

# SEARCH ENGINE POSITIONING - OR - WHY KEYWORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH!!

by John Saxon

*In the quest to develop and publish the world's number one business related web site I knew we had cracked it when we entered NorthernLight at No 7 out of 4,876,060 sites on the key phrase 'business start up'.*

*Coming from a Sales and marketing background, with a background in IT, but no knowledge of the Internet, I had to approach everything from the ground up, with an open mind.*

*This proved to be of significant advantage, since I was prepared to listen to everyone, try anything, reject the bad and improve on the good.*

*We also appear on Lycos, Google, AltaVista, Excite and a myriad of other search engines and know that with 12 months work ahead we will be the No.1 Business Start Up site by 2002.*

## Here are my *ten top tips* for successful web placement:

1 - Most web designers assume that the customer is the reader - wrong. It's a bit like assuming the customer for an old people's home is the resident - it isn't, it's the residents 45 year old daughter. Therefore, sell to her and the place is full.

The main customer for a web site is 'gulliver' or 'arachnia' or whatever the search engine spider is called. Observe it, profile it, get to know it intimately; what does it like and loathe. How can you get its attention?

2 - In my experience only AltaVista takes <KEYWORDS> seriously. I know this because I used 'mingmong21' as a keyword and, despite all the search engines we appear on, if I search on all of them for 'mingmong21' I only turn up on AltaVista. Don't put too much store in keywords.

3 - The <TITLE> of the page is the single most important thing to Google, Excite and a host of other search engines, so why, why, why are we so vain that we call our web site 'XYZ Inc.' If they knew who we were before they got on the web, they would have called us on the telephone. The <TITLE> of your site should be what you do, not who you are.

4 - Many of the search engines pick up the first paragraph of the <BODY> content (in other words what's written on the page). Don't confuse it with 'last updated on ...' and counters, etc. Just have a simple paragraph that says what you do and ... use the same words as the <TITLE>.

5 - If each search engine spider likes different things, give them exactly what they like in the form of 'portal' pages which are dedicated to one keyword or phrase and aimed to satisfy each search engine spider. For example, a page with the title 'business start up' and the KEYWORDS 'business start up' where the BODY says 'business start up' will put you pretty high when someone searches for 'business start up'. Make sure that you have a link from your index.html page to this portal and from this portal, that way you don't have to submit each page (it will be found on the next spider) and be accused of spamming.

6 - Make the <DESCRIPTION> of the page tie in with the <TITLE> and <KEYWORDS> -

obvious but some of us get a bit carried away.

7 - Tell the spider what to do <ROBOTS> index, follow and <REVISIT-AFTER> 10 days. then you get a regular visit.

8 - Content is king - that means that when the spider visits you, and you appear on the engines, if your content is negligible or static (never changes) don't expect anyone to come back - you can only sell rubbish once.

9 - Subscribe to, and read, every newsletter on web marketing that you can. If you only pick up one tip per month you can improve your web site placement.

10 - The KING of all tips. Most Search Engine spiders cannot follow graphically embedded links!!!! In other words if you have a 5000 page web site and have linked it through gifs or buttons then, as far as the spider is concerned, you have stuck the pages together and it sees only page one. If, however, you place text links or <A HREF> links that the viewer cannot see, within those pages then you have 5000 pages that can have a <TITLE>, <KEYWORDS>, <DESCRIPTION>, etc to sell to 'gulliver' and his little friends.

Follow these tips, and by 2002, YOUR WEBSITE could be the No. 1 ranked web site in your category!

John Saxon is a grandfather of 3 and Technical Director of Fastlink Solutions Limited. He is a Companion of the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management (one grade above Prince Philip) and has 25 years experience in helping new and growth businesses develop and profit. Fastlink Solutions is a free access site providing advice for anyone considering setting up, or expanding a business. Visit Fastlink Solutions at: <http://www.fastlinksolutions.btinternet.co.uk>

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