to be used for the visually impaired. You can have your web browser read a webpage to you if you have difficulty seeing, and the image alt tag is intended to offer a written description of what the image is. When you add an image to a page in your editor, there is almost always a field called Description or ALT. This is your chance to include something like “Woman renting a dumpster in Peoria, IL”. Google will like that you included a description of the image, and you managed to include a keyword too.

Off-Site SEO

Off-site SEO is anything you do elsewhere online that can improve your search engine rankings. In this section we'll talk about creating and managing directory listings, as well as getting other websites to link to yours.

Directories

Online directories are the modern day equivalent of the Yellow Pages. They range from the big and important like Google My Business and Yelp, to the small and obscure like Yellowbot and Citysearch. The advice for these directories is essentially the same across the board:

Is your business listed? This one is pretty straight forward; are you even listed? If not, take a few minutes to setup your business listing and fill it out completely. Don't just assume you're there, double check. Even if your business is listed, it's worthwhile to claim the listing as the business owner, so that you can make changes to it as needed.

Is your business name accurate? Often times a company can have their business name appear differently on two different directories. If you show up as The Dumpster Company on one site and Dumpster Co. on another, that can have a negative affect on your SEO, because Google might think these are two different companies. Make sure your business name is consistent across directories.

Is your business address accurate? Just like your business name, your business address can sometimes show up differently on different directories. Make sure that your address is listed exactly the same across directories, right down to the abbreviations used in street names and office numbers.

Directories (Continued)

Is your phone number listed? You want to make it easy for anyone trying to reach you to do so. Make sure an accurate phone number is listed in your directory listings.

Is your website listed? You want to make sure people can find your website, but you also want a link from the directories. This helps Google connect the existence of your local business to your website. This is especially important if you're a Dumpster Market customer and can make rentals on your website with our booking system.

Do you have a photo uploaded? Make sure you upload your company logo if the directory allows images. Some of them, like Google and Yelp, let you upload several, and you should take advantage of that. Upload a company photo, some pictures of your dumpsters and/or trucks, crazy things you've hauled away, etc.

Backlinks

Links are a very important part of SEO. When another site links to your site, it tells Google that the site linking to you thinks you are important. The more sites that link to you, the more of an authority in your industry Google will see you as. The more authority you have, the more likely your pages are to rank well for the keywords you're targeting.

Links have two pieces, the web address they're pointing to, and the text you see and click on. It's very important to make sure that the address the link points to is a working page, and one that's important like the homepage. The text of the link (or hypertext as it's called) is another opportunity to use one of your keywords. If the site linking to you includes one of your keywords in the hypertext, that tells the search engines that's what the page you're going to is about.

So where do you find sites that will link to you? Check out the next page for some Ideas!

Backlinks

Partners: Look to the companies that you do business with. Do they have a website? Is there a place on their website might make sense for them to place a link to yours? Offer to do the same in return.

Industry Directories: In the last section we talked about local directories, but there are industry directories too. These directories will list other waste haulers, so why not you? Make sure your business is listed and includes a link to your site.

Guest Blogging: Are you comfortable blogging? Blogs are always looking for more content and many are more than happy to let guests write a post for them from time to time. Typically, the guest blogger is permitted to include a link back to their own website within the blog post. If you can write pretty well and have some things to say about your business or the industry in general, you might be able to get some backlinks to your site out of it. Often times, all it takes is asking a blog that publishes the kind of content you would write if you could do some guest blogging for them. That's it! They get free content and you get a link- it's a win-win.

Need Help Getting Started?

Hopefully the things in this ebook seem pretty approachable. We've tried to make SEO feel as doable as possible. There's a lot of very technical things we could have included, but you can get a lot of bang for your buck out of the things we did. And while SEO doesn't have to be super technical or difficult, it does take time. Don't expect to do everything in an afternoon and be done. SEO is an ongoing process. You should also not expect to see a huge change in the amount of traffic you get overnight. Or in a week. Or a month. The results from SEO come slowly, but they build over time. The results you see may seem small at first and therefore feel like it's not worth the effort. If you keep at it, however, your results will start to snowball, until you can look back and see how dramatically your traffic has grown.

Stick with it. Follow the steps in this guide. Be consistent in your efforts. The pay off will make it all worth it.

If you need some advice on getting started with local SEO, grab a slot on our calendar to talk with our team!

Click to Schedule free consultaion

