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TRAFFIC BUILDING
WITH LONG TAIL SEO



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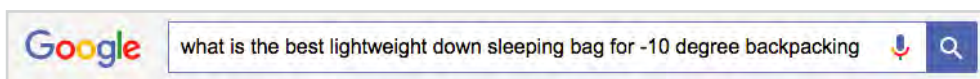


WHY IT MATTERS?

Before jumping into things too deeply, it's always nice to know why something is worth one's attention. Now, it's likely that you already see this as something worthy of attention (you did download the eBook after all), if for no other reason than it piques your interest. So here is a little information to help you convince your team and boss to get behind you on growing your long tail SEO.

Think about the way you shop for a new item -- something you would be buying for the first time or upgrading, not something you buy all the time. If you're like most people, you start with a web-search. Assuming you're still like most people - 80 percent to be precise - you start your search with a long tail phrase or question.

Think about it. What was your last purchase? Here's one of ours:



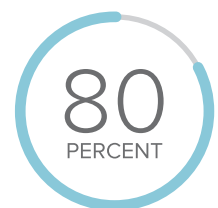
The average shopper's search term isn't a category generic item. And they're usually question-based or comparison-based searches. We didn't go looking for *sleeping bags* or even the *best backpacking sleeping bag* because, as you likely experienced, you had a specific use case that needed a specific answer and product recommendation.

If the fact that 80 percent of searches are long tail didn't grab your attention, perhaps this will: a long tail search result is 8.5 times more likely to be clicked than paid search. Consumers, yourself included, are more curious, educated, and particular about the items they are buying online.



89
PERCENT

OF CONSUMERS
RELY ON SEARCHES
PRE-PURCHASE



80
PERCENT

OF SEARCHES ARE
LONG TAIL KEYWORDS
AND QUESTIONS



8.5

LONG TAIL RESULTS
ARE 8.5 TIMES MORE
LIKELY TO BE CLICKED



WHAT IS LONG TAIL SEO?

You've probably heard about long tail before, but just to be sure we are all on the same page, let's start with the basics. Long tail (a term coined by Chris Anderson in 2004) is most often used in relation to retail and online product offerings. In his words:

"The theory of the Long Tail is that our culture and economy is increasingly shifting away from a focus on a relatively small number of "hits" (mainstream products and markets) at the head of the demand curve and toward a huge number of niches in the tail. As the costs of production and distribution fall, especially online, there is now less need to lump products and consumers into one-size-fits-all containers. In an era without the constraints of physical shelf space and other bottlenecks of distribution, narrowly-targeted goods and services can be as economically attractive as mainstream fare" (<http://www.longtail.com/about.html>).

This is largely how online retailer titans like Amazon grew their empire. They built their business around the idea of offering everything to everyone. They even call themselves *The Everything Store*. This is also one of the reasons the internet has become the go-to location for shoppers. With the abundant availability of niche products available, shoppers can have just about anything shipped to their home in two to three days.

The more long tail an item is the more consumers rely on detailed searches to find such a niche product. If you sell a very niche biodegradable toothbrush made in the USA, your customers aren't finding you by searching tooth brush (and if you were to try to compete for those AdWords, well, good luck).

That said: a product doesn't have to be a niche or long tail product to have long tail questions. Quite often the most frequently purchased items are the ones with the most consumer questions. They are the items that other brands are trying to compete with which leads to comparison and specific use-case questions. Long tail SEO is exactly what it sounds like: terms and keywords people are using; questions they are asking in their initial search for a product.



HOW TO LEVERAGE LONG TAIL

START WITH A CONVERSATION. There are other locations that these long tail conversations are happening, which we will address in the next section, but none of them serve up detailed, long tail SEO search terms on a platter, that is, not until the conversation starts. Currently, there is no better place or means of having those conversations in-mass than an on-site chat. Engage customers when and where they are thinking about your products, when and where they have questions and where your product users and experts can answer those specific questions.

