# THE FOSTER WEB MARKETING CLIENTS' GUIDE TO GREAT CONTENT

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**BY TOM FOSTER**

FOSTER WEB MARKETING

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# INTRODUCTION
# "Content Is King"

## You may have heard the words "Content is King" before, but what exactly does that sentiment mean?

Is it just the rallying cry of web marketers? The crutch that SEO people fall back on? Is it even true? And if so, how does one even begin to write content, let alone "good" content? In the following pages you will get the answers to not only what content is and why it's important, but also the time tested, tried and true methods to creating web content that converts web visitors (after all, isn't that the point?). So sit back, grab a notepad and a pen and be prepared to start jotting down the stream of ideas that will begin to surface as you read the rest of this book.

Today, website content is still—by far—one of the most important elements of a profitable Web marketing campaign. In fact, it is one of the key pieces of the Internet marketing puzzle. Search engine optimization (SEO) experts and even Google proclaimed "Content is King!" Therefore, the more relevant, high-quality content you are able to add to your website on a regular basis, the better.

There are a few reasons as to why content is so critical to Internet marketing. First, it gives you the chance to have more pages indexed by the search engines. You can devote certain Web pages to particular keywords to boost your chances of ranking well within search results. Second, as you add content to your website, you are able to build a theme. You can let the search engines and Web visitors know what your site is all about. That will position you as the expert or authority on that particular subject. For example, if you regularly add content to your website about motorcycle accidents in Virginia, that is going to signal to everyone that

you know this subject well. The following is an example of what a theme would look like:
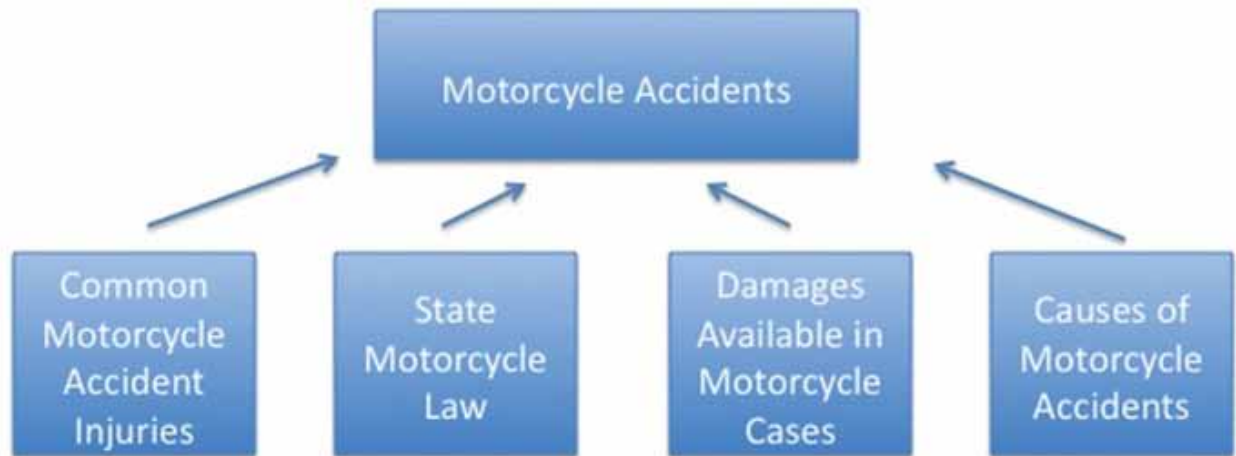


In the above example, "Motorcycle Accidents" represents the practice area page, while "Common Motorcycle Accident Injuries," "State Motorcycle Law," "Damages Available in Motorcycle Cases," and "Causes of Motorcycle Accidents," would represent blog posts, library articles or frequently asked questions. These articles support the practice area page by providing more granular or detailed pages that link back to and from the main practice area.

Another reason content is so important has to do with your prospective clients. Think of content like your tackle box: the more "bait" or "lures" you have in your tackle box, the more fish you should be able to catch. The same is true of your website content. The more specific, targeted content you have on your website, the better your odds of attracting quality visitors.

# CHAPTER 1

# Different Types of Content Have Different Purposes

Many people think that writing content is easy—and it is—but writing interesting content that appeals to both search engines and potential clients alike requires a bit more work.

As you create monthly content to support the practice areas of your website, you have several options. You can write a news article, library article (informational/educational article), blog post, or frequently asked question. If you have won a case, you can post case results and even ask for a testimonial from your client. You also need to add interesting, informative, well-produced videos to the mix. Ideally, you want to post a mix of these types of content to your website on a regular basis.

So what are the different forms of content that you can and should write?

## Home Page and Practice Area Pages

There are a variety of ways in which someone might enter your website, but the most important pages are your home page and practice area pages. These are considered landing pages—meaning that they are pages where you want to generate the most traffic. Each page needs to provide an overview of your practice and should be focused on the Web visitor, not you. If you want to keep people on your website, you will need to capture their attention right away. Therefore, your home page and practice area pages must speak directly to the concerns of your

**Is your homepage enticing?**

Web visitors. Everything you include should be centered on the person reading your content, not on you or your business.

The one rule of writing is to always remember that **it's not about you**. Your content needs to speak to the emotions that the Web visitor is feeling. Think about the questions and concerns you may have if you were hurt in an accident or facing divorce. You need to use these ideas to address the conversation that is already going on in the reader's mind. You also don't want to overwhelm your readers; therefore, your home page and practice area pages should not be more than 800 words in length.

In both home and practice area pages, you should expand upon the specifics of the types of cases that you accept, how they are handled, and offer reasons why your law firm is well-equipped to handle them. When writing these types of pages, it's important to incorporate the following:

- **Lists of subtypes of cases** – Since weaving in specific keywords is very important, and since bulleted lists are easy to read and are search engine friendly, list your practice areas as well as the types of cases that you cover. For example, for a slip and fall practice area, you could list icy sidewalks, badly lit hallways, rickety stairs, unmarked wet spots in stores, and poorly repaired railings. You can also include other lists, such as "What to do if you think you have a slip and fall case" or "Common misconceptions about slips and falls."

- **Specific examples of cases, either from the firm or from the news** – Real-life examples of people going through a personal injury (or other type of case) can help you easily integrate strong keywords and give a personal feel to the copy at the same time. People love to hear stories of how you've helped someone just like them—so integrate them into your content!

- **Your geographical location** – Include streets and highways for vehicle accident pages. Integrate local streets and highways throughout your content, when possible.

- **Calls to action** – After you have given information on your practice area, be sure to add a call to action at the end of page. This short paragraph could simply begin, "If you or someone you love has been injured in a slip and fall accident, contact us today to have your questions answered." Including information about a free book, report, or offer will make your page even more powerful.

**A library article should be timeless and informative. A video can help accentuate the material in the article.**

## Library Articles

Library articles are educational pieces that are typically not tied to a time-sensitive event. Instead, the information presented in this content should be applicable long term. When writing a library

article, ask yourself, "Will this information apply a week, month or year from now?" If the answer is yes, then it is a good topic for a library article. Each article should be between 300 and 600 words in length. If it is longer than 600 words, consider splitting it into a two-part article series.

Library articles are great opportunities to focus on specific subsets of practice areas. For example, if one of your practice areas is medical malpractice, you could write a number of library articles each with a particular focus: surgical errors, bad drug interactions, wrong diagnosis, failure to diagnose, procedural errors, etc. In short, library articles are a great way to work in a wealth of keywords that ordinarily get overlooked in the general practice area copy.

Library articles are also great opportunities to make numbered or bulleted lists—two things that search engines and human readers alike are attracted to. Some good topics include:

- *A list of ways to ruin your accident case.*
- *A list of tactics used by insurance companies to avoid paying a claim.*
- *A list of warning signs that your parent might be the victim of abuse at his or her nursing home.*
- *A list of 5 tips to win your dog bite case.*

## Blog Articles

Blog articles are usually shorter than library articles, hovering around 250 words, and are more casually written. They are a unique opportunity to showcase the individuality, concern, warmth, and expertise of the people who work for your firm. A blog can be used as your sounding block to voice your opinion. A blog also gives you the opportunity to share your expertise and let your personality shine. When you are writing a blog entry, picture yourself having a conversation about the subject. Talk to them, not at them. This will help you capture a great tone and will allow you to reach your readers on a more personal level.

Blog articles can cover almost any topic, from news to advice to changing laws and policies. Blog articles can also blend two genres. For example, a blog may reference a recent car accident in the area and then go on to mention related cases you've handled and what to look out for. A blog may also announce the result of a recent product liability case, and then give information on how a lawyer can help if you were injured by an unsafe or badly labeled product.

