

Top Mistakes Made in Optimizing Web Pages

By Robin Nobles

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Last month we looked at Top Tips . . .

So now, let's look at . . .

Top Mistakes Made When Optimizing Web Pages

By Robin Nobles

What are the top mistakes that folks make when optimizing their Web sites? What do some of the best SEO's in the business consider to be the top mistakes made in this industry?

Last month, we looked at top tips, but this month, we're concentrating on top mistakes, with the goal of learning what not to do when working on our sites.

Important facts about these mistakes

These tips aren't listed in any particular order of importance. The first mistake in any category isn't necessarily the worst, and the last mistake certainly isn't the least.

Each mistake has been identified with the SEO who wrote it. Then, at the end of the article in alphabetical order, I highlighted the various SEO's who participated in this article, along with brief information about their qualifications.

Now, let's see what some of the best SEO's consider as the top mistakes being made in the search engine industry.

Cloaking and Stealth Technology

* Don't jump into cloaking before you know SEO and design. In some instances (which would be beyond the scope of this interview), cloaking is a logical and ethical choice for SEO. But until the search engines adopt this point of view, cloaking will always carry with it an inherent risk. Additionally, beside the

additional cost associated with cloaking, the process of cloaking itself requires more of your time. And as we know, time equals money.

So before you jump into cloaking, make sure that you know that cloaking is right for your situation, and make sure that you also have the technical expertise to handle it.

Cloaking is not a magic bullet. It simply serves an alternate page. If you can not rank highly without cloaking, the odds are that you can not rank highly with it. J.K. Bowman with Spider Food (<http://www.spider-food.net>)

Content

* One of the biggest mistakes I've seen is Web site copy that's written with *just* the search engines in mind -and a strong marketing message is nowhere to be found.

Savvy search engine optimization writing satisfies two very demanding masters - the search engines and your prospects. If you write your copy *exclusively* for the search engines, and your text reads like a laundry list of keyphrases, you'll lose your customers the moment they hit your site. Why spend thousands of dollars in money (or time) for great rankings, when your site doesn't convert buyers into sellers?

Yes, it's crucial to create keyphrase-rich copy for the search engines. But, don't forget that your copy should blast your benefits, build rapport, and immediately tell your prospects, "what's in it for them." This winning combination of spider-happy and prospect-friendly text will help you get the high rankings you want - and convert that targeted traffic into paying clients! Heather Lloyd-Martin with The Rank Write Roundtable (<http://www.rankwrite.com>)

* Creating Web pages that are void of artistic quality or meaningful content is a mistake.

This is seen most frequently with machine-generated doorway pages. The problem with these pages is that while some of them may rank very well, they are often so visually unappealing or so lacking in content that when a surfer reaches one of these pages, they simply use the back button on their browser to return to the search engine results.

To be successful in search engine optimization, you must not only be able to achieve high ranking for your clients, but you must also be able to develop Web pages that will retain a viewer's interest when they reach the site. J.K. Bowman with Spider Food (<http://www.spider-food.net>)

* In all of our efforts to write well for the robots, we must remember to also write well for the human brain. Remember that the human brain likes the appropriate use of colour. The human brain likes text broken down into manageable chunks or clusters that are easy to read and absorb. Write your copy using all of the important SEO principles but be sure to strike a balance. With practice, you can build pages that are content rich and compelling to read. You can create projects that are pleasing to look at and still score exceptionally well. John Alexander with Beyond-SEO.com (<http://www.beyond-seo.com/>)

Conversion to Sales

* Remember to try and look beyond SEO. I learned early that it is not enough to simply have massive traffic coming to your clients' pages. You must also deliver value to your visitor and compel them to take action. Although this has more to do with getting action from your visitors than traffic-building itself, I think it is still an important issue or error that is far too easily overlooked. My client's business does not really begin online until a visitor responds to their online experience. Building traffic is wonderful, but don't forget to make the most of the traffic you already have by giving visitors a "non-threatening reason to act now."

Converting visitors to customers may not be on the agenda as an SEO (we're always so busy thinking traffic), but once you start examining methods to convert your client's visitors to customers, you'll start to deliver additional value to your clients and you'll find a full consultancy approach does not go unrewarded. (John Alexander with Beyond-SEO.com (<http://www.beyond-seo.com/>))

Doorway Pages

* Believing doorways don't work or will get you banned is a mistake.

