

An Ingenious Way to Use Wordtracker . . . that's actually easier too!

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Robin Nobles
RobinN@acws.com

Academy of Web Specialists <http://www.academywebspecialists.com>

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If you're in the search engine industry, or if you're a Web designer or Webmaster, it's an almost sure thing that you've heard of, and probably used, Wordtracker (<http://www.wordtracker.com>).

But, for those who may not know about Wordtracker, let's back up for a minute.

What exactly is Wordtracker, and why is it so important?

Most search engine optimizers would agree that one of the most important things you can do for your Web site is to target the right keywords. If you target the wrong keywords, you may get scores of traffic but no conversions to sales, or no traffic whatsoever. Either is disastrous for an online business.

Before Wordtracker, it was up to the search engine marketer, or the client, to choose the right keywords for the site. We also had GoTo's Search Term Suggestion Tool, which was one of our only sources for keyword help at that time.

Then Wordtracker (<http://www.wordtracker.com>) entered the picture. With Wordtracker, you can plug in some keywords, and the Web-based service will give you ideas for additional keywords that might work for your business. Not only that, but the service will also tell you how competitive those keywords are (how many other Web pages have been optimized with those keywords in mind) and how many people have actually searched for those keywords in the past 24 hours at each of the major engines.

Ideally, your goal is to choose a keyword phrase that doesn't

have a huge amount of competition but that (hopefully) a large number of people are searching for. This is where the KEI comes in. KEI, which stands for Keyword Effectiveness Index, refers to the number of times a keyword has appeared in Wordtracker's data compared with the number of competing Web pages, which points to which keywords would be most effective for your search engine marketing campaign.

In other words, the higher the KEI, the more popular your keyword phrases are, and the less competition they have. According to Wordtracker, a "good" keyword to target is one that has a KEI of around 100, but an "excellent" keyword to target has a KEI of over 400.

Okay, enough of the background into Wordtracker. Most of you probably already know all of that. In fact, your path through Wordtracker most likely looks very similar to mine.

The "old" way to use Wordtracker

In the past, I have always started at Keyword Universe, or maybe at Keyword Projects. From there, I work my way through the system. Does it work? Yes, very effectively. Is it time consuming? Yep.

But, let's look at an easier, and even more effective, way to use Wordtracker. And with this alternate way, you're actually considering keyword phrases based on your target audience.

Introducing John Alexander

To write this article, I interviewed John Alexander, an authority of Wordtracker who has spent countless hours working through each of the features and developing his own unique strategy.

As means of introduction, John is a professional search engine optimizer with Beyond-SEO (<http://www.beyond-seo.com>) and a trainer of onsite search engine marketing workshops through Search Engine Workshops (<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com>).

Besides using Wordtracker to find keywords, John actually uses the service to target an audience's surfing behavior. Once he determines the surfing behavior, he can use that knowledge to target those who are most likely to purchase his clients' products or services.

Unlike most of us, John doesn't get "stuck" in Keyword Universe to where the system does all the thinking for him. Instead, he begins at Comprehensive Search (found under the Multiple Search heading).

He explains, "Where you'll find most of your 'revelations' or 'insights' is in the Comprehensive Search feature of Wordtracker.

Try entering one part of a search phrase and letting Comprehensive Search figure out the best 'full use' of the phrase."

Let's look at an example

John has a client who sells baby furniture and products online, so he needed to find the target audience for baby furniture. Putting his creative mind at work, he started thinking about who would want to buy baby beds and strollers. Not people with newborns - after all, they already own all of the furniture they need. The true audience for his client is soon to become parents, grandparents, etc.

His next step was to use Comprehensive Search to try to determine what his target audience is looking for. John typed in "baby," and he found some very interesting results.

People searching for the word "baby" were searching for keyword phrases like "baby names," "Baby Names," "Baby Boy Names," and so forth.

