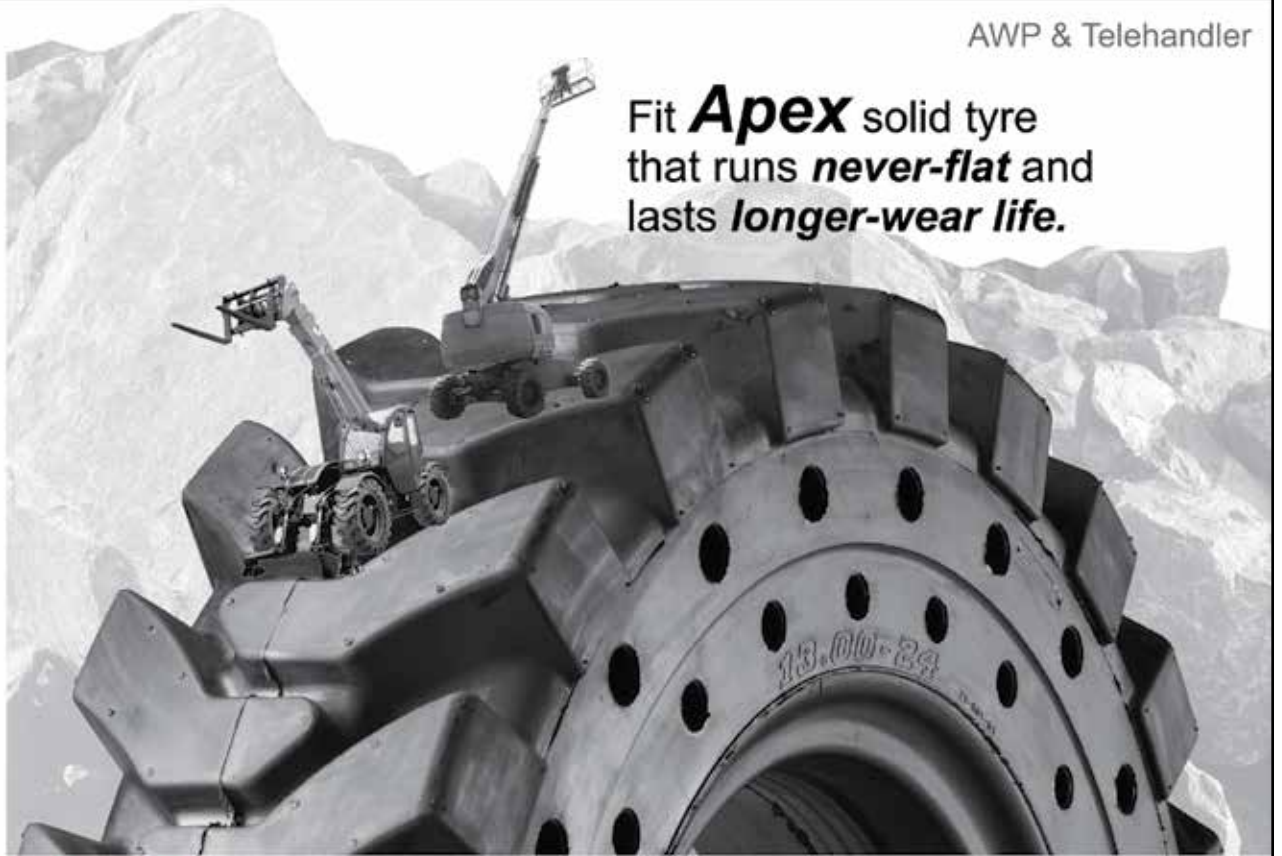


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Why isn't my website on page 1 of Google?



As an SEO consultant this is a frequent question prospects ask of me. "What's wrong with my site! I've slaved over it creating engaging content, used breath taking photography and I keep the news or blogs updated daily and yet I just can't seem to get on the first page!"

