

KEO Marketing MARKETER'S GUIDE



TOP 7 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SEO AND SOCIAL - POST HUMMINGBIRD



Insight
Selling

EDUCATION MARKETING



Inbound
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LEAD GENERATION



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ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING



Content
Marketing

MOBILE • LOCAL • SOCIAL



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TOP 7 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SEO AND SOCIAL—POST HUMMINGBIRD

The world of SEO and social is constantly changing and evolving—and that was certainly true in 2013.

Things started out gradually, with seemingly routine (although still important) updates to Panda and Penguin. It would later become obvious that these were smaller steps that would lead up to the biggest SEO change of the year, the arrival of Hummingbird.

Just as a quick review: Hummingbird is Google's new search algorithm, the system that determines what results appear (and in which order) when someone does a search on Google. Panda and Penguin were parts of the old algorithm. While Hummingbird is a brand new system, it still uses some of the same parts of the old system, including Penguin and Panda.

Hummingbird is the most significant algorithm change we've seen in years. It also makes search more sophisticated and intuitive than ever.

Bottom line: marketers need to learn as much as they can about Hummingbird, and move quickly to make necessary adjustments accordingly.

In this Marketer's Guide, we will touch upon some of the most important things you need to know about Hummingbird and how it will impact your search and social strategy. For more details on all of these topics, as well as other things you need to know about Hummingbird and search in general, be sure to check our blog often for the latest updates and insights

1. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE USER.

Virtually all of the search-related changes in 2013 were motivated by the mission of improving the user experience. With Hummingbird, the goal is to give users results that will provide them with the answers and information they actually need—results that will be valuable and helpful, as opposed to search results that showed up simply because a few words matched or someone managed to work the system and earn high placement on the list.

Users want results quickly and without weeding through a lot of useless or irrelevant listings. This is especially true since many users are now accessing content on smartphones and other portable devices where it is inconvenient to keep scrolling through long lists of search results or hunt through content that doesn't answer your question.

Users want the answers they need—and they want to be able to find it quickly and easily.



2. NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOOD CONTENT.

More than ever, content is king. As noted above, though, content doesn't mean just throwing a bunch of words on a page. Panda and Penguin both incorporated elements aimed at avoiding spam and rewarding high-quality content and links, thereby bypassing sites that tried to bulk up on fluff just to boost their ratings.

Hummingbird continues that trend and takes it further, making the quality of content even more of a top consideration. It isn't just the words themselves, but how they are written and the meaning behind them that factor into the equation.

In addition to quality, the format and packaging of your content is also a major factor. You should aim to have a variety of content types and lengths, but be sure you offer as many longer articles as possible. Hummingbird likes in-depth information and it appears that longer articles are being more heavily rewarded in the new system, so providing an inventory of longer articles will definitely give you an advantage. Your best strategy is to offer a nice mix of shorter content such as blogs posts as well as more in-depth materials like white papers and case studies.



3. KEY WORD STUFFING WON'T CUT IT.

As you have probably already realized, you need to put a lot of thought into how you present information to readers.

Shortcuts are no longer an option if you want to get SEO rewards. Just packing content with a bunch of keywords surrounded by fluff (or perhaps even seemingly random text) won't get you anywhere—and in fact will likely earn you some painful penalties from Google. Yes, keywords are of course still very valuable. But it's important to use them strategically, so they seem to flow organically into your relevant content.



Rather than just throwing a bunch of keywords into a blog post or on a web page, you need to take some time to think about your content more carefully. Consider what your users really want to know, and brainstorm ways that you can provide content that meets their needs and best conveys the information you want to share.

Of course, it's fine to tweak the wording slightly to incorporate words or terms that might be preferable from a search ranking standpoint. But if you plan and create your content with your users' needs and motivations in mind, the general context will likely align with what would give you the best SEO outcome. In other words, this should happen naturally without you having to manipulate content in order to force irrelevant words to somehow fit your information.

4. IT'S IMPORTANT TO MINE (AND HIGHLIGHT) YOUR EXPERTISE.

Obviously, you will want to mine the knowledge and expertise you and your team possess in order to create this valuable content. The next step is to make sure everyone realizes that you have this expertise which allows you to be considered a reliable, trustworthy source of accurate information.

This is known as establishing yourself as an authority and it is given more weight by Hummingbird in determining your search rankings.

