

Keyword Research Workbook



How To Get Your Keywords Right

The purpose of this keyword research workbook is to help you understand the first step in improving your organic search results. In order to drive more traffic to your website, you need to have a clearly defined set of keywords that you can test, measure and evolve. At the end of this workbook, **you will have a list of keywords** that you can start using and testing on your website to improve your organic search results.

Organic Search Ranking Takes Effort

Sadly, there is no magic bullet to get control of your organic search ranking. Unlike pay-per-click (PPC) ads, you can't just throw money at it, sit back and watch the results. Organic search is a slow process that requires a strategy, a work plan and ongoing maintenance, measurement and adjustment.

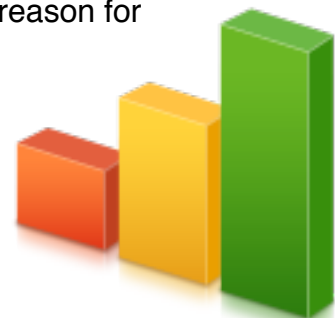
Why Bother?

Because you want traffic on your website! More than 82% of people looking for stuff today start out with a search on the world wide web, plus there are more than 1 billion Google searches performed every day (not including Bing!, Yahoo and others). Just because you launched a new website or issued a "seo'd" press release doesn't mean that people are going to find you online. You need to optimize your web presence to improve your organic search ranking and it all starts and ends with the keywords you choose. Success or failure hang in the balance!

Why Organic Search?

If you are willing to pay top dollar then you'll likely be able to reach the top of the PPC results in the major search engines. However, recent research tells us that in the search engine results pages (SERPs), approximately 85% of all search traffic clicks on organic search results (left side of the SERPs). The obvious reason for this is that there is a higher level of trust implied with the natural "organic" side versus those who have paid for top spot in PPC.

Organic search will give you a higher ROI in the long run and improve your trust ranking on the web.



Keywords Are Key

When we talk about keywords, we don't mean the list of meta keywords hidden in the heading section of your page - at one time was your primary source of ranking, not anymore. Instead we are talking about the topical or primary phrases that explain the theme and subject of a piece of content.

Keyword phrases are used throughout your content to relay the appropriate information to both your visitors and the search engines. Properly choose your keywords and you'll not only please your visitors, you'll also help the search engines position you as an authority for those phrases. Determining the proper keywords for your business is the starting line for any search engine marketing strategy. It's also the toughest. Sometimes it feels like you may never get out of the gate. The key to a good keyword strategy is to start immediately, plan and test. gShift developed this workbook to help you pick the best keywords for your web presence.

EBWAY's Keyword Workbook

At the end of this exercise you will have your pool of keywords and keyword phrases.

To get started you will need:

1. Excel document (recommended)
2. Your domain name
3. A list of product(s) or services(s) your ideal target audience is searching for
4. A list of your top three competitors

In order to answer questions #2 and #3, you may want to start by making a list:

- What does your business sell?
- Who does your business sell to?
- How does your business sell its products or services?
(i.e. online, through referrals, sales reps, etc.)

Once you have answered these questions, you have just created your first list of keywords! Now what you want to do is refine this list to improve your search engine optimization (SEO) success.

How Many Keywords Do I Need?

There's no hard and fast rule, but one to four keyword phrases per web page on your website is a good rule of thumb. Also, make sure they relate to each other.

KEYWORD RESEARCH

(1) Branded Vs. Non-Branded Terms

In most cases, you are going to always rank highly for your proprietary “branded” terms (i.e. your company name, your exclusive product or service name, etc.) and spending a lot of time optimizing for these terms is not needed. It’s usually enough to just include your branded terms on your site, where appropriate for the audience, rather than optimizing extensively.

The obvious advantage in combining branded keywords with common (nonbranded) keyword phrases is that there will likely be very little competition for the terms. But is there going to be anyone searching for those same terms? What pages will it make sense to put branded phrases on?

Task: *Make a list of your branded keyword phrases.*

What keywords need to be in content and on what pages:

(2) Create long-tail keyword phrases

A long-tail keyword is a phrase that contains more than one word and is as specific as possible.