At this point, I ask the all-important question: "What are you trying to rank for?" Frequently I receive either a single word or phrase answer. Often the single phrase will be a 'vanity' phrase, for instance 'powered access'

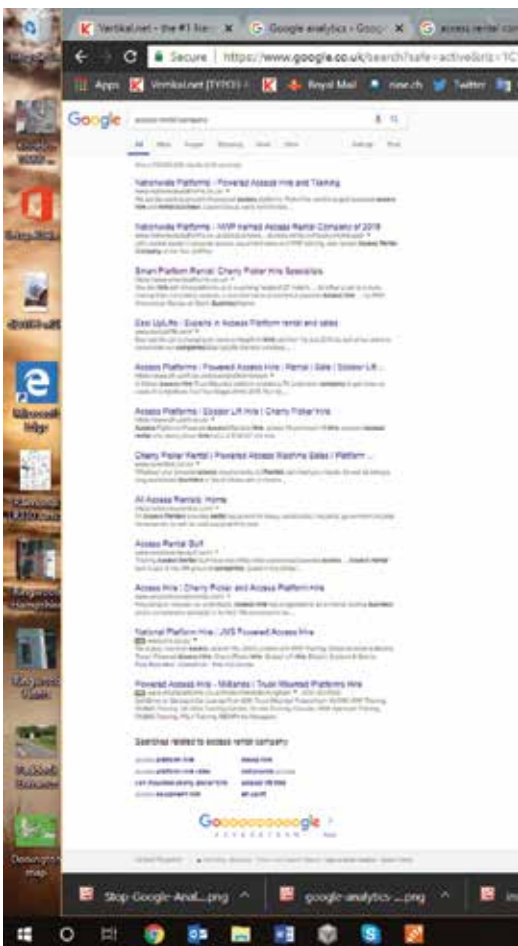
or 'cherry picker'. The reason I say vanity is there is no certainty what someone wants when they type a generic phrase like this into their browser. Do they want powered access training or to hire a cherry picker, maybe purchase a platform or possibly they just want to know a definition of what powered access means. The fact of the matter is there is no way of knowing from the general nature of the phrase what that person actually wants.

Intent is everything

So instead of worrying about your ranking for vague phrases it's worthwhile backtracking a little and spending some time thinking more precisely what someone who is looking for your service may type in to the search box. So, if you're involved in rental maybe you want to consider 'powered access rental' or 'cherry picker hire'. Of course, the greater the qualification then the closer you are to a sale. So, if someone types in 'cherry picker hire Watford', this long tail enquiry (a search with three or more keywords) is much more likely to be someone on your doorstep who is looking to rent.

So how do you determine the

right keywords and phrases in the first place? Initially, it's well worth asking all of your clients and prospects how they found you. If it was through a search engine, then what did they type. This is a great way to determine what it is you are already gaining valuable enquiries from. You can take this one step further. If you have access to your Google Analytics you can find further information on what people typed into search engines to find you. Even better, if you have access to your Google Search Console then you will find even richer information on the search terms you are already ranking for, as well as some great data on the volume of searches for these terms. If you don't have access to these tools, then ask your



Google Analytics console



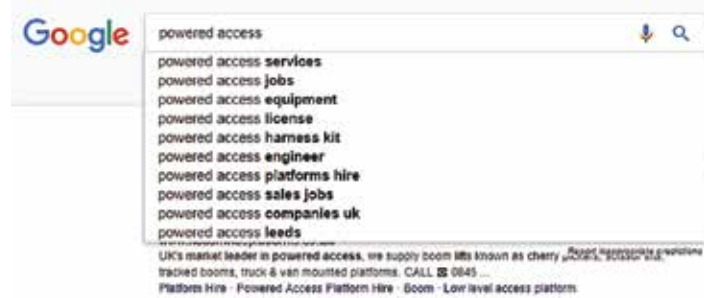
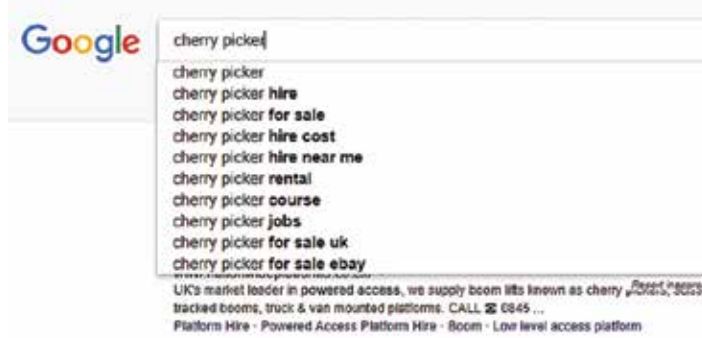
Google Analytics

