

How to Use Your SiteSuite Content Management System to Apply Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) Techniques & Principles

(or how to get customers flocking to your brand new website)

What this white paper is: a basic how-to guide in getting your website prepared for ranking well within the major search engines such as *Google* and *Yahoo!* using the SiteSuite Content Management System (CMS) tools. SiteSuite's CMS includes the necessary tools required to get your new website ranked well within search engines. This is achieved by using Page Titles, h1 tags, Paragraph Tags, Defined URLs and more.

What this white paper isn't: a be-all and end-all to SEO. It is, however, a solid introduction that will get you pointed in the right direction. We recommend that you either employ the services of an SEO professional or, if you're happy to "DIY", purchase a suitable book on the subject and apply SEO principles to your website as you learn new SEO 'tricks'.

It's entirely up to you whether you get a SEO pro to do this work for you or if you do the work yourself. Speak to your SiteSuite consultant if you'd like to employ a reliable SEO professional. Your consultant has good knowledge of the SEO industry and can recommend a suitable SEO business based on your budget and what you want to achieve.

Your Website's Go-Live Date Looms...

So your website's about to go live and you're full of expectation. You want the world to know about your new website as well, right? Unless you've just parted with cash for the sole purpose of massaging your ego and showing off to your friends and colleagues, you most likely decided to build a website because you wanted to attract new business. You want a wide audience to hear about your products, your services and your ideas.

The reality is that the dream won't become realised until you put certain things into place and, ideas and research, into action. In the context of your online marketing strategy, the following paragraphs could be the most important information you read this year. Why? Because your shiny new website is going to be dead in the water until you put the following ideas into action.

The good news is, that you already have in your grasp the tools to optimise your website for *Google* and *Yahoo!* If you're reading this as a SiteSuite client, by now you should have access to the Content Management Tools that control your website's pages, text and images. We're now going to show you how to optimise your web pages so that search engines index those pages to maximum effect. That is, you want those pages to rank on page 1 of Google, and this is where the SiteSuite CMS comes into its own.

This white paper is an introduction to SEO principles, with a focus on applying those principles using your SiteSuite website management tools

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a broad subject that can take months – even years - to master and fully grasp. There are hundreds of books written on the subject and thousands of businesses in every city vying for a slice of the SEO pie. SEO is big business because when applied properly, it can mean solid returns through substantially increased traffic to your website. Without SEO, your website can languish in the depths of Google on pages well below the prized Page 1 position.

SEO can be expensive because it's labour intensive through research and implementation and, it's *ongoing*. It *never* ends for most businesses because competitors are continually optimising *their* web pages to rank well in Google. So, unless you want to be left behind, you also need to follow suit.

This doesn't necessarily imply that you have to go through the entire SEO process every 30 days (unless you have the budget or time to do so) but you do need to be aware of how Google and co work and how they index your web pages from week to week.

The Bare Minimum Required in Maintaining a Successful Web Presence

At the very least you could implement the key points discussed in this document and then, over the following months, maintain a regular blog (news article) as well as making changes to key pages by way of information updates. Why? Because Golden Rule Number 1 says that Google loves new content and will give your web pages more credence if you update them regularly than a web page that's left to languish over time. So, update your web pages regularly and keep a regular blog. *Commit that Golden Rule to memory.*

If "blogging" is alien to you, then pick some subjects that you know and know well, then write about them every week. Company news, industry insights – anything. Check our article on blogging if you're struggling for ideas: <http://www.sitesuite.com.au/article/blogging-for-business>.

We're here to tell you from personal experience, blog often and traffic will come! We're a website design and development business but we blog on a wide range of subjects – check them out on our website: <http://www.sitesuite.com.au/articles>

Getting Started: SEO in a Nutshell

To gain a good understanding of these steps in detail, we suggest investing in any number of publications available on the subject of SEO. Most bookstores will offer such books, with most well under \$50. These are the simplified steps required to optimise your website.

1. Keyword research
2. Site structure and balance / page creation
3. Copy writing and page implementation consisting of:
 - a. Page Title creation
 - b. h1 and h2 tag creation
 - c. Paragraph creation
 - d. Image tag & description creation

Step 1: Know Thy Enemy

Do you know where your competitors are positioned when their customers type search terms into Google? When your website is published, it doesn't magically appear at the top of Google's page 1. Chances are, thousands – sometimes millions – of other businesses also sell or promote similar products or services online. So the first step is to learn what your competitors are doing to get *their* websites sitting up top on Google, on page 1. And by the way, if your website's going to be ranking on page 2 or lower, then your results are going to be average at best. When was the last time you searched for something on Google and actually clicked on the 'next page' link at the bottom of the page? Unless you looking for something that is rare, then we'd think not very often!

