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**How to reach more target customers by search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA)**

Case: Clean Solutions Finland Kb

Thesis

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## SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

## Thesis abstract

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The goal of this thesis is to find out how the case company, Clean Solutions Finland Kb, can reach more target customers for their online store by utilizing online marketing activities, such as search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA). The case study method, combined with qualitative methods interview and observation, was applied to collect the data necessary for the study.

In the theoretical part of the thesis, related literature is reviewed and the most relevant techniques related to both types of search engine marketing (SEM) are analysed. The empirical part of the thesis combines the data collected from the literature and the case study together to build the results of the study. The results are presented in the form of recommendations for the case company. Due to the market leadership of Google in Finland, the recommendations only apply to Google.

The results of the study show a variety of activities that are needed to take in order to reach more customers through marketing by search engine Google. In SEO, the main techniques are divided into on-page and off-page techniques. According to the study, choosing the right keywords play the main role in SEO. SEA activities require using Google's own tool, Google AdWords, and the results chapter explains how this tool can be utilized in reaching more customers through search engine Google.

Keywords: SEO, SEA, SEM, online marketing, Clean Solutions Finland Kb

## SEINÄJOEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

### Opinnäytetyön tiivistelmä

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Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tutkia, kuinka kohdeyritys Clean Solutions Finland Kb voi käyttää nettimarkkinoinnin kahta osa-alueetta, hakukoneoptimointia (SEO) ja hakukonemainontaa (SEA) verkkokaupan kohdeasiakasryhmän parempaan tavoittamiseen. Tutkimusmenetelmänä on käytetty tapaustutkimusmenetelmää, jossa yhdistyvät kvalitatiiviset menetelmät haastattelu sekä havainnointi.

Opinnäytetyön teoriaosuudessa käydään läpi aiheeseen liittyvää kirjallisuutta ja otetaan selvää hakukonemarkkinoinnin (SEM) eri tekniikoista. Empiirisessä osuudessa yhdistetään kirjallisuudesta kerätyt tiedot tapaustutkimuksessa kerättyyn aineistoon tutkimustulosten rakentamiseksi. Tulokset esitetään suositusten muodossa, jotta ne ovat paremmin kohdeyrityksen käytettävissä. Koska Google on käytetyin hakukone Suomessa, suositukset pätevät ainoastaan Googleen.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että pääasiakasryhmän tavoittaminen hakukonemarkkinoinnilla vaatii monentyyppisiä toimenpiteitä. Hakukoneoptimoinnissa päätekniikat on jaettu sivun sisäisiin ja ulkopuolisiin optimointikeinoihin. Avainsanojen määrittely nousi tutkimuksen mukaan tärkeimmäksi tekijäksi hakukoneoptimoinnissa. Hakukonemainonta puolestaan edellyttää Googlen oman työkalun, Google AdWordsin hallintaa. Tutkimuksen tulokset kappaleessa esitetään, kuinka tätä työkalua voidaan hyödyntää asiakkaiden tavoittamiseksi hakukone Googlen kautta.

Avainsanat: hakukoneoptimointi, hakukonemainonta, nettimarkkinointi

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## Abbreviations

<b>SEM</b>	Search engine marketing
<b>SEO</b>	Search engine optimization
<b>SEA</b>	Search engine advertising
<b>URL</b>	Uniform resource locator
<b>HTML</b>	Hypertext markup language
<b>KPI</b>	Key performance indicator
<b>SERP</b>	Search engine results page
<b>CPC</b>	Cost per click
<b>CTR</b>	Click-through-rate
<b>CMS</b>	Control management system

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

In the year 2015, we live in a world the power of internet cannot be underestimated. We have to realize the fact it is part of everything, especially in the world of business. For business it can be soon hard to survive without at least some kind of internet strategy. This is the situation business world must adapt to, however it's not necessarily a bad thing. The internet is actually very good thing for all kinds of businesses; it is full of possibilities to gain more popularity, visibility and therefore increase revenue. Internet can be used not only for introducing your business but also for different marketing activities. Marketing in internet is known as online marketing.