The fact is that every page on your Web site that ranks well for any reason is acting as a "doorway" to your Web site. Many people mistakenly believe that everyone will arrive at their site through the home page. Do a focused search on Google, AltaVista, or another major engine, and you'll almost always find matches that are not home pages.

In addition, each search engine ranks pages differently. Therefore, you may have a page about Product X with 400 words on it. That page may rank well for "search engine A" that likes to see 400 words on a top ranking page, but it isn't going to do well for "search engine B" that is looking for 800 words on a top ranking page.

Lastly, some of the same search engines that condemn the term doorway page include tutorials or FAQ's on how to create a page to rank well in their index. True, these tutorials are often too non-specific to be of great help. However, it confirms that optimizing each of your pages to rank better is not something the engines inherently object to. Brent Winters with FirstPlace Software (<http://www.webposition.com>)

* Do not allow pages that you are in any way paying for to be on anything other than your own URL. If you do not own them then the traffic is only being rented and can be taken away very quickly. Technology is not a valid reason to have pages remotely hosted, the motivation is control. Bruce Clay with BruceClay.com (<http://www.bruceclay.com>)

Keywords

* Don't go after generic keywords. Generic words are not how the average person really queries a search engine. I have found a user will type in a generic or single word like "animals," then realize what they asked for was too broad in scope. They have to narrow it down, like "animal pictures," "baby animal pictures," and the list goes on. If you can just focus on very specific key phrases, you will have more success in the long term, hold a position longer, have less competition for focused phrases, and find that users will stay on the site longer because your site answered their questions. Ginette Degner with ServiceBrokers.com (<http://www.servicebrokers.com>)

* Don't optimize for the wrong search phrases. At least optimize for phrases that you know people are using to find your site, even if they aren't the most popular ones. Bill Gentry with The Selling Source (<http://www.sellingsource.com>)

* Failing to "identify" and "theme-base" your most promising keyword phrase(s) is a mistake.

All keyword phrases are not the same. Perhaps the best way I can explain this is to use a hypothetical example. Let's say that you are an attorney who practices only appellate law. As you build your Web site and establish its "theme," how will you define the Web site's identity?

Here are just two keyword phrase possibilities that you might consider for a lawyer who only handles appeals.

appeals lawyer appellate attorney

Both of these phrases are right on target, and you would naturally have pages optimized for both combinations. But when deciding your Web site's theme, which one do you focus in on?

The phrase "appeals lawyer" is about 7 times more popular than "appellate attorney." But if you failed to do your research in advance before building the site, you probably would not know that.

Use a good service like WordTracker (<http://www.wordtracker.com>) or the Overture's Suggestion Tool (<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>) to find out what will produce the most traffic for you. J.K. Bowman with Spider Food (<http://www.spider-food.net>)

Linking

* A common mistake is not using text links in addition to graphic buttons, image maps and Flash menus, therefore preventing spiders from crawling the site. Bill Gentry with The Selling Source (<http://www.sellingsource.com>)

* Don't submit before you establish some external links. Some engines, such as HotBot, are known to drop pages after a couple weeks if they find no other domains linking to them. Google has also stated that it will not index a site that does not have at least one external link pointing to it.

Sometimes a link from a major directory such as Open Directory, LookSmart, or Yahoo! will suffice. However, you should also try to trade links with other Web sites that are complimentary to yours, then submit the URLs of those pages that are linking to you. If you can submit the page of one of these external links and let the search engine spider find your site on its own, you'll stand to rank much higher than if you'd submitted your site directly. The drawback is that it may take a bit longer for the spider to get around to indexing you.

If you're in a big hurry, buy a second domain and put some unique content on it and cross-link your two sites. To give the impression of independence, it's best if you host the two domains at separate hosting services. You might also vary the spelling of the information you submit when you purchase the domains or use a valid PO box on one and your street address for the other. This can further the illusion to an automated spider that the two sites have different owners. Brent Winters with First Place Software (<http://www.webposition.com>)

META and Other Tags

* Do not use the same tags and text on every page. Do not use excessively long tags even if the limits "by the book" say you can (i.e., do not stuff keywords into the ALT tags of 1-by-1 pixel images and expect a robot to consider them. Common sense should prevail.) Bruce Clay with BruceClay.com

(<http://www.bruceclay.com>)

* Probably the biggest single error that people make when they are first learning the fine art of SEO is the emphasis they might place on the importance of the keyword META tag. Just because there is room to put 150 or more keywords into this META tag does not mean that it is really the wisest thing to do. Of the three most popular META tags, the keyword tag is probably the least influential. I have created many top scoring pages with very limited use of the keyword tag. It's best to think in terms of themes when building keywords, and I would not recommend repeating any word. Keep your most important words up front, and some of the best results are achieved with no punctuation or commas as opposed to the old approach of separating every word with a comma. (John Alexander with Beyond-SEO.com (<http://www.beyond-seo.com/>))

* META tags won't solve all your problems.

