
BASICS OF STRATEGIC KEYWORD RESEARCH



SOFTNIK TECHNOLOGIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Importance of Preliminary Target Market Analysis	4
Keyword Research = Knowing Your Customer	4
Learn Everything You can About Your Customer	4
Learn Everything You can About Your Competition	5
Generate Your Primary Keyword List!	5
Using Keyword Suggestion Tools	6
Remember that Keyword Research is about People.	6
Think About Negative Keywords	6
Pay Per Click Advertisements	7
What About the Search Volume Counts?	7
Getting Started with Competition Research	8
Study the Top Ranked Web Page Titles and Search Result Snippets	8
Perfecting the Best Web Page Strategy	10
Web Page Strategy - Things To Do!	10
What is the purpose of the web page?	10
Identify the primary keyword phrase and craft a good web page title	10
Your web page description	11
Identify the secondary keyword cluster for the web page.	11
Headings!	11
Do Link Out When Required	11
Images and Videos	11
Create Pauses Within Your Web Page	12

Get Rid of Distractions	12
Tabulate and Record	12

Importance of Preliminary Target Market Analysis

Strategic Keyword Research is More About Knowing Your Customer and Less About Using a Keyword Tool!

The web is full of articles, tips and ebooks on **keyword research**. Almost all of them explain how easy it is to find keywords by pressing a few buttons in some software or web application!

Keyword research is an extremely important part of **marketing your online business** and is not as **mindlessly robotic** as clicking a button!

Keyword Research = Knowing Your Customer

Strategic keyword research is not about finding words that people type in.

It is really about knowing your target market.

The ultimate aim of any keyword research is to connect your customer to your product or service. You can do that only by knowing more about your customer.

Learn Everything You can About Your Customer

Before you jump in and start typing phrases into keyword suggestion tools, spend a day or two (or even a few hours) analyzing your target market.

1. Define your target market. Who is going to use your product?
2. Learn about your target market. What are their interests and fears? What problems will your product, service or website solve?
3. What kind of questions do they pose at discussion forums?
4. How do they explain their problems?
5. What are their opinions about existing products and services that attempt to solve their problems?

6. If you get emails from prospective customers, what words do they use to express their problems?

Learn Everything You can About Your Competition

1. List your direct and indirect competition. How does the competition attempt to solve your customer problems? Can you do better?
2. Who are the leading competitors? How long have they been in business
3. Do they have a blog? What do they discuss often?
4. and much more...

Generate Your Primary Keyword List!

Fortunately the Internet and the search engines make it very easy to research this and more. You can use Google to find your competitors, forums where your customers hang out, the problems they discuss, their opinions about your business and that of your competitors, etc.

Keep a Notebook and Pencil

Spend some days browsing the web. Keep a notebook and pencil or your favorite text editor handy and visit as many discussion forums as you can. **Write down the words** your prospective customers use. Find the various **industry jargon** related to your product or service. Write it all down.

Once you have completed the above steps, you have your primary keyword list. Remember that you did not generate your primary keyword list using any keyword suggestion tool.

Once you done the preliminary target market analysis, you are ready to improve your keyword list using keyword suggestion tools.

The first step in **strategic keyword research** is learning everything you can about **your customers**. Browsing discussion forums and social media sites used by your target market will familiarize you with what your customers discuss and **how they express themselves**. This in turn will help you gain **powerful insight** into the kind of keywords you will want to target.

Using Keyword Suggestion Tools

The second step in your keyword research is validating your preliminary keywords and enlarging your keyword list.

You will need to make use of search engines and keyword suggestion tools for this purpose. Here are two you could use.

1. [Google Keyword Suggestion Tool](#)
2. [adCenter Labs Keyword Forecast](#)

As we often like to repeat, don't make the **mistake** of thinking that the keyword suggestion tool is more important than **your target market**. Blindly accepting what these tools tell you will cause you more problems than they solve. Use the knowledge gained from the earlier customer research to make **your own decisions**.

Remember that Keyword Research is about People.

Whenever you come across a keyword phrase that has a high search volume, try to think about the **intent behind the search**. How will you handle someone who did that search if he or she landed at your site?

Take a lot of notes while doing this!

Add the new keyword phrases into your mix and sort these based on the probable intent behind the search. Always remember that many of these searches are also from people who are probably not your target market.

Think About Negative Keywords

These are the words that appear in searches you are interested in but reveal a totally different search intent.

For example, if your product is a Windows "**seating plan software**" and you see searches for "**seating plan software for ubuntu**" it is obvious that "ubuntu" is a negative keyword for you.

Quick Tip

Google keyword suggestion tool allows you to save the keyword data to CSV files. You can then import the contents to Keyword Builder / SEO Lab and then access these data at any time (even when you are offline).

Pay Per Click Advertisements

One of the most important factors that contribute to the success of **Pay per Click Campaigns** is the use or non-use of **negative keywords**. Google earns a lot of extra money simply because many people neglect this!

We will be discussing more about negative keywords and **Pay Per Click Advertising** in the upcoming articles in this series.

What About the Search Volume Counts?

