



Wise Women's Winning Websites

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The following is a list of items or ideas that the cats at HeyCats! consider to be important ingredients for that winning website!

1. Design

- a. Do you know your target audience? Design appropriately. No vanity sites!
- b. Simple and clean. Keep design and styles consistent throughout site. Use cascading style sheets (CSS) for consistent fonts and style elements.
- c. Custom design if possible for good branding
- d. Intuitive user interface/navigation. Avoid fancy roll-overs or complicated drop-down menus. Keep all pages less than 3 clicks from the home page. User-friendly.
- e. Compatible in all browsers (IE, Firefox, Chrome, Safari, etc.)
- f. Design/code for people with disabilities if needed for your market
- g. Resist the "Flash" temptation. Can be distracting. Do not use Flash intro pages. Not good for search engines. Keep Flash and large graphics to a minimum for faster page load times.
- h. Important information should go up front and center (phone, next event, sale item, newsletter signup, important keyword text)

2. Content

- a. Appropriate for target audience
- b. Dynamic content – change some of it regularly, keep it fresh so folks come back. Update product info. Use RSS feeds to provide changing news. Stream Twitter posts, etc.
- c. Professional writing – good grammar, etc. Use copywriter if necessary. Be an expert in your field!
- d. Rich in keywords for search engines. Write keyword-rich page titles, paragraph headings and links.
- e. Keep it concise and short! No one wants to scroll for pages unless they are doing some heavy research.
- f. Provide a special service to members (special login area for more info or services)
- g. Avoid broken links

3. Maintenance and Accessibility

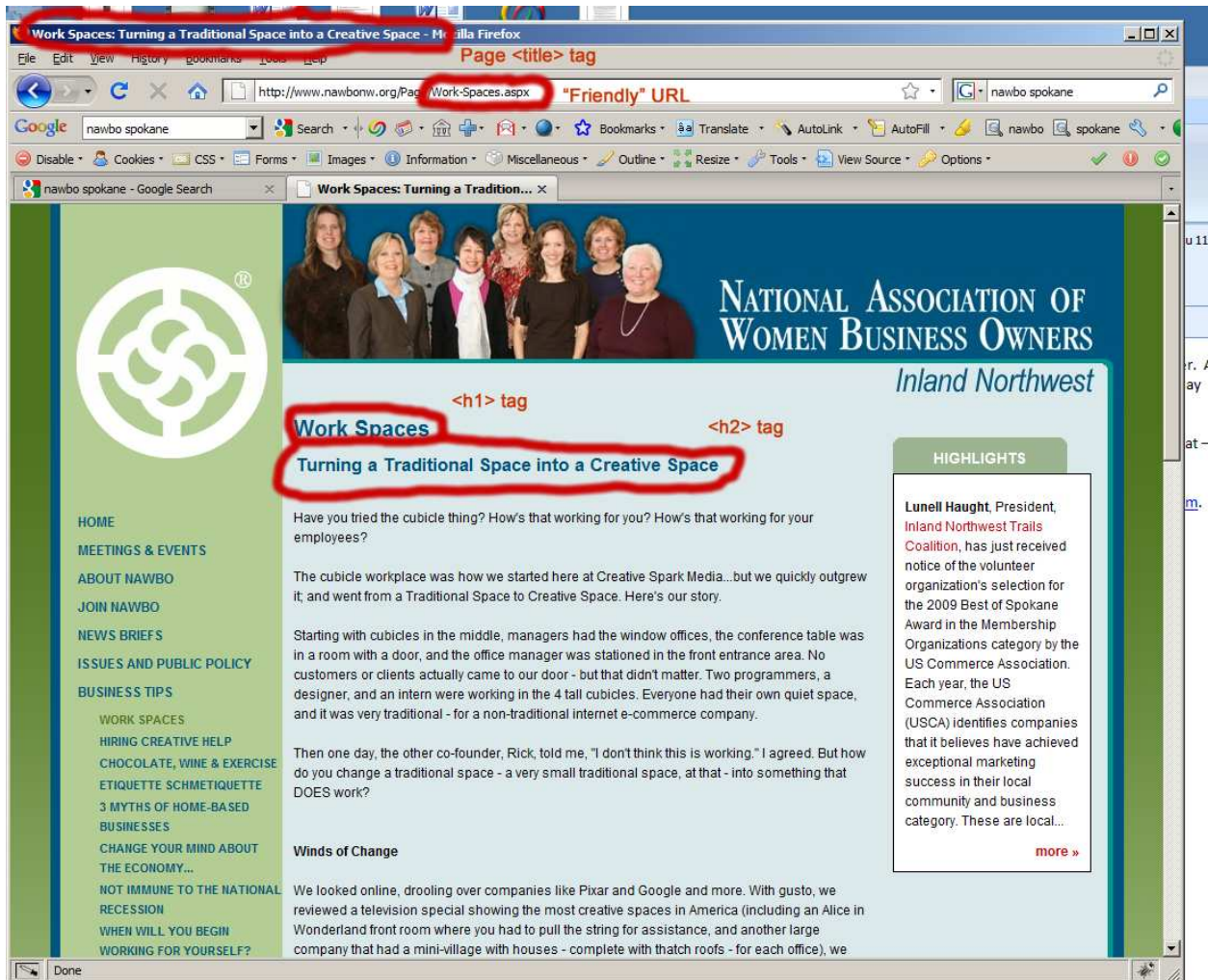
- a. Use content management system (CMS) so you can control your content from any web browser – even as you travel. Make sure it allows unique meta data for each page.
- b. Know your web host! Make sure they back up your site up so if you make a mistake it can be restored.
- c. Know your web designer/programmer if they manage your content. Make sure you have access to all your original files and digital content. Know how to log into your server. Maintain all login info.
- d. Use Google Analytics and follow your website statistics