Google Authorship is an important tool you can use to help establish and verify your authority as an expert.

Google Authorship is a program in which Google allows you to digitally sign your name to content you create and post—in other words, to add your official byline. This signifies that you personally created this content, as opposed to simply sharing and linking to content written by someone else. But it's not just a byline that gets added to your content—authorship also links to your Google+ profile, so your photo will appear with your search listings, which will also link to your complete profile. This helps you establish a persona, one that users will recognize—which will eventually prompt them to gravitate more towards results that feature you as the author.

It is simply human nature that users' attention tends to be immediately attracted to results that feature a photo in the listing preview.



TIPS: If you are struggling to get at the very top of the search results list, authorship can be a good way to overcome that challenge. Even if you aren't necessarily at the very top of the list, the fact that your search snippet includes your photo will naturally attract users' eyes and draw them to your information.

Google Authorship offers you a great way to establish yourself as an expert and trusted industry leader—which is extremely valuable both for search rankings and many other online and offline benefits. Since your author profile gives you more prominent visibility—and also gets your name and face out there—users will start to recognize you, and that sense of familiarity helps them feel comfortable trusting what you have to say.

Google Author Rank works hand in hand with Google Authorship. In order to evaluate your authority level, Google had to come up with a way to measure it. Not surprisingly, this led to a ranking system. Author Rank—as you can probably guess by the name—is a method in which Google determines your placement and visibility among other authors. The more high-quality content you create and post, the better your Author Rank will be.

5. CONTEXT IS CRITICAL.

One of the main effects of Hummingbird is the focus on conversational search. This means it's not just the words themselves that are important, it's how they are used. This was no doubt inspired by the increasing popularity of voice search, which many people use when searching on their smartphones.

In some ways, this should boil down to basic common sense. Consider how people think and talk. The way someone would talk in a normal casual conversation is likely very close to how they would ask a question via a conversational search. Think normal phrasing—not technical jargon or awkward acronyms.



This also means that longer-tail queries are now more of a consideration, since Google now has the ability to better answer those types of inquiries. While longer keywords are harder to pinpoint and incorporate into your content, they are worth the effort. Although these longer, more specific queries may be less frequent than the more common and simple keywords, they are generally used by people who have a specific goal and know exactly what they want. These are, as a result, motivated users who are more likely to take a specific action, such as engaging with your business. (In addition, you will encounter less competition when using long-tail search terms, since the phrases tend to be so specific and unique.)

7. YOU MUST BE MOBILE-FRIENDLY.

In announcing the advent of Hummingbird, the Google team stressed the focus on catering toward mobile users.

In order to ensure you are providing these users with the best possible experience, you should make them a top priority when considering your content and site design. You should have a responsive website that can accommodate users who access it via a wide variety of different devices. Make sure to constantly analyze and evaluate your site for any elements that may be slowing it down, as mobile users quickly become frustrated by delays and site freezes.





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ABOUT KEO MARKETING

Innovative Business to Business & Inbound Marketing Solutions Looking for significant increases in leads and sales?

KEO Marketing delivers innovative marketing solutions that achieve tangible and substantial results. Some of the world's largest brands have depended on KEO Marketing for marketing programs that drive business growth.

Specializing in business to business (B2B) marketing strategy, creative, messaging, infrastructure, execution, marketing analytics and results, KEO Marketing helps Fortune 1000 companies as well as medium sized businesses achieve and exceed their marketing and sales goals.

We start by understanding your business, your industry and your marketing plans. We build on that with research to identify how your customers find your products and services today. Then we tailor a marketing strategy for you based on proven experience and a thorough understanding of your marketplace. We take that knowledge and put it to work for your unique business situation and environment.

For more information and to request a complimentary marketing audit visit keomarketing.com.



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Here are some tips for designing for mobile devices:

Clear, Focused Content



“Minimize” is the keyword when designing for a mobile experience. Many people use their mobile device while they are on the go, so navigation and searching are not easy. Keep the design simple; each page should have one central focus. So the user can find what they are looking for quickly.

Simple Menus and Navigation



Mobile devices do not have the space for long menus. Make the menu a drop-down menu or an icon on the top left or right of the mobile screen. Also, make navigation easy and short. If the user has to tap through four levels of menus just to find something, the chances are good that they will leave after the 2nd tap.

