



A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS: KEY WEB-SITE INGREDIENTS FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE MARKETING

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To be an effective marketing tool for your company, your Web site needs to serve a dual purpose. It must clearly communicate your key messages, and it must use language that attracts traffic from your target audiences. Accomplishing both goals takes a careful balance of ingredients. Much like the recipe for a cake, each ingredient serves a specific purpose vital to a successful product.

THE RECIPE

Copy — Copy serves as the foundation for a good Web site just as flour does for a cake. While well-written copy will deliver your intended message, strategic copy is the deciding factor in attracting search engine traffic.

In developing copy, focus on relevancy and currency. Any content on your Web site must be relevant to your company and the traffic you hope to attract. Search engines award higher rankings to sites with a consistent focus on a particular theme. Regularly adding fresh copy draws the attention of search engines and gives visitors to your site a reason to return.

The Recipe for Web Success

- > **Fresh, relevant copy**
- > **Incoming and outgoing Web links**
- > **Thorough and routine Search Engine Optimization**
- > **Clearly defined conversion steps**

Links — Adding baking soda to cake batter makes the other ingredients expand to a size greater than the sum of their parts. Links work much the same way for a Web site: They increase the visibility of your site and help attract visitors. Incoming links from other Web sites direct traffic to your site and add credibility that enhances its search engine presence. While incoming links provide the most value to a Web site, don't discount the value of outgoing links. By guiding visitors to useful information elsewhere online, outbound links can make your site more popular with your audience and encourage link-backs from other sites.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) — SEO works much like the salt in a cake recipe: You don't notice it in the finished product, but you'd miss it if it weren't there. But while a cake recipe needs only a dash of salt, don't skimp on the SEO when developing a Web site.

Search engine optimization is a continuous, concentrated effort to maximize your site's visibility among Internet search engines like Google, Yahoo and Microsoft Live. Best practices in SEO call for:



- > Maximizing industry or topic keywords within your copy
- > Adding unique page titles and meta tags to each page
- > Using keywords in page URLs, such as [property-management.html](#)
- > Organizing the copy on each page with appropriate header tags
- > Including alt and title tags to describe any graphic or image
- > Using keywords in the anchor text for outbound links and links within the site

Although the bulk of your SEO efforts may go unnoticed by visitors to your site, continued optimization is crucial to maintaining its relevance and visibility on the Web.

Conversion Steps — What's a cake without a thick layer of creamy frosting? An expensive Web site with no measurable results is just as disappointing. To generate a return on investment, your Web site needs to help convert visitors to customers.

Whatever the goal of your Web site, include an action step to achieve and measure your returns. If your goal is to sell corporate services, offer market reports for download. If you're looking for tenants, provide a link to your leasing agent's e-mail. If you're focused on attracting investors, include a request for prospectus. Whatever your purpose, make sure your site easily directs visitors to the right person.

SERVING UP SUCCESS

Any good chef will tell you that the ingredients make the dish. The same is true of Web sites. But while baking gives you no do-overs, you can always improve the ingredients of your Web site. Maintaining an effective Web site requires routine analysis of your ingredients and regular tweaks to your recipe. By understanding the essential components of a Web site — and how to use them to your advantage — you'll have a more visible and effective Web site.

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