

SEO Analysis

MurderMysteryTrain.com

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Executive Summary

This SEO analysis was conducted as part of the MurderMysteryTrain.com website redesign. The primary goals of the analysis were to identify key phrases that could be incorporated into the existing site content, determine internal areas of improvement on the site, and evaluate inbound/outbound links.

The analysis revealed many areas for improvement. The most common problems included:

- Lack of accurate descriptions for individual pages and image files. HTML coding issues identified a lack of descriptions configured in page headers as well as inaccurate “alt” tags for images.
- Few reciprocal links to websites providing the business information. Adding the reciprocal links will help boost page ranking as well.
- Overuse of images where text is sufficient.
- Name and keyword confusion on links that still list the business as “The Old Road Train”. Where business listings were found on external websites there has been inconsistency with the business name and linked text.
- Missing page links included in an outdated sitemap as well as external sources.
- Outdated information on Google Local Page as well as no local page for the Charlotte location.
- No social media presence.
- Outdated business information on existing listings at Pure Michigan and Blissfield Chamber of Commerce sites.

The analysis also highlights opportunities to incorporate new key phrases into the website text and increase search engine visibility.

Recommended Key phrases

The following is a list of keyword phrases that internet users are entering into Google searches. It is recommended that these keyword phrases are incorporated into the text of the website wherever possible. For example, “Are you ready for a night of mystery and suspense? The Murder Mystery Company has been a favorite on The Old Road and Murder Mystery Dinner Train for 10 years.”

The first group of search terms is related to the murder mystery entertainment service. The first parenthesis gives an example of search frequency for that phrase. The second parentheses are the current competition level for the given keyword. These frequencies do change. If a phrase has low competition it is more likely the website will appear in the search results after these phrases are added to the web site. The list is sorted putting the lowest competition phrases at the top and should be considered for use before any higher competition phrases.

1. murder mystery train (1600) (low)
2. night of mystery (1600) (low)
3. The Murder Mystery Company (1900) (low)
4. murder mystery company (1300) (med)
5. mystery dinner theater (1600) (med)
6. sleuths mystery dinner show (1600) (med)
7. murder mystery dinner (14800) (high)
8. murder mystery dinner party (1900) (high)
9. murder mystery nights (1000) (high)
10. murder mystery party (18100) (high)

Please note that there is a difference between the search frequency of “The Murder Mystery Company” and “murder mystery company”. In the former it would appear that people are searching specifically for this acting group. Therefore it is recommended that the proper name of the acting group is incorporated into the website text.

The following terms are related to the other services provided by the Old Road Train:

1. special event rentals (3600)(low)
2. dinner and a show (1300)(med)
3. scenic train rides (1300) (med)

On-Site SEO Issues & Recommendations

The following are a list of recommendations for the current website in order to improve search engine visibility.

Landing Page Recommendations

- Create a consistent business name in the header to include the “Murder Mystery” brand. Such as “The Old Road and Murder Mystery Dinner Train”. This will help reduce keyword confusion for visitors and the search engines.
- Highlight the next available booking and ask customers to schedule online. An online discount could be offered for pre-booking.
- Make all contact information available in a common footer and make use of Microformats. The phone number and addresses should be visible in a common footer for all pages. This will help the user make a phone call quickly when they are ready to book a ticket. Microformats will also help search engines identify specific information such as phone numbers and addresses.
- Place more information on the home page. There is plenty of room to put important information on the home page. Consider moving important reminders such as “Reservations Required” with phone number to the home page.
- Create an RSS feed for the web site calendar. Having an available RSS feed for information that regularly changes will help users to connect the calendar to their own news feeds ensuring up-to-date information is always distributed.

