



Google SEO for Beginners

Introduction

As many of us web developers already know, Google is rated by many as the number one search engine in the world. We personally know that our websites get about 90% of their search engine traffic direct from Google searches.

Getting indexed by Google can be a pain, but getting highly placed rankings for specific keywords seems to be the nut that not many web developers without SEO (search engine optimization) experience or [seo training](#) can crack.

Today we're going to give you an informative primer on the basics of search engine optimization techniques -- many of which we use everyday to optimize our websites and stay ahead of our competitors.

4 Steps to Better Rankings

We personally believe in the "practice what you preach" approach to all things business related -- especially SEO. So, before we continue, here's a sample of keywords and Google rankings for some of our websites:

Website	Keywords	Google Ranking
Activekb.com	Knowledgebase software	#2 of 4,980,000
DevEdit.com	Online HTML editor	#3 of 9,080,000
MyFreeTemplates.com	Free Dreamweaver	#4 of 93,600
	Templates	

Step 1. Choosing The Right Keywords

Choosing the right keywords to base your site optimization around is an important first step. General or generic keywords are usually not the best approach, and sometimes it's better to be a little more specific and focus on niche keywords relating to your product or service.

For example, let's talk about www.devedit.com -- DevEdit is our WYSIWYG HTML editing component that drops into browser-based applications.

The problem is, there are a LOT of WYSIWYG HTML editors, but how can we get DevEdit to appear in Google's top 10 rankings? Well, let's see. Trying to optimize for the keyword "HTML" alone would be a tough task, as it's too general. There are HTML editors, HTML tutorials, HTML articles, etc.

We need to be more specific, which means:

1. Targeting a more suitable market that is looking for a content editing solution
2. Competing with fewer websites targeting the same keywords
3. Optimizing for keywords that people actually use when performing searches

Targeting a suitable market will depend on your website, as well as the products and services you offer. Try to be specific with your keywords, and remember that people no longer use single keyword search phrases - the average search phrase contains 3-5 related words.

For example, if you're optimizing for a web development site and you're located in Sydney, Australia, use keywords such as "web development Sydney" or "web development services Australia".

To find out how many websites are competing with your keywords -- either intentionally or not -- simply do a search on Google and note down how many results are returned. In our case, for "online html editor", we're competing with 9,080,000 sites. The more sites that are competing for your keywords, the harder it will be to get on the front page.

Alternatively, to get a rough indication of how many people are actually searching for the keywords you want to optimize your site for, use the Overture search suggestion tool. It's not exact, and doesn't measure Google searches, but it does give a very good estimate.

The Overture search suggestion tool will also provide you with a list of similar keywords, based on the keywords you enter. This can be a great way to find other keywords to optimize your site for.

As a rough guideline, try to optimize every page on your site for a different search phrase. Each search phrase should contain 2 to 3 highly targeted keywords.

Step 2. Your URL and Title Tag

Two of the most determining factors in Google's ranking are your domain name and title tag. For example, a domain name such as:

`http://www.web-development-sydney.com` will generally get ranked higher than

`http://www.companyname.com`, assuming that they had identical keywords and page content.

For some of us, keywords in the domain name look too unprofessional, and we've already registered our domain, so it's too late to change. An alternative -- and also a useful tactic -- is to add your keywords into the names of your pages, such as

`http://www.companyname.com/web-development-services.html`

Your title tag is equally as important as your domain name. Using keywords in your title tag can improve your Google ranking significantly. Trying to achieve a balance of professionalism with keyword density in the title tag however is sometimes a little more difficult.

Going back to our example of a web development company earlier, a good title tag would be:

```
<title>"Company name provides professional affordable web development services in Sydney Australia."</title>
```

Usually, the closer to the front of your title tag the keywords are placed, the better.

Step 3. H1 Tags and Keyword Density

`<h1>` tags seem to have been depreciated by style sheets these days, and are not used as often as they used to be.

The Google ranking algorithm dictates that if you're using a `<h1>` tag, then the text in between this tag must be more important than the content on the rest of the page. Here's a quick example:

```
<h1>Google sees this text as more important</h1>
```

```
<p>... than this text</p>
```

By default, H1 tags aren't the prettiest in terms of formatting, so using a CSS style to override the default look is usually a good idea:

```
H1 { color: blue; font-family: Verdana; font-size: 16px }
```



Sprinkling keywords throughout your page content can also improve your sites keyword density. Keyword density simply means the ratio of optimized keywords to the rest of the content on your page. It is usually expressed as a percentage, and should be between 7% and 10% for each page on your site.

Don't overdo the keyword density, however, but don't overlook it either. A good example would be:

Before:

Company name provides web design and site management services to our clients.

After:

Company name provides web development services to the Sydney region in Australia

Notice how we use the keywords more efficiently the second time around?

Step 4. Links, Links and More Links

And this leads us to the toughest part of the Google SEO process -- back-links. Back links are websites that link directly to your website. The general principal is the more back links you have, the higher your pages will be ranked, as your website must be good if so many other sites are linking back to it.

If you run a web development company, then adding a simple link to the bottom of each of your client's websites, such as:

`Web development by Company Name`

... (With your clients permission of course) can help boost your back links, which will help boost your ranking position in searches.

Submitting your site to dmoz.org, Yahoo! and other directories is also an important step to increase the number of sites linking back to yours. Do remember however, that setting up back links takes time. I would recommend emailing 5-10 websites each and every day to request back-links or partnership links (keeping in mind that the sites contacted should be relevant but not competitive) e.g. - If you sell chocolate, partnering with a company that sells Roses may just be a good idea. Within a couple of weeks, you should have a good 100 or so sites happily linking back to yours!



Action Marketing Solutions

Visit us at GetActionMarketing.com

Conclusion

Google can be one tough search engine to crack. Hopefully, however, in this article we've provided you with enough basic tips to get started optimizing both yours and your clients website.