Start by making a list of search terms or phrases that you believe someone may type into Google to find your products or services

It's no good having the belief that your customers will type into their web browser your company's name, because potential customers won't necessarily type in a business name to find you. So, step out of the box for a minute and write down a list of search terms you believe people will use to find your stuff.

What you effectively need to do next is to ascertain how many people actually use the terms in your list to find products or services and then decide whether to optimise your website for the most popular search terms or perhaps take a different tact and optimise your website for more obscure (but still relatively popular) search terms.

Fig. 1 tells us that when searching for "investment properties on the Sunshine Coast", about 234,000 results are returned. Using Google's keyword analysis tool, Fig.2 shows how popular this search term is in both Global and Local search results.

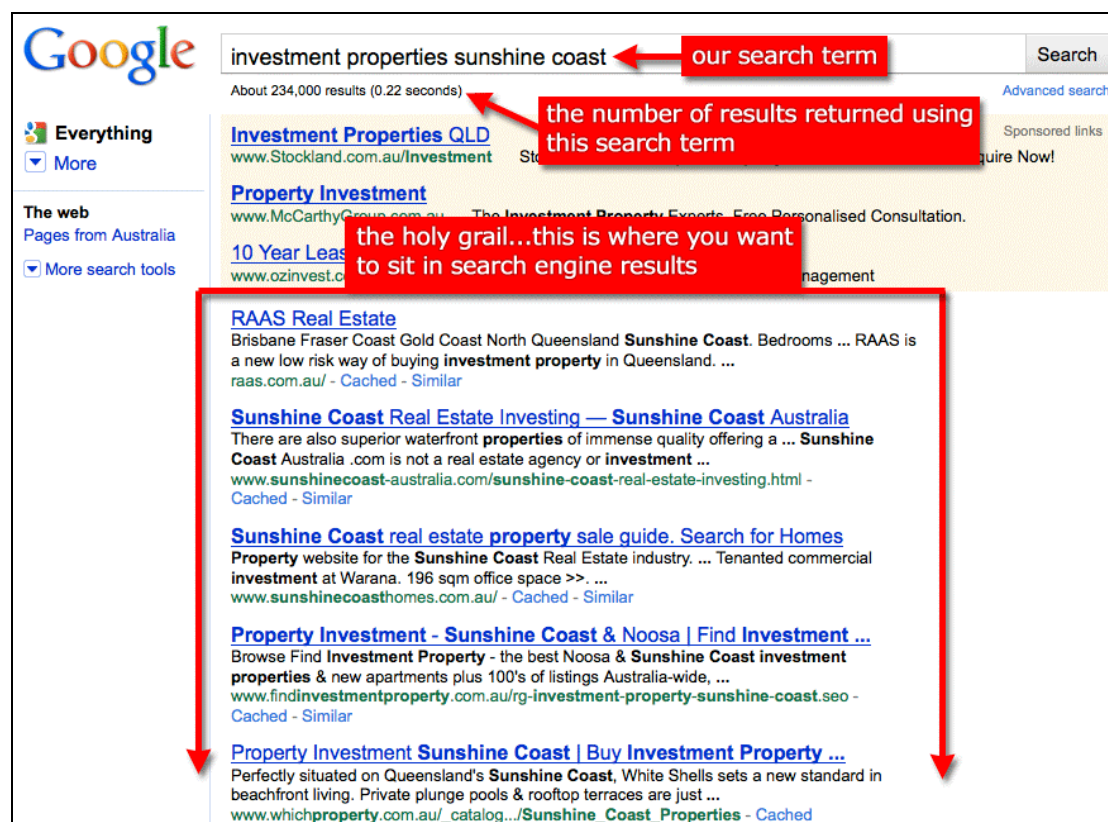


Fig. 1: Begin by researching the popularity of each search term on your list

Keyword analysis tools such as those offered by Google (through their AdWords application) <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>, can quickly build a picture of which terms or phrases are used, where they're used and at what times of year they're most popular, as illustrated in Fig.2.

Once you've researched and settled on the terms and phrases suitable for your business, you can then build those terms into your website's pages using your SiteSuite Dashboard interface (or CMS).

