STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Practical Exercises
Lesson Goal: Recognize how to plan your search marketing strategy

Prepare an analysis of the Search Marketing opportunity for your company by completing the following steps:

- Research a variety of terms that would be relevant for your products or services. Use the Google Ads Keyword Planner or another keyword research tool to get search traffic volumes. If you do not have access to a tool, enter some keyword search volumes based on your best estimation.
- Export your selected keywords into Excel. Put your keywords in column C, name Column B ‘Ad Group’, and name Column A ‘Campaign’.
- Categorize the keywords into relevant ad groups, i.e. keyword lists (based on features, for example). Do this by adding a Theme name in column B, beside the keywords. Group your Ad Groups into campaigns by adding a campaign name in Column A.
- Add up your total search volume to estimate how often these keywords are searched for each month.
Lesson Goal: Recognize best practices to bear in mind when setting your objectives for your search campaign

Before continuing with the creation of your strategy, now is a good time to set your objectives. The purpose and activities of the objective phase combine to establish clear KPIs that will measure performance. As such, it is essential to keep this interplay in mind as you strategize. Ask yourself these questions to help set your objectives:

- Business objectives: What is the overall business looking to achieve in the next year?
- Audience objectives: With whom does your business want to communicate, and where?
- SEO objectives: Which keywords are the most important for your brand?
- Product objectives: Who are your competitors and what makes your product unique or superior?
- Brand objectives: Do you want to raise awareness, improve affinity, or change brand perception?
Lesson Goal: Recognize how you can conduct research for your search marketing campaign

Carrying out a technical SEO analysis of your website will provide invaluable insight into how Google – and your customers – interact with your brand online.

To undertake this analysis, do the following:

- Run a test of your site’s speed, using Google’s site speed test – just search for ‘Google Mobile Test’ on Google or another search engine.
- Assess the number of crawl errors within your site’s Search Console account.
- If you have access to an account, use Screaming Frog to crawl your website and find 404 errors, along with missing or duplicate meta tags.
- Compile your findings and prepare some recommendations to improve your company’s website before embarking on a full search marketing campaign.
Lesson Goal: Recognize how you can prepare to deploy your search marketing campaign

An SEO content strategy is valuable in that it increases your organic search visibility across informational, navigational, and commercial keywords.

In order to define the role of content marketing for your company and assign responsibilities to relevant parties, carry out the following steps:

- Consider the content formats that would be most relevant for your audience (based on your audience research).
- Group keywords into categories based on whether they are informational, navigational, or commercial.
- Weigh up the options for content promotion and write up the benefits and drawbacks of each.
- List the steps that will need to be taken to go from research to content production and finally, to content distribution.
- Assign responsibilities to different team members to see through your plan from step 4.
Lesson Goal: Recognize how you can implement your search marketing strategy

Use Google Analytics to understand your search strategy by logging into your Google Analytics account or the Google Demo Account.

Ensure your Google Analytics account is linked to your Google Ads Account. If you can see Google Ads data in the Google Ads Report under the Acquisition tab, then your accounts are linked.

If they are not linked and you have enough account permissions to link them, you can link them by completing the following steps:

- Log into both Google Ads and Google Analytics in your browser (on different tabs).
- Go to Tools in Google Ads at the top of the screen and choose ‘Linked Accounts’.
- Choose Google Analytics from the options and link the accounts.
- When you start seeing data in the Google Ads report in the Acquisition tab of Google Analytics, toggle between ‘Site Usage’, ‘Engagement’, ‘Clicks’, and any other tabs just above the graph in Google Analytics to get a view of how your campaigns are performing in relation to engagement, conversion, and cost metrics.
- Repeat these steps for your keywords by choosing ‘Keywords' in the Google Ads report in Google Analytics.
- In the Acquisition tab, navigate to ‘All Traffic’, and then ‘Channels’, to evaluate performance of your organic traffic for these toggles. Note: Clicks and cost information isn’t available as organic traffic is free, so focus on site usage and conversions to compare and contrast performance of your channels to drive insights which can help improve performance.
Lesson Goal: Recognize best practices for evaluating your search marketing campaign

In Google Analytics, look back over data from the last six months, using the date selector to see traffic growth over time to help evaluate longer term SEO objectives.

- In the Acquisition tab, navigate to ‘All Traffic’, and then ‘Channels report’. Click on the ‘Organic Search’ channel to view this channel only.
- Change your time range to ‘week’ or ‘month’ in the toggle buttons to the top right of the line chart on screen.
- Has the user count grown over time? Consider if this is reflective of what you hoped would happen.
- Now compare year-on-year growth by clicking the date range selector. Then tick or check the ‘Compare’ option and choose ‘Previous Year’ from the small drop-down menu.
- Press ‘Apply’ to execute the comparison.
- Note the difference between the metrics year on year, and how the charts compare year on year. Last year’s user performance will be in a slightly different color to this year’s performance.