SEO Quick Fixes:
Part1- *Initial Clean Up*

The first of a four part series designed to help the average website manager learn and apply some important fixes that are guaranteed to help any website's ranking.

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Page Structure

➢ **Heading and Subheadings, bullet points, small blocks of copy, main keywords towards the top, keyword placement, etc.**

All too often I am handed a website to fix, or receive new content from a client, which consists of pages of copy that are essentially word dumps on a page. Somebody writes 500 words of copy, drops it on a page and calls it good. It isn't.

I don't care who you are or how many fancy medical papers you have written or essays in college, this is different. Your old style of writing just won't cut it here. You are writing for the web, people want their information fast, concise, easy to find, and easy to digest. If you don't give them that, chances are they will leave your page in a hurry and that tells the search engine that the page was not a good one to share with people and your ranking drops. Not to mention you lost the person who had made the effort to come to your page.

1. Format your page around keyword topics.
2. Each page has its own set of topics and keywords.
3. Use a powerful Heading.
4. Use sub headings to support that main topic/heading.
5. Break the copy into bite size pieces, paragraphs should be short and concise. Use bullet points – keep them short and concise too and have them made of terms which are associated with your main topic(s).
6. 300 words minimum, sweet spot is 450 – 600 words, unless you are writing an important article (like this one).
7. Read up on how to write for websites, there are plenty of articles out there.
8. Then review your website, chances are it needs to be rewritten.

H tags

Examine your use of H1, H2 and H3 tags and reassess and reassign as needed. Remember, these should reinforce the topics the page is about. Some developers say these have no bearing on SEO, I have found the opposite to be true. Again, write for people but consider the fact that these are Headings and Sub Heading and as such are major descriptors of the page as a whole. Main keyword goes up top in your H1, supporting keywords go into the sub heading or H2's and possibly H3's. Some CMS programs force these tags to be used in conjunction with certain formatting, other programs, like Dreamweaver, allow you to apply them as needed to assign importance where it needs to be.

Alt Tags

Alternative text tags were created to assist those web visitors who have the images turned off in their browser, or those with vision difficulties, to understand what an image is. The web reader program reads the alt text to the person. Alt tags are also a good way to help the search engines understand what an image is. Although a popular place to insert keywords, by itself an alt tag will not count for much with the search engines…unless…the image is a hot link to another page. Then the alt tag text becomes anchor text and adds value to the page being linked TO.

Not all browsers will display the alt text on the screen so if you don't see it when you hover over an image that doesn't mean it isn't there. If you are comfortable browsing through code in View Source you can look to see if you have alt tags completed, or you can simply discuss this with your developer.

Titles

> **Unique, Keyword on left, location, 65 max**

Every page is a unique page and has a unique Title and Description. Place the main keyword for the page on the left of the Title. Separate things with "pipes" (|) to save pixel space and if you are looking for local traffic be sure to place your city, State as the last thing on the right. Oh, btw, keep all that to no more than 65 characters, less if you are using wide letters, they judge Titles by pixel width.

Description

> **Sales pitch, Page promise, keywords, CTA, 155 characters max**

This is your elevator pitch. This is what gets them to click over to your website. You have 155 characters to convince them that this page is the answer to their search. Be sure that what you promise they will find when they click is the truth or they will leave right away and that sort of statistic helps drop your website page in the rankings.

Try to start your description with a keyword, try to avoid periods(.), and if space allows, end with a Call To Action and/ or a phone number. Invite the viewer to connect with you, and then make it easy for them. Remember, many people are in a hurry and if all they need is the phone number of someone in your line of business, be the first number they find. 155 characters maximum length, seriously!

No Flash

Flash is unreadable by search engines so what it is used for is typically invisible to search engines. Also, Flash is essentially defunct now because it is typically NOT mobile friendly. Use JQuery instead. If you use Flash your visitors will see an empty black box where your pretty picture was…that's a bad way to make a first impression.

Search friendly URLs

> No underscores, descriptive, 301 if changing old to new, no dynamic query strings.

The URL should be descriptive of what is found on the page. Word Press users, this is your permalink, be sure to customize it.
YES: proclasswebdesign.com/seo-packages.htm
NO: proclasswebdesign.com/pageID=243

Robots.txt

A little while ago Google made a quiet statement that carries a lot of weight. It had to do with how many of us have used the robots.txt file. Lots of developers over the years, yours truly included, have created robots.txt files that kept the spiders from crawling through areas of a website that we felt they didn't need to be in. Places like folders with scripts, galleries of images, cgi folders and others were quietly herded into a list of

Disallow: example.htm items which we in our infinite wisdom deemed beyond the scope of Google' need-to-know. For the most part Google forgave those forbidden areas and was always able to work around those exclusions and still understand the page. Not anymore. Their recent statement clarifies that if they need access to something, or think they do, in order to evaluate a page they want access, denying access will result in their dropping the page.

The bottom line is, you need to clean up your robots.txt file and forget about excluding something which might have importance to Google. The exceptions still remain, of course. Areas with duplicate content, personal information, backdoor stuff, etc should still be excluded.

If you are the least concerned, and you should be, check it out by going to the URL **http://yoursite.com/robots.txt**. Discuss what you find there with your web person. If they give you a blank stare in return or avoid the topic then perhaps begin the search for a new one.

Site Check

A great tool I use on a regular basis to quickly check the health of a website is [Screaming Frog](#). There is a free version which is quick and easy to install and within minutes you can have a robust report of all your pages, the health of those pages, titles and descriptions, keywords, in links and back links and more. And it is great for more than checking your own sites health, be sure to use it to check on your competitors and see what keywords and popular pages they have going for them.

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