Now the whole process of keyword research isn't quite this simplistic but it should give you an introduction as to what you need to start thinking about. For example, it's good to also view the source HTML code of the websites that rank up top in Google using the search terms you're hoping to optimise your website for (refer Fig.3). This gives you a very clear picture of the keywords and phrases being used on any given website and *how they're placed* within a web page's Page Title, h1 Tag and so on.

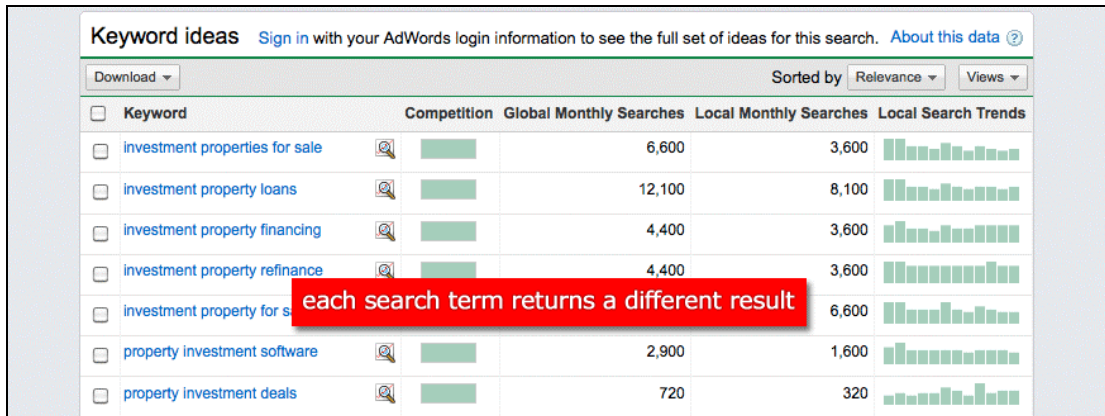


Fig.2: Learn which search terms are most popular based on preferred keywords or phrases

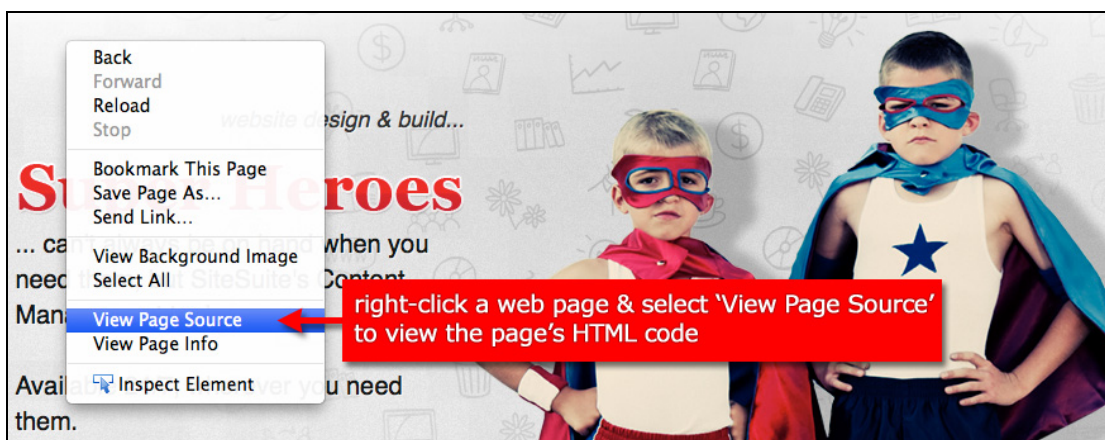


Fig.3: Right click a well-ranked web page and select 'View Page Source' to view the keywords on that page and how they're used

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<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transiti
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">

<head>
<title>Website Design, Ecommerce, Email Marketing & CMS Tools | SiteSuite - Websites Made Easy</title>
<meta name="keywords" content="website design, web development, web hosting, content management systems, e-comm
<meta name="description" content="Website design and web development company SiteSuite specialises in business v