**A blog can be slightly informal but still just as informational. Video also compliments the message of the blog post.**

Blogs can also reference other new material on the site. They can point to a recent library article and rehash that item's main points and why they are important. They can spotlight a new eBook that is available on the site or a new practice area that has been added.  However, no matter what you summarize, whether it is a library article or eBook, the blog entry needs to contain unique content. You don't want it to be too similar to the article you are referencing. Take a different spin on the topic.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions can be up to 400 words, which includes the question. Try to create a question that appears to be popular and tie it in with information that is already on the website. For example, if you represent brain injury cases, you can create a question "What are some of the warning signs of a serious head injury?" If you have written a library article or blog entry on this topic, you can reference and link to it in the answer.



**FAQ's provide helpful information to website viewers. Answers should also be in the video.**

## News Articles

News articles can also be up to 400 words that relate to current events relevant to one of your practice areas, as well as your geographical location. Each news article should link back to at least one reputable source, such as an online newspaper. You can also use this section to highlight news within your practice.



**News articles are written about what's happening currently. This news article is also complimented by a video about how to use Facebook Graph search.**

News has become a very important piece of content. When the Google freshness update was announced, the search engine said it would impact nearly a third of search results. The greatest impact was to be on current news, trends, hot topics, recurring events and frequent updates. With this update, Google has identified the content that is tied to a time-sensitive topic or event. The search engine then places the freshest content, or the most recently posted content, at the top of search results. This change can be especially helpful to your Web marketing efforts. As you identify breaking news or a hot topic that relates to your practice, write content about it. And don't just write one news article. Write several, and include tips and advice from an expert's standpoint.

As always, consider who will be searching for key terms in relation to the news article in question. Include as many specifics as possible, such as the names of those involved, the details of their injuries or situations, and the exact location of the accident or event. Use proper nouns and hyperlinks to internal pages when you can.

**PRO TIP**

**Here are some great resources for finding news topics:**

- **Google Alerts – (www.google.com/alerts) You can sign up for Google Alerts so that you receive links to news that are related to a topic of interest. For example, if you represent car accident cases in Dallas, Texas, you would want to sign up to receive alerts for "Dallas car accident," "Dallas auto accident," and so on. You can wake up to the best stories of the day in your inbox, just waiting to be rewritten.**

- **Google News Search – (news.google.com/) If you don't want to flood your inbox with alerts from Google, you can always go directly to the source. Use Google's news section to search out stories and events that are relevant to your practice. Many of them will be great fodder for your news items.**

- **Google Trends – (www.google.com/trends) Google will show you the most popular searches for any given day. This will give you some insight as to what is a newsworthy event or hot topic.**

- **Local online news sites – Make a bookmark folder of these sites and take the middleman out of your searches.**

- **National news** – If there is a relevant national case from a state that you are covering, be sure to write about it. Many more people will be looking for stories about national items, and writing about a case that is receiving a lot of attention can send your traffic through the roof. Just be sure that it is relevant to your state and your practice areas.

- **Government organization press releases** – Press releases from government agencies and big non-profits can be wonderful sources of news. Bookmark government sites like the state Department of Transportation and the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and check them periodically for new policies, studies, and statistics.

**BE SENSITIVE!** In our experience, news articles can be a little controversial, as people might accuse you of using a tragic news story to attract cases. Therefore, use some discretion when writing this content. Make it compassionate and avoid overly promoting your firm. You need to be thick-skinned when using this strategy as you may receive negative comments, but many of our clients have weathered the storm and received great cases—sometimes directly from the victim of the news item they published! It works!

## Offer Pages

Book and offer pages are a bit different than other types of content that you are writing. Your goal with these pages is to compel the potential client to request the book or offer. In order to write persuasive copy for these pages, you should keep in mind the questions and concerns that the potential client may have. Helpful tips to write compelling book and offer page copy include:

- *List some examples of information that is contained in the book.* Keep in mind the questions that the potential clients may have and convince them that you have the information they've been searching for.

- *List the retail price* (if there is one), highlighting the fact that they can request it for free on your site.

- *Convince the readers that they really do need this book or offer* by listing ways it will help them, and reasons why they would be at a disadvantage without it.

**Your offers should be well defined and descriptive. Make the prospect want to order your book!**

## Case Results and Testimonials

Case results and testimonials are wonderful ways to showcase your successes as a firm. Not only do they help you stand out from the crowd and show potential clients that you are experienced, they are also a way for you to draw your readers in. Reporting on your case results for the kind of cases you like best also attract more of those kinds of cases and clients!

One way to really draw the attention of your readers is to tell a story, no matter what kind of content you're writing. Readers can only soak in so many facts at a time, but they remember and relate to stories. When writing case results and asking for client testimonials, don't fill up space with case numbers, basics, and the award amount; tell about the hardships that your



**Testimonials are very powerful when a quote and video are combined. A person cannot connect to a quote as they can to a real person saying great things about your services.**

previous clients went through and what you did to help them through the difficult times in their lives. The award amount is certainly an important piece of the puzzle, but the emotional connection will make the biggest impact.

## Videos: The Best Kind of Content You Can Do Today!

Just like the other types of content, you need to have video on your website. Video has been proven to convert Web visitors into contacts, and video tends to keep people on you site longer, thus reducing your bounce rate. Google has even admitted that video on a website is one of the factors it considers in its ranking algorithm. However, video can also hurt you. If your videos are boring, all about you, or are low-quality, you might as well say goodbye to potential clients.



**This website greets visitors with a multitude of informative videos.**

Wondering what to talk about in your video? To start, always remember the top rule of content: it's not about you. Make your videos instructional, informative, and interesting. Think of the questions that your clients have, and answer them in the video. You may even consider describing a case of a client that you were able to help.

Once your video is ready, you'll need to load it to the web. It's important to not only load the video to your own website, but to also add it to video sites, like YouTube. This will enable you to reach large audiences and, ideally, draw them back to your website. You'll also need to write informative content to post with your video. Instead of posting a script of the video, write an interesting summary of the information that is presented. Keywords are important when posting on YouTube. Make sure that the keywords you use accurately reflect the material contained in the video.
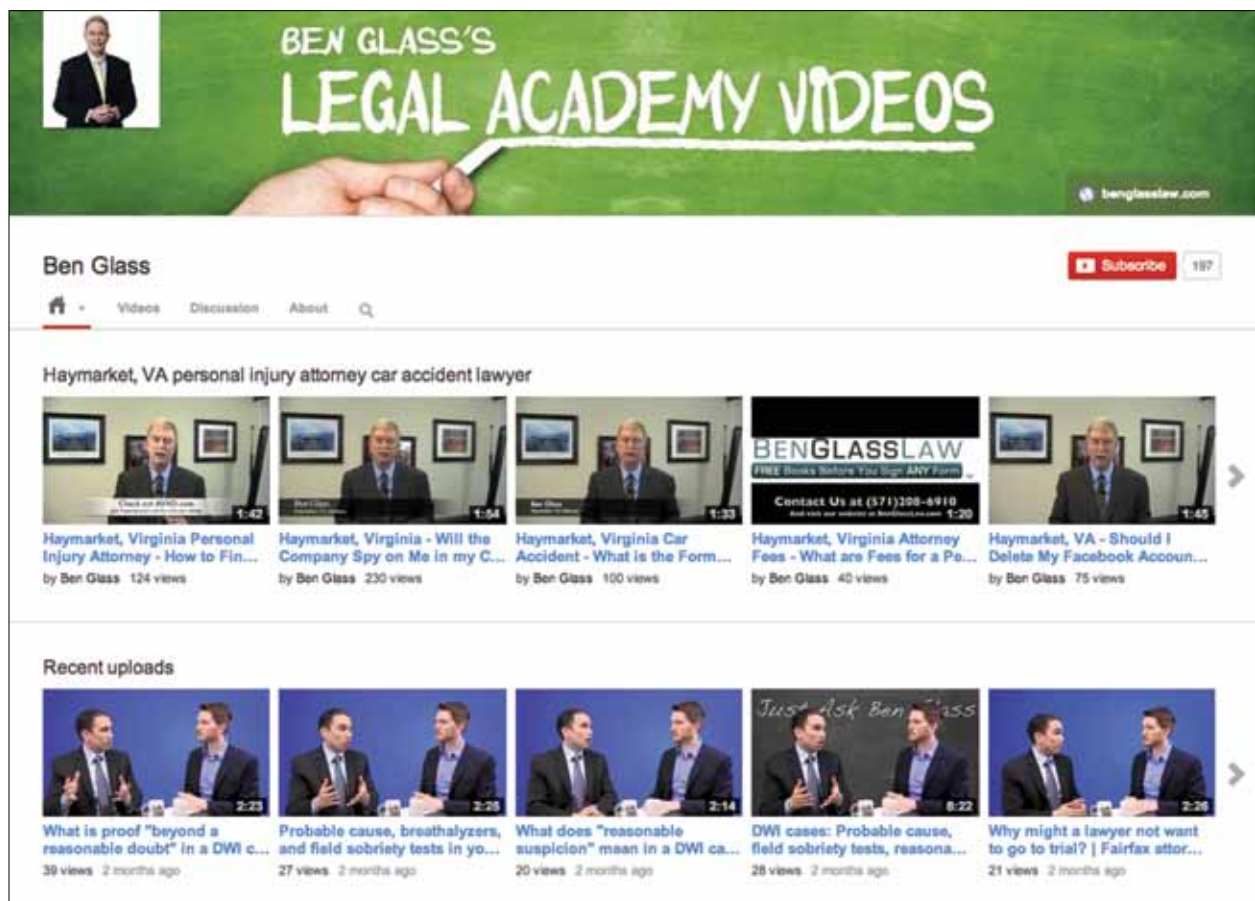