Bingo! He had the angle he needed to get traffic to the site. Rather than concentrating on the actual product he was trying to sell, he thought of a way to pull in traffic through a different window. After all, what will his target audience be looking for on the Internet? Ideas for names for their new babies!

John adds, "Keep in mind that this angle is also based on the fact that babies are always on the way, around the world, day after day, which creates an extremely unique market for certain products. Understand the advantages of identifying people's behavior, and you'll never look at keyword research quite the same."

After he has captured the visitors at his site, he can easily slide in the fact that the site is also selling baby products and furniture. He's gotten them to the site, which is step #1; they are his target audience, which is step #2; and with compelling content, he can increase the site's conversion rate to go along with the increase in traffic.

How did John proceed? He created a page that focused on the meanings of baby names.

Keep in mind that the page he created has value and unique content. He didn't just toss together a page, simply for the sake of getting a top ranking. Instead, he worked hard to find links all over the Web to sites that offer the meaning of baby names. His page offers tremendous value to the search engine and users as a one-stop resource for finding links to the meanings of baby names. Then, in strategically placed spots on the page, he subtly added pictures of his client's products with links to related

pages.

John explains, "Don't ever trick your audience or they will simply never buy. Give them exactly what they are looking for right up front. In this example, I created a page that offers baby names and the meanings of baby names, and I subtly offered a few product listings or links to my client's storefront. It is essential that you always provide content related to their search first, and then offer links to appropriate products within your client's site."

The bottom line?

How did John's strategy work out for his client? The baby names page alone pulls in an additional 500 unique visitors of extremely targeted traffic each month.

John adds, "I cannot give you the percentage in terms of the exact increase in sales, but I can tell you that the client has been very pleased with the results."

Remember that this is just one page that John added to the site.

He explains, "Had I really wanted to pull out all the stops, I could have created several entry pages around this one theme. For example, targeting keyword phrases such as: 'most popular baby names,' etc. You could also build the content right into the site and extend it through all of the races:

- * Spanish baby names

- * Italian baby names

- * Jewish baby name

- * French baby names"

Now, let's look at a "new" way to use Wordtracker, John's step-by-step approach:

To write this article, I came up with a real-life example and I started at step #1, just like you will do with your own site.

Let's say that your client sells aromatherapy supplies over the Internet. Your first step is to try to determine the target audience. Who would be buying aromatherapy supplies? One target audience would be people with stress in their lives who want to use aromatherapy as a way of relaxing. So, let's try that angle and see what we come up with.

- * Go to Comprehensive Search at Wordtracker (<http://www.wordtracker.com>) and type in "relaxation." Click Proceed.

* Scroll toward the bottom of the page and click on "Check boxes off."

* Scroll back to the top, and look at the various choices. Remember that the "Predict" column is the predicted traffic you could expect to get for each of those keyword choices from all of the major engines and directories in one day.

* Begin marking keyword ideas, all the while thinking of a strategy to pull in traffic for your client's site through the target audience.

* Scroll back to the bottom of the page and click on "Option 2: Competitive Search."

* Choose MSN and Google, since those two engines have the potential of bringing in a lot of traffic to most Web sites. Of course, you can choose any two engines or directories that you'd like. Click Proceed.

* What did we find? "Relaxation" and associated words were not good choices, because the KEI in comparison to the projected traffic was too low. Targeting those keywords just wouldn't have been worth the effort for such a low amount of traffic. Keep in mind that this is a real-life example, so this is certainly something that could happen to you when doing this strategy yourself.

* So, we went back to the drawing board and tried "aromatherapy." Again, not a good example.

* Then, we tried "massage." After all, aromatherapy oils are used when giving massages, and people who are interested in massages would be a perfect target audience for aromatherapy supplies.

* After studying the Wordtracker results for the MSN and Google search engines for words that include "massage," we picked the third result, "Techniques of Massage," because it's an excellent and appropriate angle for our client. The #1 result in MSN has a KEI of 3696, but it wouldn't work with our client's site. You have to be sure to choose keyword phrases that are appropriate for your particular client's site.

