

The Truth About Topic Selection

If there is one place where more people new to Internet marketing go wrong, it is at the **topic selection** part of the process.

What makes things worse, topic selection is one of the very first critical decisions that must be made. If you get this wrong from the start, everything else you do from that point forward, no matter how well you do it, will not result in you making money.

The purpose of this document is to teach you two important concepts -

1. The psychology behind why people will pay money to purchase something online, and...
2. Techniques you can use to find where these buyers are and then get in front of them to sell them what they want.

Why People Buy Things

By far the very best - *and simplest* - description of the psychology behind why people purchase something online, especially when it comes to selling information products, that I have ever come across, is this three step qualification process from **Eben Pagan**.

I have to give full credit to Eben for these words...

When looking for a target market, the people you are attempting to sell something to must satisfy these three vital criteria -

1. They must be experiencing some kind of **pain** or **irrational passion** for the subject
2. They must be **actively searching** for solutions
3. There must be very few **perceived options** they can go to solve the problem

Every single Internet marketing trainer on the planet, well at least the good ones, will talk about these criteria in some shape or form.

There are hundreds of ways to say it, but fundamentally we are looking for people with painful problems or irrational passion for something, who are actively trying to solve the problem or feed the passion by searching online and when they do so, they don't come across many *perceived* solutions.

It's your job to become the best perceived solution and stand in front of these people when they go searching for answers.

It's pretty obvious why this three step qualification criteria works. If people are suffering significantly enough that they are motivated to find a way to solve their problem, or they are so addicted to whatever they are passionate about that they go hunting the Internet to find a way to feed their hunger, then they are very likely to purchase something.

If your audience are not hungry or not suffering enough to get out there and look for solutions, then you have to go out there and find your audience and worse still, find a way to convince them they need what you have.

This is near-impossible and where so many people go wrong. If you choose a topic that people aren't **actively** looking for solutions, then you've just made your job much harder. You can still make it work, but I'd much rather sell something to people who come to me hungry for what I have, rather than go knocking on their door and attempt to convince them they should buy from me. Cold calling is NOT fun.

What Do You Mean By Irrational Passion?

I suspect you understand what a problem is and it makes sense that people will go looking to solve it.

The alternative is **irrational passion**, and it's the irrational part that makes the difference. People can be passionate about something but never really get out there and go looking for - or buying - things to feed their passion.

If they're irrational fans, they are devotees, geeks, groupies - whatever you want to call it - and will take steps that normal people won't to indulge in what they do.

These people go looking for and then purchase things to feed their irrational passions. Think "trekkies" who buy Star Trek products, or any pop-culture television show or movie who has fanatical fans, or women who buy way more shoes than they really need, or men who buy golf equipment.

Not everything is about solving a problem, but no matter what the case, the driving force is a strong emotional urge to either stop suffering from something or to feed a desire that's grown beyond what is considered "normal".

Why Does Perceived Value Matter?

The final step in the process is about perceived options to solve problems or feed passions.

While this might sound clever, all we are talking about is presenting an image to people that what we provide is unique in some way. Even though you sell the same thing as ten other providers, if you can establish the mindset in your target market that what you have is uniquely different - *special* - then you will win the sale.

Marketers do this by positioning themselves as the **best expert** in a unique niche. Product retailers do this by aligning their product with celebrity endorsements. Some companies build unique brands, or register special trademarks in order to differentiate what they have from everyone else.

Perceived value is why the iPod, although not the first MP3 player to enter the market, quickly dominated. The "cool" factor Apple established created the perception in the mind of the consumer that the iPod was the device you had to have.

When investigating your potential to present a *perceived* unique offer, you need to look at two elements -

1. How many competitors sell the same or very similar offer to what you sell?
2. Is there an angle, or a position you can build, to create the perception that you are the only or best provider of what you offer?

What you have to be careful of is entering a market where what you provide is already heavily serviced by other companies and there is no way for you to establish a perceived difference in the mind of consumers. This is especially true if what you sell is a commodity item, that is easily to replicate and thus competition can come in and take away your customers.

Some of the simplest ways to become the dominant player in a market is to target a sub-niche, create a better product, use a better marketing process, make a better offer or build a better brand. I'll cover how to do this in the techniques section of this report coming up next....

How To Research The Internet To Find Money Topics

Now you know the criteria you are looking to meet, let's take a look at how you research these elements online to find the topics that could potentially be money earners for you.

I'm going to break down several different techniques that various Internet marketing experts have created to help you determine whether there is money to be made in a niche.