**This YouTube account is filled with multiple video uploads.**

# CHAPTER 2
# Determining Your Topics

Before you jump into writing content, you need to understand one thing: **who you're writing for**. While it may be tempting to start writing just to get something up there, you need to use your time wisely—after all, time is money.

When developing a content strategy, you need to take a step back to look at your practice.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- *Who are your perfect clients?* (If you could get one type of client every day, what would they look like?)

- *Who are your bread and butter clients?* (What type of clients at the ones whom you —at this very moment— cannot live without?)

Your content strategy needs to appeal to both of these types of clients. As you start to get more and more of your perfect clients, you can certainly reevaluate the breakdown of your content.

While it may seem daunting at first, it's helpful to take a step back and reflect upon the conversations that you have with your clients on a day-to-day basis.

- *What kinds of questions are your clients asking?*
- *What questions should your clients ask, but don't?*
- *Are there any questions that seem to come up on a frequent basis?*
- *What are they worried about?*

- *What are they confused about?*
- *Have you been able to help people just like them?*

You want to appeal to your readers' emotions. Answer their questions and ease their worries. Provide tips, "secrets," and expert advice that set you apart from the pack. If you frequently face questions from your clients about what to do when contacted by an insurance adjuster, write a set of articles about the subject.

With that being said, it can still be difficult to sit down and come up with content topics. So, prepare ahead of time. Keep a notebook in your desk in which you jot down monthly content topics. Whenever an idea pops into your head, whether on the phone with a client, reading through the news, or working on a case, jot down the topic to write about later.



**Appeal to your readers' emotions by answering their questions and easing their worries.**

There are also many websites that you can use to do topic and keyword research (which will be covered in a later section.) One such site that is great for topics is [http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/keyword-questions](http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/keyword-questions). This site will show you how many people are searching for a particular question, word or phrase, which will provide some great topic ideas!

When we train our writing team at Foster Web Marketing, we tell them two things over and over again: "Become a critical thinker" and "think like a reporter." When you employ your critical thinking skills, you start to reexamine every news article you read, every story you hear on television, and every book you read. Even emails start to look different, as you consider whether there is some type of angle or information you could apply to your target audience. As a critical thinker, you can reshape concepts and ideas into something new by asking yourself, "How can I translate this information into something useful for my audience?"

When you wear your "reporter hat," you can also start generating some amazing content. You will always be on the lookout for something new that would relate to your prospective clients. Some of the questions you should constantly be asking include:

- *Is there any big event I can capitalize on?*

- *What are other companies saying about the topic?*

- *Have I written about this subject already?*

- *Is there a different angle I can take on this topic?*

- *Can I expand on what I've written already?*

When you are creating your website content, keep in mind what would interest your reader. Just because the topic is appealing to you doesn't necessarily mean that your Web visitors will feel the same way. On that same note, make sure you are using language that is relevant to your target market. Avoid industry-specific lingo and overly technical terms.

**PRO TIP**

Writing website content isn't about pumping out as many items as you possibly can. If you take that approach, the quality of your content will suffer. You may end up writing the same type of thing over and over again, with little new insight for your Web visitors. So, be sure to take the time to go beyond what is obvious when writing your content by focusing in on your perfect clients, doing topic research, and creating interesting content that answers your potential clients' questions and concerns.

# CHAPTER 3
# Keyword Research

Ah, the infamous keyword. First we must explain how keywords are used today, as there is a drastically different approach to the use of keywords now then there was just a few years ago. Everything has drastically changed since the great Google Panda update of 2011 and the subsequent Penguin updates that just keep coming. When we speak of keywords, we do not mean "meta" keywords of old-school SEO. We mean keywords used sparingly within your page title, headline, meta description, and body copy.

When we refer to keywords, we're not talking about just one word. We're actually talking about the keyword strands, or phrases, that potential clients may type in. When choosing keywords, it is important to imagine potential clients sitting in front of their home computers and wondering where they can find help for their legal problems. These people are probably not going to type in overly formal legal terms like "product liability" or "elder care abuse." Most of the time, they will type in a question or the details of their specific case. To attract these web visitors you need to write in the language they use and understand.

SEO is a page-by-page process, meaning that each page of a website should be unique and should target a unique set of keywords and phrases. Each page has the potential to rank in the search engines for these terms.

Keywords should be used to relay the overall content topic for a particular page. In most cases with SEO practices, content will be created specifically to target a unique set of keywords that have been identified as being effective or as having the potential to bring traffic from a targeted group of searchers. These keywords will also tell the search engines what your page is about in order to determine where it should be indexed, hence the importance of a page-by-page approach.
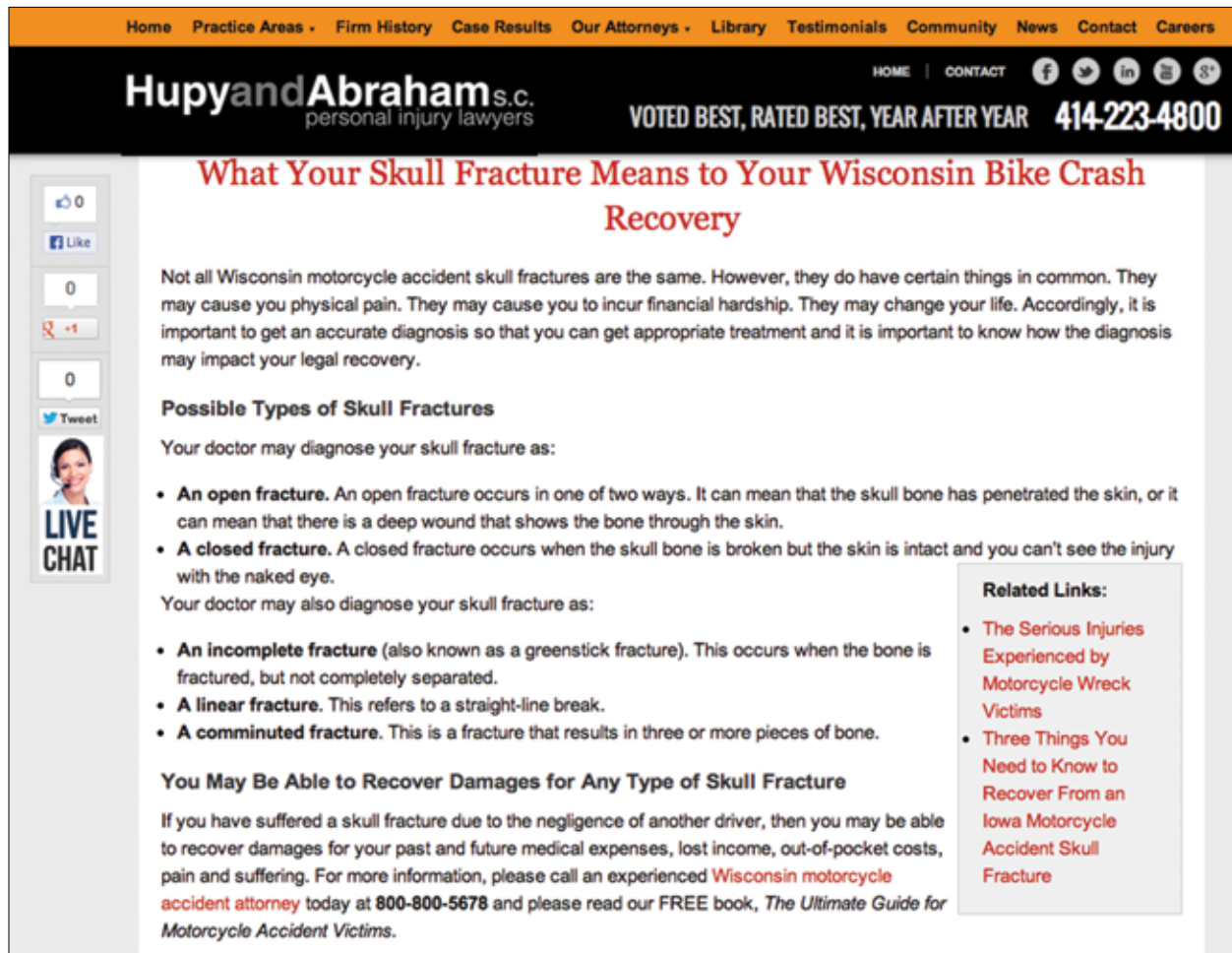
**The blog post uses geo-location (Wisconsin car accident and Wisconsin accident) so that when searched, should come up higher within search results.**

