



SEO FOR ECOMMERCE CHAPTER 1



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INTRODUCTION

This series of eBooks is aimed at those with an eCommerce website who want to improve their search engine performance.

In this chapter, we'll cover how to carry out keyword research, using Google's data and industry tools, learning from your competitors – and even taking tips from Amazon.

KEYWORD RESEARCH

A 'keyword' is a word or phrase that is people use to find answers to questions, goods or services, or anything else they want to find out from a search engine. As an eCommerce marketer, digging into the keywords your target audience is vital to:

- Get insight into what your customers want
- Identify the phrases and topics to target in your categories, page titles and content

Why is keyword research so important?

Keyword research will inform your entire SEO strategy, from content optimisation, to technical on-page optimisation, to site architecture (all of which we'll cover in more depth in subsequent chapters). This will allow you to increase your visibility, improve the relevance of your traffic, reduce irrelevant traffic or leads, and enhance user experience.

For eCommerce, you should concentrate on:

- Product pages
- Category pages

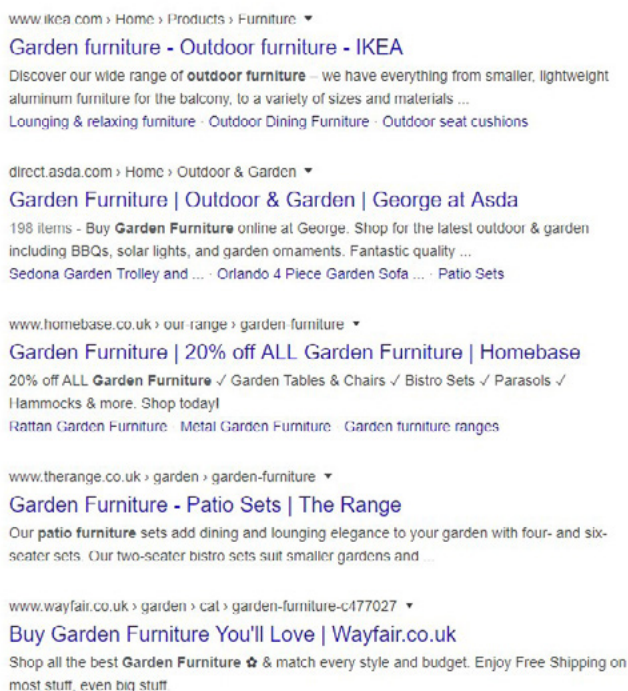
We will cover landing pages, contact pages, FAQs and your blog in a later chapter.

The majority of an eCommerce's site's keywords will need to be tailored around long tail product searches, for example: "king size bed frames on sale" as opposed to the informational search "choosing bedroom furniture": the second shows a higher intention to actually make a purchase.

Why are long tail keywords so important for eCommerce SEO?

Long tail keywords are usually longer and more specific phrases that people are more likely to use when they're closer to a point-of-purchase. Not only do long tail keywords tend to convert better than terms from the 'fat head' or 'chunky middle' (terms with greater volume), as they bring more targeted visitors to your site. They have less search volume, but that means they're usually less competitive.

A quick Google search for the generic 'garden furniture' reveals, unsurprisingly, the top 5 ranking webpages are from big, well-known brands. Trying to outrank them is a very ambitious objective – and probably unachievable in the short term.



(Note that Google also recognises and returns similar terms in searches – in this case 'patio furniture' and 'outdoor furniture' and included as synonymous with the original 'garden furniture' search.)

That's why it makes for sense to target more specific, detailed search terms. In this case, an example would be "round patio table 200cm".

As a rule of thumb, you need to optimise category pages for broad keywords and product pages for long-tail keywords.

How to start your keyword research

The results from this research will help inform how you optimise the content on your product and pages.

Get Googling

Start by running a search query on Google using what you consider to be the most common things your audience would search for or ask. The key is to try to step outside of your business and really think like a customer, who is more likely to use natural, casual language than industry jargon or the terms you use to refer to your business.

As well as studying the results returned by Google, another simple way to discover common searches is to use Google Autocomplete – the suggestions that appear in the drop-down menu when you start to type in your search. Google bases these predictions on how often others have searched for a term (although it can also be influenced by your own search history) and they can also provide you with a hint of the motivations behind them.

