webmechanix
PROFESSIONAL ONLINE LEAD GENERATION

Seven Steps for
Internet Marketing Success

1. What is all this "keyword" business really about?

A critical, but often neglected part of an Internet lead generation campaign is called **keyword research.** This is always one of the first steps in our process; it's often the most rewarding.

Keyword research is vital to the success of any Search Engine Optimization (SEO) project, as your website will be modified to include those keywords in not only the code, but the content as well. Putting the extra effort into this research will save a lot of time in the long run.

You've Got to Start Somewhere

It can be an overwhelming task at first, but there are many tools out there to help find the perfect keywords for you. The simplest and cheapest (free!) would be Google's Keyword Tool. This offers you an in-depth look at what people are searching for on Google's search engine.

On the other hand, a great paid service to try out is SEOmoz's Keyword Difficulty Tool. If you sign up for an SEOmoz membership, you'll also gain access to almost all the other research tools you'll need during the SEO process. Good news: they have a free 30-day trial.
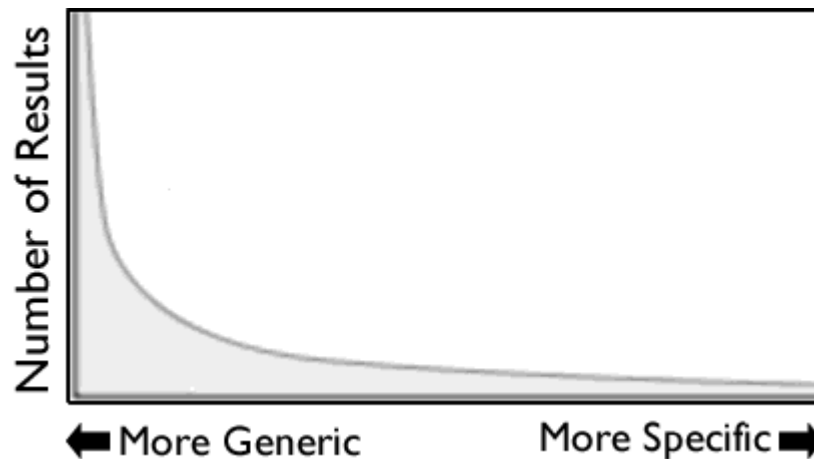
The "Big Daddy"

First, start off selecting your primary keyword or phrase -- we call it the "**big daddy**." This will be the focus of most, if not all, of your content. Each page should target one of these "big daddy" terms.

Next, select your **secondaries** (keywords or phrases that are related to the "big daddy"). It's okay to be ambitious and choose one or two secondaries that are more on the competitive side. Use 5 to 10 secondaries on each of your subpages.

The Magic of the "Long Tail"

Most of your search engine traffic will be from a combination of the primary and secondary keywords. However, the **long tail effect** could bring in just as much -- if not more -- traffic than the actual keywords you are targeting. For example, the phrase "search engine" is found in related queries such as "search engine marketing," "search engine optimization," "search engine consulting firm," etc.

When adding up the visits to your website that come from long tail (more specific) searches, you may be surprised to find how much traffic you are getting from those terms.

How To Determine Your Competition

An important metric to consider is KEI, or the Keyword Efficiency Index. This value signifies how difficult a keyword will be to rank for. To determine this value, divide the number of queries for the term into the amount of competition. In WordTracker, competition is measured by "IAAT," or "in anchor and title."

For example...

Keyword: "cut flowers cheap"
Searches: 83; IAAT: 73
KEI: 1.14

Keyword: "cut flowers"
Searches: 29; IAAT: 999,000
KEI: 0.0

The higher the KEI, the better odds you have of ranking for that phrase. Using the above data, we can see that ranking for "cut flowers" will be much more difficult than "cut flowers cheap." In almost every case, the shorter phrases will be harder to rank for.

Getting Visitors In Your Service Area

In many cases, small businesses only provide products and services to a limited service area. In those situations, it's important to **include the geographic region in the keywords**. A carpet cleaning company in Baltimore, MD, will only want to attract the attention of homeowners and businesses in the Baltimore area. Site visitors from outside their service area will not result in any lead generation. Remember to include the geographic location in both the site content and meta data.

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Using our own service's page as an example again (http://www.seobywebmechanix.com/internet-marketing-services-virginia-dc-maryland/), you'll see how we've targeted areas specific to Virginia, Maryland and DC. It's sprinkled in the content, it's in the meta data and it's also in the URL.

2. **What's the story behind "content architecture?"**

Where content is concerned, many may think that it's just the actual copy that matters. *False.* Your site's layout and architecture are incredibly important as well. If a search engine is unable to navigate, or "crawl" your site, the pages will most likely not appear in their results.

Why do I need a sitemap?

Sitemaps have two valuable uses:
- they help the visitor easily find what they're looking for, and
- acts as a page full of intra-site links for search engines to find your content.

In addition to the sitemap living on your website, it's important to create an XML version to submit to Google Webmaster. You can use a website such as this one to create the XML for you (follow the on-screen directions), and then share that XML with Google. Note that the automated creation of an XML sitemap may take several minutes on a larger site.

