## Copywriting Playbook

Search & Social Media



## writing for social



# How is Writing for Social Media Different from Other Types of Writing?

- It has to be abbreviated; short and to the point; aim for compression and depth
- The content is going to be very widely read, so the composition of the content is key; every detail counts
- Content needs to directly connect with each reader/follower
- Purpose is to incite an action (such as a like, follow, comment, click, etc.)





# What are People Looking for from Social Media Writing?

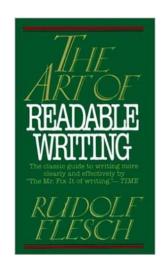
- Ideally they're looking for content that's **entertaining and smart** and will add value to their lives.
- Brands that get social media right by appealing to their audience and forging a strong connection: <u>Denny's</u>, <u>Pampers</u>, <u>Dove</u>, <u>GoPro</u>.
- In writing social media for, say, a financial institution, it can be more challenging to be entertaining, but at least strive to be as interesting and engaging as possible.





#### The Challenges of Social Media Writing

- The tyranny of the short form you're restricted to very short length
- 140 characters for Twitter max; 116 if you use a link
- For Facebook and LinkedIn, 2-3 sentences, ideally
- Blog posts have to be short and to the point; for brevity, 300-600 words long, but longer definitely if the subject matter warrants it
- A general guide to writing excellent expository prose that's direct and to the point: <u>The Art of Readable Writing by Rudolf</u> <u>Flesch</u>





# Different platforms demand different tones



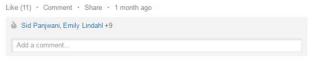
## LinkedIn: The Leading Business & Professional Social Media Platform

- Used to demonstrate professional knowledge, expertise and acumen
- Its tone: a career-oriented site with a more serious/professional tone
- Length: 2-3 sentences
- Goal: make the content as punchy, intriguing and interesting as possible
- Impart essential information (like the first paragraph of a news story)
- Coca-Cola has won praise for its LinkedIn page; click on the link to see some examples.



MFS Investment Management Why must investors today assume three times the risk they did 20 years ago? Lior Jassur believes weak returns are here to stay due to high public debt, low economic growth, poor demographics, and low interest rates. http://bit.ly/2dptVkt







#### Twitter: The Shorthand Communicator

- Length: 140 characters, 116 with a link
- Tone: punchy, like a headline: the messaging has to be as spare as haiku
- Goal: thought-provoking and attention-getting
- Utilize hashtags
- If there's an accompanying link, messaging should act as a teaser to get people to click on it without goading
- American Airlines has won praise for its Twitter page; click on the link to see some examples





#### Facebook: The 800-pound Gorilla in the Social Media Room Like

Where LinkedIn is the preferred platform for professionals, Facebook, without question, is the dominant social media platform in the world; it's the planet's kitchen table for casual conversation.

- Tone: where LinkedIn is to a degree B2B, Facebook is B2C: Business-to-Customer; use Facebook to talk to customers
- Not as business oriented don't use complex professional terminology (e.g., jargon) as with LinkedIn
- Goal: use the messaging to reinforce core brand values, address the reader, provide a clear call to action
- Establishes a personality
- Nike has won praise for its Facebook page; click on the link to see some examples







Your circumstances don't determine your outcome. Come out of nowhere



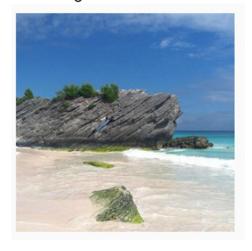
3.9M Views



### Instagram: The Premier Photo Sharing Site

- Often used by businesses for product promotion and customer outreach; <u>American Express</u> is killing it on Instagram, because it's a travel company that covers the world and so can depict a wealth of striking images from around the world (click on the link to see some examples).
- Captions are revealed when you click on a photo

