

WHITE PAPER

Writing For The Web To Make Your Site Look Good To Search Engines.

Why Website Content Is So Important

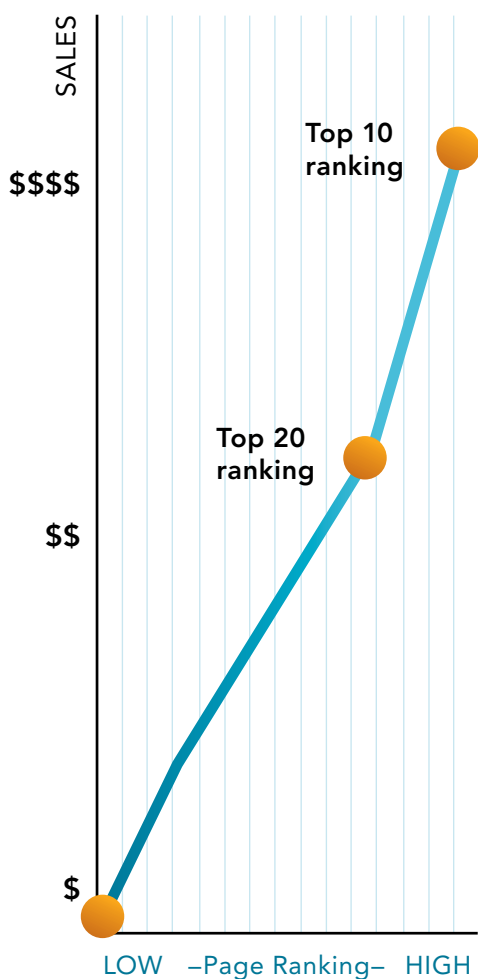
Today, it's no secret that business-to-business (B2B) buyers are turning online for solutions to clearly defined problems. They go to a search engine such as Google or Yahoo, and type in some words describing the problem, not the name of a company or product. They're actually looking for your company or product, but they just don't know it yet. **So, how do you get these buyers to find you before they find someone else?**

In short, it's your Web site content. Take a look at the Internet today—it's full of streaming video, Flash animations, special fonts and banners. Strip away all of those stunning visuals and what's left is plain, simple content. That's what matters when your future customers turn to search engines to solve their problems.

Search engines rank Web sites on results pages based on the relevance to the words entered by the person searching. Earning a high search engine ranking is more essential than ever before and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the means to this end.

Studies have shown companies that land in the second or third page rankings of a search can increase their Web site traffic by up to nine times. While top-10 rankings, or first-page listings, can generate an additional six-fold increase in traffic, the correlating impact on sales is also impressive: within the first month of being listed among the top 10 matching sites, companies averaged a 42 percent increase in sales.¹

Search engines don't look for pretty pictures; they scan Web pages for words. Creating quality, SEO-friendly content is the only way to make your pages come up higher in organic search results.



Failing to get your Website ranked in top search results equates to lost traffic for your site, and lost opportunity for your business. Proper content development can lead to better rankings, increased traffic and most importantly, increased sales.

¹Source: Thomases, Hollis. "Determining if SEO is something my business needs and how much SEO to implement." B to B Magazine Online.



Know Your Audience

Writing to your audience is true for all forms of copywriting, and writing content for the Web is no exception.

It is imperative that you nail down your target before you do anything else. Knowing who your buyer is affects not only the tone of your Web site, but the keywords you'll use to make sure they find you in their search.

Keep them on your Web page by telling them what they want to know.

Once they've found your site, the job of your Web content becomes keeping them there and telling them what they want to know. Keep in mind that people read differently online than on paper. Not only does reading from the monitor make prolonged reading less comfortable, but the back button and embedded hyperlinks make finding other options in the middle of a paragraph easy. With the click of a button, your buyer can go back to a list of links just waiting to take him to someone else's Web site.

If you don't write specifically to your prospects, you aren't going to get their business.

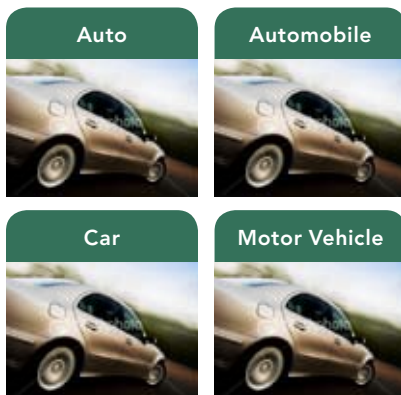
Choose The Right Keyword Phrases

Now is the time to think like a searcher. Put your brainstorming hat on and consider what keyword phrases your potential customers might use to try to find you on a Web search.

