
Needs Analysis

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Section 1: Overview of Project.....	3
Section 2: Learner Profile.....	4
Section 3: Needs Analysis.....	5-8
Section 4: Learning Outcomes.....	9-10
Index.....	11
Appendix.....	12-13

Executive Summary

This report serves as a needs assessment for a technical writing staffing agency. The agency is unsure if it needs to provide training for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) keywords to potential content management applicants. The structure of this report is as follows:

- An overview of the agency's needs, goals, and target audience
- An overview of the learner's profile
- An overview of methodologies, data analysis, and results
- An overview of learning outcomes

Section I: Introduction

After an overview of job applications for content managers, social media content developers, content strategist, and copywriters, the technical writing staffing agency has determined that applicants need to have some understanding of Search Engine Optimization. The positions that they fill are often temporary to permanent. The recruiter hopes to place better qualified applicants and increase the retention rate by offering training. Since SEO is a broad subject, the agency surveyed current clients to learn what they deemed most important for content management applicants to understand. Through surveys, research of job descriptions, and multiple interviews with SEO experts, the functionality of SEO keywords has consistently appeared as a critical topic.

Based on the research, several questions pertaining to the SEO keyword training have emerged. They are:

- What type of companies require SEO keyword qualifications? Is there a correlation between the industry type and keyword knowledge?
- Which organizational level requires the most knowledge of SEO keywords? Do entry level or managerial positions require more knowledge of SEO keywords?
- Do content developers write more blogs or website content with SEO keywords?

These questions are addressed later in the discussion and learning outcomes portion of the report. They are intended to further narrow down the types of job applicants who need to attend the training.

Target Audience

The SEO keyword training is for applicants interested in applying to a job in the content management field.

Project Goal

The staffing agency wants to place more content management applicants within various industries. They hope the SEO keyword training will increase:

- Initial placement in new positions
- Retention rate at new jobs
- Repeat placements for new position if applicant is on temporary assignment
- Potential employers' and applicants' satisfaction

Business Goal

Content management applicants must be knowledgeable about SEO keywords after completing training.

Section 2: Learner Profile

The learner profile describes job applicants interested in learning more about SEO keywords. They hope the training will increase their marketability when it comes to job placement by the staffing agency. Chart 1 describes the type of learner who will participate in the training and is based off of interview information and surveys.

Characteristics	Requirements
Age	25-60 The age is defined in a large range in order to include entry level and managerial applicants.
Prior Knowledge	Based on results from the survey, most content managers have some previous knowledge of SEO. This is a good indication that learners most likely understand the basics of how SEO works for a website.
Strengths	Because the staffer is trying to recruit applicants who have some sort of writing background, it makes it easier for the learner to understand how keywords are incorporated into content development and strategy.
Attitudes	Attitudes are a mix. Most surveyors are satisfied with what is currently available as far as training, but some would like training materials that address specific questions such as the research questions mentioned in the introduction. What are the various industry trends for content writing and keywords?
Wants	Content developers want keyword training for specific industries. How do they go about researching it?
Needs	Because of how broad the content management industry is surveyors were curious about specific trends such as which industry level (entry-management) requires the most knowledge of SEO keywords, and whether content developers write more blogs or website content with SEO keywords?

Section 3: Needs Analysis

Methods

The methods section is an overview of the activities used to complete and gather data for the report. The data includes interview content, survey results, and research in top SEO forums. It will also include information about the research questions.

Interviews

To understand the basic scope of the project, I started by interviewing two SEO experts. Within the interviews, we determined SEO keywords are a concept all content developers need to know. This topic is particularly relevant for content developers because they are the ones coordinating, writing, and editing content for various mediums.

Survey

In order to narrow down the idea of SEO keyword knowledge and meet the training needs of the staffing agency, my research included a brief survey of current content developers in a variety of industries.

First, I built and organized the survey in Qualtrics and Survey Monkey. Questions included information about how often content developers use SEO keywords, when they used them, and for what types of content. The survey also included basic demographic questions about education, industry type, job title, and organizational level. It was posted on Warrior Forum, and emailed directly to SEO firms. Overall, the surveys received ten total responses.

Job Description Analysis

Because of the low survey response rate, I conducted a word frequency count on twenty different job descriptions from Indeed.com. Job titles such as content managers, social media specialist or strategist, content strategist, and copywriters are included in the data. I also kept track of industry type, organizational level, and content type. I was looking for how often “SEO keywords” occurred within the summary. I chose to include this research to compare results from the job description analysis and survey answers. After the survey and job description analysis, I defined three main research questions:

- What type of companies require SEO keyword qualifications? Is there a correlation between the industry type and keyword knowledge?
- Which organizational level requires the most knowledge of SEO keywords? Do entry level or managerial positions require more knowledge of SEO keywords?
- Do content developers write more blogs or website content with SEO keywords?