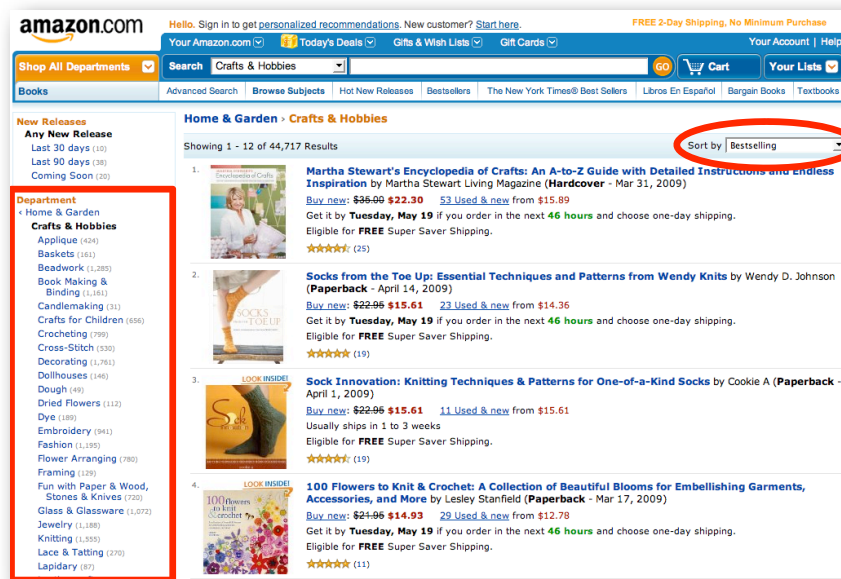
Bear in mind that every single technique below is a **hypothesis** until you actually go out there and attempt to build an audience and sell them something. These techniques are designed to make the decision making process more likely to lead to profitability, but there are no guarantees. If you want a definite answer, put up a website.

Use Amazon.com To Find Popular Topics

This system is fantastic if you want to avoid spending money to build traffic.

Adam and Alen from [Niche Profit Classroom](#) teach the following methodology to find profitable niches using [Amazon.com](#), which they then go after using only organic search engine traffic.

1. Go to Amazon.com and look in any category to find the top bestsellers. If a physical book is popular in the real world, then that means it is likely to be popular online too.



The screenshot shows the Amazon.com website interface. The search bar contains 'Crafts & Hobbies'. The results page is titled 'Home & Garden > Crafts & Hobbies' and shows 'Showing 1 - 12 of 44,717 Results'. A red circle highlights the 'Sort by' dropdown menu, which is set to 'Bestselling'. On the left side, a red box highlights the 'Department' sidebar, which lists various sub-categories under 'Crafts & Hobbies' such as Applique, Baskets, Beadwork, Book Making & Binding, Candlemaking, Crocheting, Cross-Stitch, Decorating, Dollhouses, Dough, Dried Flowers, Dye, Embroidery, Fashion, Flower Arranging, Framing, Fun with Paper & Wood, Stones & Knives, Glass & Glassware, Jewelry, Knitting, Lace & Tatting, and Lapidary.

- Once you have found a topic to investigate, take the main keyword and type it into the [Google AdWords keyword tool](#).
- Look for keyword phrases that have a search volume of at least 1,000 daily searches according to the Google data. This is equivalent to the “demand” for this topic.

Keyword Tool

Use the Keyword Tool to get new keyword ideas. Enter a few descriptive words or phrases below. [Keyword Tool Tips](#)

Important note: We cannot guarantee that these keywords will improve your campaign performance. We reserve the right to disapprove any keywords you add. You are responsible for the keywords that you select and for ensuring that your use of the keywords does not violate any applicable laws.

Results are tailored to **English, Australia** [Edit](#)

How would you like to generate keyword ideas? Enter one keyword or phrase per line:

Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)

beta fish tanks

Use synonyms

[Filter my results](#)

Choose columns to display: [?](#)
Show/hide columns

Keywords	Advertiser Competition ?	Local Search Volume: April ?	Global Monthly Search Volume ?	Match Type: ?
Keywords related to term(s) entered - sort by relevance ?				
beta fish tanks	<div style="width: 50%;"></div>	110	4,400	Add v
beta fish tank	<div style="width: 50%;"></div>	320	3,600	Add v
Add all 2 >				

Download all keywords: [text](#), [.csv \(for excel\)](#), [.csv](#)

- Go to Google and type that keyword phrase into the normal Google search engine. Look for phrases that have 10,000 or less competing pages for that term. This is equivalent to the “supply” for this topic.

Google [Advanced Search](#) [Preferences](#)

Web [Show options...](#) Results 1 - 10 of about 8,050 for "beta fish tanks". (0.19 seconds)

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This technique uses Amazon.com as the research site for topic ideas that are already proven popular based on what people are buying. Once some possible topics are discovered, using the Google keywords tool and a basic search, you can find topics that have enough traffic looking for answers, but not too many competing websites targeting that traffic.

