

Gather Your Keywords to Improve Search Engine Positioning

We all do this - when we need to look something up on the Internet, we automatically fire up our favorite search engine. For many web surfers, their home page is already set to Google, Yahoo, or MSN. In that search engine we punch in a few words that relate to the information we need. Almost immediately we are overwhelmed with a batch of results. But how much of these results do we actually read through? The majority of web surfers scan through the first page or two, and perhaps even through page three. If a web site is positioned beyond page three they are basically out of luck. When web surfers punch in keywords related to your products and services, does your site come up within the first few pages of the search results? If it does, you're likely running a very successful business in which visitors come to you without much need to advertise.

Most web site owners haven't built their website with reaching search engine users as one of the site's goals. In this article I will pretend that you own a shopping web site called PrettyDresses.com. Your web site is very lovely, full of pictures of dresses in all the latest styles and trends. Anyone who has found your site is very impressed with the selection of products and beautiful pictures. But you ask yourself, why is your traffic so low? Why isn't anybody finding my site? What can I do? The answer is quite clear and the problem is quite easy to solve.

Almost without thinking, web surfers (more specifically web searchers) will pop open their search engine and type in something like 'evening gown'. As this is their first thought, it should also be yours. Does your web site contain the words and phrases that web searchers are using to find your products and services? Are those words found on your website many, many times, only a few times, or not at all?

On regular intervals search engines crawl the web, reading and collecting information on the sites they come across. As they come across your website, they look for what the most frequently used words and phrases are to determine just what it is that your web site is all about. The better your web site does at effectively using the phrases that are being searched, the higher up the list your web site will be displayed on web searches. If your web site's content does not match what is being searched, it will not be found. It is as simple as that.

It should be clear by now that you should be starting to put together a list of keyword phrases to include within your web site. This list should include your products and services and any related items. There are many people searching for dresses as you are reading these words. Do they all use the exactly same phrases - of course not. Your mission is to discover as many of these phrases as possible and which phrases or words are used most frequently. The list should be prioritized based on which words are used in searches most frequently.

Brainstorm. Sit and think about what your web site is really all about. Close your eyes and picture your website as a store with customers looking around. What are they looking for? What are they asking you for? "Excuse me, I'm looking for a..."

Think about which words relate to your products and services. What is another name for dress - a gown, evening gown, sun-dress, a cute black dress, etc.

Be sure to ask family and friends, and clients and associates. Which phrases or words might they use when looking for your products and services? You are soon to discover a pattern. The most commonly used search terms will start to emerge.

Which keywords do high end competing web sites use, that carry products and services that are similar to yours? Their research may save you some of your own.

Pretend to be different types of customers. Be a customer that knows exactly what they want and jot that down. Also be the customer that is just looking around, or looking for ideas. This second customer may use more generic terms, while the first customer may refer to specific items. What other types of shoppers can you pretend to be? What about a wealthy shopper versus a bargain hunter?

Are some of the words on your list often misspelled? If so make sure to jot down the incorrect spelling as well. Poor spellers also have money to spend.

Are your products or services focused on a specific geographical location? If so, be sure to jot down the neighborhood, quadrant, city, state, and even country. A visitor may not want to drive too far from home and may therefore search for 'dresses in south Dallas'.

Also be sure to include the different variations of your selected keywords - for example: dress and dresses.

Remember to keep a balance between keeping your pages readable by both visitors and search engines. An over-optimized page will include many, many keywords which will [improve your positioning](#) with search engines, but may sound like nonsense and unprofessional to a real human visitor.

Don't turn away potential customers after they've found you. Some search engines have been known to punish web sites that attempt to trick the system with keyword spamming on their web pages.

Now its time to get to work. Use these ideas in this article to [optimize](#) your web site's content. Be sure to include the words and phrases that your potential visitors have in mind. Don't forget about your web site's title and description meta tags, which are only read by search engines. With some hard work and careful analysis you'll be sure to see a lot more traffic in your future.

About the Author

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