Data Analysis

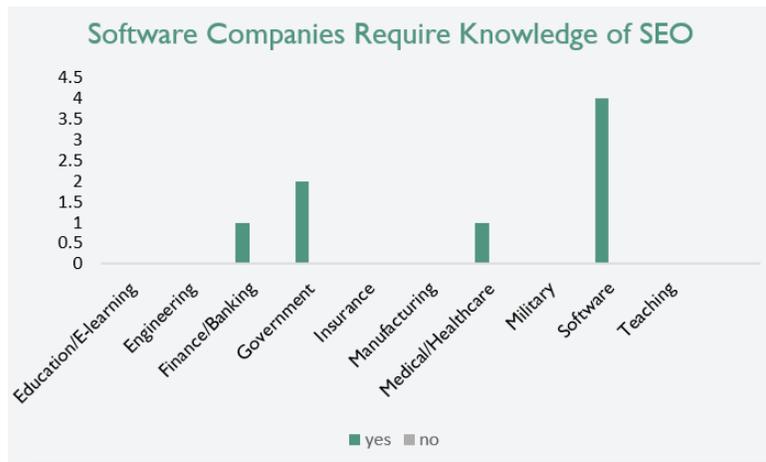
I used various methods to analyze the data including Microsoft Excel, and the crosstabs option in Qualtrics. I created a list of items to compare based on survey and job description results. For instance, when comparing industry type to SEO keyword knowledge, I selected the question about industry type to appear in the rows and selected the question about SEO keyword knowledge to appear in the columns. Then I generated a table and compared the two variables.

Section 3: Needs Analysis

Results and Recommendations

The results are organized by research question. They analyze specific trends and certain variable relationships. Each question includes a chart, a summary, and a discussion based on the data.

1. *What type of companies require SEO keyword qualifications? Is there a correlation between the industry type and keyword knowledge?*



Graph 1

Summary

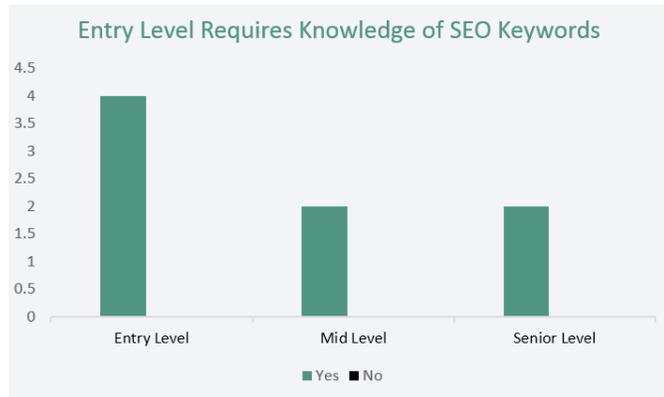
Graph 1 suggests there is some relationship between SEO keyword knowledge and industry type. Because many tech and software companies market to readers online, it makes sense their content writers should have knowledge of SEO keywords.

Discussion

When creating the training, the agency should emphasize SEO keyword research for prominent industries such as software and technology. Another aspect to consider is whether or not the applicant has some interest or experience in the technology industry. If so, the agency can emphasize the importance of attending the training to the applicant.

Section 3: Needs Analysis

2. Which organizational level requires the most knowledge of SEO keywords? Do entry level or managerial positions require more knowledge of SEO keywords?



Graph 2

Summary

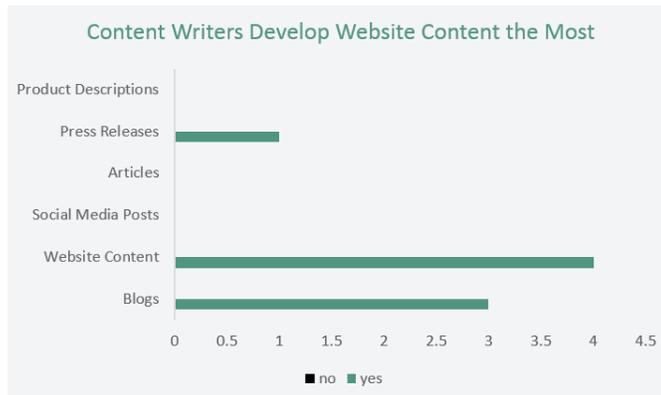
Graph 2 suggests there is some relationship between SEO keyword knowledge and industry level. The relationship indicates a new trend in internet marketing through content. Because of this new trend, many groups are requiring that applicants have some knowledge.

