

# The Essential Guide to Internet Marketing: Step 1 – Building a Keyword Strategy

The Building Blocks for Succeeding With Marketing on the Web



## About the Author

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## Introduction

The Internet has fundamentally changed the way people find, discover, share, shop, and connect. More and more of the things we used to do offline, like getting news, researching products, and finding a great place to eat, we now do online. Small businesses need to adapt to these changes in order to be a part of a prospect's decision making process, and to stay there.

With 57 percent of Internet users searching the web every day, and 75 percent of those users never scrolling past the first page of results, it's critical for small businesses to have a keyword strategy in place in order to be found in search results. Small businesses that are not ranking well for the words that describe your products and services are not getting found for them by potential customers. Plain and simple.

This first whitepaper in this series on internet marketing will revolve around building a keyword strategy, and optimizing your website around said strategy. Consumers are using these keywords to find businesses online. By developing a keyword strategy, you will not only increase your chances of getting found online, but you'll be able to drive *more and better quality* traffic to your website.

## Components of a Keyword Strategy

A keyword is a word or phrase that a person enters into a search engine, such as Google or Bing, just as shown in the picture below.



Although that's important to know, and is the foundation to any keyword strategy, a keyword strategy has more components to it than the keywords themselves. Here are the components to a quality, effective, keyword strategy:

**A Keyword List** – A keyword strategy involves more than one keyword, so a keyword list is necessary when first putting together your strategy. The list can be started with some of the keywords you're already optimizing and what you can think of off the top of your head. We'll go over the different types of keywords and some tools to help add to this list in future sections. By the time your keyword strategy is ready to be executed, you should have over 200 keywords on your list.

**Keyword-Focused Pages** – Obviously these keywords are going to be optimized in your website, but which ones will be optimized where? You shouldn't optimize them all on your home page, as it's nearly impossible for your home page to rank on all of them, and that many keywords to one web page could alarm the Google police and have your site blacklisted (blacklisted is when your site is dropped lower in search engine results, or removed all together. More on what can get you site blacklisted later.) A vital component to a keyword strategy is figuring out which pages will optimize which keywords. In another white paper we have on business blogging, we discuss how blog posts can help with taking a keyword strategy to the next level.

**The Backend** – This includes some of the behind-the-scenes of your web pages i.e. meta description, page title, image file name etc. A keyword

strategy, and keyword-focused pages, must include more than the on-page content. The backend is equally critical to a keyword strategy and optimization, as search engines look at those parts of the web page when determining which pages are most relevant for that keyword. Make sure that each web page is optimized for just one or two keywords, and optimize those keywords on all parts of the web page.

**Internal Links** – Internal links are links in your on-page content that lead to other pages on your website (a link to your contact page from your home page, for example). In order for internal links to work for you in your keyword strategy, the anchor text (the blue text you click) needs to be a keyword that you're optimizing. Anchor text such as "click here" or "check this out," is awful for your keyword strategy since hardly anyone searches for those terms. So, if your keyword is "content marketing strategy", then that keyword ought to be a link to a blog post or a product page. Search engines like internal links, but don't do it more than two or three times per page. By then, it becomes obvious to readers that the hyperlinking is for SEO, and it can be a turn off to web visitors.

**The Goal** – What is the goal of your keyword strategy and all this search engine optimization? Is it to increase brand awareness? Improve revenue? Rank on the first page of certain keywords? Without a goal, your keyword strategy would have no direction, making it difficult to determine if your keyword strategy is even working or is accomplishing what you want it to accomplish.

## Different Types of Keywords

Not all keywords are created equal, or the same. Knowing the difference among the types of keywords can help you to develop an effective SEO strategy and to incorporate more of the terms that your customers are using. Here are the different types of keywords, and examples of each type:

**Single Word Keywords** – These are words like “cleaning,” “entrepreneur,” and “services.” Single word keywords are very general keywords, and unless it’s your company or product name, should not be targeted or included in any SEO strategy. Not only are these keywords super competitive, but they are often too general to drive quality traffic to your site.

**Keyphrases** – These are search terms that are two to five words long, and are phrases instead of just words. The keyphrases may be harder to find, or to think of, but they are some of the best to optimize in your search engine strategy. Keyphrases are much more specific, much more likely to drive quality traffic, and are much more likely to be less competitive than single word keywords. Examples of keyphrases include:

- Content marketing services
- Green home cleaning
- Using nitrogen in tires

**Long-Tailed Keywords** – These keywords are even longer than keyphrases. In fact, long-tailed keywords may even be complete sentences! Long-tailed keywords are even harder to find, or to think of, but they are the best to optimize in your search engine strategy because they are most likely to be what your potential customers are typing into the search engine. Keyphrases can easily be industry-jargon, such as “inbound marketing software”, “energy management consulting,” or “nitrogen tire inflation system.” Like keyphrases, they are very specific, much more likely

to drive quality traffic, and are much more likely to be less competitive than single word keywords. Examples of long-tailed keywords include:

- How to Prepare Mentally for a Webinar
- Why Small Businesses Need to Have a Blog
- Does the Solar Energy Tax Apply to Commercial Projects?