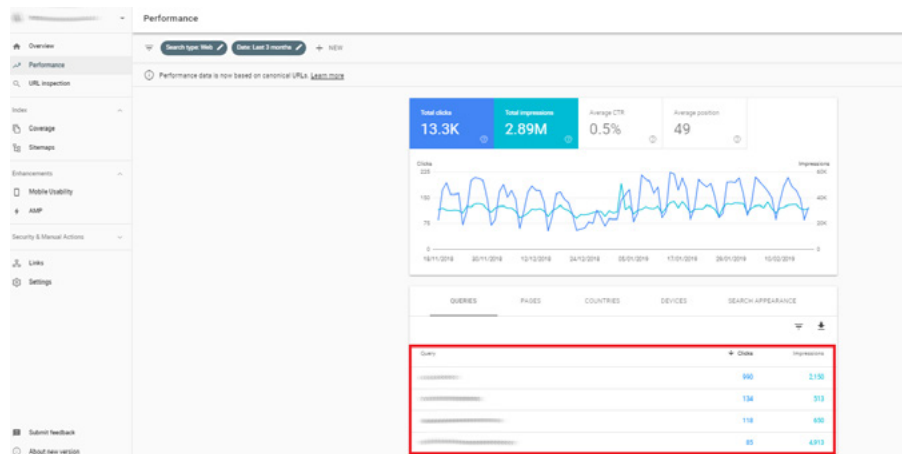


Google Search Console

This tool allows you to check a number of important aspects of your site's place in Google search – from indexing to visibility, average rankings, errors, notifications and more. It also shows some of the search queries people used to click through to your website. What better place to begin your keyword research than to find the search terms already driving clicks to your site?

To getting started, log in to Search Console and select 'Performance'. You'll then see a graph something like the below. You can filter (and compare) by search type (web, video or image), time period, query (where you can enter specific keywords), page, country, device or search appearance (Web Light results or AMP non-rich results).

For this exercise, you're looking at 'Queries' – searches people have made to get to your site ('Clicks'), or searches that have led one of your web pages to appear in Google search results ('Impressions').



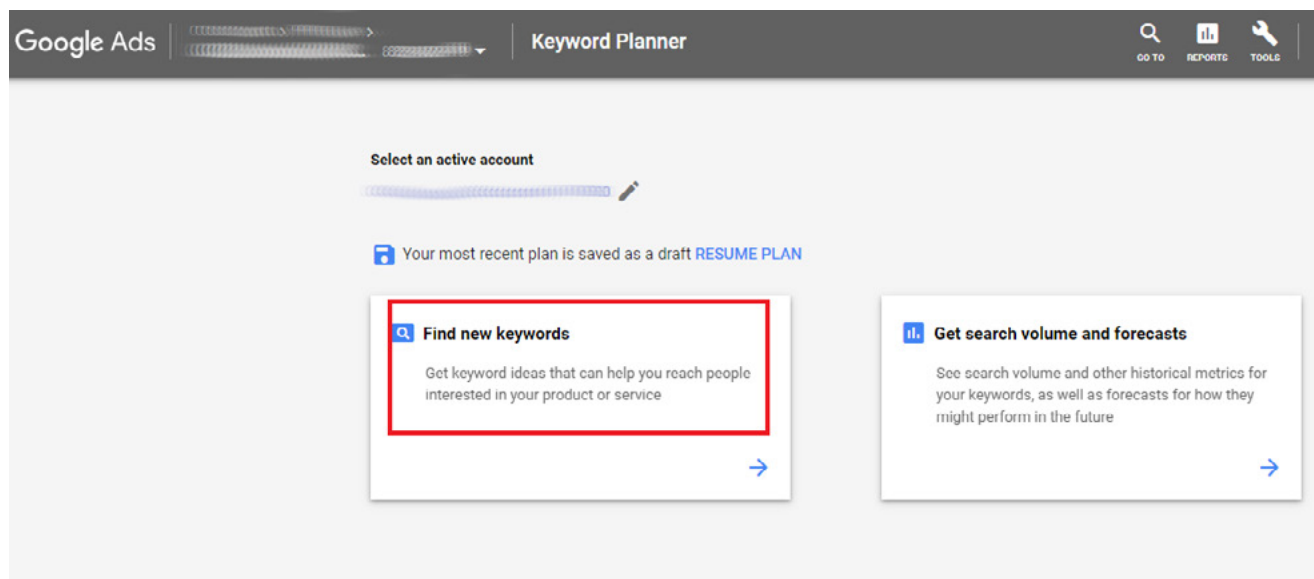
When you've selected this, export the list – either to Google Sheets, or as a CSV. This will allow you to filter the terms by clicks, impressions, click through rate (CTR) or position (whereabouts you appear in Google's search results for that keyword). You can use this data to:

