



LenderHomePage

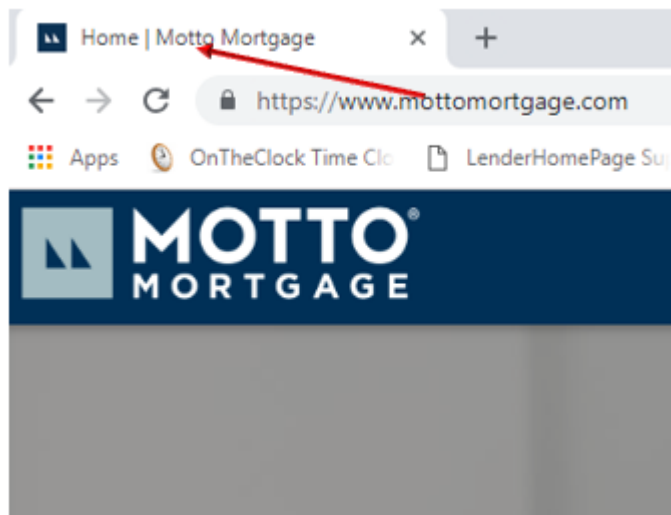
SEO BASICS

TITLE TAG & META KEYWORDS

In addition to the actual title bar of your site, every web page that you create has a so called “title tag.” This is the snippet of text that appears in the top left-hand corner or in your web browser tab. The title tag is also shown as a blue link that appears in search engines when your website is listed in a search engine results page (SERP). Title tags have up to 70 characters, so you should choose your words wisely. The title tag is a ranking criterion for Google and other search engines. As title tags are easy to optimize, you should address this issue.

Tips for using title tags:

- Use the website’s central keyword in the title tag.
- Be sure not to exceed the maximum length of the title tag, or it will be shortened in the SERPs.
- If possible, use your brand name in the title tag, for example, your website domain.
- Use a unique title tag for each web page.



The “meta description,” in contrast, is a piece of text that describes what a specific page is about. Meta descriptions are typically displayed as text below the blue links in search engine results. If you have no meta description, search engines usually take a piece of text at random from the content referenced by the link. The meta description is limited to 175 characters.

Tips on using meta descriptions:

- End your meta description with a call to action.
- Do not exceed the maximum length of 175 characters, or the description will be cut off in the SERPs.
- Use a separate description for each web page.

Keep in mind that the title and the description are usually the first elements that a new visitor to your website sees in the SERPs. You can influence whether or not a visitor clicks on the search result with your website by optimizing the title and description.



IDENTIFY LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

Focusing on long tail keywords is key to successful search engine optimization. Although these keywords get less traffic than generic short-tail terms, they are generally associated with better qualified traffic. The good news is that choosing the right long-tail keywords for your websites is an extremely simple process. Relevance is the key issue when choosing the right keywords. Keep in mind that the more specific and niche the keywords, the better.

Example: Your company specializes in discount VA funding fees for disabled vets: Which keyword will attract more qualified potential customers to your business?

“VA Loan” or “wave VA funding fee for disabled vets”

Clearly, the visitor who searches for “wave VA funding fee for disabled vets” is already in research mode. They are trying to find out about how to get this fee waived or find someone who will waive the VA funding fee—and that could be you! Optimizing for “VA Loan” is of some value, but there is no doubt that this keyword addresses a far more general audience who may or may not have any interest in your services.

TOOLS FOR KEYWORD RESEARCH

Google's Keyword Planner is a free tool that can help you with keyword research. The tool is actually designed for the Google AdWords advertising program and aims to help marketers select suitable keywords for ad placements. But it can also help you with search engine optimization. For example, you can use the Keyword Planner to look for suitable terms for a keyword. Google's tool may also show you search terms relating to your website URL. For example, you can also enter a competitor's URL and search for relevant keywords like that.

Traffic data and trends can also be used to identify how frequently searches were run for each keyword. If you only want to look for search trends, you can use Google's free "Google Trends" tool. You can run searches there to look for global or regional search trends with terms of interest.

SEARCH FOR KEYWORDS

Besides studying your web analytics data and using keyword research tools, there is another very simple research method: Use the search engine itself to do keyword research. The search engine can provide answers to certain key questions: How much competition is there? Look at how many search results there are. If there are hundreds of thousands or millions of results, you should ask yourself whether it is worth the time and trouble to operate in that area.

How do your competitors rank? Pick out a keyword for which you want to optimize your site. Check out the top 20 search results: Are your competitors somewhere in there? What is your ranking for this keyword? This information should help you to find a good niche for you and your keywords, where your competitors are not operating. It may also be that you find keywords for which it is worth joining the competition.

KEEP UP TO DATE

Here are some online resources that make it easy to keep track of the latest SEO news and changes as they relate to your site.

- www.Moz.com
- www.SERoundTable.com
- www.SEOBook.com
- www.SearchEngineLand.com
- www.inbound.org