Online marketing has rapidly grown and developed as its own form of business which uses internet as a tool to promote different goods and services. Online marketing has gained popularity because it makes it possible to reach the right customers better than the traditional mass marketing through television and newspapers. In addition it's effective and can be done even with relative small financial investment. Consumers are increasingly using internet in their daily basis, doing research and price comparisons online before buying the actual product. Eventually the product can be purchased online rather than from physical store. Therefore it has become more important for businesses to start familiarizing themselves with the different ways of online marketing.

Typically people use internet for several reasons and that is why online marketing also has many forms. Since internet can be used for socializing, networking and staying updated for the latest news, online marketing forms like social media marketing, display marketing and mobile marketing have found their place. However, in many cases internet is used for finding information. This information searching

happens most likely by using search engines like Google. The situation is now that people simply tend to google the things they want to know instead of digging out the phone catalogue or the yellow pages.

The use of search engines enables a potential and cost-effective way of online marketing: search engine marketing (SEM). SEM has come inseparable part of online marketing; nevertheless not that many businesses in Finland have taken advantage of it. Surprisingly the amount of SEM in Finland is still below 10% amongst all businesses even if Finnish people are one of the most active Google users in the world (Larvanko 2012, 85). Therefore there lies a huge potential in this type of online marketing and for this reason it is important for businesses to raise awareness of this topic and start to market their products or services through search engines. SEM can be divided into two separate types: search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA). This thesis will concentrate on these ways of SEM so as to find out in practice how to use the potential of them as an advantage in marketing.

## **1.2 Thesis objectives**

The first objective of this thesis is to study the two types of SEM: search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA) in order to be able to give recommendations for the case company Clean Solutions Finland Kb for starting this type of online marketing activity. Clean Solutions Finland Kb manufactures eco-friendly and certified detergents and cleaning products and they sell their products both in retail and in online store. The second objective of the thesis is to identify the target customers of the online store and with this information to give recommendations in SEO and SEA to reach exactly this target customer group to visit the online store and make purchases. When these objectives are met, they give together answer to the research question of how to reach more target customers to the online store by SEO and SEA.

### 1.3 Structure of the thesis

As mentioned in the research objectives, this thesis studies the two types of SEM: search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine advertising (SEA) in order to give recommendations for the case company to reach more target customers for their online store. As Google is the number one search engine and holds the biggest market share, it is the only search engine whose logic will be studied in this thesis. After the introduction, the second chapter opens the theoretical part of the thesis. The second chapter will give the reader background information about online marketing, narrowing down to search engine marketing and the difference between SEO and SEA. Lastly the logic of search engine Google will be explained in detail.

The third chapter concentrates to study the main techniques of SEO giving the reader information of how SEO is conducted in practice. The techniques used for SEO are separated into two categories, on-page and off-page optimization techniques. These techniques are analysed using relevant literature and guides of both Google itself and SEO experts. After the basics in SEO, in the fourth chapter the reader can get acquainted with the other form of search engine marketing, SEA. Basically this chapter explains how to begin advertising in Google and how to use the main SEA tool Google AdWords. In addition, strategic information about the pricing of the ads and the final ad location will be discussed. This is the last chapter of the theoretical part of the thesis.

Before the empirical part, the methodology of the study is explained in the chapter five. This research strategy chapter includes the introduction of case study as research method and the reasons why this kind of method was chosen to conduct this study along with two qualitative methods; interview and observation. Moreover, the compatibility of the research methods and the research question is explained. Basically, the whole research process and how the research question will be answered are described in this chapter. Finally the research process is explained in detail for the use of other researchers that could be interested in doing similar research.

