

How to Research Keywords Using Google AdWords and Moz Difficulty Tool

Keywords are the words or phrases people type into a search engine to produce a list of relevant links. From a marketing perspective, they are also one of the most important components of any SEO program. The right keywords will drive the *right* visitors to your content — creating meaningful connections with your most desirable prospects.

But how do you find the *right* keywords? In this how-to you will learn how to research keywords (or, more accurately, *keyword phrases*) using two popular SEO tools: Google Adwords and the Moz Keyword Difficulty tool. Both will identify keywords that are relevant, frequently searched, and unique enough to bring you success. In case you are wondering, while Adwords is designed specifically for Google's pay-per-click service, it is useful for more general SEO, too.

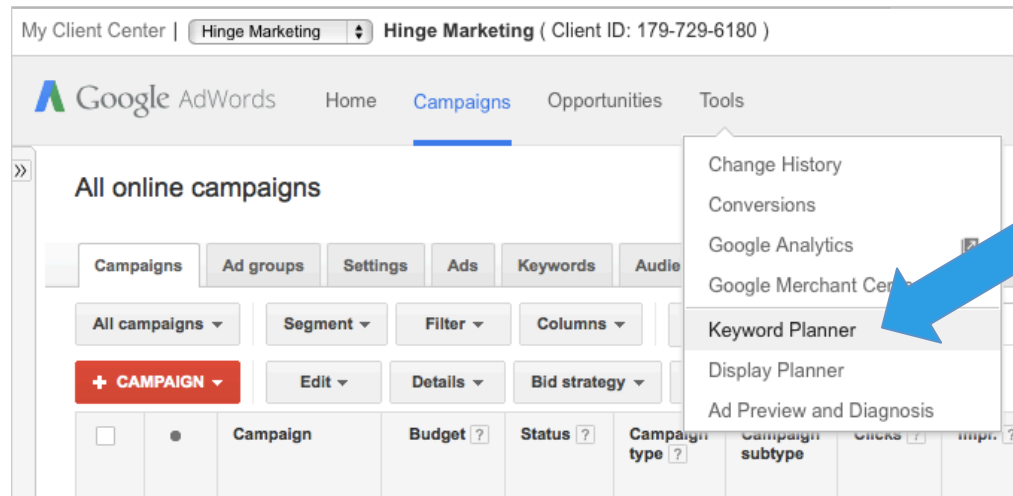
To start, you'll need to set up accounts with Google AdWords and Moz. if you don't already have them. Google's tool is free but Moz is a subscription-based service (a free 1-month trial is available). You can easily set up Adwords [here](#) with your existing Google account. Click [here](#) for Moz.

We also recommend [Moz's SEO Toolbar](#) — it's a free download that will help you analyze keywords and pages on the fly. Currently, this tool is only available for Chrome and Firefox web browsers.

Note: If you are a little lost right now, you might want to check out *The Basics of SEO* first.

Step 1. Open the Google AdWords Keyword Planner

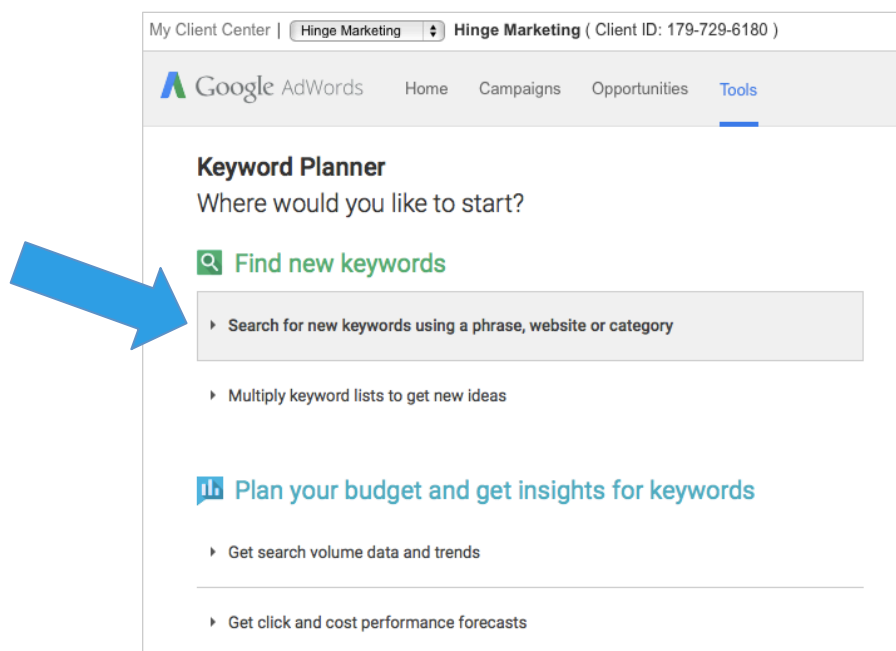
Open Google AdWords and navigate to **Keyword Planner** under Tools.