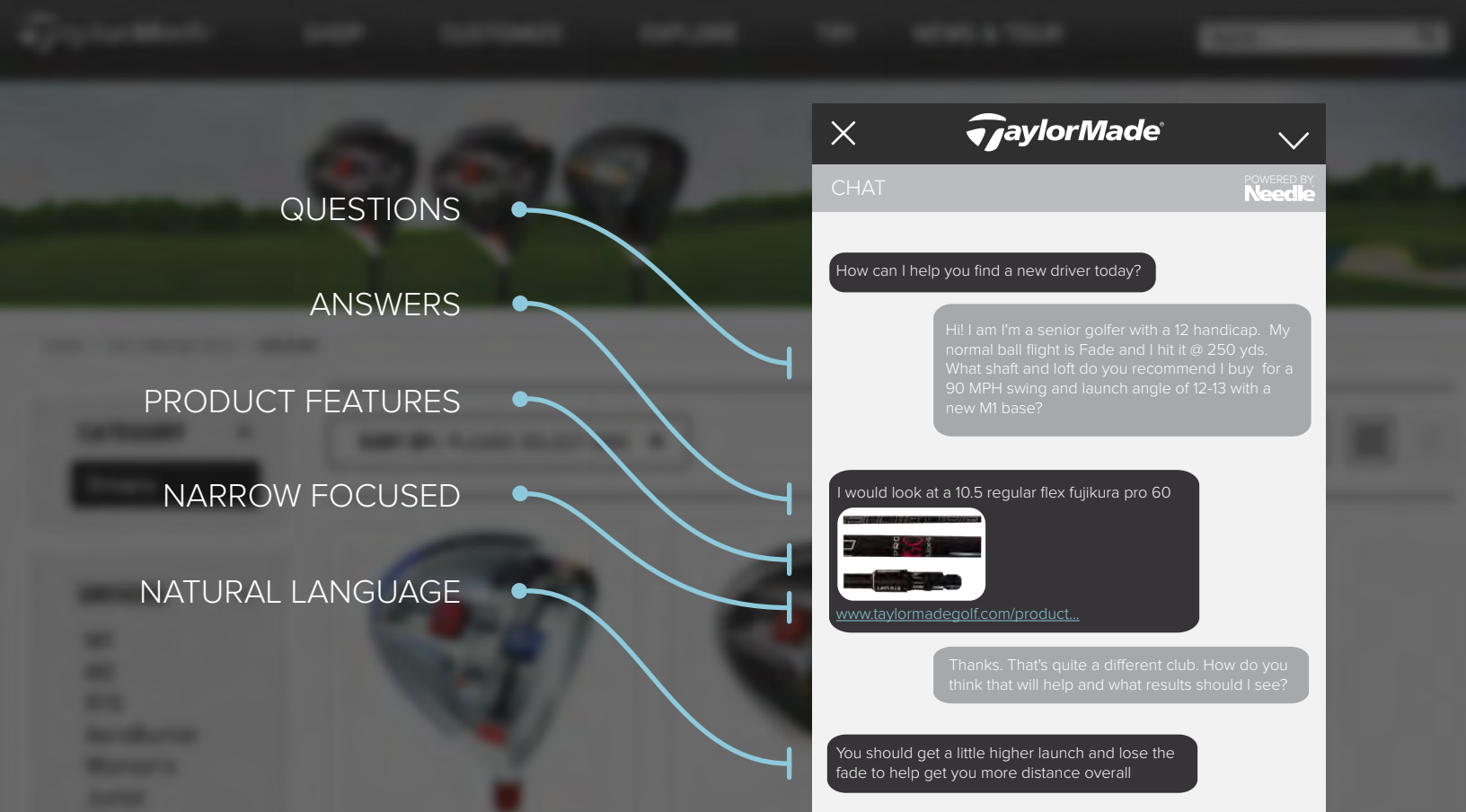
You've had the conversation, now it's time to curate. Search, filter, and sort the best conversations. You won't want to publish every exchange. You should view your SEO curation and publication as a tool to help attract and capture highly qualified traffic that you can quickly pull deep into the funnel. It's an opportunity to stop market and start selling to shoppers looking to buy.

