Site Review for www.sellthewidget.com

Prepared By Danny Dover

SellTheWidget.com is a major e-commerce website in a competitive industry. It has a great deal of ranking potential and is currently being held back by a poorly search engine optimized content management system. This report identifies the current search engine related problems affecting SellTheWidget.com and provides comprehensive solutions.

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Top Five Most Pressing and Valuable Changes

Below are the most important upgrades necessary to optimize www.sellthewidget.com for search engines. Implementing these changes will lead to better search rankings for a multitude of important keywords.

http://sellthewidget.com/home.html should 301 redirect to www.sellthewidget.com/

Currently, http://www.sellthewidget.com 301 redirects to http://sellthewidget.com/home.html. This is an unintentional waste of Link Juice (ranking power) because each link that is redirected through a 301 is slightly diminished in value. Since more links are pointing at www.sellthewidget.com/ (1,805,384) than http://sellthewidget.com/home.html (30,559) it is recommended that you implement a 301 redirect to recapture a significant amount of link value.

Add list of widgets to category and subcategory pages

SellTheWidget.com does an excellent job of establishing a clear site-wide hierarchy to organize its massive amount of products. Each product category is linked to from the homepage (the page with the most incoming links) and thus capitalizes on a great deal of Link Juice (ranking power) by transferring it to each category page. Each of these categories then links to lower level subcategories. Adding links to top selling products on each of these category and subcategory pages has the potential to create the ideal internal linking structure.

Adding links to each applicable category and subcategory page will ensure that all of the links to the homepage will help boost the rankings of each individual product page. More information can be found in the section Information Architecture & Internal Link Structure - Information Architecture.

Exact match search queries on SellTheWidget's internal search should automatically redirect

Currently when a user searches for a product on SellTheWidget.com they are taken to a results page even if their query is an exact match for a product. For example, a user searching "Red Widget" is taken to http://www.sellthewidget.com/search?query=red%20widget. Placeholder Consulting recommends that in the event of an exact match, the user should be redirected to the product page. This will stop these internal search result pages from acquiring and wasting links as well as remove unnecessary pages from the major search engines' indices. As a result, more links and more ranking power will be aimed at applicable pages rather than the less user-friendly SellTheWidget search results pages.

Placeholder Consulting recommends that SellTheWidget add a meta robots tag to search result pages that don't return any results. The robots meta tag should only be added to SellTheWidget search result pages that are blank and NOT to search result pages that return results. The correct meta robots tag appears below:

<meta name="robots" content="follow, noindex" />

Make blank 404 error pages more useful to users

SellTheWidget.com's current 404 error page is a hindrance to users. The current version returns an incorrect HTTP response code (200 rather than 404) and does not help the user find the page they are looking to access. Users are simply left with a blank white page with the text '404'. Ex. http://www.sellthewidget.com/this-page-does-not-exist.html

At a minimum, this page should offer a message explaining the file is not found and suggestions on where to find the file. It should also include the website's global navigation menu and a search field.

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Search Engine & Third-Party Statistics (Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses)

The following metrics are reported by third-party sources (including the search engines themselves). They provide valuable insight into how various parties see SellTheWidget.com at a high level. They are time dependent and should only be used as estimations, not as exact measurements.

Search Engine Inclusion Data

www.sellthewidget.com	Result	Date	Source
# of Pages in Google	10,620,000	February 27th, 2015	site:www.sellthewidget.com
# of Pages in Bing	1,120,000	February 27th, 2015	site:www.sellthewidget.com

The number of pages on www.sellthewidget.com in the two major search engine indices

What does this data mean?

These metrics indicate that SellTheWidget is being properly indexed in Google but not in Bing. This is important information to know because the indexation of SellTheWidget in the major search engines strongly correlates to the amount of traffic the search engines send to SellTheWidget. Solutions for improving these index statistics are provided throughout this report.

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Link Popularity Data

www.SellTheWidget.com	Result	Date	Source
# of Links in Google Webmaster Tools	2,042,637	February 27th, 2015	https://www.google.com/webmas-ters/tools/externallinks?siteUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sellthewidget.com%2F&hl=en
# of Links according to Linkscape	2,001,159	February 27th, 2015	http://www.Placeholder Con-sult-ing.org/linkscape/intel/basic/?uri=www.sellthewidget.com
# of Links according to Google Blog Search	17,382	February 27th, 2015	http://blogsearch.google.com/blogsearch?hl=en&ie=UTF-8&q=www.sellthewidget.com&btnG=Search+Blogs
# of Links according to Nielsen Blogpulse	1,528	February 27th, 2015	http://www.blogpulse.com/search?query=www.sellthewidget.com&image22.x=0&image22.y=0

The number of links to www.sellthewidget.com as determined by various sources

What does this data mean?

To put these numbers in context, Google reports that www.sellthewidget.com has 1.7 million links and that www.widgetseller.com has 900,000 links. (Keep in mind that the numbers themselves are not necessarily accurate, but the relationships they reveal are extremely important.) This shows that SellTheWidget has the potential to outrank very competitive websites. In this case, the distinguishing factor between potential rankings and real rankings is very likely the anchor text and source of links pointing at SellTheWidget.

SellTheWidget's current anchor text profile reveals that it is targeting a large amount of very specific search phrases (long tail). For example, "Product XYZ at SellTheWidget". This is a good strategy that leverages SellTheWidget's links very well. However, given the competitiveness revealed by the above metrics, SellTheWidget could supplement its current anchor text strategy by targeting competitive search phrases like "Widget". This would work nicely with SellTheWidget's current PPC campaigns.

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Linkscape Metrics

www.SellTheWidget.com	Result	Date	Source
Domain level mozRank	8.17	February 27th, 2015	http://www.seomoz.org/linkscape/intel/basic/?uri=www.sellthewidget.com
mozTrust	8.92	February 27th, 2015	http://www.seomoz.org/linkscape/intel/basic/?uri=www.sellthewidget.com

Aggregate link information as determined by SEOmoz's Linkscape

What does this data mean?

Each of these results are on a log scale with a max of 10 and average 4.50 across the Internet. This confirms the competitive nature of SellTheWidget discussed above. SellTheWidget has a lot of potential to rank highly for very competitive search keywords.

It is also important to note that SellTheWidget.com's mozTrust is very high. mozTrust represents the amount of 'trusted' websites linking to a given target. Trusted websites are determined by the search engines independently but generally include respected .edu websites (http://www.harvard.edu/), important .gov websites (www.whitehouse.gov), and important news websites (www.cnn.com). Trust is a link metric that is completely separate from pure link counts but has been proven to improve rankings.

SellTheWidget's higher than expected mozTrust is likely coming from links from SellTheWidget's enterprise partners. This adds significantly to SellTheWidget's competitive edge.

Brand & Domain Mentions in Search Engines

SellTheWidget	Result	Date	Source
# of Brand Mentions in Google Search	6,700,000	February 27th, 2015	http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&safe=off&q=%22SellTheWidget%22+-site%3ASellTheWidget.com &btnG=Search
# of Brand Name Mentions in Google Blog Search	12,992	February 27th, 2015	http://blogsearch.google.com/blogsearch?hl=en&ie=UTF-8&q=link:www.sellthewidget.com &scoring=d
# of Brand Name Mentions in Google News Search	65,400	February 27th, 2015	http://news.google.com/archivesearch?q=%22SellTheWidget &btnG=Search+Archives&hl=en&ie=UTF-8

The number of times SellTheWidget is mentioned in the media according to various sources

According to Google Insights, brand name mentions of SellTheWidget have stayed roughly at the same level since 2004.

What does this data mean?

Given the popularity of widget news, these metrics are lower than they ought to be. SellTheWidget has clearly been successful in establishing itself as a widget platform (indicated by the high number of 'Brand Mentions in Google Search') but has not yet succeeded in effectively influencing the blogosphere and major news outlets.

As indicated by the Google Insights graph, SellTheWidget sees a spike of brand mentions during the last two months of every year (except 2004). These spikes, which are likely tied to the holiday season, highlight the effect of successful and newsworthy content. Analyzing what content was successful during these time periods could prove very helpful in crafting future content.

For example, analyzing HTTP referrers during these time periods in Internal Analytics highlights the success SellTheWidget saw from making itself the best place to buy Widgets related to the series finale of the popular TV show 'The Widgets'. Linkworthy content such as this is essential to driving links and traffic.

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Third-Party Traffic Metrics (Monthly)

www.SellTheWidget.com	Result	Date	Source
Traffic according to Google Trends for Websites	1,070,000	February 27th, 2015	http://trends.google.com/web-sites?q=SellTheWid-get.com&geo=all&date=all&sort=0
Traffic according to Compete.com	30,000,000	February 27th, 2015	http://siteanalytics.compete.com/SellTheWidget.com/?metric=uv
Traffic according to Quantcast.com	20,800,000	February 27th, 2015	http://www.quantcast.com/SellTheWidget.com
Traffic according to Omniture (Analytics)	70,500,000	February 27th, 2015	Internal Analytics

Monthly traffic according to various sources

What does this data mean?

This information is important from a competitive analysis point of view. Competitors will likely rely on these erroneous metrics while analyzing SellTheWidget. It is to SellTheWidget's advantage to know the numbers are inaccurate and use their relative counts to serve as a baseline for conducting competitive analysis on SellTheWidget's competition. The large inaccuracies in these third-party traffic meters should serve as warning of trusting website traffic estimations in the news and elsewhere.

