



Beginner's Guide to SEO



AtHomeNet

Community Association Web Sites
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3 - What is SEO?

Page 3 - A Brief Overview: How SEO Operates

Page 12 – Homepage Search Engine Optimization

Page 14 - Master Your Keywords

Page 18 - 20 SEO Copywriting Hints

Page 20 - Google Analytics

Page 22 - Links to More Information and Resources

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What is SEO?

SEO is the active practice of optimizing a web site by improving internal and external aspects in order to increase the traffic the site receives from search engines. Firms that practice SEO can vary; some have a highly specialized focus while others take a more broad and general approach. Optimizing a web site for search engines can require looking at so many unique elements that many practitioners of SEO (SEOs) consider themselves to be in the broad field of website optimization (since so many of those elements intertwine).

This guide is designed to describe all areas of SEO - from discovery of the terms and phrases that will generate traffic, to making a site search engine friendly to building the links and marketing the unique value of the site/organization's offerings.

Why does my company/organization/website need SEO?

The majority of web traffic is driven by the major commercial search engines - [Yahoo!](#), [MSN](#), [Google](#) (although AOL gets nearly 10% of searches, their engine is powered by Google's results). If your site cannot be found by search engines or your content cannot be put into their databases, you miss out on the incredible opportunities available to websites provided via search - people who want what you have visiting your site. Whether your site provides content, services, products or information, search engines are a primary method of navigation for almost all Internet users.

Search queries, the words that users type into the search box which contain terms and phrases best suited to your site carry extraordinary value. Experience has shown that search engine traffic can make (or break) an organization's success. Targeted visitors to a website can provide publicity, revenue and exposure like no other. Investing in SEO, whether through time or finances, can have an exceptional rate of return.

Why can't the search engines figure out my site without SEO help?

Search engines are always working towards improving their technology to crawl the web more deeply and return increasingly relevant results to users. However, there is and will always be a limit to how search engines can operate. Whereas the right moves can net you thousands of visitors and attention, the wrong moves can hide or bury your site deep in the search results where visibility is minimal. In addition to making content available to search engines, SEO can also help boost rankings, so that content that has been found will be placed where searchers will more readily see it. The online environment is becoming increasingly competitive and those companies who perform SEO will have a decided advantage in visitors and customers.

How Search Engines Operate

Search engines have a short list of critical operations that allows them to provide relevant web results when searchers use their system to find information.

1. Crawling the Web

Search engines run automated programs, called "bots" or "spiders" that use the hyperlink structure of the web to "crawl" the pages and documents that make up the World Wide Web. Estimates are that of the approximately 20 billion existing pages, search engines have crawled between 8 and 10 billion.

2. Indexing Documents

Once a page has been crawled, it's contents can be "indexed" - stored in a giant database of documents that makes up a search engine's "index". This index needs to be tightly managed, so that requests which must search and sort billions of documents can be completed in fractions of a second.

3. Processing Queries

When a request for information comes into the search engine (hundreds of millions do each day), the engine retrieves from its index all the document that match the query. A match is determined if the terms or phrase is found on the page in the manner specified by the user. For example, a search for [car and driver magazine](#) at Google returns 8.25 million results, but a search for the same phrase in quotes ("[car and driver magazine](#)") returns only 166 thousand results. In the first system, commonly called "Findall" mode, Google returned all documents which had the terms "car" "driver" and "magazine" (they ignore the term "and" because it's not

useful to narrowing the results), while in the second search, only those pages with the exact phrase "car and driver magazine" were returned. Other advanced operators (Google has a [list of 11](#)) can change which results a search engine will consider a match for a given query.

4. **Ranking Results**

Once the search engine has determined which results are a match for the query, the engine's algorithm (a mathematical equation commonly used for sorting) runs calculations on each of the results to determine which is most relevant to the given query. They sort these on the results pages in order from most relevant to least so that users can make a choice about which to select.

Although a search engine's operations are not particularly lengthy, systems like Google, Yahoo!, AskJeeves and MSN are among the most complex, processing-intensive computers in the world, managing millions of calculations each second and funneling demands for information to an enormous group of users.

Keywords and Queries

Search engines rely on the terms queried by users to determine which results to put through their algorithms, order and return to the user. But, rather than simply recognizing and retrieving exact matches for query terms, search engines use their knowledge of semantics (the science of language) to construct intelligent matching for queries.

How to Conduct Keyword Research

Keyword research is critical to the process of SEO. Without this component, your efforts to rank well in the major search engines may be mis-directed to the wrong terms and phrases, resulting in rankings that no one will ever see. The process of keyword research involved several phases:

1. **Brainstorming** - Thinking of what your customers/potential visitors would be likely to type in to search engines in an attempt to find the information/services your site offers (including alternate spellings, wordings, synonyms, etc).
2. **Surveying Customers** - Surveying past or potential customers is a great way to expand your keyword list to include as many terms and phrases as possible. It can also give you a good idea of what's likely to be the biggest traffic drivers and produce the highest conversion rates.
3. **Applying Data from KW Research Tools** - Several tools online (including [Wordtracker](#) & [Overture](#) - both described below) offer information about the number of times users perform specific searches. Using these tools can offer concrete data about trends in kw selection.
4. **Term Selection** - The next step is to create a matrix or chart that analyzes the terms you believe are valuable and compares traffic, relevancy and the likelihood of conversions for each. This will allow you to make the best informed decisions about which terms to target. SEomoz's [KW Difficulty Tool](#) can also aid in choosing terms that will be achievable for the site.

