

Core Term Qualifiers



Optimizing your website for core terms is only part of the optimization process. The vast majority of searches are performed using longer, more specific phrases. When it comes to keyword research, these phrases are really nothing more than your core terms with key qualifiers added to them.

Using your keyword research tools you can find dozens or even hundreds of qualifiers for just about every core term. Each of these new phrases must be carefully analyzed for appropriateness for your site, whether it targets what you offer and fits with the page's content for which that core term has been applied. Those that don't can either be discarded or set aside for optimization to other pages.

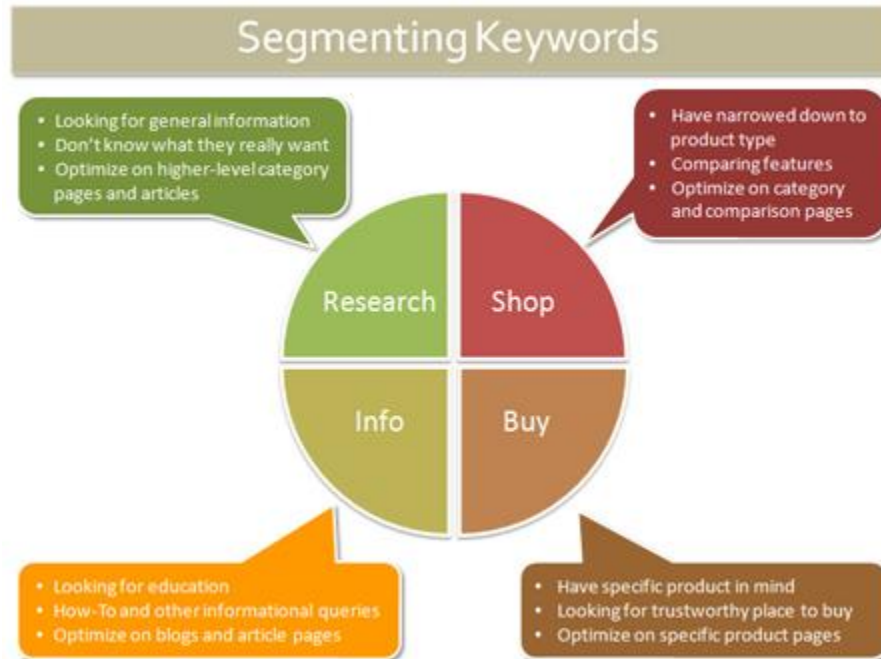
Some qualifiers are merely the same core term in different form such as plurals, past tense, active tense, etc. (run, ran, running, etc.) Other qualifiers provide additional context for the core term but don't do anything to affect the meaning of the phrase. Other qualifiers will change the meaning of the phrase and may not be appropriate for optimization with the primary core term or page.

If adding the word "discount" doesn't apply to you then that's a qualifier you don't want. If most of what you offer is not discount but you do have a section where you list certain discounted items, then that is a phrase that is better optimized on a different page from the actual core term. Every qualifier added to the core term must be carefully considered to ensure it belongs with that core term or not.

Some qualifiers will also come in direct contradiction with each other. When speaking of Jewelry you don't want to use "cheap" and "vintage" on the same page. There are many

considerations like this that must be accounted for before just throwing a bunch of related core term qualifiers on the page.

Segmenting Keywords



There are four distinct keyword segments each representing a different phase of the searcher's buying cycle. After going through the process above you should be left with one or more groups of keyword that can be optimized into a page or several pages. The next step is to take each group and segment them even further based on those keyword segments.

Research: Researchers are at the very beginning of the buying cycle and generally don't know what it is they want. They go to the search engines to find very general information to help them narrow down their options. These are generally the core terms with no or very basic qualifiers. These terms will be optimized into higher level category pages.

Shop: Shoppers have moved to the next phase of the buying cycle having narrowed down their query to the product category level. Searchers are looking at different features and variances between products and deciding on which features they want. These keywords can easily be optimized on product category and comparison pages.

Buy: Searchers who are ready to buy have at this point figured out exactly what they want and now they are just looking for the right place to buy it from. They are looking for the store that meets all the right criteria for a purchase such as brand trust, price, warranties, shipping policies, refund policies, customer service, etc. These keywords can be optimized into product pages.

Info: Info queries are generally the "how to" search terms. These are people not looking to buy but looking for information and education for themselves. These queries are best optimized on

blog and article pages. They don't bring in direct customers but they do help you build a strong resource website that draws links and a loyal audience.

