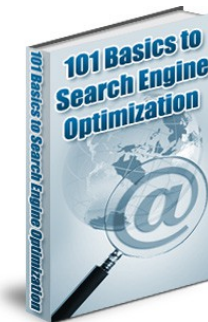# 101 Basics to Search Engine Optimization

A Guide on How to Utilize Search Engine Optimization for Your Website

Brought to you by: **John Eye**
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A Guide on How To Utilize Search Engine Optimization for Your Website

By: **John Eye**

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Introduction

Hi fellow entrepreneur.

In this book, we will look at what Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is, and the ways in which it can be used. Through this book, we will provide you with the basics on using Search Engine Optimization in order to improve traffic flow to your site.

By many people, SEO is considered to be a part of search engine marketing. It is often used when people are describing a process for improving the amount of traffic that goes to a website from various different search engines. Many site owners will engage in using SEO in an attempt to obtain qualified visitors to their site. The quality of these visitors will often be measured by what specific keywords they are using in order to reach the desired result they want, such as making a purchase, or it could just viewing or downloading a particular page on that site. It may be that the visitor just requests some further information, or they sign up to a newsletter.

Search Engine Optimization is a marketing strategy which can often generate a good return for the site. But what must be remembered is that search engines are not actually paid for the traffic they send to a site from a natural (organic) search. Plus, they will regularly change the algorithms that they use for these searches to be carried in an effort to improve the results for people using their search engine. In fact, there is no guarantee that using this system is successful in either the long or short term for any website. Because of this, SEO is often compared to traditional forms of PR (Public Relations), while PPC (Pay per Click) advertising is more closely associated with traditional forms of advertising.

However, even if you do find you have increased traffic to your site because of SEO, if your site is unprepared for this increased traffic, it may in fact be detrimental to your site, as visitors will go away feeling dissatisfied and will not return.

But though SEO can be considered as a marketing tactic which is a law unto itself, it is often considered to part of the bigger picture by many industry experts.

Warm regards,
John Eye

Chapter 1 –

Why Use Search Engine Optimization

SEO (Search Engine Optimization), as already previously mentioned, is a sub section of search engine marketing.

Unfortunately, with SEO, there are no shortcuts, and if you are looking for a way to get quick and easy results, then this isn't it. But instead, you will need to carry out some hard work, especially in relation to the actual content of your site.

Also, you will need to have plenty of patience, as results do not happen overnight. So if you are looking to improve the search engine position of your site, you should consider this very early on when looking at using SEO.

However, what are important are the following points:-

Good Content

This is probably the single most important point you should remember when doing SEO, especially if you want your site to be found on the web. Although your site may be technically perfect so that the search engine robots find it, you will find that it will not help if the actual content of your site is not good.

For the content of your site to be good, it should be factually, as well as grammatically correct. But this is not really necessary for every site that is on the web today. However, what is important is that whatever your site is about, the content actually needs to be unique and specific so that it will appeal to people. Moreover, it in fact needs to be particularly appealing to those people looking for information or who want to find your site.

By having good content on your site, visitors will return and eventually these visitors who return are more likely to link to your site. Having lots of inbound links is not only great for your site, but for search engine rankings also. It is even better if those links are from more highly ranked sites than your own.

Also, not only do you need to have good content on your site, you also need to have fresh content also. If you add new content to your site on a regular basis, you are giving your visitors more reasons for returning to it. Because of this, search engine robots will also visit your site more often as soon as they notice that you are updating it regularly. So what this means is that any new content you add, will then be indexed much quicker in the future.

Check your Spellings

If your site is written in English, then you are probably aware of the differences in spelling between American and British English. Where in the UK they will write "colour", in the USA it is written as "color", and the same can be said of "optimization" and "optimization". So if you can, why not set up your machine so that the spell checker is set up as USA English rather than British English. Unfortunately, there are many words between these two languages that are often misspelled, and in fact, the same can be said for many other languages around the world.

Make sure your Page Titles are Descriptive

If you make your page titles as simple, descriptive and relevant as possible, it will make it easier for the search engines to know what each page of your site is about. This will then allow people to scan through the search results they get, and are able to quickly determine if your document contains what they are actually looking for. Also, it should be remembered that the page title is also what is used in order to link to your site from the results provided by the search engines.

As a result of this, it is important to ensure that the title on the page is one of your most important elements of your site. In fact, some people will argue that this the most important part of any site above all other things.

