

## **Search Engines: Keyword Optimized Copy For Your Web Site**

Writing copy for your web site is very different from writing for a brochure or other traditional advertisement. Catchy slogans and clever hooks that arouse interest in your audience may work well in traditional advertisements but online, it usually pays to be more straightforward. When writing copy for your web site, you have to appease two different audiences - search engines and your potential prospects. The key is to find the balance of optimizing your site's copy for search engines, and maintaining its readability and tone for your visitors.

It is important to know that search engine spiders rely on the text on your web page to determine it's content and relevancy. Fancy graphics and Flash intros may look nice, but search engine spiders aren't able to pull any relevant content from them. If you're serious about search engine optimization, you need to trade in the Flash intro or graphics intensive homepage for one with that's rich in your keyword phrases.

### **Home Page**

Your homepage is easily your site's most important page. It gets the most page views and is the most commonly linked page within search engines. Plan to write 200-300 words in the copy of your homepage, focusing on two or three of your most important keyword phrases. This may seem long but it's the only way you can include each phrase at least three times without destroying your marketing message.

Don't try to cram your keyword phrases into the first paragraph of your copy. Search engine spiders quickly scan your entire page for every word, so you can include your keywords where they fit best. In fact, it may be better to keep your keywords dispersed throughout the page. When possible, include keywords within your page headlines and links. Search engines consider text within these markups to be more important.

It's important to remember that while targeted keywords in your copy will increase your search engine rankings, your most important audience is still your potential prospects. Search engines may not care about how articulate your messages are, but prospective prospects do. You shouldn't ever sacrifice the readability and tone of your message for the sake of including keywords.

### **Secondary Pages**

Secondary pages within your site allow you to target different keyword phrases. This is especially useful when there are multiple phrases with similar meanings. For example, you may be faced with choosing between "San Francisco Real Estate" and "San Francisco Properties". If your web site allows you to create additional pages with customizable content, you can focus on different keywords with each page. This allows you to cover all the important phrases without needing to stuff your homepage with them.

If you have a custom built web site, adding new pages shouldn't be a problem. However, most real estate web sites are template based and aside from your homepage and profile page, don't provide many opportunities for you to add search engine friendly content. You should keep this in mind when purchasing a web site and look for the ability to add custom pages if you plan on maximizing your exposure on search engines.

## Page Title

The page title is what's displayed at the top of your browser when you visit any particular web page. Search engines weigh the Title of your page quite heavily and you should always include your most important keyword phrase. It's tempting to use your company name or your web site's domain name as the page title but this won't help your search engine rankings at all.

Good: Berkeley Hills Real Estate and Community Information

Bad: JohnDoe.com : John Doe Investment Group

## Meta Tags

Meta tags are an invisible part of the HTML that makes up your web pages. The two meta tags you need to be concerned about are the Keywords and Description tags. While most search engines no longer use meta tags in their rankings, it doesn't hurt include them.

## Keywords

The keywords tag consists of a list of key phrases separated by commas. This is a good place to enter all of the different variations of all your possible keyword phrases. You should use the lowercase form of the words and separate each phrase with only a comma.

## Description

The description tag is a bit more important as a number of search engines still display the meta description when your site comes up in a user's search. Not only should you include your keywords, but also make your description as compelling as possible in order to get visitors to your site. Try to keep your descriptions to under 20 words.

## Final Tip

Make things easy for yourself and choose a domain name that includes your most important keyphrase. One enormous advantage of having a keyword in your domain name is that you can easily write keyword rich content. The keywords from your domain name will also appear in all the right places -- links, headlines, your page title, etc. It'll be easy to scatter your keyword phrase throughout your copy without being intrusive.

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