So use the conversations that lead to sales. If the chat helped one shopper purchase, it's likely to help another. Have your experts and chat-reps flagged valuable, detailed interactions and train them to know what sort of information is of value to you. Invite your shoppers to rate the conversation and their interaction from their end and then use your highest ranking chats as a starting point to curate.

PUBLISH: Now that you have begun to curate and sift out the gold, it's time to start publishing. Here is a quick overview of some publishing best practices:

INCLUDE QUESTIONS: People start searching with a question, the closer you can match your content to that question the better. Go beyond FAQ's and basic Q&A: leverage your chat interactions into question based content.

GIVE ANSWERS: An obvious, but seldom used tactic is to provide answers to questions and drive the content to a conclusion. A content piece that tries to be everything to everyone usually means nothing to most. The intent of the search is to arrive at a conclusion, not more questions.



FEATURE PRODUCTS: Consumers want to see what they are trying to buy. Don't let there be any confusion as to what they are discussing. Those images can also show up in the search results.

NARROW THE FOCUS: View your SEO as a sales tool. Help your shoppers decide. Be more definitive in your content. The goal in long tail is to be focused and provide answers, not to try and appeal to everyone, or worse, widen shopper's options. Use your questions, answers, and product features to help shoppers narrow their choices to a point they'll buy.

USE NATURAL LANGUAGE: Shoppers that are deeper in the funnel want focused, decisive, real-talk that is aligned with others who are really into what you are selling. They know the technicalities and nuances of your product better than you. Use that natural, tribal language and own those keywords.

INDEX: There are various options as for locations where this is available on your site. Regardless of where you publish this information, the hardest part is done. It's time to submit your sitemap to Google for indexing and ranking. This is the rather simple part. Submit your site

Rinse and repeat. The best part about enacting this process is that it becomes a self-powering loop. The more conversations you have and publish, the more qualified traffic you'll drive. The more qualified traffic you drive, the more qualified questions, answers, and content you'll capture and the higher your conversions will be. It also drives higher AOV lifts, builds trust, and consumer loyalty.



CURRENT LONG TAIL SEO CONTRIBUTORS

Long tail SEO already happens all over the web - but it's not being leveraged as it could be. This is how bloggers and review sites make a living. And while each tool offers some very solid pros they all have their shortfalls and cons. The biggest that applies nearly across the board, is the inability for a brand to collect, curate, and publish the content in a timely manner as to be relevant for customers.

At the rate of product releases and as new brand emerge, it would take an entire team dedicated to sourcing and collecting from these other sources. That's not to say you can't leverage some of these tools to work in your benefit. But when looking at these other contributors, we looked at them as the rules, not the exceptions.

FORUMS

THE PROS:

- Unsolicited customer conversations with good question and answering, often with links to products and other conversations around the same issues.
- They are between users of the products, offer real world application and often contain user images and content.

THE CONS:

- Usually off a brand's site and out of the brand's messaging.
They are not usually sales driven conversations and in the off-chance they are, the links that are shared between people do not drive to your site (most often driving to Amazon or other big-box like sites).
- Relies on an outside party to answer questions for your brand.
They are susceptible to data rot: things rot on forums, questions go un-answered.
- Where it's off site, competing brands can also harvest the same content, conversations, and keywords



REVIEWS (BLOGS, VIDEOS, ETC)

THE PROS:

- Customer driven, honest, and usually unsolicited.
- These can be on the product page, which is nice, because it allows for a brand to manage, and potentially track its influence. However, a large portion of reviews come from bloggers, vloggers, and other influencer outlets which takes that feedback off site.
- Brands can work with influencers off-site to generate user content, reviews, etc. but that is hard to scale and grow.
- It's a go-to location for many shoppers to see about quality, fit, use, etc.