Critical Components of Optimizing a Site

Each of the following components are critical pieces to a site's ability to be crawled, indexed and ranked by search engine spiders. When properly used in the construction of a website, these features give a site/page the best chance of ranking well for targeted keywords.

Accessibility

An accessible site is one that ensures delivery of its content successfully as often as possible. The functionality of pages, validity of HTML elements, uptime of the site's server and working status of site coding and components all figure into site accessibility. If these features are ignored or faulty, both search engines and users will select other sites to visit.

The biggest problems in accessibility that most sites encounter fit into the following categories. Addressing these issues satisfactorily will avoid problems getting search engines and visitors to and through your site.

- **Broken Links** - If an HTML link is broken, the contents of the linked-to page may never be found. In addition, some surmise that search engines negatively degrade rankings on sites & pages with many broken links.
- **Valid HTML & CSS** - Although arguments exist about the necessity for full validation of HTML and CSS in accordance with [W3C guidelines](#), it is generally agreed that code must meet minimum requirements of functionality and successful display in order to be spidered and cached properly by the search engines.
- **Functionality of Forms and Applications** - If form submissions, select boxes, javascript or other input-required elements block content from being reached via direct hyperlinks, search engines may never find them. Keep data that you want accessible to search engines on pages that can be directly accessed via a link. In a similar vein, the successful functionality and implementation of any of these pieces is critical to a site's accessibility for visitors. A non-functioning page, form or code element is unlikely to receive much attention from visitors.
- **File Size** - With the exception of a select few documents that search engine consider to be of exceptional importance, web pages greater than 150K in size are typically not fully cached. This is done to reduce index size, bandwidth and load on the servers, and is important to anyone building pages with exceptionally large amounts of content. If it's important that every word and phrase be spidered and indexed, keeping file size under 150K is highly recommended. As with any online endeavor, smaller file size also means faster download speed for users - a worthy metric in its own right.
- **Downtime & Server Speed** - The performance of your site's server may have an adverse impact on search rankings and visitors if downtime and slow transfer speeds are common. Invest in high quality hosting to prevent this issue.

URLs, Title Tags & Meta Data

URLs, title tags and meta tag components are all information that describe your site and page to visitors and search engines. Keeping them relevant, compelling and accurate are key to ranking well. You can also use these areas as launching points for your keywords, and indeed, successful rankings require their use.

The URL of a document should ideally be as descriptive and brief as possible. If, for example, your site's structure has several levels of files and navigation, the URL should reflect this with folders and subfolders. Individual page's URLs should also be descriptive without being overly lengthy, so that a visitor who sees only the URL could have a good idea of what to expect on the page. Several examples follow:

Search Friendly Text

Making the visible text on a page "search-friendly" isn't complicated, but it is an issue that many sites struggle with. Text styles that cannot be indexed by search engines include:

- Text embedded in a Java Application or Macromedia Flash file
- Text in an image file - jpg, gif, png, etc
- Text accessible only via a form submit or other on-page action

If the search engines can't see your page's text, they cannot spider and index that content for visitors to find. Thus, making search-friendly text in HTML format is critical to ranking well and getting properly indexed. If you are forced to use a format that hides text from search engines, try to use the right keywords and phrases in headlines, title tags, URLs and image/file names on the page. Don't go overboard with this tactic, and never try to hide text (by making it

the same color as the background or using CSS tricks). Even if the search engines can't detect this automatically, a competitor can easily report your site for spamming and have you de-listed entirely.

Along with making text visible, it's important to remember that search engines measure the terms and phrases in a document to extract a great deal of information about the page. Writing well for search engines is both an art and a science (as SEOs are not privy to the exact, technical methodology of how search engines score text for rankings), and one that can be harnessed to achieve better rankings.

In general, the following are basic rules that apply to optimizing on-page text for search rankings:

- **Make the primary term/phrase prominent in the document** - measurements like keyword density are useless (see [kw density myth thread](#)), but general frequency can help rankings.
- **Make the text on-topic and high quality** - Search engines use sophisticated lexical analysis to help find quality pages, as well as teams of researchers identifying common elements in high quality writing. Thus, great writing can provide benefits to rankings, as well as visitors.
- **Use an optimized document structure** - the best practice is generally to follow a journalistic format wherein the document starts with a description of the content, then flows from broad discussion of the subject to narrow. The benefits of this are arguable, but in addition to SEO value, they provide the most readable and engaging informational document. Obviously, in situations where this would be inappropriate, it's not necessary.
- **Keep text together** - Many folks in SEO recommend using CSS rather than table layouts in order to keep the text flow of the document together and prevent the breaking up of text via coding. This can also be achieved with tables - simply make sure that text sections (content, ads, navigation, etc.) flow together inside a single table or row and don't have too many "nested" tables that make for broken sentences and paragraphs.

