



*The Essential*  
Search Engine  
Marketing  
Checklist



# 1. Transferring Content



Transferring content from one location to another is challenging as there are many things that could go wrong, without the guidance of a professional SEO firm. The process must be conducted according to Google's guidelines to prevent redirect issues, 404 errors, missed content, blocked content, duplicate content, (insert about 50 other things here), etc.



Make sure that search engines understand that your content has permanently moved using Google's recommended 301 redirects.



If you are changing address, make sure you use the change of address tool.



Make sure everything on the list below makes it to the new site, design or CMS:

- url structure
- titles
- descriptions
- h1
- h2
- rel canonical
- robots.txt
- sitemap xml, html, image, video, news
- viewport meta tag
- schema.org



Following this on-page SEO checklist will result in a page that's optimized to rank well in search. It also provides a foundation for other organic search improvement efforts.

Additional major factors, such as the authority of your site's domain, and the number and authority of links coming into your page and your site will also play a big role in optimal search ranking,

# 2. On-Page Factors



Content is high-quality, relevant, fresh and at least 500 words in length. Always create content for users first, then search engines. Search engines are getting very good at understanding user intent, so if users don't find the information on your site relevant, neither will search engines.



Target search phrase is included in page headline and at least one subhead.



Target search phrase is repeated three to 10 times within body copy and use related variations of your target keyword. Don't overdo it, or the page may get downgraded as spam. Keep the reader in mind as you work with the target search phrase. Copy should always be reader-friendly.



Page includes relevant images and/or graphics that help illustrate the target search phrase. Images should be resized, compressed, and appropriately titled before uploading them to the website.



Captions for images and/or graphics include the target search phrase.



Content and/or tools and resources on the page are so good that visitors will want to share your link with others and post your link elsewhere.



Enable users to easily share content directly from your webpage using "share triggers."



**Location:** If you are optimizing for specific country, state, city or regional names, be sure they are mentioned in your copy or a page footer.



If you're listing your contact information, be sure it's consistent with your name, address, phone number (NAP) on your business listings.



**No misspellings or poor grammar.** Yes, the search engines downgrade for either.



Inclusion of social media links and / or user discussion or reviews. Pages with active visitor interaction are scored higher than static pages.



# 3. Technical Factors



Include the target keyword/search phrase in the page URL if possible. Keep the URL under 50 characters.



**Title tag:** Every page should contain one HTML title (enclosed in <title> </title> tags). Do not include more than one. The title copy should be unique, include the target keyword or target phrase, and must be 60 characters or less (any longer and Google truncates it).



**Meta description tag:** Even if the search engines don't weigh a meta description in ranking a page, it is very important, because it is the marketing copy for your page. The meta description in the page head-tag set (enclosed in <meta name = "description" content=""> usually appears with your organic search listing, and induces readers to click through. The meta description tag should be no longer than 160 characters, and should include your target phrase.



**Avoid using the Meta Keywords tag.** While Google doesn't pay much attention to it, some less sophisticated search engines still use this tag and it can be easily over-optimized. Over-optimization of the meta keyword tag may result in your site being viewed as spammy.



**Rename images before uploading.** Preferably, something descriptive that includes a keyword phrase.



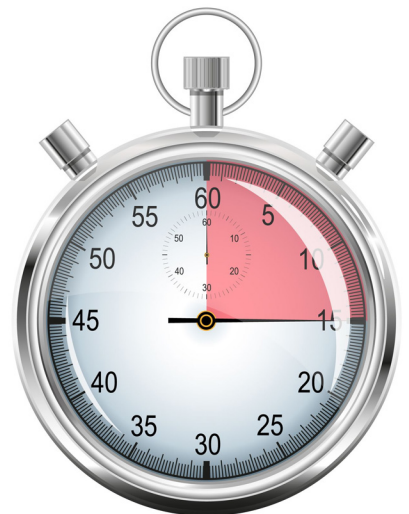
**Image and link alt text:** Use the target phrase in image alt text (embedded in the image tag as alt="your keyword"). The alt tag should be representative of the image or link, as this is also used for text-to-speech translators. Avoid keyword stuffing.



**Image and link title tag:** each image should include a brief description of the title (embedded as title="name of the image"). This provides a tooltip when hovering.