Discussion

The graph's information indicates another type of person to gear the training towards. The agency should consider asking entry level applicants to take the training. Because people taking the training are not familiar with SEO Keywords, there should be an introduction into what SEO is and how it pertains to content development.

Section 3: Needs Analysis

3. Do content developers write more blogs or website content with SEO keywords?



Graph 3

Summary

Graph 3 shows the distribution of the types of content most content developers create when using SEO keywords.

Discussion

The training should include how to research specific keywords for websites, blogs, and press releases. Are there particular programs or content formats the applicant should know when learning about SEO keywords?

Section 4: Learning Outcomes

Outcomes

Based on the research, there are four outcomes the agency needs to consider when training potential applicants on SEO Keywords. This section also includes recommendations for training.

Outcome 1

SEO Keyword training must include a section that focuses on specific industries in order to increase marketability. Learners need to know if there are specific terms, resources, or rules when they write content targeted towards technology or software industries.

Outcome 2

Training should have a module for entry level applicants. It should cover information on what SEO is, and how it pertains to content development.

Outcome 3

Training needs to include information on content such as websites, blogs, and press releases.

Outcome 4

Training needs to include an initial interview with agency to ensure applicant matches following criteria for training:

- Do they have an interest in a specific career?
- What types of writing are they familiar with?
- What type of experience do they have with SEO?

Section 4: Learning Outcomes

Recommendations

Training Solutions:

Before applicants join training they must have an initial interview with a recruiter to establish interest and level of knowledge. It is also recommended that applicants with prior knowledge of SEO Keywords be given a short quiz to guarantee they understand the basics. The training should be offered in an online, two-day course. Staffing members can establish when the best time is to offer the course based on hiring quota needs.

Training should have two different sections:

1. Because many jobs are interested in entry level applicants, it might be more feasible to have a section dedicated only to beginners. This part of the training focuses on Outcome 2. It ensures that applicants learn specific terms, resources, or rules. If applicants already have knowledge of SEO Keywords they can join the second training module.
2. Learning module two needs to include information on specific content types and industries. This portion of the training allows applicants with prior knowledge to enroll in a more in-depth discussion of SEO Keywords.
3. Finally, throughout the course students are required to develop content in a variety of formats such as blogs, articles, or web content. They will keep a log that needs to be turned in at the end of the course. Of course, the applicants joining the second part of the course will have shorter writing assessments. The writing will help with training objectives and give them writing samples to present to potential employers.

Index

A

Appendix 13

B

Business Goal 4

E

Executive Summary 3

J

Job Description Analysis 12

L

Learner Profile 5

Learning Outcomes 10

M

Methods 6

N

Needs Analysis 6

O

Outcome 9

Overview 4

P

Project Goal 4

S

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) 3

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) keywords 3

Survey Questions 13

T

Target Audience 4

Appendix

Job Description Analysis

Table 2 shows the job title and how often I found SEO Keyword mentioned in the description. I selected the first positions that appeared within the search. The jobs I analyzed are a sample of data from Indeed.com and include titles such as content manager, social media, and copywriter.

Links	Word Frequency for SEO Keyword
Search Term: Content Manager	
Experienced SEO Content Writer	1
Manager Content Distribution - (1700005Z)	0
Digital Content Specialist	0
Web Content Producer	0
Brand Content Strategist	1
Digital Social Media Specialist	0
Digital Content Specialist	0
Search Term: Social Media	
Digital Editor and Marketing Manager	0
Social Media Manager	0
Digital Marketing Specialist	1
Consumer Communications Assistant	0
Media Relations Specialist	0
Marketing Representative	0
Digital Media Coordinator	1
Search Term: Copywriter	
Content Copywriter	1
Copywriter	0
Editor/Copywriter	0
B2B Marketing Copywriter	0
Copywriter-Consumer Marketing	0
FREELANCE Copywriter-DFW	0
Sr. Copywriter	0

Table 2

Appendix

Survey Questions



Which of the following best describes your current position?

- Entry Level
- Mid Level
- Senior Level

Do you use SEO keywords when you write content?

- Yes
- No

What industry do you currently work in?

- Education/E-Learning
- Engineering
- Finance/Banking
- Government
- Insurance
- Manufacturing
- Medical/Healthcare
- Military
- Software
- Teaching

What is the highest level of education you have obtained, or are pursuing?

- High school diploma
- Certificate
- Associate's
- Bachelor's
- Master's
- PhD

What is your job title?

Do you use SEO keywords when writing content?

- Yes
- No

What types of content do you write the most often using SEO Keywords?

- blogs
- website content
- social media posts
- articles
- press releases
- product descriptions
- N/A