

SEM Services and International Online Search Marketing: consulting for companies

What is SEM? **SEM** means **Search Engine Marketing**, that is the set of strategies that leverage search engines to promote businesses and market websites.

These techniques use search engines' features, starting from the Google's ones, to increase website traffic, improve brand awareness and get conversions.



SEM marketing includes different set of strategies:

- SEO (Search Engine Marketing);
- SEA (Search Engine Advertising) or Paid Search
- Link building and link baiting campaigns
- Content Marketing

SEO - Website optimisation to improve ranking on search engines

Internet exposes enterprises to a **high level of competition** primarily on the basis of visibility.

Since **Google** and other search engines have become the main way to search for information, products and services, any firm striving to boost its business or just defend its market position needs to concentrate on the web; on the contrary there is a **high risk to become irrelevant** like is happening to companies behind in starting an eCommerce business.

Rather than focusing on that risk, it is important to recognise the **opportunities offered by internet** and being able to adapt to its dynamics. At this point it comes very useful **SEM strategies**, especially the SEO set up, that consists in making a website more compliant with search engines rules in order to increase its ranking.

Let us to be clear about a point: **even the most graphically beautiful website can be totally inadequate in terms of SEO**, which equates to say irrelevant (badly ranked) or inexistent (not

indexed) for Google and its brothers. It does not matter how good are products and services provided and how functional is the website or shop online if it is inaccessible.



The search marketing, by means of [SEO techniques](#), aims at **making the website more visible than the competition**, with all pages indexed and well ranked on search engines for the business' most relevant keywords.

As SEO optimisations are hardly evident to non-specialists, companies lacking of expertise on this field cannot evaluate the work carried out by **seo agencies** and **seo experts**.

At this respect web analytics softwares, like Google Analytics, allow to track visits and monitor websites collecting data useful to **measure SEO campaigns results**.

Website ranking for relevant keywords and **number of visitors** are the main indicators, monitoring data analysis comparing different lapses of time a way to appreciate the seo job.

SEA - Search Engine Advertising and Google Adwords Campaigns

[Advertisements on search engines](#) are a powerful instrument within the range of SEM techniques. This type of promotional strategy consists in publishing ads (usually *pay per click*) triggered by users when they digit keywords or keyfrases on search engines. Publication depends on the set of keywords chosen and costs are applied only after users' clicks.

The strong points of search engine advertising are:

- **control over advertising costs**. You decide the budget and the maximum price threshold for each user's click (cost per click - CPC);
- **control over target**. Publishing advertisements only in response to specific users' searches you are certain to provide highly targeted advertising;
- **pay per click model**. It guarantees a free publication of ads when they do not get clicked: a sort of branding at zero cost;
- **great flexibility**. You can create as many ads as products or services you need to

market. Keywords are selected at the planning stage (except for later additions or variations) and after clicking users are sent to landing pages that can be specifically prepared.

In Europe speaking of SEM marketing or digital advertising across search engines means first of all speaking of **Google Adwords**.



Online ads can be published also on other search engines like Bing or Yahoo, but Adwords system is the only one that allow to publish on Google, that is to say where most of the online searches occur.

Advertising on search engines is more pressing for **b2c companies** that need to balance out low ranking websites (for lack of SEO). **Google Adwords campaigns** are in these cases a tremendous SEM strategy.

Link building and link baiting campaigns: other SEM strategies

Websites are not isolated entities but are part of a gigantic ecosystem which is internet and its subnetworks. Each website can be connected to others through **links: bridges that tied web pages**. When links tie webpages belonging to different websites emerges a relationship according to which the website receiving the link becomes a possible **destination for visitors** coming from the website is linked to.

It means that the more links a website receives the more traffic it will gain as a consequence. Clearly the amount of visits depends also on the type of websites are sending them: links proceeding from popular blogs and web portals represent **much coveted traffic sources**.

A **planned link building strategy** is a form of search engine marketing (SEM) that aims to obtain the highest number of backlinks from other websites especially the ones with a high authority.