Start with a phrase you think best describes your site. It's important to focus on phrases, not single keywords. Write down everything that comes to mind, no matter how long the list gets. Include words that are semantically related. For example, if the term "car" is a key term for

Take into account that people can refer to the exact same things by different terms.

your business, you should also list related words such as auto, vehicle, automobile and motor vehicle. You can build this list by going to popular search engines, typing in your words and seeing what other relevant terms should be added.



Make sure your keyword list includes all variations of terms that are critical to your business.



Utilize keyword analysis tools to determine how Internet users typically find products and services similar to the ones you offer. Tailor your key words to match up with how your potential prospects are searching.

When your list becomes so large it's frightening, it's a good time to get critical with the keywords. How do you narrow down the list?

- 1 Eliminate obscure, hard-to-spell, easy-to-forget or highly technical words.
- 2 Get rid of incredibly long keyword phrases. Most users perform simple searches.
- 3 Target about one keyword phrase per page, so if your site is 50 pages, consider a list of 50 keyword phrases.
- 4 Avoid broader terms when a more specific keyword phrase will do. For example use "commercial building contractor" instead of "contractor."
- 5 Employ a keyword analysis tool, such as Wordtracker.com or KeywordDiscovery.com or even Google's keyword tool, to get a good idea of how likely your site will be able to compete for a keyword phrase.

Your Web Copy Is The Key

All content, no matter how it's presented, contains keywords and phrases throughout. The repetition of these keywords and phrases is what draws the attention of search engines.

So, why not just fill your site with content that features your keyword phrase over and over? This sort of content won't fool the search engines and certainly will disappoint visitors. "Keyword stuffing" is not an effective SEO strategy. Search engines know how to scan for readable, sensible content.

The goal with keyword phrases is to select terms on each page that are based on your Web site's natural content. This more conservative keyword strategy will meet search engines' latest standards and will help increase your site's ranking over time.

SEO Glossary

Title tags.

Strategic keywords that describe a specific Web page. Title tags appear in the reverse bar of a web browser, and become a Web site's text link that gets reported in search engine listings.

Meta description tags.

Tags used by Web developers to populate a Web site's description within reported search engine results.

Meta keywords tag.

All of the keywords and phrases that are relevant to the content or purpose of a particular page. Among many applicable terms, BMW could list car, luxury vehicle, automobile and motor vehicle among its keywords.

Keyword frequency.

The total number of times a keyword or phrase appears on a Web page.

Keyword density.

The percentage of times a keyword or phrase appears on a Web page compared to the total number of words on the page.

Keyword prominence.

The location of a keyword in source code of a Web page. Keyword prominence is weighted by search engines and affects ranking results.

More Keyword Considerations

Keyword frequency. Every piece of content on your site should have two or three important keyword phrases on that specific page. Use of these select keyword phrases should be limited to three times on the page.



Keyword prominence. Where your keywords appear is just as important as what those words actually are. The main keyword phrase for the page should appear right away in the title. Headings and subheadings not only break up and organize the page, they

create even better SEO. Make sure keywords are used in every subtitle. Furthermore, the main keyword phrase must appear in the first sentence of the content.

Quantity of words. A good rule of thumb is not to exceed 400 words per page. If a Web page's content can communicate a full thought or idea, or can describe a product or service with less than 400 words, then use less. If your target audience prefers longer pages, then give it to them. But, do not obsess over word count. Word count is a general guideline, not the be-all and end-all of SEO.

Keyword density. There's a lot of debate around optimum keyword density, which is defined as the percentage of keywords that can be found in the indexable text on a Web page, because search engine companies don't disclose the details of their algorithms. A search engine's measure of keyword density is believed to take into account the text components in the HTML of the page (i.e. the meta tags: title, keywords, alt text and description). So, you don't just count the words your visitor sees; you also count the words in your meta tags (defined below). **Generally, keyword density should be no more than 5.5 percent.**

Above all, your pages need to be readable. It's important that keyword phrases appear naturally and that the content remains user-friendly. Remember, SEO is not an exact science and is always changing.

Tag It To Bolster SEO

Improving SEO goes beyond just the copy on each page. Behind that copy are the text components of the HTML including titles, meta description tags and meta keyword tags.