Keep it Clean

Good, tiered organization of your site is valuable to the visitor and search engines alike. Users will be able to easily navigate from your homepage, to a subsection, to a subpage. Google will be able to prioritize content based on how far down your directory structure it is.

For instance, pages on the root (www.mydomain.com/page.html) will be seen as higher importance as those buried in subdirectories (www.mydomain.com/folder/folder/folder/page.html).

Are people clicking where you want them to?

Assuming you don't have the budget to do an eye-tracking usability study, Google Analytics' In-Page Analytics feature is going to be your best bet.

After installing Analytics on your site, log in to your account and click the "Content" link on the left navigation. Then select "In-Page Analytics." Some browsers/versions are not supported. We've found it works best in Firefox and Google Chrome.

When it opens, you will see your homepage with percentages on top of your images and links. This tells you which percentage of your visitors clicked on what when they first got to your site.

In-Page Analytics should answer the following questions:

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- Is my page layout optimal for what I want users to accomplish on the page?
- Are my users seeing the content I want them to see?
- Are my users finding what they're looking for on the page?
- Are my calls to action motivating or visible enough?
- Which links are users clicking?

More information and troubleshooting is available here.

Wait... why do I need to link to my own pages?
It's all about the anchor text. Anchor text is the text portion of a link (ie. "eye-tracking usability study" is anchor text from a link in the previous section).

These links are important because you can spice them up with your targeted keywords. Each page should have links to other pages within the copy. The anchor text should *almost always* include a "big daddy" or secondary keyword. Don't use anchor text like "click here," "visit this link," etc. It won't tell search engines what that page is about.

From a usability standpoint, intra-site linking keeps users on your site longer. The more time spent on your site means a higher chance of making a sale/conversion.

Once you've written all your content, go back through and find some instances on each page that would be a good place for an intra-site link. You may be surprised how easy it is if you're working with quality, SEO'd content.

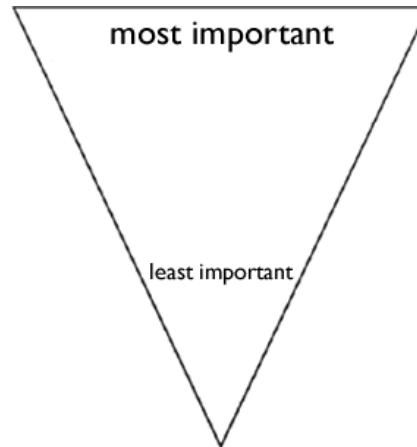## 3. <u>Why is content the king of the web?</u>

If a user is coming in from a search engine and not typing in your URL directly, chances are you aren't sure which page they're actually going to get to first. **It *may not* be your homepage.** Therefore, every page needs to be equally as engaging, have a purpose and have a call to action (CTA). Otherwise, the user will "bounce," or leave your site. (NOTE: In Google Analytics, this is the "bounce rate" figure you see on your dashboard.)

The headings and subheadings (or headlines) of each page are obviously the most important part of the content. If a reader has no interest in the title of your content, why would they read any further?

Your page-specific targeted keywords need to be sprinkled into the corresponding page's content. Shoot for a keyword density of around two or three percent. Keyword density is simply the number of times that phrase appears compared to the total number of words on that page. There are dozens of websites that will calculate keyword density for free; our favorite is Textalyser.

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In copywriting, there is a standard known as the inverted pyramid. The importance of the content is arranged in a manner where the most crucial copy is highest in the page. This is done for two reasons:

- the most important content is probably also the most interesting to read; and,
- if the content you've written is too long and needs to be shortened, it makes it easy to find what's least important.

most important

least important

Last, but *definitely* not least, keep posting new content to your site while keeping your target audience in mind. This could be as simple as installing an RSS feed, or if you're dedicated to making frequent updates, installing a blog.

Writing content in a company blog that's linked from your website (ie. http://blog.mydomain.com) will provide valuable, fresh content -- especially if it's written with your targeted keywords in mind. Wordpress is a very common software package used for setting up your own blog, and is known for their "famous five minute installation." (NOTE: You must have access to your FTP and database server to install.)

4. <u>Is your site a credible resource?</u>

Without the quality content you read about in the last section, your SEO campaign will most likely go nowhere. But, once you have some valuable copy, other people should start noticing. There are two major types of credibility:

4A. Search Engine Credibility

If the search engines determine that you don't have quality content -- even if you do -- your rankings won't be where you want them to be.

The Power of the Backlink

Inbound links -- also known as "backlinks" -- from external sites are crucial to the success of your SEO campaign. You won't get this if you don't have that quality content you read about in

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the last section. There are two factors at play here: the *total number of backlinks* you have and the *quality of each site* that is linking to you.

The Other PR

Don't fret, we aren't talking about writing a press release. On Google, a site's quality is measured by PR, or "page rank." A number of factors influence PR. If you're a math wiz, you can check out the iterative and algebraic calculations for it. Assuming you don't hold a PhD in applied mathematics, let's break it down into a few components:

- Number of backlinks from quality sites
- Number of outbound links to quality sites
- Number of pages on your site (hastily adding tons of new pages to an existing site will decrease PR; never adding new content will have a similar result)
- Directory structure/hierarchy of your site

4B. End-User Credibility: References / Testimonials

We aren't just trying to prove to Google that your product/service is amazing. The end-user needs to be convinced, too.