- Discover whether keywords that you expect to see actually do appear; if not, your site might not have enough useful content relevant to those keywords.
- Find lower ranking results which you can look to either optimise for or create new content to target (filter by position to filter out the top 10 or top 20 results).
- Identify queries with high impressions and low CTR. These queries can help identify where you can improve your titles and snippets to match your users' interests.

Google Keyword Planner

Part of Google's Ads (a paid search, or PPC, platform), this tool is designed to provide advertisers with the search volume and potential costs of specific keywords - and it's also a great tool for building out your keyword list for SEO purposes.

Log in to Google Ads (or set up an account), select 'Find new keywords' and type in a keyword to begin generating new ones:



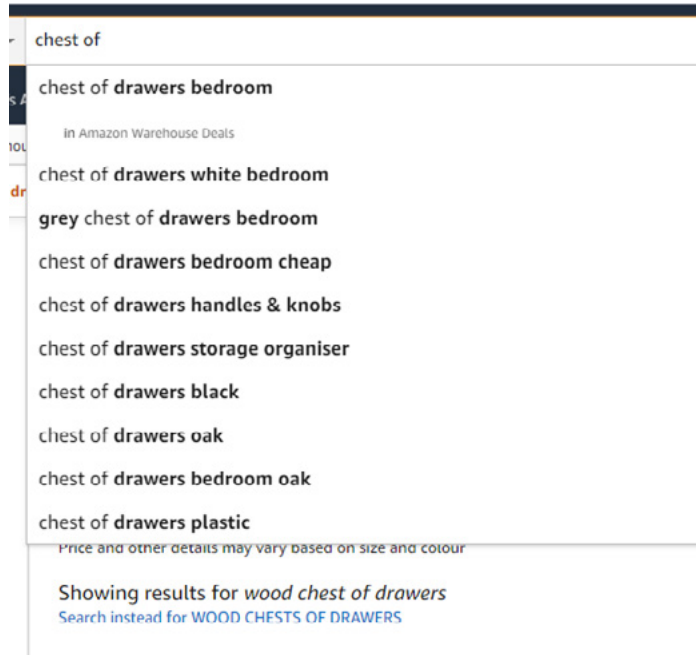
The suggestions provided will show you the average monthly searches carried out for each keyword and the competition level (High, Medium or Low). The latter is the measure of how difficult it will be to rank for a particular keyword; although this is based on PPC bids, it gives a general indication of how popular the keyword is and industry competition for SEO purposes.

If you can be detailed with the keyword with which you begin your search, you will generate more specific – and therefore relevant - keywords.

Mine Amazon

First, head over to Amazon and enter a keyword that describes one of your products.

When you do, Amazon will list suggestions around that keyword. This is great for informing product keywords to use for your own website.



The keywords Amazon suggests tend to be very targeted, long tail, keywords (note also the suggestion of “Search instead for WOOD CHESTS of DRAWERS”).

