

I wrote this piece as part of my SEO Copywriting certification. It teaches the principles of SEO content writing to students of digital copywriting. The piece is designed to draw a high amount of organic, qualified traffic to the publisher's site, awai.com.

How to Write SEO Content for Websites (With Formulas)

When writing content for a website – especially a core page like a home, about, or product page – it's important to consider Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Optimizing your web content for SEO helps draw in qualified organic traffic to your client's or employer's website. This helps build a business's reputation, leads, sales, and retention.

Ideally, optimizing content is something you should do *before* you publish content on a website.

But you can and should also optimize content after it's published, to help improve a site's SEO health and signal to search engines that you're providing value to readers.

Here's what we'll cover in this chapter:

- The two audiences to keep in mind when writing SEO content
- How to write an SEO Optimized web page
- How to optimize 9 common types of web pages (with formulas)
- Pricing SEO content optimization projects

For an overview of what SEO content writing is, check out this [introduction to SEO content writing](#).

The Two Audiences to Keep in Mind When Writing SEO Content

First things first: when creating SEO content, we want to satisfy both people reading the page and search engines.

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We want to satisfy **people reading the page**, because they need our help and can potentially be excellent leads and customers for our client's business.

We want to satisfy **search engines** such as Google, because when we do, our content will be more likely to show up when people search for relevant queries.

All this means that while there are certain frameworks and formulas we can use to optimize our content for search engines, it's essential to make sure our content is enjoyable, useful, and easy to read.

How to Optimize any Web Page Through Content Writing

Before we get into the specifics of optimizing certain types of web pages, it's helpful to have a universal checklist for all web pages.

These steps apply to virtually any web page you might write.

The steps of optimizing a web page are to:

1. Identify the target audience
2. Determine their search intent
3. Choose your topic
4. Plan and select your keyword
5. Write the title tag
6. Write a compelling headline
7. Write the meta description
8. Select an appropriate URL
9. Write the page content
10. Link to other relevant web pages on your site
11. Write descriptive alt tags for your images
12. Use the on-page SEO checklist before publishing

Let's go into each one so you know how to do it.

Step 1: Identify the Target Audience

We always start with identifying the target audience. Who are you writing to, and what are they trying to achieve?

Spend some time thinking about their:

- Age
- Income
- Location
- Education
- Interests

- Goals
- Challenges

If nothing else, you need to know their goals and challenges. When you're clear on this, it's going to be a lot easier to plan and write a compelling web page that helps your target audience solve their problem.

Step 2: Determine their Search Intent

Next, we need to know what kind of "intent" they have when coming across the web page you're about to create.

For example, if they're reading an article, then it's very possible they're in research mode. At this stage, they'll probably be annoyed by sales copy that's trying to get them to purchase something.

If they're looking for a product or pricing page, on the other hand, they're most likely primed to buy. In this case, they don't mind upfront copy about the benefits of a product and its price.

There are four different stages of search intent:

- Research
- Compare
- Buy
- Succeed



So, determine which stage your prospect is in for the web page you're rewriting, and your keyword selection and writing process will be much easier.

Step 3: Choose Your Topic

If you're creating a page that doesn't exist yet, then you'll want to spend some time thinking about what your page should cover.

However, if you're optimizing a page that already exists, then you'll most likely want to keep the topic, and simply find keywords that are related to that topic.

Refer to our guide to [creating a content strategy](#) for tips on how to select the best topic for your web pages.

Step 4: Plan and Select Your Keyword

Next, it's time to do keyword research, and eventually select the best keyword to target with your web page.

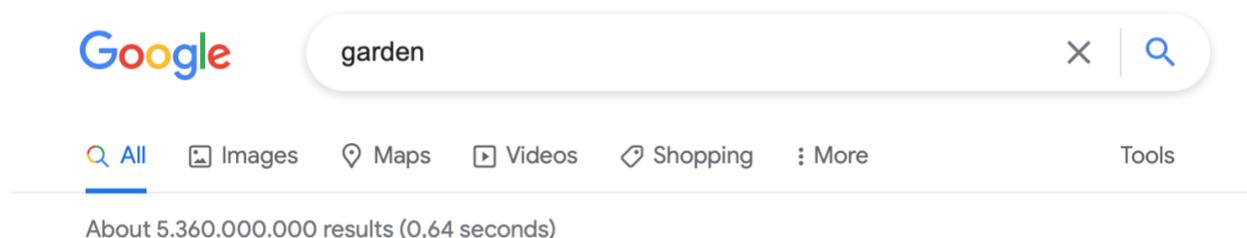
The keyword should match both your topic (what the page is about) and search intent (why your prospect is searching).

