

White Paper: Breaking Down SEO into Four Easy Steps

In e-commerce, there's no way around search engine optimization (SEO). And with this easy SEO guide, there doesn't have to be. We can help you learn what user intent means for your keywords, get returns sooner by focusing your efforts, set realistic SEO goals and monitor your progress. These four easy steps will lead to an SEO strategy you're confident in:

- **Step 1:** Know the Three Types of Keywords
- **Step 2:** Prioritizing Your Efforts
- **Step 3:** Find What Holds You Back
- **Step 4:** Tracking Results

Tackling these four steps will improve your ranking on Google, which boasts a search market share 7.5x greater than Yahoo and Bing combined in the U.S. during 2018.^[1] By catering to Google's algorithm and SEO best practices, you get more eyes on your site. Reaching that goal starts with the top three keyword types and determining the best way to target them for your company.

Step 1: Know the Three Types of Keywords

In SEO, keywords are phrases someone would enter for specific searches and intents. It's these intentions that distinguish each type of keyword: shopping intent, research intent and local intent. Google treats these keywords differently to make sure the user gets exactly what they're looking for — which is great news for you, because that's what your company is for your clients.

You already know what needs you meet for customers, so all you need now is to know which keywords match up with that need and how that changes your SEO strategy for each type.

1.) Shopping Intent

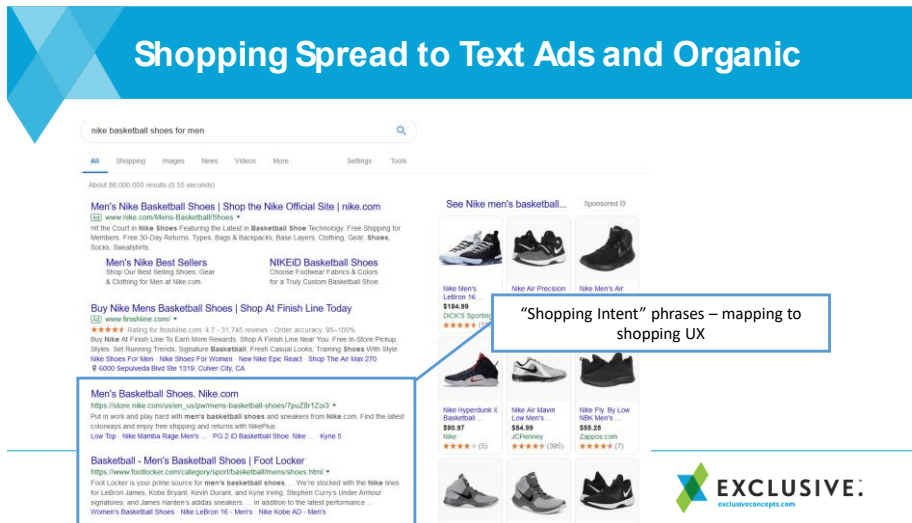
Take this below search for "nike basketball shoes for men" as an example. This user knows what product they want and they're ready to buy, so Google's algorithm will respond by showing them options for this product. To rank well on the search engine results page (SERP) in this example search, your site should be optimized with shopping intent keywords focused on the products you offer.

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Commented [VS2]: Need section headers for the steps

Commented [VS3]: Reword please

Shopping Spread to Text Ads and Organic



Category Page Strategy:

Your category page needs content with the right keywords to tell Google what a user can find there (i.e. basketball, shoes, men's). When the algorithm knows what your category page offers, it's more likely to determine that your site page will resolve the user's search for your products and rank it higher in the SERP. Where you place it on the page depends on the user experience and design for your site.

Product Page Strategy:

The approach is a bit different for individual product pages. Where your content pages are the tree trunk, your product pages are branches — and the leaves on these branches are detailed and unique product descriptions. This content should be both how you would describe your products to a customer and optimized for SEO keywords that suit the item for sale on that page. And yes, those are different from category page keywords. A shoe category page might target "men's shoes" and "basketball", but the product page includes more specific shopping intent keywords such as "arch support".

2.) Research Intent

Let's say another user is also thinking of buying new shoes, but they have some questions first. This user might look up "how to buy good basketball shoes", which is an example of research intent keywords. This intention is easy to spot since it's usually a question (why, how, what, etc.) with the goal of getting more information. And it's probably a question you've heard from your clients before, so you have that advantage when deciding on research intent keywords to target.