website designer for access which is very easy for them to do.

So now you will have some rough ideas on what you would like to rank for or rank better for you, you will need to start determining what volumes of searches are being made using these terms for the area you cover. There are a number of tools available, some paid and some free. A good starting point is using Google's Keyword Planner which used to be a 'no strings' solution, though now you are required to set up an Adwords account. Once you have done this you can start generating some very general volumes for the keywords you have in mind, but it will also generate a lot of other possible keyword ideas that you had not even considered.

Don't underestimate your current position

It's easy to think that you're not getting any traffic from the web. However, you may well find that once you start looking at these search terms, say in Google Search Console, in greater depth you may find that for some high volume high intent phrases you are only just off the first page. Without taking this into account it can be easy to find yourself trying to rank a page for a new search term which could take an eternity, whilst missing out on the opportunity that you were on the brink of being able to exploit! Additionally, it's important to see exactly which of your pages are ranking for these terms, since with some tweaking they may be able



to make their way on to the first page. There are tools to check your ranking, but a simple way is to use your search engine on your browser. So, if you're using Chrome go into Incognito mode and you'll be able to see your real rank from your location without any of your past history affecting the result.

How much is enough volume?

Again, people can become obsessed with high volume search terms and not take into account the likely intent of that phrase. There maybe some low volume terms that are much more likely to convert into sales. So yes, it very much depends on how competitive your marketplace is and also your relevant existing rank is for higher volume phrases. For instance, if you are a single location business, you may ideally want to snag lower volume county or city based terms over the non-geographic form for that term, given your ability to fulfil that work. By the same token, if you are a multi site organisation you might want to create dedicated pages to snag location specific traffic near these sites.

Don't let your Home page be your magic bullet

It's easy to obsess about your Home page at the expense of all the other pages on your site. Practically any page might have a keyword opportunity available to it. Say a model page for a specific scissor lift. Admittedly, there may be very few searches for that specific model but those that there are maybe highly informed prospects close to converting that want that very specific platform.

Moreover, it is frequently obvious to your prospects when a Home page has been 'keyword stuffed' - just a long list of keywords, making very little grammatical sense and appearing to have been written with the sole intent of ranking on search engines. Additionally, this is a very dubious and old practice that can lead you to gaining a penalty from Google so another reason not to try

and focus all your efforts on just one page!

Don't underestimate your brand

For websites that haven't had any search engine optimisation undertaken on them, it can come as quite a surprise that over three quarters of their search engine traffic that is clicking through to their web site, are coming from company name or brand name searches. So, they were looking for you anyway! It is well worth remembering this and keeping your company name prominent and not forsaking this for a number of keywords you're looking to rank.

Page one isn't enough!

Finally, you may of course think that getting onto page one is the end point and your goal has been accomplished. In fact, it's just the start. Why? If you're in the bottom quarter of the page, you'll likely still only be seeing a single digit percentage of that traffic generated from that search term. So, the bad news is you need to refine this on an ongoing basis. In future articles I look forward to showing you the steps you can take to help you make the first page of Google a reality.

About the author:

Guy Willett has over 10 years marketing experience working in the powered access sector. If you would like to know more about reputation management, including addressing bad reviews, claiming and optimising your GoogleMyBusiness listing, or other SEO services that can be provided to the rental market then contact guy@readysteadygoseo.co.uk or visit www.readysteadygoseo.co.uk.



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