Technical On-Page/On-Site Issues

The following data is taken directly from the search engines and reveals conditions that are negatively affecting search rankings for SellTheWidget.com. Generally, each of the problems below has easy solutions that can be quickly implemented.

Registration with Search Engines

The search engines offer a variety of tools to help webmasters explain to the engines how they would like their pages indexed by their crawlers. The tools also offer valuable feedback on potential problems the engines see on websites that couldn't otherwise be detected.

Google Webmaster Tools

Webmaster tools allow site owners to specify certain Google settings for websites. The most important settings are outlined below:

Geographic Target - Not Set

Geographic Target controls how Google targets users at SellTheWidget.com. For example, if SellTheWidget had a Japanese version of the site, this feature would be used to tell Google that the Japanese version of the site should have precedence in Japan. Since SellTheWidget does not have geo specific versions of its website, Placeholder Consulting recommends not setting this feature.

Preferred Domain - http://www.sellthewidget.com

SellTheWidget's current preferred domain contains "www.". This is as opposed to http://SellTheWidget.com. Placeholder Consulting recommends the version currently selected because it is what users most often understand and expect.

Image Search - Enabled

SellTheWidget currently allows its images to be crawled and included in Google's index. Placeholder Consulting recommends that this setting is kept as is. Including SellTheWidget's images in Google's index drives additional (although low converting) traffic to SellTheWidget and helps increase brand awareness.

Crawl Rate - Specialized by Google

Google's crawl rate of SellTheWidget.com has been manually set by the search engine. This generally only happens to large and complex websites. Server logs show that Google's bots crawl SellTheWidget extremely frequently compared to other test sites. This is good for SellTheWidget and shows that it included favorably in Google's index.

Registration with Bing Webmaster Tools

Webmaster tools allows site owners to specify certain Bing Search settings for websites. The most important settings are outlined below:

Overall

Bing does not report any major problems with SellTheWidget.com that could lead to it getting removed from its index. However, the search engines do indicate that SellTheWidget.com does suffer a lot from the URL tracking parameters.

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<u>Site Status</u>

These settings indicates the general health of the site in Bing's search index.

Domain score - 5/5

Indexed Pages - 20,740,000

Blocked? - No

These data points indicate that SellTheWidget.com is strong and well in Bing's index. The domain score and blocked status are typical of non-spammy websites. The number of indexed pages is higher than expected and is most likely a result of the tracking parameters appended to SellTheWidget.com URLs.

<u>Crawl Issues</u>

File Not Found (404)

SellTheWidget.com has 1,500 404ing pages according to Bing. It is important to note that this is typical of a site with as many pages indexed as SellTheWidget.com. That said, if these can be fixed it would beneficial. Most of these occur on the subdirectories listed below:

- www.sellthewidget.com/temp/ (Ex. http:// www.sellthewidget.com/temp/juno.html)
- www.sellthewidget.com/news/ (Ex. http:// www.sellthewidget.com/news/content.php?id=60423)
- www.sellthewidget.com/product-description/ (Ex. http:// www.sellthewidget.com/product-description/data.html)
- www.sellthewidget.com/fr/ (Ex. http:// www.sellthewidget.com/fr/)
- www.sellthewidget.com/favorite/ (Ex. http:// www.sellthewidget.com/favorite/card.html)

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Review of Robots.txt

As of February 27th, 2015, www.sellthewidget.com/robots.txt contains the following:

```
User-agent: *
Disallow: /photos/
Disallow: /photos.html
Disallow: /newsletter/
Disallow: /privacy_policy*
Disallow: /*widget.html
```

www.sellthewidget.com/robots.txt

SellTheWidget's robots.txt file is currently blocking 874,182 variants of the regular expressions above. This is needlessly wasting a lot of links that otherwise could be helping pages rank.

/photos/

This is a potentially good idea because images found via search engines rarely lead to conversions. Normally it would be better to simply implement meta robots but since this folder only contains image files, this is best way to do this. In addition to blocking this folder it is recommended that images search be opted out of in Google Webmaster tools.

/photos.html

These pages do not need to be indexed and thus should be blocked from search engines. A better way of doing this would be to use the meta robots tactic (*<meta name="robots" content="noindex, follow" />*) on each of the applicable pages.

/newsletter/

This directory contains a lot of pages that contain useful and link worthy content. It is recommended that the decision to block this content be reevaluated. Unless there is a strong business reason to hide this content from search engines, these pages should be made indexable and act as landing pages for potential widget buyers.

*/privacy_policy**

These pages do not need to be indexed and thus should be blocked from search engines. A better way of doing this would be to use the meta robots tactic (*<meta name="robots" content="noindex, follow" />*) on each of the applicable pages.

*/*widget.html*

This is a dangerous tactic as it means any file that ends with this pattern will be blocked. This includes widget pages that happen to end with "widget.html". A manual review showed hundreds of product pages that fit this pattern. (Ex. /red-widget.html, /blue-widget.html). It is recommended that this regular expression be edited to cover only the content that shouldn't be indexed.

Server Response Codes

SellTheWidget.com has several common but harmful server response errors.

404 File Not Found

SellTheWidget.com's current 404 error page is a hindrance to users. The current version returns an incorrect HTTP response code (200 rather than 404) and does nothing to help the user find the page they are looking to access. This is a problem because the search engines are indexing these 404 pages and the users who encounter them see a blank white page with the text '404'. Ex. http://www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/popular/new-releases.html.

At a minimum, this page should return a 404 error code and offer a message explaining that the file is not found and show suggestions of where they might find the file. The 404 page should also include the website's global navigation menu and a search field.

301 Moved Permanently

SellTheWidget.com has many incorrectly configured 301 redirects. According to Google Webmaster Tools, 106,413 of the 301 redirects on SellTheWidget.com redirect to non-existent (404) pages. Manual tests showed that these redirects worked for human users but not for Googlebot. Some examples of these URLs are included below:

- http://www.sellthewidget.com/goto?widget.10040677 (**This pattern is observed over 100,000 times**)
- http://www.sellthewidget.com/goto?product-description.10040677
- http://www.sellthewidget.com/goto?widget.description.10040677

These redirects should be fixed immediately in order to ensure that the search engines are able to crawl SellTheWidget.com correctly.

Site Canonicalization

www.sellthewidget.com's homepage has some common canonicalization issues. The two erroneous subdomains below should be 301 redirected.

- 'ww.sellthewidget.com' has 1,005 links pointed at it and should 301 redirect to www.sellthewidget.com/
- 'wwww.sellthewidget.com' has 2,987 links pointed at it and should be 301 redirected to www.sellthewidget.com/

Additionally, some secure pages are erroneously indexed in search engines. One example is:

1. https://www.sellthewidget.com/user/private/100076

As a security measure, all pages using the http protocol in combination with a secure socket layer (https) should contain the following meta tag in their HTML <head> section.

<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, FOLLOW">

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Use of Sitemap Files

Currently, SellTheWidget.com does not host XML sitemaps. Instead it uses a non-standard HTML version located at www.sellthewidget.com/html-sitemap/. The current sitemap should also be supplemented with an XML version and made available at www.sellthewidget.com/sitemap.xml. This is the default location search engines look for sitemaps.

Sitemaps are used by the search engines to learn both the location and relative importance of webpages on a domain. Adding an XML sitemap to SellTheWidget.com will likely create a short term boost in the number of pages indexed by the engines.

The search engines provide three ways to identify the location of sitemaps.

1. Google and Bing will automatically search for sitemaps at www.sellthewidget.com/sitemap.xml. If the engines find a file there, they will use it as an aid in indexing www.sellthewidget.com.

2. Sitemaps can be specified in robots.txt. When search engine crawlers visit SellTheWidget.com the first file they parse is almost always www.sellthewidget.com/robots.txt. Robots.txt allows for a sitemap parameter for adding the location of sitemaps.

    2.1. For example, adding 'sitemap: www.sellthewidget.com/sitemap.xml' will direct search engines to download the file located at that URL and treat it as a sitemap.

3. Lastly, sitemaps can be submitted directly to the search engines through their designed webmaster resources pages. Google's is located at http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/.

All three of the methods work equally well. Additional information about sitemap protocol can be found at http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/docs/en/protocol.html

Duplicate Content Issues

SellTheWidget.com is self-imposing a lot of search engine related harm by serving the same content on both http://www.sellthewidget.com with plain URLs and http://www.sellthewidget.com with tracking parameters URLs enabled. This leads to a two-tiered problem. First, it dilutes Link Juice site-wide. Second, it increases the risk of search engines penalizing webpages on SellTheWidget.com.

Diluting Link Juice - From the perspective of the search engines, every time someone links to a given page on the Internet they are giving that page a small amount of ranking power (or Link Juice). Thus, from the perspective of a webmaster, the most important page for rankings should have the most links. SellTheWidget.com's tracking parameters are interrupting this system. When a user links to a page on SellTheWidget.com, they often include the tracking parameters in the link. This means that if two users each link to the same page on the website, the search engines will interpret their links as pointing at two separate URLs (due to the difference in tracking parameters) and the potential ranking bonus will be split two ways.

Search Engine Filters - Search engines use many metrics to identify spam. One of the most widely utilized spam indicators is duplicate content. When the engines encounter duplicate content they must make a guess as to which website is the original content creator. This guess leaves a chance for error. After the engines choose which copy is the primary source, they filter the remaining sources by devaluing their identical content.