Use of Real Headings

This is where you need to use h1-h6 (header tags) elements for your headings. By using graphics for your headings you are able to use any typeface you want (but search engines will not pay much attention to this). Even if you do use the alt attribute to specify an alternate text for heading images, this is not anywhere near as important as using real text in a heading element.

But if you are unable to use real text, then look at the various image or flash replacement techniques that are available instead. However, be aware that there may be some risk involved in doing this. As image replacement involves hiding text, it is quite possible that you may be penalized by search engines for doing this. But at present, this kind of risk seems pretty slim.

Ensure that your URL's are search engine friendly

It is important to use search engine friendly URL's, as opposed to dynamically generated ones that have a query string (which lets the server know which data to fetch from a database). Unfortunately, there are many search engine robots which have difficulties with this kind of URL and they may well stop at the question mark, and so not actually look at the query string.

By using a search engine friendly URL; you are helping both your ranking and users of your site. Many sites have seen an incredible improvement just because they have changed the URL scheme on it. However, the modification and rewriting of a site's URL can be a little tricky.

Getting Linked

There is no easy or sustainable way in order to solve this but for one. The really only good way to ensure that your site gets linked is to ensure that it contains good content. For any site on the web, incoming links are very important, especially for Search Engine Optimization. In fact, you may find that this is the hardest part of SEO for you to implement.

But many people have found that incoming links are less important, especially where you have more specific and unique content on your site.

Make it Accessible to All

This is as important as all things previously mentioned. It is important that you make your site accessible to those who are visually impaired, as this will help search engine robots find their way around it also. It is important to remember that Google is blind, so even if you are not bothered whether blind people use your site or not (which we all should be in today's world); you still need for it to be accessible. What this means is that you should use real headings, paragraphs and lists, and avoid using anything which may interfere with the search engines spiders.

Be Careful when making a Submission

Although this is often overrated, submitting your site to directories and search engines can actually be useful. This is especially important if the site happens to be new and has not as yet been picked up by Google and many of the other search engines that are around.

But if you do want to look at submitting it to some directories, you may want to consider using Yahoo Directory and Open Directory Project and some directories specific to your topic (for example, if you have a blog, try submitting to http://www.blog-search.info). But you will need patience, as it can take several weeks for any submissions to be processed unless you pay for it to be listed.

Do not try to fool the Search Engines

Never use such methods as cloaking, link farms, keyword stuffing, alt text spamming or any other dubious ways. Although they may work for a short time, you not only risk getting your site penalized, but it could actually be banned from search engines altogether.

As search engines like their results to be accurate, they just do not take kindly to people trying to trick them.

Avoid the use of Frames

Although it is possible to provide workarounds that will allow a search engine robot to crawl frame based sites, these will still cause problems for any visitors who find that site through a search engine.

What happens is that when someone follows a link from a search result to a frame based site, they will end up on an orphaned document. This will, in most cases, create confusion for the user, as in many cases, vital parts of the site will be lost, such as navigational links.

Browser Detection – Be Careful

If you have to use some kind of browser detection, then make sure that it does not break when a search engine spider or any other unknown agent comes along. Unfortunately, if the spiders can not get in, then your site will not be found.

Do not waste your time with Meta Tags

You will find that most search engines do not place a great deal of value on the content contained within Meta Tags today. This is because they have been used too much by spammers. So instead, if you need to, use Meta description elements. Although keywords will not hurt, they don't really help either, so generally it is not worth the effort to use them.

Often there are some search engine sites which will use the content of a Meta description element to describe a site in their search result listings. So whenever possible, make their contents unique and descriptive for every document or page.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, we have provided a few basic guidelines in relation to SEO. But there is much more that can be done in order to increase your site's visibility with search engines.

Chapter 2 –

What is the Basic Link Structure within a Site

This is probably the most obvious, but certainly one of the most overlooked aspects of search engine optimization. This helps to make sure that search engine spiders can actually find (crawl) all of your site's pages. But if they can not find them, then they won't get spidered, and this means that they won't get indexed. In fact, no amount of search engine optimization you try will help.

Below are some points that should be taken note of in respect of link structure for your site.

Spiders can not see links which are accomplished by JavaScript. This is because, as far as search engines will be concerned, they do not exist. So if you want spiders to follow the links on your site, do not use JavaScript. In fact, you will find that Google will not spider any URL if it looks like it has a session ID in it. So any URL's that have a longish number or odd characters (such as a question mark) in them should be avoided (these are often dynamic URL's).