In the press, you've probably seen one of many tutorials on how to create the perfect META tags so the search engines can find you. What they don't tell you is that the majority of the major search engines don't even read META tags anymore. The ones that do read them tend to give them little importance when deciding how your page will rank.

Some of the "experts" will tell you to simply include your keywords in your title and META tags and to create a Web site with quality content. The search engines will then naturally flock to you and rank your site near the top. Certainly title tags and content quality are important, but don't make the mistake that this is all you need to do to be found on the Web today. Brent Winters with First Place Software (<http://www.webposition.com>)

* One of the biggest errors I ever made was thinking that the title tag is just a place for putting keywords. I was just a beginner, learning the craft back then, but even today there are so many SEO's trying to get all the mileage they can out of injecting the title tag with keyword combinations. One day I discovered another advantage of title tag development, which rendered something much more powerful. Go ahead, optimize for a search phrase right up front, but then use the remainder of your title to deliver a message. Use your title to mention your site benefits, make an attention grabbing statement, offer a solution, ask a compelling question or do anything to set yourself apart from those other pages. Whatever you do, don't merely settle for a cluster of keywords stuffed together. Use your title wisely to best SEO advantage and begin to grab people's attention. (John Alexander with Beyond-SEO.com (<http://www.beyond-seo.com/>))

Myths and Hype

* Don't allow yourself to be hypnotized by the search engine optimization experts' (both real and self proclaimed) knack of wagging their index finger and threatening you with ranking penalizations or total index bans if you don't adhere to their particular brand of positioning techniques. Bear in mind that bans are pretty rare and even if they do occur, more often than not, they will relate to one search engine only -they will never happen right across the board. Instead, chose a flexible approach and be prepared to work not just a single domain but preferably scores of them. This will spread the risk, boost your coverage, allow for bolder experiments, and will to some extent cover your back should something go wrong. Ralph Tegtmeier, a.k.a. Fantomaster (<http://fantomaster.com/>)

Online Marketing

* The biggest mistake I see people making is assuming that the search engines will produce traffic if they hit all the right buttons. I've known sites with 1500 pages of quality content that only produce a few hundred referrals a day from search engines. Search engine optimization is only one aspect of a well-rounded promotion campaign. That campaign should slowly broaden into more traditional avenues. Search engines aren't the formula for long term site success - it's up to your site to produce repeat visitors. Brett Tabke with Webmaster World (<http://www.webmasterworld.com>)

* Don't fail to develop an overall strategy of how to market your site. Don't look at it engine by engine but as a complete plan to make your site better known. Look especially at the order in which you submit your site to the engines. Gary Woods with Santa Barbara Properties (<http://www.santabarbaraproperties.com/>)

Optimization

* Don't buy into the myth that SE optimization no longer works.

There's no question search engine optimization has become more challenging over the years. Many critics have taken this and declared that search engine marketing is no longer effective. However, research from third parties like the recent NPD Group study refute this idea. The NPD Group study demonstrated that search engine listings result in six times more sales on average than an equivalent number of visitors from banners ads (<http://www.overture.com/d/about/advertisers/slab.jhtml>). That means visitor to visitor, you'll make six times more money on search engine listings than banners.

So don't fall victim to the biggest mistake: the assumption that search engine marketing doesn't work anymore or it's a battle you

simply can't win. The key is to arm yourself with the right knowledge combined with the right tools so you will win. Brent Winters with First Place Software (<http://www.webposition.com>)

* Don't try to make one page work for all search engines. Engine specific pages are generally much more effective. (Rocky Rawstern)

* Focusing on page optimization only is a big mistake. Research shows that there is more to good ranking than an optimized page - there's quantity and quality of inbound links, age and stability of the Web site, simplicity of the code (HTML 2.0), and more. David Johnson and Annam Manthiram with Position Research (<http://www.positionresearch.com>)

* Do not get rankings and then "leave them alone." Rankings erode if not maintained. Competition always wants your spot, and they are ruthless. Search engines change without notice. What is today yours is easily lost if you are not paying attention. Bruce Clay with BruceClay.com (<http://www.bruceclay.com>)

* Don't be inhibited: search engine optimization is possible and it's actually being done by thousands of people every day. So there's really no reason why you shouldn't be able to pull it off, too. However, don't be surprised if you meet five search engine optimization experts only to be confronted with six mutually exclusive opinions! So, do your homework - there's no easy push button way out, just like there's no free lunch anywhere. Ralph Tegtmeier, a.k.a. Fantomaster (<http://fantomaster.com/>)

Outsourcing

* Don't wait until the end of the Web development process to bring in an SEO consultant.