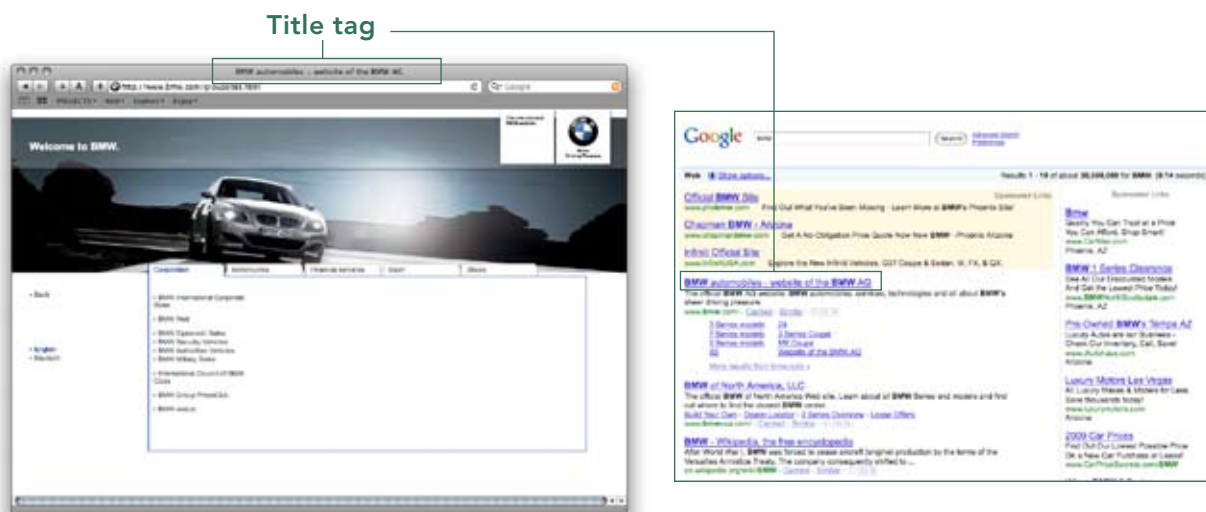
Title Tags

Today's search engines are believed to rank titles even higher than keywords. The title tag is displayed in the search engine results page. It's the link that people click on to visit your page. It also appears in the reverse bar of the browser when the Web page is viewed. Each page should have separate, descriptive titles². It's important that you do not repeat your page titles on multiple pages.

The title tag is your hook to get visitors to your Web site. If it is ineffective, you'll lose the opportunity to capture a prospects attention.

So, how do you write a compelling page title?

- Pick the strongest keyword for the page.
- Use this keyword and about five other words to clearly describe what the page is about.
- Limit the title tag to 50-75 characters.
- Use benefit statements; this is your mini headline.
- Leave your company name out of the title tag. If you must use your company name, use it at the end of the title tag.



The relevancy of words and phrases used in your site's Title Tags are imperative for placement among top search ranks.

²Source: Google's Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide, Version 1.1, 13 Nov 2008.

Meta description tag



Meta Description Tags are also important to prompt users to know whether or not your site will help them find the information they are looking for.

Meta Description Tags

It doesn't stop there. Every Web page also needs a meta description tag, which is the short explanation that appears below the title tag on search engine results pages. While the meta description tag is believed to have less impact on rankings than the title and keywords within the page's body copy, it should be thoughtfully constructed.

Consider the meta description tag as a mini ad promoting the pages content. The meta description tag should be a readable sentence or two that uses the page's keyword phrases.

To create an effective meta description tag for your page, consider these tips:

- Use the same keyword phrases as the body copy.
- Place keywords as near to the front of the tag as possible.
- Target 150-200 characters in length (the paragraph above falls into this range).
- Write it in the third person.
- Use a strong call to action.

Meta Keywords Tag

Preferred, but not mandatory, the meta keywords tag is a list of the keywords for which the page is optimized. The major search engines do not use this tag, but other smaller ones do. The meta keywords tag is sometimes useful to reinforce the keyword phrases for which the page is important, but in most search engines it will do nothing at all to improve your rankings.

In fact, repeat a particular word too often in a meta keywords tag and you could actually harm your page's chances of ranking well.

Because of this, it's important to follow a couple simple guidelines when creating a meta keywords tag:

- Use commas to separate keyword phrases.
- Combine keyword phrases that use duplicate words.
- Include up to 25 keywords or keyword phrases.

Fresh Content Is A Mandatory

Creating SEO-friendly content is a lot of work. The Internet is continuously reinventing itself as search engines change their algorithmic standards. Likewise, to stay in the game, you need to offer fresh content and fresh keywords to keep up. SEO is essentially a full-time job.

While SEO increases traffic to your Web site, marketing techniques are designed to keep traffic on your Web site and encourage purchases. The challenge is to find the balance between the two and transform your Web site into an online marketing engine.

Businesses should engage a trusted partner that understands both marketing and SEO. The right partner will not only help you to keep on top of the online world and increase your rankings, they will make your Web site content sell.

To learn more, please contact:

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