It is important that you make sure that all pages link to at least one other page. Pages which do not link out are known as "dangling links". It is important that you structure the internal links so that targeted search terms are reinforced. So make sure that you organize your links so that your topic's sub topic pages are linked to it (ensuring that you use the right link text that is specific to the page being linked to) and vice versa. See below for the different types of methods we mean.

Link Text (some link text
This is one of the 2 most important elements to ensure good rankings for a site. It can either be on pages within the site, or on other sites' pages. But which ever way you do it, it is important that it is included. It is vital that you include the target page's main search term in the link text. Also, whenever possible, do not use identical text for every link that links to a page. But if you can include the target page's main search term in the link text instead.

In fact, links will carry more weight with search engines if the text around them is concerned with the target page's topic and search term(s).

Title Tag <title>some title words</title>
This is probably second most important element in order to get good rankings for a site. It is important that you make sure the page's search term is contained within this tag. So place it as near to the front as possible while ensuring that the title reads well. In fact, there is nothing wrong with you placing the search term up front on its own

and then follow it with a period such as "Page Rank. Google Page Rank and how do I make the most of it?" As you can see, the target search term here is of course "Page Rank". But what you should obviously do is make sure that each page's title tag is different from the title tags on your site's other pages.

Description Tag <meta name="description" content="a nice description">
You will find that some search engines, such as Google no longer display the description like they use to. But no matter what, you should include this on each page for those search engines that do. There are even the odd times when Google will actually display them. So it is vital that you write a description that is appealing and incorporates the page's search term into it at least once but preferably twice is better. So if you can, place one at the start or as near to the start of the description as possible.

Keywords Tag <meta="keywords" content="some keywords">
It is important to remember that the keywords tag is never actually treated by search engines as keywords. They will be treated as text on a page. Although this tag is not effective as it used to be, there is no reason to leave it out. Instead, make sure that you put in plenty of relevant keywords and include the search term once at the front of the tag. Also, you do not need to separate keywords or key phrases with commas (as is often done) as search engines ignore these.

H Tag <Hn>some heading words</Hn>
The "n" in this tag represents a number from 1 to 6. The biggest heading is represented by 1. You will find that H tags are given more weight than ordinary text in a page, and so the bigger the H size, the more weight it will have. So it is important that you include your target search term in the H tags at least once on the page, but if possible two or three times is even better. Also place your first H Tag as near to the top of the site page as possible.

Bold Text
This gives more weight to a page than ordinary text, but not as much as an H Tag does. So where ever possible, enclose the search term in bold tags occasionally where it appears on the page.

Normal Text
Whenever possible, use the search term as often as you can on the pages of your site. But ensure that they do not detract from how the page actually reads. Ensure that you use the term once or twice in the very early pages of the body text, and then as often as possible throughout. If you need to, reword small parts and add sentences to ensure that the search term is well represented in the text for good search engine optimization.

But you will probably find that each word you have in your search term will be found separately on the page. So, if you need to, add a few of them throughout the page.

Alt Text <img src="url" alt="some alt text which is displayed or mouseover">
Include your search term in the alt text of all images on your pages. It is important to remember that some systems, such as those used by Braille readers and speech synthesizers, use the alt text. So it may be advisable to make them usable while including the search term.

So in summary what you need to do is as follows:-

1.   Select the main search terms you wish to use.
2.   Allocate these search terms to a suitable existing page, and if you need to, split pages.
3.   Organize your internal links, and then link text, to suit the target search terms and their pages.
4.   If you can, organize those links from other pages to suit the target search terms and their pages also.
5.   Now organize all the on page elements in order that they suit each page's target search term.
6.   Finally, now sit back and watch your site's page rankings begin to improve.

Chapter 3 –

Effective Use of Keywords for SEO

What you should remember is that Search Engine Optimization does not need to be complicated. What you should do is make sure that each and every page of your site is a unique entity, and needs to be treated in the appropriate manner where SEO is concerned. Below we provide you with some guidelines which should help you achieve your desired SEO results.

Get the Keywords Right
It is important that you make sure the selected words you use meet your marketing criteria. So do not pick words which are too general. Using words that are more specific will result in a higher ranking for your site. Also, it is important that you choose words which are suitable to your site. For example, you will find that "optimizing search engines" and "search engine optimization" have completely different rankings.

Include keywords in your Page Titles
Unfortunately, a lot of people will use either inappropriate names or their company name in the page's titles. So it is important that you include the appropriate keywords in your title, as that is they way people carry out searches on the internet.