<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="/persistent/css/jquery.cycle.all.css">
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="/persistent/css/jquery.validate.css">
<script type="text/javascript" src="/persistent/js/jquery.cycle.all.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="/persistent/js/jquery.validate.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="/persistent/js/jquery.cycle.all.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="/persistent/js/jquery.validate.js"></script>
</script type="text/javascript">

```

Fig.4: Learn how successfully ranked websites utilise keywords on their pages

In summary:

- Google loves new and fresh content so never allow your website pages to flounder
- Keep a regular blog as a way of gaining Google's attention and driving traffic back to your website
- Take time to research your competition and gather what search terms return the most, or least, results for any given term
- Using your web browser, study the source code of websites that rank up top on page 1 of search engines and study their use of keywords and phrases within the Page Title, h1 and paragraph tags

- Rather than taking on well-ranked websites with the same search terms, begin by optimising your website with search terms that return fewer results. Then, as the months go by, slowly introduce more popular terms and keywords and experiment with your website's rankings, monitoring your progress weekly.
- Optimisation is not generally a do-it-once-and-forget exercise. It takes many months of experimenting to get the results that you want to achieve. Set targets.

Step 2: You've got your keywords and phrases ready so now it's time to get creative

This is where you put your wordsmith hat on! Here's your challenge: you must now integrate your chosen keywords into the web page's Page Title, h1 tag and paragraph text, tying the keywords and phrases together in such a way that your human readers will respond to your words and sentences, and a way that Google will sit up and take note – and index your page accordingly.

Google won't respond well to a page that's littered with meaningless keywords and little else. When Google arrives at your web page it looks, in this order, at the page's Page Title tag, compares that title text with your page's heading (labeled using the "h1" tag) before moving down the page and into the paragraph text. Along the way it looks for words and sentences in **bold type**, whole phrases [acting as hyperlinks to other websites](#) or pages within your own website and then, if all those elements are relevant to each other, decides how well (or how high in the search rankings) to index your page.

Let's pause for a second. You're probably thinking, "OK, If my page optimisation is perfect in every way, then I'll rank #1 on page 1 in Google, right?". Not quite. If, in the previous step of keyword research, you decided to "take on the big guns" and optimise your website for the most popularly used search terms relevant to your business, then it could take up to 12 months before Google decides to throw someone else off the top perch and position your website there instead. Don't forget, too, that to get to the top on Google takes months and months of continual optimisation, tweaking and so on. Many SEO specialists will therefore advise you to target search terms that don't go head to head with the big guns but instead focus on your area of expertise – a niche of sorts – and, in real terms – a play on words that still allow people to find your products and services using more refined search terms.

Writing effective copy that both your human readers and Google will understand

