

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Rutherford Hotel

Nelson – New Zealand

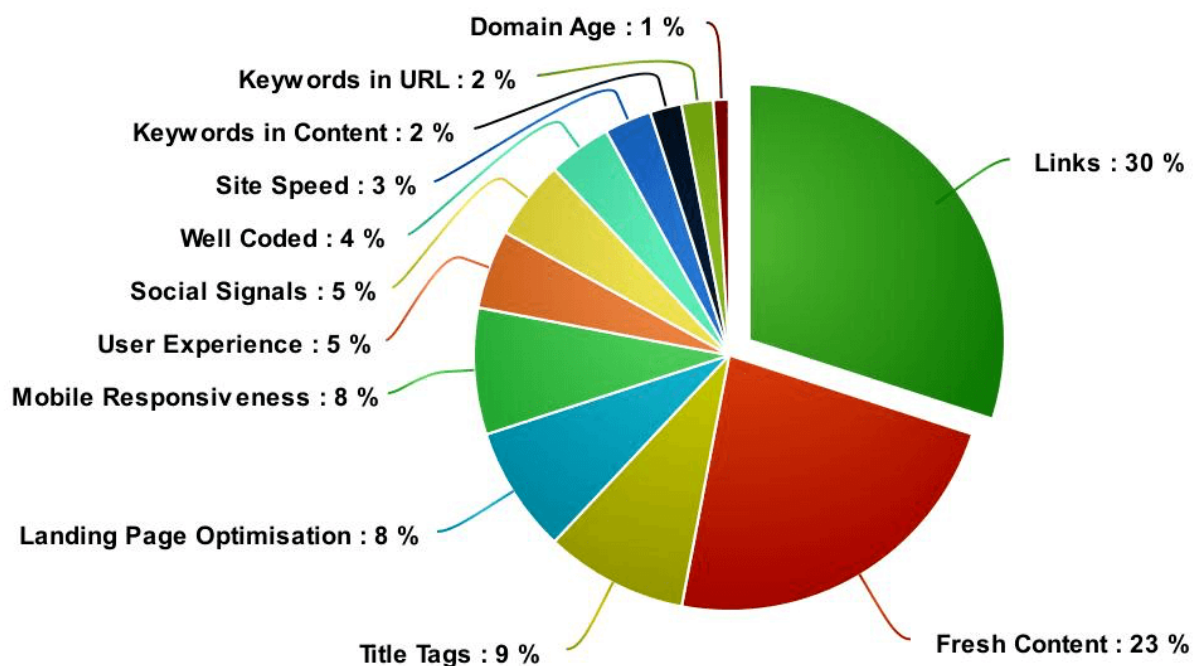
Premier Conference Hotel

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1. OVERVIEW - WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

- Conform to the semantic web
 - Ensure that the content and pages can be interpreted by the search engine
 - Make the data self-describing
 - Utilize appropriate tags to give meaning to content
 - Use new elements to future proof the website for HTML5
- Understand the target business user
 - Use surveys and questionnaire to better understand customer needs
 - Interview customers, ask questions at checkout and record answers
 - Review the competition, what do they do well
 - Develop an understanding of the language customers and staff use to describe the services and products of the hotel offering
 - Consider options for the website name e.g. hotelnelson.co.nz
- Understand how search engines see the website
 - Consider human input when organising the structure and content of the website
 - Attempt to repeat keywords in every semantic way possible, think about word order
 - Place more important information at the top of the web page, give it greater impact
 - Spend time on the home page, Google considers this the most important



2. KEYWORD RESEARCH

There are several methods that can be utilized by the hotel to gain a good range of relevant keywords that can be used on the website, blog posts, social media etc.:

- Analysing surveys completed by customers, the hotel could incentivise the completion of the questionnaires by offering vouchers or free drinks etc.
- Interview front of house staff, what terminology do they use? Have they adopted the terminology of the hotel customers?
- Review competitor websites, are there any identifiable industry standards
- Use keyword tools such as those provided by Google. Do the suggestions provided match your information gathering results?
- See what keywords are popular in hospitality sector. Think! If the keyword is very popular are you going to stand out in a business marketplace, how can you narrow

down your click through rate? Look at the services, products, total offering that make the business unique, take advantage of those niche words.

