

13.7: Understanding How Consumers Use Keywords

Understanding How Consumers Use Keywords

Since user experience is central to ranking high, it becomes quite important to understand how people search for stuff online. We are going to talk about three ways of thinking about this.

One way to think about how people search is to link it with the objective of their search. Three types of searches are typically referred to by SEO professionals (Gabbert, 2023):

- Consumers perform **informational searches** when looking for information about a specific topic.
- Consumers perform **transactional searches** when looking to perform a transaction. Transactions have been narrowly defined (i.e., [buying a product](#)) and more broadly defined (i.e., [perform an interaction](#)).
- Consumers perform **navigational searches** when looking to go on a specific website.

The objectives people are trying to achieve when performing search queries are helpful for us as digital marketers because they allow us to create webpages to answer these specific objectives. The kinds of keywords on each page will be vastly different.

These objectives can also be part of the process of moving from needing information about a specific need or challenge to wanting to perform interactions (or a transaction) to address this need to want to go on a specific website. This is exemplified in the figure below, which provides search examples for each objective. The key idea here is that, as digital marketers, knowing why people are searching for something helps you create pages that more directly align with their searches. This helps you improve user experience and choose the right keywords, both of which should allow your webpages to rank higher.

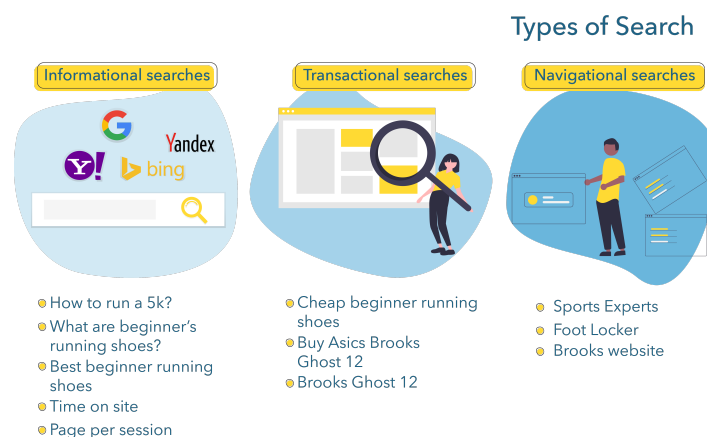


Figure 13.6 Types of Search

A second way to think about why people are searching is to start with their needs, challenges, and goals. This has a few implications: first, as we have seen with RV Betty, different segments/personas have different needs, challenges, and goals. That means that you will need to create different webpages to attract different personas to your website, where each webpage should address a specific need, challenge, or goal (and, perhaps, could do so by targeting different search objectives). Thus, when creating webpages, the first question that should come to your mind is: What are the needs of my persona? What goal are they trying to achieve? What challenges are they facing when addressing their need or achieving their goal? Answering these questions should allow you to generate many different content ideas from which you can think of specific search queries. We will cover this in more detail when we talk about content marketing. To foreshadow what will come up, in this course, we will emphasize how consumers' searches vary depending on where they are in their journey:

- Early on in their journey, consumers are looking to find information about a problem they are facing or a need they are trying to address (e.g., "How to run a 5K," "treating acne fast," "easy ways to gain muscle," "getting a job after college")
- As consumer move to actively evaluate their options to address their need, they will start to weigh different options (e.g., "best training plan for 5k," "retinol vs. benzoyl vs. salicylic," "is creating that good," "should I register on LinkedIn")
- Finally, once they are closer to making a purchase, they will look at evaluating or accessing the specific product they choose (e.g., "sales brooks ghost 12," "where to buy benzoyl," "creatine online cheap," "LinkedIn promo code")

As with the three objectives of searches, knowing that consumers first concentrate on problems, then on potential solutions, then on the product or service they are interested in is the first step to start creating a marketing campaign. Keeping in mind that our goal is to create value for consumers by representing them (rather than talking about our company), this means that we will need to create ads and content that (1) inform consumers about their problems, (2) help them evaluate their options, (3) position ourselves as the best product / create product or service-specific information. When we introduce the conversion-based framework in the next chapter, we will see how each stage can also be used for different strategic goals (attracting visitors, converting visitors to leads, and converting leads to customers). This is visually represented in Figure 13.7.

Journey and Searches



Figure 13.7 Journey and Searches

We will cover the last way to think about searches, **Google ZMOTs**, very briefly, given that we discussed it in the last chapter. As we saw, Google proposes four ZMOTs: I want to know, I want to go, I want to do, and I want to buy. Some of these overlap with what we just saw. I want to know are informational searches. I want to buy can be thought of as transactional searches (within a broader definition of transactional searches, I want to do could also be thought of in that sense). These moments again present numerous opportunities to create content. Google presents numerous ways marketers can capitalize on "[I want-to-do](#)" moments [here](#) (Mogensen, 2015).

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