- 4. Market your site!** (*“What’s the point of wearing your favorite rocketship underpants if nobody ever asks to see ‘em?”* –Calvin)
- a. Search Engine Optimization (see tips below)
 - b. Get on the Google Local Business Center (free)
 - c. Promote videos/audios.
 - d. Write articles for others to use and post on your site and link to these articles
 - e. Issue news releases and post to your site
 - f. Traditional strategies – business cards, print material, radio/tv ads all should have your website address. Include your website in email signature!
 - g. Newsletters – use contact form on your site to collect and maintain an email list.

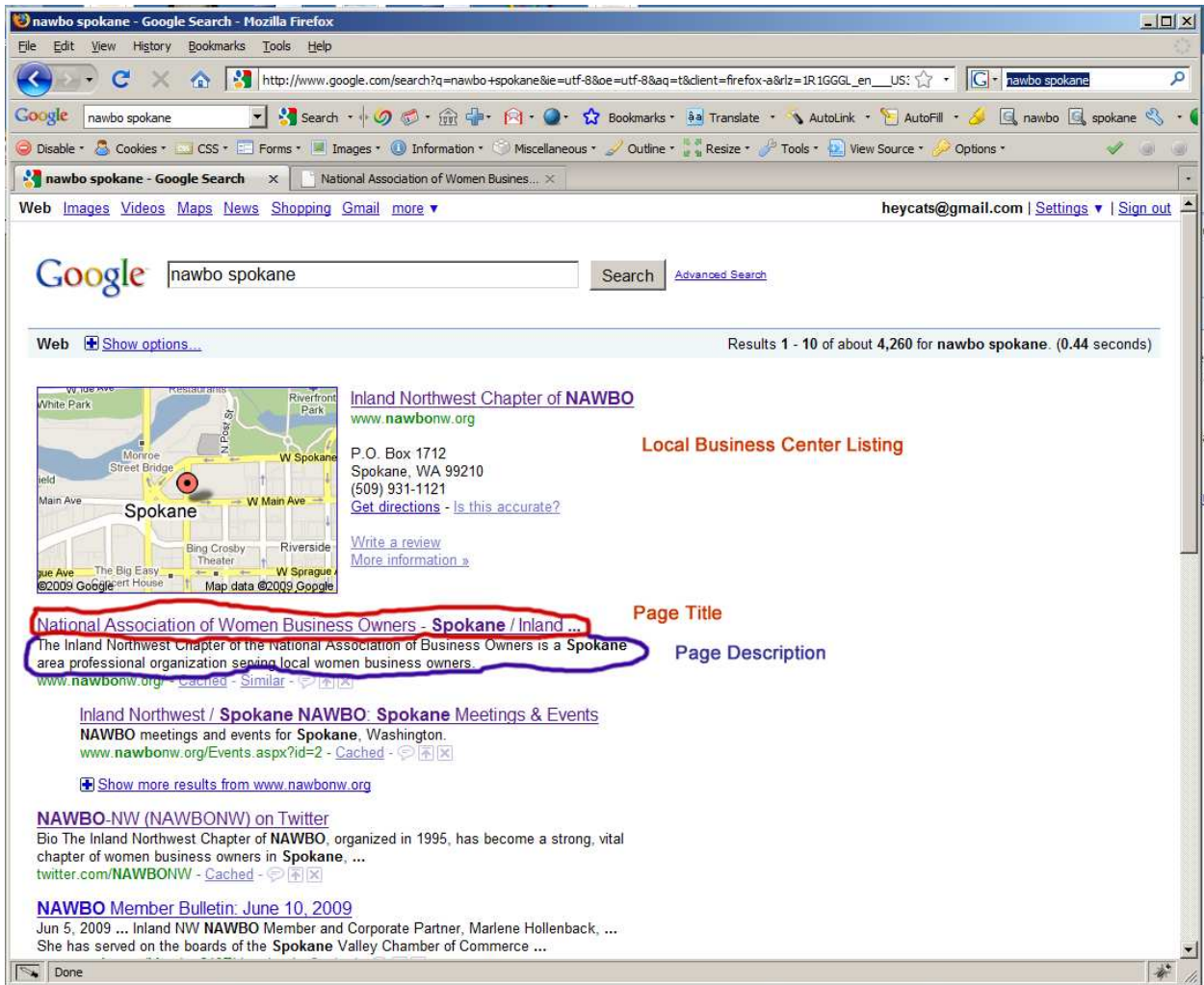
Top 10 Search Engine Optimization Tips

By Gary O'Conner of Consistent Hits (gary@consistenthits.com, 468-1612)

1. Have web metrics tracking in place. Google Analytics good tool and its free.
2. Unique Page Titles <Title>Keyword Phrase 1 | Company Name | Toll – Free Number</Title>
(Sample for Home Page)



3. Unique Meta Descriptions – Important for Google and Bing. 160 chars preferred. Make them informative and enticing. Describe page content accurately. Meta Keywords should be populated with no more than 9-12 keywords/phrases separated by commas.
(keyword 1,keyword phrase 1, keyword 2, etc)



4. W3 Compliant Pages. Use valid DTD or XML statements – <http://validator.w3.org>
5. robots.txt – make sure you have one, and unless desired, make sure it allows spiders in.
6. Sitemaps – have both .txt version and xml version. (free software to build sitemap - <http://gsitecrawler.com/>) Submit directly to Google, Yahoo, Bing. Only needs to be done once for a new site. Spiders will revisit automatically afterward) Submit via:

Google Webmaster Central (www.google.com/webmasters) – sign up using the same Google account you established when signing up for Google Analytics. Submit XML version.

Bing Webmaster (<http://login.live.com>) – you must establish or have a Windows Live ID account. Submit XML version.

