

## Getting Started with Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Decide what kind of product or service you intend to offer for your final project for this class (real or fictitious).

[Read SEO Basics: 8 Essentials When Optimizing Your Site](#). The 8 essentials mentioned in the article provide a wonderful guideline to get started with Search Engine Optimization. You should also read their expanded update to this article [SEO basics: 22 essentials you need for optimizing your site](#). It provides new insights based on how search Engines rank sites today.

This week we will be doing some exercises designed to help you begin incorporating these essentials into your web-based business. Do the following:

1. Copy the exercises into your E-commerce Plan
2. Complete them, check your answers for grammar, spelling and punctuation
3. Copy and paste your summary to a post in this week's lesson on Canvas
4. Attach your E-commerce plan to the SEO assignment link on Canvas and submit

### Exercise 1: Your Website is Like a Cake

**Essential 1** Says your website is like a cake. Links, Search Engine Marketing (SEM), and Social Networking are the candles and icing that attract attention to your online business. The content of your site (words, pictures, and media) is the cake that convinces consumers to stay on your site and to buy your products and services. One ingredient of your icing can be AdWords, words you purchase on a search engine to help promote your site. The most [visited search engine](#) by a large margin is still [Google](#), so it cannot be ignored. However, with Google you need to pay to play, so you want to make sure you are purchasing words that are both effective and cost-effective. To do this you might get more bang for your buck by purchasing less expensive, but very popular key words. If you have a Google account you can take advantage of the [Google Keyword Planner](#) and do a search for new keyword ideas. It's free if you have a Google AdWords account, but you need to supply credit card information. For that reason, we'll use this free tool instead:

- Keyword Tool -- <http://keywordtool.io/>

#### Steps:

1. Visit <http://keywordtool.io/>
2. Select the Google tab
3. Enter a keyword for your business
4. Pick ten results that you like the most and paste them into your E-commerce Plan

**Note:** You are only allowed to use this tool free twice

### Exercise 2: Check the Indexing of your competitors

To be competitive it's also important to know as much as possible about your competitors. One thing you need to be aware of is how easy it is for potential customers to find your site compared to your competitors. One indication of this can be the number of pages indexed by a search engine like Google. Why is this important? An indexed page is one that's been coded and stored in a search engine for quick retrieval. Some experts say the more pages a site has keyword indexed, the more likely it can appear as a search result when entering key words. Here's a good explanation

<http://webcertain.com/index-glossary.html>

Steps:

1. Obtain the URLs of at least 2 sites you consider to be your direct competitors
2. Open a new search page in Google
3. In the Google search bar type the competitor's site using this format -- **site:nameofsite.com**
4. At the top of the page it will list the number of results and under that a list of the indexed pages for that site
5. Copy the number of pages indexed and paste it in your E-commerce plan. Be sure to type the name of the site above the number of results.

Answer these questions in your E-commerce Plan:

- Would you consider paying for AdWords to help promote your website? Why or why not?
- Based your results, which keywords would you consider paying for to help promote your site? Why?
- Which two sites have the highest number of pages indexed? Why?
- What do these indexing results tell you about these sites?
- Does it help make them more popular or profitable? Why or why not?

### **Exercise 3: Know Your Business Model**

**Essential 4**, Know Your Business Model, poses a series of questions.

Answer these questions in your E-commerce Plan:

- What are the goals of your business?
- Nielsen defines the E-commerce term conversion as a "user that takes a desired action." Usually this means someone who buys something on your site. What is a conversion for you? Why?
- Are you selling eyeballs (impressions) or what people click on? Basically, this means will you be making money from advertising (eyeballs) or selling goods or services (clicks). Why?
- What are your assets and liabilities (refer to your SWOT)?

### **Exercise 4: Optimize for Multi-Channels**

**Essential 5** Reminds us to not forget to optimize for multi-channels, meaning keyword phrases should be used consistently for all channels.

Answer this question in your E-commerce Plan:

What other channels besides your website are you planning to use? Why?

### **Exercise 5: Be Consistent With Domain Names**

**Essential 6** Mentions the importance of including keywords in your site's title. For instance, if you were promoting a Frisbee Cleaning service you might name your site, frisbeecleaning.com. However, the Search Engine Journal says it's better to have domain names that are "brandable."

Steps:

- Read [How Your Domain Name Will Impact SEO & Social Media Marketing](#).
- Using the three formulas at the end of the article pick a domain name.
- Visit [WHOIS](#) to see if this name is still available. If not, pick another.
- What available domain name did you pick?
- How does it match up to the 7 factors the article says you should consider when choosing a brand-able domain name?

## Exercise 6: Focus on Your Meta Data

**Essential 8** Says you should “think of your title as a 4-8 word ad” to encourage your reader to keep clicking and reading.

SEO expert, Ken Lily, at [6dglobal](#) says, the best resource to learn SEO is [MOZ](#). They have a section of their site dedicated to [learning SEO and search marketing](#). Here is a summary of their guidelines for writing title tags.

### 1. Watch your title length

For Google, this length is usually between 50-60 characters.

### 2. Don't overdo SEO keywords

Avoid titles that are just a list of keywords or repeat variations of the same keyword over and over. These titles are bad for search users and could get you into trouble with search engines.

### 3. Give every page a unique title

Unique titles help search engines understand that your content is unique and valuable, and also drive higher click-through rates.

### 4. Put Important Keywords first

Keywords closer to the beginning of your title tag may have more impact on search rankings.

### 5. Take advantage of your brand

If you have a strong, well-known brand, then adding it to your titles may help boost click-through rates.

### 6. Write for your customers

While Title tags are very important to SEO, remember that your first job is to attract clicks from well-targeted visitors who are likely to find your content valuable. It's vital to think about the entire user experience when you're creating your title tags, in addition to optimization and keyword usage. The title tag is a new visitor's first interaction with your brand when they find it in a search result—it should convey the most positive and accurate message possible.

From: <https://moz.com/learn/seo/title-tag>

Steps:

- Visit the MOZ [Title Tag](#) page and read their recommendations
- After reading, use their [Title Emulator Tool](#) to write title tags for these 3 pages on your website:

- Home page
- Product page
- About us page
- When satisfied paste your Title Tags in your E-commerce Plan
- Explain how these title tags meet the [MOZ guidelines](#)

**Exercise 7: Write Summary**

Steps:

1. Briefly summarize what you learned from this exercise
2. Paste your summary in a post in this week's discussion on Canvas
3. Comment on posts from 2 other students
4. Attach your E-commerce plan to the SEO assignment link on Canvas and submit