



[SEO101 SAMPLE LESSON]

Lesson 5 – Title and META Tag Creation

In Lesson 1 we learned about TITLE Elements, as well as the META Description Tag and the META Keywords Tag. To refresh your memory, let's take another look at these:

The TITLE Element

TITLE elements, (commonly called TITLE Tags), are one of the most important factors that search engines “look” at when it comes to determining the relevancy of a web page against a search query. In their ranking algorithms, nearly all the major search engines attribute a high relevancy weight to the content of the TITLE tag.

In the HTML code of a web site, TITLE tags look like this:

```
<TITLE>Miami Florists - beautiful floral creations made to order.</TITLE>
```

To view the HTML code of any site, choose “View, Page Source” / “Page, View Source” or similar from your browser toolbar or right click anywhere on the page and choose “View Source”.

The TITLE tag should be 5 to 12 words in length, should be a readable sentence and should include your most important keywords within a descriptive phrase.

In his article [Best Practices for Title Tags](#)¹, Rand Fishkin, award-winning SEO blogger and CEO of SEOmoz, goes through a number of steps explaining how to make the best possible TITLE tag. He concludes you should limit your TITLE tag to 65 characters including spaces, to be most effective and to avoid it being cut off at the top of the browser window. This doesn't mean that search engines don't *read* TITLE tags that are longer than that. A little [experiment](#)² by Hobo Creative showed that Google does pick up the words in very long TITLE tags. But for the best SEO results, you should try to keep within the 12 words/65 characters limit.

¹ Source: <http://www.seomoz.org/blog/best-practices-for-title-tags>

² Source: <http://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-blog/index.php/google-you-can-put-50-words-in-your-title-tag-well-read-it/>



The META Description Tag

META Description Tags are designed to describe the content of web pages. Search engine robots will gather up this information when indexing web sites and often use it when referencing web pages in the search listings. For this reason, The META Description should describe your site both accurately and in an appealing way. Between 200 and 250 characters of the META Description is usually indexed so you should ensure you include your most important keywords within the first 250 characters in the tag.

While not all search engines continue to utilize the META Description Tag, a majority of search engines rely on the content of this tag (together with a site's visible content) to provide information about a site that they can match with search queries. It is therefore important for webmasters to include keywords and phrases in the META description that they would expect searchers to use to find their site content.

On its Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs), Google may choose to display either the META Description, or a relevant 'snippet' from the page content, or a combination of both, underneath the page title. On Google's Webmaster Central Blog, a Google developer explains [why Google cares about META Descriptions](#)³.

In the HTML code of a web site, a sample META Description Tag looks like this:

```
<META name="description" content="Miami Florists create beautiful floral bouquets, arrangements, tributes and displays for all occasions, including weddings, Valentines Day, parties and corporate events. Deliveries throughout Florida.">
```

You can view the META Description Tag of a site by viewing the source code.

The META Keywords Tag

While only indexed by a small handful of search engines these days, the META Keywords Tag is still worth including within a site's HTML code, if only

³ Source: <http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/09/improve-snippets-with-meta-description.html>



to provide those search engines with as much information as possible about site content.

The current lack of support for the META Keywords Tag by so many search engines can be attributed to increasing spam abuse by ignorant webmasters. These webmasters thought the keyword tag was a good place to stuff hundreds of keywords in the hope of achieving a higher search ranking, thereby "spamming" the search engines with useless, non-relevant data. This prompted many search engines to filter out the META Keywords Tag or lower its importance within the ranking algorithm.

In the HTML code of a web site, a sample META Keywords Tag looks like this:

```
<META name="keywords" content="flowers, roses, weddings bouquets, florists, floral arrangements, flower deliveries, Valentines Day gifts, Christmas decorations, Mother's Day, tributes, wreaths, clutches, sprays, in sympathy, funerals, corporate functions, parties, floral displays, Miami, Florida">
```

You can view the META Keywords Tag of a site by viewing the source code.

Create Your Own

Now, it's time to create optimized TITLE and META Tags for your own site. Let's start with the TITLE Tag for your Home Page.

TITLE Tag

Take the list of target keywords and phrases that you produced as a result of your keyword research. You should have already allocated them to the appropriate pages of your site to be optimized. I use a spreadsheet for this purpose but you should use whatever works for you.

Now, open a text file in Notepad or something similar. If you like, you can use an existing sample TITLE Tag as your template. Let's say our existing Title is:

```
<TITLE>Miami Florists - beautiful floral creations made to order.</TITLE>
```

Now take your list of keywords for the home page and put them in order of importance, with the ones you want to rank highest for at the top. For our fictional florist these are:



- florists Miami
- florists Florida
- wedding bouquets

Now you are simply going to combine these keywords into a sentence or short blurb so they make the best use of the keyword real estate available. Always try to use as few words as possible in your Title Tags, because each additional keyword dilutes the ranking relevancy of all the others.

