

Five Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Guidelines for Your Website Better, Faster, Cheaper

by Kevin P. Blasko

1. Title/Description Tags

The Title and Description “Tags” are part of the underlying programming code of your website home page. These tags tell the search engine the title of your site and a brief description about it that is used in search results. The search engines will rely on whatever information is in the code currently in these tags. If there’s nothing there, the search engine will label your site on its own. You should review and refine the information in these tags to best help the search engines accurately identify your site in search engine results. Consult your webmaster or website vendor for assistance in editing the information. After changes are made, it can take a few weeks for them to appear in search results. Note that each search engine has a different word count limit in what it will display, so keep it very short. A few other tips:

Title Tag: If your organization regularly goes by an acronym, make sure your title tag information has both the acronym and the full name. Also, if your organization has a short tagline describing your services, feel free to include it in the title tag after your name.

Description Tag: A condensed version of your organization’s “boilerplate” description used on press releases, brochures, etc. are fine to use for this space.

2. Keywords in Content

Good content — copy that is informative, clear and thorough — on your site is the best overall way to make sure your site is highly visible in search engine results. Make sure your content naturally includes the kind of keywords you hope people will search on and find your organization’s site. Google’s analytics/webmaster tools or other software can help you see what terms people are using right now to find your site.

3. Inbound links

Part of how search engines determine how high your organization’s website is listed in results is by analyzing how many and what kind of other websites link to your website.

In general, it’s good for your site if more websites link to your site. However, Google and other sites will kick your website

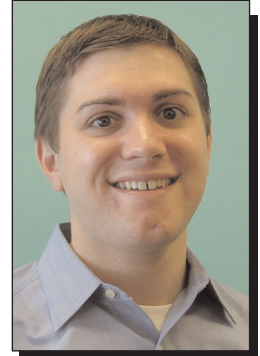
out of its index if it detects that that links are being added “unnaturally,” or from less-reputable sources, so you should only ask similar sites as yours or other trusted organizations (e.g. your law firm volunteers) to link to your site.

4. Site Map

Every website should have a link off its home page called “site map,” that goes to a page containing links to all the major sections of your organization’s website. Search engine “crawlers” work by reading pages of content and following links on those pages. Crawlers find site maps helpful to scan all the content of your site and therefore can include your site in more of its search results.

5. Beware of SEO Vendors

Unfortunately, there are a lot of less than reputable companies out there that prey on website owners promising them fantastic search engine results for their website in exchange for a fee. Many of these operations use controversial techniques and other methods that could potentially injure your site’s rankings in the search engines. There are also many well-established outfits that use above-board techniques to help a site. In short: Be wary of vendors who you’ve never heard of before and who make impressive claims such as, “I’ll make your site the #1 site in Google.” Before you engage a SEO vendor, conduct a return on investment analysis to make sure the results of the effort will help further the mission of your organization.



Kevin P. Blasko

Kevin P. Blasko, Public Relations Manager
Jenner & Block LLP
330 N. Wabash Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
Tel. 312 923-2635
Email: kblasko@jenner.com