Keep in mind that the text layout and keyword usage in a document no longer carries high importance in search engine rankings. While the right structure and usage can provide a slight boost, obsessing over keyword placement or layout will provide little overall benefit.

Building a Traffic-Worthy Site

One of the most important (and often overlooked) subjects in SEO is building a site deserving of top rankings at the search engines. A site that ranks #1 for a set of terms in a competitive industry or market segment must be able to justify its value, or risk losing out to competitors who offer more. Search engines' goals are to rank the best, most usable, functional and informative sites first. By intertwining your site's content and performance with these goals, you can help to ensure its long term prospects in the search engine rankings.

Usability

Usability represents the ease-of-use inherent in your site's design, navigation, architecture and functionality. The idea behind the practice is to make your site intuitive so that visitors will have the best possible experience on the site. A whole host of features figure into usability, including:

- **Design**
The graphical elements and layout of website have a strong influence on how easily usable the site is. Standards like blue, underlined links, top and side menu bars, logos in the top, left-hand corner may seem like rules that can be bent, but adherence to these elements (with which web users are already familiar) will help to make a site usable. Design also encompasses important topics like visibility & contrast, affecting how easy it is for users to interest the text and image elements of the site. Separation of unique sections like navigation, advertising, content, search bars, etc. is also critical as users follow design cues to help them understand a

page's content. A final consideration would also take into account the importance of ensuring that critical elements in a site's design (like menus, logos, colors and layout) were used consistently throughout the site.

- **Information Architecture**

The organizational hierarchy of a site can also strongly affect usability. Topics and categorization impact the ease with which a user can find the information they need on your site. While an intuitive, intelligently designed structure will seamlessly guide the user to their goals, a complex, obfuscated hierarchy can make finding information on a site disturbingly frustrating.

- **Navigation**

A navigation system that guides users easily through both top-level and deep pages and makes a high percentage of the site easily accessible is critical to good usability. Since navigation is one of a website's primary functions, provide users with obvious navigation systems: breadcrumbs, alt tags for image links, and well written anchor text that clearly describes what the user will get if they click a link. Navigation standards like these can drastically improve usability performance.

- **Functionality**

To create compelling usability, ensure that tools, scripts, images, links, etc., all function as they are intended and don't provide errors to non-standard browsers, alternative operating systems or uninformed users (who often don't know what/where to click).

- **Accessibility**

Accessibility refers primarily to the technical ability of users to access and move through your site, as well as the ability of the site to serve disabled or impaired users. For SEO purposes, the most important aspects are limiting code errors to a minimum and fixing broken links, making sure that content is accessible and visible in all browsers and without special actions.

- **Content**

The usability of content itself is often overlooked, but its importance cannot be overstated. The descriptive nature of headlines, the accuracy of information and the quality of content all factor highly into a site's likelihood to retain visitors and gain links.

- Overall, usability is about gearing a site towards the potential users. Success in this arena garners increased conversion rates, a higher chance that other sites will link to yours and a better relationship with your users (fewer complaints, lower instance of problems, etc.). For improving your knowledge of usability and the best practices, I recommend Steve Krug's exceptionally impressive book, "[Don't Make Me Think](#)"; possibly the best \$30 you can spend to improve your website

Link Bait

When attempting to create the most link-worthy content, thinking outside the box and creating a document, tool or service that's truly revolutionary can provide a necessary boost. Even on corporate image or branding sites for small companies, a single, exciting piece of content that gets picked up en masse by your web community is worth a small fortune in public relations and exposure. Better still, the links you earn with an exciting release stay with your site for a long time, providing search visibility long after the event itself has been forgotten.

With content that generates links becoming such a valuable commodity, creating solely for the purpose of gaining links has become a popular practice for talented SEOs. In order to capitalize on this phenomenon, it's necessary to brainstorm. Below are some initial ideas that can help you build the content you need to generate great links.

