

2012 SEO Web Design Strategy Tutorial

by Jim Degerstrom

Improve and enhance SEO search engine optimization of website content with this 2012 SEO web design strategy tutorial. Unlike printed marketing materials to promote your business product or service, your website content is easily changed.

Website owners can perform this annual website content review even if they outsource the actual web design to a web developer or delegate the task to an employee. Take one day to invest the time in learning these basics to apply to your website and help promote your business online, and then review the results with the person responsible for managing your website.

On site content is the first priority. Off site content and links to your website are the second priority.

Introduction

The New Year is the perfect time to scrutinize each page of your small business website to ensure you accurately describe things that may have changed. Do this every year in January. For example, it may be time to update your web design and text content if you introduced a new product or service, or have outdated or discontinued items to remove.

First Priority for Search Engine Optimization

Let's review the first SEO search engine optimization priority of on site content.

Updating and optimizing that content is key to staying ahead of your competition and ranking well with search engines. This 2012 SEO web design strategy tutorial explains how our advice has helped our web design clients gain that advantage, and new natural methods including off site content to attract search engines.

Google rewards higher page ranking and higher traffic to websites that provide visitors original quality content. Frequent updates are a search engine magnet

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that will allow your website to improve that ranking and traffic.

How Google Indexes Your Website Pages

Website owners need to understand how search engine robots access your content and methods for optimizing the web design text that search engines index. Google does not view what visitors see displayed on your pages. The robots only access the underlying code that displays page content.

A well designed website will include META code that human visitors do not see, yet Google robots will access and consider when ranking that page. These robots, or crawlers, first look for 3 lines of code inserted near the top of the page including the Title plus META description and keywords.

How Google Crawlers Rank On Site Content

100's of factors are programmed into search engine robot crawlers in the form of proprietary mathematical algorithms that scientifically analyze each individual page. Google supercomputers use that information to crunch the data and determine the content topic and ranking of that page compared to similar pages already in their index.

Next, they view the next page on your website to determine the topic and ranking comparison, plus they compare this second page for a consistent theme related to the first page. This continues throughout your website with ranking and cross ranking to establish your niche and the overall theme of your site content.

How well your website is ranked compared to 100 million other websites will determine where you appear in Google search results. If you want Google traffic, you'll obviously want to be on Google page one.

Google remains THE dominant search engine because their priority is serving up relevant results to people using their services. Being number one on Google page one happens because that website represents the best result out of

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millions of others to help that visitor which in turns protects Google's reputation for being the best.

Their secret is the proprietary mathematical algorithms that the Google supercomputers use to evaluate and compare website content. These algorithms get tweaked, added, or removed constantly to improve the relevance of search results.

This 2012 SEO Web Design Strategy Tutorial is a result of tracking year to year trends in SEO search engine optimization, and adjusting how content is presented to maximize improvements in search engine ranking.

Some SEO advisors track trends and then attempt to game the system without providing "original quality content". Our SEO strategy uses natural methods in line with the latest search engine optimization trends to give website visitors the best possible experience, and EARN top ranking with Google.

Beware of promises to get your website on Google page one. Too often, these experts use unnatural methods that may work short term, yet could eventually get your website blacklisted for using deceptive SEO techniques.

Review of the Title Tag in a Web Design

Of all the 100's of factors that are used to rank your website, the page Title is THE most important. Some websites do not have a Title in the code. To check, right click on any blank area of a web page to view a drop down menu that appears, and then select "View Source", or "View Page Source" depending on your browser, to see the code.

Look for the title enclosed by brackets with the title text enclosed between opening and closing tags near the top of the page code as follows: <title></title>. Is there text between those tags? If so, that title may or may not appear displayed on the actual page, yet it makes sense to use the title as the headline at the top of your page, too.

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Why? If the single phrase describes the essence of the page content hidden in the code for search engines to index, it makes sense that same phrase should display as the headline to introduce that content, also.

If a person favorites that page, the Title is what appears in their bookmarks as a reminder of that content. In addition, even if the Title is not used on page as a headline, it will still appear in the very top of the visitor's browser (above, and OUTSIDE the page content) next to the icon in the far top left of the computer window.

