Law Firm Websites
- Best Practice Reference Guide

Ever wonder if your website design is optimal or exactly what SEO and SEM mean? In this helpful reference guide, Heather Suttie of Heather Suttie & Associates, outlines some best practice tips for building the online presence that drives traffic and clients.

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Tactics for High Rankings

"A search engine results page (SERP) is the listing of results returned by a search engine in response to a keyword query. The results normally include a list of items with titles, a reference to the full version, and a short description showing where the keywords have matched content within the page. A SERP may refer to a single page of links returned, or to the set of all links returned for a search query."

Source: Wikipedia.

search engine optimization ("SEO")

intuitive navigation

writing for online users

cross-linking

content and tools

Content is **King**   Design is Secondary

Problematic site symptoms can include:

▸ illegible type

▸ limiting view

▸ unclear intention

▸ stale information

▸ unmatched to firm culture or individual's personality

▸ unsearchable, uncopyable text

▸ unnecessary distractions

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Online **Business Strategy**

then

now

"let your fingers do the walking"
meant yellow pages

international exposure **24 hours a day**

legal information was **difficult** to access

legal information readily and **easily available**

online brochures revealed **nothing**

interactive + personality =
attractive and engaging

recipe for disaster

Online Website Strategy

recipe for success

recipe for disaster	recipe for success
1 being everything to everybody	1 focus on strengths
1 stealing from competitors	1 be yourself
1 focusing on design instead of content	1 tightly written and easily understood copy
1 legal speak	1 design supports copy and brand

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SEO - How Not to be Found

- ⊘ a splash page or copy-free home page
- ⊘ blank or repetitive title pages
- ⊘ lack of keywords in copy
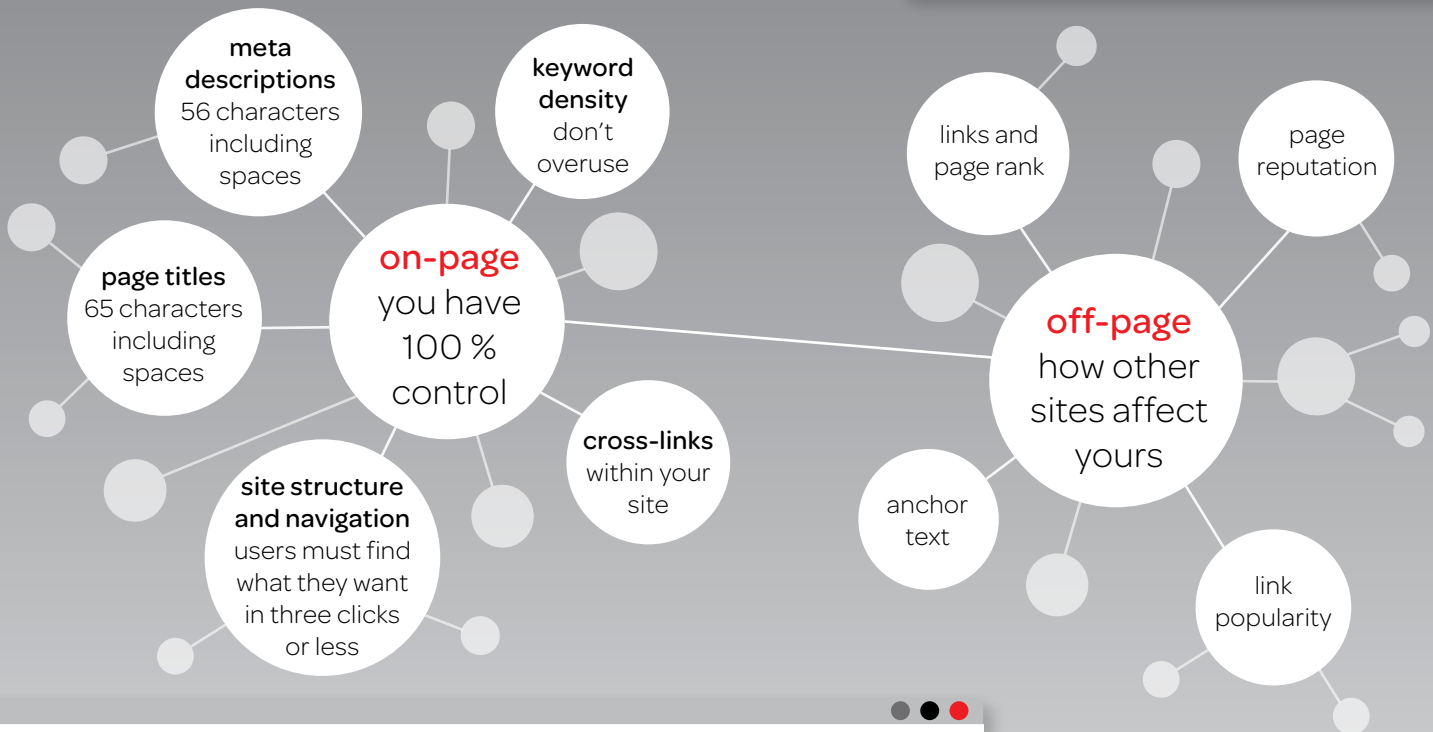- ⊘ no cross-links within your site itself

> "Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's "natural" or un-paid ("organic") search results. In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search results page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users. SEO may target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, video search, academic search, news search and industry-specific vertical search engines."
>
> Source: Wikipedia

> "A **Spider** or **Web crawler** is an Internet bot that systematically browses the World Wide Web, typically for the purpose of Web indexing."
>
> Source: Wikipedia

SEO - Spider Food

- **meta descriptions** 56 characters including spaces
- **keyword density** don't overuse
- **page titles** 65 characters including spaces
- **on-page** you have 100 % control
- **site structure and navigation** users must find what they want in three clicks or less
- **cross-links** within your site
- **links and page rank**
- **page reputation**
- **off-page** how other sites affect yours
- **anchor text**
- **link popularity**

SEO - How Does Your Site Look?

test it:

[   ] 🔍

go to Google, **use the "cache" search**

in search box, enter **cache:yourdomain.com**

result:

Google's memory of how your site looks

look for searchable content that describes firm

next to no searchable text = poor ranking

! also try **www.marketing.grader.com**

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Top 10 Website Tips

01 exchange value for time
clients will spend more time on your site if you provide value and insight

02 create client-focused content
focus on client problems then explain how you can help

03 eliminate jargon
speak in simple terms (less intimidating, higher search results)

04 content trumps design
simple and easy to read; flashy design dates a site and downloading takes time

05 interact but don't intrude
e-mail, newsletter and blog signups, etc. enable interaction

06 communicate with character
provide glimpse of personality and culture of firm

07 know your users
monitor traffic, learn what pages and downloads are accessed, search for patterns, provide more of what is accessed most

08 make everything easy
help users scan, simplify signups, pages to load fast, navigate in three clicks or less

09 keep up with the times
monthly check and refresh to attract search engines and users

10 your site is your number one marketing vehicle
equal parts front office, resource library, and publicity machine

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