

LONGTAIL



HANDBOOK

By Spencer Haws

**HOW YOUR BUSINESS
CAN PROFIT FROM
LONG TAIL KEYWORDS**

**SEO RANKINGS
CONTENT
LONG TAIL KEYWORDS
SEM NICHE SITES GOOGLE
KEYWORDS**

NichePursuits.com

[Long Tail Handbook](#)

Thanks for your interest in my Long Tail Handbook! What you will find in this free guide is an overview of how I have turned building small niche websites into a full time thriving business.

I started building websites in about 2005 as a hobby just to see if I could learn how to do it. As time went on, I decided that I would try to monetize these websites. The first option I ever considered was Google AdSense. Since then I have tried numerous ways of monetizing my websites including creating my own products, selling affiliate products, selling Amazon products, using the eBay Partner Network, and others.

However, I have been most successful by far using the very first method I ever found – Google AdSense. I am not here to convince you that Google AdSense is the best way to monetize every website, because its not. However, it does monetize many different niches and keywords extremely well – that other affiliate programs cannot compete with. Google AdSense is the largest advertising network in the world, and therefore there are more advertisers spending more money on more diverse topics, keywords, and products than anywhere else. For niche websites, this is a great place to start.

Well, as I began building websites, I failed miserably at almost everything I tried. I chose topics that I knew a lot about like “personal finance” – but it turns out that these topics were highly competitive and I was never able to rank well in Google for these. I chose topics that I was passionate about, but as it turned out I knew absolutely nothing about keyword research.

As time went on (a few years), I started to understand Search Engine Optimization a little better and the importance of choosing keywords. However, it wasn't until I made a major shift in my thinking that I became successful. I think most newer internet marketers including myself thought that the way to really make the money was to rank well for a keyword that got lots of traffic! Of course it made sense, if I

could just rank for a keyword that got searched for a million times each month, I would hit the big time! Well, as it turns out – this is not usually true for one very important reason...these keywords are HIGHLY competitive! Chances are that after a year of hard effort and link building you will still not be ranking anywhere that gets much traffic for these keywords and hence be making no money.

The major mental shift came for me in the realization that I COULD rank well in Google very quickly for search terms that get very low competition – which often means keywords that only get searched for between 1,000 to 10,000 times per month. But I decided, if it means that I will only make \$50 or \$100 per month on my website as I target these low volume keywords rather than making nothing (as I was doing) targeting high volume keywords, then so be it. Once I made this mental shift, this is when my success began.

I built my first couple of “small niche” websites and they started making a consistent \$20/mth each. It was more than I had made before so I was encouraged. I decided to scale my business up – and built more than 200 of these sites over about a year and a half. As I built more sites, I got better at picking low competition keywords and finding high paying niches. I made lots of mistakes along the way, but I got a lot of things right too. So, yes some of my sites still only made \$20 or \$30 per month (or some nothing at all), but I also have several sites that make \$20 to \$30 a day or more!

These small niche websites have since enabled me to quit my job (on March 11th, 2011) and pursue my business full-time.

9 Steps to Creating Successful Niche Websites

I thought I would give a quick overview of the entire process that I follow from start to finish – in 9 steps. This can be thought of as a quick start guide, and certainly won't answer all of the questions out there, but hopefully it would provide you a great baseline to get started.

Step 1: Market & Keyword Research

There are lots of different ways that you can do keyword/market research to determine what niches to go into, but what I share below are the methods I use. Finding the right keywords is the really the key to success and these bullets points may seem simple, but when used properly these techniques can really build a thriving business. So, here is a quick point by point introduction to finding great keywords:

- Use eBay categories, Amazon top sellers, or other brainstorming methods to generate root keywords for research.
- Use Google Adwords keyword tool or [Long Tail Pro](#) (the keyword tool I developed) to generate a larger list of keywords based on the root keyword.
- Pick keywords that meet my criteria that I discuss in more detail below. Namely, must have at least 1,000 exact match searches (2,500 or more preferred), must have a \$1 or greater Google Adwords CPC value from advertisers, and the exact match domain name is available.
- I choose 1 Primary Keyword to target per website. I will target related keywords on other pages of the site as necessary, but the main focus is one keyword.

Step 2: Evaluate Top 10 Google Results for Competitiveness

- Evaluate competitiveness of the top 10 based on PageRank (PR) of page, backlinks to results page, whether exact keyword is in Title, whether domain name has keyword in it.

