

KEYWORD RESEARCH WORKSHEET

Keyword research helps you understand what topics your audience cares about so you can create content that answers their questions, solves their problems, and ranks well in search engines. It allows you to answer questions like:

- What terms are people searching for?
- How many people are searching for it?
- What format do they want to receive information in?
- How difficult will it be to rank for that search query?

This worksheet walks you through the step-by-step process of performing keyword research. Use it to organize your research, prioritize keywords, and inform your content strategy.

Remember: This is just one way to do keyword research, and there are many different approaches. Feel free to deviate from the worksheet and adapt the steps to suit your needs.

SEO Keyword Research

Please SAVE this workbook to the desktop on your computer. This way your progress will be saved correctly as you complete each section.



Step 1

Understand your customers and their goals

- The key to success with your content strategy is having a deep understanding of your ideal customer. To do this, create your buyer personas with SEO in mind.

Write down demographic information about your buyer persona (e.g. age, gender, job title, income, etc.).

- Demographics are important, but psychographic data is even more important in the context of SEO. This has to do with your ideal customer's goals, ambitions, obstacles, and struggles.

Write down as much as you can about your buyer persona's goals and the problems they face.

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- Now that you have a good understanding of your ideal customer, it's time to start thinking about how they use search engines. What terms are your target customers searching for online? What words and phrases do they use?

Write down as much as you can. If you don't have this information, make an educated guess. If you have time to interview a few of your best customers about their search habits, this is even better.

Your business may have multiple buyer personas. If so, repeat these steps for your other personas.



Step 2

Decide which topics you want to be known for

- Think about all the topics directly related to your business. For example, a topic that's related to a real estate agent is "buying a home." These are the topics people will search for online that are related to your business. They are broad topic areas with a large number of different subtopics underneath them.

Create a list of all the important, relevant topics based on what you know about your business.

Take a look at the list you just created and narrow it down to the single most important topic.

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The topic you chose above could be the topic most closely related to your business, a topic related to a product you're launching, or a topic you want to start creating content on immediately.

Use this topic to guide the rest of the worksheet.

You can repeat the steps in this worksheet for other topics later, if you choose.



Step 3

Find out what terms people are searching for online

Using the topic you chose in the previous step, "zoom in" and identify subtopic keywords that fall into that bucket.

For example, if a real estate agent chooses the topic "buying a home," some potential subtopics are: "home buying process," "buying a home for the first time," "what do I need to know before buying a home," "buying a home with bad credit," and so on.

Use your keyword research tool of choice to find queries that include or relate to your chosen topic. Some recommended keyword research tools are:

- Google Keyword Planner
- Moz Keyword Explorer
- Keywords Everywhere (Chrome extension)
- Keyword Surfer (Chrome extension)

Write down 10-15 keywords related to your core topic. This isn't meant to be your final list of keywords, just a brain dump of phrases you think your potential customers might search for within a given topic area.

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Step 4

Note search volume and competition

- Monthly search volume is the number of times per month that particular keyword is entered into a search engine. Competition refers to how difficult it will be to rank for a given keyword. Depending on which keyword research tool you're using, this number may be displayed differently.

Use your keyword research tool of choice to take note of the monthly search volume and competition for each keyword on your list above.

Keyword	MSV (Monthly Search Volume)	Competition

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- Based on the data you've gathered, choose 5-8 keywords from this list to focus on. You may want to avoid keywords with high search volume and high competition, since they will be more difficult to rank for. Choose keywords with some monthly search volume (how much depends on your industry) and low competition, which are easier to rank for.

Write these keywords down below.

- In addition to search volume and competition, it's also important to understand the search landscape for your chosen keywords. What kind of content is ranking on page one for this keyword? What format is the content in? How long is the content?

For each keyword on your list, look at the first 5 results on the first page of Google (or your chosen search engine). Takes notes on any similarities you notice in content format and content length.

Keyword	Notes



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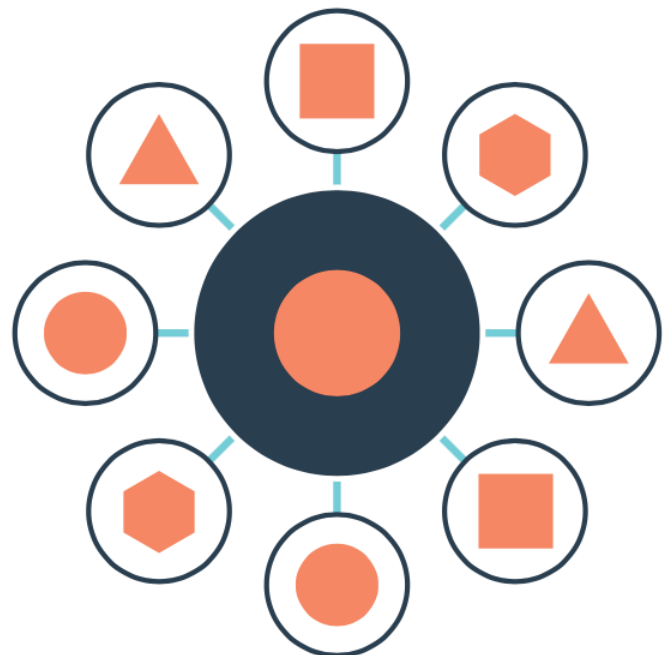
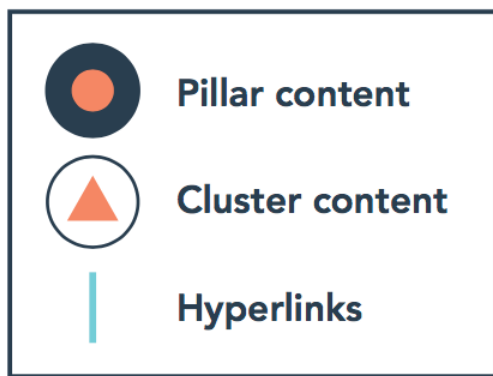