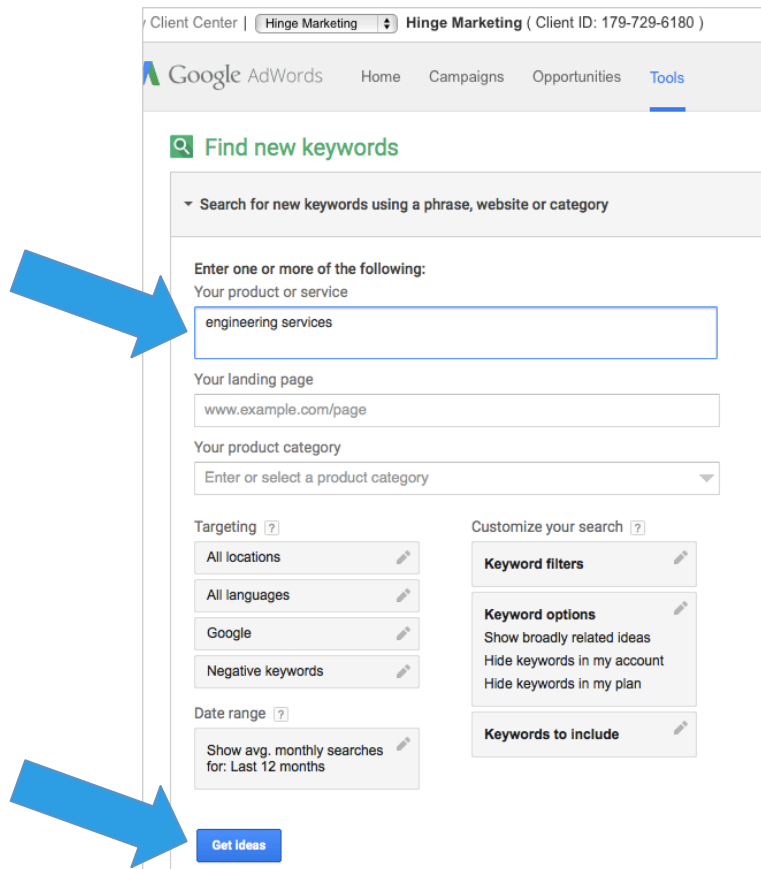
Step 2. Enter Your Broad Topic to Find New Keywords

In this how-to, we'll start with the broad topic of "engineering services". We'll use our tools to analyze several more specific combinations until we find some great keywords. Keep in mind that while general keywords such as "engineering services" may seem like the best fit at first, you may not be able to rank for that keyword if your website's domain authority isn't high enough (domain authority measures how easily a website can rank for a given keyword). But it's a good starting place.

You'll see this screen first. Click **Search for new keywords** to expand.



Enter your broad search term (engineering services) under your **product or service**. Click **Get Ideas**.



Client Center | Hinge Marketing Hinge Marketing (Client ID: 179-729-6180)

Google AdWords Home Campaigns Opportunities Tools

Find new keywords

Search for new keywords using a phrase, website or category

Enter one or more of the following:

Your product or service
engineering services

Your landing page
www.example.com/page

Your product category
Enter or select a product category

Targeting ?

All locations

All languages

Google

Negative keywords

Customize your search ?