Fast Loading Speed



According to Kissmetrics, 40 percent of website visitors abandon a site that takes more than three seconds to load. Google measures the speed of loading a mobile page. If the page loads too slowly, Google will lower the search engine rank of the page. If you need to speed up the loading time, Google recommends that the mobile pages be created using their Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) coding.



Rising Technology: Wearable Devices

Mobile devices are not limited to smartphones. Wearable technology such as watches and armbands are also growing in popularity. International Data Corporation (IDC) forecasts that shipments of wearable devices will reach 213.6 million units worldwide in 2020. Designing for wearable technology will require a different strategy than for smartphones.

Here are some steps for designing for wearable devices:

Use Very Minimal Design

Everything from color to typography to imagery should be simple, straightforward and easy to read at small sizes. The content must be “glanceable”; meaning the user will understand the content in a single glance at the device.

Use High-Contrast Colors

Use colors to represent elements that require interaction. The key is a sharp contrast. Consider the environment for these devices and design so that every letter is easy to read in any condition.

Keep the Type Simple

Avoid typefaces that are light or condensed. Be careful with super thick, black or bold styles. Stick to a sans serif typeface that is easy to read at a glance.

Make the Experience Easy

Above all else, design for ease-of-use. The function should be easy for the user to use from the beginning. Do not include layers and menus if at all possible. If you must add layers, make sure the user can discern the next step easily with items such as arrows or “next” buttons.

2. DESIGN FOR SEARCH



After you have responsively designed your website for mobile devices, the next step is to consider the search engines that will be visiting and indexing the site. Careful designing can increase the page rank and put your website at the top of the results pages.



Site Engagement

The level of visitor engagement by the user is an important factor in gaining higher page rank. Studies by Moz.com have determined that Google measures factors such as page views, time spent on the site and bounce rate to help determine the rank of the page.

A large number of page views signal Google that the website is popular. Page views combined with long time on-site and low exit rates can tell Google that the page is popular and well constructed. Bounce rate is another consideration. If many visitors come to the site but then leave immediately, it signals to Google that the page is not engaging.

What is a good method of increasing engagement? First, write great content. Make sure that everything you include on the landing page is helpful to the visitor. Second, make sure the content matches the promise that brought them to your site in the first place. If you promise the visitor that they will learn a new technique for improving their business, do not link them to your home page. Direct them to the content you promised they would get.



Optimize your website for voice search

According to a Global Web Index Study, one-in-five mobile users rely on voice search to find information. But voice searches are different than typed searches. When people are voice searching, they tend to have longer queries that use more complex phrases as opposed to entering single keywords in a search engine.

Because of the growing reliance on voice searches, online content creation and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for your website must change to adapt to it. But the new method of optimization is significantly different than the old methods that used for typed searches.



Niche content

Niche content is the act of creating content with the intent of using it to market to a particular niche market. Niche content can be created to appeal to a particular industry, a subset of companies, a department, or even a specific job description. Niche content is where the “persona” of content marketing is important. It helps you define the niche.

Niche content will help you appeal to target customers and reach them in new ways.

That can bring the following benefits:

- **More Qualified Leads.** Targeted content will draw in more leads and since they are responding to a targeted piece, they are self-qualifying.
- **SEO Prominence.** More targeted content means longer engagement on your site, lowering bounce rates and increases page views which will move the site higher in the search engines.
- **Stronger Word of Mouth Marketing.** As you might expect, people within the niche that like your content are more likely to share it. When they do, they will be spreading the word about you and your products.

Ultimately the successful marketers will direct their focus toward more narrow niches, personalized content and more targeted channels through which they will produce smaller content volume but increase the content ROI.



