

Content Guidelines

Writing for Search Engine Optimization



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Keyword Targeting

When SEO first became a marketing strategy, the main way Google could determine the topic of a page was how many times a given keyword was mentioned on the page (known as keyword density). This led to the SEO community stuffing as many keyword mentions as possible into the content to achieve rankings, often making the content less user-friendly.

Fortunately, Google and other search engines have significantly improved their search algorithms since those days, and SEO specialists no longer need to use keyword density as a rankings tactic. In fact, keyword stuffing (maximizing keyword density) is now considered a black hat practice, meaning it can negatively impact rankings.

The search engines are now able to better understand the content on a page and are much more interested in whether the content answers a user's query sufficiently. This provides the best possible user experience.

This means that integrating keywords into the elements we discuss below is important, but using them repeatedly in the text is not. What is more important is including a variety of keywords and topics that will fully address anything the user who is searching for that primary keyword might be interested in.

Do

Include a variety of keywords.

Don't

Stuff keywords to achieve rankings.

Title Tags

Every page published on the site should have an optimized title tag. This is one area search engines look to gain an understanding of a page's purpose, and it serves a valuable role in the search engine results page (SERP), appearing as the text linked to the page.



We recommend including both a primary and secondary keyword in the title tag if space allows, as well as noting your brand name.

Title tags should be between 50 and 60 characters (including spaces) in length to ensure they aren't truncated by search engines. The title tag is in purple in the screenshot below:

www.thelashlounge.com › services › eyelash-extensions

Natural Eyelash Extension Application | The Lash Lounge

Get long, full lashes with eyelash extensions from The Lash Lounge near you. Schedule your full set or refill today and get a low-maintenance look you'll love!

Do

Optimize each published page.

Title Tag

Title tags should be between 50 and 60 characters long (including spaces).

Meta Descriptions

While meta descriptions are not a direct ranking factor, they do serve a major purpose in assisting users to decide what link to click from the list of choices in the SERP. An effective, engaging meta description will improve click-through rate, which is likely to have an impact on rankings, so the meta description is indirectly linked to rankings. The meta description appears in the screenshot above as the grey text below the green URL. We recommend using action words in meta description text to encourage users to click through to your site.



We recommend using action words in meta description text to encourage users to click through to your site.

Meta descriptions should be between 145 and 160 characters in length. The length of meta descriptions shown by Google varies greatly from SERP to SERP. While the meta description for the page above is 154 characters long, well within the suggested length, Google has still truncated the final word from it. This is unavoidable, so the best we can do is stay within the guidelines.

Meta Descriptions

Meta descriptions should be between 145 and 160 characters in length (including spaces).

www.thelashlounge.com › blog › swimming-with-lash-... ⋮

6 Busted Myths About Swimming With Eyelash Extensions

Sep 21, 2020 — FALSE: You can most definitely go swimming with eyelash extensions. Just remember to give your extensions eight hours to set before getting ...

Utilizing Headers

Utilizing headers is an important aspect of your on-page optimization strategy when writing content. Headers help to organize your content, making it easier for users to read and easier for search engines to understand.

The most important header is the H1. This header should always include the primary keyword, as it is a place search engines look to gain a better understanding of what the page is about. Both the H1 and smaller additional headers (H2, H3, etc.) are important for designating that the content will cover a new topic and are often utilized in pulling content for featured snippets and voice search.



We recommend using keywords, particularly those formatted as a question, in headers, and then answering the question in the text directly below the header.

These short blocks of content are sometimes pulled into the search results as a featured snippet. The content can then go on to build off that brief explanation and more fully answer the user's inquiry.

This system of organizing content is also helpful for voice search, as the same type of content that could be pulled for a featured snippet is what voice search algorithms are looking for to read aloud to users searching by voice.



The H1 header should always include the primary keyword.

Anchor Text for Internal Links

Anchor text is the visible, clickable text in a hyperlink. It is often displayed as blue underlined text, but the style can change based on the site's styles. This text is particularly important when linking between pages on your website as it is your opportunity to share more about the context of a page with search engines. The anchor text for a link should clearly explain what the user will find when they click the link. If possible, this anchor text should be the primary target keyword for the page it links to.

Internal Linking

Internal linking is important for search engines to better understand a page's content, a site's structure, and which pages are most important.



We recommend including internal links to relevant pages throughout the content on your site.



Anchor text for a link should clearly explain what the user will find when they click the link.

Voice Search

Industry-wide, the data on voice search is relatively limited, meaning SEO professionals are still unable to know exactly what searches are most common on voice search. We do know that voice searches are more likely to be longer and conversational in their wording, meaning the same search intent could be worded in infinite ways. We also know that most voice searches take the form of a question, and that featured snippets are often read aloud as the answer to voice searches.



This means we can optimize for voice search by optimizing for featured snippets. We also recommend your content team understands the questions most commonly asked by customers and potential customers of the business.

