

# Ten Tips on SEO for Event Websites

From Episode 105



As we discussed in Episode 101, the days of paper registration are long gone. Everything is online now, and events are no different. If you're managing an event or conference, we think it is vital that you create some kind of event website. Some events can be handled with single landing pages, but others are far better served with an entire site that can help sell your event and increase attendance. Either way, if you are creating an event website, you'll want to optimize it for search engines.

In this episode, Chris Justice, Sparksight's Search Engine Expert (and CEO) goes through ten tips on search engine optimization for event websites. These are quick and easy (well, mostly) ways you can give your site a traffic boost, and combined with a creative marketing strategy and a targeted social media campaign, will help you fill the seats and sell out your event.

## 1 Excel-erate Your Messaging

Open Microsoft Excel and come up with a list of "trigger words" and "trigger phrases." These are the terms you think best describe your event website, and will be used throughout the SEO Process.

For example, if we were hosting an event for event managers, our trigger words would include "events," "conferences," "event managers," "conference planners," etc. Once you have a good number of words and phrases, pass the file around the office for input and reinforcement. If everyone has the same document, you can ensure your message stays consistent and is optimized for search engines.

## 2 Get Wordy

Come up with a 200 word, 100 word, 50 word, and 25 word description about your event. These will come in handy during SEO, and will save time to have different length descriptions pre-made that you can drag and drop.

## 3 Go for Multiples

Buy multiple domains based on your trigger words and phrases. Going back to our fictional Events event, we might try to buy several domains, such as: [eventsandconferences.com](#), [conferencesandevents.com](#), [conferenceplannersunite.com](#), etc. Domains are a cheap and easy way to get more links and ensure that search engines list you in multiple places.

Take the multiple domains and reroute them with a 301 redirect to your main site, and you're good to go.

## 4 Write it Out

Now it's time to write the content. Using your trigger words and phrases as well as your event descriptions, create the content for each page of your event site. There's a lot you can do with your content to make it search engine friendly, so here we go...

First, make a page title that clearly describes *this specific page*. Include a location if applicable.

Second, use varying sizes for your titles to let the search engines know what the pages are all about. In html, these are your H1 and H2 tags (used for main titles and subtitles).

Third, write the content. Use your trigger words and phrases throughout.

Fourth, make sure every page has a *unique* description and supporting keywords within the metadata. Although your viewers will not see this information directly, it is vital to SEO!

Last, fill your content with internal and external links. Link to content on your other pages as well as content to external sites for maximum effectiveness.



## 5 Be Bold... and Italic!

Once your content is ready, **bold** and *italicize some of the* important elements, such as your trigger words and phrases. Doing so tells Google and the other search engines that these words and phrases are important, and thus more "search-worthy."

## 6 Use ALT and TITLE Text

Of course the text on your site is important, but the text in your html is also crucial to great SEO. ALT tags are used to describe items that are slow to load or unloadable. For example, a photo of Chris Justice might have alt text that says, "Photo of Chris Justice, smiling and wearing his Search Engine Expert leotard." ALT tags are a necessity for your code, so make sure that you are using great descriptions that maximize your trigger words and phrases.

TITLE attributes, like ALT tags, are used to describe elements of your website, but can be used in numerous places like links and tables. Using both of these descriptive elements will greatly increase your searchability, just be sure that each tag is unique on each page, to avoid being labeled a "ballot stuffer" by the search engine bots.

## 7 Map It

Sitemaps are the logical xml-based structure of your website, and are required for search engine submission. You don't have to make your own sitemaps, though... there are plenty of online sitemap generators. Generate a sitemap, and then your ready for submission...

## 8 Submit It

Believe it or not, just because something is on the web does *not* mean it is automatically added to Google's index. Of course, they have an incredibly powerful crawler (the oh, so adorable Googlebot) that will seek out new URLs, but to be sure your site is highly visible (and indexed the way *you* want it indexed, you're going to want to submit it to the big engines yourself. Team your shiny new sitemap with your content (trigger words & phrases) and submit the entire bundle to the search engines.

## 9 Don't Pay a Cent!

The site submission process should be FREE! Do not pay a 3rd party to do your submission for you... go directly to the search sites and find their submission engines. It's cheaper and more direct.

Here's some helpful info on a few of the major engines' submission process:

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=34575>

<http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/search/siteexplorer/manage/siteexplorer-45.html>

<http://about.ask.com/en/docs/about/webmasters.shtml#22>

<http://webmaster.live.com/>

## 10 Link, link, link, link

You've done the right things so far but now you must be a bricklayer. The term refers to a person who use blocks to construct blockwork walls and other forms of masonry. In your case, you (or we hope your brand new intern) will be going out to hundreds of websites, talking to owners/editors and asking them to link to your site. This includes bloggers, webmasters, partners, friends, attendees, you mom and anyone else that can benefit your ranking. Do not however work with people who sell links; in 95% of the cases it is a scam and you won't be able to accurately measure your return.

Ten tips on SEO is just the start. Contact Chris any time for more help on SEO: [Justice@sparksight.com](mailto:Justice@sparksight.com)

