

Search Engine Optimization Guide

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Not by any sense of the word is search engine marketing a secret. However there are secrets and tricks to search engine marketing. In this article we'll try to successfully educate you on the different factors which contribute to SEO, SEO is becoming a 'Hot Word' in Internet marketing

In case you don't already know, SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. It is a vital part of any online marketers quest for success. It means preparing your website with the 'right ingredients' for the search engines to 'like' it. If they 'like' your site you can expect to get hundreds if not thousands of free visitors from them.

In fact some research has found that at least 65% of traffic to websites comes from search engines. This is just a general figure and of course varies depending on the other marketing methods you employ, however this figure does give you an indication of how important SEO is to any online business. OK now we'll go through the different factors which affect your sites ranking. First things first! Choosing the right keywords Keyphrases

With most of the big 'useful' engines now operating express submission services you will want to spend your dollars wisely. Do You want:

- Highly targeted visitors?
- Very good visitor to sale ratios?
- Lots of profits?

If you answered yes to these questions, then forget about choosing the rights keywords, realize the benefit of keyphrases. This approach is likely to generate much higher click through of highly qualified visitors.

Let me explain this to you - How many people do you think search for the word music? "A lot" - How many results come up for music "A lot". What do you think your chances of appearing near the top are, well I'll answer that one for you. SLIM TO VERY SLIM. Not to worry though because visitors who click-through to a site after searching for music are not highly targeted, you don't know if they're searching for:

- music tickets
- music lessons
- music CDs
- music related equipment
- music software
- music news
- etc., etc., etc.

It's so vague that your time and effort would be better spent on other methods.

However if a search engine visitor types in 'Special Offer Music CDs' and you have targeted that keyphrase in prominent places where search engines look on your website, you have a much better chance of appearing near the top of the pile. Also if in fact the visitor clicks through on your listing, you are much more likely to make a sale, because you have exactly what the searcher was looking to buy. The more complex your keywords are the more highly qualified visitors you are going to get from the search engines. Qualified visitors = Sales! Sales! Sales

Try also to regionalize your keyphrases if possible. This will of course only apply to certain websites. What I mean by this is that if you operate out of a specific location target that location and the surrounding areas in some of your keyphrases. This helps to improve the quality of your visitors.

Example: Imagine that the biggest & best car dealer in Detroit happens to have a website, but they're unwise and their title tag is as follows:#1 Car Sales Dealer and Garage in America.

They think this will bring them lots of visitors because it has an alphabetically high start (#1) and has decent keywords, they're probably right. The visitors it does bring however will not exactly be targeted. A visitor from the other side of America could visit their website, are they going to travel across America to buy a car from someone just because they

visited their website? No.

Now let's say a man from Detroit is looking to buy a new car. The dealer he bought his two previous cars from has closed down and he doesn't know of any other dealers around. He therefore decides to use the Internet to look for "Detroit car dealers" .

The likelihood is that the above car dealers competition will show up because he or she has used a title like this: #1 Detroit car dealer, garage and sales website.

Obviously the man looking to buy a car in Detroit is going to be interested in the site. It's for these reasons that if it's appropriate for your business I recommend that you always regionalize with your keyphrases.

Imagine you don't know what words to target in your keyphrases, well there's a simple solution. Visit <http://www.wordtracker.com> and do their free trial. Enter in a word that you think people searching for your site will enter on the search engines and wordtracker will give you a list of 15 related words and keyphrases. These are what you'll use to make your keyphrases. Now you should know what keyphrases you want to rank well on in the search engines, but where do you put these on your website pages to improve your chances of appearing near the top of the results. Title tag

The title tag is probably the most important area of your page as far as the search engines are concerned. All search engines give relevancy to words found in the title tag.

Title tags are easy to include in webpages -

You simply put your title between two HTML title tags. Here's the HTML needed

```
<title> AKA Marketing - Internet Marketing Articles, Internet Marketing strategies, tips, tricks and secrets </title>
```

The start title tag <title> and the end title tag </title> should be placed between the <head> and </head> HTML tags of your page, these tags are at the top of all HTML pages.

OK now you know where to put it, but how do you know what to put in it. Have a look at the sample title I have included above, it targets my main keyphrases

Internet Marketing Articles

Internet Marketing Strategies

It also targets secondary keyphrases like

Internet Marketing tips

Internet Marketing tricks

Internet Marketing secrets

and reads very well which helps to attract searchers to the AKA MARKETING.com site.

Don't even think about having a title page like PAGE 1, Joe's home page, My home page or any other title that's not very descriptive because it won't help you one bit.

Take another look at my title above, obviously it has got my main words in it such as Internet Marketing Articles, strategies, tips, tricks and secrets. Since search engines often return the title in the search results, your HTML title should be both very descriptive and attractive, the example given above is.

Remember including your keywords in your title is imperative not just for getting good rankings but also to allow to searcher to mentally associate your listing with a good find, which he or she will do when they see the search query is present in your title, hence they'll be more likely to click through to your site.

You may notice I included AKA Marketing in my title tag, I did this because many search engines and directories display web sites alphabetically. Therefore, to take advantage of this, I included my website name AKA Marketing at the start of my title. A is the first letter of the alphabet, its a capital. Capitals are alphabetically higher than lower case letters, so on search engines that list sites alphabetically I will appear before sites with similar content that either have a small a or any other letter. I will also appear ahead of anyone with a capital A and a lowercase letter as their 2nd letter in their title tag because K is my 2nd letter.

I also did this because my website name matches my domain name and I personally think it is smart, catchy and very memorable so I included it in the hope people might revisit and because it makes the site seem more professional.

