

For true SEO, remember the human element



By [Tiffany Markman](#)

6 Sep 2018

A colleague of mine (a fellow writer, but not a website copywriter or SEO specialist) recently said,

“ SEO writing has deteriorated into basically choosing appropriate keywords for a subject, and then using them in vaguely coherent sentences to score highly in searches. ”

He went on,

“ In this day and age, in which people hardly READ anymore, what's the point of strategising, optimising, carefully inserting and tweaking? Who cares if the content is largely vanilla, instead of deeply significant, client-specific copy? ”

I couldn't disagree more and, because this is a widespread misperception that many clients and industry fellows may share, I need to clear it up. Like, now.



© everythingpossible via [123RF.com](#)

What you need to know

What my colleague was referring to is an old and thankfully abandoned practice, commonly referred to as 'keyword stuffing'. It looks like this:

"This article provides free writing tips, so be sure to check out this free writing tips article if you are interested in getting free writing tips."

Or like this:

'Our investment principles guide our investment strategy and form the basis from which investment decisions are made. Before embarking on any investment plan it is important to have the correct foundation on which to base an investment strategy. With this in mind, we have chosen certain basic investment principles.'

But the technique doesn't work anymore, because Google has evolved so much that it is far too clever for this nonsense. In fact, using keyword stuffing today will badly prejudice your organic SEO.

So, what to do? *Remember the human element.* Here are six tips for achieving organic SEO on websites, in line with Google's latest algorithms...

Six tips for true, human-friendly SEO

1. Try to create high-value content that achieves the business's objectives, as if search engines didn't exist.
2. Create smart on-page SEO, using the language that the audience uses when searching and socialising, so that Google sees the site as the most relevant option to direct them to.
3. Prioritise answering the user's question over ranking. (Invest in one great piece of content that engages buyer personas, rather than six pieces that fail to answer real-life questions.)
4. Pick only one main keyword or keyphrase per page, and use that as your over-riding 'topic' or focus area for the page.
5. Consider the length of webpage copy. If you only have a few sentences per page, search spiders will think your content is too skimpy. Granted, there's no official word count, but I like to aim for 200-250 words on 'normal' (less strategic) pages and 750-900 for cornerstone pages.
6. Never 'keyword-stuff' or try to make websites into article factories packed with waffle. It doesn't work. Google. Is. Cleverer. Than. You. Are.

The bottom line is that modern search has moved away from starting with info and connecting it to an audience, to starting with the user and customising the result. That's how we should write SEO copy for websites.

ABOUT TIFFANY MARKMAN

I spend 10 hours a day writing - and teaching others to write. I was South Africa's Freelance Copywriter of the Year in 2020 and one of the world's 'Top 50 Female Content Marketers' in 2021.

- The 'Death by Zoom!' pandemic - 20 Jun 2022
- The "Give Away Your Clever" approach to content marketing - 22 Apr 2022
- The '4 Cs of business writing'? Hogwash. - 13 Aug 2019
- How book publishing is changing in the age of digital - 25 Jul 2019
- Explaining the explainer video: how to write a good video script - 6 May 2019

[View my profile and articles...](#)