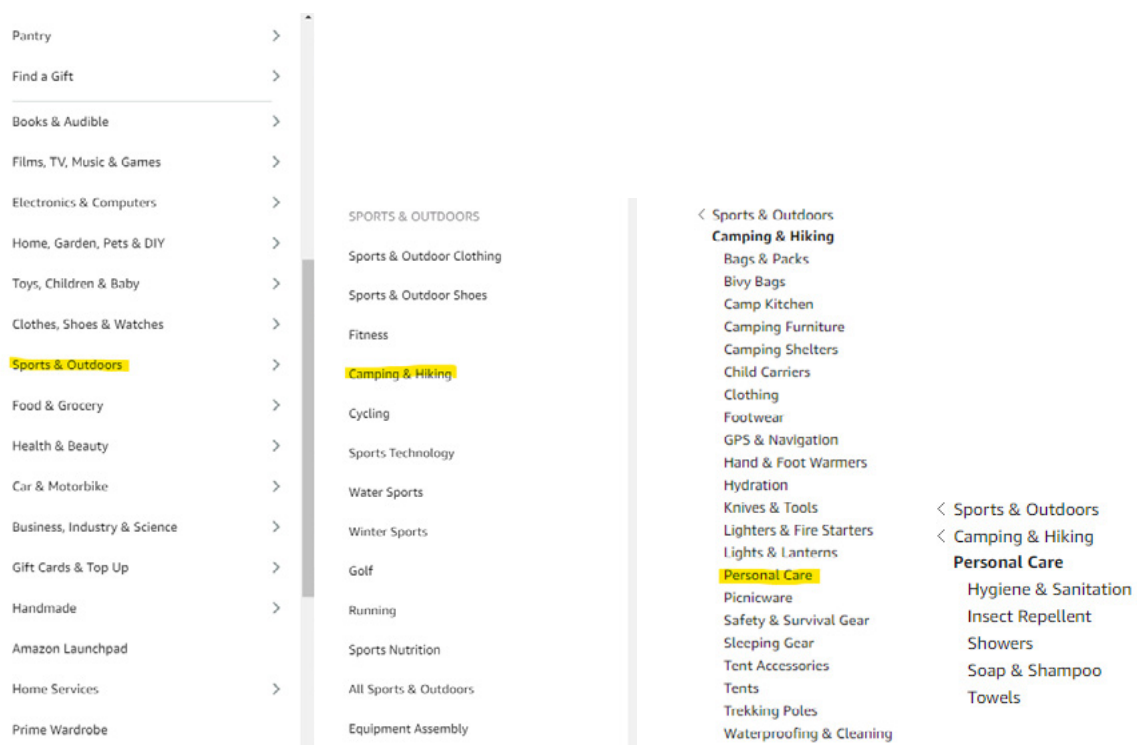
Rinse and repeat for the most important products on your site.

Category page keywords

As we touched on earlier, you can use broader keywords for category page than for specific product pages as they are less likely to convert; but that doesn't mean you shouldn't put time into discovering how to optimise – and structure (more on this later) – them.

An obvious first step is to visit competitor websites to see how they structure their categories. Amazon is again a source of inspiration; with such an enormous range of products, the retail giant has got category organisation, and naming, down to a fine art. If you narrow their list of departments to subcategories, you can get very granular. For example, if you sell accessories for hikers and campers, you could identify category names like this:

This last one, DDA, can deliver the most accurate value of each step in the conversion funnel by taking the guesswork out of choosing a model that's right for your audience. It also paints the clearest possible picture of success in your account by helping you to determine where to invest more.



This gives you a great list of suggestions for the categories on your site, and you can repeat the exercise for each line of your products. As well as giving your insight on the best keywords to use for categories, it might even make you rethink how had previously organised them in the navigation

COMPETITOR RESEARCH

Find out what - and who - is already ranking for the keywords you've chosen

The reason that they're ranking strongly suggests they are satisfying user intent as Google is viewing them as highly relevant and authoritative. What are the pages that rank offering customers? How are they satisfying the query? If your site aims to sell and the high ranking results for your term are offering information, this could be a sign you're targeting the wrong terms and may need to refine your keyword choices.

You can do this by simply carrying out a manual search and studying the organic results.

Find out which keywords your competitors are ranking for

This will give you an indication of competitor keyword strategies and shows which particular competitors are ranking well for target keywords. It will also allow you to see where there may be gaps in your current keyword list, and to identify long tail opportunities to target.

SEMrush

While this is a paid-for tool, you can open a free account to carry out top-level research to identify the highest search volume keywords for each of your competitors.