Following are some basics of choosing keywords:

**KEYWORD DOS:**

- *Include locations in your keywords.* Most people seeking lawyers want to find someone nearby who has a good knowledge of state law. For this reason, many people include their geographic location in their searches, such as "Fairfax car crash lawyer." Also, remember that people often use abbreviations for states.

- *Target one keyword string per content piece.* Don't get carried away with your content. Choose one keyword string that you would like to target per content item.

- ***Balance the number of keywords.*** The ratio we use when it comes to keywords is mentioning your target keyword twice per 250 words. One way to find out if your content has too many keywords is to read it out loud. If you stumble while reading it, then you may have overstuffed the content with keywords.

- ***Use alternate keywords when writing.*** For example, instead of always saying "accident" for an auto accident practice area, use "wreck," "collision," "crash," etc. This helps convey to the crawlers what the page is about, but won't send off the alarms caused by repeating the same words and phrases over and over on a page.

- ***Write for your readers.*** Original, relevant, and natural-flowing content is the goal. If readers stay on the page and visit other pages on your site, they are telling the search engines that your page provided the information they were looking for and answered their question.

- ***Frontload your keywords.*** The more relevant words you can integrate into the first paragraphs of content (don't forget the headline & page title), the better. However, don't sacrifice clarity or natural tone to write, "social security disability" a dozen times in two paragraphs, but also don't neglect to mention "social security disability" somewhere in the opening paragraphs of an article centered on that subject.

- ***Focus on the long tail keyword.*** The long tail keyword generally consists of about 4 or more words and has lower demand and competition. However, it speaks to a highly targeted audience. Long tail keyword should occur naturally in the content.

**KEYWORD DON'TS:**

- ***Keyword stuffing***. Repeating the same words on a page over and over is a clear violation of Google's stance against keyword stuffing. It also makes your content difficult to read and affects the overall quality of the content. If it sounds unnatural when read out loud, then you've used too many keywords.

- ***Using the same keywords for numerous pages.*** You do not want to target the exact same keywords across numerous pages, as you will decrease the value of the original page's content and rankings. This can potentially hurt your site's overall visibility in the search engines by creating an internal keyword battle where no specific page is able to rank as well as it could for the targeted keyword.

## Diving Deeper Into Keyword Research

Keyword research—which is "the practice of identifying which phrases are used on search engines when people are looking for information, and usually includes finding both the search volume and relative competitiveness of the terms"—is a vital element for search engine optimization. When properly used, it creates a road map for both the execution and design of building websites and developing content.

**IF I AM INJURED IN A CAR ACCIDENT SHOULD I GIVE A RECORDED STATEMENT TO THE OTHER VEHICLE'S CAR INSURANCE COMPANY?**

On behalf of Corless Barfield Trial Group posted in Personal Injury – General on Friday, May 3, 2013.

The answer to this question is NEVER. If you are injured as a result of a motor vehicle accident and you are not at fault for the accident, you should never give a recorded statement to the at-fault vehicle's car insurance company without first consulting an attorney.

It is very important to remember that if you are injured as a result of a car accident and you are not at fault; the car insurance company of the at fault party only wants the recorded statement to gather information and build a defense against your injury claim. Your number one concern should be your health and receiving the appropriate medical care to treat your injuries.

If you are injured as a result of a car accident, it is very important that you speak with an attorney as soon as possible. As a driver in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Marion, Polk or the rest of Central Florida you have important legal rights. A qualified attorney can explain these rights and help protect your legal rights.

**Car accident is used over and over but is too general of a keyword to provide local information.**

*Usually*, keywords are split up into groups based on the number of words within the query phrases. The more words in a keyword phrase (referred to as "long-tail keywords"), *usually* the easier it is to rank for the term, since *usually* there is less relative competition.
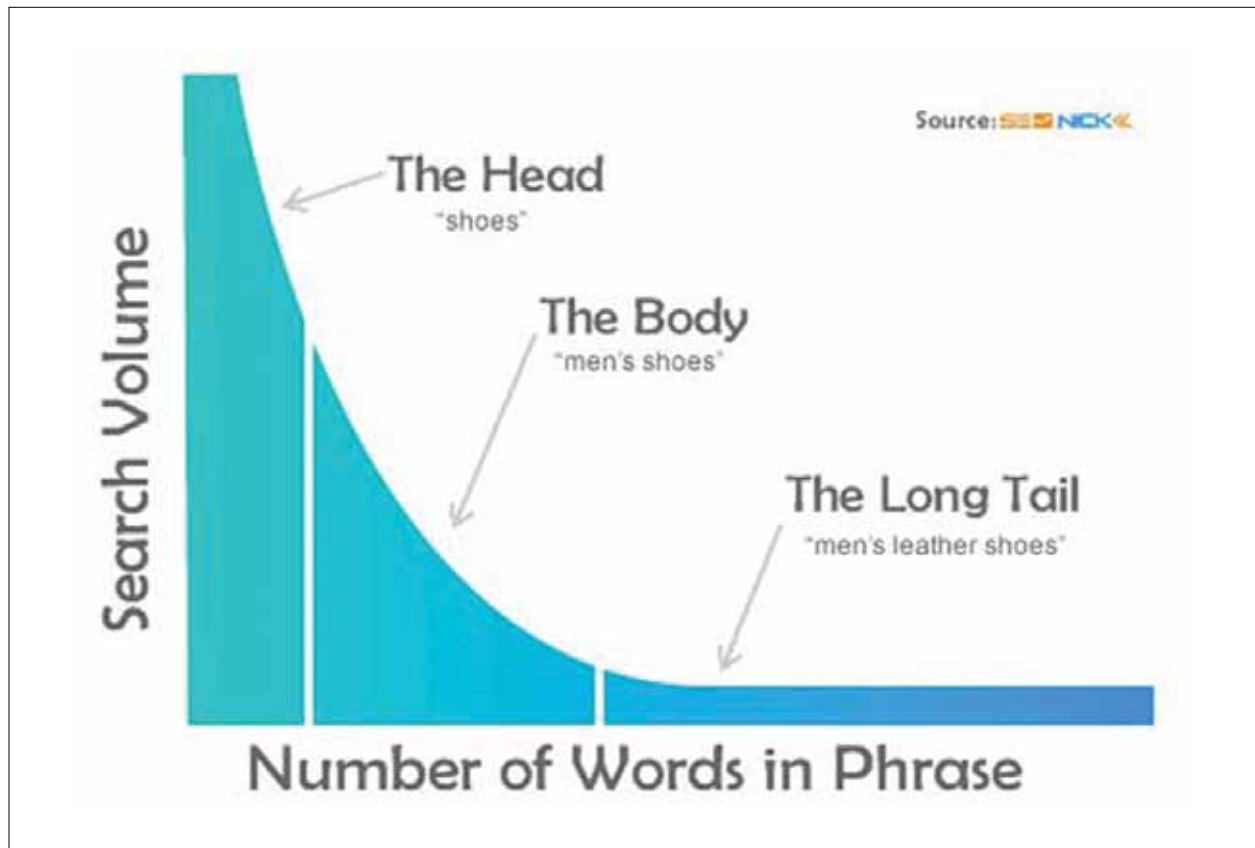


**There are two schools of thought for keyword research: optimizing for traffic, and optimizing for conversion.**

## Researching for Searcher Intent

When writing for conversion, it is important to gain some insights into the mindset of your ideal audience, as well as the intent of your ideal customer. Let's take a brief look at the two most common types of intent to consider, when writing for conversion:

### 1 COMMERCIAL INVESTIGATION QUERIES

A commercial investigation search walks the line between commercial intent and pure research. This, in a nutshell, means that these types of searches aren't always based around a transaction,

and may never even result in an exchange of services between yourself and the user, but they are not solely about information either.

