

13.2: How to Rank High

So, How Do You Rank High?

The main job of a search engine is to serve results that best address people's search queries. Let's say you want to know how to clean your cat, including what kind of soap to use, how warm the temperature should be, and how to wash their paws. You can turn to a search engine to learn how to do so. People turn to search engines and use **search queries**, the "query based on a specific search term that a user enters into a web search engine to satisfy their information needs" (Wikipedia, 2023). For example, you might turn to Google and type in "How to bathe my cat," or "easiest way to wash my cat," or "wash a cat," or "cat wash soap."

We will use the term **keyword** to talk about the key terms people use in search queries. Keywords are central for digital marketers. They are what we use to both talk to search engine to "tell" them what search query a specific webpage is supposed to respond to (and we are going to see shortly how to do so), but it is also what we use to talk to consumers and make sure our webpage shows up when they search for something. Keywords link consumers' search queries and whether or not our webpages show up when they search for something specific. It is thus important for us to think ahead when creating pages about *what are the keywords and search queries this webpage answers?*

The search queries above are all slightly different in terms of keywords, which might indicate that they are looking for slightly different things: the first user seems to want a tutorial, the second an easy way to wash a cat, the third is rather undefined, and the last one has more specificity on soap. Thus, search engines will deliver slightly different results to best address what they think the person wants in terms of information (i.e., what exactly they are looking for).

The role of search engines is thus to deliver the best result possible for people doing a specific search. Thus, to rank high on search engines, you need to *create pages that best answer specific search queries*.

You do so by creating specific pages for specific search queries. Each page should have content that best matches that query, and it should have keywords that are, ideally, perfectly aligned with the query you believe people will be making. This reflects the importance of representing (and understanding) the customer (i.e., your pages need to address questions, needs, wants, and challenges that people have). In addition, you should, ideally, write about topics you are knowledgeable about (or you are an expert in), in which your site has authority; and your information should be honest, accurate, and trustworthy. This is summarized in the [EAT acronym](#) (Expert–Authoritative–Trustworthy) (Handley, 2023).

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