#### Instagram





## YouTube: The World's Leading Video Sharing Site

- Companies like Red Bull and PlayStation have capitalized on the communication value of YouTube videos; click on the links to see some examples
- Select your titles and captions carefully so they'll be hit often

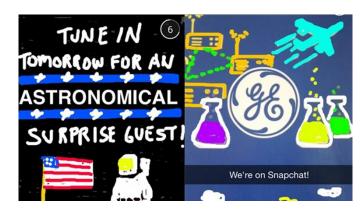




# Snapchat: Sharing Ephemeral Photos that Make an Impact

- Many brands, such as <u>General Electric</u> and <u>Warby Parker</u>, are adopting Snapchat to reach out to consumers, especially younger ones; to access the hyperlinked brand Snapchat sites.
- Photos on Snapchat aren't permanent; they're ephemeral and vanish quickly, which encourages frivolity and spontaneity on the part of users who are posting their real-time cellphone photos
- As with Instagram and YouTube, hashtags and tags embedded in the captions and accompanying texts are crucial







# Pinterest: A Photo & Video Sharing Site Especially Popular with Women

- 70% of Pinterest users are women
- Brands like <u>L.L. Bean</u> and <u>Nordstrom</u> have established great success with their Pinterest accounts; click on the links to see some examples
- As with Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat, captions provide the only opportunity for writing





Date night in Baxter State Park

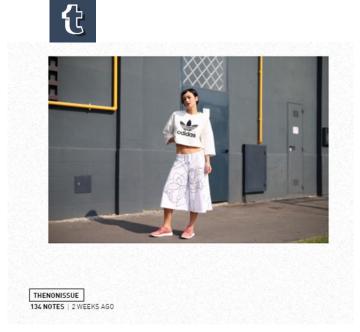
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# Tumblr: A Photo Sharing Site that Allows Microblogging

- Many corporations like
   <u>Adidas</u> and <u>Target</u> use
   Tumblr to great effect; click
   on the links to see some
   examples
- As with Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat, captions provide the only opportunity for writing

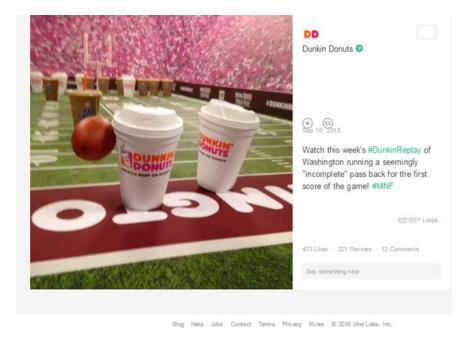




#### Vine: Home of the Six-Second Looping Video

- The most popular video sharing site on the planet; six-second videos repeat endlessly
- Corporations like <u>Dunkin</u>
   <u>Donuts</u> and <u>Sony</u> use Vine skillfully; click on the links to see some examples
- As with Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat, captions provide the only opportunity for writing







### Blog Post: The Digital Essay

Posts have to be interesting and informal; they should draw you in and be engaging. They're abbreviated essays with a 3-part structure:

- 1. Opening argument
- 2. Supporting evidence
- 3. Recap and conclusion
- Tone: The tone of the post should be conversational, but not too casual. The language should be intelligent, but not artificially erudite
- Goal: Blog posts should trigger new thinking by being provocative and stating a clear opinion. They should answer the question, "Why should I be interested in this topic? Of what use is it to me?" Posts should initiate a conversation with clients and prospects
- Subject matter source: Usually here at iCrossing, a writer is assigned a topic to expand upon, but if you're free to choose your own subject, ask yourself: what kind of blog post would / like to read? What kind of short essay would accomplish the blog's rhetorical goal?





writing for search



### SEO Copywriting Best Practices



## Why Write Copy With Search Engines In Mind?

#### Search Engines Read and Index Content

Search engines will "read" your content and rank it for relevant queries.

#### Gain Incremental Traffic for Your Content

Search engines drive people to your content who might otherwise have never visited.

