

VIRTUAL BUSINESS 911

Website Review Workbook

A comprehensive website review workbook and
checklist for business owners

Barb Asselin

2011

Website Review Workbook

by Barb Asselin

Contents

First Things First – Keywords	3
Popular Keywords	3
Low Competition Keywords	4
Long-Tailed Keywords	4
Low Pay-Per-Click Keywords.....	4
Look and Feel of Your Site	5
Brand.....	5
Logo.....	5
Competition	5
USP	6
First Fold	6
White Space.....	7
Opt-in Offer	7
Headings	7
Graphics.....	8
Search Engine Optimization.....	8
Title Tags.....	8
Meta Tags	9
Meta Descriptions	9
Headings	10
Content	10
Linking.....	10
Alternate Tags	11
Analytics.....	11
Each and Every Page	12

Review of Social Media Practices	14
YouTube	14
Facebook.....	14
Twitter.....	14
LinkedIn.....	15
Blog	15
Linking them all together	15
Marketing.....	16
Forums	16
Blog Comments	17
Article Marketing.....	17
Questions?	17

First Things First – Keywords

Popular Keywords

What are the main keyword phrases that define your niche market? This should be the first step you take when developing any site or implementing any online marketing plan. Knowing what your potential audience is searching for helps you define problems in your niche market and allows you to “solve” those problems with your content, services and products.

Here is the site I use for all of my keyword research:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

List your site’s most competitive keyword phrases:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Low Competition Keywords

Now, find some keyword phrases that have a good amount of monthly searches, but low competition. Make sure they are specific enough so that any lead who reaches your site via these keywords will be highly qualified leads.

List your site's low competition keyword phrases:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Long-Tailed Keywords

Now, find some keyword phrases that are VERY specific (long-tailed, meaning many words). These are people who absolutely know what they are looking for and will be happy when they reach your site and see exactly that – a sure sale!

List your site's long-tailed keyword phrases:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Low Pay-Per-Click Keywords

Now, list the keyword phrases that have low Pay-Per-Click (PPC) values (\$0.05 to \$0.10) each. These will be the best place to start if you decide to run a Pay-Per-Click campaign on Google.

List your site's low PPC keyword phrases:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Look and Feel of Your Site

Brand

It is important that your company have a brand (company or product awareness and identity) that is consistent throughout your website, so that people who see your branding efforts automatically know that it represents your site or products.

- Does your url (web address) describe your product or service?
- Do you have a color scheme that is consistent throughout your site?
- Does your site, product or service have a theme that is consistent throughout your site?

Logo

Your logo should be an extension of, and contribute to, your brand and products.

- Do you have a logo?
- Does your logo have the same color scheme as your site and product labels?
- Is it clear from your logo what your website address is?

Competition

Competition is a healthy part of every business. You need to know your competition so that you can be sure about what sets you apart from your competition.

Check your main keyword phrase(s) and see who your competition is. To do this, go to www.Google.com and type in your keyword phrase and see which websites come up. List them here:

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now review these sites to see what products they offer that are similar to yours, what they have that you don't and what you have that they don't.

Reviewing the competition often gives us ideas for products and services and packages that we can offer. List any ideas you come up with while reviewing the competition:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

USP

Now that you have had a chance to review the competition, do you see what sets you apart? What added benefit does your product or service give that the others don't? Is your product a green alternative? Is your service all-inclusive? What sets you apart from the competition is known as your unique selling proposition (USP).

Take a minute to discover your USP and write it down (remember to be specific):

First Fold

The first fold of your website is what viewers see when they look at your site without having to scroll down the page to read any more. What people see in the first couple of seconds will determine if they are going to stay on your site or not. So, it absolutely has to stand out. Something has to grab their attention, whether it is an offer, a graphic, a free giveaway or a headline.

- Does your site load quickly when you first arrive at it?
- Does your most important message appear on the first fold?
- Does your message explain how you can help them solve the problem your product solves?
- Is the text easy to read?

White Space

White space is just that – space on your website that is white and free of text or graphics. It is important to have a sufficient amount of white space so that your site is easy to navigate and does not appear to be confusing.

Go through each page of your website and answer the following questions:

- Does the page look crowded?
- Is the text easy to read?
- Is there enough white space?
- Are there any graphics that explain any of the text (for those people who prefer visual clues)?
- Do you make use of videos or graphics to counter balance the use of text?

Opt-in Offer

An opt-in offer is a form on your website that allows you to collect names and email addresses. If you offer a monthly newsletter subscription or a free eBook or report for free, then you should be collecting names and email addresses. This will allow you to develop a relationship with your list. Your goal should be to become an expert to them in your area of expertise. Once they see you as an expert, they will listen to what you have to say.