- **Opportunities:** Convert to client, influence purchase decision, collect email, get user feedback/participation
- **Average Value:** High



## 2 TRANSACTIONAL QUERIES

Transactional searches represent more than the transfer of monies. Signing up for a free consultation, downloading a free report, or finding the most qualified attorney in a specific area are all examples of transactional searches. These make up the majority of visitors you want to attract because they are looking for something specific that will incite an action. When relevant to the page's topic & intent, calls-to-action are mostly written to target these kinds of searches.

- *Opportunities:* Achieve transaction (financial or other)
- *Average Value:* Very high
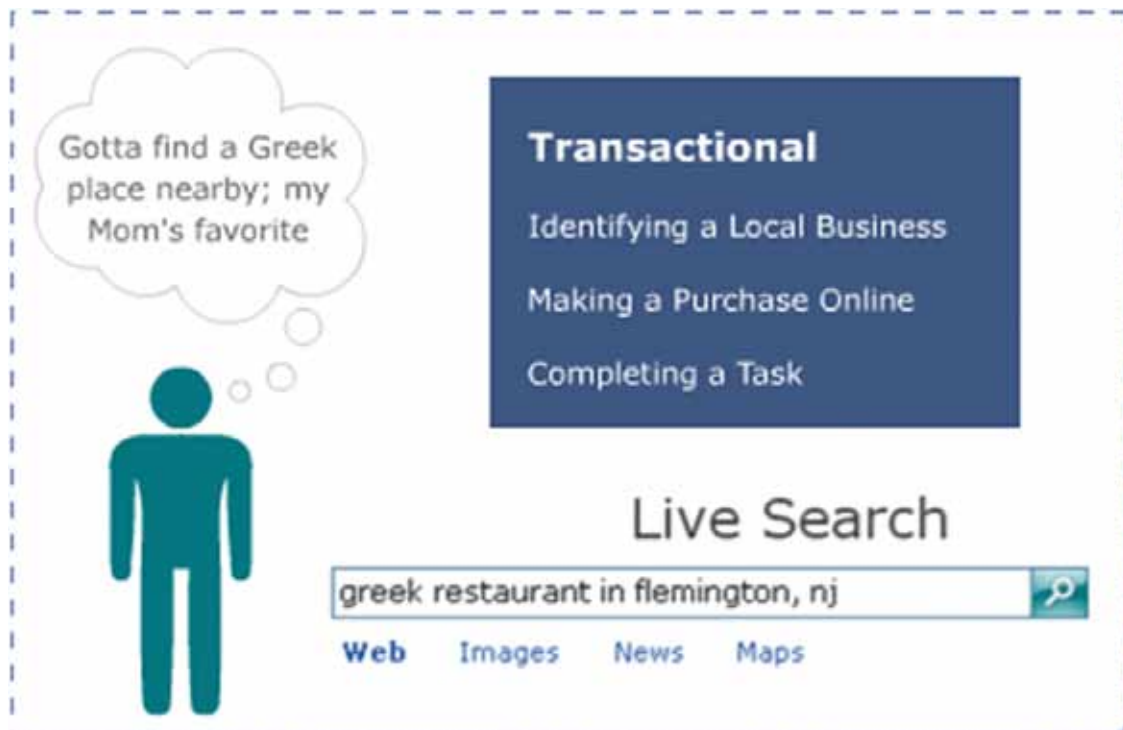


## 3 Things to Keep in Mind When Conducting Keyword Research

*1* Keywords with a high search volume tend to be more competitive (i.e. harder to rank for). Search volume for keywords should be taken into account, but it should not dictate your choices and should never be the only factor used to determine your target keywords.

*2* Search volume doesn't guarantee relevancy. At the end of the day it's not about how many searches a particular keyword gets, but rather how relevant it is to your website and your audience. That's why it's important to conduct keyword research on a page by page basis so you end up with the most relevant keywords on every single page of your website.

*3* Long-tail keywords drive more targeted traffic. Searchers are getting smarter and more specific

in order to narrow down search results. Long-tail keywords are also more specific and aim to drive more targeted traffic. While they have less search volume individually than broader terms, the majority of our sites get more traffic from combined long-tail searches. And they are less competitive, so the opportunity to rank higher for these longer terms is greater.

## Important Keyword Research Tools

**PRO TIP**

**Below is a list of our top recommended keyword research tools, and a brief overview of each:**

- **Google Keyword Tool** – This tool shows you monthly search volumes and competitive levels for both local and global searches. Remember, the more competitive the keyword, the more difficult it may be to rank for. This tool is a great first step when creating a keyword prospect list.

  ***It is important to note that the term local represents searches within your local country (i.e. United States) NOT your local city or state.***

- **Übersuggest** – (www.ubersuggest.org) This tool scrapes Google's auto suggest and provides you with the most frequently searched permutations of your keyword(s). This, coupled with the Google Keyword Tool and Excel, is a great start in quality keyword research.

- **Keyword Spy** – (www.keywordspy.com) This tool provides a quick synopsis of the search landscape, in relations to your target keyword(s). This is a valuable tool because it provides common misspellings of keywords, which is something that should be taking into consideration while completing your research.

- **Google Trends** – (www.google.com/trends) This tool provides data on search volume for keywords over time. Google Trends is most helpful after you've established a general idea of the keywords you want to target. It allows you to compare the search volume history of multiple terms and shows which keyword may be gaining in search popularity or falling behind other similar search terms. This comes in handy when selecting between similar keywords to determine which term is searched for more often based on Google search only.

*It is important to note that the above-mentioned tools are just a small portion of the keyword research tools available. Some are free while others are paid, but understanding the basics and*

*creating a strong foundation for your keyword research is an extremely important step to creating valuable content to convert readers into clients.*
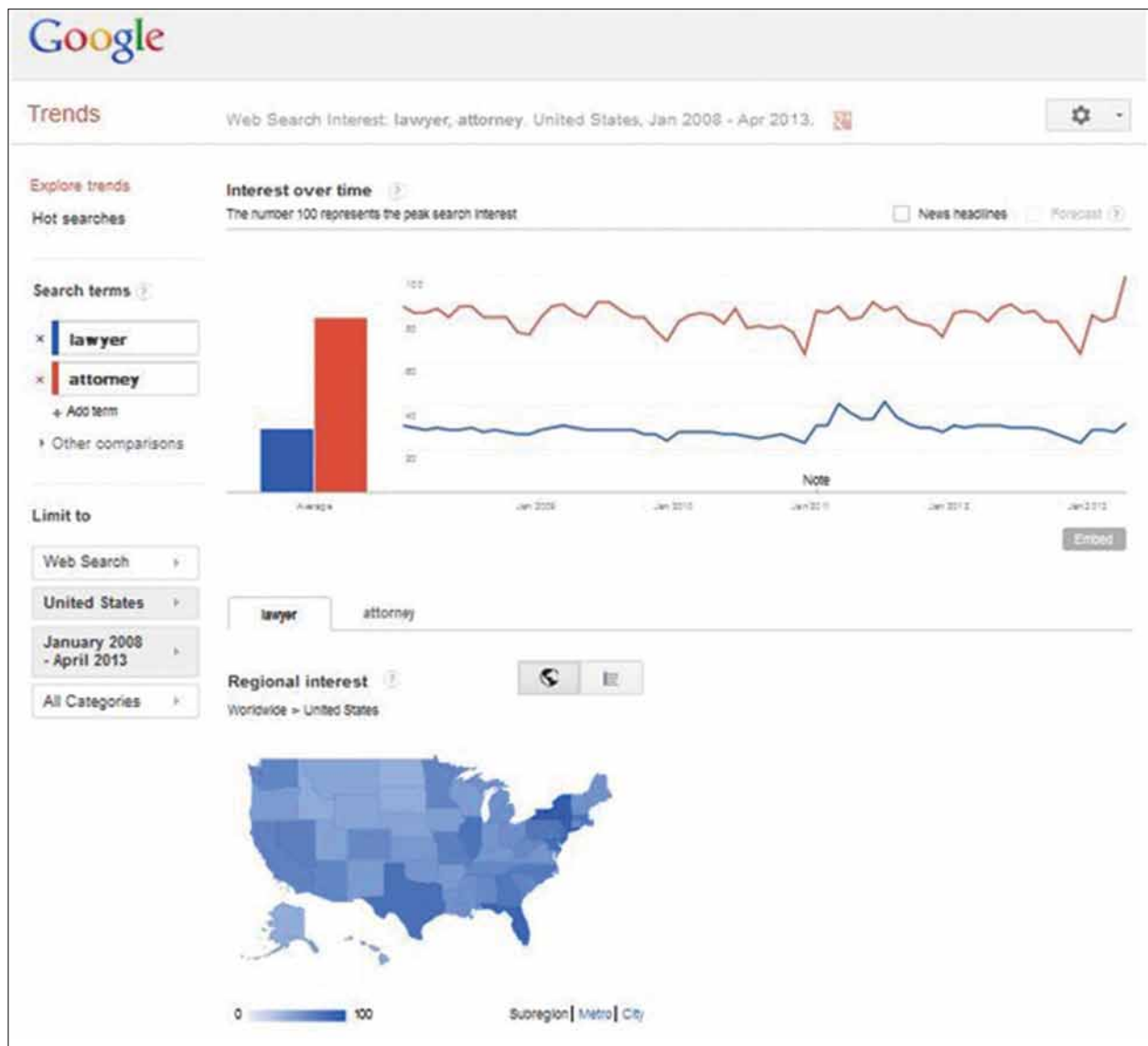


