How to Write a Great Title Tag for Google & Users by @jennyhalasz

*Editor's note: "Ask an SEO" is a weekly column by technical SEO expert **Jenny Halasz**. Come up with your hardest SEO question and fill out our form. You might see your answer in the next #AskanSEO post!*

Today, we're talking title tags. Here's this week's Ask an SEO question:

> *I would like to ask how you write a title tag today. Would you be using: primary keyword | alternative keyword | company name? (exact phrase) or would you drop the keywords in the title tag in any order?*
>
> *If the keywords are residential builders and commercial builders, would you write it as:*
>
> *Residential Builders – Commercial Builders | Company Name*
>
> *Or would you be writing it as:*
>
> *Residential, Commercial Builders in Location | Company Name*
>
> *What is your take on this? How does Google read title tags today when you search for terms?*

Ultimately, the only way you'll know for sure what works for *you* is by testing and measuring everything you do in SEO.

Optimize Your Title Tag for Search

While I can tell you that Google's spider accesses words in the order in which they are presented in the code, that doesn't really answer your question and could lead you down the wrong path.

Lots of SEO professionals will tell you that the title tags should have the most important keyword first, and then the company name at the end, if you choose to include it.

This is generally a good way to start because it makes sense based on what we know about how Google's spider parses code.

However, what's far more important is how it actually performs.

Optimize Your Title Tag for People

Google needs to present a title tag that will compel users to click on the result and then hopefully have a great on-site experience. That's why Google sometimes changes the title you have provided.

You should try some different ways of presenting the information based on what you know.

- **Is the prospective customer likely to see some value in your brand name?** Then you should probably include it in the title.
- **What about the location?** Important for builders and dentists, less so for T-shirt sales.

You don't need to do an exact match in your title tag.

"Residential Builders – Commercial Builders | Company Name" is just awkward.

You need to consider the device the customer is likely to see

your ad on.

If it’s a desktop or tablet most likely, you have more room for the title.

If it’s a mobile device, and you’re doing SEO for a restaurant, you better get the name of the restaurant in the front of the title.

Add Important Information in Your Meta Description

Keep in mind you also have the meta description tag to communicate key information.

Without knowing anything about your company or your location, I suggest you emphasize the more important keyword and the location first. Something like:

TITLE: Residential Builders in City | Company Name

META DESCRIPTION: Home and commercial builders, licensed in state. [Another sentence that contains a key selling point.] Contact us for a free estimate today.

Optimize Title Tags on Every Webpage

If you also do commercial building, I suggest emphasizing that on a different page.

Remember, you have lots of different pages on your website, and the home page is rarely going to be the most relevant.

If someone is looking for a commercial builder, they’re looking for a much different experience than a residential one. Commercial is all about efficient, licensed, bonded, budgets, etc.

While these things are also important to people searching for residential builders, they're more interested in beauty, comfort, quality, and probably price.

Commercial sales will be mostly made based on facts, while residential sales will be mostly made based on emotion.

Measure Twice, Cut Once

Ultimately, the decision maker will be your click-through rate and the position of your title tag.

- Do you lose or gain average position when you make a change?
- Do you have a higher or lower ratio of impressions to clicks?

Since we're on the subject of building, a key saying for builders is "measure twice and cut once". It refers to the importance of getting things right the first time.

Cutting a block of wood too short is a deal-breaker; you have to start over.

Making a mistake in SEO doesn't necessarily mean you have to start over, but making changes without measurement is a good way to end up with a crooked house (or website).

With all things (especially SEO), you need to measure and test.

You can use theory and "what SEO pros say" to get you started, but measuring and knowing is always better.

Have a question about SEO for Jenny? Fill out this form or use #AskAnSEO on social media.

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