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## How to Design a Search Engine Friendly Web Site

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Many web site designers don't design their sites for the [search engines](#). This is a huge mistake because they miss out on attracting lots of free traffic. Your beautifully designed web site may have cost you thousands of dollars but it still needs to attract visitors to be profitable.

Here are 12 highly effective strategies for designing a search engine friendly web site:

1. Research highly targeted keywords - do this even before you begin designing otherwise you may have to go back and clean up some of your [web site design](#). Use the keyword research tool, KeywordDiscovery (KeywordDiscovery.com) to research the most popular keywords that pertain to the subject matter of your web site. KeywordDiscovery will show how many people have searched for that particular keyword over several search engines within the last 12 months.

2. Create a list of approximately 100 keywords or keyword phrases that you can include within your web pages. After having completed the above research, you should have found the keywords that were searched on most frequently, but only produce a small number of competing web sites.

3. Write a paragraph of 250 - 500 words of text for the top of each web page. Weave your keywords within this text being careful not have them so close together that your copy reads strange for your visitors. Aim to please the search engines as well as your web site visitors.

4. Optimize meta tags - the most significant meta tags are the title and description meta tags. The keyword meta tag has lost its effectiveness due to people spamming it, however include it anyway as some search engines still use it. Include your keywords within each of these meta tags. The title meta tag should be a short sentence about the purpose of your site. In your description meta tag, write a sentence on the greatest benefit of your site. Your keyword meta tag should include the most frequently used keywords contained within your web page.

5. Include Heading Tags - these can range from H1-H6 most designers will only use H1-H3. These tags separate each section of your web page with subheadings. The H1 tag contains the largest font and is the most significant. Within the descriptive text of these header tags you should include the keyword phrases placed in the same order as your keyword phrases that are within your keyword meta tags.

6. Optimize images using the alt tag - write a short description for the alt tag of your image. The alt tag has 2 purposes:

- a) visitors can read the description if they can't see the image.
- b) search engines only spider text (not images), therefore this could help your site's rankings.

7. Reduce image size - too many images or very large images on your web page will slow down the loading time of your web site. Make sure your images have a resolution of 72ppi. Slice large images into smaller pieces with your graphics editor.

8. Find incoming links (backward links) - web sites that link to yours raise your link popularity. Search for web sites that are compatible with yours and have a PR 4 or more to do a link exchange. Write optimized articles and include them on your web site. This means your site has a greater chance of being indexed quickly as well as getting a boost in its rankings.

Create absolute links (ie <http://www.domainname.com>) from all your internal pages to your home page. This will increase the number of links pointing to your home page.

**9.** Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to implement a clean design throughout your web site. This will reduce the time to implement a consistent text (or layout) style for your web site. It will also enable you to easily update your whole site should you wish to make any future changes.

**10.** Place any script code into external files - when using [javascript](#) (ie for swapping images on your navigation bar) it creates a lot of code between the header tags, pushing down the text that search engines would spider first. Placing the script code in an external file reduces the code to just one line.

**11.** Insert the DOC TYPE tag at the top of every web page. A DOCTYPE ( "document type declaration") informs the validator which version of HTML you're using for your web pages. DOCTYPEs are a key component of compliant web pages: your markup and CSS won't validate without them. i.e.

```
[!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01  
Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd"]
```

DOCTYPEs are also essential to the proper rendering and functioning of web documents in compliant browsers like Mozilla, IE5/Mac, and IE6/Win.

**12.** Write clean html code - web site editors often write extra code. This can increase the loading time of your web pages. Check your html code by running it through a html validator (<http://www.htmlhelp.com/tools/validator>).

Once you have implemented all the strategies above, submit your website to the search engines and get ready for lots of targeted traffic.

You now have built a profitable search engine friendly web site.

## **Resources**

[The Global Structure of an HTML Document](#)

[Page Validation and Loading Times](#)

[Fix HTML code errors](#)