



FREE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION; TIPS FOR SUCCESS **Neil Burr, Designtec (www.designtec.co.uk)**

You may believe that optimising your website's compatibility with online search engines would be a highly expensive and technical process... However that doesn't have to be the case. To achieve greater search engine results and increase the amount of traffic being directed to your website, ultimately maximising the online presence of your business without spending a penny, be sure to follow the simple SEO guide below:



SEO tip #1 – Page Titles

Page titles have a very important impact upon SEO, and are something which can create a huge difference to the online presence of your website, incredibly simply. A common mistake is to use the same page title for every page site-wide. This greatly limits the likelihood of your web pages being found by the search engine from the keywords which the user has searched. So to increase the potential for search engines to find one of your web pages, edit your page titles individually to make them unique and relevant to the content of each web page. With a greater variety of keywords used within your page titles, your website will have far greater chances of being highly and widely ranked within search engine results.

SEO tip #2 – Headers and sub-headers

Headers are required at the top of every web page, and sub-headers are useful to break up the text on each page - helping users to find specifically what they are looking for, promptly. However in addition to these basic functions of headers and sub-headers, search engines use them in a more technical manner to recognise highly relevant search engine results. The key point to understand here is that search engines will only pay attention to headers which are set as "H1" and sub-headers which are set as "H2". These H1s and H2s will have a standard appearance, font and size; however they are noted by search engines as key pieces of information. Therefore if a user searches a phrase which is also used as a H1 or H2 within your website, it causes great potential for your web page to be highly ranked within the search results.



SEO tip #3 – Content

Content is king. While broader content used within your web pages is likely to draw more traffic to your website from a greater variety of keywords searched, it will not be beneficial to you or your business if you have a high bounce rate. Bounce rate refers to the amount of single-page visitors to your website who exit your site from the landing page because your website is not in fact relevant to their search. SEO is only worthy if your website visitors are going to be happy visitors who do not feel like you have wasted their time; so be sure that the content on your web pages is significant and relevant to your purpose. Don't go off on a tangent, it will only confuse search engines and your visitors alike.

SEO tip #4 – Alt tags

When uploading images to your site, always use Alt tags to describe the picture in brief key words. Alt tags offer alternative text to images which can prove to be highly useful in certain circumstances; for example to provide further detail of an image in instances where images cannot be displayed (for example to people who use text-only browsers), to enhance user experience for those with disabilities who are using a screen reader, and to describe the link in hyperlinked images to give an insight into the link destination before a user redirects.



SEO tip #5 – Internal Linking

Search engines will pay more attention to linked text within your website, therefore long tail linking is another key SEO tip. Selecting longer phrases within your web content and linking them to other relevant pages within your website will result in those web pages being more highly ranked by search engines. Don't only link to and from your homepage; always include an internal link when mentioning content on a web page which is relevant to the content on another of your web pages. To ensure that you are choosing to link effective phrases which are commonly searched for, the Google keyword tool is highly recommended. By using the Google keyword tool you can find out exactly what web users are searching for at which rates in order to make informed decisions about which web content to link.

SEO #6 – Back Links

Having back links on your website is another key SEO tip. A back link is a link on an external website which links directly back to your website via relevant content. Your website will then in turn inherit some of the other website's ranking potential. This can be highly valuable to your website, particularly so if the other website is one of strong authority. This will make your website appear higher in search engine results.

SEO tip #7 – Accurate Copy

For users to rate your website - and in turn your business - with high credibility, it is important that the copy on your website reads fluently with grammatical accuracy. If every visitor to your website is distracted by your poor spelling and confusing sentence structures then they will not be able to see past this which would be extremely detrimental to your business. If your website visitors cannot appreciate the service which you are offering because you are struggling to explain your services accurately and fluently, then all of your SEO efforts will be wasted. If content writing is not one of your personal strong points then hiring a copywriter is a must.

SEO tip #8 – Meta Tags

A Meta tag is a line of HTML coding which contains Metadata about a webpage. It is essentially a page description which Google will present as a mini 'advert' for your website on the search engine results page. Make sure you create a different Meta tag description for each page of your website if your CMS allows this. Using Meta tags will increase your click through rate and in turn lead to higher conversion. Note: Search engines no longer read Meta keyword tags so you can leave this blank.

SEO tip #9 – Videos

Google has recently expressed a huge love for videos, presenting videos relevant to the search term towards the top of the search engine results on page one, sometimes pushing highly relevant websites which are lacking in videos on to the second page. Videos will make your website more accessible, and give users variety and flair – after all, who is going to read 1,000 words about your business when they can watch and listen and understand everything your business has to offer in 30 seconds of simple video?!

SEO tip #10 – Social Networking Buttons

In this age of social media, online networking websites like Facebook and Twitter can act as fantastic tools for marketing your business on the web. Adding a Facebook 'like' button, and a Twitter 'follow' button to your website is a great way to get the word spread about your business. If social media users see that their best friend has 'liked' or 'followed' your business then they themselves are likely to take a look and follow suit. This snowball effect will boost the online presence of your business rapidly - and the more social networking button clicks you get on your website, the more Google will 'like' your website in turn!