Keyword filters

Keyword options

Show broadly related ideas

Hide keywords in my account

Hide keywords in my plan

Keywords to include

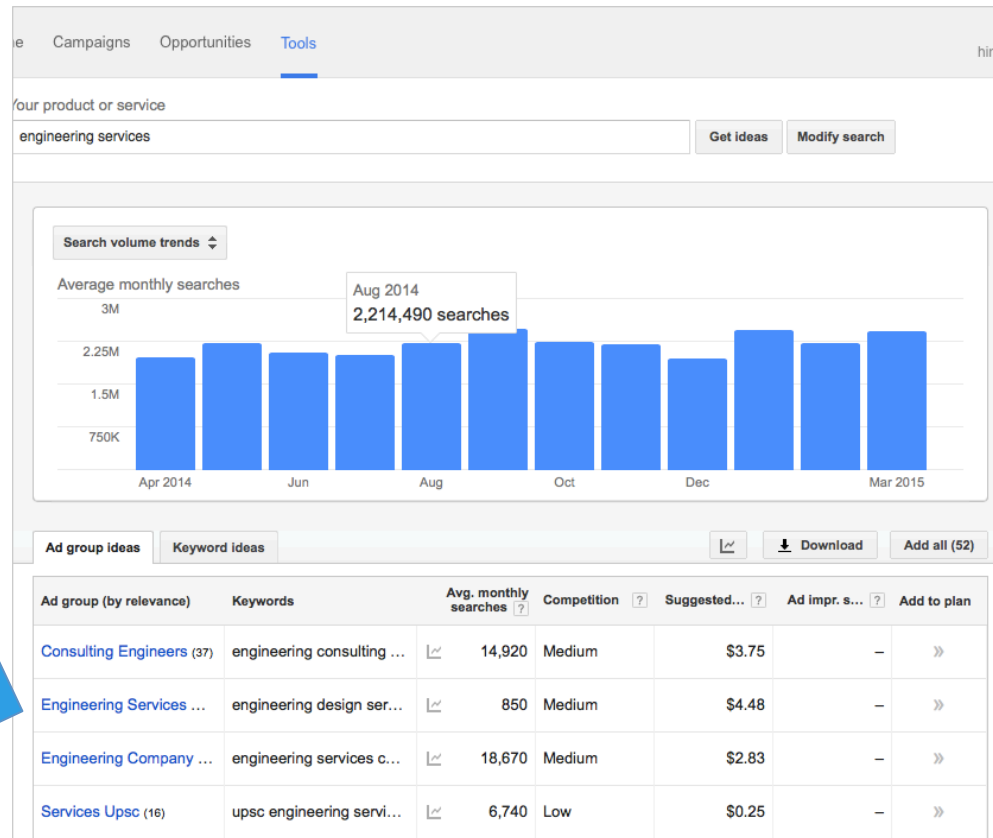
Date range ?

Show avg. monthly searches for: Last 12 months

Get Ideas

Step 3. Select Relevant Ad Group(s)

AdWords will display the results as **ad groups**. These are groups that target a shared set of keywords.



Select the ad group most relevant to your broad search term. In this case you see “engineering services” on the second line above. This will lead us to a list of possible keywords to continue our research on.

Step 4. Evaluate Keywords for Search Volume

Your first instinct may be to jump on the most relevant keywords for your services, but you need to consider a couple of factors first — *search volume* and *difficulty*. Search volume is the best metric to start with. Look for keywords that carry a volume of at least 100 monthly searches. This is where you will see the best value for your keyword work.

You’ll see on the next image that “engineering design services” and “design engineering services” command the greatest search volume with 390 and 170 monthly searches respectively. They also fit nicely with our broad search term (and the services our hypothetical company likely provides). We’ll select these to keep researching.

Keyword Planner
Add ideas to your plan

Your product or service
engineering services

Get ideas Modify search

Targeting ?

All locations

All languages

Google

Negative keywords

Date range ?

Show avg. monthly searches for: Last 12 months

Customize your search ?

Keyword filters

Keyword options

Show broadly related ideas

Hide keywords in my account

Hide keywords in my plan

Keywords to include

Ad group: Engineering Services Design

2 of 52 ad group ideas

Download Add all (11)

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches ?	Competitive ?	Suggested... ?	Ad Impr. s... ?	Add to plan
engineering design services	390	Medium	\$4.18	—	»
design engineering services	170	Medium	\$5.35	—	»
mechanical engineering design services	40	Medium	\$4.78	—	»
engineering design services companies	50	Medium	—	—	»
design and engineering services	40	Medium	—	—	»
engineering design service	30	Low	—	—	»
engineering services design	20	Medium	\$5.98	—	»
engineering and design services	40	Medium	\$2.61	—	»

Step 5. Evaluate Keyword(s) in the Moz Keyword Difficulty Tool

We're off to a good start; now let's deepen our research. As a final step, we'll compare these two metrics from Moz:

1. **Domain Authority**, a measurement that predicts how well a given domain is likely to rank in Google search results. (You can find it by logging into Moz, navigating to Open Site Explorer, and typing in your website's URL. You can also find it on the Moz SEO Toolbar.)
2. **Keyword Difficulty**, which analyzes several factors to determine how stiff the competition is for a given keyword phrase.

Both metrics use a 1-100 scale that makes analysis easy (Keyword Difficulty appears as a percentage). The relationship between these metrics is important. If your Domain Authority isn't strong enough a particular keyword may be out of reach (at least until you improve your domain authority). This final step will identify keywords that are easy to rank for and have the potential to rank on the first page of Google's search results.

