

Step 1: Phrases that pay

The first of two steps in the planning and preparation of your SEO campaign, phrases that pay is all about finding the right keyphrases for your business proposition, then deploying them for best effect in your site and campaign.

In this step we look at who your customers are and what you can offer them online. Using the D-A-D (discovery-attractiveness-deployment) model of keyword analysis, we then work out what search phrases they might use to find you - and your competitors.

1.1 Proposition development

Many companies start their online business presence by buying a domain name (a name for their website, often one close to their business name) and building a web page that is really little more than a brochure. Only later do they turn their mind to optimizing their site for both their audience and the way those in their audience find them. Very few take a long, hard look at what their online competitors are doing first or think about what part of their business works best online. And hardly any revisit their entire business model to consider how it might change to take advantage of what the internet offers. Take it from me, the best way to succeed in search engine optimization is to build it into your business development strategy from the very outset.

More importantly, an SEO campaign must be a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is vital to see it in its broader business context: What sort of visitors will convert well for this business online? Is the ideal visitor budget conscious or seeking luxury items? After all, there is no point in chasing high search volumes only to find that visitors look at one page, then leave the site. And don't let SEO take over your life - you still have to be out there doing business. It's easy to become