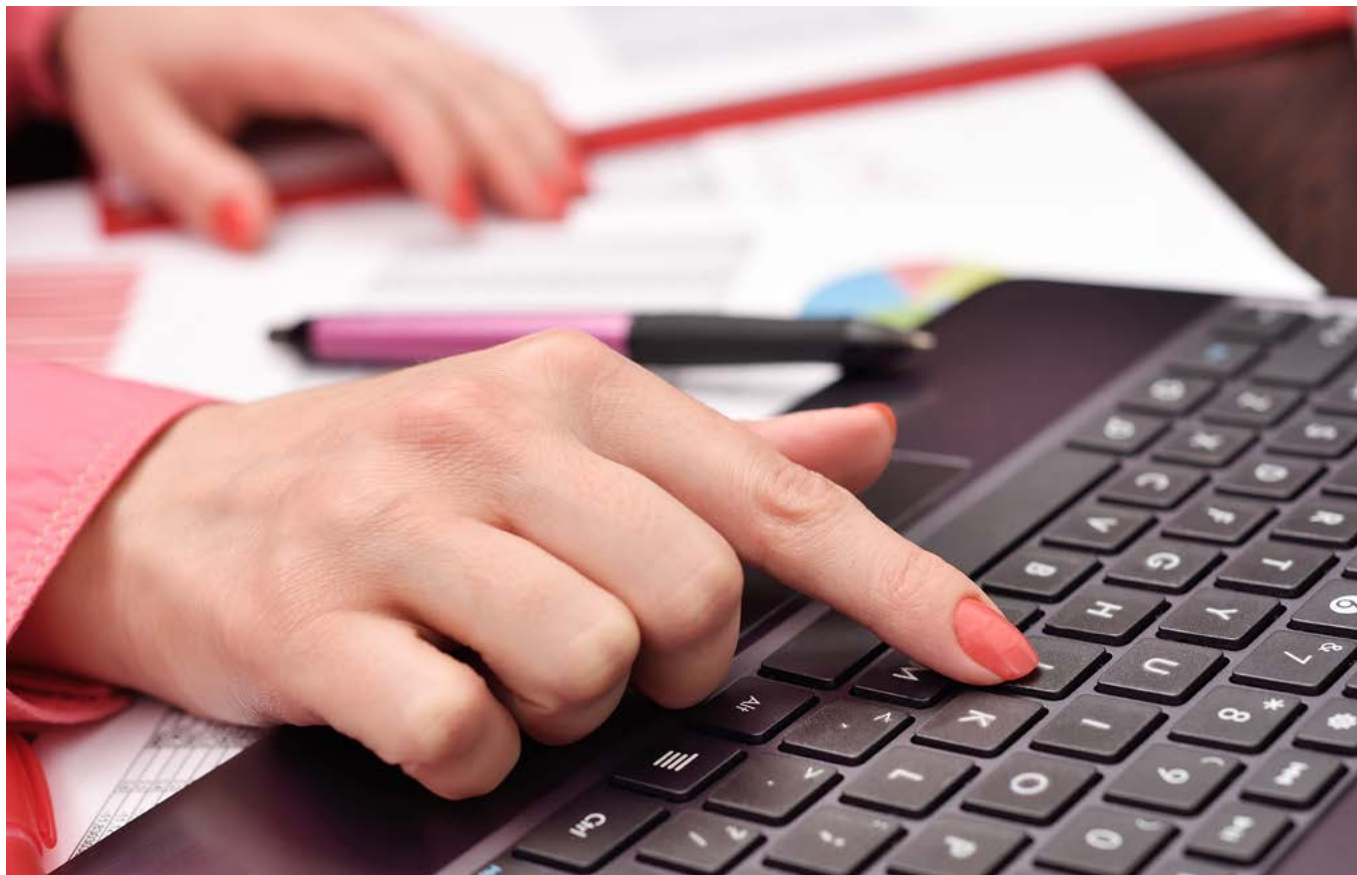
Recorded and Live Video

Consumers are demanding more intimate connections with companies before making the purchase decision. One of the best methods for making that connection is through live-streaming video. A research report from BrandLive.com showed that based on a survey of more than 200 brands a more authentic interaction with the audience (79%) emerged as the top benefit, followed by bringing a human element to digital marketing (63%). In 2016, several apps launched that allowed users to produce live video using a smartphone. Product introductions, Q&A sessions, product support, and production facility tours can now be broadcast live and can include questions from the viewers.

Close connections with the audience through live video can build preference for your brand through open transparency and connection.



One of the best uses of data in data-driven marketing is in follow-up. Data gathered when the prospect converts can be used for follow up communications. Tracking and analysis of the product-viewing process exhibited by the prospect can suggest follow-on products through customized emails. These follow-on products are tailored specifically to the product purchased based upon the product-viewing that the prospect performed before conversion as well as the type of product that the prospect finally bought.



