

Internet Marketing Tips - Onsite Search Engine Optimisation

In the competitive world of [online marketing](#), link building counts for everything these days. Or so we are told to believe when we read all the information available on SEO websites and blogs. Content is no longer king and link building is everything.

Whilst there is a lot of truth in this, and building up inbound links to your website is incredibly significant when it comes to the overall success of your online marketing campaign, there is still a lot you can do to improve your chances by optimising your website carefully and thoroughly onsite in the content and html code of your web site.

First of all you need content, and as much as is possible on every page. Search engines read words, and without them you are lost. Words are the building blocks you can use and manipulate to build up the strength and quality of your onsite optimisation work. Remember as well, that every page of your website is a potential landing page and deserves as much attention and quality content as possible.

Secondly, you need internal links. Internal links within your website aren't worth as much as external inbound links, but they do count for a lot. Internal links will not only help search engines to navigate your site they will also allow them to associate the keywords in your link text with the web pages that they link to. This is important since it helps count towards the relevance of your web page.

Once that we have content and we have links we are ready to build up the quality of our onsite search engine optimisation. There is one caveat here. While in this article I do cover about 98% of what you need to achieve formidable results in your onsite search engine optimisation, I do leave out a few pieces of proprietary information. As an SEO who earns his living from this sort of thing I have to leave something out right, otherwise I would have to look for another job.

Starting at the top of the HTML source code we will begin by looking at metadata

Search Engine Marketing and Metadata

<Title> TAG

The TITLE tag is an essential tag for every web page.

- Ideally the Title Tag should have no more than 10 keywords in it. You can stretch it to 12 or 14 if you are stuck, but do not exceed this.
- The title tag should have keywords and phrases in there which are relevant to the web page you are describing.
- The first words in the title tag matter most, so if you have to put your company name in there leave it to the end.
- Every title tag should be different. It is describing the web page, not the web site.
- Do not populate the title tag with keywords that are not used on your web page.

Meta Description:

The search engines are looking for relevancy here, so if you don't say it on your web page then do not, under any circumstances, say it in your Meta Description.

I frequently read online that the meta description doesn't matter any more, or that if it does matter, it only matters because sometimes search engines use the meta description for the description they provide in the SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages). This is nonsense. Search engines are looking at more than just keywords or content for their results when they look at your Meta Description, so include it and be HONEST!

Meta Keyword:

It is very tempting to squeeze as many keywords in here as possible, but this can be a grave mistake. You will already start to lose some edge if you include more than 10 comma separated key phrases in here. So, you have been warned – no more than 10. Also make sure that these key phrases are the ten most important and contextual phrases or words used on your web page. Do not use words which do not appear on your web page, and do not repeat individual words more than three times. Do not put your company name in here, it is a wasted word.

Meta Language:

Being specific here can really help the search engine robots out when they are trying to decide upon which data centre you belong to. This can have real benefits, for instance, if you have a .com domain name but your primary market is in the UK. The search engine robots have to know to put you in the UK data centre so that your results get displayed in the Google UK results as well as the Google Web results. Without a .co.uk domain name, the robots are deprived of one of the best means they have of making this decision, and getting the meta language right can really help them when making their evaluation.

```
<META HTTP-EQUIV="Content-Language" CONTENT="en-GB" >
```

If you are using a content management system which doesn't allow you to edit this bit of meta data, then another good way to provide this bit of information is in the HTML code within the body of your web page. E.g.

```
<span lang="en-gb">some text</span>
```

Character Encoding:

Remember to declare which character encoding you are using. E.g. UTF-8 or ISO-8859-1. It gives search engines further relevant information about the language and regional dialect of your web site, and therefore important information about your geographical location and potential market place. This information contributes towards the decision about which data centres your website ought to be included upon. e.g.

```
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1" />
```

HTML Code and the Body of the HTML Document

Internal Links

Internal links are incredibly important when it comes to your overall success at using onsite search engine optimisation to market your website on the Internet. Links allow you to indicate to the search engines important contextual information about the web pages you are linking to, so the more links the better and the more keywords and key phrases that you have linked the better.

Look for as many opportunities as you can within a webpage for linking to other pages on your website. The following are some of the linking opportunities you might consider.

Text menus: It's obvious this one, but the more menu items the better.

Image menus: image menus don't count for as much as text menus, but if you have to use them, make sure that you don't forget to populate the title attribute, since this is your only opportunity to get keywords across.

Bottom text menus: add an additional text menu to the bottom of your web page. This is an excellent opportunity to double up on links and linked terms. Try to vary the linked terms used in your main menu if possible.

Images: link the images on your web page, and don't forget to include the title attribute to describe the link. Remember also that image links aren't great for providing information to your visitors about where the link goes, so make sure you provide other text links to the web page, that are clear and easy to navigate.

Links from text within paragraphs: search engines love these, so look for opportunities within the content of your webpage to link to other pages on your website.

List links: Group relevant web pages together in link lists to provide an extra navigation option. Search engines like lists, because they provide highly contextual information in a concise way.

Lastly remember, that both the link text and the title attribute are important places to get your descriptive keywords in. Be imaginative and creative, and vary your link text if you link to the same place more than once.