- If top 10 results are mostly root domains, I typically avoid this keyword. This is a sign of a strong market. Results tend to be weaker when the ranking page is a deep page on the site. For example, www.domain.com would be harder to beat than www.domain.com/subpage/subpage2/keyword1
- I use [Long Tail Pro](#) to help me visualize the above criteria and several other SEO strength indicators. However, you can also use the free tool SEO for Firefox, a Mozilla Firefox plugin.

Step 3: Purchase Domain

- I buy my domain names at Godaddy.com, but any domain name registrar is fine.
- I prefer to buy only buying exact keyword .com, .net, or .org domain names. However, if it's a great keyword, I will add a suffix or prefix.
- If you buy 6 or more domains names at a time, you get a bulk discount at Godaddy.com and you can add Private Registration for free.

Step 4: Setup Hosting and Install WordPress

- I set my name servers to my hosting account on GoDaddy. I personally [use Bluehost to host my sites](#). I LOVE Bluehost! The product is awesome and the customer service is the most responsive I have ever seen.
- I use WordPress for all of my sites. I install WordPress with Simple Scripts or Fantastico which takes about 5 seconds.
- Install plugins. Some of the plugins I use are (there are many more that could be used):
 - All in One SEO Pack
 - Quick Adsense plugin
 - Ultimate Google Analytics Plugin
 - XML-sitemap plugin
 - Contact Form 7
 - Easy Privacy Policy
 - Yet Another Related Posts Plugin

- Install Themes. I try to use a new theme on every site I start now. So this is just a few of themes I have used in the past. Don't get hung up on your theme selection, just find one you like and go with it.
- Arithemia
- GreenPark2
- Fthemes.com (lots of free or paid themes)
- [NicheWebsiteTheme.com](https://nichewebsite.com) (I created this theme, and its GREAT for niche sites).
- 100's of others. Just click "Install themes" from within wordpress and you will see thousands of free themes to use.

Step 5: Create Content

- I have 15 to 20 articles written per website to start typically. At least 1 article has the exact keyword in the title. The other articles should be about related topics, but should not always use the exact keyword.
- I outsource my article writing to authors on [Textbroker.com](https://textbroker.com) for the most part. I love this website, because the authors are high quality and because there are thousands of authors, my projects get done very quickly. I find that level 3 is usually sufficient; although minor editing may be needed sometimes.
- Other than these articles, I also have a basic about us page, a contact page, and a privacy policy page.

Step 6: Insert Adsense

- I typically have one large rectangle or medium sized adsense block directly under the title of my article – right or left justified with the text wrapping around the ad. I also have adsense in the sidebar or sidebars right at the top.

Here is an screenshot of a similar ad placement I use on my niche websites:

I use similar ad placement on my niche websites. This is a medium sized ad block right justified right under the article title

- I also use “link units”. Typically I will have one link unit near the top of the site right under the navigation bar. I will sometimes place another link unit at the end of the article.
- I go to great lengths to make sure that my adsense colors match exactly to the templates I am using. I make sure that the Ads blend in naturally with my website.

Step 7: Get Indexed

- I submit my articles to Digg.com or other social bookmarking site right away as a means of getting indexed quickly by Google.
- You can also add your site to Google Webmaster Tools.

Step 8: Get Backlinks

There are lots of ways to get links to your sites including article marketing, forum profile linking, social bookmarking, and many others. Below are just a few ideas for generating links to your sites.

- Here are a few places you can get links:
 - Quality Web Directories
 - Guest Posts

- Link Bait
 - Ask for links
 - Build Relationships with other site owners
 - Copy Links for Competitors
 - Social Media
 - Link Out to Others
 - Video Submissions
 - Photo or Document Sharing sites
 - Sponsor a Contest
 - Comments or Testimonials
 - Forum posts
 - Q&A Sites
 - Web 2.0 sites
 - Article Marketing
- I would recommend starting with around 100 to 200 links in the first month of so to get your site started. You can get 10 to 20 links from each of the locations listed above.
 - To get started, you can submit a new article or two site to EzineArticles.com and other article directories, once your site is indexed.
 - You can hire someone from an internet marketing forum or freelance website to build links for you. This is what I do exclusively now. I have found a few good packages or services that I use time and time again to build links to my sites, but I'm always searching for more. These links include blog networks, directory links, document sharing, or other article websites typically.
 - There are lots of other link networks. However, for the most part, I would avoid link exchanges as this leaves a large footprint in the eyes of Google.
 - Anchor text is CRITICAL NOW! **Don't overuse your keyword as your anchor text.** So, for each link you build, you need to vary that anchor text. Here's a general guideline to follow:
 - 20% - Exact Match (your exact keyword)

