

10 useful tips to rank higher in search engines

Search engines bring you visitors – free of charge

Search engines can attract numerous visitors to your website without financial investment from your part. In order to have search engines list your website, the main criterion obviously remains its content. The more the content is rich, relevant and specific, the more likely your chances of success will be with relevant keywords. However, you can lend Google a helping hand. That is why we're happy to provide you with an overview of 10 SEO tips, which represent the least you should do with respect to your domain name.

Tip 1: Register relevant domain names

Give it a try. When you search for certain keywords in Google, it is not uncommon that a web page containing these keywords in its domain name ranks amongst the first results of your search. Thus, this means that Google likes it when keywords are to be found in the domain names themselves. Does that however mean that you should register a domain name such as wholesaler-overhead-doors-tiles.co.uk and use it in the frame of your everyday dealings with (potential) online customers? Absolutely not. The best thing you can do is to register your company name in addition to registering several generic names such as overhead-doors.co.uk, overhead-doors-shop.co.uk, etc. On those pages, you can then create landing pages that will redirect visitors to your company's website. It is however possible that the name of your core business is still available as a domain name. In that event, do not hesitate to also use this domain name for your everyday dealings with (potential) online customers.

Tip 2: Choose the right Meta tags

Meta tags are very important to search engines. A lot of web designers overlook this and give their index pages titles such as « Homepage », while they could get way more benefits out of them. Here's a practical example:

Gebruik dus niet:

```
<title>Homepage</title>
```

But rather:

```
<title>Overhead doors Johnson, your specialist in overhead  
doors and garage doors in the Manchester area</title>
```

By doing so, you will already place several keywords in your title, which will allow you to obtain a good ranking in search engines. You should not rush into this; think your keywords through carefully in order to rank higher in search engines.

Besides, the same thing applies to the Meta description and the Meta keywords. If we apply those instructions to overhead doors Johnson, the Meta tags would look as follows::

```
<meta name="description" content="Overhead doors Johnson is  
your specialist in overhead doors, garage doors, tiles and  
flooring in the Manchester area" />  
  
<meta name="keywords"  
  
content="overhead door overhead doors garage door garage doors  
garages driveway driveways tile tiles manchester" />
```

Tip 3: Diversify your vocabulary

It is important that you diversify your vocabulary in your web texts. We do this on our website as well. We once write (even in the same sentence) about domain names, then about domain registration and then again about domains. In other words, do not hesitate to use synonyms. While doing so, do not stick exclusively to what you find in your Oxford Dictionary. Also think of popular expressions and synonyms that are used in your regional dialect. That is probably something that your competitors forgot to do, while these keywords could guarantee you easy success.

Tip 4: Give each page the right file name

This often happens with websites that are programmed in a certain language. They use e.g. `index.php?14564654`. This is not advisable, because search engines cannot tell what the page is about, so they can only deduce that from its content and the Meta tags. Therefore, it is wiser to name your pages as follows: `www.johnson.eu/request-an-offer.html` or `www.johnson.eu/garage-doors.html`. Webshops should avoid listing the latest Coldplay CD under:

<http://www.webshop.eu/product.php?54566645546546>

but should rather list it under:

<http://www.webshop.eu/cds/coldplay-parachutes.html>

Tip 5: Write web content tailored to search engines

Lists with the Top 100 Google keywords are published on a regular basis in Belgium, the Netherlands, worldwide, etc. It's much more interesting though to already use the Google Keyword Tool during the writing stage of your texts. This tool is an extremely valuable marketing tool. Let's say you sell kitchens. When you enter the keyword "kitchen", in seconds, Google will offer you an overview of many relevant keywords, as there are "buy a kitchen", "design a kitchen", "new kitchen", "kitchen appliances", etc. What's even more interesting is that Google indicates how much competition exists for a keyword and what the search volume was (in relative terms, between 0 and 1) for this keyword during the previous month. Google also provides an immediate overview of related words like "bathroom", "new building", "contractor", "counter top", "granite", etc.

Thus, Google doesn't only help you during the writing stage of web content, but can also be used to conduct market research and to check which keywords and categories are often used and therefore where the commercial possibilities lie. It's also possible to type the address of your website or your competitor's website and, subsequently, to obtain a list of relevant keywords. This is an ideal tool for everyone who's planning to launch a web shop and who wishes to check which categories are popular in order to ensure sufficient and variegated stocks.

Tip 6: For your images, use the right ALT texts

You probably already heard about Google Images (<http://images.google.be>). Many Google users use this separate section of the Google website to search for images and lately, Google also displays images in ordinary search results. Therefore, it is important to couple a telling description to all your images. Just like any other search engine, Google is unable to determine an image's content. That is why you should help search engines by giving suitable names to images (for instance, use `smartphone_htc_dual_touch.gif` instead of `img4565646.gif`) and by using the right matching ALT texts

```

```

Tip 7: Regularly update your texts and see to it that your content is original

It is important to regularly update your website. Search engines enormously appreciate websites that are updated regularly. From time to time, add a new section, rewrite a text, make a page more commercial, etc. Most of all, avoid copying texts from other websites as in doing so, you could possibly violate authors' rights, plus, search engines appreciate original texts (as a matter of fact, they sometimes even punish websites that quote entire texts belonging to other websites). Moreover, copying another website's texts doesn't make your website unique, nor does it allow you to rank high with unique keywords.

Tip 8: Ensure that other websites link yours

Google attributes a certain PR (PageRank) value to every website. This PR value reflects your website's value. There are several websites with a high PR value. It is interesting to get in touch with them in order to exchange a link or to place paying ads on them. It is also interesting to look for websites with a content related to your website's content. If you sell car accessories, contact car or car tuning enthusiasts' forums or websites that publish exclusive news related to automobiles.

Tip 9: Create a sitemap for your website

A sitemap is a navigation screen for your website. Not only does this come in handy for your visitors, but it also makes it easier for search engines like Google to actually index every page of your website. Sitemaps are often written in XML. Your average Internet user is not familiar with this programming language, but luckily, there are ready-to-use solutions available. Via <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com>, you can e.g. create a sitemap in XML in just a few clicks without having any technical knowledge. Have you created your XML sitemap? Excellent, in that case, you can let Google know by means of its webmaster tools (<http://www.google.com/webmasters>). Besides, on that same page, you can find many interesting tools for webmasters, like e.g. a discussion group, a blog, a support centre for webmasters, a wizard that shows you the index status of your website, etc...

Tip 10: Consult an SEO specialist

We have now thoroughly examined 9 SEO tips, but there are plenty of other things that are not so generic but rather involve custom work specific to your website. If you wish to get the most from your website, you can involve an SEO specialist.

In this frame, COMBELL collaborates with a reliable partner: bSeen. bSeen has been active for over 10 years. Now, it is the largest independent SEO company on the Belgian market. Besides



optimizing your website, this company also offers paying advertising solutions on search engines. Currently, it manages about 300 customers, ranging from SMEs to multinationals. Take a peek at <http://www.combell.com/en/get-your-website-to-rank-high-among-search-engine-results/> and request a free position test without further obligation, in order to determine what your website's current success rate is and how this could be enhanced.

By the way, did you know that you can place paying ads on search engines? Every COMBELL customer receives a Google Adwords voucher worth 50 € to advertise through Google. Surf to <http://www.combell.com/en/google/> for further information.

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