#### Gain Qualified Traffic for Your Content

Adding specific keywords drives qualified traffic to your content



## how search engines work



#### An Overview of Search Engines







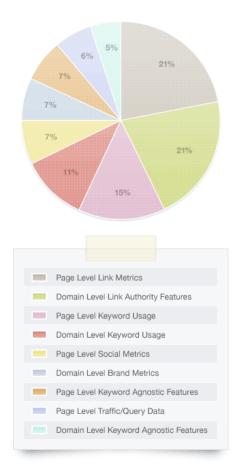
- Every search engine's goal is to display the most relevant and useful results to the end user when a query is performed.
- Google & Bing have well over 1,000 different ranking signals they use in their algorithm to determine which webpage should rank the highest for a specific query
- Google & Bing make changes to their algorithm EVERY DAY



### Ranking Factors

#### Influential ranking signals include:

- Appearance of keywords throughout page elements
- Number of backlinks to the domain as well as the specific web page
- Social Media popularity
- Page Load Time
- URL Structure
- PageRank
- User Feedback
- Domain Authority (Site-wide)
- Page Authority (Page-specific)
- And much more...



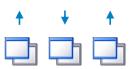


#### How Search Engines Work

Crawling, Storing, Indexing & Prioritization

- 1 Search Spiders Follow Links
- 2. Software Compiles Pages
- 3 Pages Stored in Database













Search engine spiders comb the internet through links, looking for documents and their corresponding URLs. These documents and web addresses are collected and sent to the search engine's indexing software, then to their databases where they are stored.



#### How Search Engines Work

#### Crawling, Storing, Indexing & Prioritization















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Creative Circle offers creative staffing, marketing staffing, and creative jobs in several major cities. Creative Circle provides client service, full time positions, and

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custom project teams. New York to Portland. Connecting local talent with creative -

creativestaffingintl.com/ \*

Creative Circle | Creative Staffing

End-users go to search engines and perform search queries when looking for specific information. The search engine index is searched, looking for documents matching the query. Relevant results are displayed based within the search engine result pages (SERPs).



#### How Search Engines Work

Weighted Elements



- Content must be accessible to the search engine crawlers (spiders)
- Content should include unique, optimized titles and meta-data
- Content should be optimized to support target keyword phrases



choosing effective keywords



#### How to Choose Keywords

Start with a general topic in mind, and then use these tools:

- Google Trends <a href="http://www.google.com/trends/">http://www.google.com/trends/</a>
- 2. Google Keyword Tool <a href="https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal">https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal</a>
- 3. Google Blog Search <a href="http://www.google.com/blogsearch">http://www.google.com/blogsearch</a>
- 4. Google News Search <a href="http://news.google.com/news/advanced\_news\_search">http://news.google.com/news/advanced\_news\_search</a>



#### **Using Trends**

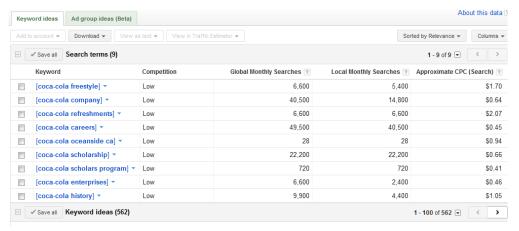


#### Go here: http://www.google.com/trends

- Enter your post idea as the search term and set your geographic preferences
- Google returns "Top Searches" and "Rising Searches" with additional topic ideas
- Download CSV for even more Top Searches & Rising Searches
- Use these to help think of additional post topics



### Using Google Keyword Tool



Go here: https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal

Set the match type to "[Exact]"

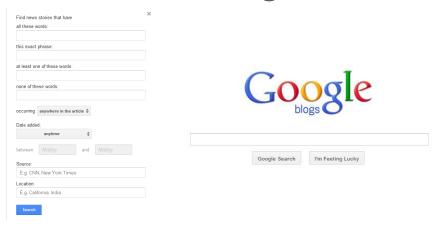
Use the "Advanced Options & Filters" to set local market and language preferences