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Crawling Problems

SellTheWidget.com has potential features that could prevent the search engine crawlers from properly indexing the website. The potentially problematic features are listed below with their best solutions.

Plug-Ins

SellTheWidget uses Adobe's Flash plug-in to stream audio and video. Since keeping this valuable product content behind the flash player is a competitive advantage for SellTheWidget, it is appropriate to not allow the search engines to index this media content. When the engines try to access the given content they are returned the text "Please upgrade your Flash Player by visiting http://www.sellthewidget.com/product-details/". This is the recommend behavior for both users and search engines.

Forms

Search engines are not able to use the main search form on the global navigation menu of SellTheWidget's website. Instead they navigate SellTheWidget.com by following internal links. SellTheWidget's internal search result pages can only be indexed if they are linked to either by SellTheWidget itself or by third-parties. These pages have been linked to nearly 10,000 times.
http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&safe=off&q=site%3Asellthewidget.com+%22Search+Results%22. Please see The Top Five Most Pressing and Valuable Changes - Stop Search Engines from indexing empty SellTheWidget search result pages for more information.

Images

SellTheWidget.com does an excellent job of including alternative text for every image. This is helpful to both blind users and search engines that can't interpret images in the same way that humans do. No additional changes are necessary.

Javascript

Search engines are not as capable at parsing Javascript as they are at parsing HTML. Many times this can cause indexing problems for websites that use Javascript for tracking and navigational links. However, the pages that SellTheWidget is using Javascript links for don't need to be indexed because they contain protected product files. No additional changes are necessary.

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Individual Section Reviews

The following are SEO audits for each of SellTheWidget.com's most important subsections. The recommendations below focus on the page elements that are most important to search engines. (See http://www.seomoz.org/article/search-ranking-factors for more information).

Overall, SellTheWidget does a good job of optimizing its basic SEO related metrics. The title tags are generally excellent and the meta descriptions are well optimized. SellTheWidget does make the common mistake of including the unnecessary meta keywords tag but need not worry about this hurting rankings. Further details are explained below.

Homepage
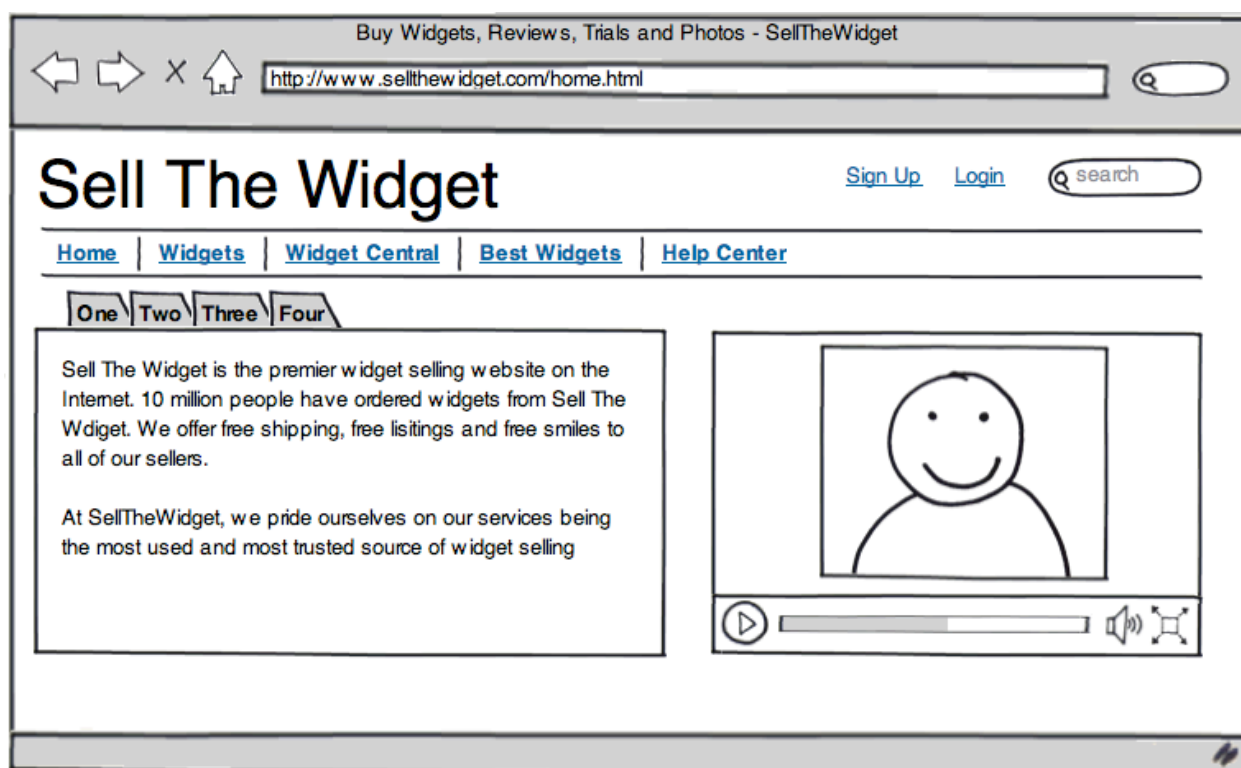
www.sellthewidget.com/home.html

Meta Data

Title Tag
<title>Buy Widgets, Reviews, Trials and Photos - SellTheWidget</title>

SellTheWidget.com's current title tag is well optimized for both humans and search engines. No improvements are necessary at this time.

Meta Description
<meta name="description" content="Buy widgets are the guaranteed lowest prices online - millions of widgets for sale, each including product reviews, samples, free trials, photos, latest trends and **new styles.**"/>

SellTheWidget's homepage meat description is very close to optimal. It is click worthy and contains many important keywords. Its only shortcoming is that the word "new styles" is cut off on some search queries due to character limits. Placeholder Consulting recommends that the meta description is shorted to less than 155 characters.

Meta Keywords
<meta name="keywords" content="widgets, buy widgets, widget videos, widget, widget reviews, widget photos" />

Currently the only search engine that uses the meta keywords tag as a ranking metric is Yahoo. It only uses it in certain cases with minor significance. Its main use today is by competitors to do keyword research. It is Placeholder Consulting's recommendation that the meta keywords be deleted from SellTheWidget.com to negate the risk of unintentionally aiding competitors.

URL
www.sellthewidget.com/home.html

It is Placeholder Consulting's strong recommendation that www.sellthewidget.com/home.html should be 301 redirected to www.sellthewidget.com/ rather than the other way around. This is because each link that is redirected through the current 301 is slightly diminished in value. Since more links are pointing at SellTheWidget.com (105,384) than SellTheWidget.com/home.html (3,559) it is worthwhile to reverse the 301 redirect in order to save a significant amount of link value.

Keyword Usage and Targeting
SellTheWidget is currently doing a good job targeting its own name on its homepage. Placeholder Consulting recommends that SellTheWidget focus more on targeting more search related terms. These include widget, buy widgets, widget videos, and widget photos. As a rule of thumb, every well optimized webpage should have its most important keyword targeted once in the URL, twice in the title tag, and three times in the content. (One keyword in the content should also be bolded). For a page that targets multiple keywords, the keywords should be prioritized and/or targeted on other important pages.

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Widgets

www.sellthewidget.com/widgets
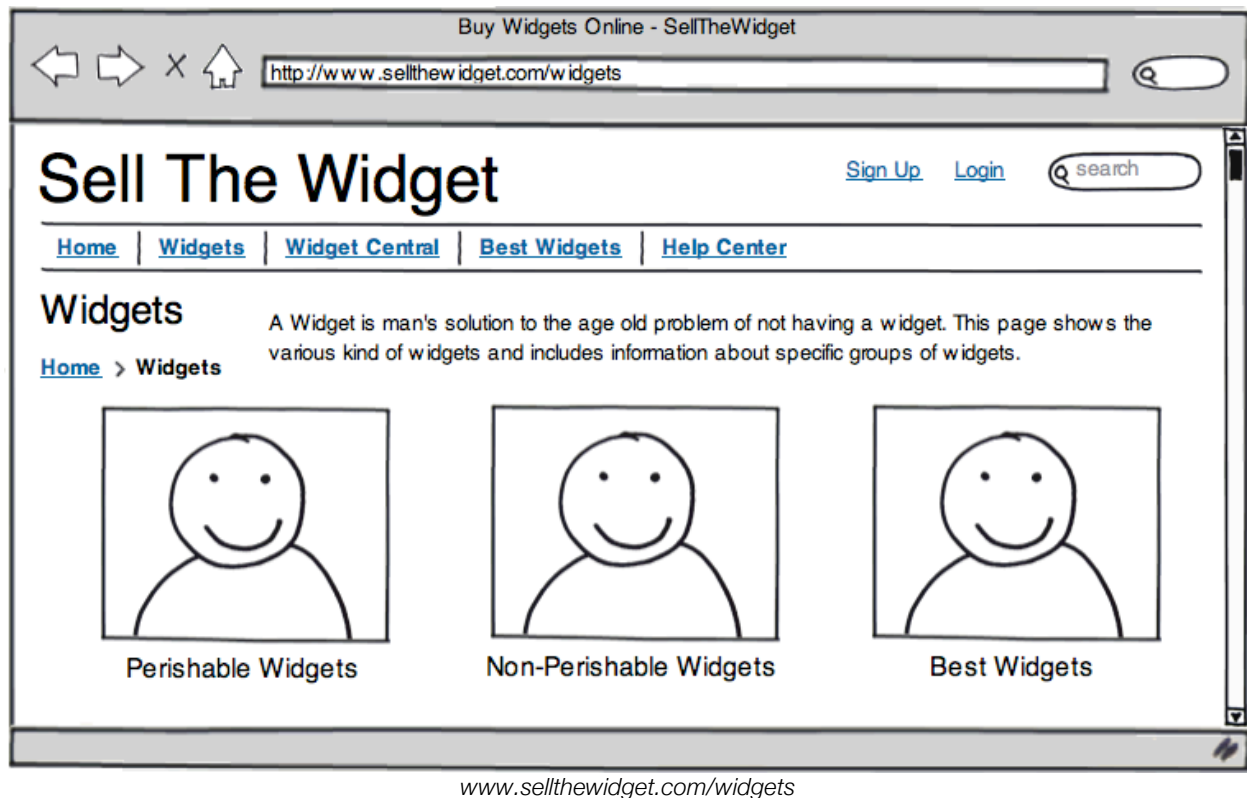
Meta Data

Title Tag

<title>Buy Widgets Online - SellTheWidget</title>

SellTheWidget.com's current primary widget page title tag is well optimized for both humans and search engines. No improvements are necessary at this time.

