

Are Keywords Destroying the Flow of Your SEO Copy?

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By Karon Thackston

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With all the shuffling that's been seen in the search engine world within the last year, the issue of obvious optimizing has become a hot button. The current line of thinking is that most engines (especially Google) are on the lookout for sites that purposely make an effort to optimize their pages in order to get high rankings. While this theory has not been proven, I agree that obvious optimization is not a good thing. Not exclusively because of what Google might think, but because of what your site visitors might think.

When a Web site is created with the intent of having it ranked highly, one thing often happens. The focus gets placed solely on the optimization and is taken almost completely away from the visitor. This leaves your site in a dangerous state of unbalance. Let's take a look at some examples.

New Orleans Web Design

Our New Orleans Web design firm offers a high level of creativity to businesses located in the general area. Our New Orleans Web design styles are never made from templates. Each New Orleans Web design is a custom creation just for your site.

I can't count how many times I've visited Web design sites that were targeting local audiences and found copy similar to this example. Forget for a moment that this copy is completely "me, us, we, our" centered, and let me ask you a question.

If someone asked you what your company did would you say, "Web design" or "New Orleans Web design"? Yes, I know the keyphrase is "New Orleans Web design," but using that phrase interchangeably with "Web design" shatters the flow of natural language. Breaking up that phrase will help you retain your appeal to the engines and your site visitors. It will also keep you from appearing to be over optimized.

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You'll also want to vary your terms to avoid absolutely bombarding the reader (and the engines) with the same keyphrases. That *may* mean the need for longer copy *if* your target audience is one that would respond well to longer copy.

Try this instead:

Progressive, creative, upbeat. Those are phrases that best describe many online businesses based in New Orleans. Web design for your organization should match your style. Never created from templates, the site designs you'll receive will be truly reflective of your corporate personality. Because we work exclusively with companies located in or near New Orleans, Web designs retain that Big Easy feel.

See the difference? By breaking the phrase up, you work with the flow of natural language instead of against it. To your site visitors and the engines, it appears the phrase is just part of a written

conversation instead of something that has been purposely (and carelessly) tossed in for the sole benefit of higher rankings.

So, is the flow of your current copy destroyed by keywords? Are you scaring off both the engines and your visitors? One quick check can help you decide. Read your copy out loud. (Or better yet, have someone else read your copy out loud.) Does it sound odd? Does reading it feel forced or stiff? Would the sentences you've written in your copy seem out of place in the course of a verbal conversation with someone? If you answered "yes" to any or all of these questions, you might better take a closer look at your Web page.

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Karon is author of "How To Increase Keyword Saturation (Without Destroying the Flow of Your Copy)." Discover the secrets to creating SEO copy with a perfect balance between keywords and natural language.

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Choosing Keywords That Bring the Best Results

By Karon Thackston

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<http://www.copywritingcourse.com>

As a search engine optimization copywriter, I've seen my share of keywords. When working with me, clients choose their own keywords (or have someone else choose them) and then send me the list to include in their copy. I must admit, sometimes I'm just amazed at the selections I receive.

It's absolutely imperative that you make wise choices in the area of keywords. Many people simply look at statistics. Others go strictly on the most highly searched keywords from one particular search engine. Still others do no research at all and just guess. While the first two can work in combination with one another, they still don't offer a complete solution.

From working with many search engine optimization (SEO) experts, I have gathered a few tips on how to choose effective keywords that bring results. I'd like to share that information with you so you can improve both your copy and your search engine positioning.

Narrow Focus

Choose keywords that have a narrow focus. The most common "mistake" I've seen when selecting keywords is choosing those that are too broad. For example, one client sold cleaner for granite countertops. One keyphrase that was originally under consideration was "granite countertops." However, as his SEO expert explained (and I agree), people could be hoping to find information on almost any aspect of granite countertops... installation, price, service, dealers, etc. This keyphrase was too broad and eventually was discarded.

The same applies to geographic locations. A real estate agent wanted to use the keyphrase "Richmond County." However, upon searching the `Net for this phrase, his SEO expert discovered that there are at least three states that have a Richmond County. Instead, the SEO expert chose phrases such as "Richmond County, Georgia real estate" to narrow the focus and ensure qualified traffic.

Applicable to the Page

Another common area where people wane is in being determined to use keyphrases that simply don't apply to the page. In one case I was asked by a client to use the keyphrase "payment portal" on a page that had nothing to do with that topic. At the time, that was an excellent phrase to target, but it would have been quite a stretch as it had little to do with what the site was about.

Just because a keyphrase gives you the opportunity to be highly ranked doesn't mean you should use it if it has nothing to do with your site.

More Traffic or Better Traffic?

I see the battle between lots of traffic vs. more targeted traffic just about every day. Clients are generally programmed by Web hype to believe you need as much traffic as you can get regardless of where it comes from.

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Most SEO experts I'm associated with (and this SEO copywriter) believe you need traffic that will actually stick around once they reach your site.

Why have tons of people coming to your site if they will just leave after three seconds because they didn't find what they were looking for? It's better to have fewer people – more targeted prospects – who are more likely to buy.

By targeting your keyphrases so they are as accurate and focused as possible, you will gain the attention of customers who are specifically searching for what you have to offer. While your unique visitor or page view count may go down, your bank account balance will likely go up!

Which words make **your** customers buy? Let Karon show you. Boost your sales and your search engine positioning by learning to write strategically created copy that hits a nerve and makes the sale. Get the details now at <http://www.copywritingcourse.com>.

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