- **Free Tools**
Automated tools that query data sources, combine information or conduct useful calculations are eminently link worthy. Think along the lines of mortgage calculators and site-checking tools, then expand into your particular area of business/operation.
- **Web 2.0 Applications**
Although the term Web 2.0 is more of a buzzword than a technicality, applications that fit the feature set described by the [O'Reilly document](#) do get a fantastic number of links from the web community and followers of this trend. Think mashups, maps, communities, sharing, tagging, RSS and blogs.
- **Collaborative Work Documents**
Working in concert with others is a good way to produce content more quickly and with generally higher quality. If you can get high-profile insiders or several known persons in an industry to collaborate, your chances for developing "link-bait" substantially increase.
- **Exposes of Nefarious Deeds**
Writing a journalistic-style exposé detailing the misdeeds of others (be they organizations, websites, individuals or companies) can generate a lot of links and traffic if done in a professional manner (and before anyone else). Make sure you're very careful with these types of actions, however, as the backlash can be worse than the benefit if your actions provoke the wrong type of response.
- **Top 10 Lists**
Numbered lists (of tips, links, resources, etc.), particularly those that rank items, can be a great way to generate buzz. These lists often promote discussion and thus, referencing.
- **Industry-Related Humor**
Even the most serious of industries can use a bit of humor now and again. As with exposés, be cautious not to offend (although that too can merit mentions) - use your knowledge of stereotypes and history inside your market to get topical laughs and the links will be yours.
- **Reviews of Events**
Industry gatherings, from pubcrawls to conferences to speeches and seminars, can all garner great links with a well-done review. Write professionally, as a journalist, and attempt to use as many full names as possible. It's also wise to link out to all the folks you mention, as they will see the links in their referral logs and come check you out.
- **Interviews with Well-Known Insiders**
Anyone inside an industry whose name frequently appears in that industry's internal press is a great candidate for an interview. Even if it's a few short questions over email, a revealing interview can be a great source of links and esteemed professionals are likely to answer requests even from smaller sources as they can benefit from the attention, too.
- **Surveys or Collections of Data**
Offering large collections of industry data culled from polling individuals, an online survey or simply researching and aggregating data can provide a very link-worthy resource.
- **Film or Animation**
Particularly in industries where video clips or animations are rare (i.e. Geology, not Movie Reviews), a high quality, entertaining or informative video or animation can get more than a few folks interested.
- **Charts, Graphs or Spreadsheets**
These standard business graphics should certainly include analysis and dissection, but can provide a good source of links if promoted and built properly.

- **High Profile Criticism**
Similar to the exposé system, well-written critiques of popular products, companies, sites or individuals in a sector have the ability to pull in quite a few links from folks who agree and disagree.
- **Contests, Giveaways and Competitions**
Giving away prizes or public awards (even if they're just website graphics) can get a lot of online folks interested and linking.
- **Trend-Spotting**
Identifying a story ahead of the crowd is commonly called "scooping" in journalism. Do this online, and all (or many) blog posts on the subject will reference your site as the first to "call it."
- **Advice from Multiple Experts**
If you're creating an article that offers advice, pulling opinions from the well-known experts in the industry is a great way to make sure links flow your way. The experts themselves will often be inclined to link.

There are dozens of other great ways to get bloggers, writers and website editors in your field to add links to your site. Imagine yourself as an industry blogger, seeking to cover the most exciting, unique trends and pages in the sector. If this individual stumbled across your content, would they be likely to write about it? If the answer is yes, it qualifies as link-bait.

Growing a Site's Popularity

While developing a great website is half of the SEO equation, the other half is promotion. Search engines are very particular about growing their ability to detect artificial manipulation and link spam, so effective SEOs who want to promote sites to the fullest extent must use natural, organic link building processes in order to have success.

The techniques and approaches described below are all ultimately designed to improve search engine rankings by growing the number and quality of links that point to a website. However, each also offers natural growth of your user base and provides visitors that come through systems other than search engines. Strangely, although the goal of SEO is better search rankings, the best sites in each industry often receive 50% or fewer of their total visitors from search engine. Why? Because if thousands of visitors are anxiously visiting your site via bookmarks, links and direct type-ins at the address bar, you've achieved the content and status necessary to not only be ranked exceptionally well, but have visitors that know your site and want to visit, no matter what the search engines say. This methodology is particularly valuable because a site that doesn't rely entirely on search engines for traffic, ironically, has a far better chance of getting visitors through them.

Community Building

Creating a user base that develops into a full-scale community is no easy task, but it's one of the holy grails of online marketing and promotion. The idea is to develop frequently updated content in the form of a blog, forum, wiki or other multi-user input system that can become a central reference and gathering point for a significant number of individuals in an industry.

Once a community is established, the input of individual members and coverage of events in these systems are natural sources for incoming links from bloggers and writers in the field, be they members or simply browsers. In addition, many members who run sites of their own will point to the community as their gathering place, creating even greater link value. Community building requires finesse and good online relationship skills, but the rewards are tremendous.

Press Releases and Public Relations

Influencing mainstream or niche press outlets to cover your company or its actions can be a highly effective way to drive attention to your site, which, if link worthy, can earn a fantastic number of links in short order. Press release sites like [PRNewsWire](#) and [PRWeb](#) are good starting places for driving traffic and links, and as both feed the major online news search engines ([Yahoo!](#) & [Google News](#)) they can provide high visibility as well. Optimizing press releases is a unique practice in and of itself - placement of text in the title and in visible headlines, compelling story writing and proper content structure are all important elements. One of the most touted experts in this field (Greg Jarboe) runs a site with specific advice ([SEO-PR](#)) on the subject of optimizing press releases in particular.