Thinking critically about whether these questions would make sense as a voice search can help your team better understand what searches your customers might be asking their smart speakers and smartphone assistants. Those questions should be answered by individual pages on the site, including both a shortened answer to the question as well as more detailed information for when customers visit the site to read more.



Our recommendations in the headings section above will have the biggest impact on succeeding here. Start with a header that includes a keyword in the form of a question. Underneath that header, answer the question clearly and concisely.

Start Here

Create a header that includes a keyword in the form of a question. Underneath that header, answer the question clearly and concisely.



Content Length

Current research shows that there is some correlation between the length of content and how it ranks. This does not mean that content should be long just for the sake of being long, but rather tells us that content that most completely answers a user's queries is more likely to rank well.



That said, we do not recommend a specific length for any content on pages other than noting that all pages should have at least 250 words of content.

When trying to decide how long to make the content on a page, it can be useful to examine the content length of other pages ranking for the target keyword. Ensure you're covering the topic in as much or more detail than the high-ranking web pages you're competing against, which will likely mean a similar or longer length of content.

Keyword Cannibalization

It is important to consider keyword cannibalization when deciding what keywords to use on the pages throughout the site. Keyword cannibalization is when multiple pages on the site are targeting the same primary keyword. This essentially pits two pages on your site against one another, competing to succeed on the same place. When this happens, both of the pages generally perform worse than they would if singularly targeting that keyword.



We recommend maintaining a running list of the keywords targeted on each page of the site to ensure keyword cannibalization does not occur inadvertently.

Linking Strategy

Internal links are links that go from one page on a domain to another page within that same domain. A robust internal linking strategy is a valuable aspect of any SEO strategy. This strategy should ensure a complete web of linking occurring between the pages on the site, with every page on the site being linked to from multiple other pages.

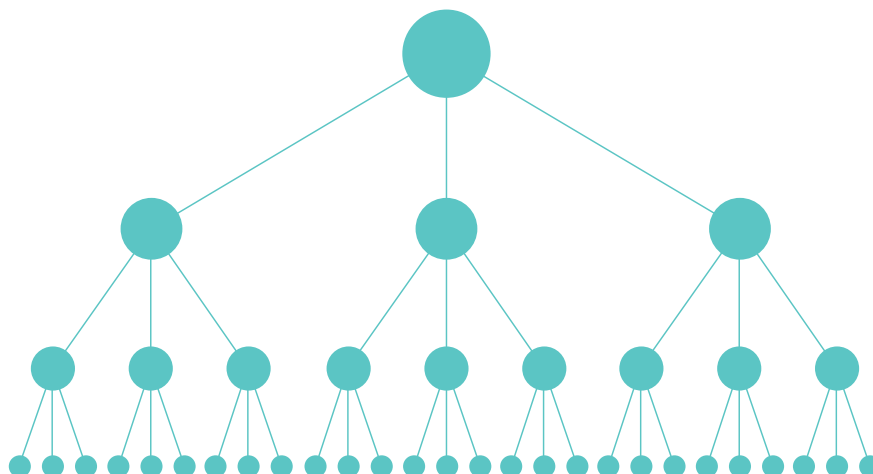
Internal links aren't just useful for helping users better navigate your website. Search engines take cues from internal links throughout the site. A robust linking strategy ensures search engine spiders are able to crawl all the pages on the site. Search engines also use the number of links to a page as a clue to how important it is for the site overall.



A robust linking strategy helps search engine spiders crawl pages on the site.

Ideal Linking Structure

The ideal linking structure looks like this, with the homepage at the top and pages slowly getting more specific as you move down the diagram:



Latent Semantic Indexing Keywords



The basis of latent semantic indexing (LSI) is ensuring your content covers not only the main keyword you're targeting but also content for similar keywords or terms a user is likely to search for next.

By including these keywords and covering the topics in your content, you are more likely to provide users with everything they want to know from the page. This prevents them from returning to Google, therefore improving your performance in the search results.

The simplest way to gain insight into these additional topics that should be covered is the "searches related to" section at the bottom of the Google search results page (SERP).

For example, a primary keyword used on The Lash Lounge's website is "lash extensions." When we look at the "searches related to" for this keyword, we see this:

Searches related to lash extensions

eyelash extensions near me

lash extensions classes

lash extensions supplies

eyelash extensions pros and cons

lash extensions price

how long do eyelash extensions last

eyelash extensions kit

why i stopped eyelash extensions



When writing a landing page for lash extensions, we should consider some of these additional keywords as headers and address the topics in the content. In this example, at a minimum we would recommend including the following keywords: eyelash extensions near me, lash extensions price and how long do eyelash extensions last.

Need Help?

We hope this resource has been insightful. If you need help creating content or implementing any of the SEO best practices outlined in this report, let's talk. At Oneupweb, our team of talented content producers has mastered the art and science of search engine optimization. The art is a balancing act of writing valuable content for your target audience in a way that also resonates with search engines (without sounding unnatural). The science is harvesting data to inform everything from keyword targets to button text. If you need help, we're standing by at the ready.



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