Once you have developed a list that you have an established relationship with, you can:

- market to them all of your other products and services
- sell them other people’s products (affiliate products)
- give them gifts like reports that help them with something
- send them a survey in an effort to determine what they need, so that you can create a product that solves their problems
- many other things to promote your business and further develop your relationship

- Do you have an opt-in offer?
- Do you have a newsletter you can promote?
- Do you have an eBook or report you can give away?
- If you have a list, are you regularly marketing to them?
- Do you have a marketing plan that provides for monthly or bi-weekly emails to your list?

Headings

Headings are the text you see on a web page that explain what the text is about. Headings are usually in a different color and different sized font (larger).

- Do your website's pages use headings to explain the text?
- Do your headings use colors that complement your site design?

Graphics

Graphics can be used to show, rather than tell, what your website is all about. You can often demonstrate a concept with a single picture, whereas the same concept would take quite a bit of text and reading to explain.

- Do you use graphics in your site to show, rather than tell?
- Do the colors in your graphics match the color scheme of your website?

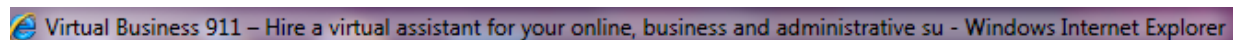
Search Engine Optimization

This section relates directly to the keyword research you did at the beginning of this report. Search engine optimization (SEO) is when you optimize your site for certain keyword phrases related to your product or services. If your main keyword phrase is "help for my small business", you can use that phrase in all of the areas listed below, and, eventually, the search engines will notice that your site is all about "help for my small business". Your goal is to end up on the first page of Google, whenever anyone searches for that phrase.

Generally, it takes three to four months to get there, but with a combination of the tips in this section, as well as regular blog posting, linking strategies and increasing content, you will get there.

Title Tags

The title tag is found in the blue bar at the top of the search browser window. Here is the title tag for Virtual Business 911:



Virtual Business 911 – Hire a virtual assistant for your online, business and administrative su - Windows Internet Explorer

The title tags you use for your site should be set up as follows:

- Each title tag should include one or two of your main keyword phrases
- You should have a different title tag for each page of your site, depending on the content of that page (it is okay if they are similar but a little different – the idea is that the title tag should reflect the content on that particular page)
- Each title tag should highlight a benefit of your site or product or service, and not a feature (i.e., a feature of toothpaste is that it cleans your teeth, whereas a benefit is that you will have whiter teeth)
- Be close to 60 characters in length (it can be as long as you like, however, the first 60 or so characters will show on a user's screen)

- Does your site use title tags?
- Does each page have a unique title tag?
- Do your title tags include at least two keyword phrases?
- Do your title tags include at least one benefit of using your product or services?

Meta Tags

Meta tags are not shown on the actual pages of your website – they are included in the html code for each page. Don't worry if you don't know what this means; any web master or IT professional can insert meta tags into the pages of your site. You simply need to know that they are a list of keyword phrases that you want to be recognized for by the search engines.

Meta tags used to carry a lot of weight with the search engines, but now they take a great deal more items into consideration when rating your site for a particular keyword phrase. They don't completely ignore meta tags, so it doesn't hurt to include them, as long as you don't "stuff" your site with keyword phrases, meaning that you don't include your main keyword phrase multiple times just to help your Google ranking. That is a sure way to be "banned" from Google, which is something that no business owner ever wants to happen!


Your list of keyword phrases (meta tags) should be separated by commas, but no spaces, as follows:

Virtual assistant,virtual help,business help,virtual business help,help for my small business

- Does your site use meta tags?
- Does each page of your site have meta tags?
- Do your meta tags include all of the aspects of your site?
- Do your meta tags include the most common keyword phrases for your niche?
- Do your meta tags include the more obscure and lengthy keyword phrases for your niche?

Meta Descriptions

The meta description is what users see when your website shows up on a Google or other browser results page. Here is the meta description for Virtual Business 911:

[Virtual Business 911 - VAs to the rescue! - Let our experienced ...](#) 
Virtual Business 911 - VAs to the rescue! Let our amazing team of virtual and administrative professionals help your small, medium or large sized business ...
www.virtualbusiness911.com/ - Cached

Your meta description should reflect your main keyword phrase (or two) and it should include a benefit of using your services. The best way to see your current meta description is to go to Google and search for your company name. Your site should come up in the first page of the search results, and you will see your site how others will see it if they searched one of your keyword phrases.

- Does your site use meta descriptions?
- Does each page of your site have a meta description?
- Do your meta descriptions include at least one or two keyword phrases?
- Do your meta descriptions include at least one benefit of using your products or services?

Headings

We talked about headings before, as a visual factor in your site. Now, let's talk about them with respect to your keywords.

