How Search Engines Work, and How to Show Up in the Results

Consumers and businesses are online looking for companies like yours every day. But how do you increase your chances of showing up in their search results?

How do search engines work?
Let's say someone sits at their computer or phone and searches for a well drilling service, for example. They open their favorite browser, like Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc., and type "well drilling company" into the search window.

The search engine scours the internet searching for relevant results using the keywords "well drilling company". It might find those keywords in a web page, but also in a PDF, blog post, an image, or a video, etc.

The more relevant those particular keywords are to your website, the better chance you have of ranking higher in the search results. For example when searching for "well drilling company", Steve's Well Drilling Company will get more results than Steve's Drilling because it includes more relevant keywords, in the correct order.

Unfortunately for Steve, other companies such as Acme Well Drilling Company or Acme Well Drilling might come up before his in the search results, again based on relevancy. So Steve's challenge is to rank higher than them.

How can I show up in search engine results?
You can improve your website's effectiveness yourself without hiring a web developer. Optimizing your website, known as SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is complex. Corporations have web teams and agencies devoted to this. But small businesses like well drillers, pump installers, pump dealers, can also play the game effectively. While there are no promises in search engine results, there are some basic measures you can perform on your website to improve your site ranking, and ultimately site visitors.

Use keywords in your text
A keyword is an important word that describes the content in your web page. It's the word you want search engines to focus on. Your website will need to contain keywords to attract search engine crawlers. A well drilling company might want to include words or terms in their website that are specific to their craft, such as "water well", "submersible pump", or "bore hole", etc. Look at other successful companies similar to yours and see how they have inserted keywords.

Name you image file appropriately
Search engines can find images just like they find websites. So be descriptive when naming your photo images. "DSC1423.jpg" means nothing to search engines, nor people in general. Image file names like "Setting-submersible-pump.jpg", "Bore-hole-drilled-colorado.jpg", or "Steves-well-drilling-rig.jpg" are descriptive and use keywords that search engines can find.

Name forms and documents accurately
PDFs are also searchable by search engines. If you have PDF documents such as white papers, forms, instruction sheets, contracts, etc., name them appropriately also, such as "Steve's-Well-Drilling-Checklist.pdf".

How Search Engines Work, and How to Show Up in the Results (cont.)

Add fresh content
Search engines like Google love new content. Their crawlers are searching sites continually look-ing for it. So when Google finds new content on your site, it indexes that information and considers your site more relevant. A website that never changes is uninteresting to Google and gets ignored. So try adding new photos to an image gallery, add new blog posts, boast new products, describe latest projects, or feature great employees on a regular basis.

Include keywords in Alt Text
Alt text, which describes an image, is the copy that appears when you hover over an image or when the image can't be loaded. If you have access to alt text, type in descriptions of your images.

Performing SEO on your site is an important step in getting visitors. Periodically type your compa-ny name into your browsers search box and check the results. Does your company appear on the first page? The first couple of pages? Does it appear at all? Do other companies like yours show up?