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By CAITLIN NISH

NEW YORK--When looking to hire a financial adviser, the first stop for most prospects is a [Google](#) [GOOG +6.25%](#) search. But to be found, advisers need to do more than simply have a website.

Below, experts share tips for optimizing your online presence to make your practice more visible to prospects.

Figure out what prospects are searching

Very few advisers are focused on search-engine optimization, notes Brien Shanahan, founder of consulting company SEO4Advisors. Optimizing your website for key terms--or what prospects are typing into search engines like Google--will give you a major advantage over your competitors, he says.

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But don't just guess at what those keywords should be. Do research. Mr. Shanahan suggests using the keywords tool in Google AdWords, which can help you determine the terms searched most frequently.

Many advisers find that the terms they expected prospects to search actually have limited traffic, Mr. Shanahan says. For instance, the largest city near you might be searched more often than the state.

Avoid jargon, poetry

There is a tendency to use generic titles for website pages, such as "homepage" or "about us," says Mike Grehan, publisher of searchenginewatch.com. Rather, these titles, which appear at the top of the Internet browser, should explain what you do and where you are located. For example, "independent financial advice for Boston metro area."

That will make it easier for a search-engine crawler to classify the page, adds Mr. Grehan, who also serves as president of the Search Engine Marketing Professional Organization.

Just make sure to avoid jargon and poetic phrases in both your titles and content. Including a phrase like "helping you right your financial ship" may lead a crawler to think the page is about a boat.

"If you try to use analogies, you're sending mixed messages to the search robots," says Mr. Shanahan. Instead, be direct and include your keywords in the title and throughout the content. But don't mix too many keywords and topics or they can water down the relevancy of the page to each of those particular terms. Mr. Shanahan suggests limiting keywords to five per page and creating individual pages to explain each service you offer.

Acquire reputable inbound links

Google's ranking algorithm, PageRank, is heavily weighted toward the links pointing to your site, Mr. Grehan notes. However, it is not necessarily the number of links that count, but the quality.

For instance, a listing with the Better Business Bureau or an industry organization like the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors are links that will give an adviser's website "authority" and help its rankings, Mr. Shanahan says.

Mr. Grehan suggests Googling the word "link:" and a high-ranking competitor's website. That will generate a list of links back to that site. There could be an industry association or local directory of advisers you didn't know about, he says. Consider contacting them to ask for a link to your own site as well.

Meanwhile, writing for an online publication or being quoted in a news article can have multiple benefits, says Stephanie Sammons, founder of financial digital-marketing strategy company Wired Advisor. If you receive a link back to your website, it increases the search equity. And an article that refers to you can potentially rank well for your name in search engines, she adds.

Get on social media

Build profiles on all the major social-media platforms your firm allows, including Twitter, LinkedIn, [Facebook](#), [FB +1.57%](#) Google+, YouTube and SlideShare, Ms. Sammons says. Search engines pay attention to who you are connected to and how active you are on those networks.

Having such profiles can also help advisers to push down results they might not want ranked highly, like a customer complaint. "Make people dig to find it by creating more profiles on good sites," Mr. Shanahan suggests.

And while it takes a great deal of effort, Ms. Sammons advocates starting a blog since search engines are constantly looking for fresh, timely content.

"The blog will give you more opportunity to be found because you are adding content consistently," she says. Instead of ranking for one static topic, like retirement planning, you can potentially rank for each individual topic on which you post.

Ms. Sammons adds that setting up Google authorship, via Google+, to tie your content to your name is increasingly important for being found as it allows you to build your 'AuthorRank' with Google.