

# Becoming Buzzworthy

A GUIDE TO MAKING YOUR  
STORE e-SAVVY

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## BOOST YOUR SEARCH ENGINE MOJO: DETERMINING YOUR TARGET KEYWORDS

“IF YOU BUILD IT, HE WILL COME.”

While Ray Liotta’s words to Kevin Costner may have worked in *Field of Dreams*, a lot has changed since 1989. The “if you build it” philosophy cannot be applied to a website since people can’t visit your site if they don’t know about it.

One of the best ways to entice visitors to your site is to become more attractive to search engines. This process is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO) which involves a variety of tools and techniques, and it all begins with keyword research.

Think about how you find websites. Most likely, you begin at a search engine, like Google, Yahoo!, or Bing, where you enter a keyword or phrase to start your search. If you are looking for a plumber, you might enter the name of your city and the word “plumber.” Then the search engine compares those keywords to online web content and returns links to websites that are the most likely to contain them.

Your ideal customer will use the same process. She might search for the name of her city and her hobby, such as “Houston yarn” or “Kansas City beading classes,” or maybe an occasion like “graduation scrapbook.” The search engine gives her a list of sites that contain those keywords. Will yours be on it?

## TARGET KEYWORDS - GET FAMILIAR WITH YOURS

In order to make the most of your web real estate, you need to think about how your customers might search for a business like yours. Ask yourself what keywords your customers might use to find you. Also, ask yourself for which keywords you want to be found. Perhaps it is for something your business specializes in? Jot down a list of possible keywords to add to your site.

You can also take advantage of online keyword research tools to identify what people actually use as search terms within your market. Play around with Google's AdWords Keyword Tool (<http://snipurl.com/adwordskeywordtool>). Just type in one of your potential keywords and you'll get a list of keyword variations to consider. For example, type in "Chicago knitting," and you'll see keywords like "knitting supplies" and "knitting workshop Chicago." Note the frequency of the searches to determine which keywords will bring the most traffic to your site.

Remember that the goal of a website is to act as an online ambassador to encourage visitors to come into your store. When brainstorming potential target keywords, it's best to use more than two words. Be specific. It is an obvious choice to use very broad terms like "scrapbooking" or "quilts." But your target audience is probably looking for something more specific – and more local. Location specific keywords like "Kansas City scrapbooking" or "Portland quilting classes" are more likely to draw your ideal customer.

## A SIDE BENEFIT OF KEYWORD RESEARCH

When you discover the top keywords on related topics, you'll get instant insight into your target market's interests. You can then use those ideas for inspiration for classes or blog posts. For instance, when you do keyword research for "knitting Chicago", you see a related search for "Chicago blackhawks knit hat", which could inspire a specific class topic. Once you know what people are searching for, you can create the resources to give it to them.

## SEO RESOURCE LIST

### CREATING GOOGLE-FRIENDLY SITES:

<http://bit.ly/GoogleFriendly>

### GOOGLE'S SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION STARTER GUIDE (PDF):

<http://bit.ly/GoogleGuidetoSEO>

<http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/>

## USE YOUR TARGET KEYWORDS

Once you determine your target keywords, it's time to put that knowledge to use. Your goal now is to post valuable content and become more attractive to search engines. According to Google's Webmaster Tools, "Original content provides useful information to users, and can help your site's visibility in our search results. Consider adding video product demos or other rich content, such as user reviews, to your site. The more unique and compelling your content, the more likely it is to perform well in our search results."

## WHAT SEARCH ENGINES MEAN TO YOUR BUSINESS

Remember, people can't do business with you if they can't find you, and in today's marketplace they will try to find you online. Effective online marketing means you need to do some background research and legwork. Knowledge is definitely power – the more you know about what your customers are searching for, the more you can offer them.

### STEP 1: USE TARGET KEYWORDS IN YOUR WEBSITE HTML <TITLE> TAGS, META DESCRIPTION, AND WEBPAGE URLS

This takes a little technical know-how, but online tutorials abound as well as knowledgeable web designers. Consult one of those resources and update your website with your keywords. If you're a local retailer, make sure to include the name of your city or closest metro area.

### STEP 2: USE TARGET KEYWORDS IN BLOG SUBJECT LINES AND BLOG POSTS

Let's say you just got back from the CHA tradeshow and you want to let your customers know about the new product you ordered. Shipments will soon be arriving from the latest, hottest designers, and you have make-and-take examples from the show. You want your customers to stop by your store next weekend for a CHA Show-and-Tell. Should your blog subject line be:

- A) Sooooo excited!
- B) Fun stuff from CHA
- C) Scrapbooking Make & Takes with new Tim Holtz products – next weekend!

If you answered C, you've done your keyword homework! Mentioning your hobby market and specific designers in your website content makes you more likely to show up in related searches. Plus that headline is generally more appealing and enticing to your audience.