Use of Images

- Replace text images with regular text. The site utilizes many images that are just text. Convert these into straight text so that search engines can index the keywords and improve page load speeds.
- Correct existing “alt” tags so that the description is unique and describes the image. For example, the home page features a rotating image and every one of the images has the description of “Old Road Dinner Train Photo Loop”. An example of a better description may be “Judy serves a bottle of wine aboard the dining car”.
- Rename image files to better suit description. Most image files are using an underline dash “_” instead of a hyphen “-” in the file names. Current best practice is to use the hyphen to make phrases more clear to search engines. For example the image “oldroadlogo_ab.gif” would be better named “old-road-logo-ab.gif”.

Other HTML Coding Issues

- Write a “description” meta tag for each web page. Currently all web pages are missing a description in the header portion of the HTML code. The description is used when search engines display your link in a list of search results. Without this configured search engines will display the first available text it can read on a page. This is not necessarily the desired effect.
- Rename web page files to use the hyphen instead of an underline “_” dash. Just like with the image files above, web pages are best named using the hyphen “-” as well. For example, “cancellation_policy.php” should be “cancellation-policy.php”. The hyphen indicates a space in the name for a search engine.

Overall Site Configurations

- Create social media links.
 - Add widgets that display the latest postings from social media news feeds. Showing any on-going activity will help the home page remain current and invite users to engage.
 - Add widgets that allow easy one-click linking and sharing of pages for users.
- Create links back to relevant pages that have links to the website. Having reciprocal links will aid search engines when crawling the web site. The following pages were found to have links to the web site without a reciprocal link in place:
 - Lenawee County Conference & Visitors Bureau:
<http://www.visitlenawee.com/calendar.html>
 - Blissfield Model Railroad Club: <http://blissfieldmrc.org/>
 - Blissfield Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.blissfieldmainstreet.com/businesses/business-directory.html>
 - The Murder Mystery Company: <http://www.grimprov.com/michigan-murder-mystery-train-/>
 - Fun Train Rides:
<https://www.funtrainrides.com/directory.cfm?directory=MI>

- Pure Michigan:
<http://www.michigan.org/property/old-road-dinner-train-blissfield/>
- Create permanent page redirects for pages that no longer exist.
 - A few broken links were identified on external web sites:
<http://murdermysterytrain.com/blissfield.htm>
http://www.murdermysterytrain.com/blissfield_excursions.php
- Update the sitemap.xml file to purge old URLs and create permanent redirects.
 - A few broken links were identified in the sitemap.xml file:
http://www.murdermysterytrain.com/new_years_eve-spec.php
http://www.murdermysterytrain.com/santa_express.php
http://www.murdermysterytrain.com/lunch_w-Santa.php
- Submit an updated sitemap.xml file to Google and Bing to initiate website indexing.
- Identify additional broken links and create permanent redirects. Web logs and analytics reports should be created if not available. If reports are available they should be reviewed for broken links.
- Standardize web site links with either the www. or root domain name. Create permanent redirects for one domain with the use of a canonical URL.
- Create the voting widget from RailsUSA.com. The web site currently links to a business listing on RailsUSA.com. This listing service offers a voting widget that can be added to the home page and display the 4-star rating the business has.
Source: <http://www.railsusa.com/cgi-bin/links/rateit.cgi?id=264&cid=39>
- Create or claim business listings in Google Places, Bing and Yahoo and update the information. Be sure to claim both geographical locations for Blissfield and Charlotte. The Blissfield listing needs to have the phone number updated to the toll free 1-888-GO-RAIL-1 number.

Off-Site SEO Issues & Recommendations

There are currently very few inbound links to the MurderMysteryTrain.com website with the main source being the sister site abrailroad.com. The following are recommendations for improving the websites visibility through other websites and linking strategies. Special consideration has been given to the two business locations of MurderMysteryTrain.com (i.e. Blissfield and Charlotte), and are presented in separate sections.

