

## Top Tips to Improve Your Search Engine Ranking

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*The principles behind ranking well in the search engines are not complex, but sometimes it can be difficult knowing just where to start. Here are my top tips for those first Search Engine Optimisation steps.*

### 1. Research your key phrases

Find out what phrase people type into the search engine when they're searching for your service. Ask your clients how they search for you– what they say might surprise you. And remember, hardly anybody types just one word into a search engine, we've learned to use a three or more word phrase to get good results. Make use of keyword research tools to help you understand searching behaviour.

### 2. Hand craft your Title Tag

The Title of every web page plays double duty: it influences the page's position in the search engine rankings and it is also the clickable link to your site in the search engine results. Get your key phrase in your Title Tag, and avoid dead words like Welcome or Home. Every page should have a unique Title Tag describing what the page is about. See my [Title Tag factsheet](#) for more information and examples.

### 3. Get links to your website

Other sites need to link to your web site – but you don't want just any old links. They have to be from quality sites that form part of your business' topical community. Links from professional associations, government or education bodies, directories or other expert sites are probably the most important factor in boosting your credibility and your search engine rankings.

### 4. Make your site search engine friendly

The search engines can't watch Flash movies, can't see your pictures, and can't pull down menus. Think "text." Search engine friendly websites have text links to all the content on the site, with descriptive text on your images and links.

### 5. Write well

Create great copy about your products and services, and you'll be using your key phrases naturally. There isn't any magic formula or percentage for key phrases. Just focus on your customers, not the search engines.

### 6. Don't be tempted to cheat

"Black hat" optimisation techniques try to improve your rankings in an unethical manner. Keyword stuffing, buying link packages, doorway pages, invisible text are all ways to break the search engine rules. If Google was serious enough to ban BMW from its index for cheating, then it will certainly ban you if you do the same.

## **7. Learn the rules of the road**

These first six rules are just the basic facts you need to know – there is a lot more to learn, and there is a lot of work to be done. Take a look at my [Search Engine Optimisation Process Factsheet](#) to get a better understanding of the breadth of activities you need to undertake, or take a look at our forthcoming [Internet marketing training and events](#).

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