1. The Container Store’s agency focused a portion of their effort on the off-page component of backlinks because it is one method that can be used to increase organic search performance. Backlinks can help the site to establish credibility of the site. Further, research has shown a correlation between the number of backlinks and the organic ranking of the site.

I do agree with this prioritization assuming the building of backlinks is done in the correct way. For instance, backlinks should be spread across many sites of similar search relevancy as The Container Store. The backlink should use keywords that are relevant to those on The Container Store’s site.

1. The steps The Container Store should follow when prioritizing keywords for an SEO strategy is to brainstorm, gather data, and use research tools.

Brainstorming identifies concepts that users’ trying to find The Container Store would be typing into the search engine. For instance, The Container Store focuses on products that aid in home and office organization. Potential keywords could include “home organization products” or organization in relation to specific rooms in the house. In The Container Store example it is important to remember the locale of the target audience. If targeting users in the UK then the proper spelling is orginisation while in the US it is organization.

The second step is to gather data on the keywords. A few questions that need to be answered are:

* What is the search volume of the term “home organization products”?
* Do these keywords represent a volume of users that would improve traffic to The Container Store’s website?

The second step can also be used to improve on the brainstorming in Step 1. Perhaps there were some keywords not thought of during brainstorming that users are using to find The Container Store.

The third step is to use research tools to solidify the keywords selected in Step 1 and 2. This step will identify similar keywords, common misspellings, and keywords often used in conjunction with the main keyword.

Overall, this process ensures several different keywords are chosen for on-page and off-page SEO. Doing these steps brings several different stakeholders into the SEO conversation – including new and potential customers and The Container Store marketing team.

1. One example where it would make sense for The Container Store to target certain keywords through paid search rather than SEO is for keywords that The Container Store’s website is not yet optimized. Paid search would drive traffic to The Container Store website without the extra overhead of optimizing the website for SEO. It would be important to optimize the site for these keywords in the future, but targeting keywords through paid search would help show immediate dividends rather than waiting for SEO.