Generally, it's best to use monthly volumes for your local country versus using global volumes

For additional keyword segmentation, use the Ad group ideas tab



#### Using Google News & Blog Search



Go here: <a href="http://news.google.com/news/advanced\_news\_search">http://news.google.com/news/advanced\_news\_search</a> and here: <a href="http://www.google.com/blogsearch">http://www.google.com/blogsearch</a>

Enter your post idea as the search term, and refine by date. You can include negative keywords, and use other advanced operators.

Browse through results to find popular news stories or blog posts that you could expand upon, react to, or otherwise use in helping formulate a blog post idea or other content pieces.



### generating new topics



### Use the power of search to...

- 1. Find new topics to write about
- Refine existing ideas to make them more relevant to what searchers are looking for
- 3. Answer questions people have (e.g. "how to", "top five ways", "most popular")



### Think Of Topics In Terms Of Keywords

### 1 Piece of Content = 1 Keyword

- Think of each post, video or any piece of content as being related to one primary keyword
- By leveraging a large amount of free tools out there, you can learn more about that keyword, and find ways to craft your post to be relevant to what searchers are looking for, based on recent search trends
- Relating to one primary keyword/topic will also help keep content focused and on-topic
- If content is about more than one primary keyword, consider breaking it into separate piece of content to keep each on-topic.



## optimizing blog posts



#### Why Optimize Blog Posts?

- Greater exposure for timely content and news in both search and social networks
- Connect with other bloggers who will repost your content, creating valuable links back to your site & increase exposure of your content
- Opportunity to connect with bloggers directly by using keyword triggers
- Keywords can trigger a link out via alert systems (ex. Google Alerts, Yahoo! Alerts, etc.)
- Opportunity to partially shape the brand results in search engines, (optimized blog posts are
  often found in the top natural results for primary brand keywords)



#### Blog Example...

**HTML Title Tag**: Five Project Planning Tools Your Team Isn't Using

**Meta Description**: It's no secret that the right project management software increases productivity for PMs & teams. But which 5 resources are often overlooked? Find out now.

**H1**: 5 Project Management Software Features Your Team Isn't Using

**Keywords**: project management software, project management tools, project manager software, project planning tools, project management resources





### 5 project management software features your team isn't using

by Office Team, on September 15, 2016 | 0 Comments | 49 Shares











From built-in templates and familiar scheduling tools, to instant collaboration and easy access across devices

According to a recent study, the most-coveted project planning tools include file sharing, time tracking, email integration and Gantt charts. No surprise there. But which helpful tools are organizations least likely to utilize? Interestingly, video chat, real-time chat, social media integration and mobile access are apparently the forgotten ones of project management software. But with communication cited as the most important aspect of successful project management, are PMs missing out on a gold mine?

Here's a closer look at five untapped resources and how they can help in executing projects easily and more efficiently:

