

What is the Role of Copywriting in Search Engine Optimization?

What is Copywriting?

Copywriting is a form of communication. It is **simply the writing of words** to inform, persuade etc.

A “copywriter” coined back in the early 1900s after the term “copy-boy” was used, may be employed by advertising agencies and public relations firms. The word “copywriting” may be most prevalent in the marketing industry. Professional copywriters can make well into the 6-figure salary range if they understand how to craft a piece of content that at the end of the day drives views, or sales.

This may be crafting a click-worthy headline, writing an article that sways the reader to make a buying decision, or scribing an audience-captivation political speech.

What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's unpaid search results—often referred to as "natural", "organic", or "earned" results. In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search result page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users; these visitors can then be converted into customers.

The Relationship Between Copywriting and SEO

A strong relationship lies between the art of writing copy, and ranking well on search engines.

Not only do humans read the copy on a webpage, but search engine crawlers do as well. There are little “bots” that crawl the web on behalf of search engines. They report back to the database the content on each webpage, conveying to engines like Google which pages are most relevant, and which results would be the ideal search result when responding to a user’s search query.

Because the copy on each webpage determines how search engines display those pages, copywriting plays a large role in search engine optimization.

Keyword Implementation

It's important for copywriters to always keep in mind what keywords they are trying to rank for (which is the practice of keyword research), and the fact that including those keywords not only throughout their content, but in **specific locations** in their content can help them achieve this goal.

1) Use Keywords in Your Title Tag

The title tag of a webpage is the most prevalent text displayed in search (the blue link), and should be treated similar to an H1 when deciding how to structure them.

2) Use Keywords in Your Headings and Subheadings

Search engines will put more value on headers (in order of H1-H6) than the rest of the body on the page. This is because they believe (and rightly so) that they are used to navigate the reader through the content. So being very aware of how you include primary keywords and supporting keywords in your page headers can make or break your SERP placement.

3) Avoid Overusing Keywords

The right density is about 1-3% of the words in the article. This is about how often it would appear in your text if you were writing about the topic without the intention to over-use the keyword. In short, use it where it makes sense, and don't where it doesn't. Google will be able to understand the content of the article without overuse of the keyword(s).

However, “keyword stuffing” is very real, and draws a red flag. You may be penalized, or even have your webpage (or website) removed if Google deems your content “keyword-stuffed”.

Time Spent on Page

Google uses over 200 factors when determining what to show in search results. Some factors include “relevance”, “freshness” etc. A major factor however is “time spent on page”. If a user clicks a link in the SERP (search engines results page), and the user quickly leaves the page back to the search results, Google takes note. Google sees this as an indication that the result click does not satisfy the search intent of the user.

A good copywriter can keep a reader on the page for a longer period of time (ideally the time it takes to read the full length of the webpage). Google, and other search engines see this as a successful match between the user’s intent, and that page as an appropriate search result.

This affects SERP placement. If a page on your website ranked #7 for a specific search query, and it consistently yields the highest “time spent on page”, this can easily affect your placement to #3, #2 or even #1. Of course there are many factors at play. But the ability to keep the reader interested, not only benefits the brand or publication the copywriting is writing for, but is picked up by digital sources, who are constantly looking to rank the most intent-fulfilling content for the user.

The Importance of Copywriting for SEO

Effective copywriting can (and most certainly will), determine SERP ranking, and ultimately effectiveness of your SEO campaigns in general. By utilizing keywords the correct way in the copy of the page, and by reverse-engineering a high reader-time spent on page, the right copywriting can help the bottom line of your business, attracting more traffic, and closing more sales.