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Media Release

Four Ingredients for Advisers SEO Recipe

Monday January 27, 2014. President and Founder of US Based i-Impact Group Mr. Claudio O. Pannunzio said financial advisers still underestimate the power and importance of search engine optimization (SEO) as a process for attracting traffic to their practice websites and in doing so, are curtailing new business and client engagement opportunities.

In his main platform and workshop presentations, to assist advisers in their understanding SEO, Pannunzio often describes the most popular engines – *Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.* – as the librarians of the Internet. Their core task is to collect information and catalogue it in a way that helps people immediately find what they are searching for.

To store information, every search engine employs an algorithm; and advisers should think of it as a secret recipe that turns information into search results. Therefore, SEO is the process of ensuring that adviser websites possess all the ingredients that match search engines' recipes (algorithms). For financial advisers, like other business owners, search results are very important, as they increase the odds that their business is easily found on the Internet.

For advisers to assess whether or not their website has a suitable online presence, Pannunzio encourages them to undertake a couple of very simple tests on their own:

1. Type the business / practice in their favourite search engine. If that name *does not* show up in the first page of the ensuing search, they need to implement SEO.
2. Conduct an Internet search using popular terms that a potential client may use to locate an adviser – *financial adviser, financial planner, investment plan, retirement solution* – and add the name of the city/town where the adviser's business is domiciled. If the name of the practice *does not* appear in the first result page, the adviser needs to implement SEO.

If both tests yield a 'negative' result, the adviser may want to seriously consider creating a SEO strategy. However, before hiring a firm to help with that, Pannunzio suggests they do a quick analysis of their social media assets.

In addition to a website, he asks advisers if they have a blog and/or a presence on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook? Are these platforms working in synchrony?

Claudio Pannunzio affirms that the correct approach in using social media is to establish an ongoing and consistent conversation that drives traffic to the adviser's website with the ultimate goal of converting visitors into clients. In marketing lingo, this is defined as a hub-and-spoke model.

It will also be extremely beneficial for advisers to establish the core objectives of their SEO efforts. The clearer these goals are, the easier it will be to measure them and assess if their SEO strategy is working.

Pannunzio provides his audiences with four key suggestions and zero-cost ideas they can implement to create an SEO strategy that will help achieve an effective online presence:

1. First, go to Google and set up Google Analytics (www.Google.com/analytics) to find out the most common terms/search words people use to find a financial adviser (it is free), and ensure that such terms are included in the practice website and social media interactions.

The more specific the adviser gets with his / her keywords, the better the chances of ranking high in search engines. The key words should be placed strategically throughout the website content. For example, if the key phrase is “a comfortable retirement,” make sure to create content about it and provide ideas and tips on how to achieve this objective.

2. Advisers can optimize their website for local search by ensuring they have a detailed listing of their practice on Google Local (www.Google.com/local/add) and other engines such as Yahoo, Bing, etc.
3. If advisers do not have a blog yet, they should consider creating one as way to increase their website ranking in the search engines and boost brand exposure. Managing a blog can be time consuming. However, it will help to attract potential clients.
4. Advisers should consider using videos on their website and/or blog. It will enable the achievement of two key strategic goals: increase the time visitors spend on the site, and boost SEO ranking.

Google's algorithms assign higher ranking to those web pages more frequently visited and where surfers spend above-average time. Algorithms work on the assumption that the longer a visitor stays on a page, the higher the quality of that page's content must be.

Claudio Pannunzio concluded, “A *YouOn TV* study revealed that web surfers spend on average 48 seconds on a specific website. When a site features a video, average time jumps to 5 minutes and 50 seconds. This is especially true for educational/informative videos versus those just selling a product”.

“Consequently, creating a video that addresses an adviser's key audience's problems and issues and provides tips and actionable ideas will help drive prospects to their website, keep them on it and achieve their SEO goals”.

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