Start with E-A-T:

This catchy phrase is easy to remember: E-A-T (expertise, authoritativeness, trust). Establishing these with your clients (and Google's algorithm) begins with designing pages that help users.

Simple, right? You might even have something like that already. These could be blogs, forums, Q&A pages, even gossip magazine sites and more. Understanding the purpose of your research intent page determines how you should design and optimize it.

Research Keyword Planning:

If you wanted to make a resource blog or buying guide for basketball shoes, you could optimize for keywords such as “best basketball shoes”, “ankle protection” and others. You’ll notice this has some overlap with category and product page keywords, but it also covers the must-have features consumers need — even if they didn’t know they needed it.

With research intent, that’s the very reason why they came to your site in the first place. These site pages establish your site and your company as a reliable resource when a user has a question. Not only are they more likely to return, but your site is more likely to rank higher on the SERP as a result.

Other Tips & Tricks:

Beyond keyword optimization, there are certain common traits of these pages:

- Author information
- Cited sources
- Dates of publication and updates
- Headers and anchor links (allowing Google to show relevant sections in SERPs)

3.) Local Intent

If a would-be client wants to see shoes in person, the keywords in their Google search would show just that. Think of a search along the lines of “basketball shoes near me”. For a strictly e-commerce company with no brick-and-mortar store, we do recommend reading this section for best practices that may still apply to your business.

Consistent Contact Info:

The first step in local SEO is NAP consistency: name, address and phone. This information should all match across your website, Google, My Business page and all other listings you have on the internet. Google will connect the dots from there and match these pages up as all belonging to the same business.

Local Lingo:

Regional terms make for great keywords to help Google recognize your store as a place that customers can visit in-person. For example, a shop in Boston near Beacon Hill should refer to both names wherever relevant and natural to avoid keyword stuffing while also optimizing for local SERP.

Bottom Line Benefits:

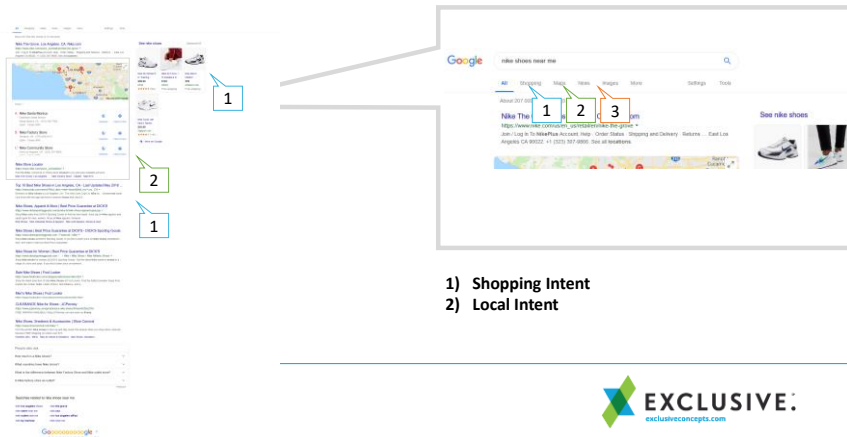
Because Google categorizes keywords by intent, these changes in keyword targeting and user experience show Google that your site pages should be re-categorized into different keyword types for different searches. When it comes to dominating a keyword and ranking well on the

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Commented [VS5]: Reword. We don't want to tell them to not read anything – perhaps they might find it educational even if they don't have a B&M

SERP, this holistic strategy can help you rank for various searches with multiple site pages tailored to the keyword types that best suit your company and your customers.

Slight Change in Keyword – New Intent



Step 2: Prioritizing Your Efforts

As with any plan, not knowing your priorities will make SEO practices seem far more overwhelming than they are. Having a coordinated strategy out of the gate will keep you right on track. Once again, this starts with knowing the need your company meets for clients and how users would type that demand as a Google search—that’s where you’ll find your top keywords. Build on that list using categorical or brand phrases like your company name or industry.

Rate your Pages:

With those target keywords in hand, turn to your site and order your pages from most to least important based on the intent and keywords you’re catering to. Your content strategy should start with the top priority pages to make sure you’ll see results quickly in the areas that you want the most.

Next, integrate these keywords into your top pages. Place your top target keywords in the title, meta description and site body copy to tell Google this page has high-quality content that will help the searcher. For the title, focusing on one or at most two keywords will be plenty.

Page Body Content:

For the page copy, your approach has to be more expansive than. Google’s algorithm will check your page for a main keyword (i.e. men’s shoes) and start looking for other keywords associated with it (i.e. arch support) to determine if your website is the most comprehensive resource for this search.