How many times have we seen this? A prospective client calls you on the telephone. They've spent thousands of dollars on their Web site and are ready to launch. And now that everything is "finished," they want to make sure the Web site ranks in the top ten.

Wups!! This is simply backward. The SEO consultant should have been brought in at the beginning of the project. That is not to say that the consultant can't still work "magic" on the site. But backward engineering is never the most best option, and it is usually more expensive. J.K. Bowman with Spider Food (<http://www.spider-food.net>)

Patience

* A common mistake that I see in the SEO world is people tweaking their optimized pages without really giving them a chance to see what they can do. Along the same lines are those that make changes to their optimization just because rankings drop in any given month.

It sometimes take months for search engines to index newly optimized pages. Furthermore, it can take a long time for those pages to rank highly once they're in an engine's database. If you've done what you're supposed to do, i.e., chose realistic relevant keyphrases and created great keyword-rich content with the titles and tags to match, then it's crucial to have faith in your work and let it stand. It's easy to get scared and think that you somehow messed up when you don't immediately see high rankings. However, trying to keep up with algorithm changes and the like will just end up driving you crazy.

It's normal for rankings to go up and down in any given month. Don't worry about it! The search engines all want to see the same thing: Web sites that deliver relevant content to people's search queries. If you are confident that your site does this, it WILL rank high, but you've got to give it time. Time to get indexed, and then time to "age" in the indices. Also time for other sites to find yours and link to it, and time for the engines to determine its click-through popularity. It's actually very rare that a good SE optimizer will need to "tweak" their optimization, in my opinion. Jill Whalen with The Rank Write Roundtable (<http://www.rankwrite.com>)

* Be patient. It's not 1996 anymore. Infoseek has shuffled off into cyberspace. Changes you make to your site may not be reflected in ratings for several months or more. Gary Woods with Santa Barbara Properties (<http://www.santabarbaraproperties.com/>)

Research

* Don't be afraid to try new, intuitive ideas, excluding spam, of course. You never know how effective something will be until you try it. (Rocky Rawstern)

* Don't make the mistake of not staying informed. I find so much of the information about optimization on the Web to be deprecated. Some articles were written 3-4 years ago and sound like they should be applied today. Optimization and techniques change some times from month to month. A good newsletter subscription and forum reading can help you stay informed of the latest developments. What worked in 2000 isn't necessarily working in 2001. Brett Tabke with Webmaster World (<http://www.webmasterworld.com>)

Spamming

* Don't participate in link farms. A massive accumulation of links without accompanying explanatory body text and effective link text is downgraded by many search engines. More often than not, FFAs (Free For All links) are not relevant, which can actually penalize a site's ranking. David Johnson and Annam Manthiram with Position Research (<http://www.positionresearch.com>)

* Spam: don't do it! While it may not bite you immediately, it will eventually . . . (Rocky Rawstern)

* Don't use hidden text or stuff your META tags. Search engines check for contrast between text and background as well as repeated words and will penalize or exclude a site from rankings if such techniques are detected. David Johnson and Annam Manthiram with Position Research (<http://www.positionresearch.com>)

* Do not spam. There are "tricks" that can be used to insert keywords and they either will not work or they will get you punished. Bruce Clay with BruceClay.com (<http://www.bruceclay.com>)

Submissions

* Don't forget to document everything. It is of the utmost importance to document every submission, especially the paid ones. Without that tracking number, you are stuck resubmitting and paying all over again. Make a note of the e-mail used and all other information given. Keep notes on dates you made changes and submission times. Ginette Degner with ServiceBrokers.com (<http://www.servicebrokers.com>)

* A top mistake is not following the recommended course of action for the Yahoo! directory. Don't play games with this directory- follow the rules! (Rocky Rawstern)

* Don't "assume" your site is ready. I've seen so many sites that were put up in a couple of weeks where the authors thought they should be freely added into directories. It takes a long time to develop a professional, successful site. Brett Tabke with Webmaster World (<http://www.webmasterworld.com>)

* Don't believe that bulk submitting is the path to riches.