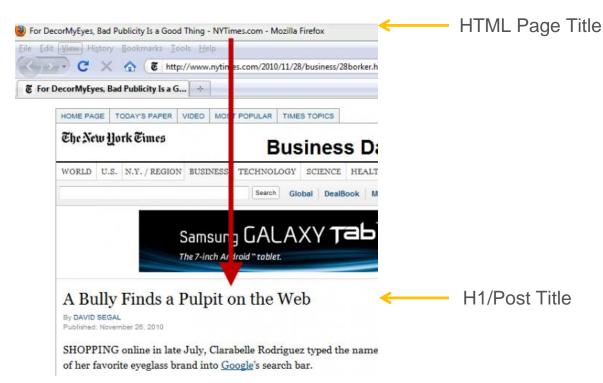
- 1 & 2. Video/real-time chat—Choosing project management software with integrated communication tools enables project team members to collaborate using voice, video or chat from within the project. How critical is that to the team's success? A Project Management Institute (PMI) report found that one of the top causes of project failure reported by companies is poor communication. Having the ability to communicate in real-time with team members down the hall or across the globe using tools designed to transmit your critical conversations quickly and securely could be the key to a project's success.
- 3. Social media integration—Social media has moved beyond just Facebook updates and tweeting the latest trends—to boosting the level of communication among teams and project stakeholders. Research has found that using social media facilitates "small talks" which, in turn, "supports familiarization to help build rapport and create a more nurturing, supportive, collaborative and trusting environment." So why not take advantage of those benefits to help drive a successful project? Using software with enterprise social capabilities like dedicated Yammer newsfeeds in SharePoint, for example, can be useful for
- 4. Mobile access—Using software that's available on Windows, iOS and Android is critical in ensuring that everyone can update tasks on their device of choice and view timelines and reports on the go. With time tracking listed as a highly critical component of successful project management, it's important to find a solution that allows team members to submit updates on the go. Improved time and task entry gives project management instant visibility to make informed decisions faster.
- 5. Sponsor-friendly settlings—Among projects labeled as "high-performing," more than 80 percent have actively engaged sponsors. Time and time again, research has shown that having an executive sponsor supporting a project from start to finish is critical to success. While a sponsor will not be part of the day-to-day tasks, they should have enough access so that they can lend support to the team when needed by staying on top of the project's progress and benefits—and going to bat for it whenever possible. That said, having software that allows your Project Management Office (PMO) or sponsor to manage Project Portfolio Management (PPM) settings without additional assistance is important.

With more and more teams working remotely, even globally, communication skills and time management are more critical than ever. Having access to tools that let stakeholders manage on the go and share the latest updates, conversations and project timelines quickly through a dedicated project site keeps everyone connected and informed. Learn more about achieving greater visibility into project performance, as well as reducing budgets, increasing savings and more.



## **Optimizing Post Titles**

- Use one keyword phrase in the post title whenever possible
- Create a keyword-rich HTML
   Page Title that targets the same keywords
- The Post Title and Page Title do not have to be the same – you can make the post title more witty & clever, but make the HTML Page Title more optimized & keyword rich (both should include keywords)
- Try to keep the post title shorter, so it is more easily sharable on social networks





## Optimizing Post Content

- Use the primary keyword in the first paragraph and pepper in related keyword derivatives throughout the post (including the end)
- Embed links within keywords to the referenced topic/page
- Embed images, video, and other content from the site to increase appeal of the blog post
- Encourage comments as much as possible (more comments = more content & information for search engines to index)



## The Best Places to Put Keywords

### From most to least important:

- ■Page Titles most important element for SEO. Ensure your keywords are present within the title
- ■Post Title weighed more important by search engines than body text
- ■Body Content near the top of the page the closer to the top of the page, the more important search engines consider the text to be
- ■Body Content "below the fold" still important, but less important than content near the top of the page
- ■Image Alt Text important, but to a lesser degree than standard body text
- •Meta Description search engines pay little attention to this for rankings, but still important for click through rates



# optimizing YouTube videos



## YouTube and Search



Optimizing YouTube channels and videos can help garner more brand exposure. Be sure to optimize your videos by:

- Put keywords in video descriptions, tags, and titles to increase search results.
- Always include a link to your site in the video description.



Video Title: This Team Color Makes the Most Three Point Shots | LG NCAA

Video Description: Does your team have the winning combination of colors? See what Jay Bilas has to say about it in LG's Color Commentator Series, as he shares some fascinating, never-before-released March Madness stats that reveal which team color is likely to have the highest three-point shot percentage! Whether your team is blue, green, gold, yellow, purple, red, black, orange, white, or a combination of two, find out if you may be on your way to winning your bracket based on team colors. See what the numbers say about your favorite college team and Do Game Day Right™ with LG, the official corporate sponsor of the NCAA®.



