

FLYING  HIPPO

WEB CREATIONS

BIGFOOT IS REAL.

SEO



IS EXTINCT.

WHAT'S YOUR

SASQUATCH?



Buried in the wilderness of North Central California, deep in the million-plus acres of the Six Rivers National Forest, lives a

SASQUATCH.

Well, according to some.

In the late afternoon of October 20, 1967, Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin were out for a horseback ride in Six Rivers National Forest, along the banks of Bluff Creek. After turning a corner around a large fallen tree, they spotted it: bigfoot, crouched beside the creek.

Patterson's horse reared at seeing the sasquatch, and he dismounted, scrambled for his video camera, and shot what remains some of the most compelling video evidence for the existence of these creatures. He took it home, developed the film and shared it with the world.

Since then, of course, there have been thousands of sasquatch sightings. And

in this age of smartphones, all we have to do is press "share" and the video is available to everyone. Everyone has their own sasquatch to share; some compelling video, article or information about their company or themselves they want to disperse and want people to see.

Instead of just one sasquatch in a remote California forest, there are a million uploaded every second. So how do you make yours stand out?

THAT'S WHERE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION COMES IN.



SE-sO What?

SEO (Search Engine Optimization, in case you're completely lost), had its inception in the early days of the Internet.

Originally, website owners had to submit their URL to search engines in order to be found. Today, of course, that process is all automatic, and is done by Internet programs called “spiders” or “bots” that systematically crawl pages.

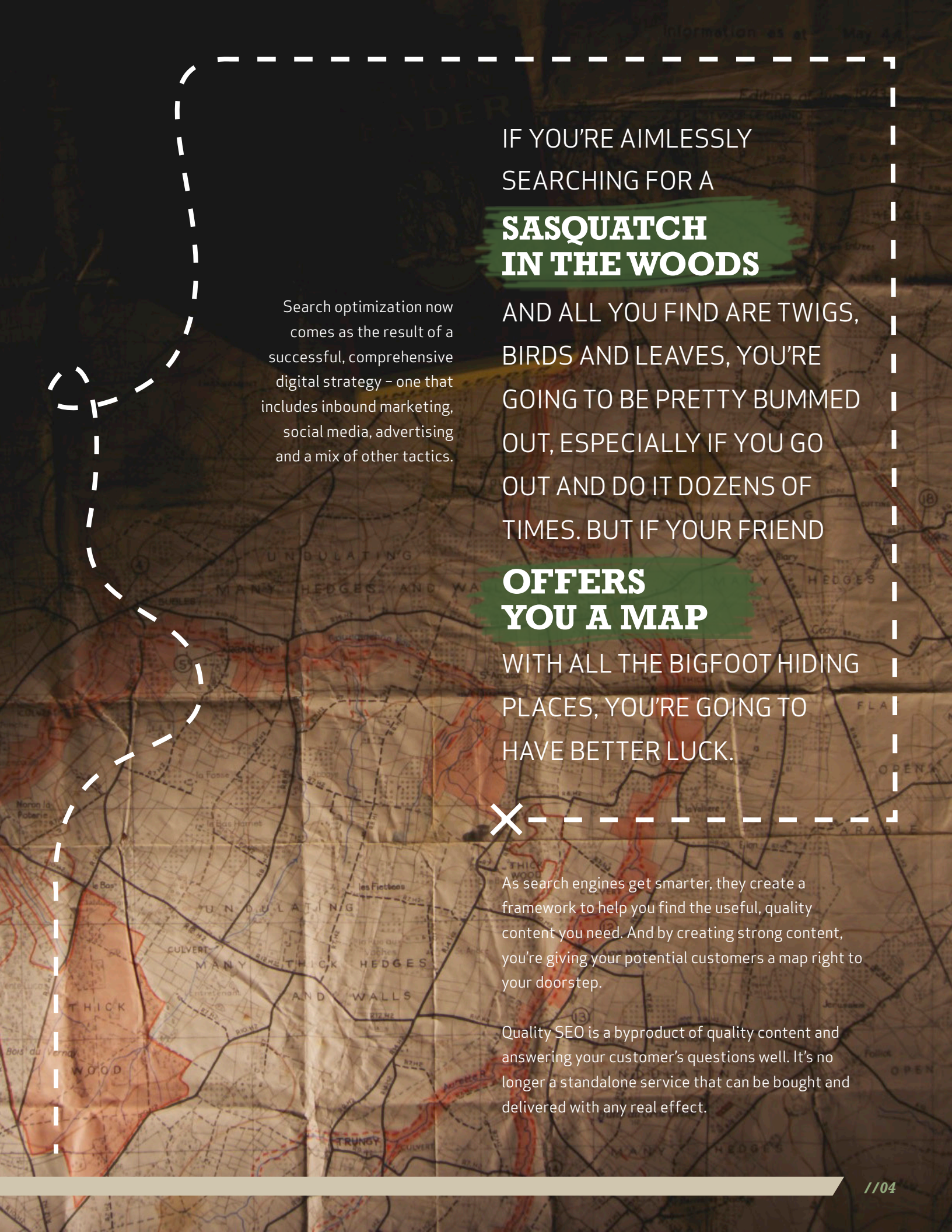
The landscape of search engines has evolved enormously from its beginnings. Many tactics that were once the cornerstone of successful SEO strategies are now shunned by the search community. Some of them are even considered malicious – and they can get you booted from Google entirely.

