

# Lure more hits

## Marketing Your Web Site Through Search Engine Optimization

**R**emember doing scavenger hunts as a kid? Everyone got a list of items that they had to find, along with clues on where to look for them. Those items might have been sitting out in the open or hidden somewhere, just waiting to be discovered.

Search engine optimization, or SEO, is like leaving clues for potential customers about where your Web site is hiding in the proverbial online scavenger hunt.

### The goal of SEO

People can't buy your jewelry if they can't find your Web site. When you get results from an online search, how often do you click through to the 10th page? If you're like most people, you don't make it much beyond page one. That's where SEO comes in — the techniques help you build your page so it appears in the top-ranking results.

### Keywords are king

Keywords are the words and phrases people type into search engines. Using popular keywords on your site is the key to successful page ranking. There are numerous ways to use keywords for SEO. We'll look at two of them: keywords in page titles and in site content.

### Page titles

"Of all the SEO techniques, your choice of Web page titles is the most important," says J. Walker, owner of GNC Web Creations. Your page title appears at the top of your Web browser when you're on that page. A common mistake is selecting a title that's too broad, such as "jewelry" or "necklaces." People won't find your site using these general terms. Instead, think niche marketing. "Custom-made sterling silver pet tags" paints a clearer picture than "pet tags," don't you think?

Walker encourages artists to pay special attention to the photos on their Web sites. She suggests using a keyword in the filename of each image. It's also a good idea to make thumbnails of the images, giving them titles and brief descriptions that are both rich in keywords. Each thumbnail should lead to a page with the full photo and description — and each of these pages should have its own keyword-rich page title.

"The more pages you create, the more opportunities the public has to find your site," notes Walker. If you've done these SEO techniques, each page offers the opportunity to niche market its jewelry. This works much better than having one or two pages and attempting to stuff the page titles with every jewelry keyword imaginable.

### Site content

"Search engines return search results in the exact order of their perceived relevance to the search phrase requested," says Walker. "The more relevant your site appears to be to the search requested, the higher your page will show in the results. Your challenge is to create pages that are focused on the actual search queries that your target audience conducts."

We'll discuss how to find the actual search queries used by your potential customers in a moment. For now, let's focus on using keywords to create relevant site content. Certainly, you'll use keywords in your jewelry descriptions. But what other content could you provide that would be of interest to your target consumers and that would contain common keywords?

Start by considering what information people who buy jewelry might be looking for. Could you add an instructional article on a jewelry-making technique or a primer on how to clean and care for jewelry? What about guidelines on how to mix and match pieces with your wardrobe, or tips on how to select jewelry as a gift? Be creative, and do research when needed. What earring shapes go best with what face types? How about including a glossary of terms on your site?

Having useful content not only brings visitors to your site, but it also



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encourages links to your page as a credible resource, which is another means of increasing your page ranking.

### Think like a customer

In a scavenger hunt, the clues that you leave need to be geared toward the hunters, or they may not find what they're looking for. When making keywords for your Web site, you need to think like your customers, leaving the appropriate keyword "clues" for them. Will they use the search terms "custom jewelry," "one-of-a-kind jewelry," or "handcrafted jewelry?" Will they look for "rope necklaces" or "long necklaces?"

"Research shows that the public is most likely to use multiple keywords in search queries," states Walker. There are Web sites where you can enter a phrase and see how many people have searched for that phrase and similar phrases (see "Finding Searched Terms," *below right*). This is how you find the relevant keywords to include in your page titles and site content.

When you're researching keywords and phrases, remember to think like a consumer. Don't use industry buzzwords or technical jargon. Understand your target market. How old are they? What's their budget? What type of jewelry might they wear?

For example, if you've designed jewelry to appeal to both teens and moms, you're going to need to identify the words these two different demographics will use to search for jewelry.

How do you learn their lingo? Grab a magazine that targets your consumers and flip through it. Visit other jewelry Web sites that appeal to the demographic you're targeting and see what words they're using. Just like a scavenger hunt involves looking behind half-closed doors and under the top bunk in your brother's room, you need to examine every nook and cranny to find keywords that fit your customers.

### All site traffic is not created equal

Getting people to your site is only the beginning. Site traffic doesn't equal sales. Once people find your site, you want them to settle in, browse, and buy. This is where content comes in.

Make your site unusual. Everyone expects rows of thumbnail pictures on a jewelry Web site. But what if I were greeted with a single, striking image of a piece that showcases your craftsmanship? Brainstorm about what best sells *your work*. Maybe it's a poem or a startling headline, such as "Wearing jewelry makes you more attractive to the opposite sex." Experiment and have fun. What would make you laugh or take a second look at a site? If you can engage a visitor emotionally, you stand a much better chance of making a sale.

With most artists running their business on a tight budget, optimizing keywords offers you the biggest bang for your buck. Still, make sure you have an understanding of what you expect from your site and how it fits into your overall marketing plan. And before you shy away from Web-based marketing strategies, take a closer look. You may be surprised to discover that something like implementing a successful SEO strategy is as easy as child's play. **A**

People  
can't buy  
your jewelry  
if they can't  
find your  
Web site.



### Finding searched terms

Enter a word or phrase on these sites to see the related searches that use your phrase and how often the phrase was searched.

- Overture Keyword Selector Tool: <http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion>
- Good Keywords: [www.goodkeywords.com](http://www.goodkeywords.com)
- Wordtracker: [www.wordtracker.com](http://www.wordtracker.com)

### A note of caution

When it comes to keywords in site content, you don't want to come off sounding like a used-car salesman. Use keywords, but always write with the intention of providing information of true value to your customers.

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