How to develop a Strategy for keyword selection

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Choosing the best key phrases is a balancing act. Balancing:

- **The size of the competition** – the more competing sites, the longer it will take to get a top ranking
- **Whether people *use* it in the real world, or in our geographic territory** – no point getting top ranking for terms that are never used (a common mistake)
- **Is it relevant?** – thinking like a customer

We have covered the first two points earlier.

To assess the number of competing websites, simply do a Google search for the term and Google will tell us.

To assess whether the term is used, we use Google Keyword Tool.

Relevance

This is all about 'thinking like a customer' – forgetting what it is we *sell* and thinking what it is people *buy* (a lot of sales people get this wrong).

It can help to build a 'persona'. If, say, most of our clients are female, children grown up, holding down middle management job, then we choose a photograph of someone who could embody that audience. Give her a name. Pin her photo on the wall and then – *make sure we address her as an individual, rather than 'the market'*.

The persona can also be invaluable when developing our website – deciding on its 'look and feel', deciding on the 'tone of voice' we will adopt when writing the text. Ask ourselves "Would *she* find this compelling?"

Buyers and sellers often use very different terms to describe the same thing.

We cited the example of the computer software industry. Most software houses loath the term *'software'*. What they are selling are *'solutions'*.

But when, say, a manager sits down at the keyboard looking for a way to computerise their stock control, they don't key in 'stock control solutions', they key 'stock control software'.

Our second example was taken from my own environment, copywriting (writing brochures, websites etc for other people). But when people search for services

like mine, they don't use the words 'brochure copywriting'. Instead they key in 'brochure copywriter'. People who search using the word 'copywriting' tend to be looking for information about the copywriting industry.

Find the low lying fruit

From the beginning of this course I have been suggesting that you choose a small number of search terms to begin your optimization project. Five low lying fruit and one long term.

Try cutting your offering down into bite-sized chunks.

When I began, I recognized that the word 'copywriter' competed with over 6 million sites. It could take a couple of years to get that ranking. Instead I selected:

Bite sized morsels

Term	Number of competing sites	Ranking
Brochure copywriter	137,000	Position 2
Case Study copywriter	131,000	Position 1
White Paper copywriter	59,900	Position 1
Logistics copywriter	686,000	Position 2
IT copywriter	2,400,000	Position 2 and 3
Pharmaceutical copywriter	642,000	Position 1

A page dedicated to each – *more* pages (Google likes) *more text* (Google likes)

All but one achieved within about three months

'IT copywriter' was my one longer term choice (competing against 2.4 million sites), and that took about a year to get high rankings.

You will find it useful to use a matrix like this one:

Term	Competing sites	US searches/month	UK searches month
Design for manufacturability [DFM] and cost optimisation	75,000	No data	No data
Chinese manufacturers	3.6 million	6,600	2,400
Chinese manufacturer	1.1 million	4,400	1,300
China manufacturing	541k	18,000	2,900
Low cost manufacturing	541k	590	56
Component sourcing	846k	720	390
Printed Circuit Board [PCB] Fabrication	229k	720	46
PCB assembly	629k	9,900	4,400
Assembly services	16 million		2,900
Offshore assembly services	214k		No data
Manufacturing outsourcing	484k		480

Where you can list each term in a table, comparing the number of competing sites and the number of monthly searches made in your chosen territory.

Recap

- Key phases, not keywords

- Forget selling – think buying

- Check whether they are *used* (Google Keyword Tool)

- Size up the competition (simply do a Google search)

- Balance competition, usage, relevance

- Start with 5+1 search terms