Step 5

Organize your keywords into a topic cluster

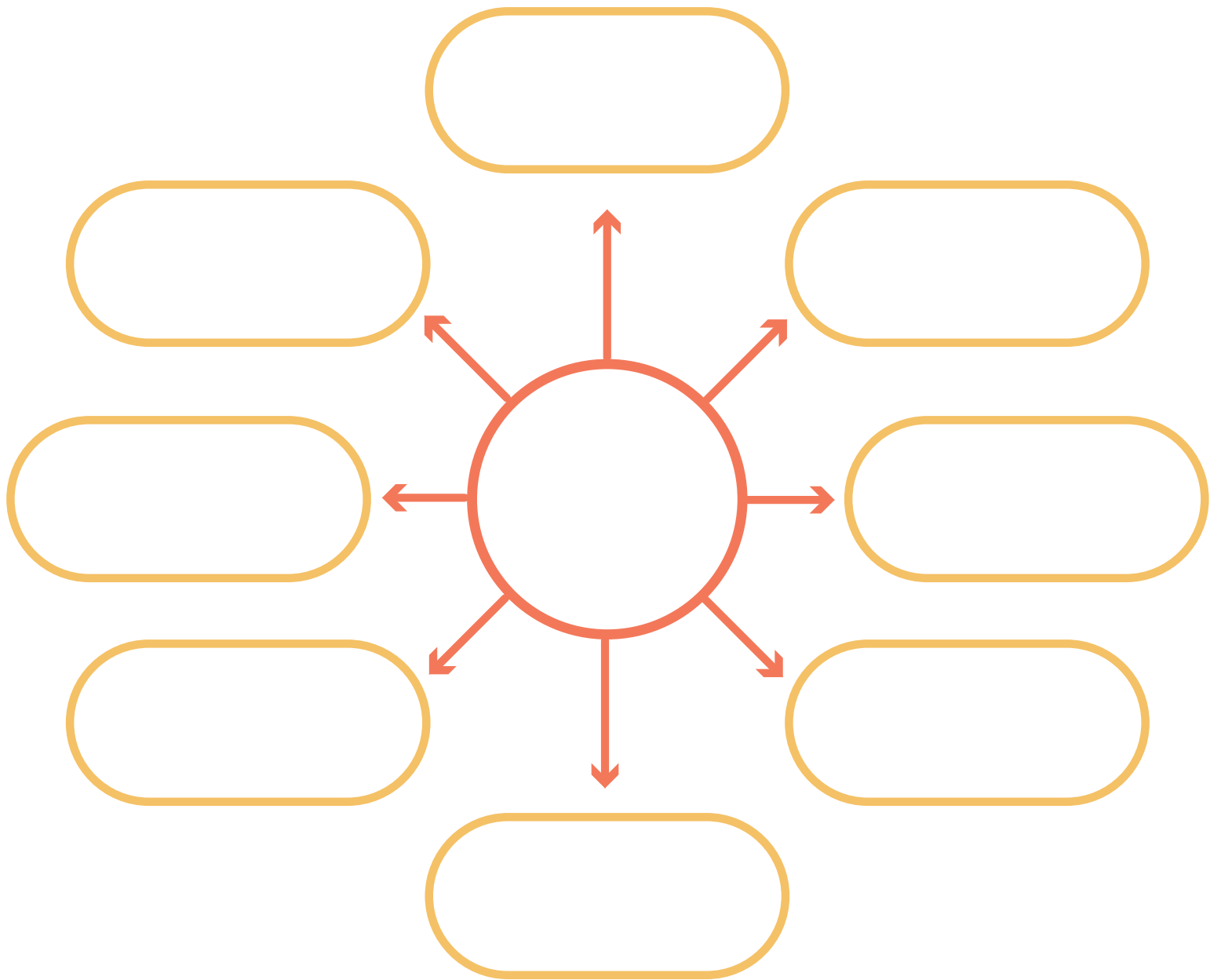
- Topic clusters are a method of structuring your content for both users and search engines. A topic cluster contains multiple pages or blog posts grouped together by a shared core topic and related subtopics. The central piece of a topic cluster is the pillar page, a comprehensive resource which covers the core topic in-depth

Topic Clusters



With the list of keywords you've generated so far, organize them into a topic cluster below around your core topic. Keep in mind their search volume and competition.

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After completing this worksheet, you're ready to get started creating or repurposing content for your topic cluster. Focus on building topical relevancy and creating high quality content that answers your audience's questions and solves their problems.

To learn more about how to create quality, SEO-friendly content, check out the [Content Marketing Certification](#) from HubSpot Academy.

Come back to this worksheet as many times as you need to.

As you get comfortable with the process of keyword research, you can adapt this process to better suit your needs and goals.

