



INTERVIEW WITH MEHMET KÖRÜKMEZ DIRECTOR, GLOBAL SEO PRACTICE INFORMABIZ

We are very pleased to present the interview Mehmet Körükmez, the Global SEO Practice Director of Informabiz, gave to the Chamber Newsletter. Informabiz, a member of the TBCCI, specialises in web design and search engine optimisation. In his interview Mr Körükmez talked about the principles of good web design and the importance of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and their relevance during and after the crises times.



Getting people to Look at your Website

Your company website can be a very powerful tool to sell and promote your products and services, and market your business. If your site is not well optimised for search engines then your website could be missing out on a lot of its potential.

Q. Mehmet Bey. Please tell us about yourself?

I joined Informabiz in early 2007. Prior to Informabiz, I worked as web marketing coordinator and senior web developer. I have a BA Honours degree in Economics and an MSc in Computing, with expertise in both business and technological principles. I have been involved in SEO for over 5 years. Now as Informabiz's Director of its global SEO practice, I lead a growing team of consultants, developers and copywriters, as well as directing Informabiz's client services and implementation teams.

Q. Can you briefly talk about your company?

Informabiz is a Search Engine Optimisation and IT Consultancy firm located in London. Our primary areas of expertise include

- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO),
- Paid search marketing,
- Affiliate marketing
- Search-friendly web design
- Social networking and link building

Informabiz's clients ranging from tiny start-up companies to large corporations and achieving high levels of success with each client, include.

IKEA Swift Computers, Easy Connect, Hedgehog Jobs,
Royal Acedemy of Arts, Avali Electronics,
Badenoch & Clarks ,Vax.

The mission of Informabiz is to give businesses of all sizes the opportunity to harness the power of search engines as a marketing medium. When properly utilized, search engine Optimisation gives small businesses an opportunity to compete at the same level as larger corporations.

It also provides large corporations with the opportunity to increase brand awareness and further solidify their dominance in their industry. Regardless of the size of your company, you can rely on the SEO services provided by our search engine Optimisation firm to get your company in front of prospective customers at the precise moment when they are looking for your products or services.

As an SEO company, our search engine Optimisation philosophy is to work within the search engines' guidelines and to provide content that is optimized for the best keywords." We make the necessary adjustments to your company's website, and get you linked in all the right places, to make the job of finding your website easier. By providing the search engines with quality, relevant content, we deliver long-term results in the form of more traffic and more sales to your website.

Q. Please describe the services and products you offer.

Our Search Engine Optimisation & Internet Marketing Services includes services that are aimed to get people to look at your website:

- Keyword Research
- Competitive Analysis
- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Paid Search Marketing (PPC)
- Search-Friendly Web Design
- Local Search Optimisation
- Contextual Advertising
- Website Analytics
- Link Building
- Content Development/Copywriting
- Blog Marketing
- Online Public Relations/Press Release Optimisation
- SERP, CMS and CRM solutions
- Development Solutions: J2EE and PHP
- Databases: Oracle, SQL Server, DB2, MySQL e.t.c.
- E-commerce Solutions
- Stock Taking/Tracking/Sales System-(EPOS)
(Low Budget and Location independent system)

Q. What is the relevance and role of websites in marketing business and organisations?

A website can provide up-to-date textual and graphic information on the products and services offered, becoming an information and advertisement platform. Internet marketing is now a major, multi-billion dollar industry. More people now have access to the Internet and the skills to get information or make purchases using the web. An Internet "platform" has now become essential and is expected for most businesses and organisations. A 'good website' has now become a must if you want to advertise your services and products in your country or abroad.

Q. Can you briefly tell us the key fundamentals of a 'Good' website?

The internet can help to find many sources of "good information". Right now, you're simply trying to "find a SEO Consultant" for your site. Before you decide which web designer or "SEO (search engine optimizer)" to appoint, you should explore your website design options carefully. Anyone can design, build and publish "beautiful websites" on the internet. However, if no one but your "close friends" **can find it**, you have wasted every penny you invested in a new company website.

What makes a good website?

