

7 Costly **Misconceptions about** **Search Engine** **Marketing (SEM)**

1. Split-testing only has to be done once or once in a while
2. We only need to target the top 50 – 200 keywords
3. Broad Match keywords will give us the best response
4. We only need one adgroup that contains all of our keywords
5. We only need to target the 'search' network; the content network isn't worth the effort
6. Conversion tracking is not a big deal
7. We only need to adjust our bids by adgroup, not by individual keywords

Tune-Up Your Adwords Account in 7 Steps!

Every day I get emails from marketers using Adwords to promote their business, and it's not working out nearly the way that they had hoped... Dismal click through rates (CTR), barely workable click costs, and no matter what they do, they can't "figure out" the Adwords system.

While Adwords is a phenomenal way to get laser-targeted traffic to your site, it does have a steep learning curve...

And that's pretty daunting when it's your own time and money on the line!

I've boiled Adwords down to the following seven step checklist. Although it's not intended to be a cure-all for every Adwords problem, these seven steps are the

first to take to make serious headway on your account!



1) Are you split-testing both your Adwords ads and your sales letter or landing page?

This is the biggest error of them all! When I say "split-testing" does your blood curl, or do horrific memories of high school algebra class flash into your head? It doesn't have to be that way!

Testing is, in essence, simple. By "simple" I mean that all you want to do is figure out whether ad "A" is better than ad "B." The definition of "better" being more clicks or sales. That's it!

Begin split-testing by making sure that every adgroup in every campaign has two ads in it. Depending on the size of your account, this could take a while, but trust me, it's well worth it.

After a while, each ad will have a different number of clicks and a different CTR.

Now use the free tool at <http://www.splittester.com>. Plug in your CTR and number of clicks, and it will run a statistical test telling you how confident you can be in the results. (In advertising, we usually use the 95% confidence level.)

After you've determined which ad is better, you've got your "control" ad. Now, write a new ad, and attempt to beat your control.



For split-testing your sales page or landing page, there are tons of available scripts, both free and paid. In some cases, your shopping cart system or ad tracker will have this feature built in.

Continue to repeat this process on both your Adwords ads and your sales pages or landing pages and you'll quickly notice an enormous cumulative effect.

2) Are you using all the potential keywords in your market, not just the obvious ones?

If you don't have at least 500 to 1,000 keywords, you're leaving highly targeted traffic on the table! Don't be content to only use the 10 to 20 major keywords and phrases. For example, I have a campaign that has 2,015 keywords -- all to sell an ebook on how to get rid of bronchitis! I recommend you do your keyword research with <http://www.keywordtopia.com>, my personal favorite.

Keyword phrases that are two to five words long are called "long tail" keywords. Individually, each one may only account for a few clicks a month, but together represent a massive amount of traffic.

(In next month's article I'll reveal a super-slick way to spy on your competitors and find out exactly what keywords they're already using on Adwords!)



3) Do you use the three match types and negative keywords?

Do you know what brackets and quotation marks have to do with Adwords? Many advertisers lose targeted clicks by only using what is called "broad match". If you're not tripling your keyword list by using phrase match (putting the keyword in quotes) and exact match (putting the keyword in brackets) you're losing out on traffic that is much more targeted and relevant than just using broad match!

In fact, some savvy advertisers delete their broad match keywords and solely use phrase and exact match to increase their ROI. Negative keywords are words and phrases used to prevent your ad from showing on unrelated or untargeted searches.

Say, for example, you're selling Condos in Costa Rica and one of your keyword phrases is "Costa Rica". You'll save yourself tons on your Adwords bill by using negative keywords like, -surfing, -travel, and -tourism.

This will prevent your ad from showing if someone searches for "Costa Rica Surfing" or "Costa Rica Travel", and that's good because those searchers probably aren't interested in what you have to offer.

4) Do you have your keywords and adgroups organized correctly?



Do you have only a couple of adgroups per campaign, stuffed with hundreds (or thousands) of keywords? If so, this is hampering your results!

Relevance is key on Adwords. And since it's impossible to write ads that are targeted and specific for hundreds of different keywords, you need to "break out" keywords into their own adgroups. For high traffic keywords, this could mean one keyword, with the three different match types, per adgroup. For lower traffic keywords, have no more than 15 to 21 keywords per adgroup.

After you "break out" the keywords into new adgroups, write more focused ads, using the keywords as much as possible in the ads. Your CTRs will raise across the board.

5) Are you using the content network effectively?

A common fallacies that you hear is that you should only have the "search network" turned on and the "content network" turned off. It's true that the traffic from the content network in some markets doesn't convert into sales as well, but that's not always so. I have several clients where the content network converts better than search. How will you know? You won't, until you test! Adjust your bids for the content network up or down until it reaches your desired cost to make a sale or get a lead, but to get those numbers you'll need to read the next step...



