

1. Keyword targeting

Keywords are phrases that are commonly searched for on Google, Bing, etc. and they are a crucial part of determining your website's rankings. Use the right amount of keywords in the right places and in time you'll see your pages climb up the leaderboards.

Enter Keyword or website URL to find suggestions:	Choose Industry (Optional):	Select Country (Optional):	
<input type="text" value="cars"/>	<input type="text" value="Autos & Vehicles"/>	<input type="text" value="All"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>

Showing 10 of 700 keywords Download Keywords				
Keywords	Google Search Volume	Competition	CPC	Opportunity Score
cars for sale	1,220,000	Medium	\$1.35	10
used cars	1,000,000	Medium	\$1.89	10
cars.com	1,000,000	High	\$0.36	10
truck	823,000	High	\$2.23	10
car sales	673,000	High	\$0.25	10
suv	550,000	High	\$7.70	10
second hand cars	201,000	Medium	\$0.41	10
car valuation	201,000	Medium	\$1.13	10
car dealer	201,000	High	\$3.05	10
classic cars	201,000	High	\$0.55	10

Go to: Show rows: 1 of 70

Keywords that a car dealership may be researching (using our [Free Keyword Tool](#)).

Keyword strategy has changed a lot over the years, it used to just be stuff as many in there as possible, but lots of content then became spammy and sites were ultimately penalized by Google's algorithms. These days, you need to **do your keyword research**, use a wide variety of keywords, and fit them in naturally. Google gets smarter by the day, so they'll make you work for it.

For more help with keywords, check out:

- [How to Rank for a Keyword in 10 Steps](#)
- [The 18 Best Keyword Research Tools for Every Need](#)
- [How to Find Long-Tail Keywords](#)

2. Metadata

You can think of metadata almost as your shop window. Your meta title and meta description are the first things a user sees in the SERP which influences whether or not they click.

Also, Google uses what are known as 'crawlers' (imagine tiny robot spiders), to scan through websites and collect information that matches search queries. By including keywords in your meta data (including image tags and heading tags) Google can more quickly understand the relevance of your page.

The screenshot shows a Google search result for the query "drive more traffic to website". The search bar at the top contains the query. Below the search bar, the first result is an advertisement from "www.shopperapproved.com/". The ad text includes "Increase Website Traffic - More Reviews In More Places" and "Drive More Visibility, Traffic & Sales With The Largest Distribution Network." Below the ad, there are two organic search results. The first organic result is from "www.wordstream.com" and is titled "25 Ways to Increase Traffic to Your Website - WordStream". The second organic result is from "localiq.com" and is titled "17 Free & Paid Ways to Drive More Traffic to Your Website". Red arrows point to the titles of these two organic results, with the label "meta title". Another red arrow points to the text "3. Get Listed in Online Directories" in the second organic result, with the label "meta description". Below the search results, there is a section titled "People also ask" with several questions and answers. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text "www.forbes.com · sites · robertadams · 2017/04/10" and "23 Proven Ways To Drive Traffic To Your Website - Forbes".

3. Backlinks

As we move into the more technical side of things, another crucial factor in SEO performance is [acquiring backlinks](#). This is when another website links to yours in an article or blog post. Not only does this help you gain what is known as [domain authority](#), but it also directly improves the chances of people clicking through to your website if it appears on other reliable domains.