Regards point #1, beware not to put in characters that don't make any sense because your title not only has to be nice to search engines but also has to be nice and attractive to people, the titles do actually get read you know!.

As for the length of your title try to keep it at about 12-20 words and less than 150 characters, having more than this will

lessen the relevancy of words in the tag and therefore they will become less important to the search engines. If however you need a longer title perhaps because you're targeting a wide range of keyphrases it is advisable to put your most important keyphrases early in the tag, the reason for this is that some search engines will truncate your tag and only take a certain amount of it. Meta Tags

Meta tags like title tags are tags which are embedded in the HTML of a page. However they are not as important as title tags because only a handful of search engines use them as a factor when determining the relevancy of a page. They still must be included in all your webpages however to get maximum results from the search engines.

There are two types of meta tags which search engines look at, the meta keywords tag and the meta description tag. Simply put the keywords tag contains your keywords and keyphrases and the description tag contains a keyphrase rich description of your site.

Here's the HTML needed for the meta keywords tag.

```
<meta name="keywords" content="Internet Marketing Articles, Online Marketing tips, strategies, Internet marketing tricks, secrets, website promotion">
```

Now here's the HTML need for the meta description tag.

```
<meta name="description" content="AKA Marketing for Internet Marketing Articles, also Online Marketing strategies, tips, tricks and secrets">
```

Again these tags have to be included between the two head tags <HEAD> </HEAD>

Let's start with the keywords tag, this is where you list words and phrases related to your website theme. You will see above that I have included my main keyphrase right at the start of the tag - "Internet Marketing Articles", this is because some search engines will see words that start early in the keywords tag as more important than ones just before the end of the tag.

The search engines that use the meta keywords tag all differ when it comes to this assigning relevancy to words within the tag, but they all seem to rate pages with short to medium length keywords tag better, so I would suggest that you keep your keywords meta tag between 150 to 250 characters.

I have a lot less than 250 characters in the example keywords tag I give above this is because I do not want to dilute the importance of "Internet Marketing Articles" by including lots of words which I have not placed elsewhere on my page. Don't repeat a word more than 3-5 times in your tag because most search engines nowadays will see this as spamming and could penalize you in the form of poor ranking or complete exclusion from their database.

The reason that the keywords meta tag is not widely used by search engines is because the text in this tag cannot be seen by visitors to a website. Therefore the search engines feel this tag will be abused, by webmasters placing lots of unrelated words within it in order to get more visitors.

However using the keywords tag in conjunction with other areas of your page can help your ranking. Imagine for example if your main keyphrase was "Internet Marketing Articles" and someone typed in that phrase in a search engine that supports meta tags. The search engine would search its database, see that you have the keyphrase "Internet Marketing Articles" in your title tag and a few times in the body of your page, then it will take into account that you have "Internet marketing articles" in your keywords tag too.

So alone keywords/keyphrases in a keywords meta tag will not give you extra relevancy. It will however help to reassure search engines that a page is relevant to the words being searched for.

Regarding the meta description tag, this is what some search engines use when your site is returned in the results for a certain search term. Without it search engines could take the first few lines of code from your page, which mightn't appear so good to the searcher. Hence you should always put a short 10-20 word description of your page in this tag. Make sure your most important keywords are at the start of your description because some search engines will truncate it to suit their own needs.

Don't stuff it with keywords, it's more important for the description to sound right and professional than to have it filled with keywords. Imagine doing a search for something and the site ranked number 1 had a description filled with keywords. Would you click on it? I wouldn't. The bottom line is that description tags will be read by searchers so make sure it doesn't sound unprofessional or just plain stupid. Where else can I include my keyphrases?

The first few lines on a page are now extremely important and nearly all search engines look at these lines for keywords and phrases. A good idea is to place a slightly altered and extended version of your title tag here, which includes your targeted words once or twice.

The reason why I haven't included longer keyword rich lines at the start of my pages is that they affected the design of my site and made it look less professional, this is because I use tables. I could have put the longer keyword rich lines in at the start of my tables, but these would appear way down the HTML and wouldn't have the desired effect.

The main body of text is of course very important in establishing the relevancy of a page. You should have a keyword/keyphrase density of about 3-7%. Keyword density means the number of keywords as a percentage of total words on a page (excluding HTML tags). Don't repeat keyphrases one after another because the search engines will think you are spamming and your page will not be ranked well.

You should have section headings which contain your target words inside `` bold tags and `<h1></h1>` heading tags as most search engines will look for text in these tags and will give words inside them extra relevancy.

You should also place you target words in the ALT image tag.

```
<IMG SRC="akamarketing-logo.jpg" ALT="AKA Marketing logo - number 1 for Internet marketing articles">
```

This will help increase you keyword density somewhat, to what extent however I'm not sure.

You should also name your pages and if you can directories with your keywords in them, for example the name of this page is "search-engine-optimization-guide.html". I have separated the words with hyphens as search engines can identify them easier this way.

Another particularly useful approach is to put your keywords in the actual hyperlink text used for navigating from page to page in your site. Both of these methods will help to increase your keyword density.

You should get your own domain name too. Names can now be up to 63 characters in length, so you should get keyword rich domains as many of the big search engines have been noticed to give extra relevancy to websites with keywords in their domain name.

Well that's the end of our search engine optimization guide, if you can implement the methods you have just learned you should have no problem getting a few top 20 rankings.

Just remember to target 2 or 3 keyphrases and have these in the most important areas of your pages. These areas are listed below in order of importance.

1. Title tag.
2. First few lines of HTML code.
3. The main body - , `<h1>` tags and link text.
4. Meta tags.

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