6) Do you have conversion tracking turned on?

Not all keywords are created equal! Some keywords convert into sales at 3 to 9 times as often as others. Setting up "conversion tracking" inside your account will tell you exactly which keyword is responsible for a sale. If you don't have either conversion tracking, Google Analytics or some third-party tool in place, you'll never know. Pareto's principle, or the 80/20 rule, applies to Adwords as well. A small portion of your keywords are bringing in most of your sales. Wouldn't you like to know which keywords to nurture and grow, and which ones to delete?

7) Do you adjust your bids by keyword?

Again, not all keywords are created equal! Every keyword will convert into a sale or lead at a different rate. Adjust your keyword bids up or down until you hit an average cost per sale that works for your business. You'll find that some keywords won't work, even if you get the click for only 1 cent! Delete 'em, and move on. Continue to monitor and adjust the keywords that are left.

I hope this article has turned you on to some quick and dirty ways to get the most out of your Adwords efforts! Day by day, work on your account and apply these steps, and you'll soon see real progress.



Shea Ellison delivers aggressive maintenance of Adwords accounts and will manage over \$500,000 of yearly spending for clients this year.

<http://StrategicAdwordsManagement.com>

Keywords and Essential Linking Strategies

Keywords tell the search engines what your page is about. It is the only way the search engines can tell what your page is about, otherwise they guess.

If you are not using keywords in a strategic way, they (the search engines) are going to guess what the page is about and there are ways of telling it through Google's Webmaster Tools and such, and they will tell you what they think a page is about. That way you can know to be able to optimize your keywords in a better, more structured way so that they are looking at your keywords and saying, "Okay, now I understand what your page is about."

Inbound links tell the search engines how important your page is. The keywords are critical. On page optimization really is more about avoiding the mistakes than it is about propelling your site to the top of the search engines. You need to know the keywords and you need to do the on-page optimization so that as you build links and you start to rise in the search engines, you are rising for the right keywords and showing up in the right searches where your customers and prospects are searching for you.

5 Must Know Tips for Improving Your Organic Search Engine Ranking

1. Keywords tell the search engines 'what' your page is about
2. Links tell the search engines your page is 'important'
3. Having your primary keywords in the anchor text of your inbound links is 'CRITICAL'
4. When it comes to your inbound links 'Quality' is vastly more important than 'Quantity'
5. Acquiring high-quality, one-way, inbound links will do **more** to improve your organic search engine ranking than everything else you do COMBINED!



The more links you have, the more high quality inbound, incoming links, the more your pages will start to rise in the search engines.

By knowing what your page is about it puts your page in the proper index. How many and the quality of your links is what they use to determine where you should be placed on the index. Realizing this, and I know this is an oversimplification of any search engine algorithm, but nonetheless it is at the core.

Obviously they include a multitude of factors that help them deliver the very best results for their users.

I can't overemphasize the importance of taking the time to carefully research and choose your specifically targeted and strategically placed keywords. It is not uncommon for the average user to spend a month or more systematically researching all the possible keyword variations. 'Month' was a fill in the blank.

Big businesses spend billions on keyword research and selection, and billions more on tap as the market becomes even more crowded, as globalization infiltrates every industry in the modern world. In order to be successful in marketing your business online, you must master the understanding of keywords – what they are, how to find them, and what to do with them.



The Basics

Essentially, keywords or keyword phrases (now coined as 'long-tail keywords') are the words people use to search for information, for academic research, for buying research, or to find your products or services or any number of reasons. However, a financial transaction only takes place when an individual uses just the right combination of keywords to locate the product or service they want to purchase. This only occurs as a continuous process when a user enters...

Keyword/keyword phrase > SERPs > click-through to website > locate specific desired product > add to cart > e-commerce transaction completes.

Most people only focus on their keyword research on the 'nouns' related to products or services. The savvy marketer puts themselves in the shoes of their prospective customer and reverse engineers the research / buying process. By doing so, the subtle differences between simply researching a topic versus how the words change when a person is ready to buy.

For example...

Say you were looking to purchase a new HDTV online. You might start your research at Google by simply entering "**HDTV options**". As you might guess; you'll probably be presented with millions of sites that contain those two words. Actually there were only 6210 results. (Note: In this case I only put the double



quotes around the search terms to delineate them here for you.) However, in the real world, by putting double quotations around your search phrase, you are telling the search engine that you only want results where that exact phrase exists. Where if you just enter the same phrase without the double quotes, the search engine will look for any pages where all the terms in your search phrase exist. (This includes in any order and they don't even have to be next to each other.) That is our first guideline to conducting precise keyword research; always surround your search query with **double quotes** to ensure the most **accurate** results (exact match).