Because of these changes, the way that we work with clients has also changed. We understand the importance of search optimization and the role it can play in boosting business. But we also know that this sort of SEO work is only one tiny piece of an ever-evolving marketing puzzle.

Because of that, we no longer sell SEO as an ongoing service. Sorry. (On-page optimization, however, is still something we offer.)

The reason is simple: there is no longer an effective, simple way to properly influence search ranking on a month-to-month basis. Search engines are getting smarter, and they're learning to see right through crummy content loaded with keywords and buzzwords.

Ultimately, this benefits the searcher, since good content that answers users' questions floats to the top rather than content stuffed with keywords or manipulated code. We're witnessing the birth of a new era of SEO, and it's an era that focuses on utility of content.



Search optimization now comes as the result of a successful, comprehensive digital strategy – one that includes inbound marketing, social media, advertising and a mix of other tactics.

IF YOU'RE AIMLESSLY
SEARCHING FOR A

SASQUATCH IN THE WOODS

AND ALL YOU FIND ARE TWIGS,
BIRDS AND LEAVES, YOU'RE
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OUT, ESPECIALLY IF YOU GO
OUT AND DO IT DOZENS OF
TIMES. BUT IF YOUR FRIEND

OFFERS YOU A MAP

WITH ALL THE BIGFOOT HIDING
PLACES, YOU'RE GOING TO
HAVE BETTER LUCK.

As search engines get smarter, they create a framework to help you find the useful, quality content you need. And by creating strong content, you're giving your potential customers a map right to your doorstep.

Quality SEO is a byproduct of quality content and answering your customer's questions well. It's no longer a standalone service that can be bought and delivered with any real effect.



WATCH

OUT FOR

FALSE PROMISES

Go do a quick Google search for a common term like “baseball” or “hot dog.” You probably get some results from Wikipedia, Major League Baseball or the National Hot Dog Council.

Nothing on search engine results is accidental. The sites that land on the top of search results worked really hard to get there by optimizing and improving their content. It’s no easy feat.

With that in mind, any company that promises they can get you to the top of Google results is lying. Being on the top of search results is a product of holistic brand building, not sneaky snake-oil schemes. Caveat emptor.

