



Guide

8 Deadly SEO Sins

**The Mistakes That Really
Hurt Content Teams**

 **MarketMuse**

8 Deadly SEO Sins

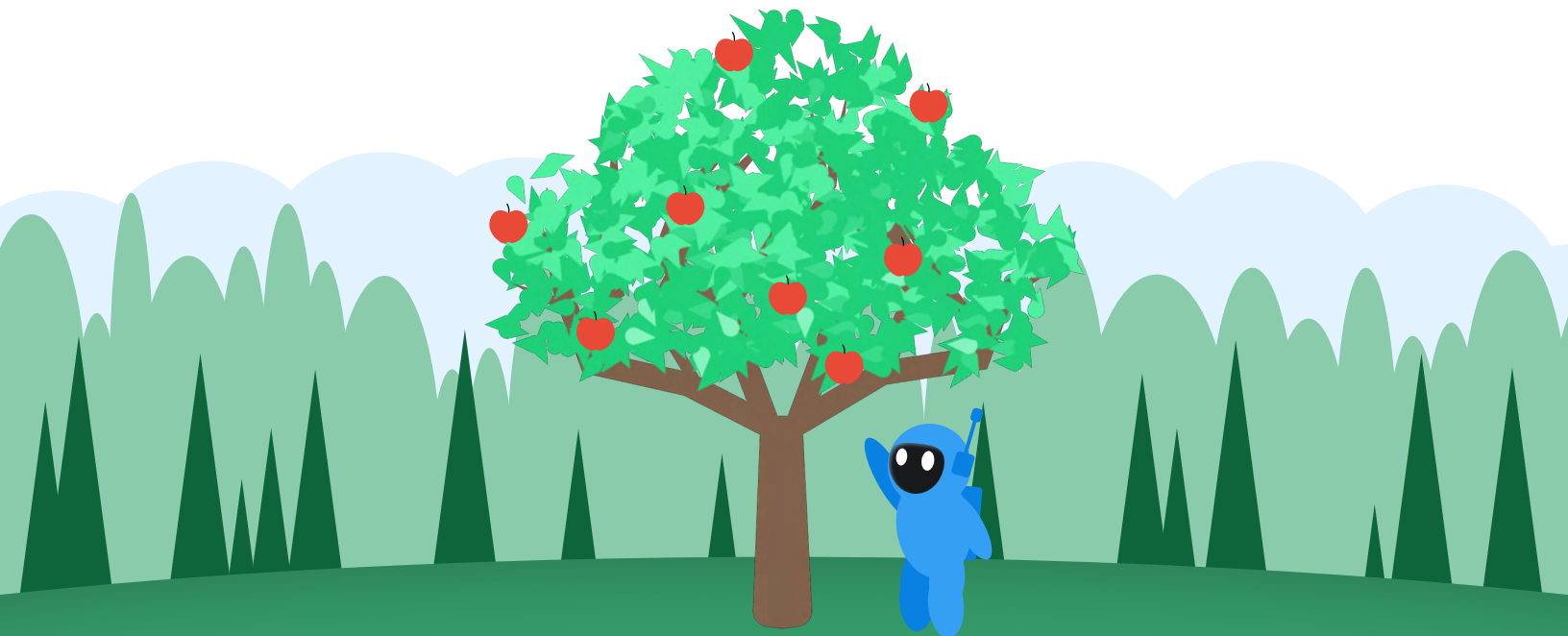
In this ebook I reveal some serious SEO mistakes I see content teams repeatedly make. They are the worst of the worst. In fact they are so bad that I call them SEO sins.

Time and time again, I see issues that drastically affect a content team's output, and not in a positive way! Often they create situations where reports cannot be tracked back to the data used to create them in the first place.

The result is some really bad outcomes.

But I understand. Humans have this innate desire to simplify inherently complex relationships, even when the result is less than satisfactory. A simple cause and effect, if-then statement, or input-output is much easier to grasp because it feels good, even if it's not good for you.

Let's dive in and take a look at some of those mistakes that can ruin a content team.





First Sin: Keyword Research With Search Volume as The North Star

The use of search volume as one's north star for all keyword research is the biggest mistake that I see from an ideation and a prioritization metric. It's understandably natural because the volume of information in SEO convinces many that using it in isolation is good enough.

Google trained the market to believe this because their only keyword research solution they released was Google AdWords keyword planner, or GAK P as we love to call it. What it returns is their MSV or their search volume data.

It also has pay-per-click competition which, by the way, has nothing to do with organic search and SEO. It can give you a relative reference of commercial intent, but that's about it. Plus they also offer their perspective on pay per click competition.

So this created a market where keyword research was driven by search volume as the North Star. Let me give you a walk through why this causes such tremendous problems, along with some examples of how this causes considerable problems for teams and significant competitive risks.

A while back we published a piece on our blog, [Keyword Research and the Search Volume Illusion](#), that delves into greater detail on the folly of focusing on keywords with a particular level of search.



Keyword Research and the Search Volume Illusion

[Read the article →](#)

The reality of content strategy is that you need to build robust, comprehensive collections of content that exhibit expertise and tell the story that you understand the entire buyer journey. What that means is you're going to write content that targets topics that have lower search

volume naturally to round out that collection of content.

So what happens when a team is heavily focused only on search volume?

They're not writing in-depth content that speaks to all the stages of the buy-cycle. They're not covering really specific user intents that people are looking for, either in the content that they land on or the content that's being linked to in that content.

Let me give you an example.

