Keyword Research

Keyword research is one of the most important parts of SEO because it helps us understand exactly what people are typing into search engines.

Think about Google for a moment.

Every day, billions of searches are performed by people looking for information, products, services, answers, and solutions.

Every one of those searches starts with a keyword or keyword phrase.

If someone wants to bake a pie, they might search for "easy apple pie recipe."

If someone wants to buy a gift, they might search for "personalized coffee mugs."

If someone needs help with their lawn, they might search for "best lawn care service near me."

These search phrases are keywords.

Keyword research is simply the process of discovering which words and phrases your potential customers use when searching online.

The reason keyword research matters is simple.

You can't create content people will find if you don't know what they're searching for.

Imagine opening a fishing store.

Wouldn't it be helpful to know where the fish are before you cast your line?

Keyword research works the same way.

It helps you identify where your customers are and what they're looking for.

Now let's talk about the different types of keywords.

The first type is called a short-tail keyword.

Short-tail keywords are usually one to three words long.

Examples include:

"pies"

"candles"

"lawn care"

"SEO"

These keywords often receive a lot of searches, but they're also very competitive.

Many websites are trying to rank for them.

The second type is called a long-tail keyword.

Long-tail keywords are longer and more specific.

Examples include:

"homemade apple pie recipe"

"soy candles for small apartments"

"affordable lawn care service near me"

"SEO tips for Etsy sellers"

Long-tail keywords usually receive fewer searches, but they often attract visitors who know exactly what they want.

For small businesses and beginners, long-tail keywords are often easier to rank for and can produce better results.

Let's look at an example.

Suppose you sell homemade pies online.

Trying to rank for the keyword "pie" would be extremely difficult.

Large recipe websites, bakeries, and food companies already compete for that keyword.

But what about a keyword like "fresh homemade blueberry pie delivered"?

That's much more specific.

Fewer websites are targeting it.

And the people searching for it are likely interested in buying.

This is why long-tail keywords are so valuable.

Now let's talk about search intent.

Search intent refers to the reason behind a search.

Understanding search intent helps you create content that matches what people want.

There are four common types of search intent.

The first is informational intent.

These people want information.

Examples include:

"how to make a pie crust"

"what is SEO"

"how to start a vegetable garden"

The second is navigational intent.

These users are looking for a specific website or brand.

Examples include:

"Facebook login"

"YouTube"

"Etsy shop dashboard"

The third is commercial intent.

These people are researching products before making a purchase.

Examples include:

"best air fryer for beginners"

"top pie pans for baking"

"best website builder for small businesses"

The fourth is transactional intent.

These people are ready to buy.

Examples include:

"buy apple pie online"

"order custom T-shirt"

"hire lawn care service"

When choosing keywords, it's important to think about the intent behind them.

The closer a customer is to making a purchase, the more valuable that search may be for your business.

So how do you actually find keywords?

Fortunately, there are several easy methods.

The first method is Google itself.

Start typing a phrase into Google's search bar.

Google will automatically suggest popular searches.

These suggestions come from real people searching online.

For example, if you type "apple pie," Google may suggest:

"apple pie recipe"

"apple pie filling"

"apple pie with crumb topping"

These suggestions can give you great keyword ideas.

Another method is to look at the "People Also Ask" section in Google search results.

These are common questions related to a topic.

Each question represents content your customers want to learn about.

You can also scroll to the bottom of Google's search results and look at related searches.

These provide additional keyword opportunities.

There are also free and paid keyword research tools available.

Some popular options include:

Google Keyword Planner

Ubersuggest

AnswerThePublic

Keyword Surfer

These tools can help you discover keyword ideas, estimate search volume, and identify opportunities.

But remember something important.

You do not need expensive software to get started.

Many successful websites begin with simple keyword research using Google and customer questions.

Let's discuss keyword difficulty.

Keyword difficulty refers to how hard it is to rank for a keyword.

Highly competitive keywords are usually more difficult because many websites are competing for them.

New websites often struggle to rank for broad, competitive terms.

That's why beginners should focus on finding specific keywords with less competition.

Think of it this way.

Instead of competing against hundreds of large websites, you can focus on smaller opportunities where your content has a better chance of appearing in search results.

Now let's talk about a common mistake.

Many people choose keywords based only on search volume.

They assume bigger numbers are always better.

But that's not necessarily true.

A keyword with 10,000 searches may be too competitive.

A keyword with 100 searches may be easier to rank for and attract visitors who are more likely to become customers.

Quality often matters more than quantity.

Your goal isn't simply to attract visitors.

Your goal is to attract the right visitors.

Before we finish, let's review the process.

Step one: Think about your ideal customer.

Step two: Identify the questions, problems, and goals they have.

Step three: Use Google and keyword tools to discover what they search for.

Step four: Focus on specific keywords that match customer intent.

Step five: Create helpful content around those keywords.

When you follow these steps, you're no longer guessing what customers want.

You're using real search data to guide your content strategy.

That's the power of keyword research.

You'll discover where keywords belong, how to optimize your pages, and how to make your content easier for search engines to understand.