



## HTB Tips – Optimize Your Resort Website Text Copy

### Effective Copywriting Delivers Higher Search-Engine Rankings!

Search engine optimization - or SEO - is a complex science, designed to increase the visibility of a website in the search engines' natural results through the modification of certain key elements and site attributes. HTB's successful SEO campaigns for hotel and travel websites fully acknowledges and addresses the hundreds of different factors that the search engines use to determine the relevancy of a site to any given term - from its posted content and architectural structure, to the age of its primary URL and affiliation with other high-ranking sites.

Recognizing that copy is just one of many tools that should be engaged in a comprehensive SEO strategy, below HTB describes the strategies it uses to increase client hotel website's natural search-engine rankings. The following list of HTB tips provides an excellent starting point in the process of increasing any resort site's visibility through effective SEO copywriting.

1. Begin with comprehensive research of search demand for relevant keyword phrases. Never simply assume that the terms that online consumers might use to find your product will be inherently obvious. Conduct thorough research to determine the exact keyword combinations that should be incorporated into your website copy. Use an online tool such as *Trellian Keyword Discovery* or *Wordtracker* to analyze the precise keyword phrases that customers enter into the search engines to look for your specific web pages. This research will serve as the focal point of your SEO copywriting campaign - as the foundational piece around which your overall strategy should be built. Analyze the demand for as many relevant keywords as possible, to determine the most effective terms to be used to drive search-engine traffic to your property's website. HTB completes this process on a page by page basis for entire web site as the search terms will vary greatly by web page.
2. Study the statistically weighted demand for keyword combinations in your property's geographic area. You will soon see that not all keywords are of equal importance! SEO works best when it incorporates keywords that are geographically targeted, for two reasons:
  - To secure prominent placement for terms specific to an area, your website needs only to compete against other sites within that defined region - rather than every-single hotel in the world with a functional website - making it possible to rank higher and become more visible on a consistent basis; and
  - Because geo-targeted keywords are driven by customers interested in your specific locale, they are also much more likely to result in successful conversion than less qualified queries. Research relevant terms within all geographic areas that apply to you as these will include the immediate and surrounding areas. Incorporate terms from these various geographic areas into your site copy to maximize exposure.
3. Identify niche terms that generate significant demand. You might be extremely



tempted to target only the most popular keywords that appear within your local market that are relevant to your product offering (e.g., "Bahamas hotel," "Bahamas travel"). But keep in mind that these terms will also be the most difficult to secure and maintain with consistently prominent placement - especially in major destination markets. A much more effective strategy is to balance the most heavily searched phrases with targeted niche terms (e.g., "Bahamas luxury hotel," "Harbour Island boutique hotel,") - which have a much greater chance of both ranking and converting. Look for targeted niche phrases actively searched by consumers, as a way of driving more qualified customers to your hotel website.

4. Choose four to five targeted keywords for each page of your hotel website. A limit of four or five terms is generally accepted industry-wide, as the maximum number that can be targeted through formal search engine optimization on any given page. Why? In order for a page to be properly optimized for a term, that phrase must appear in certain key places within the visible copy and meta data. Attempts to insert any more than four or five terms per page will divert the search engines' ability to recognize the most relevant phrases, and greatly diminish SEO results.
  
5. Use "themes" to optimize each individual page of your hotel website. An exceptionally valuable technique that should be utilized as much as possible during the process of keyword selection is "theme focused" - i.e., the grouping of terms that share a common word or phrase on one page. For instance, you may choose to center the keywords placed on the Home Page around the word "hotel" (e.g., "Rome Italy boutique hotel," "South Beach ocean front hotel"), while the terms selected for the Spa Page incorporate the word "spa" (e.g., "Miami day spa," "Boca Raton spa treatments"). When the keywords chosen for a page all include a common element, it provides valuable support to the site's natural rankings by: (1) allowing the search engines to recognize the individual keywords on the page much more readily, (2) prompting the search engines to consider the entire page relevant to the common theme, and (3) often permitting the site to appear for other terms within that theme that have not been specifically targeted. If the shared theme is also included in the title of the page, the positive effect on the site's rankings is even greater, because the search engines are more likely to recognize relevancy.
  
6. Develop the meta tags for each page around the selected keywords. Three fields comprise the meta data of a page: The title tag, meta description, and meta keywords. All three fields should be written to incorporate the targeted terms identified for each page.
  - a. Title Tag: The title tag appears in the top bar of an Internet-browser window, when a web page is opened. Title tags are the most influential "on-the-page" factor that determines natural search-engine rankings, and the words placed at the front of it are weighted with the greatest influence of all. As a result, it is absolutely essential - from an SEO perspective - to begin the title tag for each page with the primary keyword selected for it, followed by any secondary or tertiary terms. Avoid repeating a single word more than twice in any given title tag; the search engines are likely to flag



three or more mentions of that word as spam, and thus downgrade the site's rankings for that term. Also, resist the temptation to start each title tag with just your resort name. Place your hotel name first in the title tag of applicable pages on your site, as a means of ensuring top rankings for it. Optimal length for title tags is 60 to 90 characters.