In this case, I would initially combine the keywords as follows:

[Florists in Miami Florida specializing in wedding bouquets](#)

Notice how I've got the keywords in the correct order for the search queries? I've tried to include the most important keywords towards the start of the tag. There was no need for me to repeat the keyword "Florists" more than once because the sentence I've used covers both "Florists Miami" and "Florists Florida". Most search engines will ignore "in" as a stop word (look this up in the [Search Engine Dictionary](#)⁴) so it shouldn't matter that we've included it.

Although it's tempting to put a comma between Miami and Florida, on some search engines commas act as a keyword separator, so we don't want to use one here because we don't want "Florists" and "Florida" to be separated.

Now, there is just one problem with this draft Title. Our 3rd keyword phrase "wedding bouquets" is right at the end of the sentence, meaning it may lose some relevancy weight (search engines consider keywords closer to the start of the tag as the most important). How do we fix this? Let's try this:

[Florists in Miami Florida - wedding bouquets a specialty.](#)

We don't want to use a period after "Florida" for the same reason that we don't use a comma. But a hyphen should not make a difference to search engines yet still allow the sentence to read logically to a searcher. So now we have our three target keyword phrases covered in a very short space.

In fact, the above sentence now covers the following keyword combinations:

- florists Miami
- florists Florida

⁴ Source: <http://www.searchenginedictionary.com/>



- florists in Miami
- florists in Florida
- florists in Miami Florida
- wedding bouquets
- Miami wedding bouquets
- Florida wedding bouquets

When integrating your keywords, remember that their order is important. If you want your site to have the best possible chance of being found for the search query "Miami florists", you need to put the keywords in that exact order and not "florists Miami", because the spider searches the keywords in exact order. Unless they are stop words, also try to avoid using extra words between your keywords.

If you wanted to, you could integrate your company name into the Title tag, but (unless your company name is super short or includes a keyword), don't sacrifice a keyword to do so. Instead, try placing the company name at the end of the tag so you can be sure that all your important keywords will be indexed first.

In the case of our florist, let's imagine their name was *Funky Florists*. We could easily accommodate the name into the beginning of our optimized Title as follows:

```
<TITLE>Funky Florists in Miami Florida - wedding bouquets a  
specialty.</TITLE>
```

It may reduce the keyword relevancy impact very slightly, but including your company name enables you to brand your page, which may be more important to you.

The content of the Title Tag is also what gets saved in a person's Favorite's list when they bookmark your site, so having your company name included is worth considering from a branding perspective.

META Description Tag

Now it's time to create your optimized META Description Tag.

Take your list of target keywords and phrases and open another text file. Again, you can use an existing sample META Description Tag as your template. Let's say our existing description is



<META name="description" content="Miami Florists create beautiful floral bouquets, arrangements, tributes and displays for all occasions, including weddings, Valentines Day, parties and corporate events. Deliveries throughout Florida.">

You can make your META Description Tag as long as you like, but only a certain portion of it will get indexed and displayed by search engines. According to Danny Sullivan in his article [How to Use HTML Meta Tags](#)⁵, 200 to 250 characters of the META Description gets indexed but less than that gets displayed, depending on the search engine. So you want to make sure all your important keywords are listed towards the start of the tag.

Now take your list of keywords for the home page in order of importance. For our fictional florist these were:

- florists Miami
- florists Florida
- wedding bouquets

Now you need to create a readable sentence or two describing your web site and incorporating these keywords so they make the best use of the keyword real estate available.

Because search engines often display the contents of the META Description Tag in the search results, it is very important that your sentences make grammatical sense and are enticing enough to encourage readers to click on your link. Let's start with:

If you're seeking a florist in Miami Florida, Funky Florists create unforgettable wedding bouquets, floral arrangements, tributes and displays for all occasions.

⁵ Source: <http://searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/article.php/2167931>