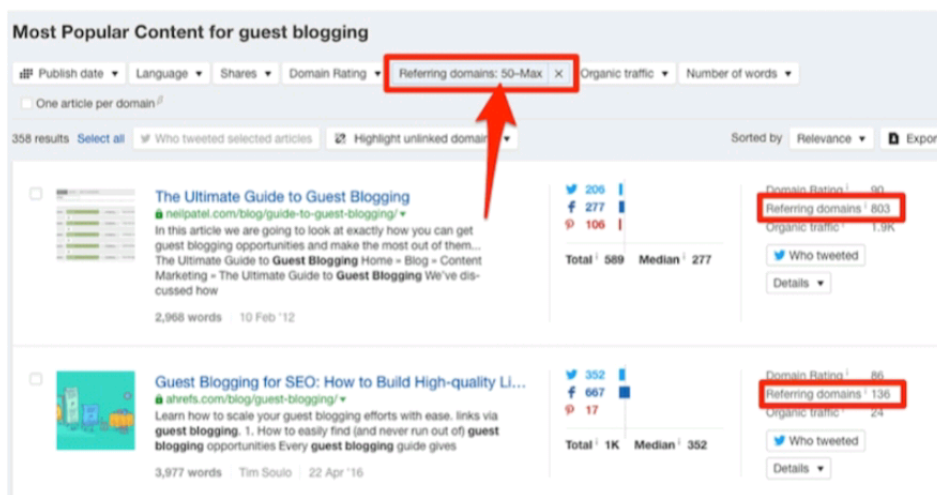


Image source

You can earn organic links by simply [writing engaging content](#): the better your work and the more closely you match with a person's search intent, the more likely others in your industry are to reference your site. This overarching process is known as [link-building](#) and while you can simply reach out to other sites to trade links—quid pro quo—there are plenty of other activities that can help speed up this process:

- Guest blogging.
- [Testimonials](#).
- Answering questions on sites like Quora.
- Creating shareable content such as videos and infographics.
- Using industry contacts and sharing on social (e.g. LinkedIn).

4. Technical SEO

Carrying on from that, there are various other technical issues in the back end of your site that once addressed, can make a huge difference in your overall [SEO results](#). At the end of the day, if your website's UX isn't smooth and accessible, it's going to be hard for any visitor to do anything significant on your website. For context, [over 50% of all online traffic is mobile](#), so when it comes to things like UX, the technical stuff matters.

Whether it's ensuring site speeds are quick, removing '[toxic backlinks](#)' (links to websites that are deemed irrelevant or untrustworthy etc.), or creating a clear XML sitemap with a clean URL structure, all of these technical SEO tips can be huge when it comes to securing those higher rankings. You don't want anything to get in the way of SEO doing its job, which is allowing for people to find your website organically.

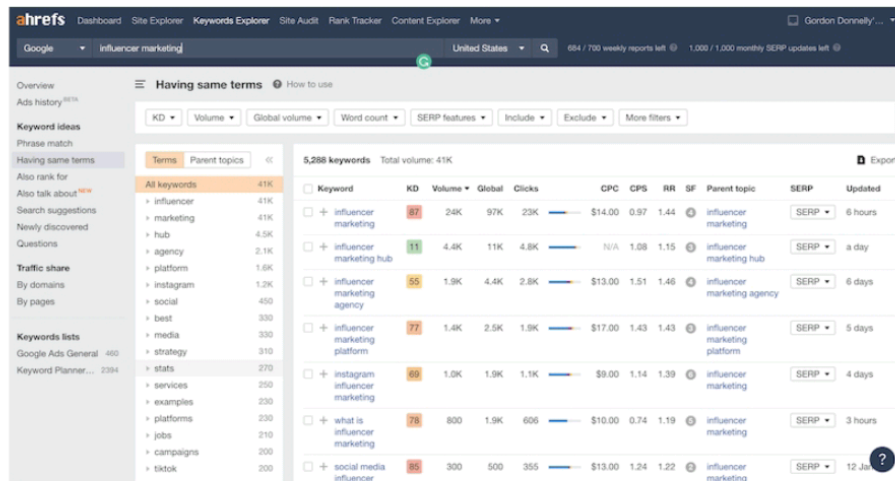
[Are you making SEO mistakes? Get a free SEO audit with the LOCALiQ website grader!](#)

5. SEO metrics

You can't do effective SEO if you don't know what "effective" means! You'll need to have a thorough understanding of [SEO metrics](#) in order to measure, analyze, and improve your SEO strategy.

Why is organic traffic and SEO important?

If you're looking for longevity and cost-effectiveness when it comes to your [digital marketing](#), organic search strategies driven by SEO can't be beaten. Not only is [SEO cheaper than paid advertising but its effects are longer lasting](#). While PPC campaigns need to be renewed and bidding costs fluctuate, SEO tracking tools use organic data to compile lists of keywords and continue to throw up more content ideas the deeper you dig.



