



Why Your  
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Won't Work

# Why Your SEO (Probably) Won't Work



Recognise these guys? They are called Larry and Sergey. They founded Google in 1995. In 1999 they got \$25 million from some venture capitalists. They are now listed on the NASDAQ (valued at roughly \$400 billion) and responsible to shareholders that care a heck of a lot more about the fact that their shares went down \$15 yesterday (20/21 Oct) than they do about you.

Google's problem is that to be useful, they have to make it possible for people to find stuff....but to make money they have to show people the stuff they charge other people to show you. It's a balancing act, but in simple terms, if Larry and Sergey make it too easy for people to find stuff that isn't paid for their share price will fall and their shareholders will be angry.

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Fortunately for them, lots of stuff (the time of high tide in Falmouth, the phone number of the city council, what Lesotho's flag looks like and so on) not only isn't commercial, but is also willingly made available to all, so Google really works well for that sort of thing and is happy to let it flow.

That means that if you get a firm that REALLY understands this stuff, using SEO can be a very effective strategy...BUT, regrettably (for you), the name of a good lawyer to fight a personal injury claim or divorce is HIGHLY commercial, which is why to be seen on page 1 of Google using PPC costs a lot of money for the applicable search terms.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) attempts to beat Larry and Sergey at their own game: to get you in the front rank of search results without paying Larry and Sergey's company. And hundreds and hundreds of firms claim they can do this for you.

The problem here is that Larry and Sergey are very very bright. They met at Stanford. They employ rafts of very very bright people...and they have a vested interest in making sure that if you want to be on page 1 of the search results, you pay them, via 'Adwords' or 'Pay per click'. Do that and they make money. Their shareholders are happy. SEO that achieved its objective would defeat the point of paying Google to be on page 1 and make their shareholders unhappy.

They also have a search system which they change on average more than once every day. Better still, they don't actually tell anyone exactly how it works.

It's a bit like playing poker against someone who marks the cards...and the offer they are making is this. You can gamble against us at our own game...and we can change the rules if it looks like you are winning...or you can pay.

So, the next time that someone (who didn't go to Stanford) comes along and tells you that they can beat Sergey and Larry at their own game, I'd be sceptical.



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Even if you do get onto page 1, by the way, you'll still be below those who pay... and you may not be visible on the user's screen (without quite a bit of scrolling) ....and of course, there's no guarantee that they'll click on your result anyway: the results all look pretty much the same...but that's (yet) another story.

If you do decide to do it, decide and independently verify what constitutes success. This is NOT visits to your website. (When we tried SEO years ago, visits to our website more than doubled, but the volume of enquiries didn't move much and the quality of enquiries actually fell). I'd go for a score based on the increase in enquiries adjusted for quality...a enquiry for your firm that does not produce a profitable paying client is a cost, not a benefit.

The ideal result is a manageable number of high quality enquiries which yield a high conversion rate and profitable client relationships.

Although the best marketing often takes time to work, you should always measure effectiveness and, if the marketing is expected to take time, measure (yourself, don't rely on the marketing service supplier!!!!) outcomes connected with the goals set.

To reduce your firm's marketing costs, save staff time and grow your business faster, get in touch. 01392 423607 or see our websites at [www.words4business.com](http://www.words4business.com), [www.legalrss.co.uk](http://www.legalrss.co.uk) (for law firms needing content) or [www.myinfonet.com](http://www.myinfonet.com) (for anyone needing a very fast, very simple, multi-modal communications/content management solution)