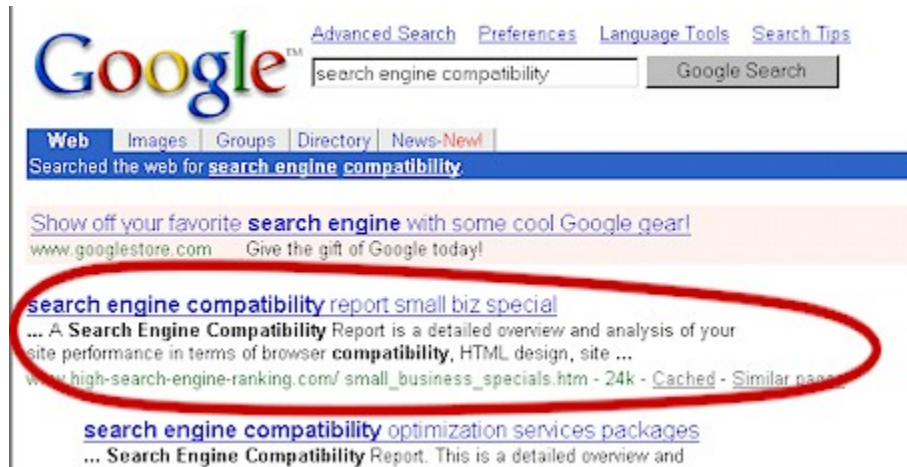


Figure 1 – Sample site description in a search result

OK, so that's around 150 characters long and gets our three important keyword phrases included. But it's a bit bland. We need to add something to entice the searcher to click on it. How about:

Order online for a 10 percent discount!

So now we have the following completed META Description Tag:

```
<META name="description" content="If you're seeking a florist in Miami Florida, Funky Florists create unforgettable wedding bouquets, floral arrangements, tributes and displays for all occasions. Order online for a 10 percent discount!">
```

Our new tag is optimized for our keyword phrases, it's around 200 characters in length, it describes our site accurately, it speaks to the reader and it (hopefully) entices them to click on the link and view the site.

More tips on how to construct a good META Description tag, specifically for the Google search engine, are set out under the subheading 'What are some good META Description strategies' in the article [Improve Snippets With A META Description Makeover](#)⁶ on the official Google Webmaster blog.

META Keywords Tag

⁶ Source: <http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/09/improve-snippets-with-meta-description.html>



We're almost there. Now it's time to create your optimized META Keywords Tag. Let me stress here that this Tag is quite unimportant in the grand scheme of things. Not many of the search crawlers even support it any more. You can see which ones do on [this page](#)⁷. Danny Sullivan, in his article [How to "Legally" Hide Words On Your Pages For Search Engines](#)⁸, concludes that META Keywords tags are now really only useful for misspellings and synonyms. If you have the time and you really want to create META Keywords tags for your pages, then go ahead, but if not, then leave them out of your code altogether. This tag will have very little impact on your overall SEO campaign.

Assuming you do want to create a Keywords tag, take your list of target keywords and phrases and open another text file. Again, you can use an existing sample META Keywords Tag as your template. Let's say our existing Keywords Tag is:

```
<META name="keywords" content="flowers, roses, weddings bouquets, florists, floral arrangements, flower deliveries, Valentines Day gifts, Christmas decorations, Mother's Day, tributes, wreaths, clutches, sprays, in sympathy, funerals, corporate functions, parties, floral displays, Miami, Florida">
```

You are just including a list of related keywords to include in this tag. Now take your list of keywords for the home page in order of importance. For our fictional florist these were:

- florists Miami
- florists Florida
- wedding bouquets

Because you have a lot more room in this tag, a good rule of thumb for creating a META Keywords Tag is to include the keywords and phrases your are targeting with your site content, as well as some terms that you don't necessarily want to use in your site copy but are still relevant to the site content. For example, the site copy, TITLE and META description tags would include the most important search keywords, but the META Keywords Tag could be used for keyword variations and combinations that don't appear in the visible site text, but that people may also search for. Examples include

⁷ Source: <http://searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/article.php/2167891#keysupport>

⁸ Source: <http://searchengineland.com/070905-194221.php>



plurals, contractions, slang, variations, misspellings, cultural nuances and industry jargon.

For our fictional florist, these may include things like:

- wedding flowers
- roses
- wedding roses
- Valentine's Day roses
- sympathy gifts
- Mother's Day gifts
- funeral wreaths
- flower deliveries
- floral arrangements
- birthday gifts
- flowers
- flowers for wedding
- wedding decorations

So now we have the following draft META Keywords Tag:

```
<META name="keywords" content="florists Miami, florists Florida, wedding bouquets, wedding flowers, roses, wedding roses, Valentine's Day roses, sympathy gifts, Mother's Day gifts, funeral wreaths, flower deliveries, floral arrangements, birthday gifts, flowers, flowers for wedding, wedding decorations">
```

However, when creating your Keywords Tag, you should not repeat any particular keywords within your META Keywords Tag more than five times. I also recommend you exclude commas so that all your keywords can be indexed in combination with each other. [I should make it clear that the use of commas is a personal choice, so do what works best for you.]

So we need to fix the draft tag to remove the excess repetition of the words "flowers" and "weddings". This is easy to do because some of the keyword phrases already incorporate these single generic keywords.

