

It's the Little Things.....

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By windsong

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Optimizing for the search engines doesn't have to be a tough job. But you need to pay attention to detail. It is often the little things that you do to your pages that will improve your ranking in the search engines. Sometimes, it's also the little things that can get you banned from the same search engines. Pay close attention. First we will cover some things you can do to improve your ranking. Then we will get into what not to do.

* Did you know that some search engines read the alt tags in your images? You don't have alt tags? Better include them in all your images. These tags were originally meant for browsers that don't support images. This way, people with older browsers would have an idea of what the image is about. However, you can place keywords in these tags. Use 2 or 3 word keyword phrases, as this is what most people search for. If your site does not have images, Don't despair. You can use a 1x1 pixel clear image, (which doesn't show up on your page) just to give yourself a place to include the alt tag. Use these images as spacers.

* Your pages are probably peppered with headlines here and there. Instead of just using a larger font size for these headlines, use header tags instead. (H1, H2, etc.) Search engines think that the most important information is in the header tags. Be sure to place your most important keywords here. If you don't have headlines on your site, start using them. This is better than meta keywords!

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* The most important meta tag is the title tag. Your title tag is within the head tag. It is what shows up on your search engine listing and in the title bar at the top of your browser window. It is a must that you place your very best keywords here. Don't just put keywords in the title tag. It must make sense. Most search engines put a very strong emphasis on the title tag. Get it right and get listed.

* Use comment tags throughout your pages, especially near the top. The search engines like to read these, and by having keywords, keyword phrases, and other pertinent data here you will boost

your ranking. Comment tags do not show up on your page. They only appear in the code. A comment tag begins with `<!--` and ends with `-->`. Be sure to leave a space between the tags and the text.

* Probably the best boost in ranking that you can give yourself is a domain name. Some search engines won't index your site if you don't have a domain name, and they put a lot of weight on your domain name. Do you know what your domain name should be?

Your very top keyword or phrase. Preferably something short and memorable. Don't get cute with domain names by using numbers and letters for words (u for you, 4 for for, 2 for to). Keep it simple so it makes sense to the search engines.

Now let's consider some things that can get you banned from the search engines, so pay close attention. These could be more important than the things you should do.

* **DO NOT** use text that is the same color as the background. Now this can get tricky. Some people have inadvertently broken this rule and don't know why they were banned. Let's say your site has a white background. So obviously you won't use white text. But what if you have a table on a page that has a black background and you use white text in this table? The search engines don't know the table has a different background. They only know that the page background is white, and suddenly here is white text. Oops! So make the text the palest gray you can. It will still look white to the viewer, but the search engines will know that it's a different color from the background.

* **DO NOT** hide teeny tiny text somewhere on your page. The search engines know the viewer can't see it, and that you are trying to trick the search engines.

* DO NOT use keywords in your meta tags that are irrelevant. some people try to use 'the most searched for words' in their meta tags.... such as, sex, MP3, etc. You get the picture. Just stick to keywords that are related to your product or service. Remember that the search engines read the content of the page, so if you have keywords that do NOT show up in the content, you are likely to be ignored by the search engines. It doesn't make the viewers happy either, if they land on an irrelevant site.

* DO NOT use flash movies, frames, java applets, or image maps. You will choke the spiders to death. This is just garbage to them. They can't read it and can't index it. You should also limit your use of javascript and cgi scripts. Javascript will push your content farther down on the page, and the spiders generally look for content near the top of the page.

Sometimes it is the little things that will make or break your listing in the search engines. Just use common sense. And always remember the number one thing your site must have to get a good listing on the search engines: CONTENT! Without this, all the optimization in the world just won't do you any good.

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Yes, You Can Say No

By Rachelle Disbennett-Lee

Yes, You Can Say No by Rachelle Disbennett-Lee

It is perfectly OK to say, "No." You have permission. Many people do not like to disappoint others by saying, "No." They will tend to acquiesce even when overloaded. Sometimes those with the need to please will agree to do something when it is not in their best interest just to be accommodating. Saying

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yes when we want or need to say no is a way to put others first. Indeed we don't want to hurt others' feelings, however we hurt our own when we overload ourselves and say yes to tasks that we don't want to or don't have time to do.

Saying "No" to things you do not want to do is a form of self-care. By saying "No" to the things that you do not want to do makes time for the things that you do want to do. Every time we say yes, we are saying no to something else. If we say yes to things we do not want to do, we are actually saying no to things that we do want to do. By saying yes to things we don't want to do we fill our lives with tasks that do not serve us, drain our energy, and are not supporting us in creating our best lives.

When we decline a request, we do not have to go into a long explanation. Just say, "No." Be direct, be polite and don't apologize. It is OK to say "No" and it is all right not to have a reason. You do not have to have an excuse, alibi or anything else. It is ok just to say no and leave it at that.

Just say, "No" so that you can say, "Yes" to the things you really want to do. For every "Yes" you say, you are saying "No" to something else. When you say, "Yes" to something you don't want to do, you actually say, "No" to what you do want to do. Remember, this is your life. Do you want to spend it doing things you don't want to do or by doing what brings you joy, happiness and contributes to your overall satisfaction?

Practice saying, "No" today. See how it feels not to commit to things you do not want to do and leave space for things you do want in your life.

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