

How Are Keywords Chosen



One of the first steps when starting a search engine optimization (SEO) project is to find out how many keywords to use for all pages of a website. The number of keywords needed for an organic SEO project depends on the business and what words would be beneficial to provide the site with acceptable traffic.

The first step is to generate an initial list of words. These keywords should be a short list of what your website is trying to promote and other words related to your industry. These words will provide the jumpstart needed in choosing the right keywords for the site's organic search engine optimization campaign. Once we have the list, we read through the site to see how it has used the keywords that have already been chosen and to gather ideas for additional keywords. The keywords chosen may be broad terms which may or may not work for your particular site. The words we look for are specialized words or phrases that will enable the site to have top SEO ranking and will deliver qualified traffic.

Another way keywords are gathered is to see what words are being used by competitors. We research with the chosen keywords to determine the competitive sites with the top search engine placement for this word (using the Top 5 resulting competitors). ***The aim is for keywords that are frequently used by your target audience, but do not have many competing pages.*** This way, you will have a better conversion rate. Doing this SEO research allows us to decide whether these words or phrases are targeted to your website's products or services.

Once we have accumulated enough words and phrases, we find out the monthly activity or popularity of each potential keyword. We use specific tools such as Google Adwords that

perform this duty. Google Adwords produces a list of relevant keywords based on the single keyword phrase provided. With the resulting suggestions we can obtain more potential keywords and will repeat the research of typing these words into the search engine and reviewing the sites with top search engine ranking to verify their relevancy.

After generating a large enough list of possible keywords, we decide which words target the website's subject the closest. After going through the list and taking off words that are not relevant we end up with a shorter, but more relevant, list of keywords, which we implement into the content of the site.

How Do We Use Keywords

Using keywords correctly throughout a page and a website is critical when you are trying to improve search engine ranking as part of your online marketing strategy.

The first and most obvious use of keywords during the organic search engine optimization (SEO) process is placing them strategically in the meta tags found in the html script of your website. Search engines use the meta tags as a summary of what the page is about, so placing keyword within those tags is always helpful. Keywords will also be used throughout the

content of the page. This typically does not prove to be a difficult process if the keywords optimized for have been chosen correctly, as they already reflect the **theme and intent of the page** and will lend themselves to natural use in the text.

As search engines generally give more weight to the first 200 words within a page, we make sure that keywords are used appropriately near the top of the page and proportionally throughout the page (2-3x) in headings and link text. This gives emphasis to the importance of those particular keywords and to the theme of the page. In addition to making sure that keywords are distributed well throughout the visible page content, we also incorporated them as image alt attributes to reinforce the theme of the page. However, it is important that the keywords used within alt text are truly relevant to the image.

In the SEO process of incorporating keywords into a page and a site, it is extremely important to remember that keywords can be overused and become detrimental to search engine ranking. We make sure not to **stuff keywords** throughout your meta tags and within the content as this is an indication of what is called a "spamming" technique. This practice is frowned upon by the search engines and can ultimately result in penalization. Thus it is extremely important to use keywords only as they are truly relevant to the subject matter and in a manner that makes sense to the average user.

What Makes a Good Keyword?

A good keyword can be defined many different ways. They can be very targeted or very broad. A general term may yield a higher search rate than other terms, but top search engine ranking for a targeted keyword phrase will generally give

your site a higher conversion rate. Depending on what your site would like to achieve, both general and broad keyword phrases may be "good keywords" for a search engine optimization (SEO) project.

Broad and Targeted Keywords

First, let's start with **targeted keywords**. These key terms are often something specific that your site offers. For example, Up Front by Design offers [online marketing services](#). This includes a variety of subjects, but one of them is a search engine optimization service. In this case, the term "search engine optimization" is a targeted keyword that reflects a specific service that we offer. Using targeted keywords like this will help a search engine know that your site is about many different things, some related and some not. But, once a search engine knows this about your site, it may display your site in the result set for that targeted phrase. A user that searches with that targeted phrase is more likely to buy or sign-up with your website because you offer exactly what they are looking for. In other words, the user will not have to sift through results to find what they want because the targeted keyword phrase brought them to exactly what they want.

Broad terms describe what your website does, but not to the level of detail that a targeted term does. If we use our example of Up Front by Design again, we are a company that does online marketing and website design. Since all of our services are a part of either online marketing or website design, we can use these broad term words to describe what our website does as a whole. Using these words has the potential of attracting more visitors to your site, but the visitors may not know specifically what they are looking for, which is why they typed in a broad keyword in the first place. Therefore, the user may leave the site because your site didn't have exactly what the user was looking for.

