

# What Are Keywords And What The Heck Do You Do With Them?

By Karon Thackston

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When I first began my online business, I honestly thought that the moment I uploaded my Web site to the host it would magically appear on every search engine in existence. Some of you are giggling. Others are saying, "You mean it doesn't"? No... it doesn't.

Let me explain. In one way, search engines operate in a similar fashion to your telephone directory. They both list companies by category. When you got your business telephone number you were probably asked what category you wanted to be listed under. Search engines use much the same logic. Rather than categories, they use keywords.

You must consider which keywords your site visitors will use to find you and then incorporate those words into your Web site tags and - more importantly - your copy.

If your site deals with dog grooming, the key phrases could be: dog grooming, pet grooming, dog bathing, grooming and boarding.

Your keywords need to be those that most people would think of when searching the Internet for a site such as yours. How do you figure out the most effective keywords? Let me recommend Wordtracker.(<http://www.wordtracker.com>).

This site has been a lifesaver for me! All you have to do is type in the keywords you think your visitors will use. It will provide all the other possibilities that go along with it. Also, it will give you the exact number of times that keyword was searched for on the Web.

Now that you've decided on your keywords, where the heck do you put them? As a Web copywriter, I've learned that the words I wrote had a direct bearing on my client's search engine success. That meant I had to write a message that made an emotional connection with the target audience, promoted the product or service AND included the necessary keywords that would help get them good rankings. Whew!

Let me tell you what I've found that works. These very basic guidelines will help you get more mileage out of your keywords.

1. Most Importantly - Include keywords in your copy. Of course, you'll need to use your keywords

within your copy. Excellent places for keywords include: the very top of the page (above your logo), the headline, sub headlines, the first paragraph, and the last paragraph.

Keep in mind that search engine spiders are stupid. They are looking for the exact keywords, not something that's close. If you really want to be listed under the key phrase of "dog groomer and border", then that specific and exact phrase must appear repeatedly throughout the copy on all pages of your site. Be sure it is included in the first paragraph, in the first sentence if at all possible.

2. Put keywords in your META tags. Whether you're using FrontPage, Dreamweaver, Go Live or any other site design program, there is a tab (usually at the bottom of the screen) that takes you to the HTML code. After you've gotten your design finished, save your page and click the HTML tab.

The site title is what shows up in the blue bar of the browser screen. Something like "dog groomer and border offers loving care" will do. Notice it doesn't include the name of the grooming company. It includes a very short description of the business, including keywords.

Now, we'll do something similar for the keyword and description tags.

For the keywords description we'll type in: "dog groomer and border dog grooming, pet grooming, pet bathing, dog bathing".

For the site description, we'll type in a short, attention-getting sentence. This is what your visitors will see when they search for your company and the listings appear on the screen. It can normally be 25 words or less. This also must include your keywords and phrases. Something along the lines of "Dog groomer and border. Our dog groomers take exceptional care of the special pet in your life." Notice it gives an advantage for using your service (you take care of the pet), as well as using three of your keywords.

HINT: You can include a different site title, description and keywords for each individual page if you choose to.

3. Put keywords in your ALT tags. If we added a photo of a dog wagging his tail, we could include an ALT tag that says, "Dog grooming for the special pet in your life" or another phrase that includes our keywords. Because ALT tags consist of words, the search engines can read them just like they read your META tags. When they read the keywords within the tag, it increases your keyword usage and your chances of getting higher positioning.

4. Include keywords in your domain name and page names. Perhaps you've found that "groomer" is your most effective keyword. You might try to get a domain name such as dog-groomer.com or groomer-and-border.com. Including keywords in your domain name gets you extra brownie points! Likewise, include keywords in all your page names.

When you create page names that include keywords, you get an additional boost to your rankings. You might consider naming pages "special\_pets" and "groomer\_pricing" or "dog\_services". Your URL for the pricing page would be [www.dog-groomer.com/groomer\\_pricing.html](http://www.dog-groomer.com/groomer_pricing.html).

While keywords aren't the sole factor to obtaining high search engine rankings, they are the predominant factor. By placing them in these strategic areas, you will increase your chances of being found on the 'Net.

Most buying decisions are emotional. Your ad copy should be, too! Karon is Owner and President of KT & Associates who offers targeted copywriting, copy editing & ezine article services. Subscribe

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