



Planning your website: Building in Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Here's a simple worksheet to help you think about the key elements that earn you high rankings in Google and other search engines. There are plenty of other things to do, but just working on the basics will give you and your site a good start.

The key elements that you have control

Target keywords: determine what keywords your audience would type in to find the information you are publishing on the web. Think like they do; ask others for their thoughts on what they would type in a Google or Bing search to find the information you have out there. Phrases should be both specific and general.

This is the basis of your entire site, since this is how potential customers/clients will find you in a search engine (Google, Yahoo, Bing etc.) If your products/services are geographically specific, then that would be part of your keyword phrase. Most keyword phrases are 2 to 4 words. Test out your keyword phrase in search engines to see if your competitors are showing up on page one.

List a series of keywords that describe your business/products/services. Are there certain terms or "buzzwords" that are specific to your business/profession? If so, you'll want to use them here. **Repeat the words from your keyword phrase and your description in the order of their importance.** Develop 20 words and list them in the order of importance.

Example: Messiah College, academics, Messiah University, higher education in PA, messiah college, admissions, Grantham PA, Christian school

Title tag (see image 1, next page) or **Page title** is one of the most important factors in how a search engine may decide to rank your web page - all search engine's use title tag for the 'headline' in search results. Write a title that describes your business. The "**title**" can be found at the very top of any browser window hopefully describing the page one is viewing. **A title should be 65 characters or less.** For more information on creating good title tags, see "Writing a killer title tag: Best Practices" Make sure the most important keywords are at the front of the title tag.

Meta Description Tag (see image 1, next page): Think of how you would describe your business to a interested stranger in 1 minute. Write a description of your website in one complete sentence – you should repeat the

words that you used in the keyword phrase of your website. This description often times appears as the second line in a search engine listing, so put the most important words at the beginning of the sentence. This sentence should be completely factual and void of boastful claims and marketing hyperbole. **You are limited to 160 characters in Google, including spaces.**

The image shows a Google search results page for the query "labradoodles in pa". The search bar at the top contains the text "labradoodles in pa" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, the results are listed. Three specific results are highlighted with yellow boxes and red arrows pointing to annotations:

- Title Tag:** Points to the first result's title, "Australian **Labradoodles** in Pennsylvania". The annotation states: "bolded items are related to the keyword search".
- Description Tag:** Points to the second result's description, "labradoodle breeders in Pennsylvania, labradoodle puppies, Labradoodle breeders in Pittsburgh, PA, ...". The annotation states: "keyword search items are bold, text should read like an ad."
- URL / web address:** Points to the third result's URL, "www.windsorcreek**labradoodles**.com/". The annotation states: "keyword search items are bold".

Other visible results include "labradoodle breeders in Pennsylvania" and "Labradoodle Puppies for Sale, Labradoodle Breeders".

Content: Content on your site is one of the most important factors for successful SEO - page should provide valuable info that reference your specific key words.

Header Tags: use keyword phrases in content headlines. This is just another way to bring your keyword phrases into your content, and draw the visitor's eyes to the content they are looking for.

Anchor Text: are words contained in clickable part of a link. It's important to use keyword phrases here because it tells visitors and search engines what the page is to be clicked on is about. Search engines put a lot of weight on them.

Image Tags (ALT tags): Contribute will 'force' you to name an image when you place one on your webpage.

URL / Web address (see image 1, above): This is more likely something you would NOT have control over, however, page names may be. As you create new pages in Contribute, consider the content, and name your page accordingly, using keywords from your list if possible.

For advanced users:

Go to <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal> and add in your keywords, do a search. Narrow the search down by using Match Type: Exact. Hide the Advertiser competition column (choose column to display)

Bringing it all together

Key words / phrases:

Develop a list of 20-40 keyword / phrases separated by a comma and space

Title Tag:

*Using some of your keywords, create a title tag using 65 characters or less
(including spaces)*

Description Tag:

*Using some of your keywords, create a description tag using up to 160
characters (including spaces)*