Inclusion of keywords in your Title Tags and Meta Tags
It is vital that, for each page of your site, you include the appropriate keywords within all the page's tags. Also, take time to go over the Meta description that you use. You should make sure that any description you use is alluring and interesting to those who are visiting your site, and include keywords within it wherever possible. There are many search engines around today which use the Meta description as the thing that will be displayed in their search results.

Keywords in Content
It is important that you make sure you include keywords in the content of your site as well. But do not over do this, as too many will result in your page being discounted by the search engines.

Using these basic guidelines in relation to keywords in relation to search engine optimization and you will find that your site can not help but be affected in a positive way.

Chapter 4 –

How to Determine the Keyword Selection for Your Site

Making a website attractive to search engines is a key factor for its success. One of the key ways in which to rank well with search engines is by optimizing the visible keywords on the pages. But in order to be successful in your keyword strategy campaign, you should use the following two steps.

Keyword Selection
You will need to determine what your pages are offering and also determine which words that your potential visitors might use in order to search for the pages of your site. You then need to create keywords which are based on those words.

For the full optimization of keywords on your site you should use between 3 to 5 keywords on the appropriate pages. It is vital that you start using them from the top left and then down. Many times you will find that this will be the first 200 words on each page of your site which will include the title tag, headings, abstract etc.

So the closer to the top left of your page the keywords are placed then the more weight they will be given by Google. Often, visitors will view your site in the same way that the search engine spider's do, so emphasizing your keywords from the top left and down is a good way to design a site.

However, if your pages are already built, you may be thinking it is too late to select your keywords. But it's not. It does not matter if you choose your keywords before or after the site has gone live (although it is better to do it before, as then you will not need to rewrite the text on the pages). But if it is live, then you may have the keywords, but they may not be the right ones. Yet they could be and you have not fully utilized their optimization value. So, if you wish, by using a thorough keyword selection process, you can make sure that they keywords you are using are optimized to their fullest extent.

Also, another issue where keyword selection is concerned is you need to determine whether the keyword is too popular or competitive. So if you find sites that are already competing for high rankings using particular keywords, then you may need to select more specific keywords instead. This can also be said for keywords which have several different meanings as well. Therefore it is important that you look how users will search for your pages, and which specific questions the content of your pages actually answers. So whenever possible, refine the keywords that you use in order to answer these questions.

But whenever you are refining your keywords, it is important that you keep in mind that a large portion of searches carried out on the net contain three words or more. So when people are searching for answers on the internet, they will often phrase their search term as a question. Therefore many people will not use search words that describe the solution to a question. So in order to optimize your pages to their full extent, it is best if you think like the person who is searching.

Check out the Competition

This is a great way of getting ideas, and you do this by carrying out a search using keywords that you already know, and that you would like to target. Then click through the top sites that come up as a result of this search. Then once on the site, view their source HTML code and view the keywords that they have in their Meta tags. But it is important that you remember to use those keywords which relate to your site or page. It is easy to view a sites HTML code, all you do is click on the "View" button at the top of your web browser page and then select "Source" or "Page Source".

By developing a list of keyword phrases, you should be able to optimize each page of your site for the search engines.

Chapter 5 –

What is Search Engine Friendly Content

In this chapter, we will look at just what search engine friendly content is. Although you may think it is about stuffing your website with target keywords, it isn't. In fact, you may find that you could fall foul of the search if you do this. What you need to remember is that you need to write copy that not only spiders will look at, but also human beings will as well. What is the point of having a site that is highly ranked, yet none of your visitors can understand? So it is vital that your site is user friendly to both your visitors, as well as search engine spiders.

First of all you need to answer the following questions:-

1.   What is your site for?
2.   What does it do?
3.   What do you want your visitors to do when they reach it?
4.   Would you like them to spend money when they get to it?
5.   Or are you just providing them with information?

So you need to remember these, as they will have an impact on the copy that you write for the content of your site.

So whenever possible, use short paragraphs or bullet points, as these are more likely to attract visitors, while more lengthy essays will only drive them away.

But if you are selling a service or product then you need to make your site look interesting. Provide as many calls to action as you can, and not just provide them with an online price list.

So remember that you are trying to attract the search engines, but your site should be designed first and foremost for human readers. As long as a site has been designed well with people in mind, then 9 times out of 10 you will find that it is search engine friendly also.