Imagine a jaw with teeth. You're just writing high-level pages – general guides, sometimes called pillar or power pages. In this case, you have no teeth, you just have a jaw. You're not putting out content that follows through on the promise that you are an expert. You're just a generalist with your content.

So teams that drive the bus with search volume, and some of these are major enterprise teams, won't write an article unless the target keyword is above a particular search volume. They never get to do the stuff that really follows through and often drives extraordinary conversion rates for their team.

The second point here is that a great percentage of queries that Google receives are unique, one-time only. So this creates a situation where people do not understand the concepts that live underneath a topic or a keyword. This is sometimes referred to as the [term pool multiplier](#). And what that means is underneath this topic, you have subtopics, right?



Keyword Research as We Know It Is Dead

[Read the article →](#)

For example, if we're talking about content marketing, target audience or buyer personas would be topics and related topics. But underneath each one of those there can be 1 to 100X unique queries that are frequently typed. And your page, if it's comprehensively written, is getting the

traffic from those searches too. These are things that can't be reported on as recurring search volume.

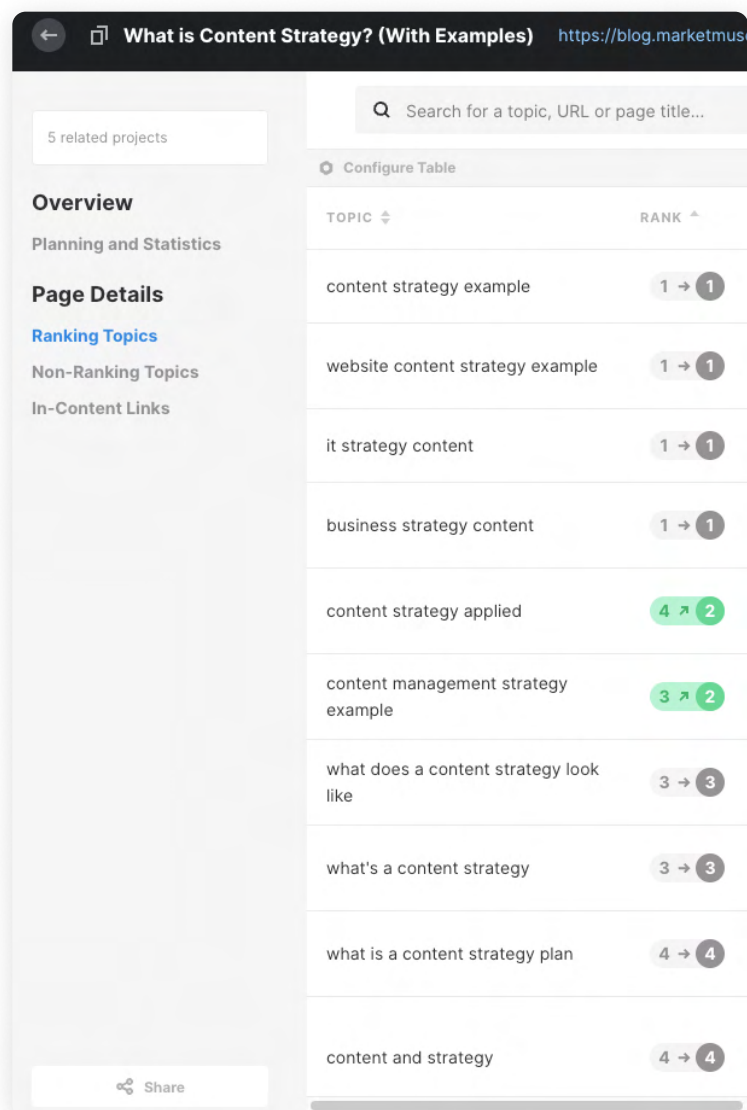
So when you're using volume as your North Star, you're essentially missing out on these pools of terms. And if you disqualify a search phrase just based on volume, you'll never have access to these variable pools of words. That can have a tremendous impact on the value for your company.

The third one I'll mention is based on that term pool multiplier scenario. Here's a challenge. Go look up the search volume for an article you've that has a target query or topic and compare that to the actual traffic. You'll find that search volume ends up being red herring for most teams because it ends up being a poor predictor.

Let's say, as an example, you rank for the phrase "4k webcam," and you're basing your judgment entirely on the search volume of that term. The reality is that the page will also rank for many other phrases.

Just like our page on [content strategy](#). As I write this, it ranks for over 180 different search queries.

That means you need to think about this as a pool of pages and a huge pool of words that all have to be there in order to own this topic. So the content that you create acts as a block – a cluster accumulating like a snowball of power on this huge pool of



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "What is Content Strategy? (With Examples)" and the URL "https://blog.marketmuse.com". The interface includes a search bar, a "Configure Table" button, and a table of search queries with their respective ranks. The table has two columns: "TOPIC" and "RANK". The "RANK" column shows a range of ranks (e.g., "1 → 1") and a green circle with a number (e.g., "4 → 2").

TOPIC	RANK
content strategy example	1 → 1
website content strategy example	1 → 1
it strategy content	1 → 1
business strategy content	1 → 1
content strategy applied	4 → 2
content management strategy example	3 → 2
what does a content strategy look like	3 → 3
what's a content strategy	3 → 3
what is a content strategy plan	4 → 4
content and strategy	4 → 4

words. And I don't deserve to rank for these high search volume terms unless I exhibit expertise throughout the buying cycle and through that entire term pool.

So teams that shoot for this particular word and don't think about what's underneath it, fail.

