

Success with Keywords

How To Do

EFFECTIVE

KEYWORD RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

9 out of 10 users look for information through search engines. When they make a search, they type in queries related to what they're looking for. It could be "book tickets to Disneyland", "cheap hotel accommodations in New York", or "used cars for sale". These are keywords.

Keywords lay the foundation for your SEO campaigns. If you use the right keywords for your campaigns, you will be attracting the right type of audience and lead them into the right stage of the customer journey. If not, you will be wasting all your time, money, and effort.

Keyword research sets the stage for your SEO success. This involves more than just looking for search terms to use in a campaign. Effective keyword research is also about understanding how search terms match with the intent of users, the purpose of the site, and your client's goals.

In this training guide, we'll walk you through the basics of keyword research and how this fits in your overall SEO strategy.

KEYWORD RESEARCH AND SEO STATS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

28.24%

of U.S. online search queries contain two keywords

+100B

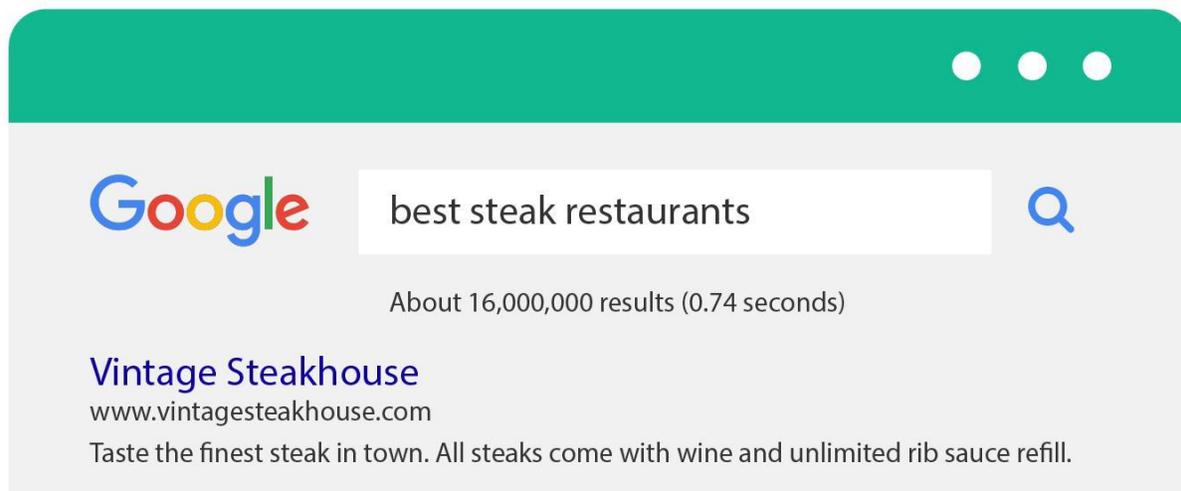
Number of monthly Google searches

49.2%

of ten-word search queries of the global search engine market share come from Google

50%

marketers state SEO is the most effective digital marketing tactic



1

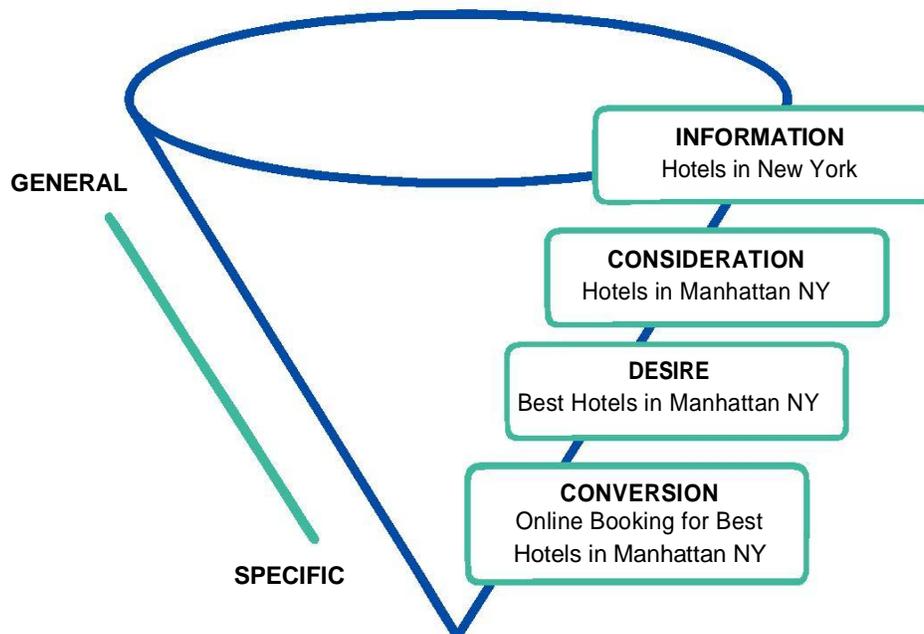
UNDERSTANDING YOUR KEYWORDS

Picture this scenario: your client is a hotel owner in London and wants to increase the number of reservations by a certain percentage. The terms “*hotel New York*” are too broad, as there are too many searches covering these keywords. The competition is also high, which makes it difficult to rank for that term. Naturally, you would want keywords that drive the right visitors to the site and convert those visitors into customers to achieve your client’s goals. This is why you need to understand your keywords first.

Understanding your keywords makes it easier to narrow down your keyword list.