Beyond releases, however, is influencing journalists to write editorial news stories about your subject and including a link or mention of your site. Some of the most highly touted PR (public relations) firms in the world charge a fortune for this service, but on a small scale, it can be performed in-house. The trick is to have content and information so compelling and interesting that journalists would love to cover it. If you have the makings of a great story with a near-perfect fit for your site, email a few journalists whose work you've found to be on similar topics. Don't start with the New York Times, though. Go local, independent and friendly to increase your chances of success. For a great example of how standard PR techniques operate, read Paul Graham's [article on the effectiveness of PR firms on the web](#).

Building Personality & Reputation

The cult of personality on the Internet provides excellent opportunities for charismatic, well-written individuals to make headlines, friends and links through online networking. A variety of social interaction sites operate across industries on the web, delivering ready-made sources for building a reputation and earning links. The keys to this methodology are to provide honest, intelligent contributions to existing discussions while maintaining a connection between yourself and the communities.

Online forums are great places to start, and can frequently lead to additional venues for the engagement of your colleagues. In building a successful reputation in an online forum, honesty, integrity and openness provide the best chances to be taken seriously and seen by others as an expert on your subject matter. Forums typically offer a built-in system for referring folks to your site - the signature link. Although debate exists on whether search engines count these links for ranking purposes, there can be little doubt about their effectiveness in driving forum visitors to your site. One last tip for forums is to use a single link to your site in your signature - ensuring that people identify you with one unique online property, rather than several. Combining these effective techniques of forum posting and signature links with blogging can also be very valuable.

In addition to forums, outlets like blog comments (which frequently use the "nofollow" attribute, and are thus valuable for live visitors but not search engines), ICQ Channels, chatrooms, Google groups and privately hosted boards or chatrooms can all serve a similar purpose. Stay consistent in each format - using the same voice, avatar (the accompanying photo on many forums) and username in order to build reputation and recognition.

Conclusion: Implementing an SEO Strategy

The process of SEO is not easy to tackle, largely because so many pieces of a site factor into the final results. Promoting a site that writers on the web are unlikely to link to is as deadly as creating a fantastic website no one will see. SEO is also a long-term process, both in application and results - those who expect quick rankings after completing a few suggestions in this guide will be deeply disappointed. Search engines can often be frustratingly slow to respond to improvements that will eventually garner significant boosts in traffic.

Patience is not the only virtue that should be used for successful SEO. The strategy itself must have a strong foundation in order to succeed. The best site's adhere strictly to these guidelines:

1. **Unique Content** - Something that has never before been offered on the web in terms of depth, quality or presentation (i.e. a unique value proposition)
2. **Access to an Adoptive Community** - Connections or alliances with people/websites in an existing online community that is ready to accept, visit and promote your offering
3. **Link-Friendly Formatting** - Even the best content may be unlikely to be linked to if it displays ads, particularly those that break up the page content or pop-up when a visitor comes to the site. Use discretion in presenting your material and remember that links are one of the most valuable commodities a site/page can get and they'll last far longer than a pop-up ad's revenue.
4. **Monetization Plan** - Intelligent systems for monetizing powerful content must exist, or bandwidth, hosting and development costs will eventually overrun your budget.
5. **Market Awareness** - If your site is targeting highly competitive terms you should make available, an online marketing budget, including funds for link buying, and hire or consult with someone experienced in bringing newer sites to the top of the SERPs.

If you take these steps and have a robust knowledge of the methods described in this guide, you are ready to begin an SEO campaign.

Homepage SEO

Getting more traffic to your business starts with your homepage search engine optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to your website from search engines via natural or "organic" search results. Usually, the earlier a site is presented in the search results or the higher it "ranks", the more searchers will visit that site.

From a marketing perspective, you want your site to appear first and frequently in the first 30 sites that pop up when someone does a search for the services you provide, without you actually having to pay for it. The main way this is determined is by how many times your company name in tandem with keywords that describe the services you provide and where and how you provide them appear within the content of your site and behind the scenes in your site's Meta tags. It all starts with your home page, which should have a healthy dosage of these terms. The more relevant content you have on your home page, the more chances you have to get your keywords in without being too excessive, as Google and others will penalize you for blatant excessive keyword use.

The sample Management Company Home Page below is designed to be an example and a guide for you in how to accomplish getting your keywords in within the parameters established by the major search engines. The landing page text below is also scattered with a few helpful tips as to how to get yourself at the top of the list. Search Engine Optimization is an ongoing effort, which will require tweaking from time to time; so make it a habit to practice and maintain good keyword placement and relevant content to forward your SEO by leaps and bounds.

(General Property management)

(Keywords: Management Company, Homeowners Association Management, Condo Association Management, Community Management, Management Website, (whatever others you deem fit that you'd like your company name to be searched on and list in the top 3)

(INSERT YOUR COMPANY/ NAME HERE) as title

(your management company) is a full service Management Company specializing in a variety of property management services for Homeowners Associations, Condo Associations, and properties seeking the highest level of management company service and representation.

Effective Community Management is becoming an increasingly more challenging and highly competitive field that requires a fresh new approach to meet the needs of Homeowner Associations and Condo Associations in America today. With per capita population growing and millions of new homes, condos and other community developments nearing completion, your Management Company is not simply a service provider. but often times is the face of your community, and the voice of it's residents.