Predictive Analytics

Companies that will succeed in 2017 will move their focus toward more predictive marketing; using the data they have captured to determine the potential best clients and developing marketing campaigns to reach out to and convert the targeted audience.

Digital marketers have discovered that they can use data gathered on earlier campaigns and apply predictive analytics to build stronger and higher-return programs. Predictive analytics apply to multiple channels of marketing from online digital to mobile to email, all as part of a multichannel strategy.



Studies from Infer.com suggest that predictive analytics are successful with the following steps:

Obtain a single view of the customer by focusing on customer data integration



Customer data integration provides the foundation for deploying decision management systems that enable companies to deliver highly relevant customer experiences.

Note which customers are already maintaining a relationship in more than one channel.



Maintaining multichannel contacts with the same customer can increase campaign effectiveness.



Determine promotional effectiveness by channel and also by narrowly defined customer segments.



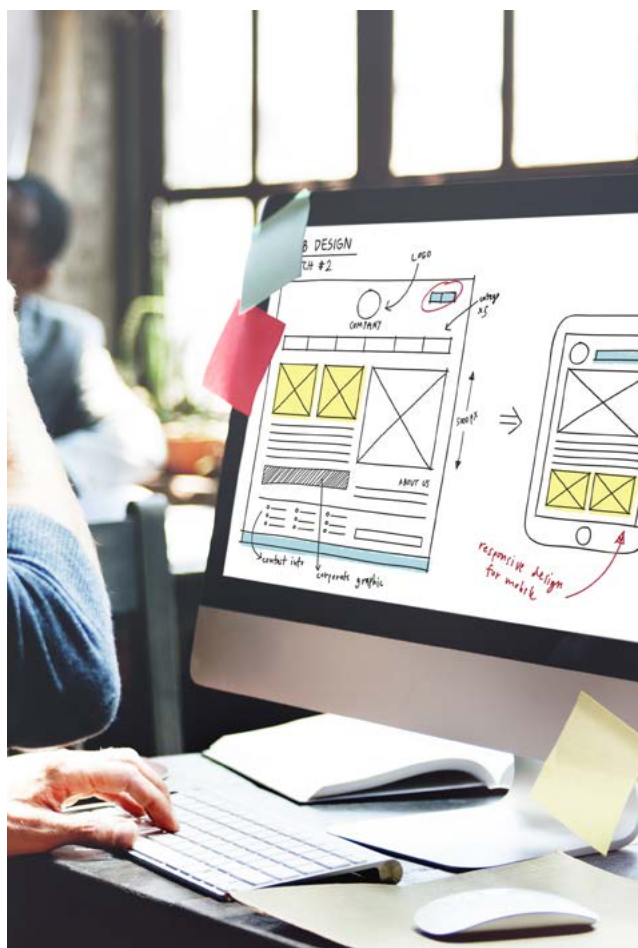
Different promotional tactics (e.g., discounted prices, ads, online events, etc.) tend to elicit different response rates based on the characteristics of the target segment.

Drive experience by learning about customers



Instead of using that information for promotion and stimulation. Today's customer owns the relationship more than organizations do. Predictive analytics can be especially helpful for audience selection for expensive channels such as direct mail or phone. This is particularly true in situations where the available universe is large, and only a portion of the universe is targeted.

The amount of data about visitors that a website can collect can be overwhelming. Predictive analytics creates a framework which can be used to modify the functionality of the website based upon predicted results. Using predictive analytics, a business can acquire important data that can help correlate customer activities and behavior to develop an effective web marketing strategy that can nurture potential leads in order to convert them into sales.



For example, based upon a web visitor's search history and/or tracking data, predictive analytics can provide information about the likelihood of a certain type of web visitor to make a purchase. Or the analytics can identify the visitor's interest in particular products based on their click-path through the website. The predictive analytics process helps marketers provide different marketing opportunities by correlating data and translating it into significant actionable information to use for mapping out marketing strategies.

Predictive analytics can help with website processes such as the path to draw the visitor into for nurturing the lead and launching the appropriate marketing strategy to compel them to convert. They can also help focus on what the visitor wants in terms of information or product data and deliver it to them. In short, predictive analytics help identify which of the website's marketing strategies brings positive engagement with customers and then helps the company utilize it to the fullest extent.