The sad part is, they don't even understand why or they get lucky with one high volume term and they don't know how to protect that page.

Here's one more point from a competitive analysis perspective. If you're my competitor and you sort descend by search volume with your keyword lists, I know exactly what you're going to do. Now that's wonderful for me but not so great for you.

In fact, strong SEO teams, I'm talking about the best publishers in the world, will look for that. They look for someone who's looking for a keyword volume list, sort descend, and they've exhibited the pattern that they're just walking down the list. Being on the wrong side of that situation puts you in a tremendously susceptible position to strong content teams.

When they have a publisher adversary, who's doing this, or they've exhibited this signal in the clusters that they create. They will use multiple techniques in order to invade that person's turf. They know the weaker competition isn't going to write certain articles, even though they are vital to rounding out their clusters.

And there's the opportunity.

So that's four core ways that keyword research using search volume as the North Star can lead to mistakes, bad predictions, miss set expectations and ultimately huge competitive risks.

The hilarious reality here is when people are doing these predictive research using search volume as the North Star, they're almost never right.

I've looked at so many people's estimate programs, and there's so many other factors that have to be involved. Should you use keyword research? Should you use search volume at all in your process? Absolutely. It is a very important directional message. It also help judge your ability to

rank for a lot of other things, were you to gain authority on this high search volume term. While I need to do that research, recognizing that it's truly a directional metric.

What do I mean by that?

Well, let's say the search volume is very high, but it's a zero click search. No one clicks on it. Now it could be what's called a know simple intent. What's the capital of North Dakota Bismarck, right? Click through rate on that query is extremely low because Google answers the question, right?

So you've got all different types of things that need to go into your analysis of words. Teams that work solely with keyword research as their North Star that drives the bus make mistake after mistake.



Second Sin: The Difficulty With Just Link Data

One of the most controversial SEO myths is keyword difficulty. I reverse engineered every important keyword difficulty metric on the web, 15 of them that are important.

What I discovered is that many of them base their calculations solely on link data. What does that mean?

What this means is that the methodology being taught to the market is that search results should be looked at and the people in the search results should be analyzed.

So this is literally playing results.

It's like what happens in game theory when one plays results in game theory. You make really bad decisions about how good your decisions were earlier. For example, you're playing cards

and on that last play, after you see the final result, you think to yourself, “Oh man I should’ve stayed in on that.”

But of course, you couldn’t know the results of your decision at the time you made it.

What search engine optimization platforms have done is they've applied things that they can do, such as high level correlations using link data. There’s no doubt that links are extremely effective. But they aren't the entire story for keyword difficulty.

Let’s see how this plays out using a couple of examples.

Google Adwords keyword planner shows pay-per-click competition. It has nothing to do with organic search. That's the easiest one, right?

Semrush has slightly improved their keyword difficulty metric. But their old one, all it did was stack rank all the traffic. They did a traffic ranking of the top 10 million sites and it would give you the average of where the sites in the search results were stack ranked.

What does that mean?

So basically, higher traffic sites were designated as being harder to rank against effectively. They did this independently of anything related to the keywords or topics being targeted, the search results themselves, and the search results features, like the right rail, and ads.

They took all those other factors and just threw them out the window. Instead they decided to only look at the traffic that goes to the sites that are in the search results. That is tremendously error prone. Definitely not correlative. Huge errors.

Ahrefs publicly confirms that their difficulty metric is only a link metric.

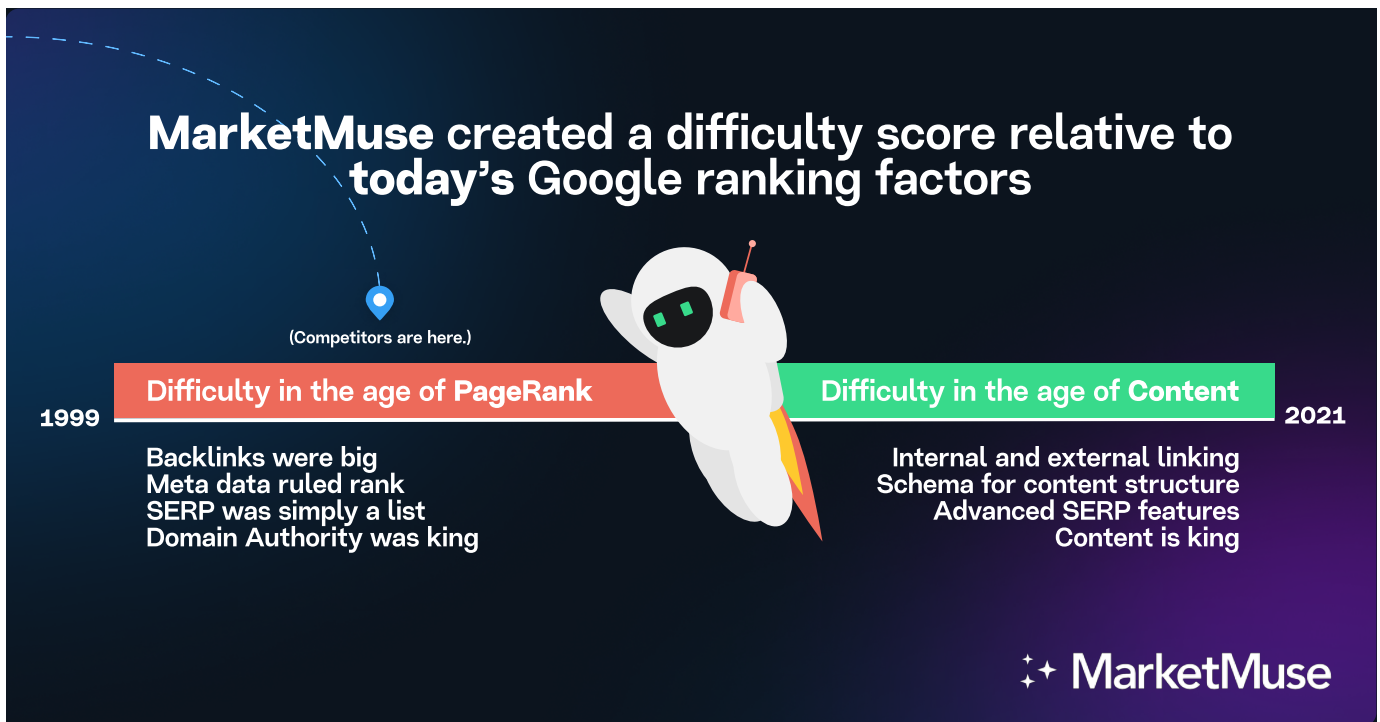
So what does it say and what problems does this create for teams? What this does, is it ignores the content on your site.

