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Create content people are searching for

Learn how to run your own Keyword Audit and Creating Topic Clusters

In this guide, I will walk you through how to conduct your own SEO Keyword Research and the process of creating topic clusters.

About the Author

Manuel Weiss is co-owner of Draft.dev, a Content Creation Agency for Technical Companies. We help Marketing and Developer Relations teams in tech businesses **drive awareness, capture leads, and build trust**.

In the last 15 years, Manuel has helped small and large businesses build lead engines based on content marketing that generated millions of unique visitors per year, driving thousands of marketing-qualified leads every month, helping generate millions of dollars and 1,000s of customers.

Table of Contents

Create content people are searching for: How to run your own Keyword Audit and Creating Topic Clusters

You might have run into this scenario before: You know content marketing works, you have great ideas and thoughts you want to share with the world. Moreover, you or your team are excited and willing to write content. You might even have a few external authors or an agency that can produce blog posts and other content assets for you.

The big question is: What should we write about?

When trying to implement content marketing for your business, consistent content output is key. As described in our "[Building a Content Marketing Engine in the Age of AI](#)" guide, one of the most important functions your content needs to fulfil is to drive consistent, focused traffic to your site. This will allow you to **generate predictable, guaranteed traffic.**

What Are Topic Clusters?

First, if you're not an SEO expert, you might not be familiar with the term. A topic cluster is a method for intentionally building content designed to rank well in search engines (especially Google).

The idea is that by writing several pieces of content that are related, you can develop a really valuable **"umbrella piece"** supported by a handful of "supporting pieces." By targeting keywords that have relatively low keyword difficulty and decent volume, you can ensure that some of your supporting pieces rank on the first page of search results quickly.

Then, by linking from those highly-ranked supporting pieces to the more difficult to rank umbrella piece, you increase its rank as well. The goal is to eventually start ranking highly valuable, high search volume umbrella pieces on the first page of Google results.

Evergreen Content Cluster
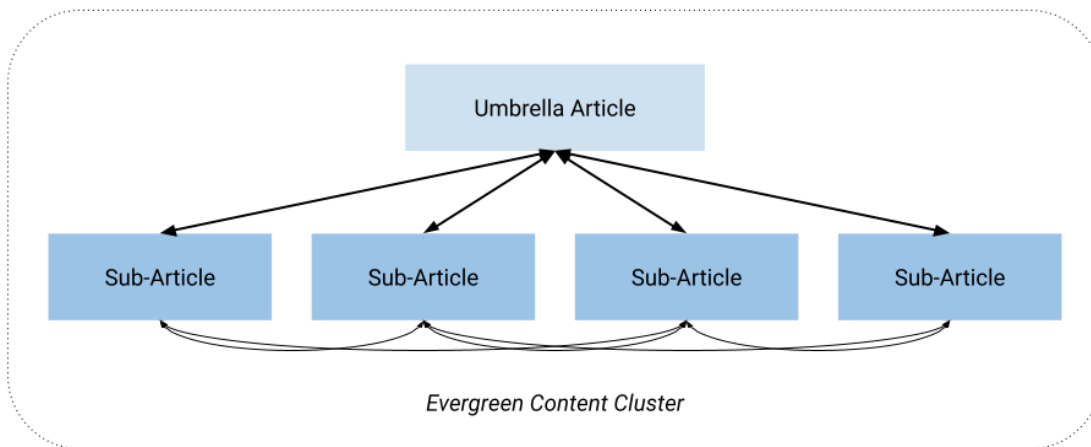
Finding Keywords

As mentioned earlier, you might have great ideas and can write high quality content that will resonate with your readers. The core problem though is to get eyes on your blog post in the first place. So, the process always starts with **picking the right topics to write about.**

The first thing you should do is to sit down and think about your **"base keyword list"** of ideal keywords. You can also ask your team a few questions that usually lead to uncovering lots of areas for exploration, including:

- What would be your dream keywords to rank #1 for? These should be 1-2 word, industry descriptions. For example, in the technology industry, these could be keywords like "continuous integration," "automated testing," or "python IDE."
- What work are people doing when they decide to use your product? What problems might they encounter leading up to that decision?
- What tools would someone use alongside your product? Are there specific services or frameworks they need to use?
- What long-tail searches would you like to rank highly for? (e.g., "how to automate GitHub backups" or "how to pick the right database")
- Who are some of your direct competitors?