**Optimize page speed and loading times.** Simple things, like enabling gzip compression, can have a significant impact on loading time and overall usability. Remember, most websites have less than 7-seconds to capture a user's attention. Don't waste their time waiting on a slow-loading page.



# 3. Technical Factors+



Block libwww-PERL user agent for security purposes.



**Create a robots.txt file** and make sure it's properly set up. Incorrectly setting up your robots file could tell search engines to "go away."



Use Schema (JSON-LD), Microformat, and OpenGraph markups. These can help search engines better categorize your website.



**Links from copy:** Use links to other pages on your site, or other resources judiciously. Links should be relevant to your page topic. The latest research shows Google may penalize any page containing more than 100 links, and we recommend stopping well short of that number, unless there is a good reason. A few internal links (to other pages on your site) are a positive, especially if they tie together similar topics. Internal links also help search engine bots navigate and categorize your site.



Using external links can provide signals that show search engines other niches that relate to your website. It's important to use the "nofollow" tag only when necessary or when you don't want to pass along link authority to the other site.



Do not allow ads or paid links to pass page rank. This is a quick way to get your site penalized.



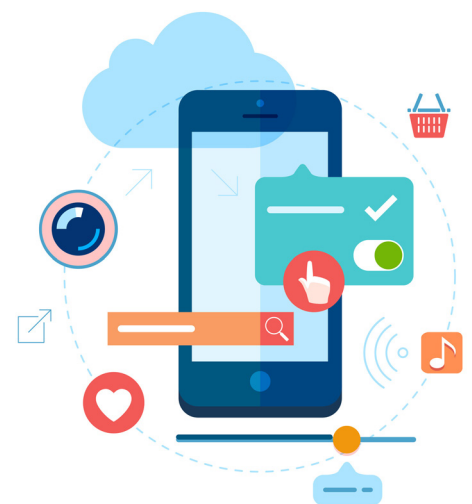
**Prune unnecessary or irrelevant pages from your site.** This can quickly improve the relevancy and potency of your website's authority and relevancy. It's much better to have 10 pages that actually provide value, rather than 100 pages that are simply "junk."



**DO NOT use hidden text or links.** This is a big "no-no" in the eyes of search engines and will result in a penalty.



**Mobile:** Make sure sites and pages intended for mobile devices are coded so that the search engines recognize them as mobile. This goes beyond the scope of this article, but keep it in mind as you work with your developer on a mobile site.



### Choosing HiveMind

Your SEO performance will improve, your online reach will expand and you'll generate more new business. While this doesn't happen overnight, we'll be doing everything possible to make it happen.

### What It's Costing You

You know the math better than we do. You know the current value for a web conversion, and what it means in actual gross and net sales. There are three ways to add to your bottom line:

1. Increase the qualified traffic on your site leading to more conversions
2. Increase your conversion rate leading to more sales
3. Increase the size or margin of each sales transaction.

### The Price of Doing It Wrong

There are worse things than doing nothing. You could spend time and money that you can't afford doing it wrong. Would you know it if you were? Our online marketing programs are data-based,

with established benchmarks, quantifiable performance criteria, and measurable ROI standards, so you know you are investing your marketing dollars wisely.

### The Cost in Time and Resources

You can add staff and divert financial resources trying to find ways to measure results and improve performance. Or you can find a proven outside resource with the right information and tools to address your challenges, while you focus on what your company does best.

## About HiveMind Studios

HiveMind Studios is a San Jose-based agency that specializes in digital marketing, helping businesses create strong websites supported by an integrated suite of digital marketing tools for marketing automation, email, analytics, search marketing and social network marketing.

Our Search Engine Marketing solutions give your company a better chance for success, by integrating software and services that optimize your website and PPC ad campaigns to increase website traffic, landing page conversions and, ultimately, sales.

Your marketing workload will always be uneven, but with the help of HiveMind Studios, you don't have to feel the bumps and bruises. Call 408.266.3162 for a free consultation today.

**1.408.266.3162**

[www.hivemindinc.com](http://www.hivemindinc.com)  
[info@hivemindinc.com](mailto:info@hivemindinc.com)

*create stuff  
that matters*

**HIVEMIND STUDIOS**