We're all content people, yet this approach to keyword difficulty ignores:

- Who you are
- Who your business is
- What you write about
- Where your strengths are
- Where your authority is
- Where your historical momentum is on successful topics
- Where you've had failures with content

Instead, it looks at a search result for a term, looks at the cohort's link volume and makes an assumption on that. For example, it's saying my score is 50 and the search result has an average score of 50. So I should be able to rank.

That's basically what the process is being taught to the market based on links.



The effectiveness rate of doing this in this way is tremendously error prone. I've seen teams waste massive amounts of money, believing that this is how it works or believing that they can't rank for something.

So they don't try on a topic. Most commonly, this is how it manifests itself.

What does this mean?

In the case of a brand new site, they're not even going to try to go write the best article that's ever been written about this topic. Or they've written a cluster of content that ranks for some easy search phrases. According to the data, they've maxxed out their potential on the topic, so they're not going to keep on trying.

That's such a waste of potential.

A better approach is to take link data as one aspect of a difficulty calculation and build composites against:

- How much content you've built on a topic
- Your breadth of coverage
- Your depth of coverage
- The quality of your coverage
- Your historical success rate

When you meld that with link data it can become very predictable.

However, the market has trained us to only look at link data. So many mistakes can be made here and I'll give you one example to illustrate it.

If we were to write the best article ever written on the brand new iPhone and post it on the MarketMuse blog, it would not perform well for the phrase "iPhone review." Sorry.

However, take that exact same article, throw it up on Cnet and it's going to do really well.

Why? It isn't just about links.

It will rank well because they:

- Have history of writing great reviews
- Offer an enormous breadth of coverage
- Possess a great depth of coverage
- Write about technology
- Write about phones
- Write about the iPhone specifically
- Have historical authority on those topics site, section combinations

The topic-site section combination authority is as important for assessing difficulty as is the quality of the page itself and link data. So if you have a practice, that's just looking at a pay-per-click competitive data or just link data for your competition, you need to get personalized.

Here's what I mean.

You've got to figure out more about you and who you are:

- What topics do you cover?
- What do you have success on?
- What does your link profile actually say?

That last one is an important point because not all links are created equal. So let's just say you're in the middle of the pack when it comes to links and all your links are about horse racing. Looking at the top search results you see you're a 50 too but all the content that you write is about audio equipment.

That does not mean that you can go write an article about horse racing and rank. It's absolutely untrue, but that's what the process has been taught to the market – that you're allowed to just jump into the pool. Very few sites can actually do that without building infrastructure.

When I say personalized, I mean that the metrics you use need to be tied to the content on your site, specifically. Unfortunately, virtually all third-party metrics like domain authority, page authority, etc. are topic agnostic.

If I use one of them to rationalize creating an article on big screen TVs and posting that on the MarketMuse blog, I have no chance of success because:

- I have no authority on reviews
- I have no authority on TVs
- I have no infrastructure

If I want to grow there, I have to build infrastructure. I'm gonna have to build hundreds of articles about TVs that write dozens of reviews in order to bridge into having that authority.

Keep that in mind.

It is even tougher if you're in a regulated market. Don't even try to just jump in and go write MarketMuse thoughts on vaccine distribution. Good luck! It's not going to work! Our blog is not even close to being in a your money or your life (YMYL) sector classification.

There's so much more to it than just link data. Yet, I've seen very large teams set their watch to using linked data for difficulty. And it is so inefficient.

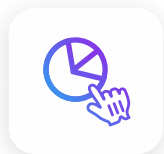
It creates tremendous mistakes at the content strategy level. Specifically:

- Investing in content that has virtually no chance of becoming successful
- A missed opportunity cost by not investing in content that has a solid chance of becoming successful

A great example of this comes from Josh Spilker, a friend and MarketMuse customer, who runs content at Friday.app.

Using our platform, which offers a personalized difficulty metric, he wrote a top-five ranking page for the word "planner." Yet every other platform would have told him not to create this article that's performing so well for him.

That's the advantage you gain when using [personalized metrics](#).