Chapter six is the empirical part of the thesis. In the empirical part the most relevant findings from the case study and literature will be systemically analysed and collected in a form of SEM recommendations for the case company's use. The recommendations concentrate to explain how the case company can start basic SEO operations by giving keyword suggestions and information how to optimize the online store both on-page and off-page. Similarly recommendations for conducting SEA activities are given in this chapter; suggestion as the first SEA campaign from the goals to implementation is given. Further, there will be instructions of how the case company can follow the results of both SEM activities and track the performance of the campaigns.

The conclusion chapter finishes the thesis by evaluating the research process. First of all, the importance of conducting such study as this is stated. Next, the results of the study are revised and discussed along with the issues related to limitations and strengths like the reliability of the research. In the end of the conclusion, short analysis of the future of SEM is provided.

## **2 ONLINE MARKETING**

The history of online marketing is strongly rooted with the development of internet. In the beginning of 1990s the use of internet started slightly to grow despite the small-scale content and the fact that computers were still quite under developed devices. The amount of internet users and business websites has grown slowly ever since. (Juslen 2011, 16.) In the 1990s, the development of internet was at stage Web 1.0 which meant that internet was one-way directed portal, mostly used only for presenting data. Nowadays internet has advanced in the form of 2.0, which makes it interactive and multidimensional platform. This new development has enabled browsing web pages easier and faster. In addition, the information seeking does not require much effort anymore. It also became easier for the users to connect with each other and as a result, popular social media platforms were soon created. All the changes of internet during the last 20 years have enabled online marketing in its present form. (Sheehan 2010, 9-10.)

There are multiple types of online marketing and businesses may use a variety of them or just concentrate on the maintenance of company website or online store. Mostly known types of online marketing are display marketing (placing paid and visible ads on other websites), e-mail marketing, social media marketing, blogging and search engine marketing. (Newlands 2011, 3.) This thesis will focus on the last-mentioned type, search engine marketing (SEM).

## **2.1 Search engine marketing**

The idea of search engine marketing is to gain visibility in the search engine results page. SEM is based on the search user makes on search engine start page from a certain topic, e.g. black boots. The search can be a straight signal of willingness to purchase the searched item. Therefore the results that appear on the top of the search results page are more likely to stay in memory of the customer even if just searching for information of certain goods or services. For this reason, when the time comes to purchase the product, the provider that appeared first in the search results page has the most potential to be the chosen one. The advantage of SEM is that the marketing is aimed at only the potential customers who already show some interest towards the product. This is completely the opposite of mass marketing in television for instance, where the purpose is to show the marketing message for all the people watching television hoping there is someone amongst the large mass who is interested. (Larvanko 2012, 85-86.)

As mentioned in the introduction, Google is the most widely used search engine in the world and has the biggest market share. In Finland the market share of Google is even larger than globally, as can be seen from Table 1 (Stats counter Global stats 2015). For this reason this thesis concentrates on SEM in Google and no other search engines.

Table 1. Largest search engines globally and in Finland

Search engine	Global	Finland
Google	88,01%	96,09%
Yahoo	4,33%	1,02%
Bing	4,61%	2,31%

Basically there are two types of SEM: search engine optimization and search engine advertising. The difference lies in the type of search engine's results which is explained more detail in the next chapter.

## 2.2 Difference between paid ads and organic results

When one makes a search using Google, two types of search results will usually occur. Firstly, there appears the so called organic result, ten search results per page. These are the results the search engine generates using several ways of analysing the relevance of web pages (Google's logic is described in the next chapter). These results are called organic results because it is not possible to pay for Google in order to show in these results. The second results that can appear on the search page are the paid results. These pages are showed only because someone has paid for the visibility in search results for Google. There is a little yellow sign with text "ad" indicating that it is not a natural result of the search. Sometimes it can be that these paid ads do not show at all. However, the amount of paid results is constantly growing, especially when the competition amongst certain businesses is hard. Figure 1 is a screenshot of Google results page when searching with term "clothing" and is below to clarify the difference between organic and paid results (Google search results [Ref. 10.2.2015]).

