

# What Makes a Good Keyword for Ecommerce?

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**Categories :** [Writing Your Best Ecommerce Copy](#)

We began our dive into [ecommerce keyword research](#) in the previous section, where we defined search engine optimization (SEO); helped you clarify your customer persona; and showed you how to use Amazon, your competitors, and a number of other sources to start a list of potential keywords for your online shop. If you've been following along with us, you've now got a spreadsheet full of search terms. Some of them—like the ones you got through Amazon autocomplete—you *know* your market is typing into search engines. Others—like the ones you found sprinkled throughout your competitors' websites—you can't be so sure of.

So now that it's time to narrow that list down, how do you know what makes a "strong" ecommerce keyword?

It shouldn't surprise you to hear that you'll discover that answer through data. Many of the keyword tools we mentioned in the previous section—[SEMrush](#), [Ahrefs](#), [Google Keyword Planner](#), [MozBar](#)—will get you the following metrics. They're all strong tools, but they give varying results; so consider choosing two and toggling back and forth between them. Here are the characteristics of a good keyword for ecommerce:

## 1. Decent Search Volume

This is the first and most important metric to consider when evaluating any keyword. After all, if no one's searching for it, you're not going to see the benefits of ranking for it. Of course, the higher the search volume, the more interested your target market is in that product, and the more potential organic traffic that means for your site. That said, "high" or "low" search volume is relative: In some industries (and for some products), 150 monthly searches is a lot. In others, 5k is. The more keywords you search for, the better idea you'll have of what "decent search volume" means for *you*.

**Pro tip:** Keep in mind that many products see seasonal variations in searches; make sure your tool gives you month-to-month search volume data.

Of course, we said "*decent* search volume" and not "*high* search volume" for a reason. Keywords with enormous search volumes tend to attract a lot of competition. Which brings us to our next metric:

## 2. Low Competition

The lower the competition, the more likely you'll be—with a bit of work—to rank. And ultimately, you want a good keyword you *can* realistically rank for. Many of the tools we've mentioned call this metric "Keyword Difficulty"; it takes criteria like PA and DA into account.

This, by the way, is where long-tail keywords will be particularly valuable. The shorter the keyword ("bed sheets"), the more high-authority sites will be ranking for it. Indeed, we just googled "bed sheets"; Target, Macy's, JCPenny, and Walmart make up four of the listings on the first page of the SERP. But when we type in a more specific, long-tail keyword—"bed sheets for hot sleepers"—the last result on Google's first page is from [a husband-and-wife business](#) that's clearly done its SEO work, and discovered a search term others in the industry aren't paying attention to. (The 9 results Google offers *above* Brooklinen's are all "best-of" lists, which makes *theirs* the first commercial—rather than informational—result):

The moral of the story is that the longer and more targeted your keyword is, the more likely you are to rank for it. Long-tail keywords are *at least* three words long (ideally longer); they often contain modifiers or describe the pain points they solve ("hot sleepers") or the benefits they provide. Prospects who search for these keywords are ready for a solution. Granted, you won't necessarily get a high search *volume*; but the traffic you *do* get will be more qualified and more likely to convert.

### 3. High Buyer Intent

It's one thing to rank #1 for a keyword and get lots of traffic; it's *another* to rank #1 for a keyword and get lots of traffic that *actually leads to sales*. Understanding searchers' commercial intent is key: Are they looking to make a *purchase*; or are they just looking to be educated? (Your blog content will satisfy the latter; but "qualified" is the key term for the moment!)

One way to determine intent is to look at the CPC for a given keyword. A high CPC—which, again, will be relative—means businesses are willing to pay more to advertise around that keyword. And businesses are only willing to *pay* if there's an anticipated ROI. In other words, high CPC = high competition = high commercial intent. Naturally, you'll want to find the "sweet spot" here, given you're looking for low-competition words as well.

There's also a common-sense element to determining commercial intent. Remember, there are *stages* to the buyer's journey—awareness, evaluation, and decision, with some subtle steps in-between. Prospects at the *awareness* stage are likely searching for definitions and asking "why" or "how" questions. (These are the search terms you'll focus your blog copy around.) Prospects at the *evaluation* stage are looking for "best-of" lists, price comparisons, and product reviews. Prospects at the *purchase* stage are searching for "discounts," "free shipping," or to "buy [product x]." *These* are the phrases to use.

#### 4. High Relevance

This final metric is as important as the first. And it's simple: No matter how strong a keyword is—decent search volume, low difficulty, high commercial intent—if it doesn't *actually describe* what you sell, no one is going to buy. *Don't* pretend to offer something in your keywords that you simply don't offer. If the keyword is even *a bit* of a stretch, let it go; otherwise you'll make yourself untrustworthy to the prospect who clicks in.

Finally, make sure you're absolutely clear about what your [unique selling proposition and value proposition](#) are before you start narrowing down your keywords—indeed, this may be something to clarify even *before* you begin your keyword research. You want the most killer keywords possible, yes. But going into research with those elements in place ensures you don't forget what makes your business *unique* in the process.

*Now that you know what your keywords are, it's time to optimize your ecommerce site with them. In the next section, we'll discuss [where to place those search terms on your product and category pages](#).*