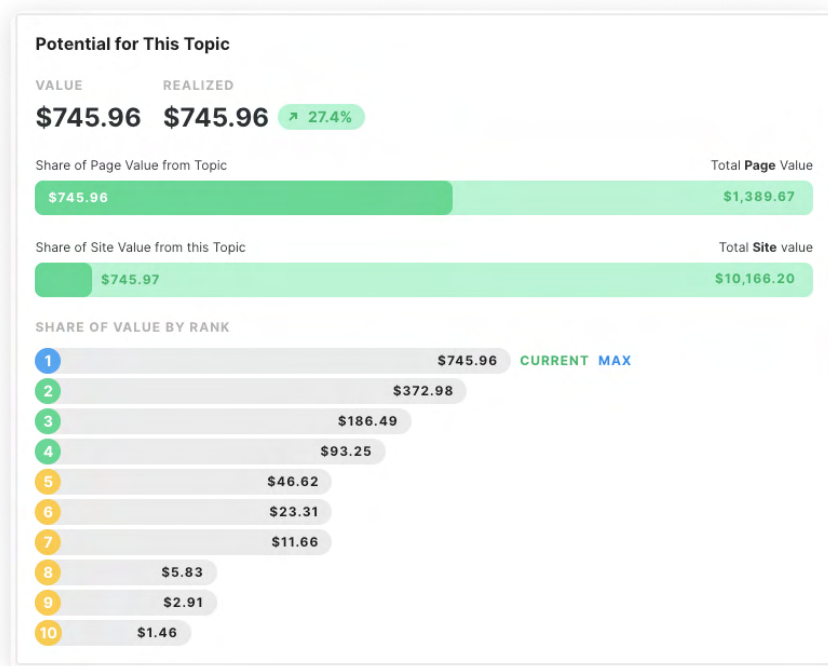
Third Sin: SERP CTRs Are All The Same

I'm surprised at how often this trips people up, but all SERP click-through rates are not the same. Yet, there are tools out there that base their predictive estimates using the same static calculation.

That roughly connects to an average:

- 30% for number position one
- 15% per position two
- 5% for position three
- 1% for the next few positions
- Even lower percentages after that

The exact numbers are irrelevant because the problem is that this approach discounts any impact of SERP features. There are Google SERP features that steal clicks, not always in a bad way because they are helping users. Still, you've got ads, featured snippets and answer boxes, where Google has decided to provide an immediate answer, and more.



These all affect the amount of traffic going to the organic results and their impact varies depending on the search phrase. That's why applying a static click-through rate to search volume is highly inaccurate.

Another factor affecting click-through rate is fractured intent. It may sound a little esoteric, but all it means is that sometimes Google doesn't know exactly what you're asking for. So they give you a buffet of things:

- Pages that satisfy early stage awareness
- Some that are middle of the funnel
- Maybe there's this other meaning for the search term

In situations of fractured intent, the intent you serve will impact the click-through rate. For example, if the majority of Searchers are looking for one meaning and you're addressing the other one, your click-through rate will be low.

Estimating CTR at a high level, without accounting for search features, results in poor predictability.

Fortunately, you have access to all of this, at least for the pages for which you already rank, using Google search console. Using your browser to access the application limits you to an artificial cap of 1,000 words.

Get a Google search console API account and you can get all your data, including all of your current true click-through rates. There are also data sets available, such as GrepWords, that provide real world click-through rates on your pool of keywords.

At the very least, get your Google search console API on the words you already rank for. Look at some of them and see what the click-through rate is for first position. You'll probably see a lot of variance between search times, 300% is not uncommon.

Then you'll realize how far off your estimates actually are. It's a really big problem for teams estimating how much traffic their content will generate and setting expectations based on that.

So imagine 90% of teams doing the three things we've talked about (volume-prioritized keyword research, link data in isolation, applying static click-through rate). Any predictions for their content plans will be wildly inaccurate based on these three data points.

Some SEOs believe that ads don't affect click-through rates. But I don't buy that. Average click-through rate in an ad unit is over 10% depending on the number of pixels covered.

We studied a hundred thousand search results and found that only 30% of the results on the first page were above the fold. That's in the cases where you have 10 organic listings on a results page set. There are some search queries that only have three listings.

Internally, Google even says that search results pages are no longer about 10 blue links. Google that and you'll see for yourself.

So if you're calculating your search click through-rates based on 10 blue links, you're leaving yourself wide open to error.



Fourth Sin: Intent Fracture Doesn't Matter

Earlier on I talked about intent fracture. But it's so important that it needs its own section. If you've never done anything with intent, wrapping your brain around it can be hard.

But I'll give you two reasons why intent fracture matters.

One, the output of fractured intent analysis frequently leads to errors. Two, there's a common mistake that content teams make that relates to this.

So what do I mean by intent fracture?

When a Searcher types "CRM" in Google, it's faced with a problem.