Your website should have a goal. A measure of how "good" the website is how successful it is in meeting that goal. The goal for an e-commerce site will be very different to a fan portal, but nonetheless, "good" websites share some common characteristics. In order to meet your goal:

- Viewers have to find your site when they search the internet
- Viewers have to be able to view it easily
- Viewers have to be able to find information easily on your site
- Viewers must think your website is credible

There is significant overlap between these characteristics. The things that make a site easy to find are the same ones that make it viewable, navigable and credible.

Some of the more important positively contributing methods are::

- Keywords in title tag, h1/h2 etc tags, alt text, URL and site links
- High keyword density in body, (content separated from presentation) preferably near beginning
- Small Pages (less than 30 kilobytes)
- Themed pages
- Efficient internal link structure

Q. Please tell us the common misconceptions about website design and "bad" web design techniques.

Most common misconceptions and bad design methods are:

- Not designing the website according what the customers look for
- The mistaken belief that a website is designed well if it basically contains good graphic designs
- Ignoring certain technical aspects that improve websites' performance (such as not designing with 'ranking' in mind)

- Imitating the competition; one needs to emphasise its own unique points
- Attention-grabbing presentations can be counterproductive by slowing down or diverting attention from real content
- Negative on-page factors such as:
 - Text presented in graphics
 - Excessive JavaScript
 - Excessive Flash

Q. Can you please explain “Ranking” and its importance in website marketing?

PageRank or **ranking** is a numeric value that represents how important a page is on the web. PageRank is Google's way of deciding a page's importance. It matters because it is one of the factors that determines a page's ranking in the search results. It is not the only factor that Google uses to rank pages, but it is an important one: Google figures that when one page links to another page, it is effectively casting a vote for the other page. The more votes that are cast for a page, the more important the page must be. Also, the importance of the page that is casting the vote determines how important the vote itself is. Google calculates a page's importance from the votes cast for it. How important each vote is taken into account when a page's PageRank is calculated.

Q. What is Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)?

Search engine Optimisation (SEO) is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a web site from search engines via "natural" or un-paid ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results as opposed to search engine marketing (SEM) which deals with paid inclusion. Typically, the earlier (or higher) a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine. SEO may target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, video search and industry-specific vertical search engines. This gives a web site web presence.

SEO consists of the Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

The Good (White Hat SEO):

Good SEOs should have some defining characteristic that catches your eyes. In some way you should see that the person is legitimate not only from their site, but from the sites of others. The best SEOs probably do much more than SEO. Either through personal knowledge or social networking an SEO worth their price should be able to advise you on other aspects of your site.

The Bad (Black Hat SEO):

Black Hat search engine Optimisation is customarily defined as techniques that are used to get higher search rankings in an unethical manner. These black hat SEO techniques usually include one or more of the following characteristics:

- breaks search engine rules and regulations
- creates a poor user experience directly because of the black hat SEO techniques utilized on the Web site
- Unethically presents content in a different visual or non-visual way to search engine spiders and search engine users.

A lot of what is known as black hat SEO actually used to be legitimate, but some folks went a bit overboard and now these techniques are frowned upon by the general SEO community at large. These black hat SEO practices will actually provide short-term gains in terms of rankings, but if you are discovered utilising these spammy techniques on your Web site, you run the risk of being penalised by search engines. Black hat SEO basically is a short-sighted solution to a long-term problem, which is creating a Web site that provides both a great user experience and all that goes with that.

The Ugly (Search Engines: Google, Yahoo, Bing etc.):

Different search engines have different ways of dealing with websites that are recognised to be using black hat methods. However, the common punishment when any black hat SEO technique is identified is for the ranking of the website to be dropped significantly. This can of course be disastrous for a business with a drastic reduction in traffic and sales likely. However, websites can be penalised even more severely. When it is deemed appropriate, a search engine will ban a website from being ranked in their search results at all. This is of course the worst punishment a business can receive and one that could damage their future success significantly.

If a website is banned from a search engine, it can cost them a lot of time and money. If the business wants to be ranked by the search engine, again it is vital that the reasons for the banning of the website in the first place are sorted out. It is necessary to make any appropriate changes to your website and then appeal to the search engine. It can take a considerable amount of time for a website that has been banned to be included in the search results of a search engine again.