For starters, we can lose the single "flowers" as it is already covered by some of the other phrases like "wedding flowers". Next, we can drop "roses" for the same reason. Then we can combine some keyword phrases together to save space, e.g. "flowers for wedding" and "wedding decorations" can be integrated to become "flowers for wedding decorations" so we can lose the extra instance of "wedding".



So now we have the following completed META Keywords Tag:

```
<META name="keywords" content="florists Miami florists Florida wedding bouquets wedding flowers wedding roses Valentine's Day roses sympathy gifts Mother's Day gifts funeral wreaths flower deliveries floral arrangements birthday gifts flowers for wedding decorations">
```

Tailored TITLE and META Tags For Each Page

While some webmasters remember to include a META Description and a META Keywords Tag in their home page HTML code, many forget to include them on every page of the site that they want indexed. Or worse, they duplicate the homepage TITLE and META Tags on all other pages. To give a web site the best ranking ability possible, it is highly recommended that each page of the site include a unique TITLE tag and unique META tags, individually tailored to the content of that specific page.

For example, our fictional Miami florist may have a page devoted to wedding bouquets and another devoted to funeral wreaths. The TITLE and META tags for the first page should include keywords relating to weddings and the page about wreaths should utilize keywords relating to funerals and sympathy. (Of course, some people may argue that it is appropriate to discuss "weddings" and "sympathy" on the same page ☺).

The use of tailored TITLE and META Tags on each page creates multiple entry points to a web site and enables relevant content to be found in search engines no matter where it resides on a site. For example, instead of relying on visitors to arrive via the Home Page, the optimization of individual site pages makes each page more visible in the search engines, providing additional gateways to the site's content. The more pages optimized, the wider the range of keywords and phrases that can be targeted and the more entry points are created to a site. The effect can be seen like a Reverse Pyramid as pictured here:

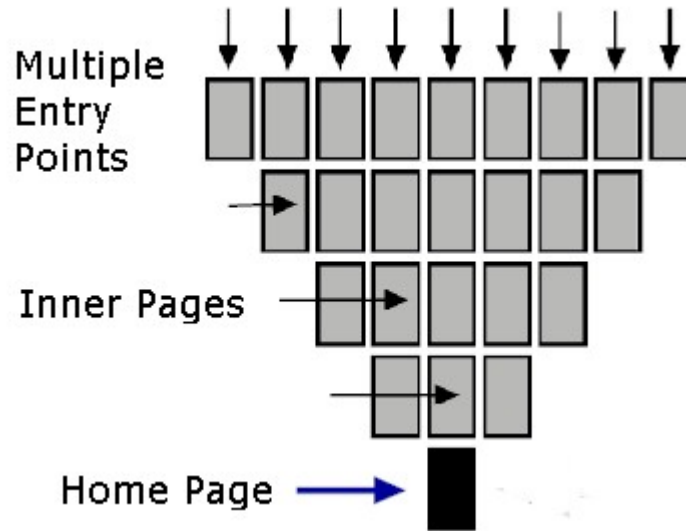


Figure 2 – Reverse Pyramid Effect of Multiple Site Entry Points

Unsupported Characters

There's just one other thing to remember when constructing your Title and META Tags. There are some characters and symbols that search engines can't or won't index if they are found within your tags. Depending on the search engine, these can include @, #, \$, %, &, * and ?

Further Reading:

[Google Webmaster Central Blog: Meta Tags](http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/12/answering-more-popular-picks-meta-tags.html)⁹

To finish the remainder of this Lesson, you must complete an assignment. (See below)

Assignment 3

⁹ Source: <http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/12/answering-more-popular-picks-meta-tags.html>



Of the five target keywords you've chosen for your own site, (or for the fictional jewelry site in Assignment 2), please choose three and create for your home page:

- 1) an optimized Title Tag
- 2) an optimized META Description Tag
- 3) an optimized META Keywords Tag

Please list your chosen URL and three target keywords within your assignment answer. Also, please use correct HTML tag syntax for your tags.

Certification students only, please prepare your assignment answers in a Word Document and upload it via the assignment link in Week 5 of your course outline (ensure your file is less than 500 kb in size).

When it is uploaded, your tutor will be notified via email that you have an assignment ready for grading. Although there is no set passing grade, you must complete this assignment to the satisfaction of your tutor to qualify for SEC certification.

[Congratulations! 🎉 You've reached the end of Lesson 5 – Please take your Review Quiz when ready]

---> **Next Lesson: SEO Copywriting**

[END OF SEO101 SAMPLE LESSON]

By applying the strategies provided in this one lesson, you can save hours and hours of time spent optimizing your site and attract the RIGHT visitors who are ready to sign up or buy from you. Imagine how much more time you can save and more money you can MAKE with the hundreds of other strategies in the rest of this course!
[View Entire Course Detail](#)