How to Create the Perfect Title

An optimized Title should be given time and serious thought because it is THE most important SEO factor for ranking well with search engines, and especially Google. The phrase should include key words about that page similar to a newspaper headline.

The Title is not the place for "Home Page" or "Welcome to Our Website", and certainly not completely blank. Very few people will search Google for either of those phrases. If they did, the results could be millions of pages and your chance of being on page one is likely zero.

Instead, consider the essence of that page content and summarize the page theme in a catchy phrase of key words that are concise and relevant. Unless your company is extremely well known, use key words that describe what you do, not who you are.

People looking for your product or service are more likely to input generic terms that describe what you offer. Be hypercritical of every word you choose. It is that important.

Here's the Title and META for the blog post announcing this PDF tutorial download:

Title Tag: 2012 SEO Web Design Strategy Tutorial

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META Description: Improve and enhance SEO search engine optimization of website content with this 2012 SEO web design strategy tutorial.

META Keywords: 2012, web design, seo, search engine optimization, strategy, tutorial

Note that the above Title is likewise the headline of this tutorial, and also the blog post. The year is important because older advice about SEO search engine optimization may be outdated. The next 4 words describe the topic "SEO Web Design Strategy", and the last word is "Tutorial" which means readers will learn what it is and how to implement the advice given.

Any SEO strategy to load up your website with key words, and certainly the Title or META code, may be perceived as a deceptive technique in an attempt to rank well. The page Title should be 5-6 words and 70 characters maximum to avoid being spammy or deceptive.

Every page of your website should have a different and unique page Title relative to that page content.

Here's a bonus tip from this 2012 SEO Web Design Strategy Tutorial that will provide techniques for testing keyword density which is the right number of key words in proportion to the total number of words on a given page.

Keep in mind Google will penalize websites that stuff keywords in the Title, META, or on page content. There are a variety of free tools to easily test keyword density. Google the phrase "web page keyword density tools" to find online resources to help you quickly analyze your key phrases.

Tip: Aim for 4% keyword density meaning a key word or phrase occurs X number of times. That divided by the total number of words on a given page is a percentage of keyword density. Anything above 6% is too much and may be perceived as spam. Anything under 3% is not strong enough to compete against all other websites.

Let's continue and review META code before moving ahead to off site content

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which is the second priority for search engine optimization.

Review of the Importance of META Code

META Description Review

Using the example presented above, we have the following:

META Description: Improve and enhance SEO search engine optimization of website content with this 2012 SEO web design strategy tutorial.

Note that the description is a complete sentence, and uses the SAME phrase included in the Title. Many website designs mistakenly use a phrase or list of keywords for the META description. Using key words is important, and similar to the Title tag, they should state the essence of the entire page content in a single sentence.

When viewing search results in Google you likely noticed they do provide a description of the content if you follow their link to that website. A well written META description will often be used by Google as THE description on their SERPs, Search Engine Results Pages.

Don't leave it to chance and have that robot crawler select something from your content that doesn't quite state the essence of what a site visitor can expect by coming to that page on your website. Google will take a well written description into account, although the content indexed by their robot crawler may still select something different based on total page text.

If the META description summarizes a page content as the essence of what is presented, it makes further sense to use that sentence as part of the on page content, as well. With that in mind, the example used here is the opening sentence of this tutorial and the blog post announcing the PDF download, too.

In summary, the META description should be a complete and grammatically correct sentence, and to avoid the perception of spam, make the sentence a

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maximum of 155 characters. As suggested for the Title, each page on your website should have a different and unique META description, too.

META Keywords Review

Next is META keywords which is a list of key words that summarize the content of a given page. For this tutorial, and the blog post announcing it, we used META Keywords: 2012, web design, seo, search engine optimization, strategy, tutorial.

The purpose is to inform search engines what to expect on the page. The keyword list used to be one of the key SEO factors for ranking well. That has changed in recent years due to abuse and misuse. People would stuff key words multiple times (sometimes 100's) into that list which helped Google ranking 5-10 years ago. Not today.