(Your management company) is dedicated to empowering every Community, Condo, and Homeowner Association we represent with the highest level of service, technology, and professional Community property management expertise imaginable.

(Your management company) has been serving forward thinking communities for (however long) in the (whatever area).

Please insert some of your company history here for example,

(Brighton Management was established by local entrepreneur Howard Kennedy Brighton III in 1994. Armed with over 6 years experience in the real estate field and an inspired sense of community dedication, Brighton was determined to create a full service management company that put the needs of the property manager and the residents of each community first. The Brighton mantra was to provide every client a level of property management service with the

same vigilance, professionalism, expertise, and attention to detail that one would provide the community in which they reside within....etc)

(Add product and or service details here, paying attention to using your keywords whenever possible...for example:

Brighton management offers several property management plans designed to fit the budget and the needs of Community Associations, Homeowner Associations, and property management clients of any size and type. The Brighton promise is to successfully identify and satisfy all of the professional needs of every property management client without inhibition in the most cost effective and timely method possibly.

Insert plan and pricing details here specific to your company

An FAQ or customer quotes area here is also helpful to get your company name on the page more as well as your keywords)

To take a property management tour (or survey or whatever you offer) please click here or contact Brighton Property Management at (***)-276-2836, or feel free to email us at [Brighton info@Brighton.com](mailto:info@Brighton.com)

To request a free Brighton Property management packet which contains plans, information, and pricing for General Property and Real Estate Management, Condominium Management, or Homeowners Association Management; please click here or send a request to Packets@Brightonmanagement.com.

Master Your Keywords

Organize Your Keyword Research

Too often, webmasters either perform no keyword research, or do their research on an ad hoc basis. As a result, they miss out on many opportunities to drive more traffic to their sites. In this article, I'll explain why planning is so essential and should be closely aligned to your business strategy.

Good planning and a systematic approach will allow you to get the best results from your keyword research. Don't dive straight into a project! Take the time to think it through and understand exactly what you're trying to achieve before you start work. People who think about keyword research before jumping in are much more likely to spot and exploit major opportunities.

Organizing your Keyword Research

Why do we need to conduct keyword research? Can't you just publish useful content? Won't people find it anyway?

If you simply guess at what people are looking for, you take the very real risk that you'll be wrong. Why take that risk when keyword research can give you such tremendous insight into what people are really looking for?

Henry Ford once said, "If there is any great secret of success in life, it lies in the ability to put yourself in the other person's place and to see things from his point of view."

Of course, Ford wasn't writing specifically about keyword research -- but he could well have been. To perform keyword research properly you must put yourself into your customer's shoes.

If you do your research properly, not only will you be able to optimize your existing web site content, but you'll also be able to tap into an endless stream of ideas for new content that you know people will be interested in. You may even uncover valuable niche markets for your existing products as well as some clever ideas for new products.

The aim of keyword research is to help you make more money from the content you've got at the moment, and lay the foundations for creating even greater profits in the future.

So what's the basic approach you should take for a keyword research project? Here's how I approach the challenge of keyword research.

Step 1: Start with a Good List of Seed Keywords

Seed keywords are the words you use to start a keyword research project. In themselves, they're not very useful, but the directions they take you in can produce a rich source of money-making keywords.

Suppose I'm researching keywords for an information site on family business. 'Succession' might be a promising seed keyword, because it leads me to 'succession disputes,' 'conflict resolution,' 'mediation,' and so on.

The greater the number of promising seed keywords you have at the start of a project, the more comprehensive your final results will be.

Jotting down notes will get you started, but it won't give you anything near a full list of possibilities -- you'll need to do something to stimulate your creativity.

When I start a new project, my favourite method is to get myself out of the office and deliberately give myself some thinking time.

I'll go to the nearest newsstand or magazine store and buy three or four magazines in the area that I'm researching. Then I'll sit down in a coffee shop and read through the magazines looking for good articles. I want to understand the subject area and the important issues or ideas that are currently being discussed.

I'll pick the best of the articles I've found and go through them in detail. I'll keep a notebook by my side and jot down the main ideas and concepts that are covered in the articles, and list what I think might be important keywords.

From this exercise I'll generate a list of at least 20 seed keywords. Now's the time to go online and do some real keyword research.

Step 2: Find Related Keywords

We're obviously very proud of the service we can offer webmasters at Wordtracker, and one of my favorite features is the fact that Wordtracker provides two main types of keywords: 'related keywords' and 'long tail keywords.'

Related keywords are words that are often used in a particular subject area. For example, related keywords for 'back pain' would include 'sciatica' and 'spinal problems'; related keywords for 'home business' would include 'weekend entrepreneur' or 'working from home'. (These examples come from Wordtracker's Keyword Universe tool.)

Long tail keywords for 'back pain' would be 'back pain treatment,' 'lower back pain,' and 'exercise for back pain'; long tail keywords for 'home business' would include 'home business opportunities,' 'how to set up a home business,' or 'home business support.' (These examples come from Wordtracker's Keyword Researcher tool.)