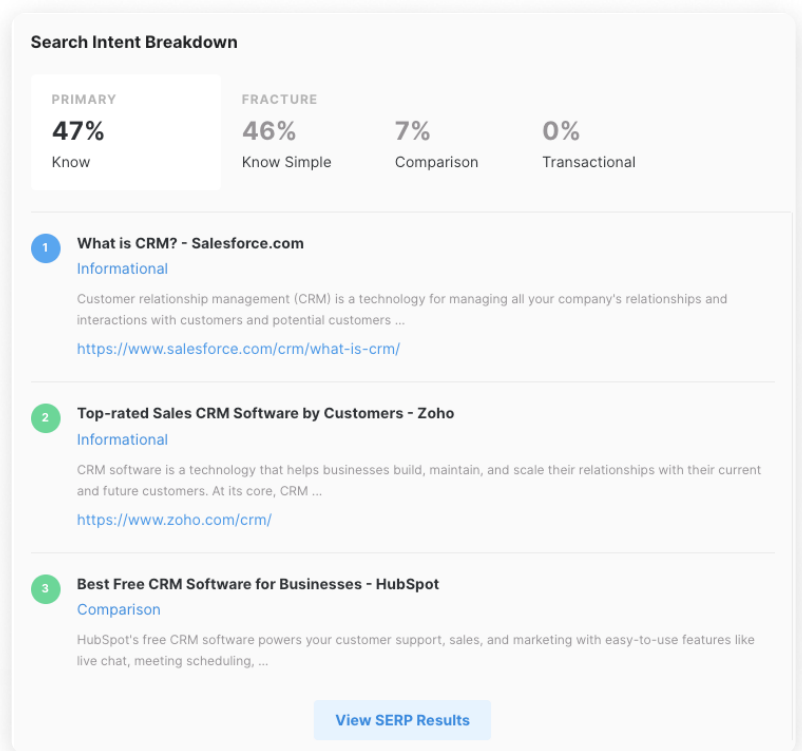
- The term is ambiguous and could stand for any one of [127 possibilities](#), including customer relationship management.
- There's an intent fracture because it's not clear what aspect of CRM you're interested in. You could be looking for a guide to CRM. I could be an expert. I could be a beginner. I could be looking for a comparison of software packages.

So what does Google provide?

They provide ways of refining your query:

- People Also Ask
- Recommendations for additional keyword variants

But they also have to provide a search result, even if they're not sure what the right result is. So they show what we refer to as Google's favored intent. If it's a fractured query, most of what they show connects to this one use case or user desire.



But they'll show some results that match other intents as well. So you might see:

- What is a CRM?
- The guide to CRM
- The stock ticker for Salesforce
- The Salesforce home page (because they have one of the best SEOs in the world).
- One of the other 126 things that the acronym CRM stands for

So what does this mean?

You don't have a clear understanding of the competition for this search term. And you don't actually have the ability to compete for all the spots in that result.

I'll let that one sit for a second.

But understand this. With that one page you create, you're potentially competing potentially with only three or four other first page competitors.

And then there's the error of looking at a unified intent. What if there are other things that Google is just not showing, but they are relevant to your business?

This is critical to understand so let me explain it using an example.

Let's say I'm trying to rank for "what is CRM" and the first page of search results is all definitions. Does that mean that I can just rank on page one? If I just write a definition?

Absolutely not.

A huge infrastructure of content about CRM at all stages of the buy cycle is frequently required. That's what I'll need for the privilege of ranking for the definition, in most cases.

The myth here is that you can look at a search result page in isolation. You don't need to care about any of the other content on the site you're competing against. For consistent success, all you need to do is copy the competition and make it "better," which often gets confused with making it longer.

Saying that when you see a certain type of page in the search results, you just need to build the same, is an absolute disaster. It only works in special situations.

Apply this "carte blanche" and you end up creating a whole bunch of pages that have no connective tissue. You're not building the way an expert would. You're not building like the person who wrote the book would, all you're doing is copying other people.

That is one of the biggest mistakes that can be made with intent fracture.

Here's one way to approach this. Build out a list of keywords that you heavily depend on for traffic or leads. Keep growing and doing better on this list of words for your business. Keep tabs on those search results, understanding if it's unified intent or if there's a mix because you're going to have to account for that.

It might mean you have to build 10, 20, 50 pages to support that Marquis page. Building up that wall with a cluster of content makes you less susceptible to invasion.

- All competitors can be beat.
- Since they're a big brand, their only competition is big brands.
- As a big brand, they don't need to be concerned about publishing.

- Not true. In fact, you have to account for all the different types of pages and different types of businesses that you're competing with in organic search. In addition to all the different types of intents on the page and the types of content those people have. You also have to account for, and be okay with, the fact that there's different types of businesses in your competition.



Now, this is going to be a splash of water for a lot of companies. And it's something you need to bring to your organization at the highest level to explain it. Because a lot of times this is where content strategy budgets get cut and destroyed.

They go in and they say we're an e-commerce shop. We don't need content because we're not publishers. But the people who are competing against you in the search results may be publishers.

And what does this lead to?

It leads to other people educating the market or being there during our prospect's buyer journeys. I once worked with a shoe company who had absolutely no content, and they crushed it for a lot of terms with extremely low competition. They were letting all the publishers in the world and competitors cover the buyer journey and all they were getting was transactional outcomes.

They never wrote anything to educate their top-of-funnel prospects about the top 10 best shoes for moms on the go. Maybe their shoes got on those lists and maybe they didn't.

They ended up paying more affiliate fees than they should. And a whole lot less people are seeing them as exhibiting expertise on the use cases for their own product.

And this all routes from C level. Executives believing that they're only competing with the other shoe companies and not, and Wired Mag, Wirecutter, and Red Ventures and everyone else that's writing about the industry.





Sixth Sin: Cannibalization Is a Huge Easy To Diagnose Problem

Au contraire. Cannibalization is a super complex issue and one of the most complicated things about SEO.

It's also one of the most common mistakes people make. They believe that cannibalization is focusing on the same keyword with more than one page.

That is absolutely not what cannibalization is.

If your content team or SEO says you only should have one page for each keyword, I have a bus back to 2010 and I bought the tickets. Okay. It's not true. It's damning for your company. It puts you at a huge competitive risk in large organizations.

