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Writing SEO Copy - 8 Steps to Success

By Glenn Murray

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We all know that the lion's share of web traffic comes through the search engines. We also know that keywords and links to your site are the two things that affect your ranking in the search engines. Your keywords tell the search engines what you do, and the inbound links tell them how important you are. This combination is what determines your relevance. And relevance is what the search engines are after.

There's a lot of information around about how to incorporate keyword phrases into your HTML meta tags. But that's only half the battle. You need to think of these tags as street-signs. That's how the search engines view them. They look at your tags and then at your copy. If the keywords you use in your tags aren't used in your copy, your site won't be indexed for those keywords.

But the search engines don't stop there. They also consider how often the keyword phrase is used on the page.

To put it simply, if you don't pepper your site with your primary keywords, you won't appear in the search results when a potential customer searches for those keywords.

But how do you write keyword-rich copy without compromising readability?

Readability is all-important to visitors. And after all, it's the visitors that buy your product or service, not search engines.

By following these 8 simple guidelines, you'll be able to overhaul the copy on your website ensuring it's agreeable to both search engines and visitors.

1) Categorise your pages

Before writing, think about the structure of your site. If you haven't built your site yet, try to create your pages around key offerings or benefits. For example, divide your Second Hand Computers site into separate pages for Macs, and PCs, and then segment again into Notebooks, Desktops, etc. This way,

you'll be able to incorporate very specific keyword phrases into your copy, thereby capturing a very targeted market. If you're working on an existing site, print out each page and label it with its key point, offering, or benefit.

2) Find out what keywords your customers are searching for

Go to www.wordtracker.com and subscribe for a day (this will only cost you about AUD\$10). Type in the key points, offerings, and benefits you identified for each page, and spend some time analysing what words customers use when they're searching for these things. These are the words you'll want to use to describe your product or service. (Make sure you read WordTracker's explanation of their results.)

3) Use phrases, not single words

Although this advice isn't specific to the web copy, it's so important that it's worth repeating here. Why? Well firstly, there's too much competition for single keywords. If you're in computer sales, don't choose "computers" as your primary keyword. Go to Google and search for "computers" and you'll see why... Secondly, research shows that customers are becoming more search-savvy - they're searching for more and more specific strings. They're learning that by being more specific, they find what they're looking for much faster. Ask yourself what's unique about your business? Perhaps you sell cheap second hand computers? Then why not use "cheap second hand computers" as your primary keyword phrase. This way, you'll not only stand a chance in the rankings, you'll also display in much more targeted searches. In other words, a higher percentage of your site's visitors will be people after cheap second hand computers. (WordTracker's results will help you choose the most appropriate phrases.)

4) Pick the important keyword phrases

Don't include every keyword phrase on every page. Focus on one or two keyword phrases on each page. For your Macs page, focus on "cheap second hand macs". For the PCs page, focus on "cheap second hand pcs", etc.

5) Be specific

Don't just say "our computers". Wherever you would normally say "our computers", ask yourself if you can get away with saying "our cheap second hand Macs" or "our cheap second hand PCs". If this doesn't affect your readability too badly, it's worth doing. It's a fine balance though. Remember, your site reflects the quality of your service. If your site is hard to read, people will infer a lot about your service...

6) Use keyword phrases in links

Although you shouldn't focus on every keyword phrase on every page, it's a good idea to link your pages together with text links. This way, when the search engines look at your site, they'll see that the pages are related. Once again, the more text links the better, especially if the link text is a keyword phrase. So on your "Cheap Second Hand Macs" page, include a text link at the bottom to "Cheap Second Hand PCs". If you can manage it without affecting readability, also include one within the copy of the page. For example, "As well as providing cheap second hand Macs, we sell high quality cheap second hand PCs". TIP: If you don't want your links to be underlined and blue, include the following in your CSS file:

a {text-decoration: none;}

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Then format the HTML of each link as follows:

As well as providing cheap second hand Macs, we sell high quality

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7) Use keyword phrases in headings

Just as customers rely on headings to scan your site, so to do search engines. This means headings play a big part in how the search engines will categorise your site. Try to include your primary keyword phrases in your headings. In fact, think about inserting extra headings just for this purpose. Generally this will also help the readability of the site because it will help customers scan read.

8) Test keyword phrase density

Once you've made a first pass at the copy, run it through a density checker to get some metrics. Visit GoRank's Keyword Density Analyzer and type in the domain and keyword phrase you want to analyse. It'll give you a percentage for all the important parts of your page, including copy, title, meta keywords, meta description, etc. The higher the density the better. Generally speaking, a density measurement of at least 3–5% is what you're looking for. Any less, and you'll probably need to take another pass.

Follow these guidelines, and you'll be well on your way to effective SEO copy.

Just remember, don't overdo it. It's not easy to find the balance between copy written for search engines and copy written for customers. In many cases, this balance will be too difficult to achieve without professional help. Don't worry, though. If you've already performed your keyword analysis, a professional website copywriter should be able to work your primary keyword phrases into your copy at no extra charge.

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SEO – Search Engine Optimization You Can Do

By J. Ratliff

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We all know what SEO is, and it seems like it has kind of an "executive" sound to it doesn't it? The truth is, thousands of webmasters spend millions of dollars every year on SEO services. Now, I am not discounting the importance of these services.

Indeed, SEO is very important not only to the big website portals, but to your website as well.

However, I do believe that a lot of the people who spend thousands annually, do so without needing to. I have done SEO work on a dozen websites for businesses, and about 20 of my own. My secret? It's all in the software.

If you have not checked out this software, I highly recommend it.

(IBP) for

short. I use it everyday, not only for my websites, but also for any SEO work I do.

It does cost around \$200, but it is worth every penny plus some.

Save money and do your own SEO work.

J. Ratliff is a webmaster, part time SEO guru, and affiliate guru. He has achieved certified SEO status from ExpertExam.



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