Meta Description

<meta name="description" content="Watch millions of name brand widgets, widget accessories and more on SellTheWidget Online"/>

Placeholder Consulting recommends that "Watch thousands of name brand widgets…" is changed to "View thousands of name brand widgets". This is based on keyword research that showed that showed that "watch" was search 10X the amount that "view" was searched.

Meta Keywords

<meta name="keywords" content=" widgets, buy widgets, widget videos, widget, widget reviews, widget photos " />

Placeholder Consulting recommends that these be removed. Please see Individual Section Reviews - Homepage - Meta Keywords for more information.

URL

http://www.sellthewidget.com/widgets

No further action is required for this URL.

Keyword Usage and Targeting

This page is doing a decent job of targeting the keyword phrase "widgets". Placeholder Consulting recommends that the phrase is added to first hundred words of content in a P tag, H3, H4, bold, and in image alt tags. This will make the page more targeted toward the phrase and will increase its rank for applicable queries in the major search engines.

Category Pages
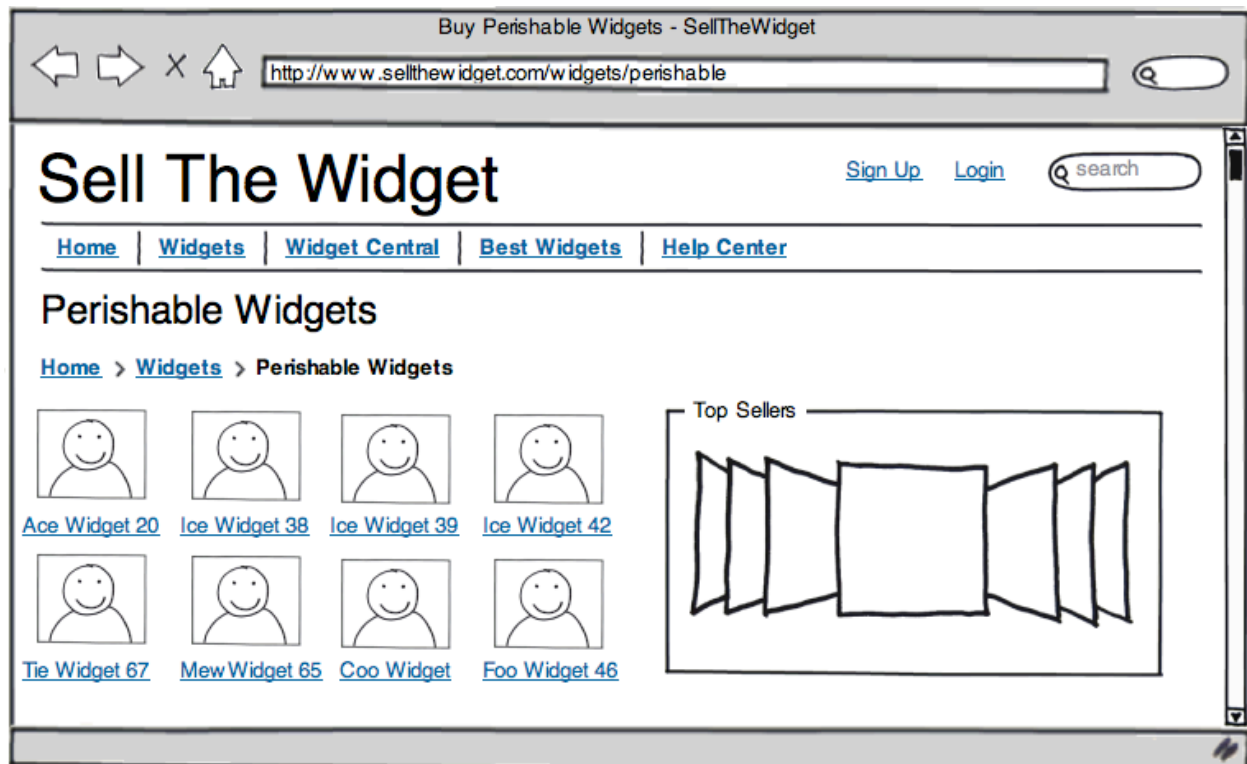
www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable

Meta Data

Title Tag

<title>Buy Perishable Widgets - SellTheWidget</title>

SellTheWidget.com's current category page title tag is well optimized for both humans and search engines. No improvements are necessary at this time.

Meta Description

<meta name="description" content="Perishable Widgets @ SellTheWidget. Free reviews, images and samples. "/>

Placeholder Consulting recommends that this meta description should be changed to "The best source for perishable widgets. SellTheWidget.com offers free shipping on all widgets" to gain additional traffic.

Meta Keywords

<meta name="keywords" content="perishable widgets, free shipping, widgets" />

Placeholder Consulting recommends that these be removed. Please see Individual Section Reviews - Homepage - Meta Keywords for more information.

URL

http://www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable

This URL is optimal for its current use. No improvements are necessary at this time.

Keyword Usage and Targeting

This page's keyword usage and targeting is optimal. No improvements are necessary at this time.
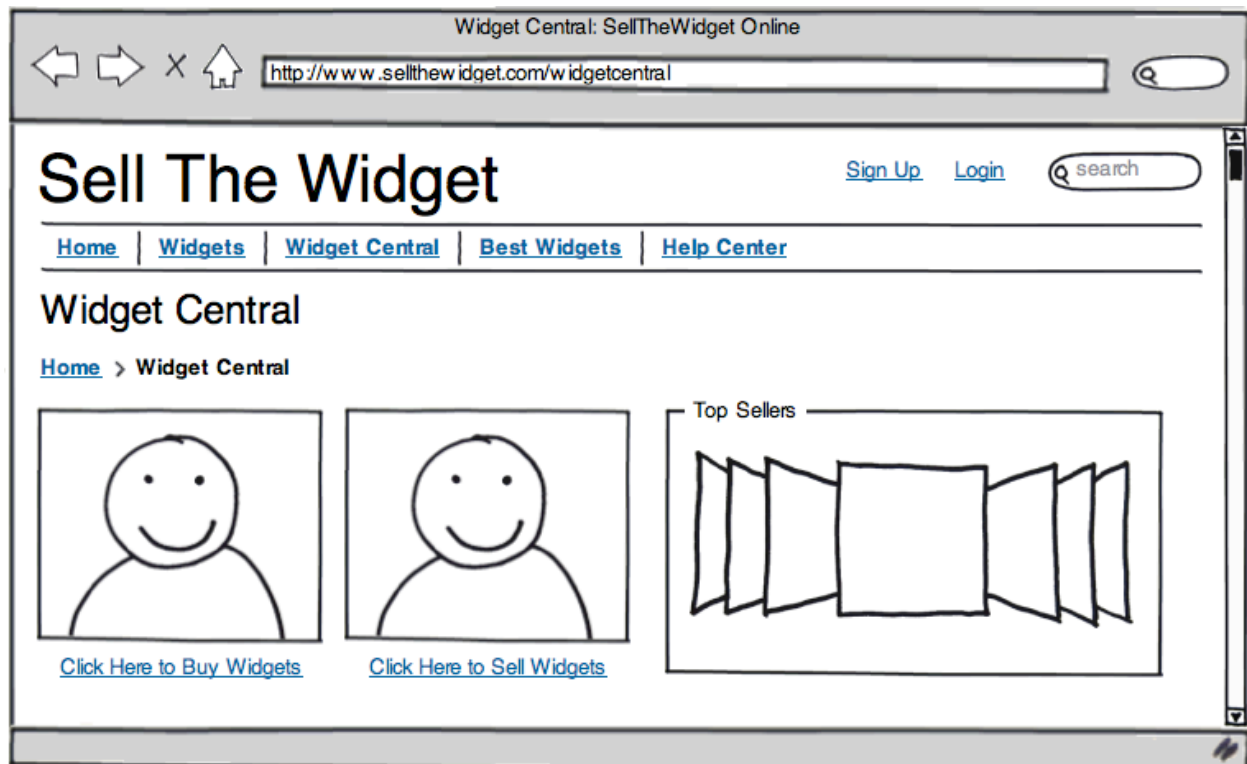
Widget Central

www.sellthewidget.com/widgetcentral

Meta Data

Title Tag

<title>Widget Central: SellTheWidget Online</title>

SellTheWidget.com's current widget central title tag could be better. Placeholder consulting recommends a more descriptive title tag like:

<title>Widget Central – Buy Widgets, Sell Widgets: SellTheWidget Online</title>

Meta Description

<meta name="description" content="Browse for free thousands of widget arrangements created by SellTheWidget users, our widget editors, and your favorite widget artists. Plus, widget reviews, new widget videos, artist photos and blogs."/>

This meta description is longer than the 155 character limit of most Google searches and is truncated. Placeholder Consulting recommends that the meta descriptions be changed to:

 "Browse thousands of widgets created by SellTheWidget users, editors, famous widget artists."