**\*Google Trends data comparing Google search volume for "lawyer" vs "attorney" in the US from 2008-April 2013.**

**The Regional Interest map shows search volume comparisons for each state.**
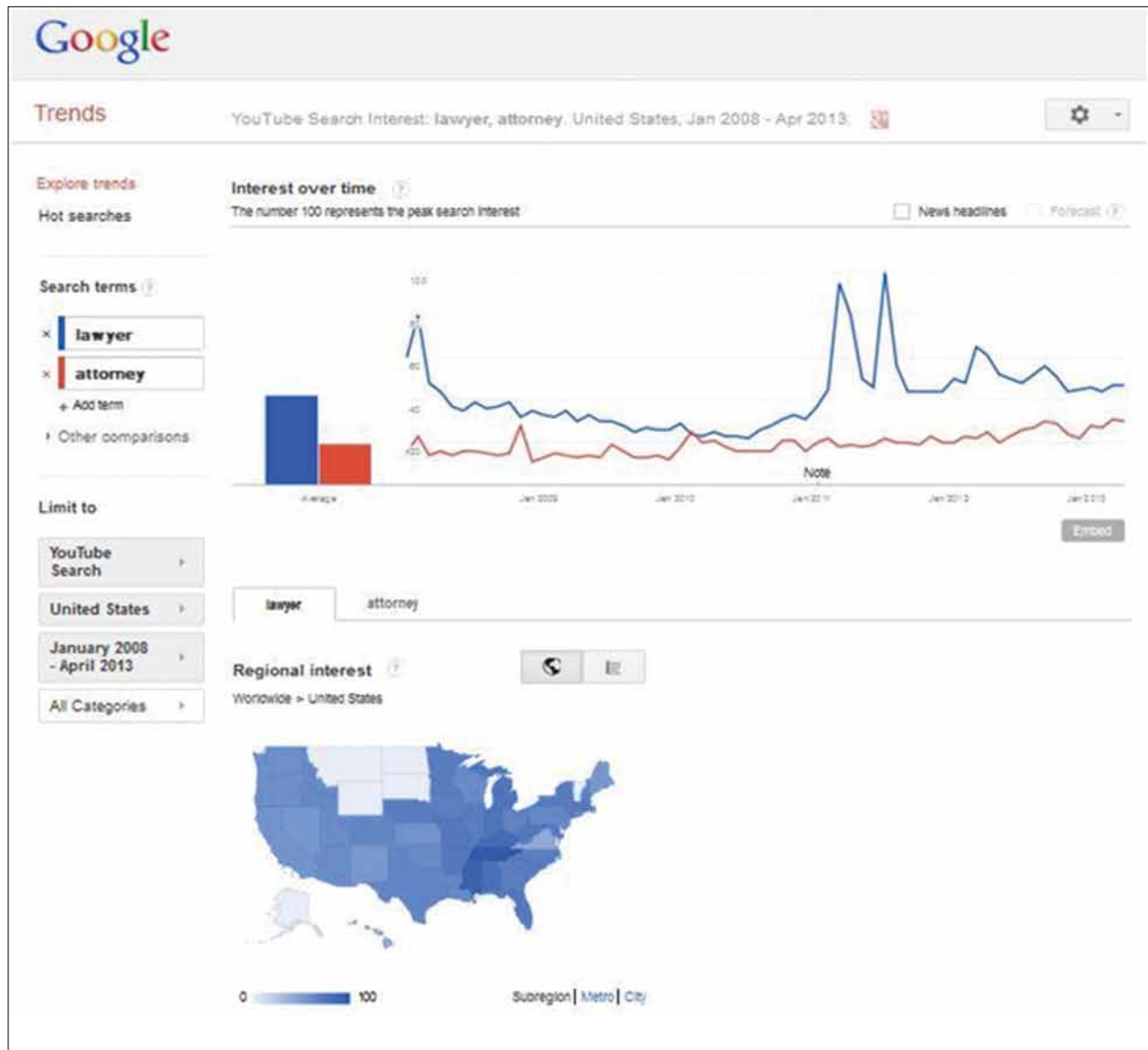
*Google Trends data comparing YouTube search volume for "lawyer" vs "attorney" in the US from 2008-April 2013.

Notice that "lawyer" is more popular for YouTube searches, while "attorney" was used more often for web search.

# CHAPTER 4

# How to Effectively Write Website Content for Search Engines & Humans

Incorporating elements into your content in order to ensure it appeals to search engines is referred to as "on-page optimization." There are many pieces of the content puzzle that must be optimized, including page titles, headlines, meta descriptions, body copy.

Remember from the chapter that discusses different kinds of content (home page, practice areas, library articles, blogs, etc) that different types of content have different purposes on the web, and therefore it is important to understand that how you incorporate keywords into these various types of content is different as well.

While this may seem daunting at first, it's very important to take your time in order to understand how to write optimized content, as all of these items need to work congruently in order for you to get the best return on each piece of content you add.

## Page Titles

Your page title is the first thing people see after doing a search. Your page title is crucial to your click through rate so it should be an accurate, concise description of the page's content. It is

critical to both user experience and search engine optimization, as search engines place a big emphasis on page titles.

For the home and practice area pages, titles need to be keyword-rich. An example of a page title for a home and practice area page would be:

"Divorce Lawyer Seattle | Family Law Attorney Bellevue"

With library, blog and FAQ articles, you can be more flexible. With a library article or blog post, you will be targeting less competitive keywords. We will typically not have search volume numbers to rely upon. Not only that, but these keywords typically have a lot more variation.

For articles, make sure your title is readable and interesting. Include a keyword in the title—*and make sure this is what your article is about.*

Here's an example of a page title for a library article:

"Virginia Car Accident Attorney Reveals Insurance Company's Tricks"

Again, remember that most people will not type in legal phrases such as "product liability," "premises liability," or "wrongful death." Would you ever tell a friend in conversation, "I got this terrible personal injury last weekend?" No. You would describe the details of the accident instead.

Another tip is to put questions into your library articles and blog entries, as people often type questions into search engines. Instead of writing "Ten Things You Should Do Immediately After a Dallas Car Accident," try, "What Should You Do Immediately After a Dallas Car Accident?" Not only is the latter more likely to be typed into a search engine, it is also more intriguing.

When writing page titles, remember the following:

1   *Titles are one of the most important on-page SEO factors, so treat them as such.*

2   *Page titles across a website should be unique; each one should be relevant to its page.*

3   *The page title needs to be interesting and compelling, so that someone will actually want to click on the link from the search results.*

4   *Unless your firm is national, include geo-location-specific keywords (such as "Seattle divorce lawyer").*

5   *After the primary keyword, use 1-2 related keywords.*

6   *Page titles may be no longer than 70 characters in length, including spaces as search engines only show the first 70 characters of a title*

7   *Mobile sites only show up to 55 characters, so keep in mind that the meat of the title should be toward the beginning.*

## Headlines

Page headlines appear at the top of the page and introduce the page to the web visitor. They are more for conversion, but search engines do take them into consideration. Therefore, please try to work keywords into your headlines *naturally*, so it doesn't look like it's written for the search engines. It just takes a little creativity.

