

Choosing the Right Keywords Adds up to Success for your Website!

What is the single most important thing you can do to insure the success of your website?

Choose the right keywords.

Why is that, with all of the highly effective search engine strategies that we can employ? It's rather simple. If you don't choose the right keywords, all of your other strategies won't help you at all, because those strategies build on top of choosing the right keywords.

Let's look at it from the point of a view of a searcher. A searcher visits one of the major engines looking for your goods or services. He types in what he considers to be the most important topic, or keyword, for his search. Up come the results, ten per page.

If you haven't taken time to choose the most effective keyword phrases, you may have done something like use the name of your company as your main keyword. If your company has significant name recognition, like Sony, that's fine. But, if your company is like the vast majority of companies on the Net, optimizing the page for the name of your company has just cost you some business.

Choose the *most effective* keyword phrase for your page!

How on earth do you choose your important keyword phrases? First off, don 't depend on yourself to choose the right keywords. Your searchers are probably not finding you the same way that you'd think they'd find you. Instead, ask your customers or someone outside of your business what they would type in the search window when looking for your site.

Optimize each page separately.

When working with search engines, consider the focus of each page separately, because the engines do. So, if you want top ranked pages, create content-rich information pages that center on one or two topics only, and use those fine-tuned topics as your keywords for that page.

Don't try to optimize a single page for every keyword that's important to your business. It just won't work. Instead, create separate content-rich pages and utilize your other keywords in that manner, and bring additional traffic into your site.

Let's look at some tips on how to choose keywords.

Stay away from general keywords.

Take your keyword ideas and fine tune them based on each page of your website. While it's tempting to choose very general keywords, like "computers," don't do it for a number of reasons.

First off, the competition will be fierce. And, more and more searchers are realizing that they can finetune their searches and cut out never-ending search results by searching for phrases rather than single keywords.

Also, research has shown that when a searcher wants to purchase something, he conducts extremely finetuned searches to find it. In other words, if he's searching for a DVD title by a particular actor, he'll search for the exact title or under the name of the actor, rather than simply "DVD."

So, while having a web page that ranks extremely well for a very general keyword seems like the ideal situation, keep in mind that you may get more traffic, but you won't necessarily get more sales.

Consider your individual goods or services.

Some excellent keyword choices are the names of your individual goods and services. For example, if you're a professional writer, create pages that advertise your services, such as "ghost writing" or "technical writing." Creating a page for the very general keyword, "writing," actually may not get you the business you want.

By the same token, don't use trademarked terms for your competitors in your tags. Trademark lawsuits are springing up faster than blemishes on a teenager's face, and you certainly don't want, or need, to find yourself in the middle of one.

Take a general keyword and add a specific word to it.

If you can only think of very general keywords, start with a list of those keywords, and then add specific words to each one. For example, if you're an artist, take the general keyword of "art" and add a specific word or two to it, based on your particular business. So, your keyword phrases may be "art lessons for children" or "modern art."

Consider regional keywords.

Does your business cater to a particular region? If you have a restaurant in New Orleans, for example, your keyword phrase should contain the name of the city or state.

Different terminology?

Do people from other regions use different terminology when searching for your keyword phrase? If so, utilize that terminology in your tags or on your page, or create a separate page. For example, in the South, people call "shopping carts" that you find in grocery stores "buggies."

What keywords are your competitors using?

Search for your competitors' sites and see what keywords they're using. Do NOT copy their tags or anything else. Simply review their pages to see if they might be using a keyword phrase that could be helpful to you.

Once you've determined your keyword phrases, don't stop there!

As mentioned earlier, just because *you* think that a keyword phrase is perfect for your page, doesn't mean that it is.

The bottom line here is, we're after traffic to our sites. Even more to the point, we're after paying customers! So, if our keyword phrase is so fine tuned that no one is using it, it will do us no good, even if we have a #1 ranking for it.

On the other hand, if our keyword phrase is too general, we may get traffic, but we might not get paying customers.

In Closing

If you spend time choosing the best keywords for your web pages, it will add up to traffic and sales for your online business!

This article was written by Robin Nobles, Director of Training at the Academy of Web Specialists. Over the past few years, she has trained over 900 people in her online and onsite courses in search engine positioning strategies. Visit this website to learn more: <http://www.academywebspecialists.com/>

After You've Chosen your Keywords, Where on Earth do you put Them?