Other website designs have more proper lists of key words that may include a given word a maximum of 3 times which was okay with Google several years ago. Not today.

Google ignores your META keyword list. It is no longer an SEO factor in their algorithms. Instead, they take actual on page content and calculate a word list in order from most often used to least used, and then determine the content theme based on that and other proprietary algorithms.

Abuse included key word stuffing. Misuse includes any and all key words about your business without overdoing it, yet the topic of a given page may be unique so that some key words in the list don't even appear on that page.

Why use the META keywords then? Google represents 80% of the potential search engine traffic for your website. They don't need it. Other players like Yahoo, Bing (formerly MSN), and a long list of smaller players represent up to 20% of site traffic.

Some of those other search engines still index and consider your META

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keywords in ranking your site, so my advice is including the list of key words. However, do NOT include all key words about your business. Only include the ones in your list that are relevant and actually appear in the page text content.

Your list of META keywords should not exceed 200 characters maximum.

Summary of On Site Content Advice

Our advice is learn these natural and proven SEO strategy principles for ranking well and gaining advantage over your competition. Use the Title again as the top headline in your page text content, and use the META Description sentence in the first paragraph of the page.

These same SEO search engine optimization strategy principles apply to all content that displays on your page. When writing or doing edits of site text content, avoid generic terms like "this", "that", or "it" when you can replace those nondescript terms with actual key words.

Avoid flowery or highly technical speech like those in presentations for a classroom setting, a sales meeting, or other formal situation. Write more informally as if talking to a neighbor and giving them an introduction about your business for the first time.

Keep those points in mind as you write the all important Title tag and META description for your website. Your goal is text with terms to match what a person would put in a search engine to find your product or service. In a phrase, keep your text message concise and precise.

Second Priority for Search Engine Optimization

The second priority for search engine optimization is promoting your website through off site methods. The first priority gives Google a reason to send people TO your website, as well as a reason for them to STAY and explore your product or service offers.

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Optimizing your site is an aspect that you can control and enhance. Off site factors are more difficult to control, yet there are steps a website owner can perform to boost search engine ranking.

Importance of Inbound Links to Your Website

When indexing the nearly billion website pages Google finds online, they encounter links between websites. An inbound link to your website from another site is like a vote of confidence. More votes equate to popularity, and a higher number of links may result in even higher search engine ranking.

Four years ago a major upheaval occurred when Google analyzed data with proof that thousands of unscrupulous sites were buying or selling links. If more links meant higher ranking, the goal of these experts was to create an unnatural number of links for a price and get websites they controlled on Google page one.

When eventually caught, millions of sites went from Google page one to oblivion in an instant. Those millions of pages with page one ranking based on purchased links did not meet the requirement of providing a positive visitor experience with "original quality content".

Deception is not an option when doing SEO search engine optimization. The natural methods suggested in this tutorial have proven long term value because the key is providing quality content to your website visitors.

Do NOT fall for schemes that promise a shortcut to success with search engines. Your site value with quality content will build over time, and the natural methods ensure staying power for years to come.

Today those inbound links are still important, yet the best source is an unsolicited one way link from a website in a related niche. Academic related .edu and government related .gov website links to your site are highly prized because they are from authority sites.

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The .edu and .gov one way links add significantly more SEO search engine optimization value than a site totally unrelated to your business. The key word in the previous paragraph is "unsolicited". The best vote is a link you did not request.

Methods for Attracting Inbound Links

Intro to Attracting Links and Evidence it Works

By now you may be wondering about the cost of getting a website ranked on Google page one. The answer is zero except for the time it takes to implement the SEO search engine optimization strategies in this tutorial.

Invest the time to provide original quality content optimized for visitors and search engines, and you will see results.

My commercial site does not depend on PPC Pay per Click advertising, paying (so-called) experts who guarantee results, or buying advertising space in print or online. The key phrase for my business is: custom cms web design. Google that phrase.