Keywords are one of the most important elements of optimizing content for SEO, and so it's good to spend some time getting it right.

In most cases, you'll want to avoid broad keywords, and focus instead on targeting "long-tail keywords."

As an example, take the keywords "garden" versus "how to plant a garden in rocky soil."

The first keyword, "garden" is extremely broad. It gives us a ton of search results, (5.3 billion!), which means there's a lot of competition for this keyword. The other problem is that it's hard to know what exactly the searcher is looking for.



The second keyword, "how to plant a garden in rocky soil," is much more specific.

We now know the searcher in the research stage and we know what they're looking for, which means we can write a web page that will be more helpful for them. The other benefit of this long-tail keyword is that there's going to be significantly less competition for this keyword, making it easier to rank for.

For a business that sells products related to gardening, this might be a good keyword to use in a blog.



how to plant a garden in rocky soil



All

Videos

Images

Shopping

News

More

Tools

About 18.400.000 results (0,59 seconds)

As a rule of thumb, long-tail keywords should be three words or more. For more on long-tail keywords and how to do keyword research, see this [guide to on-page SEO](#).

Step 5: Write the Title Tag

Once you've selected your keyword, it's time to write the title tag for your web page. The title tag is one of the most critical elements to the success of your web page, so don't skip this step!

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A title tag is a brief description of what a web page is about. A title tag is written in the code of a web page and is the most visible text description of a page on the search engine results page.

An optimized title tag should:

- Be 50 to 60 characters
- Be descriptive of the content on the page
- Be easy to read
- Contain the exact match of your target keyword

It's also a good idea to include the brand name of the website in the title tag. For a general formula you can use for most web pages, you can use the formula:

Keyword(s) | Brand Name

For example, if your client is The Smart Gardener, and you're writing a blog about gardening in soil, then your title tag might be:

How to Plant a Garden in Rocky Soil | The Smart Gardener

Once you've written the title tag, then you can move on to the other parts of the page.

Step 6: Write a Compelling Headline

Now, it's time to write a compelling headline for your web page. The developer should use this as the "H1 tag" when creating the web page.

There's a lot to say about writing great headlines, but in short, a headline for a web page should be:

- Clear
- Specific
- Relevant
- Concise
- Compelling

When optimizing for SEO, a headline should also:

- Contain the keyword or a variation of the keyword.

In our our gardening example, we could keep it simple and use the keyword for the headline, or we could do something like "How to plant a garden in rocky soil in 10 easy steps."

Step 7: Write the Meta Description

Next, it's time to write the meta description.

What is a meta description?

A meta description is a teaser of a web page, which is designed to convince a reader to click through to the page. It shows up underneath the title tag on the search engine results page.

Ideally, your meta description should:

- Contain the keyword or a variation of the keyword
- Be 160 characters or less
- Be readable, compelling, and descriptive of the page content

The meta description isn't used by Google or search engines to rank your page, but it's an important step to get right all the same.

Step 8: Select an Appropriate URL

If you're creating a new page, then it's time to select an appropriate url. The basic formula for an optimized url is:

website.com/key-phrase

If your keyword includes words like "a" or "the," you can leave those out of the url if you like.

Fair warning! If you're optimizing an existing page, be careful with urls. Changing the url without redirecting the old url to your new one is a recipe for 404 errors. Leave this to a technical person if you're not sure how to do it, or avoid changing the url altogether.

Step 9: Write the Page Content

At last, we can write the actual content of the web page.

The most important thing is to make sure you deliver on the promise of the title tag and headline. Also, think back to the "search intent" you identified earlier.

As you write, apply everything you know to writing good web content to the web page, including:

- Making the copy smooth and easy to read
- Writing directly to your target audience
- Breaking the text up into readable chunks

You'll also want to consider where you can bring in media like images, video, and audio to support your text.

Step 10: Link to Relevant Web Pages on Your Site

Once you have your web page written, consider where you can link to other relevant pages and resources on your site.

This helps signal to search engines which pages on your website are the most important and helpful, and leads readers to other valuable content that will support their user experience.

Step 11: Write Descriptive Alt Tags for Images

If you're using any images for your page, then make sure you write effective alt tags for each image, which you can give to the developer.

Alt tags are written descriptions of the images on your page for screen readers, to assist those who are visually impaired.

If it makes sense, you can include your keyword in the alt tag, but the most important thing is to write a clear and specific description of the image.