Just like a visitor to your site reads the copy on your page in order to figure out what you have to offer, so does a search engine. So when a search engine is looking at your page, they are looking for keyword phrases in your copy (Content).

Below are provided a number of tips which should help in your SEO using the content on your site.

1. You should have at least 200 words of copy on each page of your site. Although this may be difficult at times, search engines really like it, so it is important that you increase the amount of copy where you are able to. Generally speaking, once you surpass 1,000 words, the search engines will pretty much stop looking...so no need to get too long, unless the desired action you want from the visitor requires it.

   This text, wherever possible, should include your most important keyword phrases, but should still remain logical and easy to read by visitors to the site.

2. Ensure that you use the phrases which you have used in the other tags on the pages during this part of the optimization process.

3. Add additional copy filled pages to the site, such as how to articles, tips or tutorials. Not only do these types of pages help with SEO, but you may find that other sites will link to yours.

These tips should not be ignored, as optimizing your page copy (content) is one of the most important things you could possibly do in order to improve your rankings in the Search Engines.

Chapter 6 –

How do Backlinks Help with SEO

A backlink is a link which directs others towards your site; they are also often referred to as inbound links (IBL's). So, the number of backlinks that your site has is an indication of how popular or important it is according to your peers (other site owners). These are especially important for SEO, as search engines such as Google will give more credit to those sites with a good number of quality backlinks. So they will then consider these sites more relevant than others in the results pages of a search query.

Most search engines will want websites to have a level playing field, and so will more often than not look for natural links that have been built slowly over time. Although it can be fairly easy to manipulate the links on a web page in order to achieve a higher ranking, it is a lot harder to influence a search engine with external backlinks from another site. This is why these feature so highly in a search engine's algorithm. Today it has gotten even harder to achieve these inbound links because of unscrupulous webmasters. Such people try to achieve these links by deceptive or sneaky techniques (through either hidden links or through automatically generated pages). Such pages are known as link farms and they are generally disregarded by search engines. But if you are linked to such a link farm, then you may find your site being banned entirely from these search engines.

Another way of achieving quality backlinks to a site is to entice quality visitors to come to yours.

There are a number of ways in which back linking can be achieved.

1. Reciprocal Linking - this is where you link to another site that provides the same service or product as you and they in turn have a link to your site on theirs.

2. Site Submissions. Submit links for your site to directories which allow free submissions, or if you can afford it, some paid directories. There are many sites around which offer a service where you can submit your site details to numerous sites. Plus, if you want, you can always create your own directory of similar websites.

3. Articles. This is another way of getting great backlinks. So if you have a reputable looking site that contains informative, well written reviews, then there is a good chance that your articles will receive high search engine rankings also. But it is vital that any articles you write are on the subject, informative and

thorough in relation to your site. Also you could always write a few articles for submission to article sites such as EzineArticles.com or SearchWarp.com. This is another great way of getting even more backlinks to your site.

Below are a few tips you will need to consider in order to write good articles for your site.

a.   Write in a way that your intended target audience will understand what you are trying to say. In other words, don't write it like you were a teacher talking to a class of 10 year olds, but don't be overly complicated.

b.   Watch your spelling, grammar and punctuation. If in doubt, then use your spell checker.

c.   Do not make your article too long. Usually a good article will consist of between 350 to 500 words.

d.   Always include a resource box at the end, as this will include that all important backlink to your site. This resource box should also include a short biography regarding you and your site.

4.   Blogging. This has now become an integral part of the internet, and is one of the most effective ways of linking. You either have the choice of placing a few words of comments on to someone else's blog, or you may want to link to them from your own blog. In fact, you will find that most blogs will be happy to link back to you. However, it is important that you try to update your blog regularly and post interesting content to ensure that people will want to link back to you.

Conclusion

As you will soon see, search engines are one of the primary ways in which internet users will find a particular website. So that is why a site with good search engine listings is likely to see a dramatic increase in the traffic that it receives.

Although everybody wants good listings, there are unfortunately many sites which appear poorly or not at all in search engine rankings. This is because they have failed to consider just exactly how a search engine works.

In particular, they forget that submitting to search engines is only part of the equation when you are trying to get a good search engine ranking for your site. So therefore, it is important that you prepare your site through search engine optimization.

This ensures that the pages of your site are accessible to search engines and are focused in such a way that they will help improve the chances of them being found by the search engine spiders.

Good luck with your creating your optimizing your sites for search engines!

John Eye