This helps you:

- 1 Drive relevant, highly-targeted traffic to your client’s website
- 2 Convert traffic into customers
- 3 Use the right keywords according to the different stages in the sales funnel



PRO-TIP

The longer the tail of the keyword, the closer to the conversion portion of the funnel. The more general the keyword, the more informational it tends to be.

2 USER INTENT CLASSIFICATION OF KEYWORDS

Users look for answers, resources, or any information that would help with their query. This is further reinforced with the intent behind their queries. Aligning your keywords with the right user intent goes beyond increasing clickthroughs; it adds more value to your client's business.

Four Classifications of User Intent

NAVIGATIONAL	INFORMATIONAL	COMMERCIAL	TRANSACTIONAL
Company or brand queries, domain queries.	Curiosity, question-oriented, solution-seeking queries	Informational Search with future business implications	Looking to purchase queries
Examples Disneyland, Disney.com	Examples Disneyland Locations, Disneyland Vacation Tips	Examples popular Disneyland vacations, tickets to Disneyland	Examples book a vacation to Disneyland, buy tickets to Disneyland

Effective keyword research should follow user intent, as it solidifies the customer journey and opens opportunities for conversions.

INTENT	VALUE OF TRAFFIC
Navigational	Low
Informational	Mid
Commercial	High
Transactional	Very High

PRO-TIP

Following these four user intents helps you identify the best fitting keywords for a client.

3 DETERMINING THE IDEAL KEYWORDS

You cannot start optimizing pages and creating quality content until you know which keywords to target for your client's website. Determining the ideal keywords requires a great deal of thought. Think of it this way: putting the wrong keywords is like putting the wrong address on a business card. Instead of getting customers, you're directing them somewhere else. This could be detrimental for your client's business.

KEYWORD PURPOSE TO LANDING PAGE MATCH

Don't try to target a money term to the homepage unless the money term is the core business.

The keywords you allow your clients to have depends on what kind of pages they have or are willing to have inside their website.

EXISTING SEMANTIC RELEVANCE

Website is already talking about a particular topic inside their content. The website has contextual relationship with the keyword. The easiest way to pick your keywords is through the Keyword Planner tool.

EXISTING RANKING EQUITY

Don't deny your clients a keyword if it is good enough to be on the 1st page of search results
It is easier to rank pages with ranking equity; you just have to beat the competing pages.

SUPPORTIVE CONTENT

One of the characteristics of a perfectly optimized page is keyword targetedness. You can't rank for a term you're ashamed to mention.

The keyword, topic, and client's website should have the following relationships:

Semantic You're actually talking about the topic.

Contextual You have topics somewhat related to the keyword.

Syntactic Keyword exists in its exact match on your site.

When Do You Long-Tail or Short-Tail a Keyword?

It depends on what your website is designed to do. Informational or commercial terms are better for conversion. Use long-tail variations to bring out the initial experience as low in the funnel as you can.

4 KEYWORD DENSITY AND GROUPING

The old practice of stuffing keywords in a page is no more. Unless you want to be penalized by Google, you should be mindful of the number of times a keywords appear on a page, as well as the keyword group you used for that page.

Keyword density is the number of times a search term appears in a page in relation to the total number of words it contains.

WHY IS KEYWORD DENSITY IMPORTANT?

- ❑ Avoid spamming a page or website with too many terms that it starts to look unnatural.
- ❑ It does not provide any value to users if you keep repeating keywords.

KEYWORD DENSITY PERCENTAGE

PAGE DENSITY	CONTENT DENSITY	ON-PAGE	OFF-PAGE
< 5%	< 3%	1%-2%	1%-2%
Inclusive of all the times the keyword appears on the source code	Inclusive of all the times the keyword appears in the <body>	Hyperlinked to the most relevant page	1 exact match to 2 partials Only 1 hyperlinked Masked with 1 to 2 other semantically related terms

Keyword grouping is the practice of categorizing keywords into groups to simplify campaign administration.

Keywords must be a contextual and syntactic match

PRO-TIP

Don't say yes to everything; otherwise, you're doing clients a disservice.

5 CHALLENGES IN KEYWORD SELECTION

CHALLENGE #1: SAYING NO TO A KEYWORD

Solution: It's about gunning for the holy grail vs. gunning for multiple little grails.

Example: Client wants to rank for "*Family law Houston*".

Gun for variations and insert them in relevant pages of the site. Look for easier wins to get relevant traffic.

CHALLENGE #2: WATERING DOWN VANITY KEYWORDS

Solution: Set the right expectations.

Example: Client wants to beat a competitor for a specific term, even if they are already on the top spots for over a hundred keywords.

Set expectations on what you can and cannot win.

Focus on long-tail variations that drive business today, then get vanity keywords later on. Sometimes, it's wiser to say no than pursue unrealistic targets.

CHALLENGE #3: TARGETING FOR A SPECIFIC TERM, BUT EQUITY IS ON THE HOMEPAGE

Solution: Steal the equity in the homepage and make the inner pages rank.

Example: Client offers a range of services and wants to rank for a specific term "*white water rafting in Colorado*".

Make the inner page relevant.

Split the term 'white water rafting in Colorado' between the homepage and inner page. Long-tail variations on the homepage

Exact match variations on the inner page

Take content from the homepage about white water rafting and transferred to the inner page.

CONCLUSION

Effective keyword research will set your campaign in motion and drive towards the right direction. It takes away the guesswork in what people are looking for and what your client needs to rank well in search engine results pages.

Keep in mind that keyword research is not an initial phase of your SEO efforts; it is a continuous process. You should not stop after launching your SEO campaign. If anything, you should keep refining your keyword list and look for opportunities that you might have missed.