- 20%- 30% - Varied Partial match (part of your keyword and/or other related words)
- 20%-30% - URL match (yourkeyword.com)
- 20%-30% - Varied no match (Read more, click here, your name, etc...)

Step 9: Go to the Bank

This is essentially all I do to build my niche websites. The ongoing maintenance of these sites can often be very little. However, if I see that my site is doing well in the search engines or is otherwise making money, I will add additional articles from time to time (maybe a couple per month or more depending on the success of the site). I have sites with well over 100 articles on them now.

However, sometimes sites underperform as well. The sites that are not doing well after a few months (i.e. not making any money), I won't add content too. I build the winners bigger and let the losing websites die. So even though I start all sites with 15 to 20 articles; some grow much larger and others don't grow at all. I would recommend a similar strategy.

Choosing Keywords – The Key to Successful Niche Websites

I wanted to share with all of you briefly how I choose niche keywords and how I judge the competition for these keywords.

Cutting Through the Keyword Confusion

There is a lot of noise out there that can really cause confusion to people trying to do keyword research. Many people will list a dozen or so factors that you need to look at including number of competing websites, amount of websites targeting the keyword in the title, and many other factors that don't always need to be looked at.

In reality, a lot of this doesn't really matter. The most important thing to look at is the strength of the top 10 websites in Google. **That's it.** If you can outrank these 10 sites, who cares how many millions of other websites mention your keyword on their website or in the title?

Here is some of the most important criteria to look at to make a quick decision on the strength of the top 10 sites in Google.

- I like to see results that have a Google Page Rank of 0 (PR is not that important, but can help you make a quick judgment).
- I like to see websites with less than 10 or so links (zero is what I prefer) to the page (not the site) that is ranking.
- I also look for weak Title SEO. (If the exact keyword is not in the title, this may be a sign of a weak site in the top 10).
- Overall, I will only choose a keyword if there are AT LEAST 2 weak sites in the top 10 that I believe I can outrank.
- I try to avoid keywords where all the ranking sites are root domains. Results that are in subdirectories tend to be weaker. (i.e. nichepursuits.com is a root domain; nichepursuits.com/page1/category5/rankingpage.html is a page in a subdirectory).
- Be careful not to avoid a keyword just because the top results have a high PageRank or appear to be authoritative with lots of links. As yourself: "Is this website really

targeting this keyword or are they just ranking because they are an authority website?”. If they are not really targeting the keyword (its not in the title or the text of the site), then this may still be a great keyword to go after.

More Criteria For Choosing Good Keywords

Its also important to choose keywords that will get enough traffic. You can obviously set your own guidelines here, but here are some basic criteria I have used to find keywords to build niche websites around:

- Keywords that receive at least 2,500 exact match searches in the United States (not Globally).
- I will only go with a keyword that receives between 1,000 to 2,000 exact searches if I believe I can rank in the TOP 5.
- If a keyword receives around 2,500 exact searches or more, I will be happy to rank anywhere in the Top 10 sites on Google.
- I will only target keywords that have an Adwords CPC value of about \$1 or more; unless it has higher search volume – then I’m willing to accept a lower CPC.
- You can target any keywords (have less than \$1 CPC) if you plan on monetizing your sites with your own products, Amazon, Clickbank products, or other affiliate programs. You need to really determine the purpose of your site and monetization method.
- I prefer to only build websites where the exact match .com, .net, or .org domain name is available. If I really like the keyword, I will get a domain with a prefix or suffix (like mykeyword.com or keywordpro.com).

By being very restrictive on the keywords that I build sites on, I significantly increase my likelihood for success. I would also highly recommend that you do the same. In the niche websites game, the majority of your success will lie in your ability to choose good keywords. Building backlinks, writing good articles, and building a good site pale in comparison to excellent keyword choice.