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E.g.

```
<a href="awebpage.html" title="tools for internet marketing">internet marketing resources</a>
```

```
<a href="awebpage.html" title="internet marketing tools and resources">internet marketing resources</a>
```

Harness all of these internal linking opportunities and you are well on your way to success.

Content:

As I already mentioned, you need substantial and substantive content on your web pages in order to make a decent go of onsite optimisation. While you should lavish attention on your main keywords, you should also think about keyword variation. Include alternative ways of describing your subject or products and services, using terms for which there might be less competition and probably also less people searching. It will be easier to rank for these, and because they are often looser than the core keywords in terms of word length, word order and so forth, it is easier to get many more of them in, so over all they contribute a fair bit to the number of visitors they actually generate. This is known as the long tail principle.

** and **

The Strong and Em tags are the equivalent of the bold and italic formatting tags. The difference is that `` and `<i>` only control the appearance of the text they enclose. The `` and `` tags also have meaning. They are semantic tags which tell the search engine robots that the text included within them is important. Now we have looked at these basic semantic tags and understand the principle let's take a look at some more important ones.

The <H> Tag

There is a strong tendency among web designers to create headings and subheadings for web pages by nesting them in low level semantic tags or even non-semantic tags like `div`, `span` or `td` and simply formatting them with CSS to look like headings. This is a very bad idea since it prevents the search engine bots from knowing that highly important text is contained therein. It sounds obvious, but it needs saying, the top or first level heading should appear in an `<h1>` tag and subheadings (the more the

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better), should be given in <h2> tags. This way the search engine robots can readily identify the most important keywords on a page and assign them their appropriate importance.

Similarly, if you have headings, subheadings or even paragraphs which contain none of your keywords, you can demote them by using lower level tags and formatting them with CSS so that they look okay, but aren't giving out the wrong signals to the search engines. Promote your important keywords and demote the irrelevant ones.

I could say much more about semantic markup here, but once you've got the core principles behind it you should be able to develop and refine your techniques yourself.

Images and the Alt Attribute

When including images there are couple of things you can do to promote the search engine visibility of your web page. The first is the name you give to the image. If the image is related to your content then it will presumably be also related to your keywords so get them in the file name of the image. Secondly, use the alt attribute to describe the image and get relevant key phrases in their as well while describing the image. Don't spam here and keep it relatively short. Also remember that what you do here contributes not only to the overall relevancy of your web page, it might also affect how the image is catalogued in Google Images. You should make sure every image uses the alt attribute and that it is filled in. Your overall SEO score will be slightly lower for every one you miss, so you are not only improving your chances by getting these filled in, you are also preventing yourself from being marked down.

Keywords and Filenames

When naming your html files, choose carefully. The search engines look at these for information upon what a webpage is about, so try to be as descriptive as possible.

Be warned though, if your website is already live and has been indexed by the major search engines, do not make the mistake of changing files names then. This strategy is best used either when building a website from the ground up or when adding new web pages to your website.

SEO and Localisation

Ensure that your content is properly localised for the market you are targeting and the special conventions used within that market. E.g.

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For the USA:

Search engine optimization

For Australia and the UK:

Search engine optimization

Perhaps even more important for localisation is the inclusion of place names within your content.

If you are only trading locally then get a list in of the areas you cover, preferably on every page. Do not spam here, keep the list down to a minimum and in order to ensure that these keywords count, link them in. Linking the place names will also show the search engines that this is a menu list rather than keyword stuffing.

SEO and Website Accessibility

There are lots of disparaging comments made online about website accessibility, such as that its really not worth the bother, why should web designers be forced to work to these standards, and why should they care about catering for those few visitors who may have special requirements when reading web site content owing to cognitive or physical conditions. Aside from the fact that such commentators are callous, unethical and unconcerned with standards compliant web design, they are also missing a search engine marketing opportunity. As I have said, SEO is all about providing information in a detailed, focussed and comprehensive way, about the attention to detail and granularity you put into your campaign.

Accessibility features included in the HTML lexicon are great ways of building up your keyword relevancy a little, and of getting the fine detail covered. They are not big hitters in terms of what they will do for your search engine results; however, onsite SEO is about getting lots of details covered and using lots of techniques to promote yourself, that when combined have a positive impact upon your success.

So let's have a look at some of the accessibility features of HTML:

The alt attribute: this is the alternative text used to describe an image and provides those visitors using text-to-speech software or text-only browsers with a textual description of an image.

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The alt attribute is also considered important by the search engines. Forget to include alt attributes and fill them all in, and Google will mark you down. So, this is not only an opportunity to get some keywords in, your over all SEO score will also go down if you don't.

The summary attribute: This is the attribute used in the table tag to give a textual overview of the information provided in a table

The acronym tag: The acronym tag allows you to provide the full length text for an acronym or initialism, and is a great little way to double up your keywords. For example:

```
<acronym title="search engine  
optimisation">SEO</acronym>
```

See what I mean.

If you would like to learn more about using onsite search engine optimisation to help market your web site on the Internet, I run onsite SEO training consultancies via telephone and email charged at 350.00 GBP. Email cb@foursquareinnovations.co.uk.

For internet marketing campaigns please contact us for a quotation: Email cb@foursquareinnovations.co.uk

Author's resources:

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