

Tiffany Markman's approach to SEO web copywriting

Organic search drives more traffic. Paid search yields, in South Africa, approximately 10% of traffic to a site, while organic search accounts for 51% (source: Graeme Stiles, Group Head: Organic Search, Quirk).

So, in line with Panda and Penguin, Google's recent algorithms, we have let go, stopped over-thinking SEO (which we can't really control) and started aiming for something called 'Google's Trust Factor'.

To achieve this, we:

1. Work to create high-value content that achieves business objectives as if search engines didn't exist.
2. Create smart on-page SEO, using the language the audience uses when searching and socialising, so Google sees the site as the most relevant option.
3. Prioritise answering the user's question over ranking. According to www.writtent.com, we're "better off investing in one piece of content that engages your buyer personas than six pieces that fail to answer their real-life questions".
4. Carefully consider the length of webpage copy. If we only have a few sentences per post, search spiders will think the content is too skimpy. Granted, there's no minimum or maximum word count, but we aim for 200 words or more.
5. Don't 'keyword-stuff' or try to make sites into article factories. They don't work.
6. Forget clicks. Reach is everything. (This came straight from Aidan Baigrie, Commercial Team Head: Facebook Africa. I heard it myself.)

Google says: "Base your optimization decisions...on what's best for the visitors of your site. They're the main consumers of your content and are using search engines to find your work. Focusing too hard on specific tweaks to gain ranking in the organic results of search engines may not deliver the desired results. ...your ultimate consumers are your users, not search engines." (Source: <https://www.webintelligence.net.nz/search-engine-optimisation>)

Bottom line: Modern search has moved away from starting with info and connecting it to an audience, to starting with the user and customising the result. That's how we write SEO copy.