My site has been first after paid ads on Google page one for more than 4 years out of 9 million plus results from all my competition. Add the word "services" at the end of that search phrase, and my site is #1 and #2 worldwide after paid ads out of more than 3 million search results.

Trust these methods and the evidence our site optimization advice works.

First Rule for Attracting Inbound Links

Therefore, the first method for attracting inbound links should be obvious by now. Create high quality original content aimed at site visitors, and then add more fresh content often. Google will reward you by sending traffic.

One secret to adding original quality content often is blogging. A blog is no

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longer reserved for the youth to keep a journal, share their vacation, or post cute photos or videos. A small business blog is one of the best and easiest ways to add new content often while providing tips, advice, and tutorials related to your business.

Visitors will be impressed and many will link back to your site providing those all important links.

Last Rule for Attracting Inbound Links

Wait, you say? There's only two rules? Yes. The methods are simple, yet once you have a high quality website that deserves to be on Google page one, promoting your website online is the next and only other activity necessary to succeed bringing new potential customers.

Don't be mistaken. Too often site owners are looking for quick methods to achieve success. Instant success is unusual in a real world brick and mortar business, and still takes hard work and time creating a high level of success online.

The last rule for attracting inbound links in a phrase is: Get social.

The concept of social networking online is not new. The impact on SEO search engine optimization, however, has become very important in the last year. That's why the advice to "Get social" is an equally important aspect of the latest strategies for success as presented in this 2012 SEO Web Design Strategy Tutorial.

Going back to the first priority, and how search engines work, the dominant position as THE top search engine that Google enjoys is because they provide relevance. Period.

How can Google improve their search results to become even more relevant? Until recently, Google search results depended on their robot crawlers and supercomputers crunching text data from individual website pages. Human

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programmers created the system, yet the human factor ended there. That is, until now.

Importance of Get Social and Off Site Content

The key to change in SEO strategy in 2012 is social network sites like Facebook, Twitter, Google +1, YouTube, and even Flickr. There are 100's more, yet these are the major social sites that can no longer be ignored.

Each provides a format for real time human interaction. Friends, followers, and fans are socializing and sharing their likes and dislikes online. Often these posts, tweets, or comments include links to places including websites that these real people like, and share.

Just as a link from one site to another becomes a "vote" when found by Google, links from a real person to a website they like removes the nonhuman factor and ranks higher as being relevant.

Google understands that those human interactions provide an immediate and important vote for relevance.

Most small business owners do not personally control or manage their website design. That, and any other duties they can offload will get outsourced or delegated internally.

That's okay. Our advice is following the Priority One strategy and being personally involved in how your website presents your business to visitors. Having that content optimized with your vision of who you are and what you do will ensure your message is accurate.

Do the annual site review and scrutinize each page of your website based on the advice in this tutorial. Even if you simply outline changes and delegate detailed implementation later, you will at least be the driving force to define your goals.

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Implementing the Get Social Advice

The "Get social" advice does not have to be a full time job. Even business owners who chose to take on the responsibility find it can take as little as minutes a day to be effective. Like anything, and especially blogging, implementing the get social strategy does take discipline.

You may want to begin by starting a Twitter account plus a Facebook account (and page), and Google +1. Later on you can add YouTube videos and a Flickr account for uploading photographs. Each may be simpler than you realize, and once in place you make them what you want them to be. That means more or less time according to what you decide is right for your business.

2012 SEO Web Design Strategy Tutorial Summary

The strategy to optimize and promote your website is simple. The on site Priority One means scrutinize every page of your website once a year in January to make sure it accurately describes the direction your business is going. Make time to add original quality content often to enhance visitor experience and attract Google plus other search engines.

The off site Priority Two is about the Get Social strategy. Business owners who are first to recognize the importance to Google of the human element and votes that occur in social networks will be a step ahead of their competition.

That's it for the SEO search engine optimization strategy tutorial for 2012 and into the future. Readers are welcome to submit comments or questions. Follow the link at the bottom of each page in this tutorial to visit my website, and then email me from the link just under the Google search box on every page near the top in the right hand column.

Best of luck and success for 2012 and beyond.