

# Is Your Website Getting the Exposure You Want?

by Liz Watson

A website is an important aspect to any business marketing strategy. But just having a fabulous website isn't enough. What good is it if nobody can find you? That's where search engine optimization (SEO) comes in. Here are some basic search engine strategies that you should use on your website:

1) **Focus each page on one topic.** You can have more than one topic on a page, but each page should have a primary focus. This will make it easier for you to build applicable key phrases into your content and meta tags. Furthermore, if you split one general page into several focused pages, you've just created more opportunities for potential clients to find you.

2) **Use keywords in your file names.** If the focus of your page is blue widgets, name it blue-widget.html rather than product1.html. Use the primary focus of the page in your file name, but keep the name to a reasonable length. Don't create the file name as one word (bluewidget.html), and use hyphens rather than underscores as separators. Note: Don't change an existing file name unless the page is poorly ranked or not yet indexed.

3) **Create a unique page title for each page.** The page title appears at the top of the web browser when a page is opened. Use the most important key phrase pertinent to the primary focus of that page. Be sure the key phrase is one that users will actually search for. The first words of the title tag carry the most weight so place the key phrase at the beginning. Limit your page title to 60 characters.

4) **Create a compelling description meta tag for each page.** This is the tag users will most likely see on the results page when they've conducted a search. The better the description, the more site visitors you'll have. Use short sentences. Include your page title in your description meta tag. The description meta tag should be no more than 200 characters.

5) **Create a list of focused key phrases for each page.** Not everyone agrees about the continued importance of the keyword meta tag, but some search engines, including Yahoo!, still use it. Separate phrases with commas. Keep this tag to within 150 characters (including spaces).

6) **Use alt tags to describe images on your website.** Not only are these tags important for site accessibility for the visually impaired, but they also provide another opportunity to build key phrases into your page. The tag should be brief and appropriate to the image and the content of the page. Note: Images that are standard throughout the site—those used in page layout—should include an empty alt tag (alt="").

7) **Make sure you include your key phrase(s) in your page content.** This is called keyword density and it is a measure of how often a keyword or phrase is used compared to the total number of words on a give page. Don't overdo the use of that keyword or phrase, however. More is not necessarily better, especially if you end up with content that is unreadable.

8) **Use heading tags, instead of graphics, for page headings.** The H1 tag defines the main topic; the H2 tag is for subtopics. The H1 tag should be identical to your title tag, while the H2 tag should contain some portion of the title tag. Do not overuse these tags. Ideally, you should have only one H1 tag per page. You may have multiple H2 tags, but if you have too many you may want to consider splitting the content into two or more pages.

9) **Replace "click here" with keyword-specific anchor text.** Rewrite your content so that the anchor text actually describes the page the link points to, and if you can use the exact title or key phrase of the page you're linking to, that's even better.

10) **Continuously monitor your site statistics.** Know how many people are visiting your site, where they are coming from, what search terms they are using to find you, and how many visits result in sales. Know what's working and what's not, and adapt accordingly.

The rules of the search engine optimization game are always changing, but these tips will give you a solid framework from which to begin to improve your site's visibility. It takes time and patience. You won't see your rankings change overnight. But keep at it and I believe you will see positive results.

**About the Author:** Liz Watson is owner of [KinSites, LLC](#), a virtual administrative services company, specializing in web services, document production, and data management. If you'd like more information about SEO techniques, website design, or any other types of virtual assistance, contact Liz at [liz@kinsites.com](mailto:liz@kinsites.com).