By having your target keywords naturally included in the optimized site content, you're communicating to Google that your site not only answers the question — it has detailed, well-rounded information that is most likely to match the searcher's intention.

Site Structure:

Sometimes, you'll find duplicate or outdated pages on your site. At best, you'll have several pages competing for the same keywords. At worst, Google will consider your site irreputable.

Take a close look at your site and decide which pages you'd like to consolidate, rewrite or delete. Next, check the organization of your website to determine if these updated pages should live somewhere else. If the content you have is evergreen, meaning it won't be outdated for years to come, make it a static resource. For content that's timely but will become dated, publish it in a blog.

A Good Plan Comes Together:

Combining your strategy with your list of prioritized pages will help you stay focused as you get new data back from your efforts. Follow this quick list to design a coordinated SEO strategy:

- Compare category page content with your top keywords
- Refresh old pages and create new static pages
- Focus on high-performing products
- Create a content schedule for ads, email and social sharing
- Connect with friendly authorities and bloggers to share your content

Step 3: Find What Holds You Back

Setting attainable goals is half the battle, and site optimization is no different. Not every keyword is attainable for every website and knowing why will help you gain credibility on Google instead of getting frustrated with tactics that won't work. Tailor your site to Google's algorithm by checking the following:

- Natural keywords in meta data and site body content
- Site crawl authority
- Strong technical site signals (no errors, etc.)
- Penalties for content issues (duplicate content, low-quality content, etc.)

User Experience & Best Practices:

Revisiting your site design and content with the above list in mind will break down barriers between you and ranking higher on the SERP. Follow these easy steps to an optimized site:

1. **Clean your top navigation:** Add and subtract pages from your top nav to get site authority for the top priority categories you want to focus on
2. **Blog linking:** All important content should be accessible by being spidered from the top navigation
3. **Indexation:** Consolidate your index to prevent dilution of your site's strength and fill in alt-text for site images plus any missing data or navigation links
4. **Mobile responsiveness:** More and more users are turning to mobile devices to browse and research, and Google's algorithm takes that into account

5. **UX revamp:** Have category-level filters, product reviews, easily accessible policies — basically, make sure browsers have an intuitive and stress-free experience on your site
6. **Keyword Cannibalization:** Check your site for pages fighting to rank for the same keywords, then pick one so you can use SEO practices and intralinking to help search engines make the switch

Step 4: Tracking Results

Classic reporting by Google Ads and other marketing systems will work just fine for shopping intent keywords on your top target keywords list. These reporting tools present you with bottom-line performance based on revenue, conversions, etc. Local SEO and research intents need a different approach.

Local SEO Tracking:

For local intent keywords, tracking your phone calls and Google My Business results will gauge general performance and any tests that are part of your content strategy. Google does have their own call tracking software in beta, and there are a couple low-cost options available to small businesses that offer this service.


Research Keyword Tracking:

With research intent, tracking can take many forms. Ranking for Quick Answer result listings (shown in the screenshot below) is a great way to measure success for a research intent-optimized page because Google typically displays these for quick-fix searches.

Steps

1. Gather your ingredients. Pound **cake** is one of the simplest **cakes** to **bake**. ...
2. Preheat the oven to 325 °F (163 °C) and grease and flour a **cake** pan. ...
3. Cream the butter and sugar. ...
4. Add the eggs and vanilla. ...
5. Stir in the **cake** flour. ...
6. Pour the batter into the pan. ...
7. **Bake** the **cake** for 1 hour 15 minutes.

1. [4 Ways to Bake a Cake - wikiHow](https://www.wikihow.com/Bake-a-Cake)
<https://www.wikihow.com/Bake-a-Cake>



DS: 0 TS: 0 Get **Trust metrics** with free SEMrush account - [Connect](#)

L: 70 LD: 53.4M I: 9.7M Rank: 207 Age: 2005|03|11 whois </> source Rank: 92

Adv Disp Ads: 4 Pub Disp Ads: 111K

without an oven in the microwave in a crockpot airfryer

About this result Feedback

This type of result appears at the top of the SERP, giving your site maximum visibility. Now that a potential client is on your page, you can track conversions directly from the research pages.

Planning Ahead:

These four steps will get you started with the right SEO practices for your company, but there is always room for growth in e-commerce. Consult EXCLUSIVE concepts for a free, personalized e-commerce analysis to see how our agency can help you.