Be aware of the search volume counts, but never base your keyword selections based on absolute values. You can create your own search volume gradation system. For example, you could grade the keywords on a scale of 1 to 5 based on the **relative search volume counts**.

Getting Started with Competition Research

Quick Tip

Competition Strategy Studio is a powerful and easy method to research competition!

You can simply type in a keyword phrase and get all the top ranked web pages, the titles they use and more from across all the three top search engines. The data is presented in clean tabular format and accessible at any time afterwards.

[Click Here For a Free Trial](#)

Available for both Microsoft Windows and Apple Mac OS X.

The next step in your web page development is some basic **competition research**. There are a number of reasons why you would want to study your competition.

1. To improve your products and services and make them better than that of your competition.
2. To find your competitions' weak points and and exploit them
3. To learn the way your competition operates so that you can always stay ahead of them.
4. To generate your own ideas that are better.

Study the Top Ranked Web Page Titles and Search Result Snippets

The initial competition research mainly involves analyzing the top ranked web page titles and search engine snippets. This information will help in assigning the primary and secondary keywords to web pages, creating good web page titles and description tags and so on.

Get your **keyword list** and pick the most important phrases, the ones you want to use for your main web pages and articles.

Use google and search these keywords. You can try both phrase search (keyword phrase within double quotes) and the basic normal search.

Study the web pages that are listed in Google. You will notice that almost all of them contain the keyword phrase in the page title. Do you notice titles that grab your attention?

Think back to your **customer research**. Do any of these page titles appear to solve the problems they mention? Do you think that the person who did the search will want to click after seeing the title or snippet.?

Do the page titles appear relevant to the intent behind the search?
Do you see possible junk or automated pages in the results?

Do you think you can create better web page titles?

As usual, take notes. Make a list of good web page titles, descriptions and the URLs you will want to analyze later.

Perfecting the Best Web Page Strategy

One of the best things you can do to attract targeted traffic to your web sites is to perfect the best **web page strategy** for **each and everyone** of your important web pages.

Web Page Strategy - Things To Do!

Pick your most **important web pages**. These include your home page, the pages that get you the best results, the pages where most of your visitors land the first time, etc.

You should always do this **one web page** at a time. This makes it very uncomplicated because you can simply concentrate on one thing at a time.

What is the purpose of the web page?

Identify the purpose behind the page. What is **your aim**? What should your ideal customer do when she reaches this page?

Is your **call to action** very clear and is it easy for the visitor to see it without scrolling? This is what graphic designers call **above the fold!**

Identify the primary keyword phrase and craft a good web page title

Identify the **main keyword phrase** for the page and then craft a powerful **web page title** for it (the keyword phrase will form part of the title)

This is where the data from the earlier **keyword and competition research** will be put to good use! Use your keyword phrases and existing web page titles (from competition research) that already rank well to come up with good titles.

Spend time creating good powerful headlines. You could even split-test your titles and headline to find the one that works best.

Available Now!

Keyword Strategy Studio

A powerful software for finding unique and new keyword ideas that are based on the **current trends, popularity and buzz.**

Download a free trial copy today.

Most people use Keyword Suggestion Tools like the Google Keyword Tool to generate keywords. Keyword Strategy Studio uses the a **different approach** to do a deep analysis of the subject you are interested in and digs up almost everything on the base keyword you type in!

Download a free trial copy today.

Your web page description

Create a **good description** for the page and use it for your "description" meta tag.

Description tag is often used by search engines as the snippet that appears along with the search results. If you don't provide a description tag, the search engine will construct one from the contents of your page.

Identify the secondary keyword cluster for the web page.

Identify **secondary keywords** for the page. You should always have a group of secondary keyword phrases for each page. You can use these keywords as part of headings, normal web page text, anchor texts, image alternate or title texts, etc.

Headings!

A good main heading will always catch the attention of the site visitor and will prompt him or her to read further.

Use good sub-headings to **structure the web page** and to create pauses when the visitor browses your web page.

Create useful bulleted lists that will make your web page interesting and useful. Use your secondary keywords in headings if it makes sense.

Do Link Out When Required

Identify the pages that you will link to. Remember to use **sensible keywords** as **anchor texts** especially when you link to other pages on your site. Use "no-follow" if you are linking to pages that shouldn't get "link juice".

Images and Videos

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Pick the **images** and **videos** that will be used in the page. Use images to catch the attention of users.

Remember to use good alt texts and titles for images. These also help in getting listed in Google image search. This is especially useful if your website deals with photography, clipart etc. Use keywords from your secondary keyword cluster whenever possible and is required.

Create Pauses Within Your Web Page

Identify parts of the page that are likely to stand-out when you scroll through the page. Use colors and images to create **the pauses**.

You can use these pauses to call the visitor to **action** and get the response you really want. For example, this web page uses the numbered icons to create pauses. We could have inserted an extra link or a button at the end of each numbered section to make a **call to action**.

Get Rid of Distractions

Look through the full page. Are there any distractions? Get others to check your web page and observe while they are using it.

Make sure that the web page does provide **the user** with whatever you set out to provide.

Tabulate and Record

Tabulate the data for each of your important pages into a **spreadsheet**. This will help you plan your over all **site wide strategy** and to make changes easily whenever required.