MOZ Products Pricing Blog About

Open Site Explorer

URL: [Search](#)

[Hide Metrics](#)

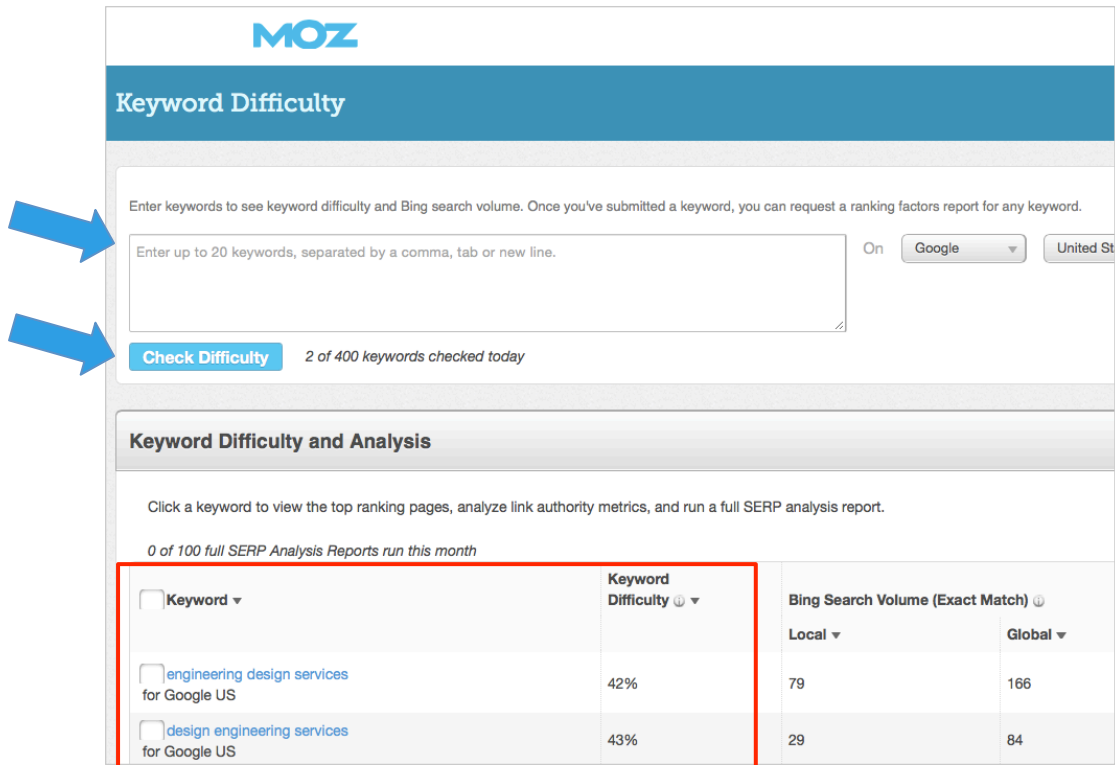
Authority		Page Link Metrics		Page Social Metrics
DOMAIN AUTHORITY	PAGE AUTHORITY	JUST-DISCOVERED	ESTABLISHED LINKS	
56 /100	63 /100	111 60 Days	302 Root Domains	Social metrics are only available to Moz Pro subscribers. Learn More
SPAM SCORE: 0 /17		4,613 Total Links		

Inbound Links
Gauge a site's influence. See inbound links to the page, subdomain, or root domain you've entered and analyze the linking pages.

Target: Link Source: Link Type:

Where to find your Domain Authority in Moz's Open Site Explorer

Log in to Moz and navigate to the Keyword Difficulty Tool. Type or paste in the keywords you selected in Step 4 and click **Check Difficulty**.



MOZ

Keyword Difficulty

Enter keywords to see keyword difficulty and Bing search volume. Once you've submitted a keyword, you can request a ranking factors report for any keyword.

Enter up to 20 keywords, separated by a comma, tab or new line.

On **Google** **United States**

Check Difficulty 2 of 400 keywords checked today

Keyword Difficulty and Analysis

Click a keyword to view the top ranking pages, analyze link authority metrics, and run a full SERP analysis report.

0 of 100 full SERP Analysis Reports run this month

Keyword	Keyword Difficulty	Bing Search Volume (Exact Match)	
		Local	Global
engineering design services for Google US	42%	79	166
design engineering services for Google US	43%	29	84

You can use your Domain Authority to determine which Keyword Difficulty ranges to target. While this is not an exact science, here are some general guidelines:

- Domain Authorities between 0-30 should not target keywords above a 45% difficulty rating.
- Domain Authorities between 30-50 should not target keywords above a 55% difficulty rating.
- Domain Authorities between 50-75 should not target keywords above a 60% difficulty rating.
- Domain Authorities 75+ should still avoid keywords with 65%+ difficulty ratings.

This is your final step in evaluating the best keywords to select. If your selected keywords are too difficult, go back to the Google AdWords Keyword Planner and identify alternate keywords to test.

Good luck keyword hunting!