From there you can set up a website or blog, create some content to target the keyword phrases you now know are popular, and in a few weeks you should see traffic coming in from Google organic results.

From there you can funnel that traffic to an email list, build relationships and then sell an affiliate product or your own product.

For a more detailed breakdown of this system, listen to the podcast interview I did with Adam Short here -

[How To Profit From Niche Websites Interview With Adam Short](#)

Find What Already Sells Online

Jeff Johnson is another well known Internet marketer who goes after many different niche markets. He doesn't care so much about his passion for the subject, he just looks where the money is and goes after it.

Although this system contains many elements, for the sake of simplicity I'll focus on one website as the main research tool - [Clickbank](#).

Jeff advocates going to a site like Clickbank, where hundreds of thousands of information products are sold every day and then look up the best sellers in each category.

The screenshot shows the ClickBank Marketplace interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home | Sign Up | Marketplace | Blog | Log In' and a search box. Below that, a red navigation bar contains 'Sell Products', 'Promote Products', 'Buy Products', and 'About Us'. The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail: 'Marketplace > Health & Fitness > Beauty > search results for 'hair loss''. A search filter box is present with the following settings: Category: Health & Fitness, Subcat: Beauty, Keywords: hair loss, Sort by: Popularity, Product Type: All Products, Language: All, and Show: 10 results per page. Below the filter box, three product listings are shown, each with a title, description, and performance metrics (e.g., \$/sale, Future \$, Total \$/sale, %/sale, %refd, grav).

Once you've found what sells well in a category you could consider entering, purchase the best selling products and see how their system works. Study the products, study the emails they send to you, the sales page, how they deliver the products and how they market the products.

You **reverse engineer** the process to find weaknesses in the marketing system and products, so you can then go and enter the exact same markets and offer a superior product and/or process to sell the product.

This method is surprisingly easy because most people who sell products online do a good job, but not a *great* job. There is always more you can do to beat the competition, for example -

- Create a better product
- Offer affiliates a larger commission percentage than competitors
- Create a multi-media product, for example produce a video version of a popular ebook
- Create superior free information to sell your product
- Use a better sales page than competitors
- Use a better follow-up email sequence than competitors
- Get a better click-through-rate on pay per click advertising

Clickbank publishes lists of the top selling products and provides data, like how many sales comes from affiliates and how many are direct sales. If a product has many affiliates, then you know it's possible to enter the market and attract those affiliates to promote your product and instantly have a best seller on your hands.

This technique requires you have an understanding of how to do some aspect of Internet marketing well, so you can beat the competition. However you shouldn't be scared by the prospect of this, most people are too lazy to do a good job, so you can win just by putting in some effort.

If you're looking for a profitable topic and you have no idea what to target, Clickbank and similar affiliate product websites already have the answers.

There's no need to reinvent the wheel, sell what people already buy.

What Do Other Companies Currently Advertise?

This is another topic research method where you don't have to guess what people buy, other companies are showing you what already sells.

The Internet, and virtually every form of media (television, radio, print) all feature some form of advertising. Any advertisement is from a company attempting to make money selling something.

You can research advertisements on Google (the right sidebar in Google shows "sponsored results"), you can look at advertisements on other websites, you can watch TV (especially late night TV infomercials) and see what is advertised. You can do the same with radio and magazine advertisements.

If you're looking to sell information, simply looking at what books are most popular by visiting your local bookstore can give you some ideas. If you're into home and gardening topics, go to the hardware store and ask what is really popular. If nutrition is your topic, go to your health food store.

The answers to the question of where the money is, is all around us, but you need to first do a little investigative brainstorming, and then once you have some potential subjects, move on to more specific research.

Check The Numbers: Do Your Keyword Research

Once you've found topics that currently make money for other people, your next step is to research the market for how best to get in front of this traffic.

Two of the most powerful traffic generation techniques available today are pay per click (PPC) marketing and search engine optimization (SEO). PPC is about spending money to buy clicks from advertisements placed in Google search results and other websites. SEO is about getting high listings in the Google search results, so you get free traffic.

Both these techniques rely on keyword phrases to bring the right type of people to your website (targeted traffic). Before you go after a market, you need to perform keyword research.

John Reese in his industry leading [Traffic Secrets 2.0](#) course advocates purchasing accounts with all the best keyword research tools and using tools that help you to spy on other websites to see what keywords they use.

