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# On-Page SEO Factor

## High Importance Factors

### *Quick Definitions*

Targeted Keyword: **McDonald's Franchise Review**

Exact Keyword = **McDonald's Franchise Review**

Broad Keyword Example 1 = **McDonald's** is a good **franchise**

Broad Keyword Example 2 = I saw a **review** online about this **franchise**...

### **Broad Keyword Usage in Document**

Search engines and users are both seeking the targeted keywords in the text of the page. Employing keywords in the document element is not only a best practice, but an essential part of SEO (and good user experience).

### **Broad Keyword Usage in Page Title Tag**

Search engines consider the title element to be the most important place to identify keywords and associate the page with a topic and/or set of terms. Correlation research has also shown that rankings are heavily influenced by keyword usage in the title tag.

### **Appropriate Keyword Usage in Document**

ext content is very important for modern SEO. In order to optimize your chances of ranking higher for the targeted keyword(s), we recommend using the targeted keyword(s) at least 4 times.

### **Avoid Keyword Stuffing in Document**

We've seen evidence that excessive use of keywords can negatively impact rankings and thus suggest moderation.

### **Recommendation**

Remove instances of the targeted keyword(s) from the document text of this page to bring it below 15

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### **Avoid Keyword Stuffing in Page Title Tag**

Using the targeted keyword(s) more than twice in the title tag may be perceived as keyword stuffing (a form of search engine spam) by the engines, and thus we recommend against it.

### **Avoid Multiple Page Title Elements**

Web pages are meant to have a single title, and for both accessibility and search engine optimization reasons, we strongly recommend following this practice.

### **Exact Keyword Usage in Page Title Tag**

Search engines consider the title element to be the most important place to identify keywords and associate the page with a topic and/or set of terms. Correlation research has also shown that rankings are heavily influenced by keyword usage in the title tag.

### **Keyword Placement in Page Title Tag**

Correlation research has shown that pages which employ the targeted keyword(s) at the front of the title tag benefit greatly in the rankings. There is a direct relationship between proximity to the front of the title element and prominence/rankings as seen by the engines, and the further back in the page title the keyword appears, the worse the correlation with high rankings.

## **Moderate Importance Factors**

### **Exact Keyword Usage in Document**

Search engines and users are both seeking the targeted keywords in the text of the page. Employing keywords in the document element is not only a best practice, but an essential part of SEO (and good user experience).

### **Keyword Usage in Image Alt Attribute**

Keyword usage in the alt attribute of an image employed on a page is surprisingly positively correlated with good rankings. It also helps considerably with image search, a popular and oft-employed vertical/universal search system.

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### **No More Than One Meta Description Element**

Multiple meta descriptions may confuse the search engines and will not help with rankings or search traffic.

### **Sufficient Quantity of Characters in Content**

Search engines seek pages that contain machine-readable content that fulfills the goals of their visitors. The 300 character limit, while somewhat arbitrary, is in a reasonable range for what the engines appears to fulfill 'minimum' unique content in most cases.

### **Sufficient Quantity of Words in Content**

Search engines seek pages that contain machine-readable content that fulfills the goals of their visitors. The 50 word limit, while somewhat arbitrary, is in a reasonable range for what the engines appears to fulfill 'minimum' unique content in most cases.

### **Appropriate Characters in the URL**

Characters which are less commonly used in URLs may cause problems with accessibility, interpretation and ranking in search engines. It is considered a best practice to stick to standard URL structures to avoid potential problems.

### **Avoid Keyword Stuffing in the URL**

Keyword stuffing in the URL may be perceived by search engines as a spam tactic and will also likely turn off potential visitors when seen in the search results.

### **Keyword Usage in URL**

Keywords in the URL string help to add relevancy to the page for search engine rankings, assist searchers and users in identifying the page's content/topic when viewing the URL and provide value when used as the anchor text of referring links.

### **Static URL**

Correlation research to have dramatically worse performance in search engine rankings than static URLs.