- Review, review, review. Identify the person within the business who will track the success rate of keywords used, if they're not working don't be afraid to drop them.

Top ranked	Narrow by location	Narrow by Activity	Narrow by features
Hotel	Nelson	Tramping	Tasman Bay
hotels	Tasman	Watersports	Sunshine hours
Hotel com	Richmond	Horse trekking	Mountains
Hotels com	South Island	Shopping	Centre of New Zealand
Cheapest hotel	New Zealand	Dining	Beaches
Cheap hotel	Abel Tasman	Mountain biking	
Hotels tonight	Nelson Lakes	Hiking	
Booking hotels	Top of the south	Golf	
Last minute hotel	Interislander		

3. LINKS BUILDING

- Share website links with local business/organisations, negotiate a reciprocal link arrangement that benefits both parties:
 - businesses that provide products and services for popular activities e.g. bike rental, local golf courses, boat rental, car rental etc.
 - things to do, the museum, sites that display local walks, the yacht club, mountain bike associations etc.
 - local shopping, small independent shops selling local or New Zealand made goods
 - local eateries, the best that Nelson and the surrounding area has to offer – locally sourced produce
 - local events, seasonal markets, outdoor or community events, popular sports events
- Set up a blog and access forums for the business, this can be on the website itself or the business can use an external platform, link to relevant information and blog about:
 - the hotel, its products and services, particularly showcasing new seasonal menus, any improvement works being carried out, staff stories
 - things happening in the local area, yearly events, a new business opening
 - the wider area, national parks, the beaches, Rabbit Island
 - Awards and recognition the hotel have received
- Share the blog and reciprocal links to social media, this can be automated when the blog is submitted:
 - Create active accounts for all major social media platforms, train staff to understand the content to be applied to each and who the target audience is for each media type
 - Link to the social media page so viewers can like and follow
 - If linking to local business/organisations they may share the blog on their social media which can support local trade into the hotel
- E-mailers can be used to target existing and past customers; relevant links can be listed in the mailer to direct users

At lot of this will be achieved in house by the hotel staff through the website CMS. The links need to be checked regularly to ensure dead links are removed or updated, this can be achieved in house.

Broken links can be checked using the following online tool: <https://www.brokenlinkcheck.com/>

4. LANDING PAGE OPTIMISATION

There are a few key tasks to be carried out to ensure the site is optimised:

1. Must be mobile/tablet compatible and functions on multiple browser platforms
2. Check HTML tags, fix duplicate meta data descriptions, check for broken links, submit XML sitemap to Google Search Console, Audit website content and improve underperforming content
3. Review page speed, a slow loading page will lead to dissatisfied users and will often leave after a 3 second wait period, reduce file size, limit use of plugins
4. Make sure content can be understood by Google and serves user intent, look at the current ranking websites, does the keyword search display expected results?
5. Use content marketing, useful and entertaining information, write news article, use trending topics, promote to social media, include images and videos that grab customers attention
6. Continually improve the quality of the user experience, look at the usefulness, usability, desirability, findability, accessibility, credibility and is it valuable

The hotel landing page optimization can be checked regularly and options for improvements can be discussed. The following online tool can be used to analysis the landing page:

<https://unbounce.com/landing-page-analyzer/>

5. FRESH CONTENT

“Fresh Content Is King” – Internet users’ value new content and the user of the hotel website are no exception, the website needs to be up to date, offer clear value and be not ‘static’:

- Interesting, engaging content – what do customers want to see from the hotel
- Frequent updating – what’s happening at the hotel and in the surrounding area
- Genuinely valuable in the eyes of the user to build loyal readership
- Differentiate the content so visitors feel it won’t be available elsewhere
- The more content that is indexed by search engines in the indexing process the more likely its positioning will be
- Fresh regular content will help the hotel to be found through the use of organic keywords – accommodation, dining, hotel, events, conferences, Nelson etc.