Overall, this is the criteria I will be using to choose the niche markets that I enter. If there is one thing that I can stress, that is to choose your keywords carefully and wisely, because this is one thing that WILL make or break your ability to be successful in this business.

What Exactly are “Long Tail Keywords”?

Before I go into a discussion about what exactly long tail keywords are and how you as an internet marketer can benefit from them, I wanted to test your knowledge with a little quiz!

Out of the four choices below, what option would be considered the most long tail keyword?

(I will share the answer below)

Keyword	Searches Per Month
a.) Internet Marketing	1,830,000
b.) SEO Marketer	480
c.) Internet Marketer	8,100
d.) Business Internet Marketing Online	49,500

So, what is your guess? Which option would most likely be considered a long tail keyword?

Instead of just giving you the answer, I wanted to discuss what a long-tail keyword is first. Then hopefully by the end you will know what the correct answer is, and of course I will tell you as well.

First, where did the phrase “Long Tail” come from? The answer is it came from an article written by Chris Anderson for Wired Magazine back in 2004. If you have never read the article, its a must read: [The Long Tail](#).

Chris also went on to write a book by the same title. I have read the book and can tell you that it is very good not only for internet marketing, but really provides good business knowledge for any venture you might be involved in.

In a nutshell, Chris took a look at how the sale of books and music changes when the internet came along and made titles that were never available in book or music stores due to shelf space; suddenly were available to anyone. Book stores and music stores had always only focused on the top hits, the best sellers.

However, one of the odd things that was discovered was that all of these deep obscure tracks that were never sold in music stores still had an audience that was interested in them. Even though they might only sell a few copies a month, or even a year; they still sold. And because it cost essentially nothing to carry these obscure titles it was still profitable to online stores. These deep tracks and obscure titles that are only searched for occasionally are the long tail products.

The most fascinating thing about the Long Tail (and particularly for internet marketers I think); is that all of the combined long tail sales often equaled MORE sales than the big hits! And if you think about it, it makes sense. While there might only be 10 or so big hits; the long tail catalog of items could be thousands upon thousands or even millions of products long. So sure, some of these titles might only sell every once in a while, but if you have enough of them, it adds up to a nice profit.

So, in my mind, this applies directly to building small niche websites. If you have enough of these small sites that target long tail keywords (those keywords that get searched for only a few times), you can build up a niche portfolio of profitable sites.

And this is the whole key to this business. Long tail keywords usually have less competition and are much easier to rank in the top 10 of Google than the “big hit” keywords are.

So, if you look back at my quiz at the top of this post, which keyword is the long tail keyword? Hopefully, now you understand that the answer is b – SEO Marketer.

Long Tail keywords *have nothing to do with the length of the phrase* and everything to do with the number of searches it receives each month.

In other words, a long tail keyword could actually be a one word phrase and a 7 word phrase might not be a long tail keyword; all depending on the number of searches it receives in a month.

Is there a Limited Supply of Long-tail Keywords?

Another thought that often comes up is that we are all racing against each other to find the great domains of all these long tail keywords. While this is true to some extent, I don't believe that these long-tail keywords will ever run out. Here's why:

According to Udi Manber, Google's VP of Engineering, during a presentation given back in 2007,

“20 to 25% of the queries we see today, we have never seen before”

There are other references from Google that state that there are new searches being performed every single day that have never been performed before. In other words, there will be long tail keywords that exist tomorrow that did not exist today.

Again, this makes perfect sense if you think about it. We don't live in a static world and things are constantly changing. One prime example is new products. A couple of years ago, there were no searches performed for “iphone”. That keyword now receives 185,000,000 searches each month globally. And there are probably about a million related long tail “iphone” keywords that also get searched for millions of times. Apple also just came out with the “ipad”; which is another term that was never searched for before a couple of years ago.

These are just 2 examples, and there are literally millions of different markets, products, lifestyle changes, etc that will pop up as new keywords every single day.

So, while there is tough competition for some domain names; don't worry! Just move on to a new market if the one you are looking at is too difficult.

Anyway, understanding what a long-tail keyword is and what it isn't is critical to being successful at building these Long Tail Websites.

In Search of Black Swans

I recently read the book, "The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable" by Nassim Taleb. The concept it portrays is interesting about how extremely unlikely (and therefore usually not considered) events can impact our lives, our finances, our country, and everything. I want to discuss how searching for "black swan" websites, ideas, or businesses can be hugely profitable.

