# 6 Essential Elements of SEO

*Blast*
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## 1 HTML <Title> Tag

**What to focus on:** Keyword Density, Differentiation, Branding, Max 68 Characters (50-55 is ideal)

The HTML <Title> Tag is the user's first exposure to your content page (as it links to your site from Search Engine Results Page). Thus it's important to maximize **persuasive power** and **keyword density**. Keywords in page title and meta description that match a user's search query will be bolded in the listing, which increases likelihood that listing will receive click over competitive listings.

### Quick Tips

- At a minimum, include primary keyword. Other keywords optional.
- **Differentiate. Think of the title as an Ad Headline.**
- Put keywords first for easy skimming and to grab user's attention.
- Length limit includes branding, such as "| [Brand]" at end of tag.

## 2 Meta Description

**What to focus on:** Setting Expectations, Keyword Density, Max 150 Characters (135-145 ideal), Include CTA

Write a quality page excerpt that includes the targeted keywords and entices users to read more. **Quality of meta description can make or break click through rate (number of people who click to go to website).**

### Quick Tips

- Think like you are creating Adwords Ad copy. Highlight what is unique (differentiate), convey benefits, set expectations and provide a CTA.
- **DO NOT** duplicate title tag. **DO** use secondary keyword and optionally, tertiary keywords. No need for primary keyword if it is in the page title.
- Put secondary keyword toward front.
- Minimize punctuation like serial commas (i.e. commas before 'and').
- **Don't make grammatically perfect.** Users will scan so avoid unnecessary stop words, such as 'the', 'that', 'a', 'it', 'an', 'were', etc.

**Meta Keywords**
*Meta keyword field should only contain primary and secondary keyword. Otherwise, can trigger SPAM penalties. Primary benefit of meta keywords is to make others managing content aware of keyword focus and ensure sustainability.*

## 3 Headings

**What to focus on:** Engaging, Primary Target Keyword Phrase, Concise

Use H1 heading at top of page and H2 subheadings throughout the content. Do not use heading tags in universal header (including primary navigation), footer or side column content. Use only one H1 per page. Minimum one H2 per page. H2 subheadings are used to separate content ideas.

### Quick Tips

- Must be Engaging - DO NOT compromise editorial copy when optimizing.
- Keep Headlines Concise - longer headlines dilute focus - MAX 7 words.
- Insert primary targeted keyword phrase in first 1-4 words of headline, IF POSSIBLE - don't force. Relevance and engaging the user is the priority.
- Include secondary keyword in one or more H2 subheadings, IF POSSIBLE.

**Headings**
*One main heading (H1) on each page. There can be multiple subheadings (H2, H3, H4). Each subheading should be subordinate to subheading it's nested under.*

## 4 Contextual Links

**What to focus on:** Relevance, 1-4 Per Page, Link Internally & Externally

Contextual links (within the body copy) are key methods to keep people engaged and on the site by providing relevant links to related internal pages. They also build authority and relevance by linking to other authoritative external sites.

Internally linking to related pages is important because search engines analyze text in links to better validate focus and value of a page and identify overall site themes.

### Quick Tips

- Pay careful attention to the text that you are linking with and do your best to make sure it sets good expectations. Don't link unnecessary words or overuse generic language like 'click here,' 'learn more,' and 'submit.'
- Link to at least one relevant internal page or pages. **Use targeted keywords of page you are linking to in link text, and vary link text.**
- Link to other related sites and top blogs to make your page an authoritative hub on the topic. As long as it doesn't distract from primary CTA. Not needed for high ranking pages, and this is most common on blog posts.
- Link internally 80% and externally 20%. Sites that aren't greedy; win!
- Don't over link. Generally, 1-2 links max in a single paragraph and not more than 4 links per page.
- Placement matters. The higher on the page, the more likely search engines will crawl them and assign greater importance and value.

## 5 Content Quality & Density

**What to focus on:** Engaging, Relevant, Scannable, Use Primary Keywords 2-6 Times

Create valuable, engaging, focused content that is easily scannable and generally uses targeted primary keyword at least 2-6 times, secondary keyword 1-4 times, and tertiary keyword 1-2 times. DO NOT keyword stuff (overuse target keywords in attempt to enhance SEO). **Always write for users.**

### Quick Tips

- Answer Who/What/When/Where/Why/How.
- **Communicate the most important content at top of the content/page.**
- Break up content into scannable chunks for shorter attention spans (max 3-4 sentences per paragraph). Mix in short sentence paragraphs.
- Using targeted keywords (e.g. primary, secondary and tertiary) is important for increasing SEO potential and better aligning with user expectations by reflecting the words they use in search, and matching their intent.

**Focus on Users**
*Use verbiage that is user-centric (e.g. you, your) versus company-centric (our, us, we). Write in an active voice and conversational tone, if appropriate.*

## 6 External (Inbound) Links

**What to focus on:** Link Target Keyword, Relevant Content, Social Visibility

Don't forget to promote. Inbound links are from other sites to your site. Inbound links are similar to popularity votes and help rankings. When an authoritative site links to you it elevates your authority.

### Quick Tips

- Promote to get links from relevant external sites (even just a few quality links make a big difference). Useful content atrracts links.
- Links from social networks (as well as Likes/+1's from FB, Google+ and etc) also matter. Volume matters more than with other types of inbound links.
- At a minimum, content team should create keyword-rich links to given page from other pages on site.

**1. HTML <Title> Tag**
- Use primary keyword
- Make unqiue

**2. Meta Description**
- Use primary keyword
- Make unqiue

**3. Headings**
- Use primary keyword in H1
- Concise subheading
- Put keywords in first sentence after subheading

**4. Contextual Links**
- Put keyword rich link(s) high on the page
- Use targeted keywords for the **page linked to**

**5. Content Quality & Density**
- Put the most important information at the top of the page
- Paragraphs should be 2-4 sentences long for easy reading and scannability

**Bonus: Content Quality Enhancements**
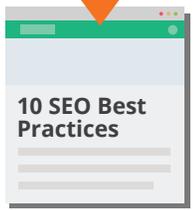
**5A Image Optimization**
- **Alt** = "woman learning how to do SEO"
- **Title** = "Everyone can learn how to do SEO"
- **Image filename** = "woman-how-to-do-seo.jpg"

**5B Call to Action**
- Give users a next step using keywords for linked page.
- Guide users deeper into funnel, towards conversion

**6. External (Inbound) Links**
- Don't link to competitors
- Do link to high authority sites

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# H1: How to do SEO

## H2: You can do SEO

how SEO works

content audit

how to do SEO

SEO best practices

create a Google Search Console account.

## H2: Other SEO Tips

How to do SEO

SEO checklist

search engine optimization

Check out our list of SEO best practices

**10 SEO Best Practices**

**Keyword Usage Quick Reference Guide**

Each page should focus on one primary keyword, one secondary keyword, and about three tertiary keywords.

| Part of Page | Primary Keyword | Secondary Keyword | Tertiary Keyword |
|---|---|---|---|
| File Name (URL) | ✅ | | |
| Page Title | ✅ | ✅ | |
| Meta Description | ✅ | ✅ | ✅ |
| Heading (H1) | ✅ | | |
| Subheadings (H2,H3) | | ✅ | ✅ |
| Body Content | ✅ 2-6 times | ✅ 1-4 times | ✅ 1-2 times |
| Inbound links (TO page) | ✅ | ✅ | |
| Images (file name, alt tag) | ✅ | ✅ | |

**Keyword Optimization** will increase relevancy, which improves search visibility, site visits, and conversions.

✅ Rank
✅ Click
✅ Convert