Yahoo! (<http://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/>) you must establish or have a Yahoo ID account. Submit .txt version.
7. Search engine friendly URLs (Search engines look for keywords in the URL of the page/name of the page.)

<http://www.mywebsite.com/important-keyword1/important-keyword1.html> or <http://www.mywebsite.com/important-keyword1.html> Make use of rewrite rules to convert dynamic, parameter filled URLs into simpler text URLs. If running on windows platform, here is good IIS software that can be used to emulate apache rewrite if needed www.isapirewrite.com

Shorter URLs are better. Separate individual words using hyphens.

8. On page optimization – broad area. In short make sure to work in your most important targeted phrase into the text as early as possible. Boldface one or first occurrence is desirable. Always try to use keywords/keyword phrases in primary navigation links. Use keywords in <h1>, <h2>, <h3> tags as section breaks or subheads. Use one occurrence as anchor text (link) if possible within content. Place one keyword or keyword phrase inside ALT attributes within image tags for first three images loaded in content area.
9. Separate and prominently displayed phone number – make it easy for visitors to find. Try to use phone number unique to web only. (Makes it easier to track incoming calls sent from website)
10. Use contact forms, not email links, for contacts, sign-ups etc (Ability to structure incoming information and track via metric programs, form submissions)

Additions by Carol...

11. Get other qualified sites to link to yours. But remember, not all links are created equal in Google's eyes. Good page rank is important.
12. Integrate social networking (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs)

Additional Resources:

Web Marketing Checklist – 37 Ways to Promote your Website:

<http://www.wilsonweb.com/articles/checklist.htm>