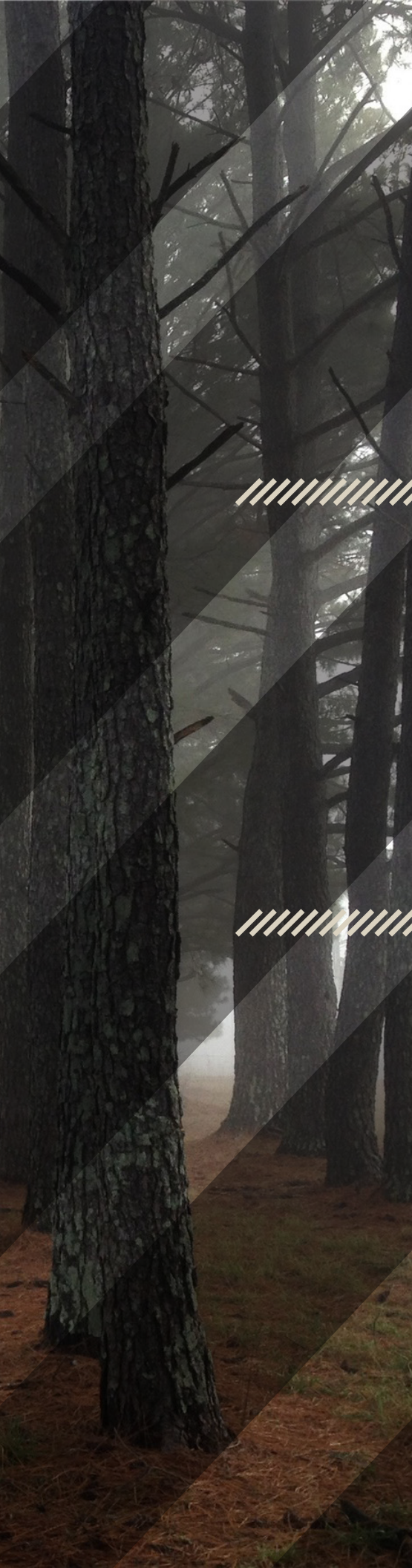


BREAKING DOWN SEO

If you're taking off on an adventure to capture the greatest, most important video of bigfoot in the world, there's a lot of variables to consider. Some of them could help your search, and some could really hurt it.

IMAGINE: you're in the woods, and, out of nowhere, you see bigfoot walking toward you. Instinctively, you reach for your video camera – and it's not there. (You left it at home.) In a panic, you grab for your still camera – and you can't find it either. With bigfoot just feet away, you totally dropped the ball. The chance of a lifetime has been ruined.

ON THE OTHER HAND: let's imagine you capture the greatest footage of bigfoot ever. (He came over to your house, you made grilled cheese sandwiches and chatted for hours.) Then, you put the footage on a single VHS tape and mailed it to your friend down the street. You waited by the phone every day for a call from Time Magazine or National Geographic, but it never came. While your content might have been good, you didn't distribute or share it very well, so no one else ever saw it.



SEO is pretty similar to a bigfoot hunt in these regards. You need to be in control of what's on your site (on-page optimization) and influence the variables that aren't on your site (off-page optimization).

Search engines look for a variety of things when they're scoring your page, and on-page tactics are a great place to start, as is including the right HTML header tags, creating a clear user interface and improving your site's load time prove to Google that you know what you're doing - and you're not some creepy spammer.

GOOD ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

On your site, there are a handful of healthy things that you can alter to help search engines index and rank the content on your site.

Some of the factors that can affect search ranking:

- Titles and heading
- Semantic website structure
- Clear categories and navigation
- Responsive design
- Quick load time
- Mobile-friendly experience

NOT-SO-GOOD ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

Search engines use keywords as a major way to organically determine the relevance and value of content. But this can present problems.

Google's original algorithm was pretty idealistic. The more times a keyword appeared on a page, the more relevant it was. This assumed the world was made of sunshine and daffodils, which, of course, it isn't.

Soon, people were manipulating these algorithms by using "black-hat" SEO techniques, including hiding keywords in invisible text on the page

and stuffing irrelevant keywords into content where it doesn't belong. These manipulations caused their search ranking to artificially rise to the top - and eventually get smacked down.

Every recent Google update has reiterated that these tactics are frowned upon. Today, SEO methods like these are a great way to get blacklisted from Google and have your content entirely hidden from people who use search engines (so, mostly everyone).



OFF-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

While it's easy to think that everything you can do for SEO is done on your site, there's plenty to be done off your site as well – probably even more.

Here's a quick history lesson: for many years, there wasn't such a thing as off-page optimization. It was largely referred to as "link-building," a term that's still very much in play today (though it's slowly going the way of the dinosaur).

Link-building is the strategy of building your search engine rank by getting links to your site on as many other sites as possible. If a link to your video of bigfoot appears on Reddit, the Huffington Post and BigfootVids.net, your rank is going to be higher than a video that isn't linked anywhere else.

By itself, it's a fine strategy that makes a lot of sense. But people always find a way to cheat the system.

They'll track you, ban your site and leave you on the sidelines while **other companies run away with your money.**

Companies selling SEO as a service have, for many years, sold link-building strategies that game the system. These have varying levels of sophistication and success, from guest blogging to link circles. Some of these strategies could make your site's URL appear on tens of thousands of other sites for pennies on the dollar.

The problem with these and other "black-hat" tactics: Google hates them, and its draconian policies against them don't mince words. They'll track you, ban your site and leave you on the sidelines while other companies run away with your money.

The best thing for you to do is focus on
white-hat techniques. The best way to do
that is to make **QUALITY CONTENT**
that answers your customers' questions.