Navigate to the 'Organic Search' under the 'SEO' category on the right-hand side of the screen:

| Keyword | Pos. | Diff. | Traffic | Traffic % | Volume | KD% | CPC (USD) | URL |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------|-------------------------|
| ebay | 3 + 3 | 0 | 367,200 | 10.07 | 20,400,000 | 86.95 | 1.18 | https://www.ebay.nl/ |
| ebay.com | 1 + 1 | 0 | 72,400 | 1.98 | 90,500 | 81.67 | 0.59 | https://www.ebay.com/ |
| ebay usa | 1 + 1 | 0 | 39,600 | 1.08 | 49,500 | 81.96 | 0.53 | https://www.ebay.rica |
| iphone 7 plus | 0 + 7 | +1 | 8,040 | 0.22 | 201,000 | 86.28 | 1.40 | https://www.ebay...4266 |
| ebay us | 1 + 1 | 0 | 7,920 | 0.21 | 9,900 | 73.42 | 0.63 | https://www.ebay...rica |
| smart watch | 4 + 4 | 0 | 6,335 | 0.17 | 90,500 | 89.16 | 1.48 | https://www.ebay...2365 |
| how to cancel a bid on ebay | 1 + 1 | 0 | 5,687 | 0.15 | 12,100 | 79.73 | 1.38 | https://www.ebay...4013 |
| collectibles | 1 + 1 | 0 | 5,687 | 0.15 | 12,100 | 76.97 | 0.56 | https://www.ebay...8810 |
| ebay motors | 4 + 4 | 0 | 5,152 | 0.14 | 368,000 | 73.91 | 1.02 | https://www.ebay...tors |
| iphone 6 plus | 6 + 6 | 0 | 4,525 | 0.12 | 90,500 | 86.52 | 0.49 | https://www.ebay...4814 |



By entering a competitor domain in the search bar at the top you get a list of keywords organised by the amount of estimated traffic driven to that website by the keyword (just the top ten in the free version of the tool). You can also view the search volume (the number of searches carried out for that term) and the landing page (URL) per keyword.

The paid version offers a lot more capability in terms of filtering, expanding date ranges, and downloadable data but the free option is still a great way to get started with identifying your competitors' best keywords.

It's also useful for pinpointing keywords that you don't rank for but for which they do, as this will provide you with potential keywords that could be valuable to your business and the types of content your competitors are using to rank for those keywords.

YOUR WEBSITE STRUCTURE

You're now in a position to use the results of your keyword research to optimise your site's structure. This is how you set up your navigation, category pages and product pages.

Why your site structure matters

It's obvious why a physical store needs to be well laid-out: to allow customers to navigate the aisles and find what they want easily, as well as hopefully picking up some extras on the way.

The same goes for your online store: if your customers can't easily find what they're looking for, they'll soon leave your site for a competitor's – and a high bounce rate is not only bad for conversions, but may indirectly impact your rankings as Google sees it as a signal your site isn't providing a good user experience.

A well-organised and intuitive navigation also helps Google to find, crawl and index all your important pages with ease, especially if you have a large site. You need to make it your sitemap available by submitting it to Google Search Console. Find out how to do this here.

eCommerce site structure

The point of your website is to sell your products; people will only do that if they can find what something that meets their needs quickly. This means your site structure should focus on:

- Getting relevant content – and products - in front of them.
- Making navigation as simple as possible (a rule of thumb is no more than three clicks from where they start).

This is where your keyword research comes in to allow you to create highly relevant URLs and content for your category and product pages.

This is what we'll cover over the next chapters in this series:

SEO for eCommerce - Chapter 2 Technical & On-Page Optimisation

SEO for eCommerce - Chapter 3 Content marketing and digital PR

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ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

YOUR BESPOKE ORGANIC SEARCH (SEO) ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

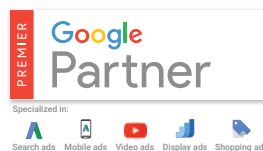
REQUEST NOW



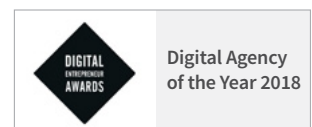
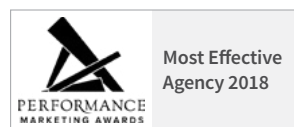
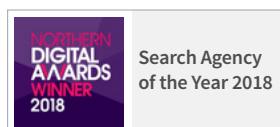
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OUR AWARDS



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