I'll take those seed keywords that I collected from my magazines and look for 'related keywords' for each in turn. You may be tempted to delve into detail, but you should resist this temptation for now. Find as many related concepts as possible -- you're not looking for the first right answer, but for many right answers.

If I'm researching a web site on buying property overseas, I'll not only be interested in keywords such as 'homes abroad,' 'property abroad,' and 'international property' but also 'international mortgages,' 'global real estate,' 'property rights,' 'buying off plan,' 'health insurance abroad,' and 'expatriates.'

Always look for niche opportunities. Keyword research is one of the most effective ways to identify niche markets that others have failed to recognize.

This process should give you hundreds of related keywords. You can now test their popularity -- how often each word is searched for on average every day. These numbers, together with your own assessment of how important the keywords are for your business, allow you to prioritize your keyword lists.

Step 3: Map Out Your Web Content Structure

You can use the keywords to map out the content of your site. Group them into themes -- for example, 'legal pitfalls' might be grouped with 'property rights' as part of a major section on the laws of buying and owning property overseas.

How you perform this grouping task is entirely up to you. You should aim to have groups that reflect your products and services and are targeted to specific target markets. Start with 6 to 10 themes, then build on this later.

Step 4: Find Long Tail Keywords

Now's the time to get into detail. The keywords you've grouped into themes are the starting point for digging into the long tail. Take each of the keywords you've researched in turn and analyze how they're used in longer search terms. For example, 'property abroad' is used in these longer search terms:

- property for sale abroad
- property abroad
- investment property abroad
- buying property abroad
- mortgages to buy property abroad
- mortgages second property abroad
- residential property investments abroad
- eco investment property abroad
- resale property abroad

Next, look at the daily search counts to get an idea of the relevant importance of each term. Using this technique, you can very quickly build up a matrix of hundreds, if not thousands, of keywords.

Step 5: Create Your Detailed Content Plan

Now start looking for specific content ideas. I'll often go back to my original notes and follow this formula to create content ideas:

Hot issue + Popular keyword = Content Title

If, for example, you know that working with local estate agents and officials is a hot issue, you could combine this with the keyword 'homes abroad' to create the content title:

'Legal pitfalls in buying a home abroad'

Don't be afraid of highly competitive terms. Include them in your web site copy, even if you have no immediate chance of ranking well for them -- you're laying the foundations for the future.

Good keyword research helps map out a detailed content plan. This means that you won't waste time on irrelevant content, but will focus on highly relevant content ideas that will bring the traffic you're after.

Keyword Research Complete?

Now that you've established your focus, you're ready to start creating your content. But your keyword research needs to be an ongoing process. Once you've published your pages, you need to monitor your performance, make adjustments accordingly, and then systematically expand the keywords that you rank well for. We'll look at how to do that in future articles in this series.

Credit Source:
Ken McGaffin

20 SEO Copywriting Hints

1. Research your keywords – use online tools to check search volumes and competition. The higher the search volumes the harder it will be to rank well, but the more traffic you will get if you rank well!
2. Make sure your page content matches your Title descriptions and Meta data. The titles and Meta data should be as accurate as possible to describe the content.
3. Ensure your H1 tag contain your most desired keyword.
4. Make your H2 and H3 tags contain other important keywords that perhaps you could receive long tailed traffic from (must be relevant to industry).
5. Highlight occasional keywords and phrases in bold to add emphasis for visitors.
6. Look at your source code, see what content the spiders will see first and add value to this content, for example; if it's a link – add a keyword / phrase, if its copy – add keyword or phrase to sentence.
7. Add keywords to your link descriptions within text copy, avoid “click here” and “read more” descriptions, but again make it relevant to the destination.
8. If you use any references to external websites also provide a link pointing to the source, this adds credibility to the content.
9. A sales page will not help you rank for a keyword, be informative and provide good detail on a page, include a click to action to your sales page if necessary.
10. Do not over use keywords in your individual page content. I have seen pages include a 3 keyword phrase more than 30 times on a single page and be placed 3 pages behind websites with 10-15 keywords on.
11. Make your content readable for your users not just the spiders, after all it's the users you want to impress.
12. Include your targeted keyword and phrase in the first sentence – although there is no real proof this helps I personally believe it does.
13. When writing around images or using images to backup your copy, give an accurate description of what the image is for or what it refers to.
14. Be sure to add your companies address on the site, either on the contact page or elsewhere.
15. Don't use text under 8pts to write your main copy - no one enjoys squinting (yes I know my text is quite small).

16. Use recognizable fonts – not everyone has the same font's as you!
17. Make sure you don't duplicate content throughout the website; each page should be unique, excluding the navigation etc.
18. Include keywords in Alt descriptions of images but don't stuff them silly people!
19. Use <http://validator.w3.org> to check your website once the copy is added.
20. The best way to write good SEO friendly copy is to use your common sense more than anything. Be your own judge on what you think visitors will want to see, at the same time remember that spiders and bots do need to see your target keywords to make you visible in the searches!