There are different levels of headings. H1 is the largest font and given the most importance by the search engines. H2, H3, H4 and more are sub-headings. Wherever possible, your headings should include a keyword phrase or part of a keyword phrase. The trick is to include keyword phrases where you can, without making it seem unrealistic.

- Do you use headings on your website?
- Do you use headings on each page of your website?
- Do you use various levels of headings on the pages of your website?
- Do your headings use keyword phrases, wherever possible?

Content

The content on your website should also contain keyword phrases, however, "stuffing" your site full of them will not help. Again, Google will ban you if you do that. It should be pretty easy to avoid being banned because your site can and should contain lots of content relevant to your niche. For example, if your site sells vacations, it only makes sense that, throughout the pages of your website, there is content that talks about vacations and different vacation packages and various locations for a vacation, etc.

Simply write your content as if you were explaining your products or services and the keywords should naturally end up in your content.

- Does the content on your site contain a realistic amount of keyword phrases?
- Do you use keyword phrases in all of the pages of your site?

Linking

You can also attract a higher search engine ranking by using linking strategies within your website. For example, you may use your index page (home page) to tell the user what they will find if they explore your website. You may explain about a certain page and then link to that page. It used to be that whenever you saw a link to a page, it said "click here to view our travel packages" and the words "click here" were underlined with a link. Now, it is much better for the link to be under the words "travel packages", since travel packages is likely one of your keyword phrases and the page you will end

up on if you click on the link will be all about travel packages. That is what Google likes. A link to a page that is all about what the link “promised” it would be about.

- Does the content on your site contain a links to other areas of your site?
- Do all of the pages of your site contain links?
- Do you use keyword phrases in all of the links on your site?

Alternate Tags

Alternate tags, or “alt tags”, are found in graphics. If a person does not want to waste time waiting for a web page to load due to the high number of graphics contained on it, they can choose a browser setting that will not show graphics.

What you can do is assign an alt tag to each graphic on your website and two things will happen. First, when a person places their mouse over the graphic, the alt tag will show. Second, if a person has chosen not to display graphics, each graphic will show as a white box with a red “x” at the top left corner and the alt tag will be written inside the box.

Using alt tags is a good way to include keyword phrases in your website, as long as the keyword phrase has something to do with the actual content of the picture.

You can also reach the top of the search engines using alt tags. When a person searches a keyword phrase, any images that also contain that keyword phrase as an alt tag, will show up in the Google images results for that phrase. You may note that the Google images results usually show up at the top of the results page – before the actual page results – getting you to the top of Google!

- Do you have images on your website?
- Do you have alt tags for each image on your website?
- Do your alt tags include relevant keyword phrases?

Analytics

Installing analytics is an absolute must for all web pages – even if you don’t know anything about code or even what analytics is.

Google offers a free analytics program at www.google.com/analytics

When you sign up, Google will assign you a code that your web developer can easily put into the pages of your website. Then, you will gain access to the following information:

- How many people visit your site each day
- How many of those visitors are new
- How many pages they look at
- How long they stay on your site
- Which pages they are looking at

Review of Social Media Practices

Of course, there are an infinite amount of social media sites and means of promoting your business online. Here is a list of the main options and what you should be optimizing your site for in each.

YouTube

YouTube can be used in a variety of ways to promote your business. You can record yourself giving a market or product update. You can use software such as Jing or Camtasia in conjunction with PowerPoint or other presentation software to create a video of a slide show presentation.

However you use YouTube to promote your business, there are some things you should remember to do each time you upload a video, so that your video is optimized for your top keyword phrases.

- Make sure the title of your video includes your keyword phrase
- Make sure the saved video file contains your keyword phrase
- Make sure your description contains the full url of your website
- Make sure your description contains two or three of your top-related keyword phrases
- Embed your video on your website, blog and anywhere else you can to get more traffic

Facebook

Facebook can also be used in many ways to promote your business. Facebook itself has a great deal of tips and techniques to help you out, whether you are using a personal page, a business page or a group page.

However you decide to promote your business on Facebook, keep the following in mind:

- If possible, ensure your Facebook page has the same name as your website
- Wherever possible, use keyword phrases in your posts
- Tag complementary business pages in your posts, to help your posts go “viral” (use @ + name)
- Post on other businesses’ pages with valuable insights to gain followers
- Link often to your website or YouTube videos or blog posts
- Include graphics in your posts (with alt tags using keyword phrases)
- Add a link to your Facebook page to your website
- Use Facebook Places to promote you business location (offer promotions to those who use it)
- Add your logo to your Facebook business page

Twitter

Twitter is a good way to get a lot of followers fast. Start by following people who share your interests and then people who have a need that your service answers. Once you follow someone, chances are they will follow you back.