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## **Low Importance Factors**

### **Appropriate Keyword Usage in H1 Tag**

Although employing targeted keywords in the H1 tag does not correlate well to high rankings, it does appear to provide some slight value. It's also considered a best practice for accessibility and to describe a page's content, hence our recommendation.

However, keyword stuffing may be perceived negatively by the search engines and can impact rankings. Thus, we suggest keeping keyword usage in the H1 to 2 or fewer uses.

### **Recommendation**

Employ between 1 and 2 instances of the keyword in the H1 tag.

### **Appropriate Page Title Length**

The visible portion of the page title in the search results extends to 66 characters, after which the engines will often truncate with an ellipsis. In order to optimize for the best possible title (and provide the most compelling call to action for searchers) keeping the title tag under 66 characters in length is recommended.

### **Keyword Usage in Bold/Strong/Emphasized/Italics**

In testing, search engines appeared to have a preference (albeit slight) for pages that employed a targeted keyphrase with one of these elements than those missing it. This may also be valuable to users who can more easily find references to their search query thanks to this highlighting.

### **Keyword Usage in the Meta Description**

Using the queried keywords in the meta description tag gives it a much better chance to be used by the engine as the page's snippet. It also creates prominence and visibility for searchers, as the engines will make query terms in the search results snippets bold.

However, employing keywords excessively in the meta description may be used as a spam signal to the search engines and will likely detract from a searcher's desire to click on a listing.

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### **Meta Description Usage**

The meta description, while it does not influence rankings in the results, can still be valuable to employ to improve the click-through-rate of searchers from the results page and to provide context to those visitors about the page's topic/focus.

### **No More Than One H1 Tag**

Best practices for both SEO and accessibility require only a single H1 tag. The H1 is meant to be the page's headline, and thus, multiple H1s are confusing. Consider employing H2, H3 or CSS styles to achieve the same results with text visualization.

### **Avoid Excessive External Links**

Linking externally is generally a good thing, but as with many optimization tactics in SEO, moderation is the best path. Employing a high number of followed external links may prevent the engines from passing much value through any given link and can also trigger potential issues of spam/manipulation (particularly if those links are not pointing to high quality/trustworthy sites).

### **Avoid Excessive Internal Links**

Employing an excessive quantity of internal-pointing links may not directly harm the value of a page, but it can influence the quantity of link juice sent through those links and dilute it's ability to help get link targets crawled, indexed and ranked.

### **Appropriate URL Length**

Search engines will often truncate the URL display at 76 characters and appear to pass less keyword value in longer URLs. Thus, we recommend limiting URL length when possible.

### **Minimal Subfolders in the URL**

The quantity of subfolders in a URL appears to correlate to rankings. URLs with fewer trailing slashes perform better than those with more. Additionally, search engine representatives have recommended that excessive, subfolders in a URL string may be a signal that the page is very deep in a site's structure and may be less valuable/worthwhile to crawl, index and rank.

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## **Optional Factors**

### **Appropriate Meta Description Length**

Since the meta description isn't used for rankings, and the snippet cuts off after 156 characters (in most instances), it's unwise to have a longer meta description tag. Words beyond this count won't be seen by anyone.

### **Avoid Using Meta Keywords Tag**

Search engines have, for years, ignored the meta keywords tag as a ranking signal. Although it technically does not harm rankings, it can be used by competitors as a method to extract your targeted terms and thus, we recommend against its use.

### **Recommendation**

Remove the meta keywords tag.

### **Employ External Links**

Linking externally is something the engines have suggested provides potential ranking rewards, and many who've tested this confirm. Thus, we suggest that on any page specifically targeting a keyword, linking externally to at least one (and possibly several) useful, valuable resources is often a best practice.

### **Keyword Placement in H1 Tag**

Just as keyword prominence in the page title element can positively impact rankings, so too do we recommend making the targeted keywords the first terms in your H1. Since the H1 appears to have such a light impact on rankings, we feel this recommendation is optional.