The worst situation is when it manifests itself into a team "owning" the word and no-one else in the company can write about it. This actually happens at large companies (with three letters).

That has a terrible impact on the bottom line. But the reality is you may need to write 100 pages about one particular keyword in order to have the luxury of having Google's favorite intent for the user's location, the user's search history, and the user's behavior. If the user is logged in to Google your page may show and if they're not, it may not.

To be present and cover every place you possibly can, you need to cover a lot of different types of users and learners. You have to cover it with:

- Long content
- Short content
- Visual content
- Video content for beginners
- Video content for experts

Now, all those pieces of content I just mentioned are focused on the same keyword. That's not cannibalization, it's bananas.

The reality is that self-styled SEO “gurus” drive this false data narrative. Their sole purpose lies in getting affiliate revenue from teaching you SEO. They use the one-page one-keyword approach because it’s easy to teach.

In this case KISS (keep it simple stupid) really is true! I’m not going to mince words.

It’s a stupid approach.

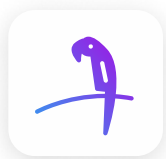
It doesn't work. It certainly doesn't work for B2B and it doesn't work for high competition zones. It only works in a few very specific situations.

If you truly have two pages:

- That deliver the exact same information gain
- Don't differentiate at all
- One of them converts at a high rate
- One of them doesn't

That is cannibalization. It is your job to figure out how to solve that problem. It's really hard to diagnose.

Having two pages, competing with one another to rank for the same term, isn't a bad thing. It's actually a good thing. And the market believes it's bad and that is super sad.



Seventh Sin: Mimic Your Idols

I’ve seen this happen countless times where marketers figure, “if it’s good enough for [insert your favorite idol] it’s good enough for me.” Why reinvent the wheel when you can see that something’s working? Right?

Wrong!

If you try copying what any large organization is doing, you will die. It's plain and simple. The

advice that's given to SEOs in this market is to go to the top three results in search and copy the amalgamation of those.

That's completely insane.

I've seen it destroy businesses at the mid market and small business because you can't do what they're doing. They're allowed to get away with more than you are because they're very authoritative in a lot of cases. And they have that historical corpus of content about these topics.

Are they good to look at and try to learn from what's working? Yes, but it doesn't mean that's what you should do. Maybe they're doing something that they're getting away with, that you can't. Copy that and it may lead to something as terrible as being penalized.

There's an online retailer you may have heard of – they're so big they sell everything in the jungle. By all measures they participate in black hat SEO techniques. They can do things that you shouldn't.

Another example are the biggest content publishers in the world. They may have built an article that covers multiple intents. It's a generalist guide and it also covers a definition and they're crushing it. It's not really best practice to do. So you may be doing something that's not best practice and because you're weaker than them, you have no chance. So you're actually taking yourself out of the game by mimicking rivals.

I know the head of SEO for a major publisher. He actually reaches out to people copying his strategy because he feels bad for them. He'll say "Don't do this. We're allowed to do this. You're not."

So if your content team is banking on copying the top three, doing what they're doing. There's too much risk that it ends up being a disaster.



Eighth Sin: Content Efficiency Doesn't Matter

My last takeaway is that you really need to know your content efficiency. Most content marketers only consider the cost to produce the content without taking any performance results into account.

You need to know both how much content you create and how frequently it hits your goals?

If you published 100 articles last year and only 10 did well, you should know that. It's going to significantly impact the true cost of content.

Let's say you spent \$500 an article last year and your efficiency rate is 10%. How much did your content actually cost in real effectiveness?

Your true content cost is \$5,000 per piece!

That's the effect that efficiency has on your cost. This is the main number that if you increase, it will move the needle for your team. And it's your content strategist's job to increase it.

Sadly, most teams don't factor performance into their calculation of content efficiency. Even worse, they don't know how the content they choose to create actually leads to success. When I take content teams through this whole process, they go from 10% to 40% even 50% on these numbers. And you should be striving to drive this number as well.

If you set a standard for building the best content every time, and you pick the right winners, it can be an overwhelmingly more impactful way of doing SEO.

What success metrics should you use when looking at content efficiency?

That's the most common question I get when talking about this topic. The main one is that you should have a process to predict the desired outcomes, and use this whenever you're [building a content brief](#) or proposing an article.



What is a Content Brief?

[Read the article →](#)

Take into account whether you expect this to provide temporal or recurring organic entrance value. Are you associating value with other channels, like social, paid, your natural distribution, or other things? So you want to have a breakdown of those things. Typically, you'll have non-organic contribution, organic entrances (if you believe they're recurring), and then engagement data.

If it's middle-of-the-funnel or late-funnel, then it's second-click engagement data and conversions, depending on the type of page. So you have to know the type-of-page contribution from other channels. But the easiest one is recurring entrances from organic search. That's the one you certainly can set your watch to. If you thought that the page was going to get recurring entrances from organic search, and then it does that's enough for me to consider that a hit.

Is it a single or a grand slam?

That's a different question. For that you're going to have to set a bar. It could be 10 recurring entrances or maybe 100. You'll probably want to set that at around your average. To get that average, you'll need to conduct an audit of your current content efficiency so you know how often you're hitting your goal. Fair warning, that audit can be a heart-breaking experience.

But sometimes you create content not expecting recurring entrances – it's support content. So when you assess content, make sure to evaluate it at both the page and group level. One of the biggest mistakes is that marketers only consider the page level and neglect to look at the whole.

