

## Keyword Research and Analysis Strategies

Good search engine optimization experts perform extensive keyword research and analysis prior to starting any SEO campaign. Much like PPC marketing, obtaining a large list of related keywords gives a search marketer the opportunity to select the most profitable and high traffic terms. Without a large list of keyword phrases, choices for optimization are slim and probabilities for success decline along with it.

Armed with a good research tool (which is usually a paid version), a SEO collects a large subset of related terms in a list and analyzes the competition levels for the ones with higher search traffic first. It is important for web marketers to understand that keyword research tools are not perfect in their data by any means. This is because many of the search tools available gather data from meta search engines. Unless the search tool is directly linked to the actual search engine database and outputs data in it's entirety, there is always room for possible error since the data collection method is not perfect in itself. For search engines to provide direct access to this data without limitations would be any SEO's dream come true. This, however, is unlikely to happen because the potential for abuse is just too high.

There are two ways keyword research tools may not report completely accurate data. First, your tool of choice may output incorrect daily or monthly search traffic. Second, it may not list other keywords that are actually being searched for. Just because the data isn't perfect doesn't mean it isn't useful. We can still deduce relative search traffic strengths from the numbers given so you can feel reasonably safe, in general, when viewing traffic potential on relative terms.

Great SEOs, though, are not only looking for the most targeted and relevant search terms but are also seeking keywords and search phrases that have a decent chance of getting ranked in the search engines. Like any marketplace, there are gaps and opportunities which competent SEOs will seek out before expending a large amount of resources on optimizing similar good search phrases. This is because similar, yet relevant, search terms have varying levels of difficulty and competition levels. After collecting a large subset of related terms in a list, a SEO analyzes the keyword competition levels for the ones with higher search traffic first.

For websites starting their optimization, it is highly recommended the internet marketer goes after the low-hanging fruit. Why? This simply means to quickly rank for terms with the least competition levels and reasonable traffic volume. Many inexperienced to the SEO game, naturally lean towards the highest search traffic terms first. This is the single biggest mistake newbies make and sets them up for failure before the SEO campaign even gets started.

Let's say you sell diamond jewelry. An amateur would go for "diamond jewelry" as their first target since this keyword yields a higher number of searches. In most cases, however, the keyword which is the most intuitive is not the one to go after because it is the most generic term for that product. Rather than going after "diamond jewelry", you have a choice of related terms such as "black diamond jewelry", "blue diamond jewelry", "discount diamond jewelry", "blue diamond wedding jewelry" and so on.

Of course, you'd generally only optimize for products you actually sell so as to increase sales conversion and not mislead your visitors. Thus, if you don't offer "blue diamond jewelry", you don't want to go after it unless your expertise as a diamond retailer tells you that black diamonds are far superior to blue diamonds and you are attempting to sway potential buyers of blue diamonds to black diamonds as a strategy.

With a more straightforward approach to optimization, these search terms "black diamond jewelry", "blue diamond jewelry", and "discount diamond jewelry" show significantly lower search numbers relative to "diamond jewelry". These keyword phrases are considered tier two search terms. Jewelry and diamond jewelry are considered tier one search terms.

For most niche markets, optimizing for more specific terms and directing the visitor to the related subpage of the website converts a whole lot better than general terms. Therefore, it is a great strategy to go ahead and optimize for these tier two keywords (after you've confirmed the competitiveness of the keyword search phrase). By building up traffic for the a bigger basket of lesser competitive terms, you will be able to have the equivalent traffic levels as if you were going after one or two difficult search terms. You'll reach your goal of getting higher search rankings faster and with less resources.

There is also another benefit many fail to realize. Notice also that the terms above have the base term "diamond jewelry" in them. As an experienced SEO company, we have found that you are getting credit for the base term even though you aren't specifically going after it in your inbound anchor link text.

Furthermore, in terms of business cashflow, it is going to be much easier to rank the lower search traffic terms first and therefore start getting some sales to generate more profit that can be channeled into the tougher key phrases. Rather than hoping to rank a tougher search term which usually takes longer and costs more, it makes sense to generate profits that can be applied towards further aggressive Internet marketing and ensure that your pool of marketing funds don't dry up before getting higher search engine rankings. Once you reach the top ten rankings for the tier two or tier three search terms, your attempt to rank your website for tier one terms, jewelry and diamond jewelry or even gold jewelry, will be an easier climb to the top. - *Anthony Yap*