Overall Recommendations

- Create social media pages on Twitter, Facebook and Google+. By engaging people through social media outlets the website will be linked to more often.
- Submit the website to the dmoz.org internet directory. The dmoz.org internet directory is another place to get a free link to the website and is also considered a trusted index by Google. Therefore, the presence of the website on this index will help improve search engine visibility.
- Connect to the Pure Michigan business promotion.
 - Update the information listings at Pure Michigan:
<http://www.michigan.org/property/old-road-dinner-train-blissfield/>
 and
<http://www.michigan.org/property/old-road-dinner-train-charlotte/>
 The web site URL needs to be changed to MurderMysteryTrain.com instead of OldRoadDinnerTrain.com
 The toll free number should be updated to use the advertised number 1-888-GO-RAIL-1
 The business name should also be changed to Murder Mystery Train for consistency.
 - Create events on the Pure Michigan calendar:
<http://www.michigan.org/add-event/>
- Connect to the Southern Michigan Railroad Society.
 - Create a membership listing under the "Ride to Dine" category:
<http://www.southernmichiganrailroad.com/14.html>

Blissfield Train

- Connect to the City of Blissfield government pages:

<http://www.blissfieldmichigan.gov/>

- Create a business listing on the city contact list:
http://www.blissfieldmichigan.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26
- Connect to the Blissfield Chamber of Commerce pages:
<http://www.blissfieldmainstreet.com>
 - Note: membership listing already exists with website link.
 - Add events and scheduled shows to the Chamber of Commerce calendar.
Located: <http://www.blissfieldmainstreet.com/welcome/media/calendar-of-events.html>
- Connect to the Blissfield Model Railroad Club:
<http://blissfieldmrc.org/>
 - Add comments to the Clubs' blog postings where relevant including a link back to the web site.
 - Write special guest blog posts for the Clubs' web site about events, awards, discount periods, or special activities. Include the website links.
 - Add the Clubs' RSS feed to the murdermysterytrain.com home page.
 - Correct the link given on the Clubs' Blogroll. The link on the Clubs' site is "http://www.murdermysterytrain.com/blissfield_excursions.php", if possible a request should be made to correct the link. See also recommendations regarding permanent redirects on page 7.
- Connect to the Adrian Area Chamber of Commerce (AACC):
<http://www.adrianareachamber.com/>
 - Create a business listing in the AACC Directory:
<http://www.adrianareachamber.com/directory/>
 - Add events to the AACC online calendar:
<http://www.adrianareachamber.com/events/category/community-events/month/>
- Connect to the Lenawee County Conference Visitors Bureau (LCVB):
<http://www.visitlenawee.com>
 - Include the LCVB Twitter handle when posting Blissfield train events on Twitter.

Twitter handle: @Lenawee_Fun

- Create a listing in the LCVB Visitor Guide. This includes a business listing and website link on their web site.
- Correct the link given in the LCVB Dining guide:
<http://www.visitlenawee.com/page14.html>
 The link is pointing to a broken link "<http://murdermysterytrain.com/blissfield.htm>", if possible request to change the link to point to the main home page. See also recommendations regarding permanent redirects on page 7.

Charlotte Train

- Connect to the City of Charlotte government pages.
 - Connect and post to the official City of Charlotte Facebook page.
 Located: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/City-of-Charlotte-Michigan-City-Managers-Office/177644648192>
 - Add events and scheduled shows to the official City of Charlotte Wiki page.
 Located: <http://www.charlottemi.org/category/downtown/>
- Connect to the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce pages.
 - Create a membership listing in the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce business directory. Located: <http://www.micharlotte.org/member-directory>
 - Connect and post to the official Charlotte Chamber of Commerce Facebook page. Located: <https://www.facebook.com/charlottechamberofcommerce>
- Create a sponsor listing at the Charlotte Performing Arts Center:
<http://www.cpacpresents.com/sponsors/>
- Connect to the Greater Lansing Michigan Conventions & Visitors Bureau.
 - Create a membership listing in the business directory. Located:
<http://www.lansing.org/membership/member-search/>
 - Create calendar items in the Events listings. Located:
<http://www.lansing.org/events/>