THE CONS:

- Short. Don't go in depth about the concerns they had pre-purchase and how that was abated after they had the product.
- Don't usually contain more information than "great" or "best product I've ever owned" which might be beneficial, but not really long tail gold.
- People are more inclined to leave a negative review when something did not live up to their expectation than a positive one when it does.
- Niche products and a long tail strategy, there needs to be a certain threshold of users and buyers to have enough people willing to leave a review.

REVIEW SITES

THE PROS:

- Very product focused and usually offers great product-to-product comparisons
- Reputable review sites have great traffic already
- Sales focused - review sites don't get paid often until they help the brand sell
- Brands can partner and pay for their products to be sponsored

THE CONS:

- You have to pay, often a decent amount, for your product to be featured
- Can feel gamed, less authentic than organic conversations between users
- Not peer-to-peer
- Many of the same problems as forums: you're relying on another site, brand, and group of users to answer the real questions that result in long tail search keywords



OF SHOPPERS TRUST
STRANGERS OVER
THE BRAND



OF CONSUMERS WANT
OWNERSHIP INSIGHT
PRE-PURCHASE



FAQ/Q&A

THE PROS:

- On-brand site and messaging, brand managed
- Scalable, influence can be tracked
- Quick to consume and easy to digest
- Current and fresh feedback that is relatively scalable

THE CONS:

- Usually missing anecdotal user experience feedback
- Relies on consumers actively leaving questions
- Time kills sales - even if the question asked by a shopper is answered within 24 hours, it very likely they've started looking elsewhere for the answer

CHAT

THE PROS:

- Readily available, live help and feedback
- On brand's site: you can throttle the number of conversations you're having daily/weekly/monthly
- Q&A focused and responses are on-brand messaging

THE CONS:

- Needs live bodies, management, and coverage to keep running
- Requires tools to chat, capture, store, and harness
- Most chat tools are Customer Support focused



WHY CHATS ARE SUPERIOR

To help you understand how we rated these other tools, we put together a general table. It is by no-means conclusive, but provides a solid foundation and benchmark to compare and contrast tools that you could leverage to bolster your SEO. In fact, at the end of this section we have provided a comparison table to help you visually see what certain contributor's do or don't provide to boost long tail SEO.

Peer-to-peer: If you're using your chat tool to help drives sales (as opposed to a support chat), your agents should be users and peers of your consumers.

Expert Driven Advice: More than peers, these chat agents should be experts. They should be able to answer the technical questions that consumers have. If they can't, they're not really peers nor contributing to your SEO boost potential. Experts speak your shoppers' language. They're a part of that tribe.

Ownership Experience: The majority of shopper questions are around use-cases. They want to hear from someone who has used the product, know how it holds up, and what else they should be considering with their purchase to complete their order. Also, by default, if they're a peer and an expert, they're likely to be owners as well, but it's worth noting not all owners are experts. You might own a car, doesn't mean you're an expert on it.

Product focused: Chats don't center around product categories like a lot of other contributors noted here. They aren't just talking about PC gaming or Dresses; they are talking about how the GeForce GTX 970 4GB XTREME graphics card works well with the CORE i5 CPU; they're comparing a Power Knit Racerback Dress in hot-pink to a Scuba T-Back dress for an all-pink summer party.

Included product images: More than talking about it, they are seeing it in their chat window, while on the product page so there is no question as to what they're discussing, making it that much easier to upsell, cross-sell, and for a shopper to add it to their car.



Sales focused: When used properly chats help consumers narrow their options and arrive at a decision. The tool should be enabled to allow chat reps/experts to help consumers purchase.

Shopper Targeted: Shopper. Not visitor. A sales driven chat platform should allow brands to identify which of their visitors has an intent to buy - a shopper, better still, which of those shoppers are exhibiting signs of abandonment or needing help.

On-brand messaging: Whether these experts are in-house employees or third-party advocates, the brand is able to work with them to be sure they represent the brand and speak with and for the brand.

On brand's website: These aren't happening in the wild. You don't have to track and hunt down these conversations because they are happening on the product pages on your site and on tools you control, and hopefully tools that allow you to capture and store.

