

9 Step On-Page Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Guide

This 9 Step On-Page Search Engine Optimization Guide will help you optimize your website pages, so they will have the best chance to get found by your target market. The Guide outlines the most important factors to consider when optimizing each page on your site. These steps are listed based on importance, so **don't skip a step**. Also, remember that creating **new optimized content on a weekly basis** is critical to achieving long-term success with SEO.

Step 1: Choose Keywords

Read the page's content and identify two (2) keywords that are most relevant to the overall page content. Choose one (1) **primary keyword** relevant to the page's content and one variation of that keyword (e.g. plural variation or two closely related keywords) per page. If you can't identify one primary keyword for a page, you'll need to create new website pages to separate the different content. If it's not clear to you what page is about, then your visitors and the search engines won't be able to understand the page either.

Step 2: Page Title

The page title appears as the blue, bolded, underlined text on a Google search results page, and also on the top left the browser bar. The page title should follow these guidelines:

- Be under 70 characters with no more than two long-tail keywords per page title
- The primary keyword should appear first
- Each keyword phrase should be separated by pipes (|)
- Each page title on your website should be unique
- Except for your homepage and contact us page, each page title should NOT include your business name

Step 3: Meta Description

The meta description appears on a Google search results page under the Page Title. The meta description helps people decide whether to click on your result, or a result above or below you. Think of it as a call to action. The meta description should follow these guidelines:

- Be under 150 characters (but not under 100 characters; take advantage of the space you have)
- Incorporate the primary keyword and at least one secondary keyword
- Provide a valuable, compelling reason for why someone should visit the page
- Include keywords in a conversational format; don't just cram in keywords for the sake of listing them

Step 4: URL

The website page's URL should include the primary keyword. Each word in the URL should be separated using dashes (-). e.g. www.examplesite.com/inbound-marketing-software

Step 5: Heading Tags

The page should have one H1 heading tag that incorporates the primary keyword, and should align with the page title and the URL or the page. This H1 tag should appear at the top of the page and should be the first thing people see when they arrive on a page.

Step 6: Page Content

Use your primary keyword a few times throughout the page's content. Don't overthink keyword density or placement, you should mention them naturally. Try to bold or underline the keyword at least once. This has an effect on how relevant the keyword is to the page. Also mention the secondary keywords when you can.

Step 7: Add a Call to Action

Every website page, including your blog, should have at least one call to action above the page's fold (Don't make your website visitor scroll down to see the call to action). Calls to action can help SEO by creating an internal link on your website to a specific landing page. Most calls to action are images; therefore you can optimize the image filename and alt text for the primary keyword you're targeting on the page (see step 9).

Step 8: Internal Links

If you mention the primary keyword of this page on other pages within your site, then link to this page using the primary keyword as the anchor text. For example, you should link to a page about inbound marketing software using the anchor text "inbound marketing software." To make sure this is completed, take a moment to create one (1) or two (2) links on related pages that link back to the page you're optimizing.

Step 9: Images

Any images used on the page should be optimized so that search engines can "read" the image. Optimize the most prominent image on the page using the primary keyword, and then use the primary and secondary keywords for any other images. Images can be optimized in two ways:

- **File name:** Each word should be separated with dashes (-), e.g. inbound-marketing-software.jpg
- **ALT text:** The alt text should match the file name, without dashes, e.g. Inbound Marketing Software

If you are unable to change image file name or if it's too time consuming, then only change the most prominent images' alt text using the primary keyword.

Meta Keywords

They aren't part of Google's or Bing's search algorithm, so I'm not including them as a step. However, still use your primary and secondary keyword in the page's meta keywords. Smaller search engines still might use them in their algorithm, but major search engines do not use them. HubSpot does not recommend you optimize your meta keywords.

Repeat these 9 steps for each of your website pages.