This more enticing and concise meta description will likely drive more traffic than the current version.

<u>Meta Keywords</u>

<meta name="keywords" content="online widget, widget charts, top widgets, new widget releases, widget reviews, widget videos, online widget, widget lists, photos, lyrics" />

Placeholder Consulting recommends that these be removed. Please see <u>Individual Section Reviews - Homepage - Meta Keywords</u> for more information.

URL

www.sellthewidget.com/widgetcentral

This URL is optimal for its current use. However, if the name of the feature was changed more traffic could be driven. Keyword research showed that "widget lists" was searched for 5 million more times a month than "widget central". If possible, Placeholder Consulting recommends that the name of this feature be renamed to "widget list" (with the URL /widget-list/). Note: "widget list" was searched for 4.7 million more times than "widget lists".

Keyword Usage and Targeting

This page is doing a decent job of targeting the keyword phrase "widget central". Placeholder Consulting recommends that the phrase is added to first hundred words of content in a P tag, H3, H4, bold, and in image alt tags. This will make the page more targeted toward the phrase and will increase its rank for applicable queries in the major search engines.

Placeholder Consulting
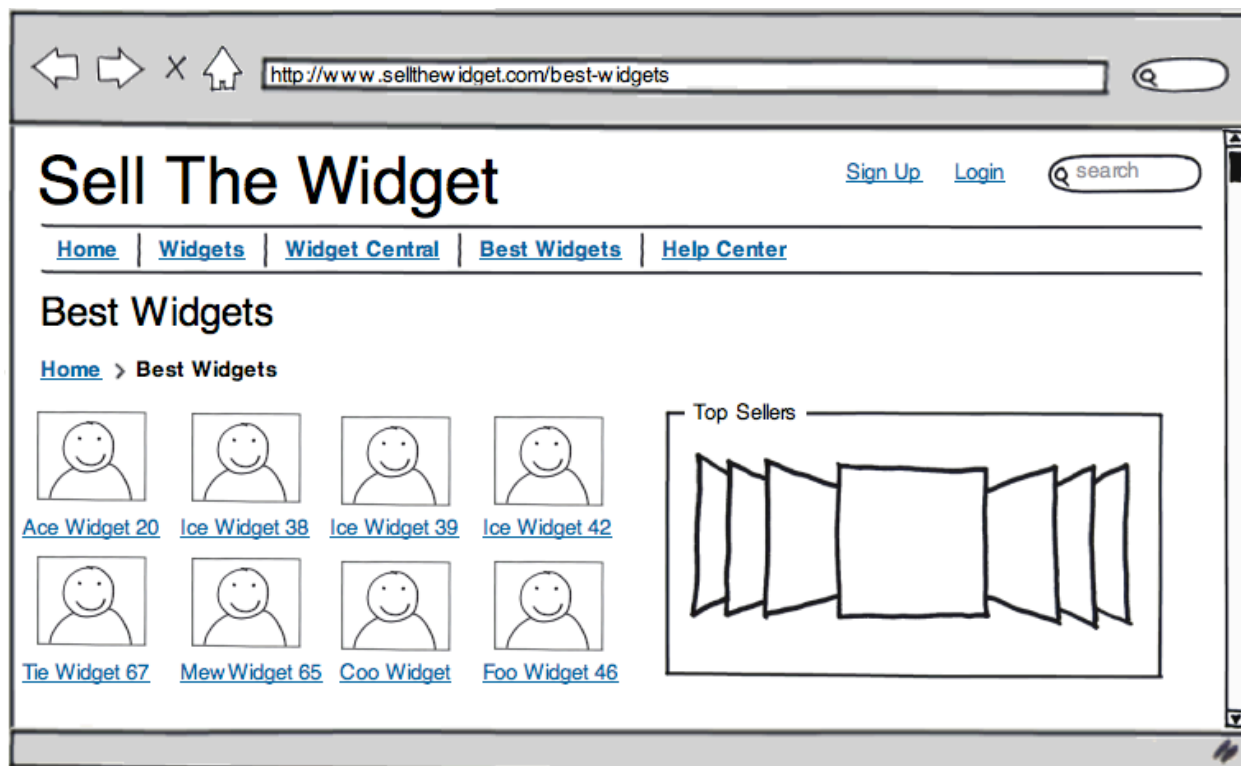
Best Widgets

www.sellthewidget.com/best-widgets

Meta Data

Title Tag

<title></title>

SellTheWidget.com's current software title tag is blank and should immediately be added. Placeholder Consulting recommends "Best Widgets of CURRENT YEAR – SellTheWidget Online" (Where CURRENT YEAR is updated every year on different URLs so old years can still rank).

Meta Description

<meta name="description" content=""/>

SellTheWidget's current software meta description is blank and should immediately be added. Placeholder Consulting recommends "The best widgets of CURRENT YEAR as voted on by widget owners" (Where CURRENT YEAR is updated every year on different URLs so old years can still rank).

Meta Keywords

<meta name="keywords" content="" />

No further action is necessary at this time.

Placeholder Consulting

URL

www.sellthewidget.com/best-widgets

Going forward it would be better to use URLs with the current year (best-widgets-2015) for individual "best of" pages and use "/best-widgets/" as an index page of all past "best of" pages.

Keyword Usage and Targeting

This page is doing a poor job of targeting the keyword phrase "best of". Placeholder Consulting recommends that the phrase is added to first hundred words of content in a P tag, H1, H2, H3, H4, bold, and in image alt tags. This will make the page more targeted toward the phrase and will increase its rank for applicable queries in the major search engines.

Placeholder Consulting

Site Review for www.SellTheWidget.com
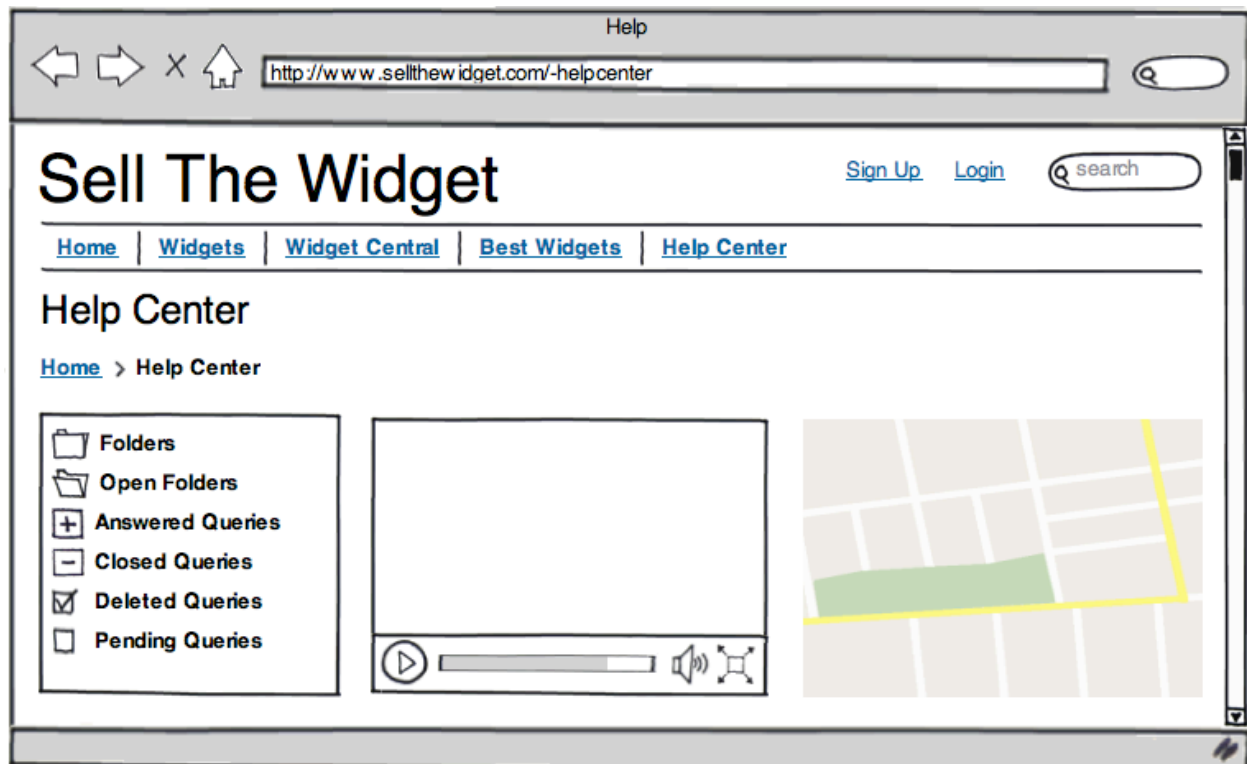
Help

