

BRAND POSITIONING STRATEGY USING SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

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Appendix A

Experimental Search Engine

The screenshot shows a Google search results page for the query "heavy-duty backpacks". At the top right, there is a "Sign in" link. Below it, the Google logo is followed by navigation tabs for "Web", "Images", "Groups", "News", and "more »". A search bar contains the text "heavy-duty backpacks" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar are links for "Advanced Search" and "Preferences". Below the search bar, it says "Search: the web" (selected) and "pages from Hong Kong".

The results section is titled "Web" and shows "Results 1 - 8 of 1,430,000 for heavy-duty backpack (0.01 seconds)". The first result is "Kurton--Maker of heavy-duty Backpacks ...". The second is "Heavy-duty Columbia Backpacks for you ...". The third is "Heavy duty Gregory Backpacks ...". The fourth is "Nike--Heavy-duty Backpacks ...". The fifth is "eBay: Heavy Duty Backpack School bag Back Pack ...". The sixth is "Apparels, accessories, heavy-duty backpacks, and much more ...". The seventh is "Heavy Duty Backpacks - Compare Prices, Reviews and Buy at NexTag ...". The eighth is "Epers Design Heavy-duty Backpacks -- About Us".

At the bottom of the page, there is a "Goooooogooogle" logo with a blue play button, a "Result Page:" indicator, and a list of page numbers from 1 to 10, with "Next" as a link. Below this is a search bar with the text "heavy-duty backpacks" and a "Search" button. At the very bottom, there are links for "Search within results", "Language Tools", "Search Tips", "Dissatisfied? Help us improve", "Google Home", "Advertising Programs", and "About Google". The copyright notice "©2006 Google" is at the bottom center.

Appendix B

Scales Used in the Study

Heavy-Dutiness ($\alpha = .88$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘X backpacks stand up well to heavy use in outdoor travel?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Stylishness ($\alpha = .92$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘X backpacks are stylish?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Luxuriousness ($\alpha = .84$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘hotel X in Chiang Mai, Thailand is a luxurious hotel property?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Friendliness ($\alpha = .89$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘hotel X in Chiang Mai, Thailand is a friendly hotel?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Internet Search Skills ($\alpha = .86$ in Experiment 1; $\alpha = .91$ in Experiment 2) (adapted from Novak et al. 2000)

Seven- point Likert scale (agree/disagree)

- “I am extremely skilled at using Internet search engines.”
- “I consider myself knowledgeable about good search engine use techniques.”
- “I know somewhat more than most users about using Internet search engines.”
- “I know how to find what I am looking for using Internet search engines.”
- “Compared to other things that I do on the web (e.g., email, chat, etc.), I’m very skillful at using Internet search engines.”
- “Compared to others skills that I have (e.g., sports, cooking, singing), I’m very skillful at using Internet search engines.”

Appendix C

Fictitious *BusinessWeek* Article

The logo for BusinessWeek, featuring the word "BusinessWeek" in a white serif font on a red rectangular background.

“Fooling Google and cheating for a high ranking position”

Christopher Palmeri Edited by Deborah Stead. *BusinessWeek*. New York: Sep 12, 2005, Iss. 3950; pg. 75

Google is good. Type in what you're looking for and you have an excellent chance of finding it on the first try. That's why more people use Google to scour the web than any other search engine. ***But what if you could no longer rely on Google to return the best search results?*** After all, when you're number one, everybody wants a piece of you. For instance, online mom-and-pop shops want to appear high in Google's listings, because Google has become the most popular way for shoppers to find brands on the web.

Although most of Google's 100 million daily users consider it a trusted source of unbiased information, ***the result of a search query is often manipulated for commercial benefit by web experts.*** To achieve a higher ranking, websites have to prove their popularity and usefulness through plentiful links. No wonder, then, that ***Google optimizers have sprung up to help sites achieve an artificial boost in Google's search results.***

Efforts to outfox the search engines have been around since search engines first became popular in the early 1990s. Early tricks included stuffing thousands of widely used search terms in hidden coding, called "metatags." The coding fools a search engine into identifying a site with popular words and phrases that may not actually appear on the site. Another gimmick was hiding words or terms against a same-color background. The hidden coding deceived search engines that relied heavily on the number of times a word or phrase appeared in ranking a site.

In addition, the optimizers found they could boost their clients' sites by creating websites that were nothing more than collections of links to the clients' site, called "link farms." Since Google ranks a site largely by how many links, or "votes," it gets, the link farms could boost a site's popularity.

In a similar technique, called a link exchange, a group of unrelated sites would agree to link to one another, thereby fooling Google into thinking the sites have a multitude of votes. Many sites also found they could buy links to themselves to boost their rankings.

Despite ranking on Google is determined by a number of factors, such as key words, popularity, spam, metadata, etc. all of which can be faked. ***Until now, there is no standard practice to prevent companies from manipulating search results.*** And as long as Google remains a top search engine, opportunists will try to rig the system.