Question & Answer focused: Rather obvious, but still worth noting as this is one of the largest contributors to long tail SEO. Chats are a back and forth, live Q&A, making them gold.

Data Collection/availability: Where these are happening on-site and when using the right tools, you can easily collect these conversations. They can automatically be stockpiled in your CRM and be recalled when needed.

Scalable: You can start on products where it makes most sense, where you have experts, and scale as you see need and success. Hundreds and thousands of conversations happen daily, weekly, and monthly, which make chats far more rich and scalable than any other SEO contributor.

Brand Managed: Nothing is published, indexed, or even curated if it doesn't fit the brand. You have the throttle, you decide what, how much, and how often.

Current: One of the biggest problems with other contributors is the rotting of data. Many consumer questions are around product upgrades and whether it



warrants the consumer upgrading. When a consumer has a question about an old product version, they still get the answer, the SEO stays current.

Use-Case Specific: closely related to ownership experience, use-case, often very specific, provides rich SEO potential

Live & interactive: Time kills sales. If consumers are not finding the answers on your site, they are moving on to find someone who has their answer, and they typically purchase when and where they find that answer.

Sales Tracking: When you know if a conversation led to a sale, you know you have a conversation worth curating and publishing. It's likely to help more shoppers arrive at similar conclusions and make a purchase.

	CHATS	FORUMS	REVIEWS	REVIEW SITES	FAQ/Q&A
PEER-TO PEER	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
EXPERT DRIVEN ADVICE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
OWNERSHIP EXPERIENCE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
PRODUCT FOCUSED	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FEATURE PRODUCT IMAGES	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
SALES FOCUSED	<input type="radio"/>				
SHOPPER TARGETED	<input type="radio"/>				
ON-BRAND MESSAGE	<input type="radio"/>				
ON BRAND'S SITE	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Q&A CENTRIC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>
DATA COLLECTION	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>
SCALABLE	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>
BRAND MANAGED	<input type="radio"/>				<input type="radio"/>
CURRENT	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
USE-CASE SPECIFIC	<input type="radio"/>				
LIVE & INTERACTIVE	<input type="radio"/>				
SALES TRACKING	<input type="radio"/>				



SUMMARY

The opportunity gain of SEO has gone untouched and unharnessed despite the data and content happening daily on most brand's website but it's something that shouldn't go unnoticed anymore. Brands have the ability to help shoppers, before they even land on their page, narrow the focus and become the go-to source for trusted, reliable, content. Online shopping continues to grow. With a projected 60 percent growth in the coming few years, brands who embrace the long tail will surpass their competition and differentiate in a similar fashion to giants like Amazon, who were early adopters of a long tail strategy. Long tail SEO is a growing subject of conversation and while others are talking about it, you could be putting it to work on your site.





OUR APPROACH

This entire eBook has been an overview of best practices, many of which are doable without many tools. At Needle, we have an entire Sales Chat platform that automates many of the best practices outlined here.

HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT

Yes, we are a chat tool - a sales driven chat tool - as you have probably surmised. There are other rules-based tools out there, some even function in a similar fashion as us and you could even find passionate experts on your own to power your conversations. What makes us different is our tools were build to be sales focused and where other “chat” tools feel they have delivered their service (merely connecting a rep with a customer), we feel we’ve only just begun to help our customers grow and sell.

Online conversations have the ability to help brands gather invaluable consumer insight, track sales, build traffic, fine-tune ads, retarget missed sales, and accumulate a wealth of data that will benefit a brand online, in-store, and in production. It also can be the easiest way to increase your online revenue. Our patented in-chat product image featuring along with our chat-to-sales tracking and data collecting process allow us to help our customers put the rich data and analytics to work on their site.

We’re passionate about what we do because we love to shop online and love to tell our friends about the brands we love and why we love them. We pair our passion with data, analytics, and technology to help brands deliver a superior customer experience that powers a brand’s digital marketing efforts.

+6-10%

CONVERSION

+10-35%

AOV

+5-12%

REVENUE