

Recently a client asked us to conduct some keyword research for her upcoming online, search engine marketing (SEM) campaign.



She wasn't sure what her keyword options were, or how to do it.

Before we began our research, we needed to know what our client's goals were. We began by asking a few questions:

1. What product or service are you advertising?
2. Is there a discount, time sensitivity, or special message that will draw them to click on the ad?
3. What is the call to action - download now, call today, don't miss it, 20% discount, etc.?
4. Is there a landing page specifically designed for this campaign?
5. What do you hope to accomplish with this campaign, e.g., clicks to website, calls, downloads, increase in mailing list subscribers, etc.?

Based on the answers to the above, we begin our research using a variety of tools, such as [Google's Keyword Planner](#), [HubSpot's Keyword Research tool](#), and [Moz's Keyword Research tool](#).

Why do we use so many tools?

To help us get a full view of the keyword research and to help us determine the best terms for a campaign based on the site content.

It also helps us define the keywords needed for landing pages specific to a campaign.

Keyword research is conducted to help determine the keywords associated with a topic,

Conducting Keyword Research for Killer Online Ads

product, service or industry you are looking to be found for on a search engine. In most cases, the terms found through this research aids in website copy development and coding search engine optimization (SEO), as well as with online advertisement keyword buys.

Once the keyword research has been completed, we cross check the list for:

- Monthly search volume by geographic location,
- Device and device by location,
- Keyword rank difficulty and competition score,
- Cost per click,
- Estimated click-thru rate,
- Estimated impressions,
- Suggested bid, and more.

Keyword Research Outcome - Example

Here you can see the geographic region where the campaign will be conducted. You can also see the device and device by location, which is important because mobile and tablet play a key role in this campaign.

Geo Targeting	Device and Device by Location	Avg. Monthly Searches
Long Island	Total - Tablet Only	1,071
Rhode Island	Total - Desktop Only	2,619
New Jersey	Total - Mobile Only	709
New York	Total - New Hampshire	156
New Hampshire	Total - New York	481
Vermont	Total - Rhode Island	88
Maine	Total - Massachusetts	2,566
Connecticut	Total - Barnstable County	190
Massachusetts	Total - New Jersey	531
Barnstable County	Total - Maine	81
	Total - Long Island	
	Total - Connecticut	264
	Total - Vermont	41

Here you can see one of the ad groups we will be focusing on and the keyword research associated with the ad group.

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Ad Group	Max CPC	Keyword	Keyword Type	Avg. Monthly Searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Estimated Clicks	Estimated Impressions	Estimated Cost	Estimated CTR	Estimated Average CPC	Estimated Average Position
Selling A Home	\$2.50	selling your home	Broad	170	0.89	\$6.08	1.93	95.26	\$0.61	0.02	\$0.32	2.58
		sell your home	Broad	70	0.84	\$3.09	2.25	145.32	\$3.38	0.015	\$1.50	2.48
		selling a home	Broad	90	0.91	\$3.12	0.17	73.58	\$0.21	0.002	\$1.22	2.39
		selling home	Broad	30	0.82	\$0.00	2.5	96.31	\$1.18	0.026	\$0.47	2.24
		sell home	Broad	30	0.79	\$7.11	5.4	307.98	\$4.85	0.018	\$0.90	2.45
		buying and selling homes	Broad	10	0.78	\$3.70	0	0	\$0.00			
		selling a home as is	Broad	10	0.55	\$3.65	0.04	7.23	\$0.09	0.006	\$2.07	1.45

Click to view full-size image.

Based on ad group segments, such as “Selling a Home,” look for the keywords with the highest estimated click rates, average position, and bid price.

Competition/Difficulty also play a key role. The higher the competition number the more difficult it is to rank for that term on the major search engines.

Bold terms are those recommended for online ad campaigns and web site pages.

Long-Tail Keywords: Generally a phrase, these terms are used for people who are past the information gathering stage of the buying process. They are in the evaluation and purchasing phases of the [buying life cycle](#). Terms in this section should be used for ads and webpages meant to convert visitors to buyers, rather than being used on generic web pages or ads.

Short-Tail Keywords: One- to two-words, these terms are used for people seeking information; and who are not quite ready to buy. Use these terms on more generic or informational pages on your website, such as About Us, Home, Terms and Conditions, Staff information, etc. When considering online advertising, use these keywords to build brand awareness rather than for sales or conversions.

Creating the Ads

Once we have a solid set of keywords, we organize them into the marketing funnel structure as shown here.

Traditional Sales Cycle



In the awareness phase, use short-tail keywords and terms that are likely to entice the general searcher seeking more information about the search criteria. These people are generally cool leads and often take the longest to convert to a sale.

The evaluation phase of the funnel requires long-tail keywords because they are in the process of evaluating information. They've done the initial research and are now looking to take the next step.

In the purchase phase, location-specific keywords and calls-to-action phrases like “free trial,” and “get a quote” are needed here.

Killer Ad Examples

Top of Funnel

In Love With Cape Cod?	22
http://www.homeoncape.com/Buyers	32
Find that one special home of	30
your dreams. View our listings.	31

The keywords for these ads are rather broad, such as “cape cod homes,” or “houses for sale.”

In the ad, the website landing page URL has “Buyer” in it. The location is listed in the headline. Terms like “home” and “listings” are used. This as is meant for those who are dreaming about owning a home in Cape Cod, but are not ready to buy. It’s a place where people start to gather information about a realtor, their site, and listing services.

Tip: The numbers you see on the side are the length of copy in each line. Online ads have restrictions for each line of copy.

Middle of Funnel

Calling Cape Cod Buyers	23
http://www.homeoncape.com/Realtor	33
28 yrs exp selling & buying in Cape	35
Call us for a consultation.	28

The middle of the funnel ad is for those looking to make a connection and start a relationship with someone. The keywords for these ads have the location but are still rather broad, such as “real estate cape cod.”

This ad’s URL has the term “Realtor” in it, which is a keyword in itself. It also has the geographic location, as well as solid call to action.

Bottom of the Funnel

Cape Cod Waterfront Homes	25
http://www.homeoncape.com/CapeHomes	35
Homes for sale and rentals in many	34
\$ ranges. Stop by or call today!	32

In this example, the ad is very specific, geographically. The keywords for these ads also have the location, such as “cape cod open houses.”

The ad title, URL, and copy include a keyword phrase “Cape Cod Waterfront Homes,” “CapeHomes” and “Home for sale.” The call to action is clear. The ad will also be supplemented with a phone number and [geotagging](#) feature for those searching on mobile devices.

The Landing Page

Now that you have the ad, the next thing to consider is the [landing page](#) (video). Creating a compelling landing page that’s going to create a sense of urgency, provide the visitor with the information needed, and the ability to complete a form are must-haves.

Parting Words

Before you begin, you must know what you want the user to experience both from the ad and on your website. Know where in the marketing funnel you are capturing leads. This helps to

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inform you of the information to share and if they are a cool, warm, or hot lead.

Interested in online advertising for your company? Learn more about some of the [online advertising services](#) we offer, including Google AdWords, Bing Ads, as well as Facebook and LinkedIn advertising.