Let's say you got all these pages about CRM – they're going to move as a mass. It's the all boats rise concept. One page may not be getting direct traffic, but the entire mass is moving. So you have to analyze page level as well as site section, or topic level.

That's easy to do. Just build your list and that's the way you can really check your work.

How many page views a month should you aim for?

My answer to the previous question inevitably leads to this one. My answer is that it depends on the business that I'm working with. I'm trying to get a vision match with them and understand their expectations. The decision of what to create or what to update will guide this.

So I want to know the content's goal. Is it part of a cluster? I want the overall cluster to have this much traffic. This is just a piece player. But I don't have a hard number for the number of entrances. Is this page getting any repeatable, recurring entrances?

That's usually a good metric if it's not a support page. That's really the only thing that kind of is universal here.

Remember, your page will naturally build up rankings for what's called the [intent mismatches](#). You'll start ranking and getting traffic from pages where the page doesn't satisfy the intent.



How MarketMuse Handles User Intent

[Read the article →](#)

You've got to move on that.

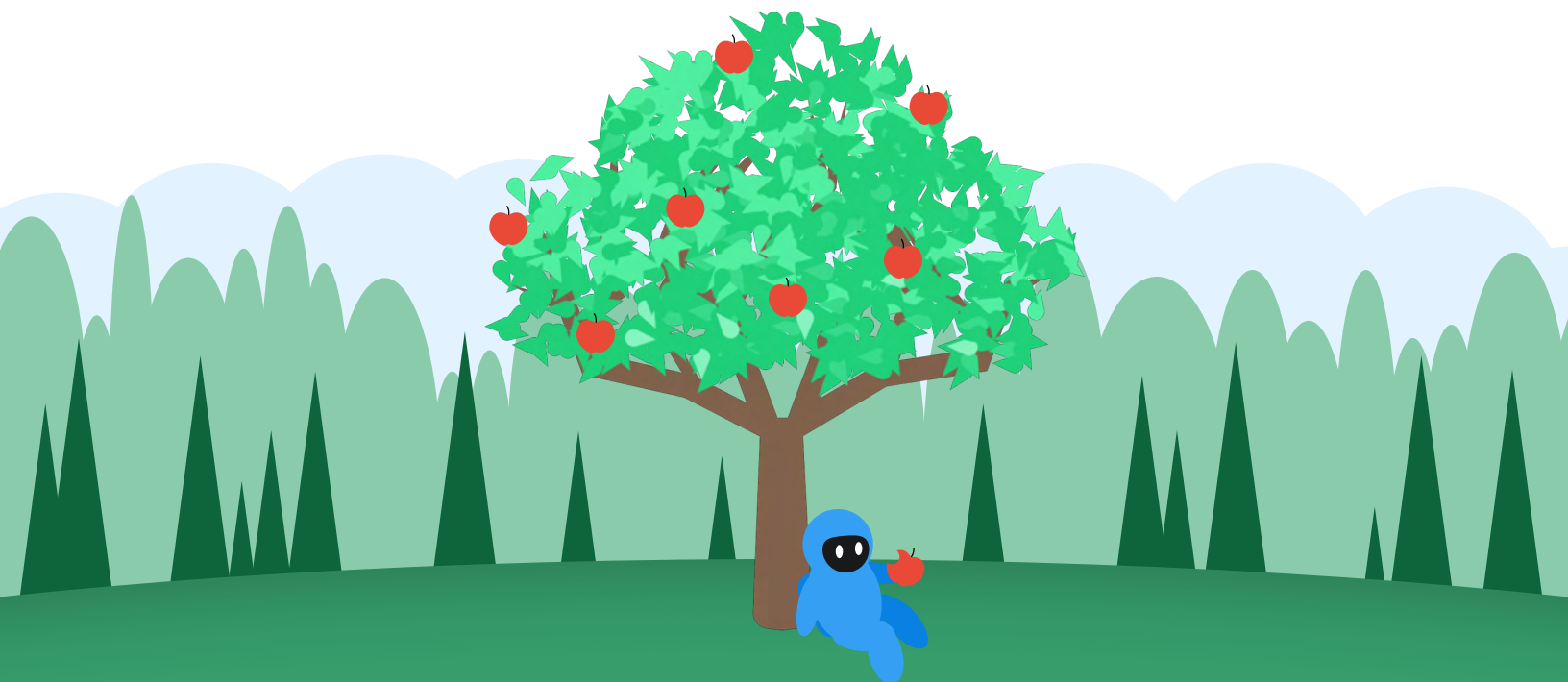
So you wrote this blog post and it's about content briefs. But your article is “what is a content brief”, right? You start ranking for content brief templates, but your page has no templates. It's just a definition. So you've got to go write an article that has a bunch of templates on it, and you've got to link to this main page.

It's also about reacting to stuff the page ranks for as well. Either change that page or create something new to satisfy intent on both. So the reason why I say it that way is that the first page may have gotten some traffic that I actually would rather go to another page. And so when I'm assessing efficiency, I also want to see, did this page gather moss? Did this stone gather moss from stuff that it maybe shouldn't have?

And what does that say about my site and about me? But you set the bar based on your current averages and your team will just get better and better. That's really what I kind of shoot for.

Final Thoughts

SEO tools are great at coming up with recommendations that are, what I call, little rocks. They do little, if anything, to move the needle in terms of search visibility. But the issues I've outlined here for you are the big rocks. Fix them and you can't help but dramatically improve your performance in search.



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thousands of content teams turn
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