# optimizing for Pinterest



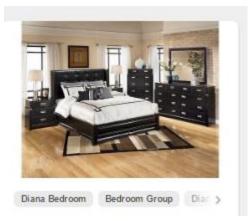
## Pinterest and Search

From a search standpoint, Pinterest has some direct impact on search engine rankings, therefore:

- Optimizing the Account and Pinboard titles with keyword-rich names and descriptions help with guided search.
- Using keywords and hashtags when describing a Pin helps increase visibility within Pinterest.



### Pinterest • The world's catalog of ideas



A perfect example of contemporary design, this bedroom furniture set features a rich espresso finish that flows smoothly over the stacked design, while beautifully accenting the button-tufted faux leather upholstery and stylish nail-head accents. The standard set includes the contemporary bed, dresser, mirror, and nightstand. Add a stylish chest, comforter set, throw rug, wall art and accessories to complete the look.

Keywords: bedroom furniture set, contemporary bed



# Optimizing for Facebook



### Facebook and Search

From a search standpoint, Facebook itself has little *direct* impact on search engine rankings. But it indirectly helps brands increase exposure to fans, which can improve search performance. To optimize for search, you can:

- Use top SEO keywords in posts to help increase off-site relevancy, increasing the likelihood of ranking for those keywords.
- Try to make the first word in each post a targeted SEO term.
   Why? That is the word that the search engines place higher importance on.







#### PetSmart

October 19 at 10:00am - 🚱

Create your own force this Halloween with these adorable dog costumes for Star Wars fans everywhere! http://ptsmrt.co/6185BC7yH



**Keywords**: dog costumes, Halloween dog costumes, Star Wars dog costumes



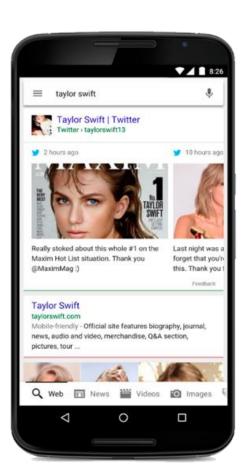
# **Optimizing for Twitter**



### Twitter and Search

Twitter is one of the best social media channels for building natural backlinks to a website. Tweets now appear in Google searches in a carousal format (mobile only so far, but desktop is promised soon). You can optimize content by:

- Using SEO keywords in tweets, and linking to corresponding landing pages.
- Searching and following #hashtags relevant to the brand to monitor industry buzz. You can also follow Twitter profiles that are relevant to the industry. This will help you come up with ideas for content, as well.





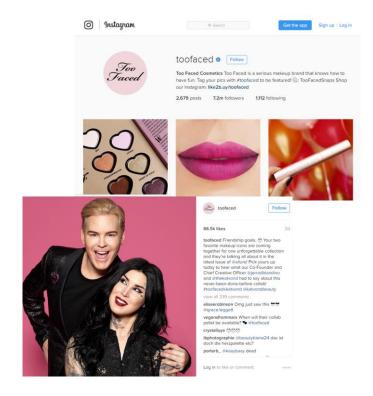
## other social spaces



## Instagram and Search

From a search standpoint, Instagram has no direct impact on search engine rankings as they don't have any crawlable web presence apart from the Account. What you can do:

- Make sure to write an engaging description or biography in the profile.
- Since Instagram allows reposting into Twitter and Facebook, which may indirectly influence rankings, you can share unique Instagram photos using themed and consistent hashtags across all channels.

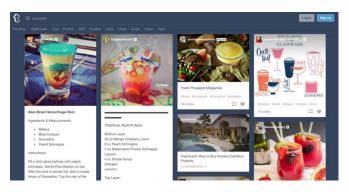




## Tumblr and Search

Tumblr is one of the largest social media and blogging platforms - and it does have a direct SEO benefit. Make the most of it by:

 Creating keyword-rich, sharable, evergreen content and updates.