Some of the more important on-site factors are:

- Keywords in title tag, h1/h2 etc tags, alt text, URL and site links
- High keyword density in body, (content separated from presentation) preferably near beginning
- Small Pages (less than 30 kilobytes)
- Themed pages
- Efficient internal link structure

The negative on-page factors include:

- Text presented in graphics
- Excessive JavaScript
- Excessive Flash

A well organized usable page that is designed to be accessible will have a better chance of achieving high SERP.

Q. What are the major challenges in the SEO sector?

Organic search engine optimization (SEO) is full of challenges and getting top-ranked is not easy. Understanding of these challenges allows you to plan your SEO strategy much better because you will get a realistic picture of what to expect. Getting through the challenges are well worth the effort once you realize your website is at the top of the search engine result pages (SERP). What are some of the ways SEO specialists deal with these challenges? Let's look at a few.

- **The number of competitors can often be astronomical.** You can rest assured that you are not unique in your niche and you will be competing

with countless others for the same top ranking on a SERP. The best way to deal with so many competitive sites is to make sure yours is up-to-date and well-maintained.

- **It is a challenge if not impossible to keep up-to-date with the various ranking algorithms among the major search engines.** Search engines such as Yahoo, Google, and Bing are constantly reviewing their ranking algorithms and initiating new approaches within them. This need for constant review stems from the numerous black hat SEO specialists who try to circumvent the current algorithms in attempt to get a site ranked faster. One of the objectives of the major search engines is to remain fair and impartial thus they must combat the black hat SEO threat. You may consider yourself an expert in them today but it won't take long before that expertise becomes antiquated.
- **Another challenge is finding the right websites to provide you with inbound links.** Search engines favor inbound links that originate from reputable and relevant websites. But link building is always an uphill struggle. Consider that each quality inbound link is like a vote of confidence for your website so you want to get as many as possible in the shortest amount of time. However the other challenge is that you don't want to get a high number of inbound links too quickly because a search engine might think you are trying to spam it.
- **Content is very important for ranking a website and their issues must be consistently dealt with.** Duplicate content is one common issue that must be quickly eliminated or your website could get penalized by the search engines. Large businesses oftentimes have duplicate gateway pages among their affiliate websites so webmasters must make sure that the robots.txt file for their sites are configured with links for indexing bots to avoid (the duplicate content links).

Q. What has been the the impact of the economic crises?

The **credit crunch** is affecting businesses all around, from small to large, from corporate to independent. For your business to survive the credit crunch punch, you need to think smart about using the internet as your key marketing tool and take advantage of something that other businesses won't – Search engine Optimisation.

Your company website is likely to either sell products, promote products, or market your business. If your site is not well optimised for search engines then your website could be missing out on a lot of it's potential. In these hard financial times, employing an SEO agency to optimize your site is likely to be the best investment you could make.

Making your website perform well and attract more traffic could massively lower your physical marketing overheads. Consumers are being more frugal than ever and are increasingly more likely to be looking for the best-priced deal on the internet, rather than trudging down the high street. If your site is well optimised, then you will have done the hard part – getting people to look at your website, now all you need to do is make sure your prices are competitive, and your business is giving off the right impression.

Experts predict that the effects of the credit crunch and the economic slowdown is going to be around for about the next couple of years, so now is the time to get proactive and use SEO to your advantage.

Q. Do you have a message to our members and the business communities in the UK and Turkey.

As a business, in order to find success online it is important to have a fully functional website.

Firstly, it should tell customers exactly what your company does and secondly, it should show them exactly how they could purchase your products and services online. It is also essential that you are aware of how you can market your site effectively, making it visible to your customers in the search engines.

Online developments, particularly in relation to search engines such as Google, have meant that there is now a wide range of ways that businesses can implement a successful marketing campaign, using a variety of techniques. Through Google's Universal Search, consumers can search using particular specifications including, videos, articles, reviews and forums. This could potentially attract a wider audience to your site, boosting ranking in the search engines and increase your companies business.

Creating videos about your business or related to the services that you offer, not only enables you to target a wider audience but it also offers a more personal, user-friendly service for the user.

Employing an SEO strategy to your site is one way of increasing its' traffic, professional online marketing agencies could offer the best advice as to how you can get yourself noticed online.

Mehmet Bey, Thank you very much



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