We all want to find that perfect product or service where we enter our domain name and then press one button and the traffic magically starts to flood into our Web site. You've seen the advertisements, such as "Submit to 3500 Web sites for just \$79." The reality is that the majority of those sites you're submitting to are set up for the sole purpose of collecting e-mail addresses

from people like you so they can send you junk mail.

Even if you do land your site in some of the real search engines (there aren't that many), those bulk submission services generally do little to nothing to optimize your rankings. You'll simply be buried at the bottom of the results with the millions of other Web sites. Brent Winters with First Place Software (<http://www.webposition.com>)

Technology

* Don't use site technology that is not compatible with search engines. Many sites are being built with no concept of search engine spiders. I was just at a site yesterday with a six-figure building budget. It was mostly built out of dynamic content that can not be indexed by search engines. You can't compete in the search engines until you get your site listed. Brett Tabke with Webmaster World (<http://www.webmasterworld.com>)

* Don't create sites with virtually no text content, whether they are using mostly images, Flash or a combination of both. A good search engine friendly Web site can be created using text, images and various multimedia extras, like Flash and streaming video, as long as they are all carefully integrated. Bill Gentry with The Selling Source (<http://www.sellingsource.com>)

* Regarding frames, some engines say they will index framed sites, others won't say, some do then decide they don't (or can't). Save the pain and don't create a site using a frame set. Dynamic URLs containing \$,?,%, &, often will not be indexed by the engines. Using too many graphics weighs down load time and does nothing for the engines as they can't crawl images yet. JavaScript excessive code pushes content down. Marshall Simmonds with About.com (<http://www.about.com/>)

* Don't fill your Web site with spider stumbling blocks. Unfortunately, some of the Web's best technology can be a spider nightmare. Complex JavaScript, drop down menus, image maps, Flash, framesets, Java applets, plus dynamically generated Web pages all present significant problems to a search engine spider.

Luckily, however, all of these stumbling blocks can be overcome with a little planning. By subscribing to a publication like Planet Ocean Communications (<http://www.searchenginehelp.com/acws/>) or visiting some of the other major SEO tutorial Web sites on the Internet (like <http://www.spider-food.net>), you'll quickly learn how to handle these obstacles with ease. J.K. Bowman with Spider Food (<http://www.spider-food.net>)

* Do not use "bleeding-edge" technology that the search engines do not understand. It often prevents pages from being indexed at

all, and certainly confuses the real content. KISS is best when dealing with the search engines. Bruce Clay with BruceClay.com (<http://www.bruceclay.com>)

Traffic and Traffic Analysis

* Don't forget to analyze your log files. Examine your logs to see where people are entering your site and make those entry portals accessible to the rest of the site and not a dead end. Gary Woods with Santa Barbara Properties (<http://www.santabarbaraproperties.com/>)

* Myth about site analysis: Hits are irrelevant.

An error or myth today revolves around the usage of the term "HITS." This term "HITS" is often used synonymously with "VISITORS." It is extremely important to understand that a hit is not a visitor. A hit is basically triggered as any action from the server. In other words, it might be 1 hit for a page to load. Another hit for a logo to load. Perhaps a menu cluster of 10 buttons (10 graphics) could render 10 more hits. In short, just one visitor could generate multiple hits for each page they view. When you are examining traffic overall, your #1 concern should be with your "visitor count," sometimes identified as "user sessions." Focus should not be on the "hit count." Our attention should always be on actual visitors (or shall we say, potential shoppers). (John Alexander with Beyond-SEO.com (<http://www.beyond-seo.com/>))

Web Design

* This is more of a pet peeve... bad coding. With the availability of html validators (some are even built in with editors), this is something that should never happen. Bill Gentry with The Selling Source (<http://www.sellingsource.com>)

* Don't forget about the importance of good, clean navigation. Look over someone's shoulder when they navigate your site and **DON'T TELL THEM ANYTHING**. You'll be amazed at how incoherent those road maps you think are so crystal clear to YOU are **TOTALLY CONFUSING** to somebody new to the site. Gary Woods with Santa Barbara Properties (<http://www.santabarbaraproperties.com/>)