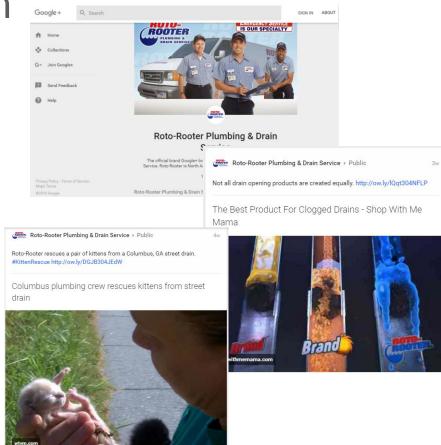




## Google+ and Search

Posts on Google+ do show up in search results and ultimately helps with higher organic visibility. Be sure to:

- Write keyword-rich content, similar to what you are publishing in other channels.
- Use a website link in each of your posts.
- Include photos, GIFs and infographics to increase likes and shares.

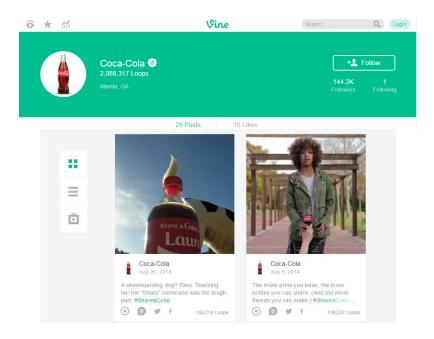




## Vine and Search

Vine videos are displayed directly within search results pages, creating another opportunity for optimized content. Be sure to:

- Create videos that are useful and entertaining. No hard sell. (e.g. "how-to" demo of a product, or something fun or interesting related to your brand.)
- Write keyword-rich descriptions, similar to what you are publishing in other channels.





seo copywriting tips



## SEO Copywriting = Copywriting, With A Twist

Everything you know about writing for social is generally true of SEO copywriting – with a one exception:

### You're writing for two audiences:

- 1. People who demand excellent content
- 2. Spiders that read & weigh elements on the page

\*\*Write for both but don't sacrifice quality!

### Keep it natural:

- Does your optimized copy sound forced? Don't change the way you write!
- Try writing "normal" (non-optimized) copy first and add key phrases where they make the most sense. Infusing keywords into existing copy is usually more efficient than completely re-writing the copy.
- No need to overstuff content with keywords. Allow them to naturally fall into place.





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# appendix



### SEO Copywriting Cheat Sheet

#### **Audiences**

- \* People
- Search Engine Spiders

#### Blogs, Articles and On-Page Copy

- Think of each page as being related to one primary theme. Choose a primary keyword based on that theme and then derivative keywords that are thematically similar - but make sure the focus is on the primary keyword. (If a page is about more than one primary keyword, consider breaking it into separate pages to keep each page ontopic.)
- Meta descriptions, which appear on search engine results pages, should describe what a visitor might see on a particular page. This description should ideally be 150 characters or less (including spaces) and should contain relevant keywords.
- Use bullets where possible for readability.
- The content should sound natural. If you find it difficult to incorporate the keywords into the content as you write, back the keywords into the content by writing first and then integrating the keywords later.
- ◆ Break up large blocks of text into paragraphs with headers (<h1>, <h2>, etc.)
- Use your targeted keywords in the page headline, as search engines like pages where keywords appear "high" on the page, especially within specific header tags (<h1>).
- Include your most important keyword in the first 15-20 words of the copy, and then work remaining keywords throughout the rest of the text. But do not keyword 'stuff' (see next bullet).
- Excessive use of the same keyword or keyword phrase should be avoided. Not only is this distracting to the visitor, but it may read as "spam" to the spiders.
- Utilizing a derivative of a phrase enables multiple phrases to be found. For example, the keyword phrase "Hyundai Sonata Hybrid" can help capture traffic for other terms like "Hyundai Sonata," and "Sonata Hybrid."