Although it is likely that far fewer people are going to search for long-tail terms (i.e. white tennis shoes in New York) than less specific terms (i.e. tennis shoes), the more specific and unique a long-tail phrase is, the less competition there is going to be when ranking for the term.

The visitors that arrive on your site should be much more qualified.

Task: *Make a list of all of the long-tail keyword phrases you think you will be found for.*

List possible long-tail phrases:

(3) Categorize By Geography

Geographic terms are of vital importance when creating a keyword list. Not only do they allow for better combinations of terms for creating long-tail keywords, they also target local search results and reduce competition for your keyword phrases.

Task: *What are some geography-specific terms?*

(4) Categorize By Industry

Think about the industry you are in and what terms are specific to that industry. Are those same terms the ones that the average visitor to your site might use?

Often an industry term that might be an “insider” term or commonly used within the industry is entirely different than what a visitor might use to search. It’s great to add industry specific terms to your keyword pool simply because it instantly reduces keyword competition to just those in your same industry.

Task: *List some industry-specific terms.*

Where will people search:

What industry are you in:

(5) Competitors Keywords

Put together a list of companies you perceive to be your competition and have a look at their websites.

- Look at their organic rank for keyword phrases that you already have in your pool
- Look at your competitors' content and where they are using keyword phrases
- Look at titles and headings

Task: Make a list of your competitors' keyword phrases that you could also use.

(6) Choose Keywords for Specific Content

Each page should have a unique topic (or should belong to a very specific category or silo). You should focus your individual keyword phrase attention on optimizing these very focused pages on your site.

Pages that are extremely focused on matching keyword phrases will always rank higher than ones with many topics (barring external SEO factors such as backlinks, etc.). These pages make it much easier for the search engines to rank the page as a relevant one, while also making it much easier for your users who will be able to find what they are looking for immediately on your page.

What keywords do your competitors use:

What keywords need to be in content and on what pages:

(7) Testing Keywords

If you are using PPC it is especially great for “testing” keyword phrases (long-tail in particular) before spending too much time optimizing your site for SEO. Very quickly, you’ll be able to see how often you show up in search results for a particular keyword phrase.

Tip: *You can also use a PPC tool to see what your competition might be doing.*

If you don’t have the budget to test keywords via real-world PPC, there are a number of free tools out there:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

<http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/>

<http://www.keyworddiscovery.com/search.html>

<http://www.wordstream.com/>

How will you test your keywords:

(8) Start By Reviewing What Is Happening On Your Site Today

If your site has been around for a while and you've been able to gather some analytics on your website, you can do some extremely valuable research when looking to build or refine your keyword pool.

Determining what keywords are currently driving traffic to your site (clickthroughs) from your analytics reports is vital. What you should look for is a list of what keyword phrases are sending traffic to your site, which search engines are sending that traffic, and whether visitors that arrive at your site using those keyword phrases are spending time there.

Keyword phrases that are driving traffic but have high bounce rates usually indicates that when visitors clicked through to your site they did not find what they were looking for when they arrived and instantly exited. Phrases with low time on site or low page-views indicate that people are just not finding what they are looking for. They are leaving quickly or possibly they are finding what they want quickly and leaving - either result is not ideal.

In all likelihood, there will be phrases which you had no idea would actually drive traffic to your site. If they have low bounce rates, add them to your keyword pool. While your analytics will show you what keywords are sending traffic to your site, you'll also want to try to get a handle on what keywords aren't sending traffic.

There are several tools that will give you an idea of keywords your site is appearing for in the SERPs (impressions) which are not actually resulting in someone clicking through to your site.

Make a list of where traffic is coming from today:

Analytics on Keywords Impressions and Backlinks:

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/>

<http://www.bing.com/toolbox/webmaster>

Now You're Ready For Success

Getting your keywords right is a lot of hard work, but it is the first step to improving your organic search engine rankings. Once you have determined your keywords and keyword phrases you are well on your way. Now, you'll need to create your content - and don't forget to use your new keywords everywhere - including your social channels!

Take Action

- *Move your research from this workbook into an Excel document so you can track your success over time and make notes and/or compare results.*

Next Step... Get Connected

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