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Google™ "HDTV options" Search [Advanced Search](#) [Preferences](#)

Web

[Understanding HDTV Options by dummies.com: Yahoo! Tech](#)
You may find that choosing the HDTV that best suits your needs isn't the easiest feat to accomplish.
[tech.yahoo.com/gd/understanding-hdtv-options/153471](#) - 48k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[Key features and connectivity options - Ultimate HDTV buying guide ...](#)
CNET has tech advice, product reviews, how-to guides, and expert commentary on the personal technology used by business professionals.
[www.cnet.com/4520-7874_1-5108580-5.html](#) - 90k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

[HDTV Center](#)
In a world full of DVDs and HDTV options, choosing a screen size can be tricky. We've got the straight story on the future of 4:3, and why (or why not) ...
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[House Hacker :: ZDNet Offers Thorough Rundown on Numerous HDTV Options](#)
ZDNet Offers Thorough Rundown on Numerous HDTV Options.
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Now I didn't include the paid advertisements on the right side of the page, but there were five; three of which were from Comcast, Best Buy, and Target.

This information will surely give you a good overview of some of the terms and technologies involved so that you can go back to the search engines and refine your search more specifically.

Now perhaps you decide to search based on one of the technologies you learned about in one of the articles such a "plasma HDTV" or "lcd hdtv" (another important note: search engine queries are not case sensitive); or you may decide to search on a particular brand such as "viewsonic lcd hdtv". However, not until you enter a very specific key phrase such as "lowest overall price viewsonic lcd hdtv" do you see very specific pages that provide you with specifically what you want to *buy*.



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Google™ [Advanced Search](#) [Preferences](#)

Web

[Viewsonic hdtv](#)
www.Newegg.com Great Bargains on ViewSonic HDTVs. 3 Day Shipping Offer. Buy Now!

⚠ No results found for "lowest overall price viewsonic lcd hdtv".

Results for [lowest overall price viewsonic lcd hdtv](#) (without quotes):

[ViewSonic N3260W 32 in. 720p LCD HDTV - Reviews, Best Prices and ...](#)
720p LCD HDTV for the **lowest price** by comparing ViewSonic N3260W 32 in. ...
consumerlistingsite.info Overall Rating: Not Yet Rated; Purchasing Power ...
www.bizrate.com/tv1/viewsonic-n3260w-32-in.-720p-lcd-hdtv-pid407360821/ - 72k -
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[ViewSonic N3260W 32 in. 720p LCD HDTV at BizRate](#)

Comparison shop for ViewSonic N3260W 32 in. 720p LCD HDTV at BizRate. Compare stores & find **low prices** on Electronics. Read product reviews before buying a ...
www.bizrate.com/tv1/products__keyword=32+inches+lcd+hdtv+ready.html - 76k -
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[Shopzilla - Find low prices on Viewsonic N1630w 16 In. Lcd Monitor ...](#)

Overall Rating: 9.1 ... Viewsonic N1630w 16 Widescreen LCD HDTV - 10000:1 (DC), 8ms.
... Shop wide selection PC Monitors **Low Prices & Same Day Shipping!** ...
www.shopzilla.com/viewsonic-n1630w-16-in-lcd-monitor/761371480/compare - 151k -
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Okay, I got too specific, but Google then suggested I try the same search without the quotes. Now it doesn't take a degree in rocket science to figure out where I might choose to purchase my new TV.

Ultimately, you will find sites all over the web that will rank well for the researcher or shoppers, looking for all the features and technologies such as LCD, Plasma, projection, Dolby surround sound, etc, which are all good keywords, but the winning sites are the ones that rank well for the **buyers** in the market. They understand the 'money' keywords that must be used in conjunction with the topical terms. (i.e. best price, lowest price, etc.)



So, this is your mission should you choose to accept it: **Reverse engineer** the keyword buying process for your prospects in your marketing niche, ensuring that your pages rank well for the keyword phrases your customers are using to **buy** your products and services. Once you do this, then you can build your click stream or information funnel pages to direct users to the purchase page.

Five Guidelines and Three Rules of Thumb to Find the Best Keywords

1. Try to think from your customer's perspective. The words they use to find your products or services may be quite different than what you would use. What problem are they trying to solve? If you can, *ask* some of your existing customers how they found you. What terms, what avenues, what methods did they choose to arrive at your doorstep – whether it be your virtual doorstep or literally in your store? Don't assume. You know what happens when you assume; you make an "ass" out of "u" and "me".

How do your customers think and speak? Most average people don't use technical terms or industry jargon. Ask your friends, unrelated business associates, family or others with no knowledge of what you do. *You* could uncover some gems you never would have imagined.

