

Tip#3: Use Simple Words/Part 2

We just mentioned using certain words for the purpose of searching, and that makes this a good time to bring up Search Engine Optimization. This is a geeky phrase that means taking steps to make it easy for Internet users to find your Web site. SEO work sometimes is behind-the-scenes work done by Web site developers, but writers also can and should do SEO work.

When you're writing your Web site, you need to always be thinking about how the words you use will help attract people to your site. And not just your home site. There's a phrase that you'll hear: "Every page is the home page." It means you need to do everything in your power on every page of your site to make it easy for Internet users to find your site. As a writer, that means using words, known as key words that people often use when they conduct searches. These key words, of course, depend on your business.

Here are four things to remember as you write:

1. "Content is king." This phrase means different things to different people, but when it comes to Web sites, it means your Web site pages need words. This may be pretty obvious to some, but the bottom line is you can't type in images to help you find what you're looking for, right? You have to type in words, and you want your pages to include the right words. A Search Engine Optimization guru I know once told me about the owner of a bakery who came to him in a panic because practically no one was visiting her Web site. She had hired a designer, and he placed large, mouth-watering photos of cakes, pies and cookies on her home page. If you saw those photos, you would want to call this bakery and order everything she was selling. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. The owner of the bakery was smart enough to know that Web readers hate large blocks of copy, but she took it to the other extreme. Her home page included precious few words, and you wouldn't be able to find her site unless you happened to know the name of her bakery and you typed that into your search engine.
2. Don't use fancy fonts in your headlines. Search engines usually don't recognize them. Stick with the standards: Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial and a handful of others.

 Writing Exercise

Using some of those key words you just jotted down, write an introductory paragraph that will go on your home page.

 **Tip #4:** Bullets are your Friends

We're not referring to those things that are fired from guns. Sentences that begin with bullets tend to pop off the page. That's why job seekers use them on résumés. They grab your attention, and that's something you want your Web site to do. Just remember to write short sentences when you use bullets. Otherwise, you defeat the purpose of using them in the first place.

Because bullets grab your attention, they often are effectively used on "Services" pages, where you want to convey a lot of information about what you offer in a small space.

On the next page is an example of a company that used them to very succinctly highlight what they do: