

hypnotized by the challenge and forget that SEO is only, at the end of the day, one part of your marketing effort; which is, in itself, only one part of the total business effort required.

For these reasons and more, before we turn to search phrases and optimization techniques, this guide considers those fundamental questions of what, who, and where.

What are you selling?

The first and most obvious question is whether you are selling a product or a service and the degree to which you can fulfill this online. Some service businesses are, by their very nature, intensely offline, local, and personal. For example, a hairdressing business will struggle to cut hair over the internet!

The best place to start is with what I call goal definition. A goal in this context defines a successful outcome from someone visiting your website and is expressed using a verb and a noun. Examples of possible goals include:

- ❖ Download a brochure
- ❖ Sign up for a newsletter
- ❖ Subscribe to a mailing list
- ❖ Request a product sample
- ❖ Book a sales consultation
- ❖ Purchase a product
- ❖ Book a service

Users can be grouped into the four areas of the marketing and sales funnel familiar to traditional marketers: a suspect, a prospect, a lead, and a sale.

Suspects are those who may have a (passive) need for your product and service. A suspect becomes a prospect once they have expressed an active interest in what you are offering. A lead is a prospect who meets