But first, I want to explain what a black swan is. For example, one of the highly unlikely events that was never considered before was the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center of 9/11/2001. Of all the possibilities that governments and other highly trained individuals considered, having 2 planes fly into these buildings was not one of them. The impact was devastating and even more so because it was never considered in the realm of possibility.

Here is the reason these highly unlikely events are called black swans. Not too long ago there was no such thing as a black swan. When you said "swan" everyone pictured a white swan. No one had ever seen a black swan and in fact the phrase "black swan" was never used because well it didnt exist. That was until someone discovered some black birds in Australia. At first they didn't know what they were, until closer examination they discovered these were swans! Only they were black! If someone had asked this individual before going to Australia what kind of birds they might expect to see, they never would have listed a black swan...because it didnt exist.

One more example from the book to drive home what a black swan is. A turkey is fed by the farmer 364 days out of the year. The bird is well taken care of. The bird is happy. The bird is fat and happy. The farmer must really love the turkey, the bird thinks! Then on Thanksgiving (a major holiday in the US) the farmer slaughters the bird. This is a black swan event. There was absolutely no evidence in the turkey's past that would lead it to believe that the farmer would kill it.

Okay, so up to this point I have talked about negative black swans. Well, just the opposite can be true about unexpected good events. What about a small little website that you expected to make \$1 a day that ends up making \$50 a day? That's a good black swan event.

This happens in business all the time. A small little startup company, like Facebook for example that is started in some kid's dorm room in college, becomes the most visited website on the internet! No major players saw this coming, nobody expected a digital yearbook to become the biggest website...but it happened!

So, how do you find black swans? Well, its not easy, because its impossible to predict what the next big thing will be. But one of the keys to success is diversification. Don't just try one thing and give up. Try lots of niche websites, or create a product, or sell something else online. Start a quirky business that seems too goofy to possibly work. You never know, you might hit on something huge!

So, even though I don't really know which of my adsense sites will be a big earner, I keep creating them because I know eventually I will find a black swan (and I have found lots of them now). Your first 10 sites might all be failures, but if you try something a little different, or choose a better keyword, or try a new strategy; you might even surprise yourself and accomplish something totally unexpected.

I am personally implementing this "black swan" mentality. I continue to build lots of websites knowing that most of them will only earn a small amount; however, I also know that some of them will unexpectedly earn more than projected. The idea is to create enough websites and to try enough keywords to eventually hit that home run. I wish I could say there was a guaranteed formula to be successful on your first website, but there isn't.

The key is to think big, try new strategies, and don't be afraid to go against what the crowd is saying! If you are getting all of your business ideas from forums and other people, you might never discover the biggest undiscovered idea out there that is

right between your own ears. I have always found my biggest success when I think of my own ideas and try to do things a little differently.

How can you be a black swan if you do what all the white swans are doing?

Learn More About Niche Businesses

What I have covered in this report is really all that you need to get started building niche websites. Of course there are other nitty gritty details but all of this information can be learned for free if you search on Google, YouTube, forums, or blogs. This report will hopefully set you on the right path and motivate you with the knowledge that this really can be a full-time business.

One additional place that you can continue to learn more about niche websites and other exciting niche business ideas is on my blog at NichePursuits.com.

The purpose of my blog is to discuss niche business ideas in general (not restricted to niche websites). Some of the ideas I have discussed in the past include building iPhone Apps, storage unit auctions, selling used books online, outsourcing software development, domain flipping, and many others. The best part about this blog is that I want it to be interactive! I really would like to have you participate on the blog by leaving comments and suggesting ideas that you might like to see me try out. I am spending my own money on real ideas that could potentially be a great idea for you to try as well! I spend my money, and you get to learn all the lessons – not a bad deal huh?

So, feel free to head on over to my blog at NichePursuits.com and leave a question for me or a comment on one of my recent posts. I do my best to respond to all the comments and answer your questions.

Since you received this free report, I will keep you posted via email when I add new content to my blog so that you can be sure to have the latest niche ideas. I hope that you will look forward to these emails as I really do try to share ideas that are working “right now”. Hopefully these ideas will help keep the wheels turning for you – and perhaps you can find the “perfect” niche business for you to pursue.

Stop by and start interacting with me and other like-minded internet marketers today: [Visit Niche Pursuits right here!](http://NichePursuits.com)