**Problem/Solution Keywords** – These are a specific type of keyphrase, one that illustrates a problem that needs solving or a solution for a specific problem. These are great to target, as optimizing these keywords will put you in front of people who are searching for solutions, are suffering from the pain points you solve, and are ready to buy that solution. Like the keyphrases, the problem/solution keywords are harder to find and to think of, but they also have less competition. Examples include:

- My nose is runny
- Ideas for my blog
- I need a virtual assistant

**Location-Based Keywords** – These are keywords that are very similar to keyphrases or long-tailed keywords, except they include a location. Focusing on these keywords is crucial for businesses that serve specific cities or communities. If you are a green home cleaning company based in St. Louis, for example, not only do you want to be targeting keyphrases like “green home cleaning” and “home cleaning company”, but also the location-based keywords such as “green home cleaning in St. Louis,” and “St. Louis home cleaning company.” This ensures that your business is found by those who are in the area that you serve. Other examples of location-based keyphrases include:

- Dallas office suites
- Renewable energy services in Chicago
- Las Vegas based tax accountants

## Tools To Develop Your Keyword Strategy

Now that you are aware of what constitutes a keyword strategy, and the different types of keywords involved in a keyword strategy, you can then learn about some of the tools that you need to use to put this strategy together. Keep in mind that these tools involve a rinse and repeat. None of these tools are a “silver bullet” to putting together your strategy, and none of them can be used with just one keyword. They need to be used again and again in order to create a strategy that is comprehensive and robust. Here are the tools:

**Google Adwords Keyword Tool** – Once you’ve taken the time to brainstorm a list of keywords and phrases that you wish to optimize, it’s time to look for those variations and related keywords that would be worth adding to the list. The Google Adwords Keyword Tool is the place to start, returning a list of related keywords to the one (or multiple) you typed in. Along with that list, the Adwords tool also shows the competitiveness, the global search volume, and the local search volume for each keyword on the list. A cool thing about the Adwords tool is that you can even specify devices for the list. So, if you’re developing a keyword strategy for your mobile site, you can find out the keywords that mobile users might be using to find your site.

**Google Insights** – Google Insights is perfect for not only finding variations to your keywords and keyphrases, but also shows which variations are rising in popularity and how the original keyword or phrase tends to trend over the year (obviously Halloween-themed keywords will peak in October). This information can help you to select variations that are growing in popularity, as well as in which part of the world your search terms are the most popular.

**Web Analytics** – Hopefully, you already have a tool like Google Analytics or HubSpot’s inbound marketing software to track which search

terms are *already* driving traffic to your site. If these search terms are terms that you have already optimized, or got on your list to optimize, then great! If not, then your web analytics can highlight which keywords and keyphrases search engine users are typing in to find you. Whether or not you think these terms are relevant to your business, the point is that the search engines think they're relevant to you, and the traffic thinks that you are relevant to them on those terms. Don't ignore their value!

This is just a quick listing of free tools. There are plenty of paid SEO and keyword tools available. HubSpot has its Keyword Grader, while SEOmoz has several great tools as well. I would suggest trying the free tools and taking a look at the paid tools, seeing if any of them can add anything toward what you want to accomplish with your keyword strategy.

## Black Hat SEO Techniques

When putting together your keyword strategy, it's important to keep in mind what's considered good practice, and what isn't. Committing any bad SEO practices, which are called black hat techniques, will have your site blacklisted. Once your site is blacklisted, it can be months before your site is taken off the list and put back into search results.

To avoid all that hassle, make sure to avoid these black hat techniques (this is not an exhaustive list of black hat techniques). These practices are considered bad practice because they do not benefit the reader or web visitor, and are most often used to trick the search engines.

**Keyword Stuffing** – Keyword stuffing is when you pack a long list of keywords onto your site. This could be on the web page itself, or in some of the backend parts that were previously mentioned. Keeping each page to one or two keywords at most will prevent this from happening.

**Unrelated Keywords** – It would seem illogical to use unrelated keywords on your web pages, but it's considered bad practice to use unrelated keywords for the sake of getting a few extra hits.

**Duplicate or Mirror Content** – This is when content is duplicated or slightly rewritten for the sake of optimizing more pages, or to piggyback off another's SEO content. Even if you are duplicating or rewriting your own content, it will still be punished by the search engines.

**Hidden or Tiny Text** – Hidden text is when text is the same color as the web page background, and the text consists of keywords. Tiny text is similar, except it's small and hard to read. Both examples are considered inappropriate because the text isn't meant for the reader, but for the search engines

## Conclusion

You are now on your way to creating a solid keyword strategy and to optimizing a website that gets found online and attracts quality traffic. Keep in mind that a keyword strategy is not a “set it and forget it” type of strategy. It must be evaluated regularly, monitoring keywords for effectiveness and incorporating keywords that you might not have thought of.

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### Stirring Media LLC's Online Presence Management

...stirs the media pot to cook a stew with the flavors of your brand!

- ✓ **Create:** Always have fresh content
- ✓ **Engage:** Content your prospects want and need
- ✓ **Measure:** See what's improved, and how to improve
- ✓ **Get found, generate leads, make sales**

