

Love

1. Verb _____

2. Adjective _____

3. Pronoun _____

Love

3. Not Optimizing for the Right Keywords

This is a big one. It's easy to _____ Verb _____ into the trap of optimizing for:

Global keywords, when you only offer _____ Adjective _____ to local customers

Generic keywords that attract visitors who _____ Pronoun _____ no interest in what you're offering

Keywords that only bring in visitors looking for free information, not prospective customers who are interested in buying something

Broad keywords that have lots of competition, maybe with several SEO experts working full-time to defend the first page ranking

It's best to be as specific as possible. Focusing on generic keywords might bring you a lot of traffic, if you're successful, but how long will it take you, and how realistic is it? Sometimes many times, you're better off going for more specific phrases, which usually lead to quicker rankings and more qualified traffic.

For example, a web designer wouldn't simply want to go for the keywords "web design" in the beginning. It would

be easier to rank for "web design services for Los Angeles realtors" - keywords that would probably start producing results immediately. You could optimize for more competitive keywords as your website grows and gains authority.

4. Not Having Unique Title Tags and Meta Descriptions

It still amazes me when I see websites that have their company or website name as the title for every page throughout their website. It's such a damaging mistake.

Every page should have a unique title, and not just for SEO purposes. Your page titles are usually shared in tweets and used as the text when someone bookmarks your website, hence descriptive, unique titles are highly important.

So looking at the portfolio of a web designer, they could have web design services as their main homepage keywords, so their homepage title would be something to the effect of "ABC Web Design Studio - Web Design Services." Then other pages in their portfolio could focus on more specific services that are popular queries, such as:

WordPress Customization - ABC Web Design Studio

Custom Template Design - ABC Web Design Studio

eCommerce

Website Design - ABC Web Design Studio

As you can see, you can carry your company name throughout your pages while focusing on specific keywords that are specific to each page. Just put it at the end.

Meta descriptions are also important. They are a 160 character sales pitch for your page within search results.

So, make each one as unique and persuasive as possible. Your homepage and each page throughout your site should include a custom meta description that will make people want to click on your listing in search results, as well as include relevant keywords. For example:

Homepage description: ABC Web Design Studio offers web design services for small businesses, including WordPress customization, custom template design, eCommerce websites, and more.

WordPress customization page: ABC Web Design Studio offers WordPress customizations, including custom WordPress template design, Thesis theme customization, and more.

5. Not Using Anchor Text for Internal Links

Have you ever seen links in the body of a web page for "click here," this post," and other generic text?

From an SEO perspective, it's a waste. Sure, using a call to action as your link may increase clicks, but it also costs you the opportunity of tailoring your anchor text, one of the most important components of SEO.

For example, if you write a blog post, and you want to link to your e-commerce services page, make the anchor text "ecommerce website design services" or something similar. Also, if you absolutely must have a call to action, try to at least include some relevant keywords in the link. For example, "click here to learn more about our ecommerce services."

6. Using the Same Anchor Text for Every Link

Optimizing your anchor text is important, but don't use the same anchor text for every link to a page. It looks funny to visitors, and some people say it can also hurt you with search engines, because it looks like you're trying to "game" them.

So, mix it up. Use variations on the phrase, the name of your company, or occasionally, even a URL to make it look more natural to both visitors and the search engines. Try not to use the same keyword more than 50% of the time.

7. Focusing on Link Quantity Over Link Quality

While there are lots of easy ways to get a high volume of links, you should usually place a higher emphasis on quality.

One link from a popular blog might do more for your search engine rankings than hundreds or even thousands of low

quality directory links. Yes, they're harder to get, but that's also why search engines place such trust in them.

They are a more reliable measure of the quality of your website.

So, focus on getting links that:

Are relevant to your website and industry.

Do not have a lot of outgoing links.

Do not contain links to adult, pharmacy, or gambling sites.

You can also use free tools like SEOquake to check the strength of the domain and incoming links to the page.

8. Using Poorly Written Content

Two popular ways of creating a large quantity of content include hiring low paid article writers and using article spinners - software that takes one article and "re-words" it to make it look like several unique articles to search engines.

Why is this not a good idea?

Sure, the content might be well optimized, but you also need to think about the impression it'll give visitors.

People can tell whether or not content is unique and valuable, and if it's not, you'll lose trust, and you'll have a much

harder time getting them to take action.

So, if you need to outsource content, hire writers who are capable of producing original articles that you are proud to publish on your site. You'll probably have to pay them a lot more, but if it results in more conversions, it'll be a far better investment.

9. Not Creating Link Worthy Content

The harsh reality of link building is sometimes the most well-written content still doesn't get links.

If you want people to link to it, you need to make it exceptionally valuable. Publish top lists, video or text tutorials, and infographics.

For example, our web design company could publish blog posts on their site like:

Top 100 Best Designed eCommerce Websites

How to Setup Widgets in WordPress

A History of Web Design [Infographic]

10. Not Taking Advantage of Great Design for Links

Is your site a custom design, or based off a popular template?

There are hundreds of CSS and other design galleries that will link to your website simply based on having a great design. You can also look for blogs that do reviews of great designs in particular industries (such as showcases of education and medical websites) and ask if they will add your website to their list as well.

No, visitors from these sites probably won't convert (unless you are, of course, a web or graphic designer), but the links still help build the overall authority of your domain. It's also easy to do. If you have a unique design, submit it to a few of the sites, and you could pick up a few easy, high-quality links.

More SEO Mistakes

Have you made any of the above mistakes with your SEO campaign? What other common errors do you see made by other websites, and ways that you can think of to fix them?

Also, for a more detailed lesson on the basics of SEO, please check out our SEO guide.

About the Author: Kristi Hines is a freelance writer, blogger, and social media enthusiast. Her blog Kikolani focuses on blog marketing, including social networking strategies and blogging tips.

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this free guide, we'll outline a step-by-step process for getting results from your A/B testing.

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Guest Sep 20, 2010 at 8:57 am

I think at times, I am guilty of using the same keywords all over the things I am writing within my blog. Thanks for reminding.

as always, another great list.

Kristi Sep 20, 2010 at 9:29 am

Yeah, it's easy to get into a habit of using the same anchor text everywhere you go, especially when commenting (with using KeywordLuv). I like to keep a s