Think of the headline as the title of a newspaper article. The headline is what will grab someone's attention and get them to read the first couple paragraphs. Therefore, you need to make sure your headline is intriguing. A good example is "Lose Your Fairfax Auto Accident Case by Taking These 5 Actions!" This headline is attention grabbing, and makes the readers want to learn more, in order to ensure they're not ruining their chances of recovery.

If you have trouble coming up with headlines, look at newspapers, magazines and websites for ideas. Copywriters are paid to create compelling headlines, so make them work for you! For example, you can convert a magazine headline, such as:

"What No One Ever Tells You About Marriage"

to

"What No One Ever Tells You About Virginia Car Accident Claims"

## Meta Descriptions

Meta descriptions are short, informative summaries of a page's content. They serve the function of advertising copy, drawing readers to your site from the search results and, thus, are an extremely important part of search marketing. This is one obvious place where you can make or break your

> Fairfax, **Virginia** - Best Personal Injury Car Accident **Attorney** ...
> www.vamedmal.com/
> **Virginia Medical Malpractice** Cases .... a year or more to find out that their **lawyer**,
> indeed, was not a qualified personal injury or **medical malpractice attorney**. ...
> Contact Us - Ben Glass - Case Results - What to Look for in an Attorney

search traffic. Crafting a readable, compelling description using important keywords can draw a much higher click-through rate of searchers to your page.

While the keywords within a meta description aren't used for ranking purposes, meta descriptions are the primary source for the snippet of text displayed beneath a listing in the results. Google also **bolds** the keywords from a search query, directing readers to the sites which contain their desired results.

Meta descriptions can be any length, but search engines generally will cut snippets longer than 160 characters; therefore, *we suggest that your meta descriptions are no more than 160 characters in length, including spaces.*

*Note: Search engines may choose to show a "snippet" of text from the page instead of using the meta description.*

### *In order to create a solid meta description, include:*

- *Dynamic, descriptive and relevant copy.*
- *Copy that matches and compliments the content of the page and the page title to which it leads.*
- *Copy that is clear and easy to read.*
- *Content that gives facts and information not present in the title of the page.*

You should make sure that your meta descriptions are not just cut and pasted from the Web page's content. Do take the extra few minutes to write a unique summary of the most important facts of the page.

What is most important here is that the reader is drawn in and encouraged to click on the search

result and continue on to the article itself. It will only help you if your meta description is *unique and relevant to the greater content.*

## Body Copy

For SEO and conversion purposes, the body of your content should include keywords, hyperlinks, and calls to action. However, the most important thing to remember when writing your body copy is to make sure it's written, first and foremost, for the visitor—NOT the law firm or the search engines. Your copy should be clear, accurate, and engaging. It should read naturally and not be overly optimized for SEO purposes. **Search engine optimization gets people to the site; strong persuasive writing gets readers to take the next step (hiring you).** Both are obviously important.

**CONTENT CREATION: HOW TO WRITE HIGH-QUALITY, TARGETED COPY THAT FOLLOWS ALL OF THE RULES**

1 ***Avoid duplicate content penalties:*** **Never, EVER cut & paste.** Don't ever cut and paste from other sites, and don't even cut and paste from your own writing or other pages on your law firm's site. Copying content from others' sites can violate copyright laws *and* hurt your law firm's page ranking. Google has made it clear that *duplicate content* is a violation worthy of site penalties.

   *You will never be penalized for writing original, dynamic, relevant, and unique content.*

2 ***Stay on topic and be clear.*** The easiest way to engage readers while incorporating targeted keywords into your content is to write about the subject at hand. Make your copy meatier with specific nouns instead of pronouns and omit needless words and phrases. Maintaining a clear and specific focus with each piece of content will not only help to keep the reader interested and improve the website's credibility, but will help to avoid *keyword cannibalization*.

   *Keyword Cannibalization occurs when a particular keyword is used excessively throughout a website, creating a battle between the pages on the site targeting that keyword. This makes it difficult for search engines and users to determine which page is the most relevant for the keyword.*

**3 Be specific.** Many times, those looking for more information on a topic already have a good idea of what they're searching for and want more details or an answer to their question. Creating highly targeted content may reduce the amount of potential traffic for the page because you are narrowing in on a smaller, more focused audience. However, if these visitors find the information they're looking for on your site, they are more likely to remember the website; therefore, they will be more likely to lead to a conversion or future referral.

- *Include specific nouns when applicable,* such as location names, business names, names of persons involved, street names, product names, intersections, etc.

- *Answer a particular question—in the first paragraph.* Visitors won't continue reading if they don't find their answer right away.

**4 Include cities and states.** Always try to incorporate geo-location-specific keywords into the content whenever it makes sense and reads well. Try to find a way to relate the content to the geographic location of the client. However, it should never be forced.

*Geo-targeting content helps to cut down on web traffic from visitors outside of your service area or preferred targeted locations, which helps improve the quality of the traffic that will come to the page.*

**5 Avoid lawyer-speak.** Don't write in "legaleze" and avoid overly complicated technical terminology; real people type easy-to-understand and common words into search engines.

**CONTENT FORMATTING: MAKING YOUR COPY EASY TO READ & SEARCH FRIENDLY**

**1 Put the most important content first.** Most search engines give a slightly higher priority to text that appears towards the beginning or top of the page. This is because search engines do not have human instincts to recognize which parts of the page are the most important or most relevant.

**2 Put conclusions at the beginning.** Another way to think of this is that you want your keywords to be denser towards the top of your article. If your page is about injuries sustained in head-on collisions, then the first mention of head-on collision injuries should

be in the title, headline, and first sentence. Don't start using synonyms for your keyword phrase until the second or third paragraph.

3 **Keep paragraphs & sentences relatively short.** Readers do not want to be greeted with long, intimidating, and dense blocks of text.

4 **Use subheadings, bullet points, & lists:**

- **To break up page content.** Blocks of content can be overwhelming and may discourage a visitor from reading. Breaking up page content benefits readability by allowing the visitor to easily transition throughout the content.

- **To segment different topics on page.** Use subheadings to segment topics. Subheadings help to more effectively target topically different keywords or phrases in a single piece of content, and can act as helpful reference points on a page.

- **To provide a quick overview for reader "verification" that tells him if page will likely provide what he is looking for.**

5 **Include a call to action.** No matter what kind of content you are writing, <u>you need to include a call to action</u>. Not only should you encourage the readers to call or fill out the online form for answers to their questions, you should suggest they request your book, when applicable.

## Call to Action? What is That?

Remember that the entire purpose of adding content to your website on a regular basis is to get people to find your content and contact you! A "call to action" (CTA) encourages the reader to take action. Each page on the website should contain a CTA, and many times will contain multiple CTAs. The CTA is one of the most important parts of a page, as it gives the reader a way to engage with you, taking that reader to the next level: conversion.

Clearly, most web searchers will not hire you right after reading your website content. You will have thousands of visitors, but only a few contacts—even under the best scenarios. It is no different than retail sales or direct mail. What do I mean by this?

Imagine a giant retail organization like Best Buy. They have over 1,000 stores worldwide and have thousands of people come into each of their stores every day. They do not sell to everyone just because they walked into the store. There are many "motivators" to encourage visitors to purchase something, from the moment they walk in to the moment they leave. These "calls to action," are what turn a store visitor into a purchaser.

The Internet is very much the same way. You need to attract visitors to your website, and then encourage them to "buy" from you. In the case of law firms, a "buy" would be that the web visitor completes your contact form, initiates an online chat, downloads a free report, requests one of your books, or simply picks up the phone and calls your office. That is how the whole process of converting someone into a client begins. Don't be naïve to think that a person that does not know you will hire you to work with them without some discussion with you or your staff first.

Let's say you have written a great article about the steps you should take after a motorcycle crash. When someone is done reading your article, what do you expect him or her to do? Your Web visitors are not mind readers, so you have to tell them what actions they should take. That is where the call to action comes into play.

A call to action consists of words that urge a reader to take prompt action. At the end of the article, you should put something like:

"To learn more about what actions you need to avoid after an accident, request a FREE copy of our controversial book, *MISTAKES That Can Hurt Your Injury Case.* This book is the one the insurance company doesn't want you to read! You can obtain your copy by calling us at 888-888-8888 or by filling out our online form."

