

SEO Best Practices

Below is a list describing where SEO focuses should be when designing and coding a new website.

Top Priority

Best Practice	Description
Keyword Research	Keyword research is vital for any SEO company. This is needed to understand the search arena for your specified business in order to target the proper keywords to optimize your site.
Title Tag	Implementation of a separate Title Tag on each web page is a necessity. These should be built out based on a combination of the subject matter of each page as well as information gathered during keyword research.
Description Tag	A unique description tag should be applied to each web page based similarly on the practices of creating Title Tags. Typically up to 250 characters.
Meta Keywords	It is often debated that these do not play a role in search engine algorithms, but they are quick and easy to set up and conveniently use info already collected from keyword research. These should be specific to each page and there should be no more than 10 to 12 keywords used.
Link to home page	All pages should link back to the home page
Text Format	All text should be in text format, avoid text in images as this cannot be read by the search engines. Also, formatting of text by using bold, italics, bullet points, increased font size and putting keywords closer to the top of the page helps to express relevance to the search engines. The idea is to use keywords often, but not too often such that it resembles spam.
<H> Tags	These are viewed as highly important text by the search engines. It is important to use them and make them keyword rich.
XML Site Map	This is just placed in a website's root directory and not visible to the common user, but search engine spiders use it to help quickly navigate through websites. It is very helpful for indexing purposes.
Site Navigation	Easy navigation is not only helpful for users, but helps search engine spiders travel around your site. Use keywords in navigation sections.
URL Structure	Wherever possible, always use keywords as part of your URLs.
Internal Links	Using keyword rich text in internal hyperlinks helps identify pages to relate to those keywords. Also, it makes for easier navigation for search engine spiders.
Images	When placing images, it is important to name the files with keywords and also use Alt Text as another location for keywords to be added.



2nd Level Priority

Best Practice	Description
Search Engine Submission	Submitting your site to the search engines can help speed up the process of getting indexed, but is not a guarantee. It is worth taking the time just in case.
XML Site Map Submission	Search engines allow you to submit your XML site map. There is no negative to this and it is possible it can add value.

Avoid

Do Not...	Description
Put Content in JavaScript	JavaScript is a convenient way to quickly code websites. It is important to realize that search engines can have a difficult time reading content that is included in JavaScript. Therefore, it is highly recommended to avoid adding keyword rich content to JavaScript as it could go overlooked.
Overuse Flash	Flash is even less likely to be read by the search engines than JavaScript. It provides for the capability of high quality imagery that is supposed to be attention grabbing. Studies show that most web users are actually not very interested in Flash and tend to skip over it. Having it as your home page can be very detrimental not only for search engines, but also for user experience.
Use Dynamic Pages	Dynamic pages are generated "on the fly"; Therefore, these pages are almost impossible for search engines to index. It is best to keep everything static, if possible.
Use Frames	Frames are a makeshift way of designing web pages and can be very confusing for search engines. It is highly recommended not to use them, but if you have to the use of <NOFRAMES> tags can mitigate the detriment.



Offsite

Best Practice	Description
Link Building	Inbound links to your website from other sites are very important. Links are how the search engine spiders travel, therefore the more you have the more likely the search engines are to find and rank you. The relevancy of a link to the content on your page is important as well as what site the link is coming from.
Link Text	Similar to on site links, it is important to include keywords in inbound links to your site. Many times this is not available, but having a specific keyword in the link is always more beneficial than just using your brand name.
Directory Submissions	Directories are a great way to find beneficial links. There are general directories that break down into categories and there are also industry specific directories.
Press Releases	Press Releases should be distributed to networks that can spread them around the internet. This helps get your releases on many different sites and hopefully include a link back to your site. They are very helpful for link building as well as for alternative ways for traffic to get to your site.
Social Media	Social Media sites are more and more playing a larger role in SEO. Claiming your Social Media profiles not only helps you in the Social Media realm, but they help claim additional real estate on the SERP for your brand, giving you more control of what is seen on searches for your brand. They are also valuable links to have.
Blogs	Offsite blogs are good for two reasons: They help build your brand by giving you recognition when contributing to blogs about your industry. The second reason is that some of them can offer very valuable links back to your website.

