

SEO AS A PROFESSION AND AN ART FORM

*HOW TO GET YOUR SEO CAMPAIGN UP AND RUNNING,
REACH CUSTOMERS, INCREASE YOUR BRAND'S VISIBILITY,
AND IMPROVE YOUR RANKINGS ON SEARCH ENGINES*

This week, please follow the following steps to write your search engine optimization strategy. When you are finished, please attach your results in the week 6 forum as a Word or PDF file. The purpose of this exercise is to get your SEO campaign up and running and to obtain initial results such as an increase in visibility. The list of techniques involved in SEO is vast, so I have concluded this exercise with some guidelines on how to develop your strategy beyond what we will cover this week.

In week 8, also remember to attach your document as an appendix at the end of your final marketing plan. The goal of this is to bring you up to date on some strategies that you can apply to increase your brand's visibility on search engines.

1. Define your Web presence

- a) Briefly remind your classmates what the name of your organization is and what it does.
- b) What is your URL? (If you do not already have one, suggest a URL that would be appropriate for your organization. Make sure that it is not already taken of course.)
- c) You will want the top results for your organization's name on Google and Yahoo! to be your website as well as various social media accounts. What are your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram links? (Note, if your organization does not have these yet, you can propose hypothetical links that you would like to create. Once again, make sure that these are not taken.)
- d) *Optional:* Lastly, does your organization have any negative results (a critical news article for example) on the first page of Google or Yahoo! when you type in its name? If so, you will need to create more social media accounts to push this negative listing down. Skip this last step if it does not apply to your marketing plan.

2. Select "targeted keywords"

- a) Come up with a list of five keywords for which you would like your to have top positions on search engines. These keywords should reflect the product or service that your organization provides.

**Important note 1:* Do not select overly general terms. For example, if you are running a local car rental service, you will not be able to get top a Google ranking for the term "car rental service," as corporations hire teams of professionals to spend countless hours optimizing their sites for that term. Rather, a more appropriate geo-targeted term would be "car rental service in Burlington," as this is more relevant and easier to obtain a first page ranking for.

**Important note 2:* As mentioned later on in this assignment, you should select other keywords to optimize on other pages of your website. For the purpose of this exercise you only need five to include in the code and on the content of your homepage.

For future reference:* If you log into <https://www.google.com/analytics/> you will see a tracking ID and tracking code provided by Google Analytics when you sign up. You do **not need to include that in this exercise, but in real life you or your webmaster would have to include this into the code of your website. This allows you to track how many visitors come to your website and where their visits originate from (Facebook, Twitter, Google, Google Adwords, banner ads, etc.).

3. Chart your progress for proof that your “work works”

You need to be able to show that your search engine rankings are improving each month. If you already have a top ranking for a keyword, you need to be able to see that you are maintaining that position.

Likewise, if you are working in a marketing agency, you want to be able to show your client that your work is making a difference in his or her rankings and sales. After all, that's why that person hired you in the first place.

- a) Create a monthly ranking report. Give it a nice sounding name of your own choosing. That is a table that shows the rank of the website for each keyword. Ideally, when you start each keyword will have a bad ranking, such as 245th (it is kind of time consuming to count this, but a life hack is to just keep clicking to the next page and then to multiply the number of pages by the amount of listings on each page until you get to the last one). After a few months, your ranking should be in the top ten on the first page. Depending on how precise the keyword is, you should ideally be able to gain a first ranking.

- b) Here is an example of what your chart can look like:

[Insert your creative report title here]

Keyword	Ranking on Google	Ranking on Yahoo!
[Keyword 1]		
[Keyword 2, etc.]		

4. Make sure that your keywords appear in your META tags

- a) You have to include your keywords into your meta tags. Note that the most important thing is to place the most important keywords at the beginning of each tag. Include the name of your organization in your title tag. Don't make the tags too long. You can follow the example of these META tags:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Insert your organization's name here and your product or services described in 2-4
words)</title>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
<meta name="title" content="Insert your organization's name here and your product or
services described in 2-4 words)"> -->
<meta name="description" content="Insert a different description of your organization that
contains your keywords here.">
<meta name="copyright" content="Put the name of your organization here">
```

The basic meta tags to work on are title, description, and copyright. Before that remember to fill in the title tag. This is easy to do, just copy and paste the code that is already there when you hit “view source” in the menu bar and then edit what is already there between the “ ” to make it better. If you are using Firefox, click on:

“Tools” → “Web Developer” → “Page Source”

**Note:* You can add different variations of these META tags to every page of your site to optimize it for more keywords, though that is not required for this exercise.

Two META tags that are no longer necessary to include in your code:

You may also see the following META tags included in the code of websites you decide to research. After some extensive reading and conversations with industry experts, it can be concluded that the following two META tags are no longer necessary:

