

# Top 10 SEO Tips to Improve Your Online Strategy



When HTC produced the first article in our [Insights series](#), we put together a few tips and tricks to help maximize your marketing dollars in a recession. We received an overwhelming response from clients looking to utilize new online strategies, with new features on their websites or sending targeted mailings. Most of all, we fielded a lot of inquiries about Search Engine Optimization (SEO), so we thought we'd expand a little beyond the basics to offer more SEO Tips.

## How can I improve my site's SEO?

Search engine algorithms have gotten much more sophisticated over the years. It used to be that adding keywords would be sufficient to yield an impact, but now there are up to 17 different ways an engine judges the value of any given page on your site to determine where that link appears in their rankings. We've already delved a little into Page Titles, Meta Descriptions and Links, so here are some lesser known tips...

### 1. Social Media



Google and Bing recently started incorporating live search results from Twitter, and those live results get prominent placement on search result pages. If you aren't already tweeting on-topic for your business, this could be a good avenue for you to increase the visibility of your company. As this is fairly new, SEO best practices for Twitter are still up for rigorous debate, however it is clear that if you tweet relevant, original content on a regular basis, it can have a positive impact on your brand (particularly as you develop followers).

### What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tactics are an easy and cost-effective way to improve search engine rankings and more successfully positioning your offering. Effective SEO makes your site easier to index by search engines like Google, and easier for clients and prospects to find. The easier it is to search for your offering and/or company, the more leads your site generates.



## 2. Keyword Research

Research keywords for your industry and market that have lower competition, and adjust your site content to include them. For example, "deal" may have fewer competitors than the word "sale," so when you write up a promotion, you can focus on the word "deal" (while still incorporating synonyms, including "sale").



## 3. Keywords in <title> Tags

Page titles are given a lot of weight, but it's also important that the words used in the page title are also used in the page copy or body content itself.



## 4. Page Copy and Meta Description

Use important keywords for your industry in page content and the meta description. If you follow both #4 and #5, Google will be more likely to "believe" your page is about "Events" if the title is Events AND the page/description include words like "Event," "Calendar," "Ceremony," etc.

## 5. Embed Relevant, Credible External Links



Not only is it good practice to source your statistics or give a nod to industry-related publications, search engines are getting better at picking up how relevant your content is to the content you're linking to in an outside site. So embedding relevant, credible links that relate to the theme of the content on your page, article, or post is more than just good writing practice: it's good SEO because it gives engines a sense of your relationship to other sites.



## 6. Alt Text

When adding images, get into the habit of adding "Alt Text." Because search engines can't "see" the image, they rely on this information to know what your picture is of when users perform image searches. This is especially important if your image includes text, like "Save 20%" or "HTC Timeline," because it helps engines identify what is on your page. The more precise your alt text, the better. "Men's Dali Medium T-Shirt, Style #1234 - Designed by John Doe" gives an engine more to go on than, say "Blue T-Shirt." If I were a consumer trying to locate that specific product through Google, I'd have better luck finding it on a site that has well-conceived alt tags.



## 7. Image Filenames

As a complement to point #6 above, instead of saving your images files as Image\_[id].jpg or DCI0000213.jpg, using a more descriptive name like mens\_dali\_t-shirt\_Style\_1234.jpg also helps to correctly classify the image in results.



## 8. Sitemaps

Every now and then, it may be worth generating an XML file of your sitemap and submitting it to major search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.) This is an invitation for them to crawl your site, and is useful to initiate after updates that involve architecture changes.



## 9. Top-level Domain (TLD)

Your Top-level Domain will affect where Google returns your links in Search Results. Now that search engines geo-locate (identify where you're browsing from), they determine some of the link relevancy by the TLD. So if I'm in Canada searching for pet supplies, a site with a .ca TLD has a better chance of appearing high on the list than one with a .com TLD.

## 10. Domain Name Contract Length



If you always opt for a 1-year subscription, your site may not be given as much weight as it would if you had choose a longer subscription term (e.g. 5 or 10 years). This is regardless of how long you've had your subscription, so a domain that has been renewed every year for ten years may not compete as well as another domain that has been active for two years and has a ten-year subscription. This is based on a simple premise: if you've committed to a domain for 10 years, your site is more likely to stick around than another on a one-year term.

For more information on how to get the most out of your website using SEO or Social Media, contact:

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