

Topic | Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Tutorial 21

Keywords

Keywords are the key to a successful web strategy. This tutorial will cover everything you need to know about keywords from research to implementation on your website.

Reading time: 20 minutes

Prerequisite: None



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tourism
awards

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Tourism Education
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Queensland Tourism Award Winner
Tourism Education and Training
2011, 2012, 2013



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1. What are keywords?

Search engine optimisation in the past was very much focused on keywords: users mainly searched on a desktop browser and only entered a few words. With the growth of mobile and tablet search as well as the arrival of Apple's SIRI and other app, the way we search has changed. We tend to search for "which is the most kid friendly restaurant in Brisbane" instead of just "kid friendly restaurant Brisbane".

To answer this shift in search and deliver the best possible results, Google needed to understand content better and faster. It therefore released a new algorithm (ranking formula) based on semantic search and named it Hummingbird (Sept 2013). Search results are much more focused on the searcher and presenting information that Google has collected about them (e.g. search history, shares on social media sites, where they are located) instead of just the keywords they have entered.

For a tourism operator, this means that you really need to get into the mindset of your customers, research what they search and how they search (words, phrases, jargon etc) and create content that corresponds to their needs.

2. Keyword research strategy

Keyword research should't only be focused on keywords but also on the needs of your customers. The below approaches should be combined to achieve the best possible result.

a) Brainstorm and competitor analysis

My business

First start by identifying the core offerings of your business, these are the offerings that you do best and what sets you apart from your competitors. You should try to really pinpoint these offerings and have no more than three or four keyword combinations.

Example: if you were a small hotel in Queenstown New Zealand, one of your core offerings would be "ski accommodation Queenstown"

If you have an existing site, go through its pages and identify at least 3 offerings (3 x combinations of 3 to 4 keywords). Do not just focus on your main activity (e.g. accommodation for the Queenstown example above) but also what other services you offer (ski hire? ski tours?)

Fill out the table below with each of your offerings and list related keywords using the bullet points provided:

Core offering 1:	Core offering 2:	Core offering 3:
.....

Keywords

• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...

My competitors

Repeat the task above. However, this time use a competitor's or another website that provides a similar service. Do as above but with your competitor's or other websites that provide a similar service. If you are unsure of your competitors, Google your three core offerings and look for someone similar to you in the search results. Try and identify 3 more keyword combinations (that differ from your own).

Core offering 1:	Core offering 2:	Core offering 3:
.....
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...
• ...	• ...	• ...

b) Broad search

You should have 6 keyword combinations as well as their respective list of keywords. It is now time to broaden your search and run your core offerings through other free online tools to complete your list, such as Google AdWords Keyword Planner:

- Go to <https://adwords.google.com/keywordplanner>. Please note that this is a new tool (it replaced the now defunct Keyword Tool) and that you will need to be logged into your Google AdWords account to use it. If you do not have a Google AdWords account you will need to create one first (free).
- Once you are in the Keyword Planner tool, navigate to Tools and select the KeyWord Planner sub menu (you will need to click on the Tools menu)
- Click on the grey button (top right) called "Search for new keywords and ad group ideas".

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- Enter your keyword ideas in the first search box, as per the screenshot below:

What would you like to do?

Search for new keyword and ad group ideas

Enter one or more of the following:

Your product or service

Your landing page

Your product category

Targeting

Date range

Get Ideas

Customize your search

Keyword filters

Keyword options
Show broadly related ideas
Hide keywords in my account
Hide keywords in my plan

Include/Exclude

- Click “Get Ideas”
- Once the new page loads, click on the 2nd tab called “Keyword ideas”.

3) Listening to your consumers

Now that you have some ideas about keywords, try the following techniques to move away from keywords into keyphrases and questions:

- Monitor email enquiries: what questions are people asking? This should help you understand how to organise the content in different sections on your website

Keywords

- Monitor phone enquiries: what questions are people asking? Ask the person who answers the phones to make a note of the keywords and the questions that hold those keywords
- Monitor live chat: what people are questions asking? If you use a live chat software on your website monitor keywords and questions once again.