Start with list of every possible keyword you can think of that a potential customer may ever use when searching for the



product or service you provide. You should be able to come up with a list of 15 – 25 before you begin to run out of ideas.

Now it's time to utilize the tips, tools, and strategies we've outlined below. After implementing all of these methods you should have a rough list of between fifty and two hundred keywords or more. Then it will be time to whittle down the list to only the best keywords for your given circumstances.

2. **Be specific** – Nobody searches for a single keyword these days anymore – not even if it is unique such as a brand name like 'Nike'. You wouldn't search just for that one word; you'd be more specific such as 'Nike running shoes' or 'Nike teen soccer shoes'. The more specific you can be, the more targeted your traffic will be.

Besides, the competition for individual keywords is likely to go to competitors with very deep pockets and who have been on the Web for a decade or more. Trying to change the search engine's 'mind' or 'memory' to say that your web page or web site is better or more relevant for a particular keyword will be a long uphill battle.

Focus on the short keyword phrases or the more descriptive 'long-tail' keywords where the **competition is less fierce**. For example, if you sell information about how to stay healthy and fit through vegetarianism and moderate exercise, you would want to target people interested in health and nutrition and who like to work out and stay active. It wouldn't make



sense to target the broad or general term 'health' or 'vegetarian' – although some (Google or Yahoo might say you should include general words such as these in your PPC keyword list; but they make money every time someone clicks on your ad. They don't really care if it is narrowly target traffic that will convert. In our expert opinion, the keywords you select to target for organic SEO are the same ones to use to target in your Pay Per Click campaigns too. More on this later.

3. The defacto tool professional's use for their keyword research is [Wordtracker](#). The people over at Wordtracker have been compiling search terms for more than a decade and continue to amass all of the keywords entered into the MetaCrawler search engine across the Web over the past 90 – 120 days and organize them into a searchable database. (A meta-search engine is a search engine that sends user requests to several other search engines and/or databases and aggregates the results into a single list.)

For a variety of articles, case studies, tips, and tricks to help grow your online business visit [The Wordtracker Academy](#). They also have an excellent [Keyword Research Guide](#) in which top industry experts have each contributed one chapter to the book to provide you with many different perspectives of how to use Wordtracker to help you succeed online. Teaching you about Wordtracker is a course into itself, so use the above resources to become an expert with Wordtracker's tools and resources.



4. Review your **Web server logs**. Often overlooked by many webmasters, is what's right under your nose – literally. Most web hosts provide some form of free web analytics to reveal what search terms visitors used to arrive at your site. Often you'll be surprised that they are terms you never considered targeting. Any search terms that continually surface should be added to your list of terms for optimization.

You want to get to the top of the major search engines for your chosen keywords right? So, who's there now? Study your competitors – particularly those who hold the top five positions in Google. Consider purchasing a tool such as Web Position Gold. It's been the 'Gold' standard for nearly ten years.

Essential Link Building Strategies

Link building is the essential element in raising your web pages to the top of the search engine results – Period. Perhaps one of the most detrimental things to your top rankings is old or outdated information.

What I mean by this is that because search engine algorithms are continually evolving, what worked for SEO's just a year or two ago are no longer valid today. It is true however, that building high-quality incoming links is the single-most important strategy you can do to elevate your web pages to the top of the search engine results pages. (SERP)



The problem is that many search engine optimization consultants, and many websites are still subscribing to the old paradigms. Time was, not that long ago that the sheer quantity of links pointing at your web pages was enough to elevate your page to the top of the search results. Then there was the strategy of acquiring reciprocal links with other important sites that would produce the desired results. The reality is, that neither one of these strategies are effective any longer. In fact, the prior could be detrimental to your web pages health in the eyes of the search engines.

We see the day coming – in the not too distant future where reciprocal linking will equate to two boxers both landing their hook punch on each other at precisely the same moment; they will tend to **cancel each other out**. In essence, you simply **MUST** reevaluate your approach to this most critical component of any SEO's toolbox.

Let's review the basics or the fundamentals of proper linking tactics. Anchor text looks like this: [search engine optimization](http://www.strategic-internet.com/) (the anchor text) – which is a link to our home page at <http://www.strategic-internet.com/> Many popular programs today, such as MS Office programs automatically convert strings that begin with 'http' or 'www' and end in a valid domain extension into a properly formed hyperlink. In order to put this in a web page, the HTML code would look like the following:

```
<a href="http://www.strategic-internet.com/ ">Search Engine Optimization</a>  
< -----URL----- > < ----- Anchor Text ----- >
```



In order to get your pages to rise to the top of the search engine results, it is imperative that you get your primary targeted keywords into the **anchor text** portion of your inbound links that are pointing toward your web pages.

Driven by the question "Why do people do what they do?"

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