Black-hat tactics undermine the entire content ranking process, and with every Google algorithm update, it becomes more and more clear: quality content is king.

BLACK-HAT TECHNIQUES

- Adding unrelated keywords
- Hidden links and keywords
- Link farms
- Spamdexing

WHITE-HAT TECHNIQUES

- Making quality content
- Adding meta data
- Keyword research
- Effective keyword use
- Quality links to your site

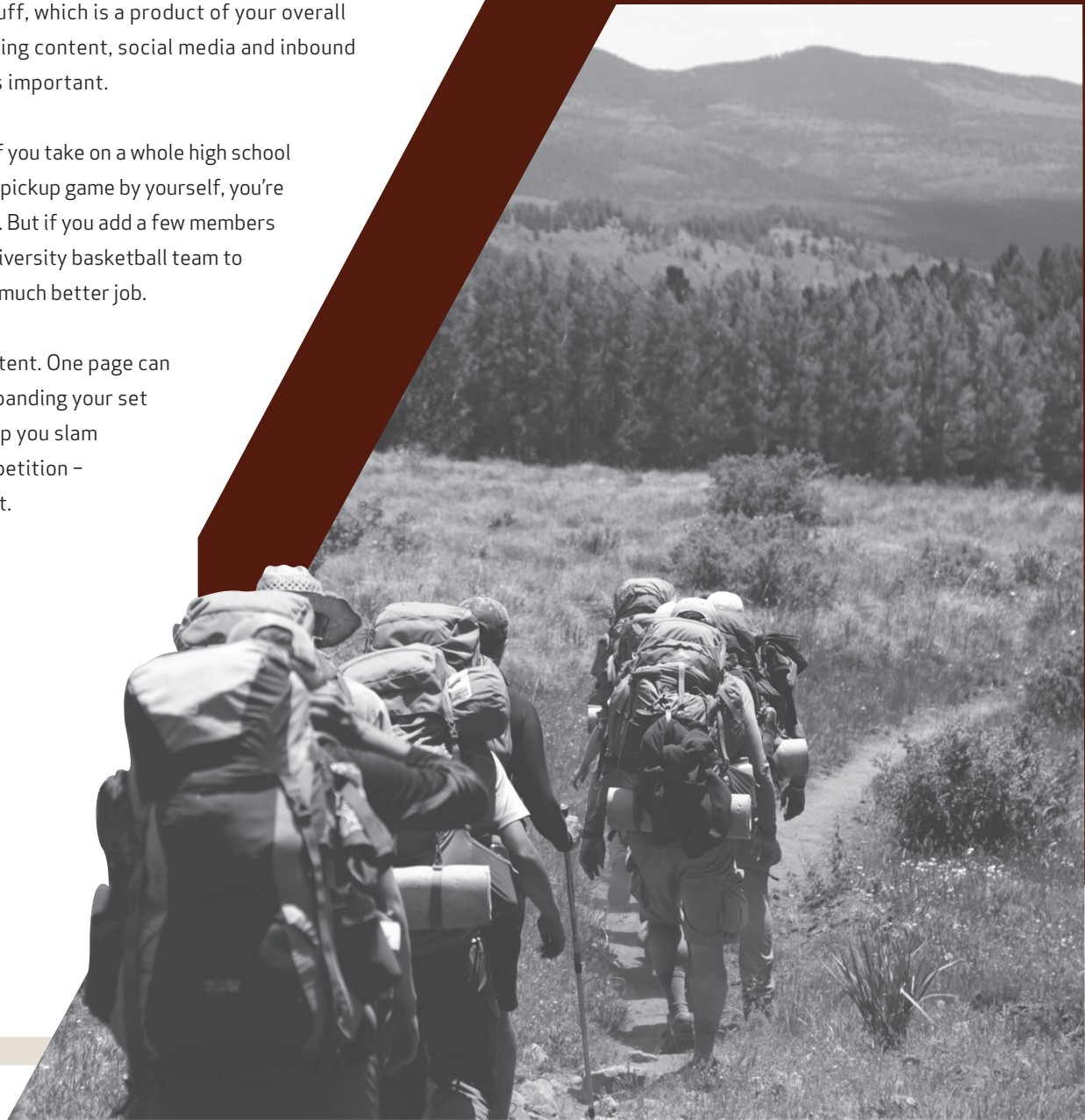
WORKING TOGETHER

On-page optimization is a necessary base,

and it's the best place for beginning your digital strategy. But the off-page stuff, which is a product of your overall digital brand, including content, social media and inbound marketing, is just as important.