Your head should now be buzzing with a growing list of keyphrases that you previously hadn't thought of. Complete the diagram below. Only keep the keywords and keyphrases relevant to your business.

<p>Core offering</p> <p>Type of service you offer (accommodation, tour, etc)</p> <p>E.g. ski accommodation Queenstown, ski lodge accom</p>	<p>Keyphrase 1:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>	<p>Keyphrase 2:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>	<p>Keyphrase 3:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>
<p>Accompanying activities</p> <p>What supplements or facilitates your core offering?</p> <p>E.g. ski hire, ski tours, pick up on arrival</p>	<p>Keyphrase 1:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>	<p>Keyphrase 2:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>	<p>Keyphrase 3:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>
<p>Local tourism icons</p> <p>Are there any well-known icons/monuments/actions nearby that</p>	<p>Keyphrase 1:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p>	<p>Keyphrase 2:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p>	<p>Keyphrase 3:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Related keywords:</p>

your target market might search? E.g. lake Wakatipu, Cadrona, the Remarkables

Reason behind trip What is the theme behind the holiday? E.g. snow trip? Honeymoon?	Keyphrase 1: Related keywords: 	Keyphrase 2: Related keywords: 	Keyphrase 3: Related keywords:

4. Where to use keywords

You now have an optimal list of keyphrases and questions to use in the content throughout your website. Decide on the focus of each individual page of your site and then attribute the relevant keywords or keyphrases to its content.

This section will show you exactly where to put the keyphrases in the structure of your page's content.

a) Title tag

Use your keyphrase in the title tag and complement it with related keywords.

E.g. Luxury ski accommodation in Queenstown

Keywords

b) Headings

Use your questions in the H1 (header 1) and use related keywords in H2 and H3 when possible. Remember that you do not want your content to be overloaded with keywords and sound unnatural.

E.g. Does your Chalet accommodate groups?

c) Image Alt attribute

Aim to use an image that is related to the page's theme and use your keyphrase or its related keywords in the text of the image alt attribute.

d) URL

Use the keyphrase or the main keyword in the page address (the URL). If your content management system doesn't allow you to do this, ask your web developer to see if some necessary changes could be made in order to reach the style of the address shown below (using keywords and hyphens).

E.g. www.mylodge.co.nz/ski-accommodation-queenstown.html

e) Page copy (content)

Build your page content taking into consideration the keywords and all the related questions people may have. The content should answer your reader's questions and show them that you have thought about everything.

f) Meta description

Even though it has been established that the Meta description (the information below the site's listing in a search engine) doesn't primarily affect search engine rankings, you should still include your keywords in it, as this will gain your customers' attention because it usually reinstates what they have searched for originally.

g) Hyperlinks

Keywords should also be used in hyperlinks. However, the keywords used in links to a page should be the keywords identifying the linked page and not the theme of the page the link originates from.

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E.g. Imagine I am on a different page than

www.mylodge.co.nz/ski-accommodation-queenstown.html. For instance, I could be on the page about prices. If I want to add a link within the prices page that takes customers to the accommodation page, I would use the accommodation keywords in the link. It could look like something like this:

Visit our page about our skiing accommodation offer in Queenstown

5. Keyword ranking in search engines

Once you have optimised your site for your most profitable keywords it is important to regularly assess how they are ranking on search engines. You could “Google” these keywords once a month however this wouldn’t be the best use of your time. There are free tools such as the SEOBook RankChecker that allow you to set up a search which you can save and run once a month (or whenever you wish).

The SEOBook RankChecker tool is available as a plugin for the Firefox browser. You can download it from SEOBook.com by following this link: <http://tools.seobook.com/keyword-tools/seobook/>

6. Key learning outcomes

- Keyword research is crucial in order to give your website the most chances to rank high on search engines for the keywords your target market is most likely to use
- Once the keywords have been found they need to be strategically placed in each page of your website
- You then need to assess how you are ranking for these keywords on a monthly basis
- You can conduct your own keyword research and search engine optimisation or pay a search engine optimisation company to do it on your behalf.

7. Related websites

- Better understanding keywords: www.searchengineguide.com/keywords/
- SEO book: www.seobook.com

Related Material

- Search engines 101
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Understanding inbound links to my site