What do others think of your business?

If you have some smokin' hot testimonials, share them! Some sites have a special testimonial page, but what's the harm on putting them on other pages as well? Consumers want to know others are impressed with what you're offering.

Namedropping Permitted

Have some "bigwig" clients? Are you a member of the BBB? Put their logos on your site and show off your hard work! (PS. Perfect place for an outbound link.)

5. Does your website have a clear goal?

If you've read this far, it's clear you're quite invested in your site. But for what reason(s) exactly? In most cases, you're trying to increase your leads and sell a product/service.

Your Call to Action (CTA)

A clear CTA -- whether it's a big button, a block of text, or your phone number in a big, bold font -- is what's going to get you the leads you're seeking. The CTA should **always** be above the fold of the site (not having to scroll down to see it) and stand out from the rest of your content.

A few examples from our own site, http://www.seobywebmechanix.com:

- The very top of our homepage asks "Could your site get more leads? Enter your website address to find out." It then has a text field where the visitor can submit their URL. Bing, bang, boom. That was pretty easy, right?

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- We use that same CTA on all of our subpages as well, just a little smaller and to the side.
- Our toll free phone number is in the top right corner in a bold font on every single page.

What happens when the visitor doesn't respond to the CTA? Am I out of luck?
Not yet. Rewind to our section on quality content. If the CTA didn't grab the viewer's attention, there's still a chance your quality content will suck them back in and spark some interest. However, if your CTA is ineffective *most* of the time, it's probably time to re-strategize.

6. My site has been SEO'd. Am I done?

Negative. **Ongoing marketing** is critical to the success of your Internet marketing campaign.
- **Email Marketing**
  Have a special offer to send out? New product/service? New, interesting blog entry? If none of those apply at the time, how about a monthly newsletter just to check in with your customers and let them know all the exciting things going on?
- **Pay-Per-Click (PPC)**
  The most immediate way to drive traffic through an Internet marketing campaign is a PPC campaign. Since a large majority of web searches are performed using Google, AdWords is a great place to start. We could write a whole paper on just PPC, but here are the basics:
  - AdWords appear all over the Google content network, including search result pages on Google.com, Gmail, external sites that display AdWords ads for a profit, etc.
  - You bid on your targeted keywords. If you outbid your competitors, your ads will appear above theirs.
  - You don't pay for the number of times your ads are displayed (impressions). You only pay for actual click-throughs. A successful PPC campaign results in approximately two or three percent of visitors clicking on your ad. Read more on click-through rates (CTR).
  - When your pre-determined daily budget is depleted, your ads stop displaying for that day and resume the next.
- **Tweet, tweet!**
  - Times have changed. Kind of. Word-of-mouth advertising has been around since, well... forever. The difference is that with the technology available today, we can track that word-of-mouth advertising... because a lot of it is typed. Check out a free tool we use all the time: TweetDeck.
- **Continuous Content Development (CCD)**
  - Keep posting fresh, quality content to your site and/or blog. Your visitors (and the search engine crawlers) will keep coming back for more.

  With the combined power of Facebook and Twitter, web content has the ability to "go viral" within minutes. Setup a Facebook and Twitter account for your business and

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update it frequently. Then continually track how many people are tweeting about you and following you on Facebook. This can be easily found using a (paid) tool at SEOmoz called Open Site Explorer.

7. When will all this work pay off?

Soon! First, it's time to start tracking your web conversions. We in the biz call it -- you guessed it -- **conversion tracking**. Conversion tracking is different for every customer, because it all depends on what you're trying to accomplish with your site. Here are some common examples:

- **Form submissions**: track how many people fill out a form on your website (requesting a quote, contact forms, etc.)
- **Purchases**: this only applies if you're an e-commerce site; how many visitors are actually making purchases and where are those visitors coming from?
- **Email registration**: kind of like form submission tracking, but in this case we're just capturing the user's email address (and possibly their name)
- **Site visitors**: keep up-to-date with your site traffic and other metrics at Google Analytics
- **Call tracking (telephone routing)**: buying phone numbers and using a specific one on each of your different forms of advertising (and your different PPC campaigns, if applicable); all the numbers route to your main contact number

It's a lot of work. Number crunching, cleaning up source code, writing ads that generate lots of traffic, developing landing pages... oh, and all those steps above too. The experts at WebMechanix are here to help you double the number of leads you're getting now. Guaranteed.

Dominate the natural search results. Show-up when prospects are looking. Make more money. Brag about it to your friends. Contact us today.

About the Author:
Dayne Kaufman has been in the SEO industry since 2004, starting as an intern at a small start-up in Richmond, VA and working his way up to a content specialist for the Food and Drug Administration right after college. He has a strong passion for Internet marketing and everything it encompasses, but most of all, loves turning customers into raving fans. Send him your SEO questions at dayne@seobywebmechanix.com.