Think of it like this: if you take on a whole high school basketball team in a pickup game by yourself, you're going to get smoked. But if you add a few members of the Sasquatch University basketball team to your side, you'll do a much better job.

Same goes with content. One page can only do so much. Expanding your set of SEO tools will help you slam dunk over your competition – and spammy content.



WHO wins?

**Brands
should
think of
inbound
marketing
as their
online
footprint.**

Let's say there's a breaking news story:

Bigfoot stole a monster truck, and is now taking police on a high-speed chase on I-35.

Two major news outlets are covering the story, and doing a great job. Both sites have extensive on-page optimization with clear site structures, clean code and other great content. They're each writing one story about the events.

Both of the stories are very popular, and both are vying for the top Google spot on a timely, popular search term such as "bigfoot monster truck chase."

So what makes one news outlet show up in the number-one spot and the other appear in the second? Their online footprint is the deciding factor.

If one organization has a much bigger social media following and generates a lot more links (these two things usually go hand in hand), then they will likely show up first in search results.

Brands should think of inbound marketing as their online footprint. By creating great content, social media posts, ebooks and more, you're spreading your content throughout the Internet and building your search engine rank at the same time.

Bigfoot is real in the world of SEO. The larger the footprint, the better. Is your company leaving a large footprint that others are intrigued by?

FOR- EVER CHASIN NG

Have you ever felt like SEO was some sort of never-ending race? We hate to burst your bubble: it is.

Link-building strategies are like a drawn-out game of Risk. While you're cobbling your army of links together, so is every other company. And Google is right around the corner to strike you down and wipe out what you've accomplished if you mess up by taking SEO shortcuts like keyword stuffing or purchasing links.

It's really an endless chase to exploit search algorithms before they change again. Somewhere out there, someone is trying to figure out how to game the current Google algorithm so their site can bump up a notch or two. But inevitably, the playing field will shift dramatically and

they'll be back at square one with a much lighter wallet.

The cause of your mediocre search engine placement isn't links, it's your crummy brand presence and lack of inbound marketing strategy.

More than that, the honest reason that many agencies and companies take a link-focused approach: building a great brand and inbound strategy is really hard work, so they cheat their way to mild success.



**BUT, AS WE ALL KNOW,
CHEATERS NEVER WIN.**

It's a lot easier to send a few emails, pay a little money or even launch a few new sites than it is to commit the time and energy it takes to effectively execute an excellent online marketing strategy. It takes tight planning, lots of different tactics and creative execution to do it well. More than that, it takes a creative partner to know what would make your brand stand out from the rest and take your marketing a step further.

That's where Flying Hippo comes in. By using tried-and-true inbound marketing tactics, we push your brand to excellence on search engines and elsewhere.

We're different than other agencies. We aren't scared to dive into a comprehensive brand-building effort. It's what we do.

**You can't
cheat your
way to the top
with SEO, and
there are no
shortcuts to
killer content
strategy.**



Inbound Marketing

With inbound marketing, by the time customers come to your site, they're already interested in your product. You don't have to convince them. This shortens your sales funnel and increases your lead-to-conversion ratio.



Outbound Marketing

Outbound marketing doesn't work the same way. A billboard on the highway will only attract a handful out of the thousands of people that see it each day, and it's impossible to nurture them along the sales cycle. This results in fewer qualified leads and fewer sales.

A flying hippo is the central visual element of the advertisement. It is a dark grey hippopotamus with large, white, feathered wings, standing on a grassy forest floor. The background is a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a bokeh effect. The overall tone is whimsical and professional.

BETTER BRANDS **BETTER** MARKETING **BETTER** SEARCH

Flying Hippo is a one-of-a-kind breed of digital agency. We're most definitely hip - our branding and creative teams have consistently produced internationally award-winning creative work for our clients. And, yes, we're off-the-charts nerds as well - and proud of it. Our nerd team consists of some of the brightest programmers and web-strategists around to make sure that all of that exceptional creative work not only looks great, but functions just as well.

If you're looking for a top-notch team of branding experts, award-winning creatives, ultra-savvy digital strategists and true-blue nerds to help grow your business, you've come to the right place.

Send us a message at info@flyinghippo.com or give us a call at (515) 288-5316.