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You've spent a considerable amount of time choosing the right keywords for each important page of your site. You've gone to a search engine and searched for those keywords to see how much competition you have, and you've taken it one crucial step further by using WordTracker to discover what people are really searching for. Thanks to WordTracker, you now have some highly effective, well-used keywords that are sure to increase your traffic.

But where on earth do you put those keywords? Can't you just slap up a few META tags containing your keywords and be done with it?

Not hardly!

Before we look at exact spots where you can place your keywords, let's spend a few minutes learning how the engines determine the relevancy of a web page.

When a search engine visits your site, it's looking at the "skeleton view" of the page, not the fancy and well-designed website that viewers see. Instead, the engines see the source code, or HTML, of a page.

To give you an idea of what the engines see, open your browser and go to any web page. If you're using Netscape, click on View, then Page Source. If you're using Internet Explorer, click on View, then Source.

You're now viewing the skeleton of the page, which we'll call the source code.

When an engine visits your site, it sees this HTML, or source code. The engines consider anything that's toward the top of the page to be more relevant than anything further down on the page. Therefore, the <head> section of your web page, which is at the very top of the page, is extremely important in terms of relevancy, as well as the fact that the <title> tag and META description tag are used in the search results for most engines.

So, be sure to place your keywords toward the top of the page, in the beginning of your keyword-containing tags, and in the beginning of your body text.

Many other factors come into play when determining relevancy, including the keyword weight of the page, how popular the website is in terms of link popularity, how frequently the keywords are used, how close to the root domain the page is, and so forth. However, for this article, we're concentrating on where we can place our all-important keywords.

Before we get started on some ideas of where you can include your keywords, here are a couple of points to keep in mind:

- ?? Every engine has a different ranking algorithm, which simply means that they each consider different things important or not important when determining relevancy and ranking. Therefore, what works for one engine won't necessarily work for another.
- ?? The engines like simplicity! You'll have much more success with your web page if you're not utilizing techniques like frames, JavaScript, dynamic pages, graphic-intense pages, etc.
- ?? Because the engines like simplicity, don't approach search engine positioning like the proverbial "bull in a china closet." Instead, take it slowly. Don't utilize every one of these techniques on your

page. Instead, start with a few, remembering that the tags toward the top of the page are most important. If you need boosts in relevancy, then add a few more tags to see how that helps.

- ?? In most cases, you won't be able to optimize each page for more than one or two keywords. So, don't think that you'll be able to optimize your main page for 14 different keyword phrases. It just won't work! Finetune each page for one or two keyword phrases only, and you'll be much more successful.
- ?? The options below are a general listing of where you can place keywords, but again, it depends on the individual search engine whether the techniques will work or not. Also, things change so fast in this industry, which means that what works today may not work tomorrow.

Options of Where you can Include Keywords

Keywords in the <TITLE> tag

Example:

```
<TITLE>Educational children's software</TITLE>
```

Keywords in the <meta name="description"> tag

Example:

```
<meta name="description" content="Educational children's software makes learning just plain fun!">
```

Note: All META tags should go in the <head> </head> section of your page.

Keywords in the <meta name="keyword"> tag

Example:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="educational children's software, educational software, childrens software, EDUCATIONAL CHILDREN'S SOFTWARE">
```

Remember that sticking in a bunch of keywords in the keyword META tag won't get your page ranked high for all of those keywords. In order to get a top ranking with a keyword phrase, you have to use that phrase throughout your page, in your title tag, and in other tags as well.

Keywords in the <meta http-equiv="keywords"> tag

Example:

```
<meta http-equiv="keywords" name="keywords" CONTENT="educational childrens software">
```

A few of the engines, including AltaVista, consider the content of http-equiv keyword tags for relevancy. GO/InfoSeek does not.

Keywords in the heading tags (h2, h3, etc.) tag

Example:

```
<h3 ALIGN="CENTER">Educational Children's Software is Fun!</h3>
```

Many of the engines place considerable relevancy on heading tags, so use them frequently, especially toward the top of your page. You may also want to try putting your entire body text in a small heading tag.

Keywords in the link text

Example:

```
<A HREF=http://yourwebsite.com/keyword-phrase.htm></A>Click here for more educational children's software programs.
```

Note: When you put your keyword phrases in your URLs, be sure to separate those phrases with a "-" or a "_" instead of running the keywords together. By breaking the words up in some way, the engines will

see them as individual words in a phrase. If the words are not broken up, the spiders will see the words as a single term.

Example:

<http://www.yourwebsite.com/web-optimizing-techniques.htm> (which you should do)

vs.

<http://www.yourwebsite.com/weboptimizingtechniques.htm> (which you should not do)