```
<meta name="content" content="I USED TO PUT THIS 2ND TAG BUT NOT
ANYMORE AS GOOGLE MAY PENALIZE YOU, SO YOU DON'T NEED THIS
ONE.">
<meta name="keywords" content="Insert your keywords separated by commas here">
```

5. Edit the content on your homepage and on other pages

- a) Make sure your keywords are on the home page in a plain text description. For this exercise, simply write a brief paragraph containing at least two of your most important keywords. This can go on your homepage or at the very least on your about us page.

Note: In a real-life situation, you should consider incorporating your most important keywords in the descriptions of the other pages of your website as well.

6. Use anchor text in a press release

- a) Write a brief paragraph that will be **part of** your press release to distribute to other websites. This paragraph should contain either the name of your organization or your main keyword in anchor text format (for this exercise, just underline the keyword that should be hyperlinked to your website and make it appear in blue font).

Here is a further explanation on what anchor text is: You can distribute a press release about your organization to various other websites. Ideally the name of your organization *or* your most important keyword should be in anchor text format. That means it should be hyperlinked to the homepage of your website or another page that contains relevant information.

Some search engine managers have been tempted to send out multiple press releases containing multiple keywords that are in anchor text format. Do not do this, as Google can consider this to be a black hat SEO method designed to fool their algorithm. In such a case Google can actually penalize a website by dropping its ranking. View the explanation of “**link schemes**” in the following article: <http://www.wikiweb.com/anchor-text/>

In other words, just focus on hyperlinking one keyword in your press release.

Additional Information (For Reference, Not Required for this Assignment)

Do not use black hat SEO techniques or Google and Yahoo! will penalize your website

Some managers resort to what is referred to as black hat SEO techniques. These are strategies that are designed to gain higher rankings by tricking a search engine's algorithm.

For example, one strategy is to paste a list of keywords that are the same color as the background color somewhere on the homepage. Some people try to do that so their pages still look nice (humans can't see the hidden keywords) but Google can. This is a technique that belongs to what is called Black Hat SEO.

DO NOT DO THAT! Google and Yahoo! have been known to lower rankings or to even ban websites from their indexes for using such techniques that are against their terms of service.

Make sure your new website is indexed by the major search engines

If you create a new website, you want to make sure that it is being indexed by Google, Yahoo, and Bing. Here are the links to submit your URL to be indexed:

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/submit-url>

<http://www.bing.com/toolbox/submit-site-url>

<https://search.yahoo.com/info/submit.html>

There are also some automated tools to consider, though these are less important. Just make sure you deselect the search engines that you have already submitted your site to if you decide to use them.

News optimization

News optimization is an integral part of a search engine optimization campaign. You can write a small press release about your products or services or an industry review covering what people in your field are doing. You should do it "in house" so that you or your company can get credit for it at the bottom and so that your hyperlinked keyword appears in the press release.

If you hyperlink a term in an article to a URL, then distribute it:

+ It will increase what is called the Google Page Rank, which is measured by the number of incoming links to a site. So in your press release that will be distributed on the Web the keyword will appear underlined in blue and will link to your website. The days of listing a straight URL in an article are dead: For optimization purposes only actual keyword strings should be hyperlinked in articles. +

+ There are two ways to distribute this. The first one is by writing individual pitch emails to various online publications. +

+ The second way is to load your article and an RSS feed to your site's server. You can then enter the information (Title, author, link, description, etc.) of the article into the RSS feed. The RSS feed is then submitted to news aggregators. A news aggregator is a portal that distributes the news articles of an RSS feed on the web. +

+ This news optimization will only take a few minutes: All you have to do is hyperlink a keyword in your press release. After that you can make an RSS feed that lists your articles. Then end the link to your RSS feed to some aggregators. It's really more simple than it sounds at first, hence RSS stands for "rich site summary" or "really simple syndication." +