Remember that once you write copy for each of your website's pages, you'll be refining that copy again in a few months from now. So don't stress about writing copy that Hemingway would have been proud of, but instead settle on effective copy that you know you can refine and modify as the months go by. Remember the Golden Rule: Google loves new and fresh content so don't ever allow your web pages to flounder. In the following examples we're going to focus on your Home page.

First stop: using your Keywords & Phrases within the Page Title tag

When search engines arrive at your website, they begin indexing work from top to bottom, and that process starts at your Page Title. The Page Title appears in a web browser's title bar (at the very top), not the human-readable page content itself, and is derived from source code generated by your website. Creating that source code is simple using the SiteSuite Page Editor. Once entered as shown in Fig.5, the CMS will automatically generate the code necessary for the Page Title to appear in every web browser displaying your page (see Fig.6).

The Page Title is the most important single summary of what a page is all about and therefore carries the highest on-page weighting in the Google indexing 'algorithm' (the search 'robot' –

or 'web-bot' – that arrives at your website to index and eventually place within Google's search results).

The Page Title should describe the key areas of your business (relevant to the page) rather than something such as "Welcome to our website". So perhaps try something along the lines of "Sunshine Coast Investment Properties & Houses Sourced & Sold" (plenty of keywords there but note how it still reads in 'human form').

Keep the Page Title to 64 characters (including spaces) or less if possible. Google actually truncates at 66 characters or the last complete full word, whichever is smaller.

These 'rules' should be applied to every single page within your website, and not just the Home page.

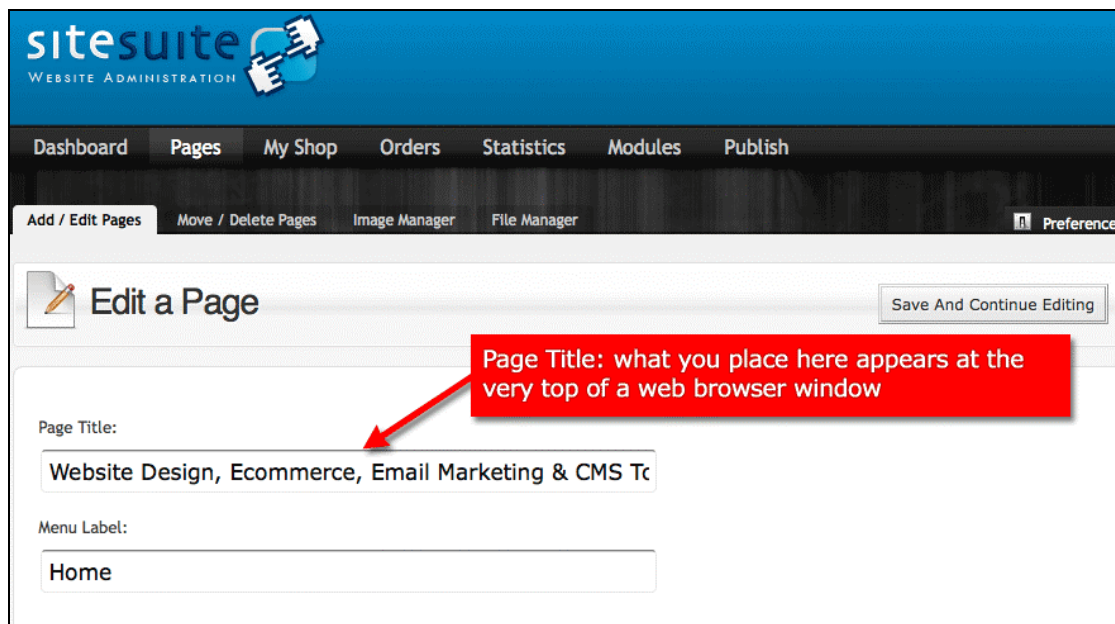


Fig.5: Ensure that every page within your website has a relevant Page Title that is 64 characters or less

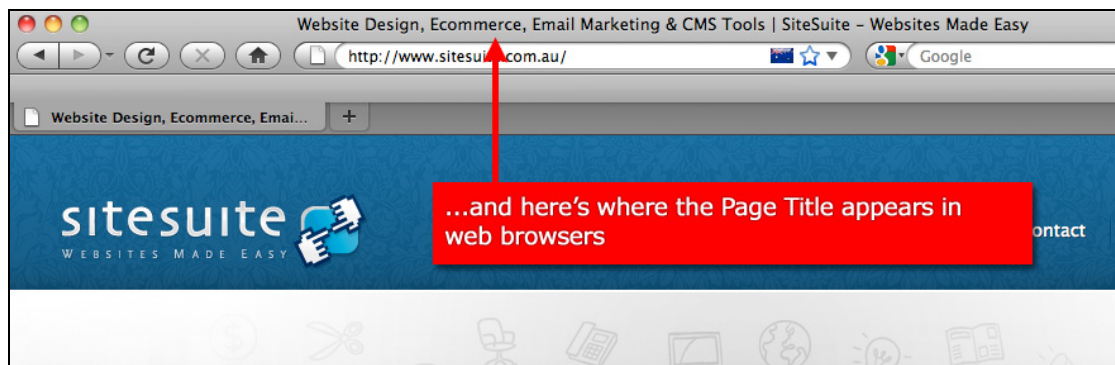


Fig.6: Your SiteSuite CMS places your Page Titles at the top of a Web Browser window

Next step on Google’s journey: the Heading and Paragraph Tags

So what exactly are these “h1” tags and why are they so important? During your website build, your designer assigns font and paragraph styles to the text used throughout your website (these styles are defined inside a file called a ‘style sheet’ (or CSS file). These styles cover everything from page headings to paragraph text, to hyperlink text, text spacing, image behaviour and so much more.

To ensure that consistency is maintained throughout your website’s pages, you’re able to assign the main headings on each page the same styling. This means that a heading on your Home page is identical to the heading on your About Us page, and so on. When assigning a text heading to a particular style, it’s called “tagging”. So in reference to the main heading at the very top of each page, this the “h1” tag – short for “heading1”. It is this heading tag that Google takes a particular interest in, by comparing it with your previous Page Title tag and the ensuing paragraph text (similarly tagged as paragraph text).

It’s important that you assign your very first page heading with a h1 tag, and you do this by using your Page Editor as shown in Fig.7 below. Highlight the heading using your mouse, then select the ‘Heading1’ tag from the drop-down list of style options. That text is now assigned a h1 tag. Don’t worry if the text doesn’t take on the exact appearance that you would like – all we’re doing here is assigning the heading a h1 style. The CSS code in the back-end of your website will pick up on the h1 tag, look to see what styling (such as chosen font, colour and size) has been assigned to the h1 tag, then instruct your visitor’s web browser to display the heading in the style defined by your website’s CSS file.