- b. **Meta Description:** The meta description is a second meta-data field embedded in the source code of a page, visible to online customers most often as the preview blurb of a site, amid the list of ranked results when a term is searched. To develop the content for this field, incorporate your primary and secondary keywords into a very brief description of the content of the page or the overall site. Optimal length for meta descriptions is less than 250 characters.
  - c. **Meta Keywords:** The meta keywords tag exists solely as back-end source code, which is visible to the search engines, but invisible to the user. Although it is generally acknowledged that this field has lost all influence within the major search engines, it should still be developed as a precaution - with the primary and secondary keywords in simple list form, all in lowercase.
7. Incorporate the keywords selected for each page into the headings and paragraph text. Mention of a targeted keyword within the visible copy of a page is one factor that the search engines consider when determining relevant results for that phrase. Placement within headings is weighted even more heavily than paragraph text, so be sure to incorporate the keywords in both areas.
8. Use a mixture of both singular and plural forms of targeted keyword phrases. Most search engines display slightly different results for the singular and plural form of a keyword, when entered as search queries. Be sure to incorporate both into the text of your site, to ensure that your hotel website appears for each form.
9. Intra-link pages within your hotel website, and include targeted keywords in the link text. The search engines evaluate the text included in links with far greater influence than standard text. While a hyperlink from a page within the same site does not carry quite as much SEO value as an inbound link from an external URL, it does carry a certain percentage of the weight - and plays an especially important role in search engine optimization when the text of the link includes a targeted keyword. The practice of incorporating links to other pages within your site also provides a secondary benefit, by presenting travelers with the opportunity to explore pages of greatest interest to them - for a more interactive experience.



10. Write copy that appeals to both the search engines and online travelers. During the meticulous process of adding keywords and incorporating various SEO techniques into your website copy, do not lose sight of the end user: Online travelers, for whom all of the standard Internet-marketing best practices should be actively engaged. To be truly successful, SEO copy must artfully balance the needs of the search engines and Internet customers, using the text that surrounds the targeted keywords to achieve the desired marketing message, and communicate your best selling points. Format the copy on your site with a well-organized mixture of headings, paragraphs, bullets, and links - to allow online customers skimming the pages of your site to process all content quickly and efficiently. Close every page with a strong call to action, as a means of driving customers toward your ultimate objective(s) - whether that goal is immediate purchase or submission of a request for information.

**Remember:** Optimized copy is not the only element that determines natural search-engine rankings. A site's indexed history, architectural structure, inbound link count, and other factors play an equally important role in the generation of ranked results. However, website copy is one of the most easily adjusted aspects of search engine optimization, allowing you to increase your site's visibility on the Web through well-formulated strategy and skillful implementation.

###

**About Hotel Traffic Builders (HTB):**

We are a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to the boutique hotel & residential resort industry.

Our mission is very simple: ***"To maximize sales success by providing our clients with exceptional internet marketing results"***.

Our clients consistently enjoy industry leading success because of our dedicated focus and experience. Our use of state-of-the art tools, best in class technology and wealth of industry experience enable us to provide full solution applications. We recognize that our clients are experts at running their hotels, and our role is to develop and maintain online marketing leadership for our client hotels.

We differentiate ourselves through:

**Industry Expertise**

We have a singular specialized focus on boutique hotel, resort and vacation home e-Marketing. Our sole goal is to be the best at what we do by ensuring maximum success for all of your e-marketing activities. Our 52 person design and development technology team delivers unparalleled quality and results. Our sole focus is resort marketing.

**Individual Customized Creative Approach & Solutions**

Every client has unique needs, opportunities and priorities, our e-Marketing plans are always custom built and based on in-depth research of your specific hotel.

**Cutting Edge Technology**

We use proprietary state of the art tools and applications that enable project efficiency, measurability and success of your e-marketing. We not only promise success, we document it in a 24/7 real-time secured private reporting platform that we create for every hotel client. Our clients never wonder about how hard their marketing dollars are working because they always know!

**Return On Investment**

The true measurement of our success is our proven ability to deliver reservation bookings. We grow booking results year over year, and we grow advance bookings, which result in higher occupancy levels and ADRs.

**Contact us at:** [www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com](http://www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com) or call us **954- 421-6399**