The screenshot shows the Ahrefs Keywords Explorer interface. The search term is 'influencer marketing' in the United States. The interface displays a list of 5,288 keywords with a total volume of 41K. The table includes columns for Keyword, KD (Difficulty), Volume, Global, Clicks, CPC, CPS, RR, SF, Parent topic, SERP, and Updated. The first few keywords listed are:

Keyword	KD	Volume	Global	Clicks	CPC	CPS	RR	SF	Parent topic	SERP	Updated
+ influencer marketing	87	24K	97K	23K	\$14.00	0.97	1.44		influencer marketing	SERP	6 hours
+ influencer marketing hub	11	4.8K	11K	4.8K	N/A	1.08	1.15		influencer marketing hub	SERP	a day
+ influencer marketing agency	55	1.9K	4.4K	2.8K	\$13.00	1.51	1.48		influencer marketing agency	SERP	6 days
+ influencer marketing platform	77	1.4K	2.5K	1.9K	\$17.00	1.43	1.43		influencer marketing platform	SERP	5 days
+ instagram influencer marketing	60	1.0K	1.9K	1.1K	\$9.00	1.14	1.39		influencer marketing	SERP	4 days
+ what is influencer marketing	78	800	1.9K	606	\$10.00	0.74	1.19		influencer marketing	SERP	3 hours
+ social media influencer	85	300	500	355	\$13.00	1.24	1.22		influencer marketing	SERP	12 Ja

Admittedly, SEO can feel like a slow burn at first. Nevertheless, you can start to see serious [upturns in your overall traffic](#) and rankings after a few months. Furthermore, the longer you stay at it, the more backlinks and site authority you build, meaning you can go for even bigger and better keywords, and so on and so forth.

Even starting at the other end of the spectrum—targeting [long-tail keywords](#) and more detailed variants—especially when it comes to content and specific sub-topics, is an excellent way for SMBs to see results early and build a platform towards momentum. [Over a third of Google's total search queries feature four or more words](#) (i.e. long-tail keywords). Not only are these keywords less competitive and therefore easier to rank for, but they can also still drive plenty of cumulative traffic organically.

8 tips to build an effective SEO strategy

It isn't always about trying to go for the most popular search terms and expecting to be able to compete with the big fish right out of the gate. It's about knowing your audience and trying to provide the content, information, and overall service they want/need. With that in mind, here are eight SEO tips that are just as effective now in 2021 as they have always been.

You may also be interested in our [epic website audit checklist \(with a six-tab Google Sheet\)](#) to help you out with your strategy.

1. Write for humans first and search engines second

As mentioned already, the Google algorithm gets smarter by the day and using constant human input, continues to better align with our thinking. That being said, there is no clever loophole or magic formula to outwit a search engine, so don't bother trying. Write for humans first and search engines second.

Ultimately, your priority should always be to provide your audience with what they are looking for, and that only comes through writing engaging and fundamentally naturalistic content. Anyone can spot a keyword that's been shoehorned in and stuffing is even more blatant, so fit them in where it makes sense and allow driving keywords to elevate your already informative and [valuable content](#).

2. Use targeted keywords in all the right places



Whilst the motivation should always be humans first, search engines second, the bedrock of this whole process is keywords. Not only do they get to the heart of what visitors and Google are looking for by isolating common search terms, but [SEO also drives 1000%+ more traffic than organic social media](#), which itself dominates over half of all online traffic. So, if keywords are at the heart of SEO, they should be at the heart of everything you do, too.

However, once again, it isn't about just chucking them in left, right, and center. It all starts with keyword research. Use [SEO tools](#) like Google Ads, Ahrefs and even simple on-site search bars to identify broad search intent and your "seed" keywords. Then dig deeper to find more long-tail variants, study competitors to find keyword gaps, and don't forget to include them in your metadata as well as the anchor text for your links. Lastly, remember not to keyword stuff. Fit them in naturally so as not to disrupt the [readability](#) of your copy.

