

Even if you have a site already, it is vital to invest significant time and energy on keyword research before starting your SEO campaign. Although this may astonish you, I would recommend that 20% of all your SEO effort is focused on this activity alone. If you make poor keyword selections, you are likely to waste energy elsewhere in your SEO campaign, pursuing avenues unlikely to yield traffic in sufficient quantity, quality, or both. To return to our analogy, if you select poor ingredients, no matter how good the recipe may be the meal itself will be a disappointment – and no one will want to eat it.

Don't forget that one source for information about keywords is your own web logs. This helps you avoid undoing what you're already ranking well for. Google Analytics' keyword stats can also be particularly useful input to the early stages of an SEO campaign (see page 225 for more on this). I learnt this lesson from a client who ran a local catering business. She told me that many of her customers had found her via Google, but she couldn't understand what they were searching on as she could never find her site in the top 50, let alone the top 10. By investigating her Google Analytics stats, we discovered that she was ranking well for "thanksgiving catering" due to some client testimonials and pictures on her site. This explained why so many of her clients were ex-pat Americans and how they were finding her business; after all, such a search term was pretty niche in South West London, UK!

Common mistakes in keyword selection

Most people approach SEO with a preconception – or prejudice – about what their best keywords are. They are normally either wholly or partly wrong. This is good for you because you are armed with this book.

There are five key mistakes to avoid when selecting keywords:

- 1 Many of my customers first approach me with the sole objective of ranking number one on Google for the name of their business. Please don't misunderstand me, I am not saying that this