After this planning session, you might have a base keyword list of 10-50 keywords. To surface similar keywords that are being searched along with your base keywords you can start exploring common keyword searches using tools like [ahrefs](#), [Google Keyword Planner](#), and industry research tools. After running your base keywords through the Google Keyword Planner, you might end up with a list of thousands of keywords to explore in more detail. Of course, not all keywords from this output will be relevant to you.

This is where the science and art of keyword research come into play.

Ahrefs will give you estimated monthly search volume and keyword difficulty, but it doesn't necessarily tell you the user's search intent or how relevant each keyword is for your product. For that, you can use your industry knowledge, competitor research, and past experience to cull the list down to a few hundred relevant, rankable keywords.

Of course, we'll want to dial in on keywords that are
- relevant relevant for our product
- have high average monthly search volume
- have low difficulty score (meaning competitors are not doing a good job covering this keyword)

Planning Topic Clusters

After building this list of relevant keywords that are not overly saturated, you can start to comb through them manually, grouping similar ideas and terms into groups. Again, this is part art and part science because you have to understand a lot of industry jargon to do this well.

Usually, you can build 2-3 topic clusters with an umbrella piece and 4-6 supporting pieces in a single round. If you can't, you should go back to the previous step and brainstorm more keywords to put into your base keyword list and then re-run the process mentioned above.

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The Result: Mapped Out Content Clusters

At the end of this process, you should have a simple, easy-tounderstand map of your results in a spreadsheet.

Sometimes this requires a couple of iterations, but it usually will reap valuable results. You'll get better at it the more often you do it.

You Know the Keywords, But Can You Run the Engine?

Using keyword-based topic clusters like this isn't suitable in every situation. For example, if you're hoping to create content as sales collateral, helping your sales team move prospects down the funnel, you might not care so much about search volume or ranking in Google. Just knowing that an article answers your prospect's objection or fear is enough.

On the other hand, if you're hoping to build awareness, generate new leads, or build up your domain authority to make ranking for more difficult topics easier in the future, this strategy is a perfect fit.

By focusing on keywords you can rank for within weeks, you won't have to wait years to see a return on investment for your content. You can attract buyers at the top and middle of your funnel to raise awareness and introduce your solution. Of course, this is only the beginning of running a content engine that

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performs for your business. For example, how do you turn this traffic into leads? Traffic is anonymous, we know somebody was on our page and Google Analytics might be able to show us where their IP address is located and how long they were on our page. But what is their name and email address? How can we start building a relationship with the **human** that is behind the blog post visit?

If you're interested in retargeting strategies, using gated asset to turn "unknown traffic" into "know names in our database" and want to get an in-depth overview of the strategies and tactics to build a successful, predictable content engine that creates traffic and turns blog visits into leads we can sell to you should check out our dedicated eBook around this topic:

[How to Set Up a Content Marketing Engine in the Age of AI →](#)
[How to Orchestrate Technical Content to Drive Business →](#)

In it, you will get to-the-point information that summarizes years of learnings into clear and concise instructions. We provide you with prescriptive material and info-graphics

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Ready to elevate your developer marketing strategy? At [Draft.dev](#), we specialize in creating high-quality technical content that resonates with developer audiences and drives measurable growth for technical companies.

Our team of expert technical writers, experienced editors, and marketing strategists understands the unique challenges of reaching and converting developer audiences. Whether you're looking to launch a new content initiative, scale your existing developer marketing program, or refine your technical content strategy, we can help.

Visit [Draft.dev](#) today to learn how our specialized technical content agency can help you build authority, generate qualified leads, and establish trust with developer audiences. [Book a Discovery Call with us](#) to discuss how we can craft

a customized content strategy that aligns with your specific business goals and technical audience needs.

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