* Don't forget to run a spell check on each of your Web pages. Virtually all editors have a spell checker integrated into the editor. You can also use dictionary.com. Also, get someone to proofread, since you can spell something wrong, but it can look like a real word to a spell checker (e.g. leave off the "w" in now, and you have no, which a spell checker will assume is correct even though it is not). Bad spelling can not only cost you rankings (if you spell your search phrase wrong), but it also

looks very unprofessional. Don't forget to proofread text in your graphics and Flash animations too. That's where they show up the worst. Bill Gentry with The Selling Source (<http://www.sellingsource.com>)

A special thanks to the following Search Engine Optimizers who were willing to share their tips for this article (listed in alphabetical order):

* John Alexander is a Professional SEO and Educator who operates an independent Internet consulting business in affiliation with WorldSites.Net (<http://www.Worldsites.net>). John also owns Beyond-SEO.com (<http://www.beyond-seo.com/>), a Web site devoted to professional SEO's looking for tips beyond the basics.

* J.K. Bowman is the Editor of Spider-Food.net (<http://www.spider-food.net>), one of the largest tutorial resources on the Web for search engine optimization and Web site promotion techniques. He currently lives in Mississippi, where he also provides consultancy and positioning services.

* Bruce M. Clay, owner of BruceClay.com (<http://www.bruceclay.com>), is a well-known Internet marketing consultant and search engine optimizer who provides Web design strategies, promotion services, and Web marketing services to clients from around the world.

* Ginette Degner operates Service Brokers (<http://www.servicebrokers.com>), a Web Optimization and Marketing Strategies firm providing expert search engine placement and consultation services since 1993.

* Bill Gentry is Manager of Search Engine Optimization Services for The Selling Source (<http://www.sellingsource.com>), an online marketing company that offers a wide array of online marketing solutions to a diverse clientele.

* David Johnson and Annam Manthiram are Search Engine Research Specialists with Position Research (<http://www.positionresearch.com>), a search engine optimization firm that considers "research" an integral part of optimizing Web sites.

* Heather Lloyd-Martin specializes in search engine optimization writing, consultation, and training (<http://www.successwks.com>), and she's the Co-Moderator of The Rank Write Roundtable (<http://www.rankwrite.com>).

* Rocky Rawstern is a Senior Search Engine Analyst with a prominent search engine optimization company on the West coast.

* Marshall Simmonds is the Director of Search for About, Inc.

(<http://www.about.com/>), a division of parent company PRIMEDIA Inc. Marshall is responsible for maximizing search engine exposure for About's 700 topic sites which cover 1,000,000 articles. He also oversees search engine strategies for Primedia's online properties, such as Americanbaby.com and Seventeen.com.

* Brett Tabke of PHD Software Systems is also the owner of Webmaster World Forums (<http://www.webmasterworld.com>) and Search Engine World (<http://www.searchengineworld.com/>), extremely popular informational sites designed "by Webmasters for Webmasters."

* Ralph Tegtmeier is the co-founder and principal of fantomaster.com Ltd. (UK) and fantomaster.com GmbH (Belgium) (<http://fantomaster.com/>), a company specializing in Webmasters software development, industrial-strength cloaking and search engine positioning services. He has been a Web marketer since 1994 and is editor-in-chief of fantomNews, a free newsletter focusing on search engine optimization, available at: <http://fantomaster.com/fantomnews-sub.html> .

* Jill Whalen (The Web Whiz) is the owner of HighRankings.com (http://www.HighRankings.com_ and Co-Moderator of The Rank Write Roundtable (<http://www.RankWrite.com>).

* Brent Winters is the President of FirstPlace Software, Inc. and author of the highly popular MarketPosition Newsletter. FirstPlace Software develops and markets WebPosition Gold (<http://www.webposition.com>), the first software product to track your rankings on the major search engines and to help you improve those rankings.

* Gary Woods is a search engine specialist in the focused area of real estate. Santa Barbara Properties (<http://www.santabarbaraproperties.com/>) is one of his many sites. Gary is also a professional technology writer, and he is a Chat Moderator for the Academy of Web Specialists (<http://www.acws.com>).

Robin Nobles is Director of Training for the Academy of Web Specialists. Robin has taught well over a thousand students in her online and onsite search engine positioning courses during the past several years. Her latest book Web Site Analysis and Reporting, as well as her past book, Streetwise Maximize Web Site Traffic, can be ordered through Amazon. Visit the Academy's site to learn more about their search engine ranking courses and products. http://www.academywebspecialists.com/more_info

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