Keyword segmenting for information only sites and blogs is a bit different than sites selling products or services. In informational sites all keywords can be used to develop content so it's a matter of determining what kind of keyword content you can produce and what keywords can be targeted together.

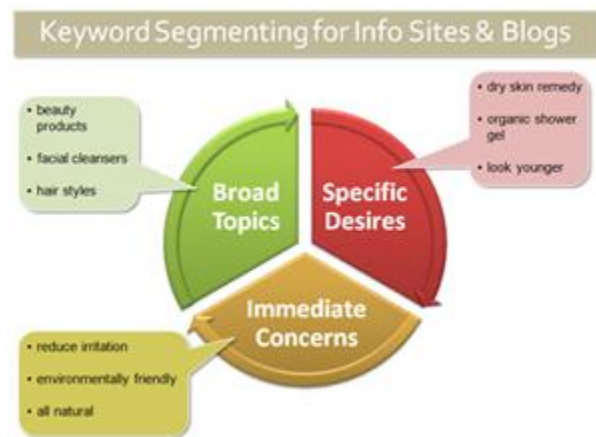
Using the same process of elimination from above you can segment all the keywords into three distinct groups.

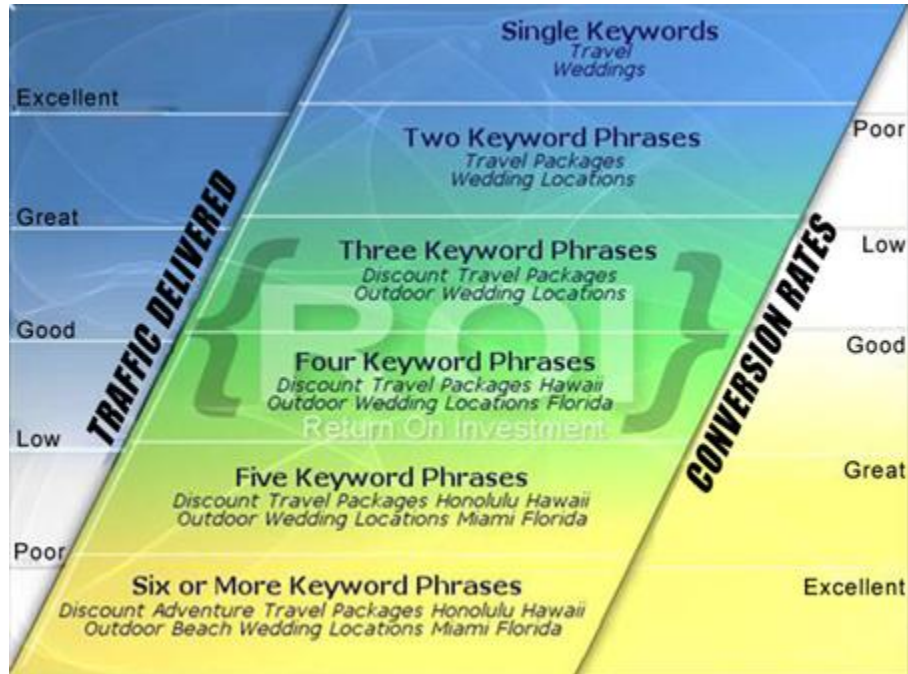
Broad Topics: People looking for general information have a general topic that they want to learn more about. You must start them with the most general information as these searchers typically are not looking for a lot of detailed specifics.

Specific Desires: These searchers are looking for answers to questions that they might have. They may be looking for a solution to a problem or the best way to get a desired result.

Immediate Concerns: These searchers are looking for solutions that meet a very specific set of criteria. It's not enough to provide broad, all-encompassing answers, they are looking for something that much more specifically can be applied to their situation.

Keyword ROI





When deciding which keywords ultimately get optimized into your site, you want to keep ROI foremost in your mind. The chart above shows a very general rule when it comes to determining which keywords produce the best ROI.

Phrases with one or two words can often produce a lot of traffic but the conversions from those keywords is often pretty low. That can be made up for with the mass quantities of traffic the keyword brings, but more traffic also means more resources consumed, including answering calls and emails.

On the lower end of the spectrum are five and six word phrases. The convertability of these phrases is very good, but there isn't a lot of traffic so total conversions is very low. These are keywords you want to optimize for but not spend a lot of time on, otherwise you lose any value from the sales they bring.

The happy ROI zone is with the three and four word phrases. These bring in good traffic and have good conversion rates. Focusing the bulk of your efforts here is where you're going to get the most value.

Keep in mind, though, keyword length isn't the only factor that matters in keyword selection. You want to make sure you select terms that are targeted for your audience produce the most profitable sales.