The paragraph text that immediately follows the h1 tagged title should also be tagged as ‘paragraph’ text, and again you do this using the same method as above: by highlighting the paragraph of text and then selecting the ‘paragraph’ style from the drop-down style menu.

Place your Keywords and Phrases in **bold** and try to keep words within your page paragraphs to 450-600 words per page. If you need more words, create more pages or sections and link to those instead. Avoid miles of text because your site visitors will most likely skim read anyway – hence the importance of **bold text** to not only human readers but to Google as well (as explained in the previous sections).

You can break down the importance of information on a page by using the h2 title tag followed by paragraph text. However, keep the most important (and keyword-rich) text up top within the initial page heading (h1) and following paragraph/s.

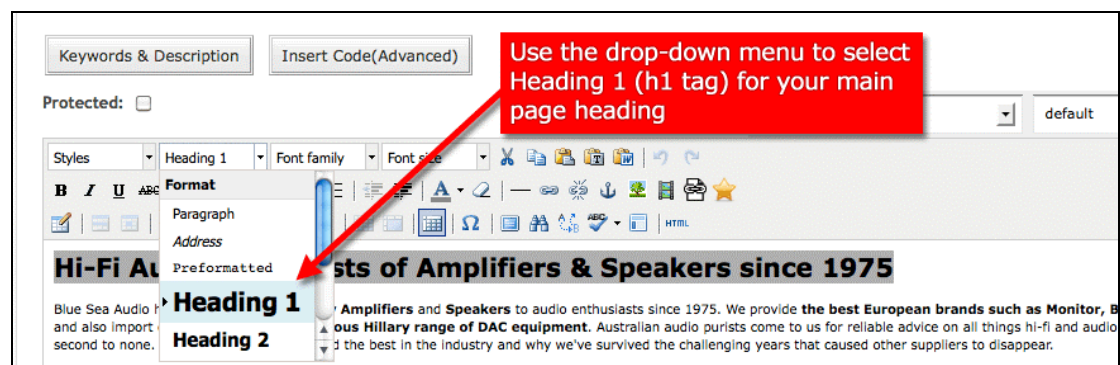


Fig.7: select styles from the drop-down menu to tag your page headings & paragraph text

In summary:

- Combine human-readable text with your keywords and try to position your keywords at the start of titles and paragraph sentences
- Page Titles are the most important single summary of what a page is all about and therefore carry the highest on-page weighting in the Google indexing system
- Keep Page Title lengths to 64 characters or less
- Assign the first page heading on every web page a h1 heading tag
- In the name of consistency, refrain from overwriting pre-assigned font styles with differing colours or sizes. It's not only considered poor design but, at worst, leaves your page looking amateurish and unsightly.
- Keep words on a page to a number between 450-600
- Use h2 (Heading 2) tags to further break down information on a page
- Highlight important phrases and keywords in **bold text**
- When creating a link to another website or page, [assign the sentence directing the page](#) rather than a simplistic "click [here](#)" link.

Resources & Further Reading

Publication:

Get to the Top on Google by David Viney

ISBN: 9781857885026

Online Preview:

http://books.google.com.au/books?id=ciaQHtrsd18C&printsec=frontcover&dq=get+to+the+top+on+google&source=bl&ots=CKg1tEoot6&sig=rGzwlULdgZ-pUknqPB0mNBi4uuc&hl=en&ei=VvIrTNabGsSPcaifncsJ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CCEQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false

Getting to Know & Understand Google

An insight into Google's indexing system, 'Caffeine'

<http://www.sitesuite.com.au/article/google-caffeine>

Superb Video resources

<http://services.google.com/breeze/webmasters/googleforwebmasters/>

Google Webmaster Guidelines

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=35769>

SEO Information & Researching Tools

10 Google Dont's - Things You Should Never Do for Search Engine Optimisation

By Marziah Karch, *About.com Guide*

<http://google.about.com/od/searchengineoptimization/tp/badseo.htm>

Google Keyword Research Tool

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

Google Website Optimiser

<https://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?service=websiteoptimizer&hl=en-GB&continue=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fanalytics%2Fsiteopt%2F%3Fet%3Dre>

set%26hl%3Den-AU&utm_medium=et&utm_source=au-en-et-bizsol-0-finderB-all&utm_campaign=enau

Copy Writing

How to Write Compelling Web Copy

<http://www.sitesuite.com.au/article/web-copy-secret-weapon>

Effective Copy Writing

<http://www.copyblogger.com/>

Blogging

Do you Blog For Business?

<http://www.sitesuite.com.au/article/blogging-for-business>

Ideas & Inspiration

<http://www.getblogideas.com/>