Keep the following tips in mind when tweeting:

- If possible, ensure your Twitter name is the same as your website
- Wherever possible, use keyword phrases in your posts
- Tag other people with lots of followers, to help get your message to the masses
- Include a link to your Twitter page to your main website
- Add your logo to your Twitter homepage

LinkedIn

If you have a LinkedIn profile, consider posting it on your website. There are a lot of free graphics on the web that you can download and install on your site.

- Do you have a LinkedIn profile?
- Do you have a link to your LinkedIn profile on your site?
- Ensure your LinkedIn profile contains your main keyword phrases in your description

Blog

Having a blog is a great way to add fresh new content to your website. A lot of websites actually are blogs. Alternatively, many companies have a website that sells something, and they also have a blog where they publish updates, current events, or other information of interest to their customers. A blog is a great way to announce specials, new products and product reviews. It is also a way to generate dialogue between you and your clients.

The two most popular blog hosting sites are Blogger (www.blogger.com) and Wordpress (www.wordpress.com). Blogger blogs must be hosted on their site but are very easy to set up, whereas Wordpress blogs are a bit more complicated but can be hosted on your own site (giving your site the benefit of all of the new content each time you make a blog post, which is great for SEO) and has many more options.

- Do you have a blog?
- Does your blog name include your main keyword phrase or your company name?
- Does your blog have the same design as your website?
- Ensure your posts contain a keyword phrase
- Ensure the content of your blog post contains some keyword phrases
- Is your opt-in form on your blog?

Linking Them All Together

There are many other social media outlets out there as well. If you utilize all of them, you could easily spend all of your time blogging and tweeting!

Another option is to link all of your social media efforts together so that you only have to post once, and your post is automatically posted to your blog, Twitter, Facebook and more. One application that

can do this is called Posterous. Simply send an email to post@posterous.com with your blog title in the subject line and your post content in the body of the email. You will then get an email back advising that you now have a Posterous account and allowing you to edit it and link it to other social media accounts.

- Set up a Posterous account
- Does your Posterous name include your main keyword phrase or your company name?
- Does your Posterous blog have the same design as your website?
- Ensure your posts contain a keyword phrase
- Ensure the content of your blog post contains some keyword phrases
- Link your Posterous account to your main blog
- Link your Posterous account to your Twitter account
- Link your Posterous account to your Facebook account
- Link your Posterous account to your LinkedIn account
- Link your Posterous account to your YouTube account
- Link your Posterous account to all of your other social media accounts (Flickr, Digg, etc.)
- Post with one email and distribute everywhere automatically!

Marketing

Here is a list of some other ways you can promote your business online.

Forums

There are forums out there for each and every niche. Simply go to www.google.com and search for “forum” + your niche. For example, if your niche is the travel industry, search “travel forums”. You will get a list of forums in your industry.

Forums are a good way to see what the needs and questions are in your niche. If you can see what people need, there may be a good opportunity to create a product that answers their question or solves their problem.

You never want to adopt a sales tone in your forum posts. What you do want to do is to establish yourself as an expert. Usually, you can add your website to your forum signature, so that anyone who wants to see more about you can go to your site. Your job is to just answer questions to the best of your ability and provide information that is helpful to your potential customers.

- Search for forums in your niche
- Visit the most popular forums
- Create a forum identity on each forum that includes a link back to your site
- Visit the most popular forums on a regular basis and answer people’s questions
- Establish yourself as an expert

Blog Comments

We have already talked about having your own blog. Now, we will talk about other people's blogs.

Other people's blogs are a good way to get traffic to your website. Here's how:

- Search on Google for your industry's most popular blogs (most participants)
- Subscribe to those blogs' RSS feeds so you are notified when a new post is made
- Be one of the first to post a comment to the blog post
- Make sure your comment adds value to the post, without offending the poster
- Make sure your comment includes a keyword phrase
- Include a link to your blog or website in your comment signature
- Wait for all of the other participants to view your comment and visit your site

Article Marketing

Article marketing is another way to establish yourself as an expert in your field. Article marketing websites always have new content so Google and the other search engines love them, often allowing them to get to the first page of Google quickly.

There are many article websites. Here are a couple of the most popular:

www.goarticles.com
www.ezinearticles.com

- Create accounts at the article marketing websites
- Create a signature or profile for yourself that includes a link back to your site
- Ensure that your profile includes a couple of your top keyword phrases
- Write a new article each week or biweekly or monthly
- Submit your article to the article marketing sites, creating new content with links to your site

Questions?

Well, you have digested a great deal of information. Do you currently have your site optimized for everything discussed above? Do you utilize all of the social media and marketing options above?

If not, don't worry. Not many businesses do it all. However, the more you do, the more traffic you get, the more business you get, the more money you make. The more money you make, the more you can afford to do.

At Virtual Business 911, we are happy to help in any way we can. Simply email us at barb@virtualbusiness911.com and let us know what your question is. We will answer you as quickly as possible.

Virtual Business 911 – Consider it done.