When optimizing alt tags, more descriptive is usually better. A descriptive alt tag for this image might be: “Child plays with soccer ball on the beach.”

Step 12: Use the On-Page SEO Checklist Before Publishing

When you’re done with your page, you can take your page through an [on-page SEO checklist](#) to make sure you have the most important elements of SEO covered as a writer.

You can then hand your finished document to the web designer, along with notes for what the title tag, meta description, H1 tag, and alt tags should be.

How to Optimize 9 Common Types of Web Pages

Now that you know the 12 universal steps for optimizing a web page, you’re well on your way to getting great SEO results from your content writing.

But, there are certain things it can be helpful to keep in mind while you're writing specific types of web pages.

So at this stage, let's look at the nine most common types of web pages, and how you can optimize each one.

Home Page Optimization

A home page is your client's "home base" for their digital presence.

Very often, people who land on home pages are in the **research** stage, and they may or may not be looking for specific products to buy.

So, you should primarily optimize the home page for the brand name. For a home page, we'll put the brand name as the first item in the title tag, rather than at the end.

For your keyword, it's best to choose a product or service category, rather than something very specific.

Putting this all together, the title tag formula for a home page is:

Brand Name | Product or Service Category Keyword(s)

Example: REI | Outdoor Clothing, Gear, and Footwear from Top Brands

One other tip when optimizing home pages: internal linking is especially important here.

Link often to the more specific parts of your website, to help guide readers and search engines to other helpful content on your site.

Article and Video Page Optimization

Next, let's look at optimization of article and video pages. Readers who come across article and video pages are usually in the **research** stage or in the **succeed** stage.

For this type of page, it's a good idea to go after a very specific long-tail keyword, so that your page has a good chance of ranking high in search results.

The title tag formula for an article or video page is:

Research or Succeed Intent Keyword(s) | Brand

Example: What is Earnest Money? | DaveRamsey.com

When optimizing article pages, make sure you optimize old articles, too, rather than simply leaving them published for years without any updates. For tips on how to do this, check out our page on [updating blog posts for SEO](#).

If you're using your page to promote video or podcast, make sure to include "show notes." These are descriptions of the video or podcast, or even a full transcription of the content. This will help search engines find your content more easily.

Lead Generation Page Optimization

A lead generation page is a page designed to capture traffic by exchanging value – such as an ebook, quiz results, and the like – for contact information. With lead generation pages, customers are also usually in the **research** stage.

So when writing a lead generation page, make sure to use a research intent keyword in your title tag.

The title tag formula for a lead generation page is:

Research or Succeed Intent Keyword(s) | Brand

Example: Free Guided Meditations with Gabby Bernstein

Lead generation pages often don't have a lot of HTML text, since your client is probably using a plug-in or form to collect customer data.

So, make sure there's enough HTML text on the page. Make sure you have a headline, sub-headline, and a bit of body copy like bullets, so that search engines know what your page is about.

About Page Optimization

If a searcher is coming across an about page, they are probably in the **compare** or **buy** stages. A mixture of unbranded and branded keywords will be best for targeting this type of intent.

So, the title formula for an about page is:

Unbranded + Branded Keywords

Example: Orlando Employment Law Attorney Gary Wilson

In this example, the "Orlando Employment Law Attorney" is the unbranded, long-tail keyword, while the "Gary Wilson" is a branded keyword.

What should you do if a company has multiple notable people, brands, or events that they want to talk about in their about page?

In this case, it's ideal to make a separate page for each one of these topics. This way, your client's website will rank better for those specific searches.

Comparison Page Optimization

A comparison page is a web page that compares one product to another. With comparison pages, readers are looking to **compare** products, and perhaps also to **buy** one of the products.

A common type of compare intent keyword is "Company vs." for example, a search like "Adidas vs. Nike running shoes" would be from someone who's trying to see which brand is a better fit for them.

The title tag formula for a compare page is:

Compare Intent Keyword | Brand

Example: Compare FreshBooks vs QuickBooks For Your Small Business | FreshBooks

With compare pages, it's very helpful to use Google's auto-complete function to determine which other brands searchers are considering. In Google, simply type in "[Client's brand] vs." If something comes up, this is potentially great content to create for your comparison page.

Sales Page

With a sales page, your goal in writing this page is obviously to get more sales. You can bring in qualified traffic by using **buy** keywords, especially the name of a product, to target someone with buy intent for that product.

The title tag formula for a sales page is:

Buy Intent Keyword(s) | Brand

Example: Renegade Diet Book | By Jason Ferruggia

With sales pages, we want to focus on *branded* keywords, as opposed to unbranded keywords.