*Some Options for Calls to Action:*

- *Call the law firm*
- *Fill out an online form*
- *Request a free book*
- *Schedule a free consultation*
- *Email the law firm*
- *Chat instantly via live chat*
- *Sign up for a newsletter*

### *Where to Place the Call to Action*

- ***Library Article:*** End of article

- ***Blog Post:*** End of article

- ***FAQ:*** End of article

- ***Home Page:*** Throughout content as appropriate

- ***Practice Area Page:*** Throughout content as appropriate

- ***News Article:*** For news articles, a call to action is not always appropriate; don't overly promote the law firm. If there were injuries or fatalities, end with a sympathetic sentence like: *"The Virginia accident attorneys at Smith and Smith Law extend their condolences to the families impacted by this tragic accident."*

Not only should you encourage the readers to call or fill out the online form for answers to their questions (and to schedule a free consultation, if offered), you should also mention your book(s), when applicable. For home page or practice area content, the book(s) should be mentioned as soon as contextually appropriate.

If you don't have a book or report, then simply mention in your call to action that readers can get answers to their questions by calling you. Your goal is to get the conversation started. A call to action will get things going.

# CHAPTER 5
# Internal Linking: Bringing it All Together

Each piece of content you write should support one of your practice area pages. That means you should have one link in the content item—whether the piece is a FAQ or library article—which points back to the main practice area page. This step is huge for SEO. You want to build upon your practice areas to show that your website follows a theme. Plus, if anyone links to your content, you want your practice area to get most of the credit. Below is an illustration of how internal linking should take place. Each line represents a link.
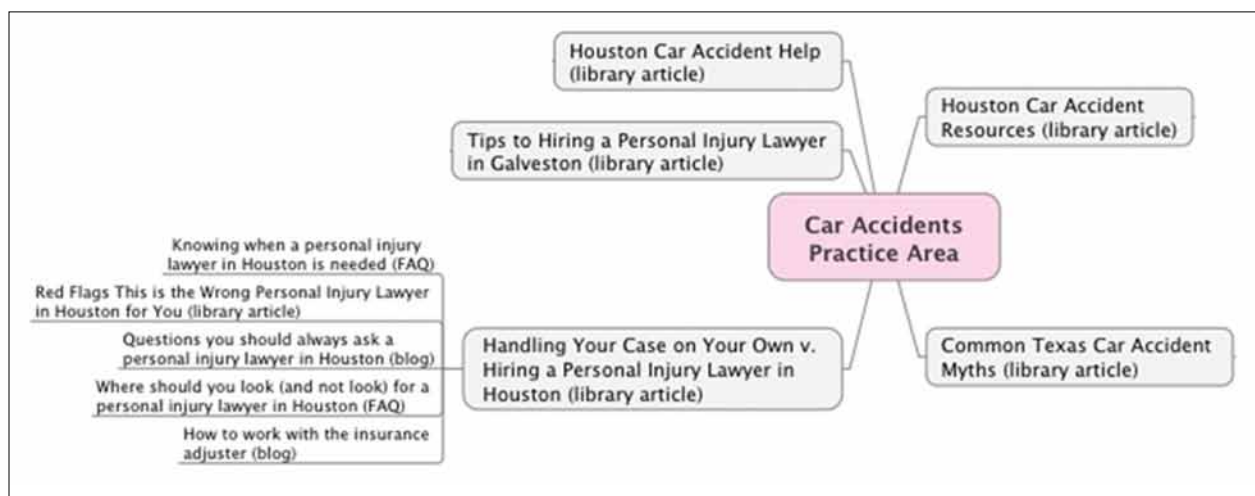


**How internal linking should take place.**

Internal links consist of two components: Destination & Anchor Text.

- **_Destination_** – Quite simply, the page on the site you link to.

- **_Anchor Text_** – The words or phrase that you select for the link. Anchor text tells the web visitor and search engine crawlers what the page being linked to is about—so it's very important to select appropriate anchor text.

    **Things to Avoid:**

- _Using generic text such as "click here" or simply using the URL as the anchor text._

- _Using text that is off-topic or has little or no relation to the destination page's content._

- _Using the same anchor text over and over._

When linking to your practice area page, use your focus keyword as the anchor text. As well as linking to the corresponding practice area page, you may also add links to other corresponding articles. When linking to another article, use anchor text which is descriptive of the destination page.

Internal links serve three important purposes: Navigation, Conversion, & Ranking Signal.

- **_Navigation_** – The primary purpose of an internal link is navigation. Anytime you have content that makes a reference, you need to provide a link to that referring source. You should also link to content that provides more in-depth information.

    A good internal link is one that sends the user to exactly the right destination to find more information on the idea/concept/person brought up in the text. If you are writing about a topic and you know that a page exists with more information on the subject, it would only make sense that you would include a link to that page to offer more value to the reader (and to the page being linked to by choosing the appropriate anchor text).

- **_Conversion_** – Internal links play a big role in website conversion and, in many situations, become the bait for the call to action. Be sure that you are linking to the most proper & effective destination for your call to action.

- **_Ranking Signal_** – Internal links, similar to external links, send a signal that associates the destination with the anchor text. This is an opportunity to let Google know what

pages you want to rank for certain terms. If done incorrectly, this is also an opportunity to confuse Google or make your site look spammy to search engines.

**HOW MANY LINKS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A PAGE'S CONTENT?**

This is a difficult question to answer. There is no set number, but keep this in mind: each link from one page to another passes page rank and *the more links added to a page, the less value those links will have*. Be picky. Think strategically.

When considering adding links in your content, ask yourself the following questions:

1 *Would the reader be best served by navigating to that page?* If the answer is "Yes," include a link to that page.

2 *Which pages would gain the most value by including a link from this page?*

3 *Are the topics covered by the destination pages relevant?*

Keep the following in mind:

- *Avoid adding a superfluous amount of links.* Again, think strategically about the reader and the web crawlers when choosing the number of links in your copy.

- *Hyperlink to external pages sparingly.* When appropriate, you may link to external web pages. However, only link to external pages if necessary, and if there is obvious value to the reader. One example where an external link would be acceptable is when referencing the source of a fact or statistic in your content. One such example would be to link to an auto accident study on the NHTSA website.

- *Don't link to Wikipedia or to unknown sites.* Only link to reputable sites and organizations, such as government agencies, non-profit organizations, or research universities.

CONTENT WRITING

# About Foster Web Marketing

Foster Web Marketing specializes in providing high-quality website design, Internet marketing, video, SEO, and content writing services for lawyers. For over a decade, our company has been helping businesses around the country dominate the Internet. Our proven Web marketing strategies have catapulted businesses from the bottom of search results to the very top.

With a large team of designers, writers, editors, SEOs, coders, video experts, and marketers, we can help you with just about any aspect of your Web marketing campaign. To learn more about our services, including our content writing, use the following information to contact us:

Visit http://www.fosterwebmarketing.com/contact.cfm

or

Call 888-886-0939

# TOM FOSTER
# About the Author

Tom Foster is the man behind it all.  He is the founder and owner of Foster Web Marketing, not to mention the creator of DSS (Dynamic Self-Syndication), a powerful and highly effective online application that allows clients to update every aspect of their websites.

Tom is a nationally recognized author and Internet marketing expert.  He is the author of *Twitter for Attorneys*, *The 5 Biggest Mistakes 99% of Lawyers Make With Their Websites* and *How Smart Lawyers are Using Video on the Web to Get More Cases Without Breaking the Bank*, as well as the co-author of the best selling book, *Shift Happens: America's Premier Experts Reveal Their Biggest Secrets to Help You Thrive in the New Economy*.  Tom has been featured on numerous television stations, including affiliates of CBS, NBC, ABC and FOX.

Tom entered the world of technology initially to focus on sales and marketing in 1991 after serving a six-year tour in the Marines.  The USMC is where he learned his initial technology skills while being stationed in Top Secret Military Communications Centers around the world.  After dedicated service to his country, Tom's goal was to break into an industry with big growth potential.  Retail software was the biggest thing going and large-scale distribution was on the horizon.  Tom jumped on the opportunity and was distributing software solutions to retail chains such as Best Buy and CompUSA, where he was able to polish his business and sales skills with executives in the corporate world.

After many successful years in the software technology business, Tom wisely recognized the future of the Internet and decided to go out and start his own Web design company. Foster Web Marketing was launched and quickly gained national recognition.

Tom lives in Virginia with his wife, Charlotte, and five children, Torie, Sam, Thomas, Maddie and Luke. When he is not busy at work, helping his clients dominate their competitors online, you can often find him hanging out with his family, biking or playing guitar.

# ABOUT FOSTER WEB MARKETING

Foster Web Marketing specializes in providing high-quality website design, Internet marketing, video, SEO, and content writing services for lawyers. For over a decade, our company has been helping businesses around the country dominate the Internet. Our proven Web marketing strategies have catapulted businesses from the bottom of search results to the very top.

With a large team of designers, writers, editors, SEOs, coders, video experts, and marketers, we can help you with just about any aspect of your Web marketing campaign.

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