



## Small Business Tips

# The Basics of Keyword Research

Discoverability is more than just SEO and PPC – it's a gold mine of consumer experience data. Through search intelligence, you can understand why and how people search, and how the wealth of search data available can help your business best reach their customers.

### 1. Define Brand Goals

#### LEARN IT.

Define the brand's goals for online content to determine which topics to research.

Understanding what the brand is trying to accomplish can help focus the scope of keyword research.

#### TRY IT!

What does your brand need to accomplish with the website?  
What does success look like?

### 2. Understand Target Audience

#### LEARN IT.

Understand the brand's target audience to tap into why they search and what they're trying to accomplish.

What task do they need to complete, or problem do they want to solve through search?

#### TRY IT!

Who is your brand trying to reach online?  
What are they like?  
What do they need?

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#### 3. Inventory Brand's Products or Services

##### LEARN IT.

Inventory the brand's products and services, including branded and unbranded terms, as well as synonyms and closely related terms to create a starter list of potential keywords.

Consider geographic parameters ("Kansas City") or other clarifying words.

##### TRY IT!

What does your brand currently offer website visitors?

What does your brand offer that people cannot get on the website yet?

#### 4. Evaluate Competitors

##### LEARN IT.

Evaluate top competitors to understand what areas competing brands are capturing territory in search results, and identify potential target keywords that make sense to pursue.

##### TRY IT!

What are other brands like yours doing on their websites?

What are related competing sites in your vertical doing online?

#### 5. Research Searcher Behavior

##### LEARN IT.

Research searcher behavior of the target audience if case studies or other research are available.

This helps provide a broader perspective of searcher intent beyond keywords alone.

##### TRY IT!

Check out Google Trends, Bing Ads Insights, Think With Google, education industry trade publications or blogs, and more.

#### 6. Build & Expand The Keyword Research List

##### LEARN IT.

Build and expand the keyword list using available keyword research tools, grouping related keywords by topic.

Consider branded and unbranded terms, as well as short-tail and long-tail keywords.

##### TRY IT!

- Starbucks
- Coffee shops near me
- How many calories in a latte

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#### 7. Evaluate Search Volume, Competitiveness & Traffic Potential

##### LEARN IT.

Evaluate search volume, competitiveness and traffic potential to select final keyword targets.

Narrow list to groups of most important target keywords for which to optimize digital and content assets

##### TRY IT!

Based on relevance, search volume and competitiveness, begin narrowing the keyword list to your ideal targets

#### 8. Identify Content Gaps To Fill

##### LEARN IT.

Evaluate whether your website offers content that fulfills searchers' needs you identified in keyword research. Create a content plan to create material that serves the intent of searchers who use these queries. Look at what search features and content currently rank in search engines for these terms for inspiration.

##### TRY IT!

Brainstorm content ideas based on keyword research and content gaps.

#### Free tools for SMBs to check out:

Google auto-suggest

Bing auto-suggest

[Google Trends](#)

[Answer the Public](#)

[Entity Explorer](#)

[Google Keyword Explorer](#)

[Wordtracker](#)

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