

Lesson no. 6 KEYWORD RESEARCH PROCESS

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Here is a basic strategy for how you can approach keyword research.

a) Identify Your Keyword Universe

Identify a comprehensive list of words that are relevant to your business and that indicate that the searcher may be interested in your content. Use your intuition, PPC data, competitor insight, analytics data, internal search data, Google suggest data, and any historical data from your client or your company to construct your initial “seed word” list.

b) Expand the List

Use the Google Keyword Tool (along with tools like Word tracker and Keyword Discovery if you have access) to expand the seed word list and to understand relative search volumes of all your keywords.

Keep in mind that Google’s projected search volumes are typically not accurate and are really only useful in comparing the relative popularity of one word to another. In other words, if keyword A has a monthly search volume of 5,000 and keyword B has a monthly search volume of 10,000, you can assume that keyword B is more popular. But don’t assume that getting a number one listing for keyword B will bring you 10,000 users a month. It may but it probably won’t.

c) Prioritize Your List

Your new expanded list is your “keyword universe.” It is then appropriate to prioritize your keywords and choose the most important keywords that you will be targeting with your campaign.

These are the keywords that you will want to track rankings for as a general barometer of health. Additionally, these keywords will be your first priority as you begin link building campaigns in a later stage of your campaign.

Some people end up with 25 priority keywords, some people end up with hundreds (large enterprise company with multiple products and sub brands). Your priority keywords should reflect words that have the highest propensity to drive revenue

d) Categorize Your Priority Keywords

Once you have a priority list of keywords for your campaign, you should categorize the keywords into segments specific to business goals. This allows for more granular reporting and understanding of performance.

At a minimum you should have all keywords categorized between brand and non-brand. Additional categories may include product type, sub brands, business group, keyword based (for example, all permutations of the keyword phrase dog food) or keywords that map to a specific business goal or customer segment.

Categorization makes it easier for people within your team to understand the impact that SEO is having at a more meaningful level.

e) Identify Preferred Landing Pages

Once you have your keywords defined in this manner you can begin mapping the priority keywords to specific pages that they are most relevant to. These pages will be the primary target of your optimization activities for your priority keywords.

f) Refine Your Keyword List Over Time

It's important to pay attention to your PPC data and analytics data to identify new keyword phrases that may be new opportunities for your business. This is especially true for new brands and sub brands as well as keywords that are driven by seasonal behavior.

It's good practice to review these data sets monthly to identify any new opportunities that should be integrated into your SEO campaign.