Google vaatteet

Verkkojaku Kuvajaku Kartat Videot Lisää - Hakutyökalut **Paid ads**

Noin 4 180 000 tulosta (0,37 sekuntia)

**Paid ads**

**Muotia oikeassa koossa - ateliergs.fi**  
[www.ateliergs.fi](http://www.ateliergs.fi) -  
 Aikulisten naisten vaatteet suoraan verkkokaupasta. Tutustu mallistoon!

**Vaatteet Zalandoilta - Laatumerkit nyt Zalandoilta - Zalando.fi**  
[www.zalando.fi/Vaatteet](http://www.zalando.fi/Vaatteet) -  
 Ilmainen toimitus: Zalando.  
 30 päivän palautus oikeus. - ALE nyt Zalandoilla!  
 Miesten takit - Lasten vaatteet - Miesten paidat - Naisten vaatteet

**Miehille vaatteita netistä - disturb.fi**  
[www.disturb.fi](http://www.disturb.fi) -  
 Teehkaa heti talven upeat uutuudet. Ilmainen 30vrk palautus oikeus  
 Suomalainen verkkokauppa - Nopeat toimitukset  
 Naisten housut - Miesten paidat - Naisten kengät - Miesten farkut

**Vaatteet - Nelly.com**  
[nelly.com/fi/vaatteita-naisille/vaatteet/](http://nelly.com/fi/vaatteita-naisille/vaatteet/) -  
 Shoppaalle uusia vaatteita päivittäin nelly.comista edullisin hinnoin ja nopealla toimituksella.  
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**House of Brandon**  
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 Vaatteita hintaan €4.0  
 Osta tämä mahtava dilli paikassa Tä

**Alen loppurysäys -60%**  
[www.trendykids.fi](http://www.trendykids.fi) -  
 Tämisesonki nyt ALE-hintaan  
 Ale -40% -50% -60% - Tilaa heti!

**Vaatteiden 1/2-hintapäivä**

Figure 1. Screenshot from Google results page

The first type of SEM, search engine optimization (SEO) is based on optimization of the organic search results so as to get the page appear as high as possible in the results. There are always 10 organic results on one search page. This marketing activity is free of charge, since it is impossible to pay for Google to rank high in organic results. Nevertheless, to rank high in the natural results requires multiple operations which are described closer in chapter 3. Consequently, the second type of SEM, search engine advertising (SEA) is based only on the paid results. Paid results are amongst the natural results and they can locate both at the top of the results and on the right side of the page. In this case, the result is showed on the results page when someone has paid Google for showing it. So the paid results are another way to get visibility and more visitors for a web site. (Juslen 2011, 143.) Chapter 4 will focus on SEA.

SEO expert David Viney (2008, 8) claims that 65% of the people never click the paid results and therefore being at the top of the natural results has to be the number one goal of a business in order to survive. Also one more recent study

from year 2011 reports the popularity of natural results being 70% compared to the paid results (Kagan 2011). On the other hand, according to SEM specialist Mark Harnett (2010, 93) third of the Google users do not understand the difference between the natural search result and paid advertisement. From these facts it can be concluded that both SEM types have their audience, pros and cons as well as own place in the online marketing world. However, to be able to understand SEO and SEA, it is necessary to be familiar of how search engine Google works.

### **2.3 Google's logic**

In this chapter the logic of Google is explained. First of all, when doing a search with Google, the search is not made from the whole web but from Google's own database which contains more than 60 trillion web pages. This ensures the fast search results, since it would not be possible to find as fast results when searching the whole web. (How search works, [Ref. 11.2.2015], Sherman & Price 2001, 26.) Secondly, the Google database does not include whole web pages but full text indexes of each page. This index could be described as the back cover of a book; it contains all the relevant information of the content. This index is created in order to find easily and fast the relevant data on each web page. Thirdly, indexes are created by Google's web crawlers, which go through the web crawling through pages and building indexes and storing them into Google's database. (Crawling and indexing, [Ref. 12.2.2015].)