http://www.sellthewidget.com/-helpcenter

SellTheWidget's help center is currently blocked by robots.txt. Given the format of help center (frames hosted on a separate domain) Placeholder Consulting recommends no changes.
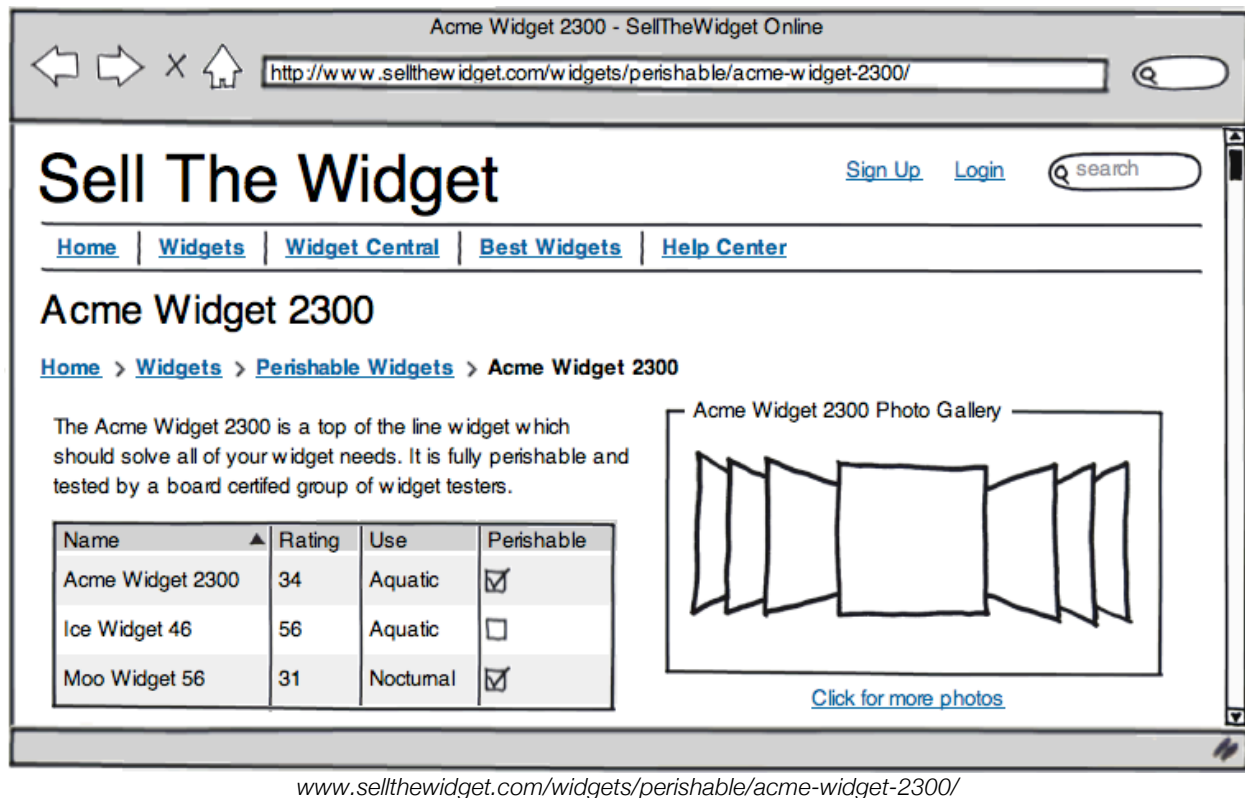
Placeholder Consulting

Widget Pages

www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable/acme-widget-2300/

Meta Data

Title Tag

<title>Buy Widgets online including Acme brand - SellTheWidget Online</title>

SellTheWidget.com's current widget page title tags could be improved. Placeholder Consulting recommends the following title tag as an improvement:

"Acme Widget 2300 – Free Shipping | SellTheWidget Online"

Meta Description

<meta name="description" content="Buy Acme Widget 2300 with Free Shipping. Customer Reviews and product photos of the Acme Widget 2300."/>

SellTheWidget.com's current widget page meta descriptions are well optimized for both humans and search engines. No improvements are necessary at this time.

Meta Keywords

<meta name="keywords" content="Acme, Widget, 2300, but online " />

Placeholder Consulting recommends that these be removed. Please see Individual Section Reviews - Homepage - Meta Keywords for more information.

URL

http://www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable/acme-widget-2300/

SellTheWidget.com's current widget page URLs are well optimized for both humans and search engines. No improvements are necessary at this time.
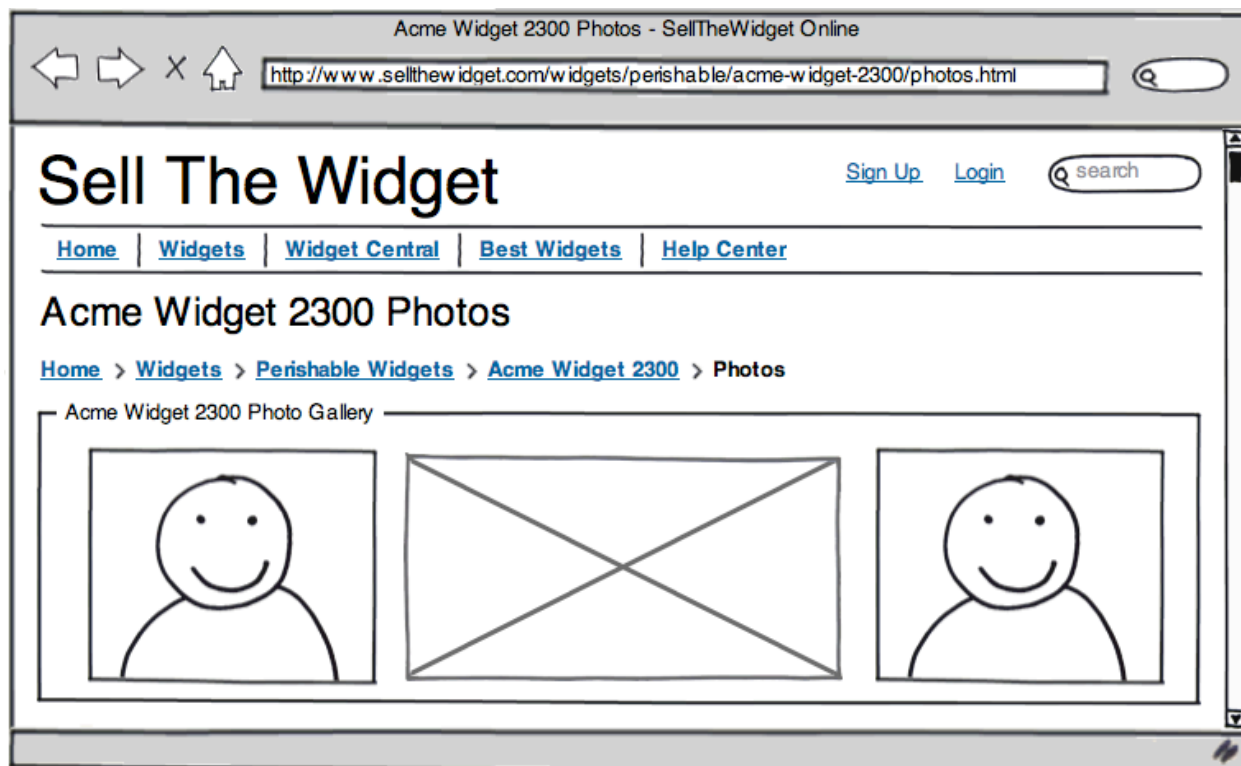
Keyword Usage and Targeting

Widget pages do a great job of targeting the product names. The only recommendations Placeholder Consulting has to improve the keyword targeting is to add keyword (product name) as the alt text of relevant product photos. Additionally, it would beneficial to add the artist's name in bold at least once on the page.

Photo Albums (http://www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/category/brand-name-model/photos.html)