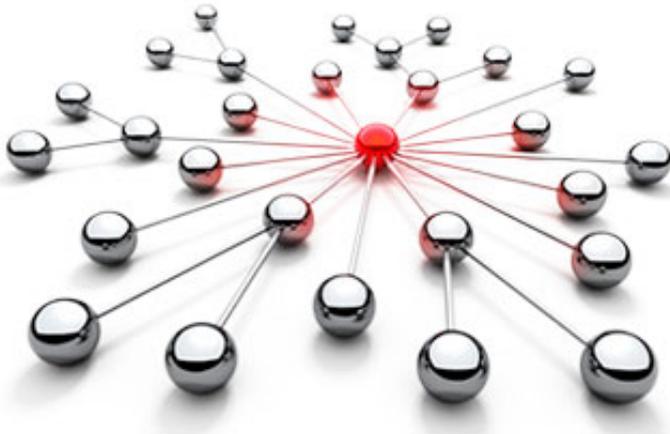
This projected link building can assume two different perspectives:

- **link building.** Free links directory submission, links exchange, article marketing, social media back link insertion, etc.;
- **link baiting.** High quality content creation and curation in order to get natural back links. In this scenario links from third websites are gained thanks to the creation of interesting and valuable contents (texts, videos, images..) that people on the web desire to share and link to.

The question to answer at this point is: given that **both techniques do not involve any search by keyword why are considered SEM strategies?** While through SEO and SEA online marketing is built upon users' searches by keywords, in the back link scenario are not we in front of a bridge that bypasses google and all other search engines?

The answer is that the number of backlinks and the referring domains' authority are among the **factors taken into account by search engines to evaluate and rank websites.** Here is why link building and link baiting can be deemed a type of SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and, more precisely, a SEO off-site activity.

Since the links quality affects websites ranking in searches is important to work on link building knowing what aspects determine links value:



- referring domain's authority/reputation;
- backlink webpage ranking;
- relevance of the backlink's source page to the backlink's destination page.

Search engines are the unquestionable authors of these evaluations, therefore companies with this sort of online marketing needs have to actually look for **SEM services.**

Content Marketing as a SEM strategy

Content marketing is a technique based on the **creation of informative and entertainment contents** in order to boost visits to a website and enhance business communication. Contents can be of different formats: texts, images, video, slides, pdf, etc.

Once they are published can be broadcasted through social media and anywhere could be shared and relaunched by other users spawning a **viral effect**.

When the contents produced are accessible to search engines they fall into the domain of SEM and, of course, SEO optimisation. At this level they can be worked to gain more visibility and empower their **digital marketing capacity**.

Content marketing leveraging search engines aims at indexing all contents created and ranking them well for relevant keywords. In this perspective **SEM, SEO and Content Marketing** combine to bring about an increase in business visibility, web traffic, brand awareness and conversions.

The best results are got when the contents created get regularly optimised by SEM/SEO experts.

A final clarification is necessary to pointing out that where quality contents boost the creation of natural backlinks on third sites *content marketing* and *link baiting* coincide.

Consulting on SEM campaigns

Also Social Media Marketing could be contemplated as a SEM strategy since **social channels become more and more important** as factor calculated by search engines to judge the reputation/popularity of brands and businesses.

The more a social network is followed and fosters users' engagement the more meaningful is considered its online presence by Google and its competitors. As a consequence, **websites linked to popular and dynamic social media** get a better appreciation and ranking on search engines.

The same social media are optimisable channels by means of a technique named **SMO (Social Media Optimisation)** that transfer SEO strategies to social channels to improve their ranking and impact on the associated website.

It should be clear at this point that planning and developing an online marketing strategy including search marketing campaigns is a complex task whose success depends also on **how these services gets integrated into the company processes management** as a whole.

Search Engine Marketing, especially in its SEO, SEA and Content Marketing versions, has an extraordinary prospective, above all when projected according to the customer company's frame of values. The challenge consists in finding **the right marketing mix** working on details and nuances.



In particular, an [international SEM specialist](#) has to be able to interpret clients requirements and translate their needs according to local markets characteristics.

Multilingual paid search campaigns, international SEO and localisation services involve **language skills** and a **flexible approach** to different countries and market contexts.

[Tweet "An abundant information exchange between customer company and SEM specialist is paramount"]