The hotel can create content directly through the website, its blogs and feedback links through social media such as facebook, Instagram and twitter. Seasonal events such as Christmas, Spring, Easter, Autumn, Halloween can all be used to generate fresh content.

Local events will also generate fresh content and can be shared on social media where engaging conversations can be had directly with the end users. This can target hotel guests looking to visit the area and local customers looking for quality dining or somewhere for drinks.

It is important to ensure that all content is deigned relevant to the website ‘look and layout’ but also the specific content of the content, such as Christmas theme etc.

6. TITLE TAGS

Title tags are displayed on search engine results pages (SERP) as the clickable headline, title tags are important for usability, SEO and social sharing. The title tags for the hotel should clearly and accurately describe the main services offered and what the user should expect from the rest of the landing page in 50-60 characters or less.

Rules to follow:

1. Make sure it is not too long or it might get cut off by search engines and don't use CAPS as it may make it harder to read by users. The title will be checked against the popular search engines and social media to ensure it works across the important media first.
2. Limit the inclusion of repetitive keywords in the title, this is not best practice and is not recommended from a user perspective, it may also get the hotel website in trouble with search engines.
3. Apply unique and valuable page titles for all important pages on the hotel website.
4. Place keywords that are more important first, for example the hotel brand is less significant than the offering.
5. Write for your customers, attracting these users is vital to ensure the website works for the business. The title is the first interaction your customers have with the website making this step vital.

Recommended Title Tags:

Hotels in Nelson, Tasman	Conferences, Nelson, view prices – Rutherford Hotel	Top of the South, New Zealand - Rutherford	Best Room Rates Direct – Rutherford Hotel, Nelson, Tasman
Hotel Accommodation Nelson, Tasman	Dining Nelson – menu for summer Rutherford Hotel	Check availability, special packages, booking options	Hotel Reservations, Rutherford Hotel, Nelson Tasman

Title tags can be checked using the following online tool:

<https://seositecheckup.com/tools/meta-title-test>

7. MOBILE RESPONSIVENESS

Evidence shows us that a large majority of travellers use mobile devices to plan, book and track their travels, the hotel will have a fully mobile compatible website that is responsive across a range of user interfaces.

Responsive sites:

- Can help a business stand out from the crowd
- Look more professional
- Ease of use meaning a customer is more likely to stick with your website
- Future proofs your website for the changing tech marketplace

8. SITE SPEED

There are a few steps we can do to increase the speed of the hotel's website. It is important to ensure the site loads as quickly as possible to keep conversion rates high, evidence shows every second counts, improving the customer experience and visibility of the site helps make the site more usable.

Site speed will improve the hotel's ranking above competitors, the average load time should be kept below 3 seconds. The page speed can be monitored regularly using an online speed tool such as: <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>.

Options to improve the site speed for the hotel:

- Use a Content Delivery Network (CDN) – this distributes the web content across geographical regions. The fees will need to be looked at to determine the cost benefit.
- Look into all available hosting options within budget, including share hosting, Virtual Private Servers or dedicated server options.
- Optimize the images displayed on the site, there are online tools the hotel can use to shrink images before uploading to the site that reduce the size in bits without compromising quality of the images displayed.
- Limit the number of plugins to those that are essential to converting users to paying customers.
- Reduce the use of web fonts as these can impact negatively of the sites speed.

9. CONCLUSION

Whilst it is important that the creation of the new hotel website conforms to all SEO principles, it is key for the hotel to understand that SEO is not a one-time function. All members of the hotel that access the CMS must understand that what they do affects SEO and should take the time to familiarize themselves with the basics, such as fresh content, keywords, reducing image sizing etc.

The pie chart provided at the beginning of this document will help the hotel to understand where to focus their SEO efforts. The links used and fresh content should take priority, followed by title tag and landing page optimisation. The baseline functionality will be included as part of the web development and will be built upon and improved over time by the hotel staff. Further and ongoing support can be provided.

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