Credit Source:
Matt Ridout

Google Analytics

Website: <http://www.google.com/analytics/>

Google Analytics offers a host of compelling features and benefits for everyone from senior executives and advertising and marketing professionals to site owners and content developers.

To put it simply a simple HTML code snippet is placed on a website which will track users coming to your sites. Based on this information gathered actions can be taken to better insure a website and its content can be located by Search Engines. Some features it consists of are:

Fast Implementation

Paste the Google Analytics tracking code into each of your website pages and tracking begins immediately.

Keyword and Campaign Comparison

Track and compare all your ads, email newsletters, affiliate campaigns, referrals, paid links, and keywords on Google and other search engines.

Custom Dashboards

No more digging through reports. Put all the information you need on a custom Dashboard that you can email to others.

AdWords Integration

Buy keywords on Google AdWords and use Google Analytics to learn which keywords are most profitable to your business.

Internal Site Search

Find out how your visitors search your site, what they look for, and where they end up.

Benchmarking

Find out whether your site usage metrics underperform or outperform those of your industry vertical. Opt-in benchmarking compares your key metrics against aggregate performance metrics while preserving the confidentiality of your data.

Trend and Date Slider

Compare time periods and select date ranges without losing sight of long term trends.

Ecommerce Tracking

Trace transactions to campaigns and keywords, get loyalty and latency metrics, and identify your revenue sources.

Funnel Visualization

Find out which pages result in lost conversions and where your would-be customers go.

Site Overlay

See traffic and conversion information for every link as you browse your site. (no download required).

Email reports

Schedule or send ad-hoc personalized report emails that contain exactly the information you want to share.

GeoTargeting

Find out where your visitors come from and identify your most lucrative geographic markets.

To go further one can use Google Ad Words which is a paid service to better enhance a websites presence in search engines To read more about Ad Words places visit <https://adwords.google.com/select/Login>

You create your ads

You create ads and choose keywords, which are words or phrases related to your business.

Your ads appear on Google

When people search on Google using one of your keywords, your ad may appear next to the search results. Now you're advertising to an audience that's already interested in you.

You attract customers

People can simply click your ad to make a purchase or learn more about you. You don't even need a webpage to get started - Google will help you create one for free. It's that easy!

Credit Source:

Google – www.google.com

Links to More Information and Resources

Daily Blogs on SEO/M

- [Threadwatch](#) - A popular community blog on all things search
- [SearchEngineWatch Blog](#) - SEW, operated by Danny Sullivan, is one of the most respected sources for SEO and search news inside and outside the webdev community
- [SEO](#)
- [StuntDubl](#) - Todd Malicoat's SEO tips and tricks journal
- [Cre8pc Blog](#) - Kim Krause Berg presents on usability, marketing, webdev and the search markets
- [Jim Boykin's SEO Thoughts](#) - The owner of WeBuildPages, a reknowned development and SEO shop, Jim's blog is geared to industry insiders and those who want an expert view
- [Matt Cutts](#) - One of Google's search engineers, Matt is Google's official representative to the SEO world
- [SERoundtable](#) - Barry Schwartz's roundup of all things search related
- [SEOBook](#) - Aaron Wall's accompaniment to his excellent book on SEO
- [Link Building Blog](#) - Patrick Gavin and Andy Hagans of Text Link Ads combine for great advice on the subject of where and how to get links to your site
- [Search Engine Journal](#) - Loren Baker's collection of posts and guest writers about events and phenomenon in SEO/M
- [Marketing Pilgrim](#) - Andy Beal's journal of the search engine space and SEO events
- [Google Blogoscoped](#) - Philipp Lenssen's journal of Google events, with an SEO bend

Keyword Research

- [Wordtracker](#) - Keyword research software
- [Overture Tools](#) - Measuring keyword popularity
- [Digitalpoint KW Tool](#) - Free data from Overture & Wordtracker (though shortened in each)
- [Keyword Research Services](#) - From Dan Thies; \$100 reports are worth thousands
- [Dan Thies' Blog at Sitepoint](#) - Coverage of a range of SEO issues with a focus on KW research
- [Measuring Keyword Competition](#) - HighRankings Thread (9 Pages)

Content Writing for the Web

- [50 Writing Tools](#) - from Poynter Online
- [Write Effectively for the Web](#) - from the LifeHacker blog
- [Resurrect Your Writing](#) - from Digital Web Magazine
- [Writing, Briefly](#) - from Paul Graham
- [The Nitty-Gritty of Writing for Search Engines](#) - from Jill Whalen (of HighRankings), it's \$50 but worth every penny

Press Releases

- [Optimization of Press Releases](#) - Paid services from SEO-PR
- [Writing for the Press](#) - From Michael Iwalaski in the HighRankings Newsletter
- [Online PR and Press Release Optimization](#) - by Lee Odden at ISEdb
- [Press Release Service](#) - From PRWeb (free and paid options)

Credit Source:

Beginner's Guide to SEO by Rand Fishkin of SEOMoz.org