John's methodology works like this -

- Your goal is to go for [Long Tail](#) keyword phrases and many of them, so you have more content out there attracting traffic (he calls this “owning more of the Internet”).
- Once you have determined what market you will go after, use keyword tools like [Google's AdWords Tool](#), [Wordtracker](#), [Wordze](#) and [Keyword Discovery](#) to create huge lists of phrases that have high traffic and low competition (similar to the goal above used by the Niche Profit Classroom system).
- The keyword tools provide two vital things you need: thousands of different keyword phrases, way more than you could up with yourself, and how much traffic currently searches for the phrases.
- Keyword tools also provide what is called a “KEI” - Keyword Effectiveness Index, which is an approximation of the “value” of a keyword phrase based on how much traffic it gets and how many web pages compete for that traffic.

Once you've come up with your best keyword phrases, you can create content to that targets the phrase and then traffic, theoretically at least, comes rolling in.

John Reese, like Jeff Johnson also suggests you avoid “reinventing the wheel”, so go online and find the websites that already rank well in search engines and then use “spying” tools like [SpyFu](#), [SEMRush](#) and [Compete.com](#) to assess how much traffic they get and what keywords they target.

These research tools are very powerful, showing you how much traffic a site gets, what other sites link to that site, what keyword phrases are used to link to that site and lots more “insider” information.

Once you have this data, you can use it to optimize your own site and even before that, determine how hard it might be to go after a certain topic. If all your competition are poorly optimized, all you need to do is enter the market with a slightly better website and then you will be sitting first in line for all the organic (free) traffic from Google.

Keyword Research Can Be Confusing

If you've never done keyword research before, what I just described may have confused you. All you really need to understand is that once again the same fundamentals apply.

You can use keyword research to ascertain the following about a niche -

1. There are enough people typing the search phrases into Google and other search engines every day (high demand)
2. A lack of quality competing websites optimizing for these keywords (poor supply)

If you can satisfy these criteria, creating content using the right keywords will deliver traffic.

If this is new to you and you're keen to further develop your keyword research abilities, consider studying **John Reese's Traffic Secrets 2.0** course. It's not free, but it does provide a great introduction to this aspect of Internet marketing, and a whole lot more -

[Traffic Secrets 2.0](#)

Keep It Simple

If you have never done keyword research, you don't have money to buy other people's products at Clickbank and you just want a simple method to find possible hot topics, a great place to start are online forums.

A forum is a community site based around a topic. The fact that forum exists means the niche is popular online.

Forums usually provide two services -

1. They help people find answers to questions and solve problems
2. People can interact and share their love for a subject with equally passionate fans of the subject

Can you see a trend here? That's the first two criteria met in our topic selection process. What we don't know yet is whether these people represent a group of online buyers and how much perceived competition exists.

Assuming a forum is popular, which means there are new threads being created every hour of every day by a very active membership, then you've found a goldmine of potential market research.

The great thing about forums is that they are broken down into different sub-forums. The job of discovering what sub-niches are popular in a subject is already done for you. If the tomatoes forum in a forum about gardening is sustaining popularity, then all you need to do is spend some time in that forum to learn all about what people who grow tomatoes want to know about.

Once you've discovered a forum you can passively observe the discussions, dig into the archives to find the most popular threads, or start new threads to do active research.

You can then take what you've learned from the forum and combine any of the previous techniques covered in this report to continue your research process -

1. Do keyword research to find out how many searches are going on
2. Check Google search results to see how much competition there is
3. Check Amazon.com to see the best products in a given category you found via a forum
4. Go to Clickbank and see if there are already any products being sold in this market
5. Head offline to a newsagent and see if any magazines target the market and see what products are advertised, and so on...

There are countless tools to assess whether a niche is popular, but ultimately all of these resources only give us an indication of what might work.

Next you need to get out there, put up a blog or a landing page, start publishing content or buying PPC ads and collecting people on to an email list.

What About Your Passions?



The one aspect I haven't mentioned at all in this report is whether your own passion for a subject matters.

I've personally always gone for topics I care about in some way, but that's because my personality is naturally creative (as a writer) and I thus enjoy the process of creating content. I therefore desire topics I can personally write about.

People like Jeff Johnson are not interested in exploring their passion for a subject when they enter a niche. They enjoy setting up a system that makes money. For them, the creativity comes from strategizing a plan to enter a niche and dominate it and then executing that plan using other people to create content, set up websites, etc.

In your case this is entirely a personal choice and you need to ask yourself when you go through the topic selection process, what aspects of the system will you personally handle?

Are you going to write website content, the follow-up emails, website copy, or build the websites yourself? What are your strengths? Do you have an existing passion that can translate into money or will you need to enter markets you don't care about personally, just for the sake of getting some cash-flow coming in?

This all depends on who you are and your life situation, so I can't decide for you.

What I can tell you is that by going through the process of finding a profitable topic, setting up a website and then marketing it to build traffic, you will discover what aspects you enjoy and what you don't.

From there, gravitate to your strengths and find other people to help you overcome your weaknesses.

Good luck!

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