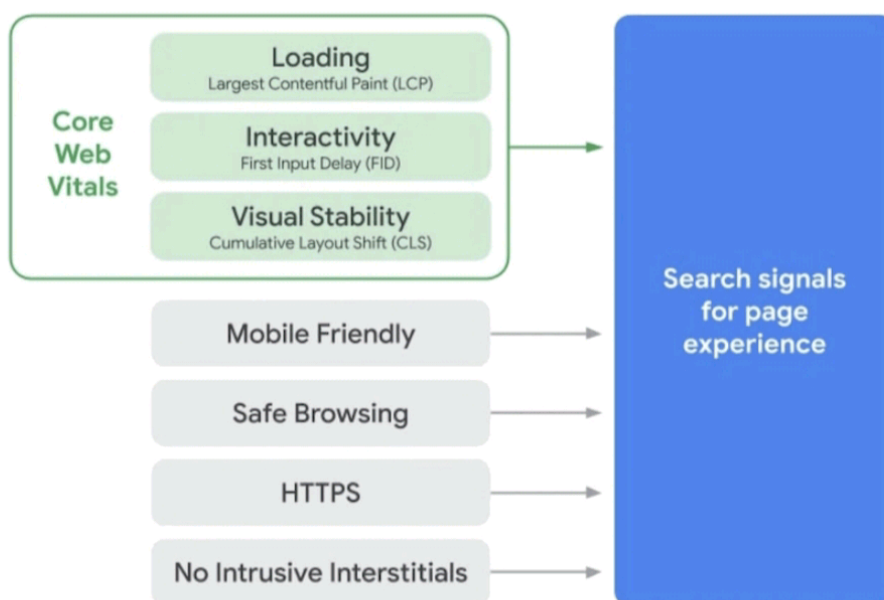


3. Focus on user experience (UX)

There is nothing worse than having to navigate a site that you can barely use. In fact, after more than a few seconds of frustration, most people don't bother and Google will struggle to make the best out of it too. Things like dead links, error pages, and messy site structures will all impact what people take away from your website.

Not only do users value a good experience and easy navigation, but this seamlessness also helps Google's crawlers scan your content and determine your SERP rankings. Use headings and short, easy to read paragraphs, tidy up your sub-folders, and optimize for mobile. All of these things will help to reduce your bounce rate, [improve your rankings](#), and generate better conversion overall.

And now that Core Web Vitals have become a ranking factor via the [page experience update](#), you should be optimizing page speed more than ever.



4. Focus on building relevant links

As mentioned, another key aspect in building domain reputation/site authority is link-building. We've already touched upon why outbound/external links are important: you not only enhance



5. Format content for Featured Snippets

Featured snippets pretty much rule SERPs these days. It's likely that you're familiar with them even if you haven't heard the term before. They are the highlighted answer boxes that appear at the top of the pages for most search queries. If you manage to earn a featured snippet, you're doing something right.

There are certain formatting and stylistic choices you can make to up your chances of landing a featured snippet: bullet points, numbered lists, infographics and answering question-based searches directly, to name a few. Whilst there is data that shows snippets don't always result in direct clicks, as the search query is answered in the Google preview itself, [over 19% of SERPs have featured snippets](#) and counting. They are great for [raising brand awareness](#) and getting your name out there. Therefore, the clicks will still come.

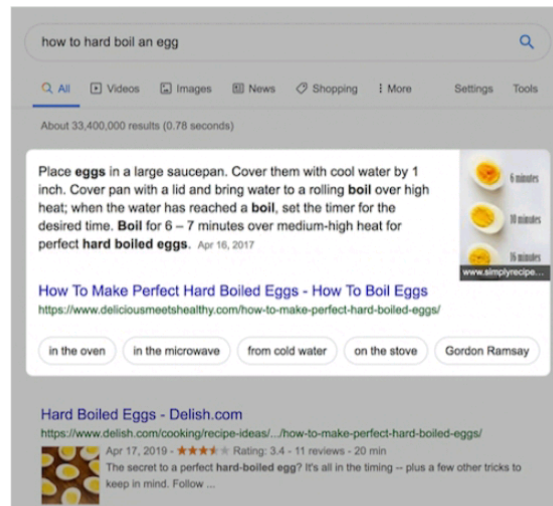


Image source

6. Remove anything that slows down your site

Once again, it can't be overstated how simple it is to get the technical stuff right in order for your website and specific content to speak for itself. Whether you're writing informative blogs, [selling a product/service](#), or simply pointing someone in the right direction, your site needs to be quick, [accessible](#), and easy to use. These days, people expect instant information and instant results. If your site [takes an age to load](#), they'll simply move on.

There are a number of ways you can improve site speed and the overall smoothness of your UX: delete old/defunct plugins, clean up your code, optimize and compress your images, make sure your sub-folders flow and make sense, and use tools like Google Page Speed Insights or GTmetrix to continue monitoring in the future.

7. Pay attention to Google algorithm updates

We've briefly touched on this already but Google gets smarter and more intuitive by the day. The core updates and tweaks to the algorithm are constant and often unexpected, with sites either benefitting or being penalized for how closely they adhere to the most recent update.



THE ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY



Give us a call at 631-353-7427 for a free consultation

Aligning SEO Strategy and Marketing Strategy