Google search is done by writing a certain term to the search field, in search engine language this term is called keyword. Sherman and Price (2001, 6) define keyword as follows: "A word or phrase entered in a query form that a search system attempts to match in text documents in its database". Writing the keyword to the search field launches the search process.

The search process begins by determining the most relevant pages that match with the written keyword. For this purpose Google has built a system called Google Algorithm. This Algorithm uses more than 200 different signals to deter-

mine the most relevant web pages amongst all the indexes in the database. These signals are for example how many times the keyword is mentioned on the site content, in the titles or in the URL. Other signals that report the relevance of the site are how many times the synonyms of the keyword appears on the site, the quality of the content and the amount of websites linking to the page. Google changes and develops the Algorithm signals constantly and therefore it is impossible to know all of them. (Split second search, [Ref. 12.2.2015].)

Moreover, Google uses PageRank to determine the relevancy of a page. PageRank formula evaluates the quality and amount of outside links a certain web page has. For example when another web page has a link to your site, your site is likely to have a higher PageRank. The more important the web page that has a link to your site is the higher is the PageRank. As a result, the amount of outside links you have to your web page is comparable to the popularity of your site in Google PageRank. (Brin & Page, [Ref. 12.2.2015].)

In addition to the explanation of how Google works, example 1 will clarify the actions once more that happen when searching from Google.

### **Example 1.** Stages in Google search

1. Writing the keyword “cleaning product” to the search field.
2. Google Algorithm activates and uses over 200 different signals to evaluate and therefore to find relevant sites that include the keyword “cleaning product” from Google’s large index database.
3. Simultaneously Google PageRank searches for relevant search answers by monitoring the amount and quality of outside links that point to web pages containing the keyword “cleaning product”.
4. All the factors that affect to the relevancy are tied together to produce the final search result.
5. The search results appear to the search page including the organic results and possibly paid ads that match with the keyword “cleaning product.”

(How search works, [Ref. 11.2.2015].)

Every second 40 000 searches are done all around the world using Google (Google search statistics, [Ref.11.2.2015]). For this reason, SEO and SEA have considerable potential in the online marketing world. In the following chapters both of these marketing strategies are explained more in detail based on the findings from related literature.

### **3 SEO**

The purpose of search engine optimization (SEO) is to gain visibility for a web site in the organic, non-paid search engines results. The visibility on the search engine result page (SERP) organic results may increase the amount of visitors for a web-site and consequently turn these visitors into potential customers. As mentioned before, most of the users who know the difference between organic and paid results tend to click on the organic results rather than the paid ones. Thus being aware of the strategies and techniques of SEO gives a marketer competitive advantage in online marketing. Even if this type of SEM has great potential and it is completely free, not many companies invest to it due to the amount of work and patient it requires. In Finland only 10% of the company's SEM budget is usually used for SEO, rest 90% being invested into SEA (Larvanko 2012, 89).

The reason why it is worthwhile to optimize for search engine results is that the closer the top 10 of the SERP the business web page appears the better chances there are to get multiple new customers from the target customer group. David Viney (2008, 14) visualizes the advantages of being at the top of Google SERP in his book in a very understandable way: "Imagine the web is one giant city, with stores scattered through it. Having your site at the top 10 is like having your store right on Main Street or near the entrance of the largest shopping mall in human history. " According to a study made in 2012, 75 % of the Google users never make it to the end of the first SERP (Siu 2012). Figure 1 will show how the clicks are spread amongst the positions on the first SERP (MOZ Guide 2012, 7).

