

Discover and Answer the Questions Your Customers are Asking Online: An Introduction to Search Engine Optimization for Content

Based on a webinar presented by Michael MacMillan of [MacMillan Search](#) on Thursday, December 3, 2020

Increase search traffic to your website with your content. Learn the tactics to discover the questions that potential customers are asking in search engines, and how best to create content to answer these questions and get your website at the top of their search results. These tips will help make it easier for customers to find your business online.

Developing Compelling Content

To optimize and increase the user experience, start with what is essential for your business and move to what improves your competitiveness. Discover the questions that people are asking in search results and develop compelling content to answer those questions.

There are four questions to ask when creating content.

1. Why should I answer the questions my potential customers are asking?

- *To discover content ideas.* Start with a content plan and a few simple questions. Finding out how many people are searching these questions in an average month is a great way to develop content ideas that go deeper into a topic.
- *To build authority.* Authority is the qualitative measure that strengthens the overall visibility and ranking of your website. Backlinks, or incoming links, are links created when one website links to another. Having links to your website on one to two high-quality sites is better than several from below average pages. Create content that is more likely to be shared and can be shared outside of your normal networks.
- *Increase relevancy.* You are the expert on the subject matter. Be sure that the questions you are answering and the content you are creating is linking back to your main service offering.
- *Increase qualified traffic.* Qualified traffic refers to those people who spend more time when they visit your website and who are most likely to convert to a paying customer.

2. How do I discover what questions are being asked?

There are many ways to identify relevant questions that customers are using to find your services or products.

- [Google Search Console](#) – use this to discover what keywords are driving traffic to your main service or product page.
 - Log into Google Search Console
 - Filter from your Home Page if you have one service or product offering or your Service Pages if you have multiple service offerings. This will help you see keywords you are ranking for.
 - Filter out any queries that include the name of your company, business or brand.
- [Keyword Surfer](#) – use this free Chrome extension that allows you to see search volumes directly in Google Search results and discover new keyword ideas.
 - Provides you with monthly search volume, competitiveness and other keyword ideas that search results have for a particular search query.
- To determine which keywords are driving more volume, create a spreadsheet to record keyword ideas and the volume of each so that you do not go after a keyword that no one is searching for.

- In most search results, there is a section called “*People also ask*” which is a good place to start when you are trying to determine the kinds of questions people are asking. Record these questions in your spreadsheet for further exploration
- [AnswerThePublic.com](#) – enter a keyword that’s driving traffic and it comes up with the who, what, when, where and why. You can easily extract this information to make a list of additional questions people are asking. This will allow you to see the volume behind the search results. *TIP: Always remove the question mark because people do not use it when searching.*
- [AlsoAsked.com](#) – discover the hierarchy of the questions to create secondary subject matter.

3. How do I answer these questions?

- Determine how many people are searching for specific keywords. If no one is searching for the keywords you’re targeting, then no one will find your content. However, if you only target keywords with high search volume, it won’t be easy to compete with bigger sites and get your content ranking. So, there is relevancy in keywords that have lower volume.
- Be specific with the information related to your product and you will rank higher.
- Find out what the competitors are saying in their content and see what kind of questions they’re answering. In the search results, look at the ones above, and also the ones below.
- Create your content and determine if you already have any that’s ranking. You want to leverage the content that’s already ranking and not compete with yourself.
- Search your own site if you’re able to, or use [search operators](#), a series of special characters and commands that extend regular text searches’ capabilities.

4. Should I refine existing content or create new?

- If the content already exists, re-work what’s already there to better address the questions your customers are searching for online. If it doesn’t exist, it’s an opportunity to create new content.
- Link back to your main product or service. Build peripheral content to support this main product or service.
- Anchor text is the visible, clickable text of a link. Use anchor text that includes variants of keywords you used when you were discovering the questions people are asking.
- Nurture your potential customers through the process by having some way to convert them on your site. Conversion can be a call to action, such as a “click here to book” or “sign up” for your newsletter.
- It can take up to six months to see SEO results. Distribute the content through your email marketing, social marketing or reposting in other formats. You can also use paid media to supplement such as an [Adword Campaign](#), leading to external backlinks. And if necessary, re-work your content.

A pretty website won’t make a difference if people can’t find you.
Install Google analytics.