At MSN, "Techniques of Massage" has a KEI of 255. Within a 24-hour period, if your site was placed well in the MSN engine, you could expect to get 90 visitors from MSN alone. What is your competition? 1954.

"Techniques of Massage" in Google has a KEI of 900, 165 potential visitors through Google alone in a 24-hour period, and competition of only 555.

Remember that a "good" KEI is anything over 100, and an "excellent" KEI is anything over 400.

Let's be honest here. You could manage a top 10 for this keyword phrase with your eyes closed (and your computer turned off).

So, for our aromatherapy client, we could create a page on the various techniques of massage, including (of course) her oils and aromatherapy products. We would spend time on the page and give it true value to both the engines and the target audience. And, we would subtly add graphics and link text that points to the client's products in various areas of the page.

John gave another example

He says, "If you're selling 'digital cameras,' don't optimize for 'digital cameras.' Did you know that everyone is searching for 'Digital Cameras Review'? Build a page offering reviews of digital cameras, which has a KEI that just blew me away."

Another effective strategy: Top Reports

Besides Comprehensive Search, John also likes to look at the top reports for high performance keywords or topics that are related to his client.

John explains, "I'll review the Long Term Reports, which are the top 1000 keywords over the past 24 hours. Then, I cut and paste any topics related to my client into Comprehensive Search to get streams of currently 'hot topics.' I define a hot topic as a popular topic in high demand, which may also have lists of related keywords phrases also in high demand."

What happens if you can't find a hot topic that relates to your site in the top 1000?

John answers, "Many people do not know that Wordtracker offers extensive top word reports beyond the database. All you have to do is ask, and they'll sell you:

* The Top 20,000 words \$99

* The Top 100,000 words \$500

* The Top 500,000 words \$2000"

Additional suggestions

* When John goes to Comprehensive Search, he doesn't put in a huge list of keyword phrases. He types in one single word, then lets Comprehensive Search do the rest. This allows him to come up with ideas and angles that he would have never considered before.

* Like John, spend a lot of time thinking of your target audience. Who are you trying to sell the products or services to? There may be several target audiences, as in the case of our aromatherapy example. If so, go after keyword choices to target each of those audiences.

* Don't be afraid to let your creativity take hold. If your first few choices don't work, continue trying. Using Comprehensive Search, it doesn't take long to go back through the system with a different keyword idea. Keep going back until you find a possibility that might work for your site or the site of a client.

* Be sure to give the surfer what they're looking for when they choose your site from the search results. If you promised them "techniques of massage," then be sure to give them good, solid content in that area, including related links. Weave your products and services throughout the page as you can. But, don't ever try to trick a surfer.

* If you get stuck and just can't find a keyword phrase with a high KEI and a low level of competition that will work for you, take a slightly different approach. Instead of trying to bring in a large amount of traffic through one single window, try creating several windows and bring in a little traffic through each one. Though more time consuming, this strategy can be equally effective in the long run.

* If you aren't already a member of Wordtracker (<http://www.wordtracker.com>), sign up for the free trial and test the system out for yourself. Pricing is very reasonable, depending on your needs. For example, you can use the service for a week for \$19.94, and many other plans are available.

The bottom line is this: if you are serious about your Web site, you've got to be serious about keyword choice. If you're serious about keyword choice, Wordtracker is a "must have" service for you.

Robin Nobles is the Director of Training of the Academy of Web Specialists (<http://www.academywebspecialists.com>), where she has trained several thousand people in her online courses in search engine marketing strategies (<http://www.onlinewebtraining.com>). She also teaches 3-day "hands on" search engine marketing workshops in locations across the globe with Search Engine Workshops (<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com>), and she has written three books that can be ordered through Amazon and other bookstores.

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