www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable/acme-widget-2300/photos.html
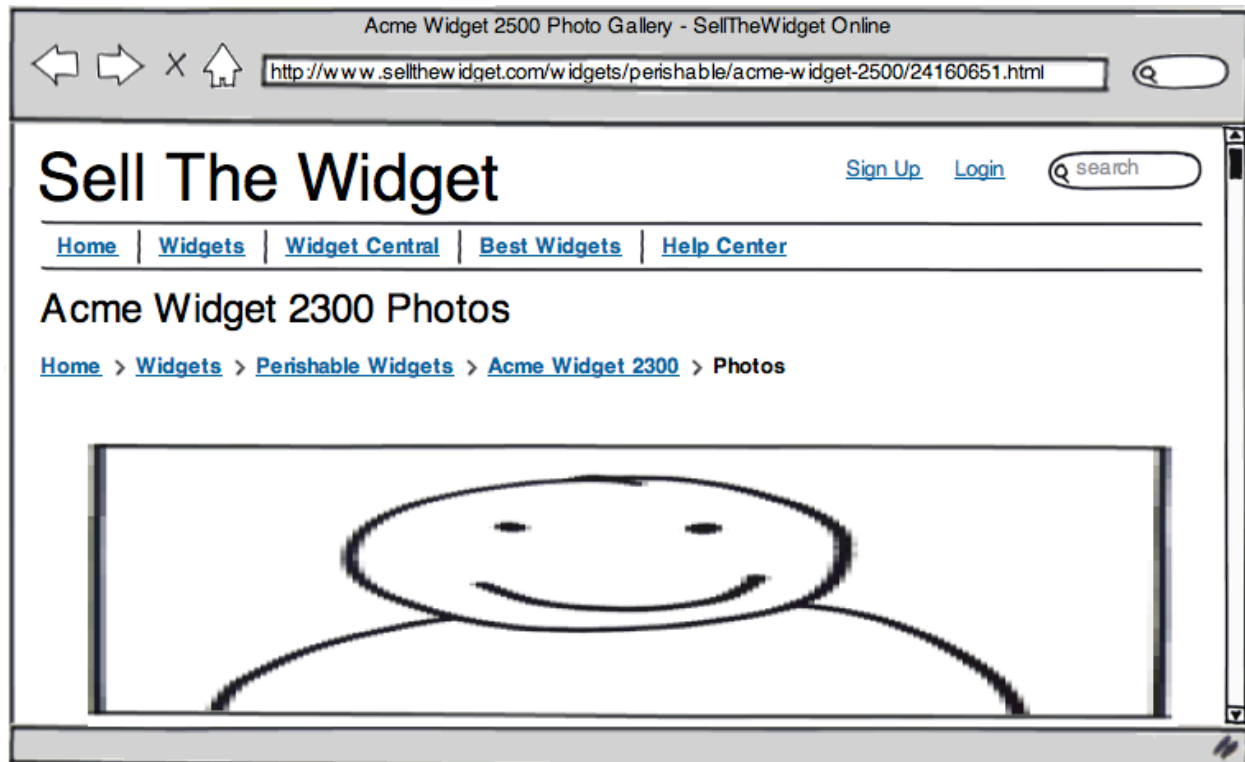
SellTheWidget's widget photo albums at this URL are currently blocked by robots.txt. It is recommended that the applicable entry (Disallow: photos.html) be removed from SellTheWidget's robot.txt and that a meta robots directive is added to these pages.

<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, FOLLOW">

Photo Albums (http://www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/category/brand-name-model/random-number.html)

www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable/acme-widget-2500/24160651.html

Meta Data

Title Tag

<title>WIDGET NAME Photo Gallery - SellTheWidget Online</title>

This title tag is well optimized but would be better if it was customized to each individual photo. Currently the title tag stays the same for every photo in an widget's photo album. It would be better for photo rankings if each photo did not compete with itself. If possible, Placeholder Consulting recommends that each photo title tag be customized to each photo. Ex. "Acme Widget 2500 Red - SellTheWidget Online".

Meta Description

<meta name="description" content="Check out Acme Widget 2500 photos on SellTheWidget"/>

This is a well optimized meta description. Placeholder Consulting recommends no changes at this time.

Meta Keywords

<meta name="keywords" content="Acme Widget photos, Acme Widget 2500, 2500, Widget, Photo" />

Placeholder Consulting recommends that these be removed. Please see Individual Section Reviews - Homepage - Meta Keywords for more information.

URL

www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable/acme-widget-2500/24160651.html

This URL is well optimized but could be better. If possible, Placeholder Consulting recommends that each URL is customized to each photo. Ex. "www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable/acme-widget-2500/Red-Acme-Widget-2500-24160651.html".

Placeholder Consulting

Keyword Targeting

The following information is about the targeting of keywords on SellTheWidget.com.

Targeted Keywords

The following are the terms on www.SellTheWidget.com's homepage that are found on the page elements that are most important to search engines. (See http://www.seomoz.org/article/search-ranking-factors for more information).

URL - **www.sellthewidget.com/home.html**

<title>**Buy Widgets, Reviews, Trials and Photos - SellTheWidget**</title>

<h1>**SellTheWidget Online**</h1>

<h2><u>**BLANK**</u></h2>

<h3>**What Is SellTheWidget**</h3>

<h3>**Buy Widgets**</h3>

<h3>**Widget Reviews**</h3>

<h3>**New & Featured Widgets**</h3>

<h3>**Categories**</h3>

<h3>**Widget Review**</h3>

<h3>**Best Widgets**</h3>

<h4>**2011**</h4>

<h4>**2015**</h4>

<bold>**Buy Widgets**</bold> (Same as <strong>)

Search engines use the above mentioned tags to help determine meaning and relative importance of page content. Specifically, the title and URL are the most important elements for search engines.

h1

SellTheWidget's current h1 could be better optimized for search engines. Instead of restating the website's name it should include the most important keyword or keywords for the domain. See "Visitor & Search Analytics - Natural Search Keywords" below for more information.

h2

Currently the h2 on SellTheWidget's homepage is incorrectly configured! See below:

```
<h3 style="margin: 0; padding:0; font-size: 26px; color:#515f64;">What is SellTheWidget</h2>
```

The current version opens with an h3 tag and closes with an h2 tag. This error is causing search engines to not recognize this line as an h2. In addition to fixing this line, Placeholder Consulting recommends that all of the current h3s are converted to h2s. This will put proper emphasis on these keywords.

As a rule of thumb every well optimized webpage should have the keywords it is targeting once in the URL, twice in the title, and three times in the content. (One keyword in the content should also be bolded).

Visitor & Search Analytics (Keyword Research)

SellTheWidget.com's current analytics provider, Omniture, is an excellent source of important and actionable data. Some of this data is covered below.

Important Metrics to Track Daily

There are several metrics that site operators should track on a daily basis.

Daily Unique Visitors

SellTheWidget.com has about 2,500,000 daily unique visitors. This number is important to watch so unusual spikes can be acted on. These irregularities can signal server errors, search engine penalties, and security compromises.

Referring Domains

SellTheWidget.com's top referring domains are:

1. www.google.com
2. www.yahoo.com
3. www.bing.com
4. www.google.co.uk
5. www.google.ca
6. www.amazon.com
7. www.cnn.com
8. www.live.com
9. www.aol.com
10. www.sellthewidget.com (self)

What does this data mean?

These websites won't likely change very often. If they do, immediate action should be taken to determine why they changed. More frequently, the fluctuations of the 'long tail' referring domains should be watched. These include domains 11 through 100 on the Omniture 'Referring Domains Report'. These domains will indicate areas of the web that are talking (either positively or negatively) about SellTheWidget.com. They should be scanned daily to identify conversations and promotions.

Natural Search Keywords

SellTheWidget.com's top referring natural search phrases and terms are:

1. "SellTheWidget"
2. "SellTheWidget.com"
3. "SellTheWidget widget"
4. "buy widgets"
5. "www.sellthewidget.com"
6. "free widget info"
7. "widget reviews"
8. "widgets"
9. "rent widgets"

10. "widget"

<u>What does this data mean?</u>

These keyword phrases represent the wants (demand) of current SellTheWidget customers. 1, 2, 3, and 5 indicate the strength of the SellTheWidget brand with its users. 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 indicate potential new customers wants and their relationship to SellTheWidget. These keywords represent what users want from SellTheWidget. They want to learn more about widgets and read what other people have to say about them (reviews). These are the key wants of users and should be well understood and potentially profited from.

Paid Search Keywords

According to Omniture data, www.sellthewidget.com's top referring paid search phrases and terms are:

1. "SellTheWidget"
2. "SellTheWidget.com"
3. "SellTheWidget gift"
4. "www.sellthewidget.com"
5. "SellTheWidget widget"
6. "SellTheWidget gift subscription"
7. "SellTheWidget widget cases"
8. "SellTheWidget cases"
9. "SellTheWidget insurance"
10. "SellTheWidget case"

<u>What does this data mean?</u>

These keywords indicate the most successful (in terms of driving traffic) paid keywords in the major search engines. This list along with similar data reported by Omniture should be shared with SellTheWidget's marketing department and used to help plan future PPC campaigns.

Placeholder Consulting

Terms & Phrases Leading to Conversions

These are the terms and phrases that most frequently lead to conversions.

- "SellTheWidget"
- "SellTheWidget.com"
- "SellTheWidget widget"
- "www.sellthewidget.com"
- "buy a widget"
- "widget reviews"
- "get a free widget"
- "widget"
- "widgets online"
- "free widgets"

What does this data mean?

These are the most important keywords to optimize for on www.sellthewidget.com. Natural SEO campaigns and paid search campaigns should focus on these terms. This list along with similar data reported by Omniture should be shared with SellTheWidget's marketing department and used to help plan future PPC campaigns.

High Search Value Terms and Phrases

www.sellthewidget.com is naturally competitive for several highly valued search keywords. These include:

- "buy a product case"
- "free widgets"
- "widget reviews"
- "buy a free product"
- "widget"

What does this data mean?

These are the most competitive keyword phrases that SellTheWidget ranks well for. It is interesting to note that all but two of these phrases contain the word widget. These are less actionable than the other lists but are a good signal of competitiveness.

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Information Architecture & Internal Link Structure

Information architecture and internal link structure are critical to how search engines index a given site. When a search engine robot (or spider) first encounters a webpage, it has no understanding of how it is structured or how important the page is relative to the rest of the pages on the domain. This means that in order for a search engine robot to correctly determine the context of a website, it needs to find algorithmic clues on a website. The most important of these clues are URLs, internal links, and breadcrumbs.

Information Hierarchy

SellTheWidget does an excellent job of revealing its information hierarchy through obvious clues.

URLs

SellTheWidget's product pages have the ideal URL structure:

http://www.sellthewidget.com/widgets/perishable/red-perishable-widget/

No further changes are recommended.