#### Social Channels & SEO

#### YouTube

Use relevant SEO keywords in title of video.

Write an enticing description and be sure to tag it with popular keywords.

#### Facebook

Use keywords in posts to increase the likelihood of ranking better.

Try to make the first word in each post a targeted SEO term, if possible.

#### Pinterest

Optimize the Account and Pinboards with keyword-rich names and descriptions to help with guided search.

#### Twitter

Use SEO keywords in tweets and link to corresponding landing pages. Search and following #hashtags relevant to the brand to monitor industry buzz and to get content ideas.

#### Instagram

Write an engaging description or biography in the profile. Share unique Instagram photos using themed and consistent hashtags across all channels.

#### Tumbir

Create keyword-rich, sharable, evergreen content and updates.

#### Google+

Use keyword-rich content, similar to what you are publishing in other channels. Include links, photos, GIFs and infographics to increase likes and shares.

#### Vine

Create videos that are useful and entertaining. No hard sell. (e.g. "how-to", demo of a product, or something fun/interesting related to your brand.) Write keyword-rich descriptions.



### Glossary of Terms

#### ■301 Permanent Redirect

• Method of redirecting an old webpage to a new location. More simply, to display another web page for the web address that you are trying to visit. 301 implies that the move is permanent (as opposed to temporary, etc.)

#### •Alt Tag (attribute)

• An HTML attribute typically used within the IMG tag to provide alternate text when images cannot be displayed.

#### Anchor Text

■ The visible, clickable text within a hyperlink.

#### Backlink

• A link pointing to another site. Generally, a link pointing to your site that can be traced to a particular page.

#### Black Hat SEO

■ The use of unaccepted or frowned upon SEO practices in order to get higher rankings and more traffic. Use at the risk of being dropped from the engines or at least being removed from high rankings.

#### Cloaking

Showing a different web page or content to a search engine spider than what is seen by humans. Method typically used by spammers.

#### Conversion

• Web traffic that fulfills a pre-established goal, such as purchasing of a specific product or filling out a form, etc.

#### Google PageRank

■ Google PageRank™ is a numeric value that represents the relative weight & importance of a page on the web.

#### ■Meta Data / Meta Tags

• Web page specific, descriptive information that helps a search engine identify the purpose and topic of a given web page. Common meta data include a web page's description and keyword listing.

#### Search Engine

• A search engine is a program designed to help find information stored on a computer system such as the World Wide Web, or a personal computer. The search engine allows one to ask for content meeting specific criteria (typically those containing a given word or phrase) and retrieving a list of references that match those criteria.



### Glossary of Terms Cont.

#### Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

• The art and science of "optimizing" your website (both internally & externally) so that it ranks higher in the natural/organic listings of a search engine.

### Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

• The resulting listings that are shown within a search engine when a keyword is searched upon.

#### Spider

• A web crawler (also known as a Web spider or search engine bot) is a program or automated script which browses the World Wide Web in a methodical, automated manner in order to gather website information for indexing.

#### ■Text Link

• A hyperlink that is created using text, rather than images or otherwise.

#### Title Tag

• A meta data element that determines the actual "title" of a given webpage. The title is what shows up in the top bar of your browser. It is also the hyperlink that shows in search engine results listings.

#### •URL / Domain name

Uniform Resource Locator, or more commonly, a web address. ex) http://www.google.com/

#### Website

A website (or Web site) is a collection of web pages, typically common to a particular domain name or sub-domain on the World Wide Web.

#### Web Content

• Web content is the textual, visual or aural content that is encountered as part of the user experience on websites. It may include, among other things: text, images, sounds, videos and animations.

#### White Hat SEO

• The use of accepted SEO practices in order to get higher rankings, more traffic, etc.