That's because if people are looking for your client's product, you want to make sure they can find it and see the sales copy you've written!

Product Page Optimization

For product pages, customers are typically in the **compare** or **buy** stages. As with sales pages, the goal of a product page is to get more sales.

With product pages, it's especially important to target branded keywords, so that you're optimizing for a very specific product name.

So, the title tag formula for a product page is:

Branded Keyword | Brand

Example: Calphalon Stainless Steel 15-Piece Knife Block Set with SharpIN Technology | Crate & Barrel

With product pages, one thing to keep in mind is that duplicate content can be a big problem. Often, product manufacturers send the same product description to all the sellers, and search engines may penalize the manufacturer's site as a result. So, it's better to write different product descriptions for each of the sellers. This is also a great service you can offer to your clients.

Pricing Page Optimization

A pricing page drives sales by offering customers pricing information they make a purchase. The searcher's intent with a pricing page is to **compare** different products, or to **buy** the product directly.

So, the title tag formula for a pricing page is:

Branded Keyword(s) + Price, Pricing, or Cost | Brand

Example: QuickBooks Online Pricing & Free Trial – QuickBooks – Intuit

With pricing pages, we again want to focus on branded keywords. That's because we want to target people who are already familiar with the brand, and are getting close to a purchase.

Support & FAQ Page Optimization

The goal of support and FAQ pages is typically to help a customer with a product they have already bought. This helps a company increase their customer retention, which is great for customer ratings, fewer returns, and future sales.

So, when writing a support or FAQ page, focus on **succeed** intent keywords.

The title tag formula for a support or FAQ page is:

Succeed Intent Keyword | Brand

Example: Microwave Low Profile Install | LEARN Whirlpool

With support pages, it's ideal to optimize each page for a single branded keyword. It's less important to be super thorough here. Consider adding video if a visual demonstration would be useful.

With a FAQ page, it's best to optimize each page for a single branded keyword. Having one question per page will help search engines send your content to searchers looking for it.

Pricing SEO Content Optimization Projects

As you can see, there are quite a few steps to optimizing web content.

But if you practice this process and follow the steps above, you'll be able to offer your content optimization services as a freelancer at premium rates, ranging from \$500 all the way up to \$3,000 per web page, depending on the scope of work.

Let's discuss three different ways to package your content optimization services.

Basic Core Web Page Optimization

Doing a basic optimization of three to five core web pages of a company's website is a great way to get your foot in the door with the company and practice your SEO content writing skills.

In a basic package, you don't actually have to do much original content writing.

It will be mostly going through the steps above and seeing how you could make some small tweaks to what they already have. For a core web page optimization, you could focus on the five most important web pages, such as the home, about, and three other key web pages.

The basic core web page optimization package could include:

- Keyword research
- Rewrite of the page's title tag
- Rewrite of the page's meta description

- Rewrite of the headline (H1 tag)
- Updated alt tags
- Updated image suggestions

Depending on what you agree with your client, you could price this at around \$250 per page, or \$1,000 for a package of five.

Advanced Core Web Page Optimization

An advanced core web page optimization package is similar to the basic one, except that in this package, you're doing a full rewrite of the web page content.

This takes a lot more research, writing, and potentially revisions than the basic package, so naturally, it should be priced higher. In this case, you could price closer to \$1,000 per page, or \$5,000 for a package of five.

Writing SEO Content for New Websites

If you're writing completely new web pages, your prices can go even higher than \$1,000 per page.

Some SEO content writers can charge up to \$3,000 per web page for key pages like home pages, especially if they are a part of the website strategy and planning discussions from the beginning. In most cases, SEO content writers would not charge per page, but would offer a hefty website package that includes many different pages.

Projects like this are quite large to take on, but can be extremely rewarding financially.

For more on how to price copy projects, you can download [AWAI's pricing guide](#).

If you'd like to learn more about how to make high fees as a SEO content writer, check out this chapter of the guide on [how to make good money as an SEO copywriter](#).

Or, check out skill-building programs, like the [Digital Copywriter's Handbook](#) and the comprehensive certification [SEO Copywriting Mastery & Certification](#).

What's inside this Ultimate Guide?

[Introduction: The Ultimate Guide to SEO Content Writing](#)

[Chapter 1: How to Write SEO Content For Websites \(With Formulas\)](#)

[Chapter 2: 9 Steps to Update an Old Blog Post for SEO](#)

[Chapter 3: How to Create a Simple Content Strategy for Your SEO Clients](#)