Internal Links

SellTheWidget's information hierarchy is segmented with appropriate internal links. The navigation menu on the homepage lists all of the top level genres available on SellTheWidget (Ex. Perishable). These then lead to subcategory (Ex. Red) pages that contain relevant products and popularity charts. Each of these categories is linked to with optimal anchor text. This system could be improved by taking it one step further. Placeholder Consulting strongly recommends that links to all of the lowest level products are added to the second level sub-categories (Ex. Perishable -> Red) pointing to the top products for the applicable subcategory. This is helpful for users and for spreading Link Juice.

Breadcrumbs

The product and categorization pages on SellTheWidget currently don't include breadcrumbs. This makes it difficult for both users and search engines to determine their relative position when analyzing a webpage. Placeholder Consulting recommends adding the following breadcrumb structure to all category and product pages.

Widgets -> Category -> Subcategory -> Product

Where 'widgets' links to the homepage and 'category', 'subcategory', and 'product' point to their appropriate pages using the name of the given section.

Content Analysis

www.sellthewidget.com currently has a lot of indexable unique content. This is great for both users and search engines alike. More specific information is available below.

Unique Content

Quality unique content is the cornerstone of any search engine optimized webpage. It provides incentive for people to link and boosts several of the metrics search engines use to rank pages.

Currently SellTheWidget does a good job of providing quality unique content on most of its pages. The homepage's "Top Widgets" feature updates daily and spreads Link Juice around to high selling products. The product pages contain unique descriptions of the widgets. Ideally, www.sellthewidget.com should contain at least three paragraphs of well-targeted keyword text per artist page to increase the chance of ranking well.

User Need Fulfillment

People use search engines to fulfill a need. Sometimes this is the answer to a question, other times it is location of a resource. In SellTheWidget.com's case, the user's need is to review and buy widgets.

According to Omniture, the most popular pages on SellTheWidget are widget photo galleries. This doesn't necessarily mean that this is the primary use of SellTheWidget but it does indicate user intent.

Lastly, SellTheWidget does a great job of offering a giant selection of widgets to its users. It also offers a lot of unique information about products (reviews, photos).

Placeholder Consulting

User Experience

Usability and User Experience are as important to the success of a webpage as search engine rankings. If a user can't navigate or understand a website, its potential is extinguished.

Design Quality

www.sellthewidget.com's design is slick, professional, and friendly. The use of familiar faces (celebrities) makes it inviting and comfortable.

The only recommendation that Placeholder Consulting has is to continue testing variations and making improvements based on the user feedback.

User Experience

The homepage of SellTheWidget.com is overwhelming. There is no clear call to action, instead there are many buttons competing for the viewer's attention. The most prevalent of these include:

- "Search" - Header center
- "Shop for Widgets" - Blue button far right on navigation menu
- "Get SellTheWidget PRO" - Yellow horizontal banner
- Scrolling Widget Photos - Middle Left
- Advertisement - Middle Right

To a first time viewer of SellTheWidget.com's homepage, it is obvious that the website is about widgets but it is unclear what the user can gain from SellTheWidget. Ideally, this should be immediately made clear on the homepage without the user needing to scroll.

Most users (64% according to Omniture) reach SellTheWidget.com through search engines. This means they likely skip the homepage and land directly on product pages. While the product pages are more focused than the homepage, they still do not have a clear call to action. While it is good to have a lot of features for users, it is also important to prioritize them for users. This gives users a clear point to start at and allows them to explore on their own and discover what other features are available to them.

Placeholder Consulting

Link Building Opportunities

Current Inbound Link Types

It is important to understand the types of links SellTheWidget.com currently has in order to plan future link building campaigns.

The anchor text distribution is as follows for all of SellTheWidget's inbound links:

Anchor Text of Inbound Link	Unique Links %
SellTheWidget	31.8
Blank [Image]	8.1
Blank	2.3
SellTheWidget.com	2.2
SellTheWidget [Image]	2.2
www.sellthewidget.com	1.8
widget	1
SellTheWidget	0.9
Widgets	0.9
SellTheWidget.com	0.9

Distribution of anchor text of links pointing at www.sellthewidget.com/

What does this data mean?

From a purely link profile perspective, SellTheWidget no longer needs links with the anchor text of its brand name or URL. This is common of large websites. This information should be used when planning partnerships with other websites and when creating link worthy content. For example, a link coming from a website using SellTheWidget's services should stop using the anchor text 'Product Name on SellTheWidget' and instead use 'Buy Product Name'.

Placeholder Consulting

Content Currently Attracting Links

The following are the most linked to pages on www.sellthewidget.com. This is important information to know because it illustrates what the most link worthy pages are on SellTheWidget.com. This information can then be used to plan new content.

Most linked to pages on *.SellTheWidget.com (Includes all subdomains)

Page	Approximate number of links
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/super-bowl	189,776
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/snl	178,624
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/oprah	135,591
http://www.sellthewidget.com/	135,394
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/verizon	63,965
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/tmobile	52,993
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/att	52,546
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/tullys	52,332
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/starbucks	36,875
http://offer.sellthewidget.com/coupon/costco	23,869

What does this data mean?

This data illustrates the SEO value of SellTheWidget's coupon program. It is very surprising to see that three partnership coupon URLs are being linked to more than SellTheWidget's homepage. This is likely due the size and placement of the partner links. These links are passing a large percentage of SellTheWidget's total link juice and should be carefully researched before removing.

Placeholder Consulting

Most linked to pages on www.sellthewidget.com (Does not include subdomains)

Page	Approximate number of links
www.sellthewidget.com/	114,284
www.sellthewidget.com/widgets	17,468
www.sellthewidget.com/products	19,394
www.sellthewidget.com/myWidget	19,381
www.sellthewidget.com/widget-reviews	19,380
www.sellthewidget.com/myWidget/library	19,373
www.sellthewidget.com/SellTheWidget_faqs	19,362
www.sellthewidget.com/new-features.html	19,345
www.sellthewidget.com/special-offers	18,315
www.sellthewidget.com/help-center	13,184

What does this data mean?

This provides an important perspective on link worthy content on SellTheWidget.com. Other than the homepage, /widgets and /products are the most link worthy sections on SellTheWidget. These sections should be further promoted to gain additional links.

The section /myWidget is also noteworthy. This shows that user engagement is leading to a lot of links. This section has a great strategy that appears to making users stay on the page longer and link to their own pages.

The last important detail that this data reveals is the relative importance of /help-center and /SellTheWidget_faqs. Since this list only includes external links, this data point indicates that a lot of people off SellTheWidget.com are linking to sources of help on SellTheWidget. This generally happens when users are confused by the given website and resort to looking elsewhere for help.

Vertical Search Opportunities & Inclusion

Vertical search offers webmasters a way to capitalize on certain types of search queries. Each of these verticals uses different signals and classifiers to create rankings. Below are the verticals that are most likely to help SellTheWidget.com drive additional traffic.

Image Search

Image search offers webmasters a way to drive an additional amount of traffic. Google uses the following signals to classify and eventually rank images. (This list is not comprehensive).

- Image filename
- Image alt text
- Text around image
- Links

SellTheWidget has already given Google permission to index its images (see <u>Technical On-Page/On-Site Issues - Registration with Search Engines</u> for more information). The next step to appearing in Google Image results is to make it easier for Google to classify images. Placeholder Consulting recommends SellTheWidget make the following changes to its photo pages. Ex. http://www.sellthewidget.com/photos/widget/blue-african-widget.html

1. Include product name in filename. Ex. "blue-african-widget-large.jpg" instead of "2356456-345234-large.jpg"
2. Add alt text other than the product name to all photos. SellTheWidget does this in some cases but for the majority of photos the alt text is only the product's name.
3. Add some kind of descriptive text to or around images.

Optimizing for Image search is usually a low ROI project but can generate additional traffic and can be utilized to improve brand recognition.

Placeholder Consulting

Blog/Feed Search

SellTheWidget.com appears to have two blogs associated with it. These blogs currently are not indexed in either of the leading blog search engines. (www.technorati.com and blogsearch.google.com)

- http://corporate-blog.SellTheWidget.com/ (Dormant)
- http://blog.SellTheWidget.com/ (Active)

Placeholder Consulting added http://blog.sellthewidget.com to both search engines on February 2nd, 2015 and it should be active within three weeks as long as it continues to post new content. Note: corporate-blog.sellthewidget.com was not added because it doesn't appear to be active at this time.

Glossary

Below are explanations of some of the search engine optimization jargon that is used in this report.

Cloaking

Displaying different content to search engines and human users. Depending on the intent of the display discrepancy and the strength of the brand of the person or company cloaking, it may be considered reasonable or it may get a site banned from a search engine.

Indexing (Crawling)

The process search engines use to download and catalog the Internet. Generally, it is done by writing a computer program (called a spider, crawler, or robot) that intelligently downloads website content, follows the links in that content to a new webpage, downloads the new page's content, and continues the cycle.

Link Juice

A theoretical metric developed by Google founder Larry Page. This metric represents a numerical unit of the worth for a given website. This worth can then be transferred to other websites through links.

Long Tail

"The Long Tail" is a phrase first coined by author Chris Anderson describing the typical distribution of search queries leading to a website. According to his widely accepted theory, most search referrer traffic actually comes from very specific search queries ("Widget I want to buy") rather than competitive and popular search queries ("Popular Widgets").