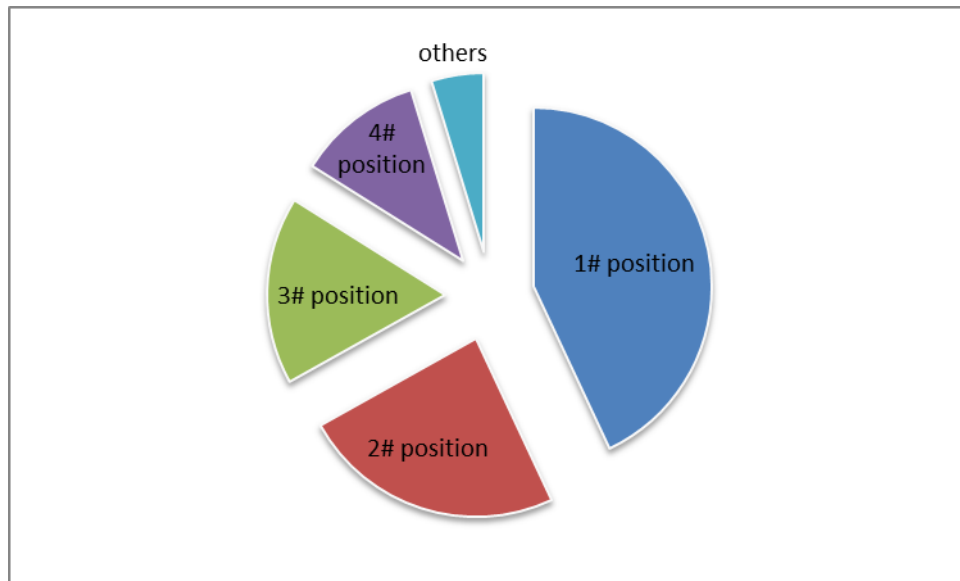


Figure 2. Click-through-rate for top rankings

As can be seen from the Figure 2, basically only the top results gain significant visibility and will take advantage of the high ranking in the organic search results.

The objective of this chapter is to introduce the main techniques and strategies of SEO by studying opinions of SEO experts like Evan Bailyn and David Viney as well as guides provided by Google and MOZ. In addition, articles of new developments in the field of SEM are considered. First of all, the SEO techniques can be divided into two different categories: on-page optimization and off-page optimization. The first two chapters explain the different techniques under both categories. Finally, the most important tools and strategies for monitoring the results of SEO campaign are introduced. As a reminder, the SEO techniques explained here apply only to SEO in Google.

### 3.1 On-page optimization

On-page optimization techniques deal with the web site structure, in other words how should the website be like in order to receive high rankings in the organic search results. The only way to rank high is to make it easy for Google to crawl and index the web page. There are certain website structure related issues that

are essential to Google and these issues are discussed in this chapter. It is ideal to build the site already from the beginning to be search engine friendly using these techniques, but it is not compulsory. The case company Clean Solutions Finland already has a website and therefore the activities that can be done after the creation of the website are considered more. The most important on-page optimization technique is related to the keywords and for this reason it will also be the largest part in on-page optimization chapter. In addition, this chapter explains how the URL and site structure can be more search engine friendly.

### 3.1.1 Keyword selection

The first SEO on-page strategy begins by determining the best keywords for the business site. As stated before, keywords are the words user types into the search engine in the beginning of the search, for example “cleaning products”. These words are the base of Google and therefore important. When Google is crawling and indexing web pages it categorizes the pages according to similar keywords that appear on the sites. Categorizing enables the rapid search. Because in SEO the goal is to get the business site to rank high in the SERP, it is vital to know the keywords used when users are looking for the site in order to place these words into the site content and structure. (MOZ Guide 2012, 16.)

Selecting keywords is related to the customers of the business. Evan Bailyn (2011, 22) says the main point in keyword selection is to know what customers write to Google when they are looking for the business and with what type of keywords the site owner would like the website to show in Google results. For example, if having a company offering catering services in Helsinki, possible keywords by which the business would be found could be *catering services Helsinki* or *party catering Helsinki*. These combinations of keywords are called keyword phrases. If user will type these keyword phrases to Google, it is likely they are looking for exactly the services this catering company provides and it would be ideal to rank high on the SERP. There are multiple methods for finding out the right keywords.

Bailyn (2011, 23-27) suggests using Google AdWords tool as one method for keyword selection. Google AdWords is a free tool which is mainly used when designing paid ads for Google (SEA) but it can also be used as a tool for SEO when trying to find out the relevant keywords. AdWords shows how many users are searching for a certain keyword and present a list with terms that relate to the chosen keywords and their popularity. There is also a chance to create a small budget paid ad in AdWords to see if it gets clicks from users and therefore see if users would choose your site with certain keywords. However, this might give misleading information about the popularity of the keyword because as stated before, most of the users do not click on the paid ads even if it would match with the keyword they have typed. Furthermore, Bailyn (2011, 24-25) proposes to check the ranking of the competitors: when seeing by which keywords they have managed to rank high in search results, it is easier to get an idea for the own keywords. Also by using web spying tools like Alexa, it is possible to see directly by which keyword phrases the competitors rank for (Bailyn 2011, 24-25).

According to Viney (2008, 28) it is also useful in the keyword selection to see by which keywords the own page already ranks high in the results. By knowing the already well ranking keywords for the business, it is easy to optimize on these besides the new keyword phrases. Usually the already well ranking keywords are related to the business name. Optimizing on these keywords is not that necessary since usually the users typing the business name as keyword to Google already know the website and the company. The goal in SEO is nevertheless gaining new visitors that are not familiar with the business before seeing the search result. (Viney 2008, 28.)

Viney (2008, 28-56) has also introduced a three-step approach called D-A-D for the keyword selection. The abbreviation stands for discovery, attractiveness and deployment. According to this tool the keywords and phrases are first discovered by analyzing customers (main customer group, location) and competitors. Next step is to filter the best keywords amongst the discovered ones by using two different attractiveness factors as KEI (keyword effectiveness index) and KOI (keyword opportunity index). Finally in the deployment step the chosen keywords are

evaluated for the last time by relevance and if necessary, the keyword phrases are re-arranged so that they form a concise and understandable entity for Google to understand. (Viney 2008, 28-56.)

Unlike other SEO experts, Newlands (2011, 149) suggests to implement only five good keyword phrases in the beginning of keyword selection. These five chosen keywords should be aimed to a relatively small customer group. After focusing first on small group and small sample of keywords it is easier to gradually increase the amount of keywords and apply the gained knowledge when expanding the SEO campaign. Another idea was to create different customer profiles and do research of their search habits and base the keyword selection on these findings about different customer profiles (Khan & Rehman, 2013.) Google's own SEO guide emphasizes more the user experience in keyword selection, which is natural because of course they want to provide the best results for their customers and do not want website owners to optimize their websites for inefficient keyword phrases. For this reason they recommend to forecast differences in customer search behavior and use this knowledge in website content and keyword creation (Google SEO Starter Guide, [Ref. 2.3.2015].)

To conclude, there are multiple ways to select keywords. Basically the main thing is to know the customers and their keyword phrases when they are looking for certain business site from Google. Different business types have different customer groups and therefore different keywords, important is to find out what works best and by what kind of keywords the business wants to be found. There are several tools available for keyword selection as Google AdWords tool, but it depends also on the own creativity and using several tools to determine the best selection of keywords is not necessity. There are two types of keywords and the difference is explained next.

### 3.1.2 Short and long tail keywords

Keywords can be categorized into two different groups: short tail and long tail keywords. Short tail keywords are search terms with usually only one word like *jeans*. Short tail keywords are very popular, since there are many searches made with these keywords every day. Therefore the competition is also very high with short tail keywords because many companies offering jeans would like to rank as high as possible with this term on SERP in order to be the one that customer decides to click. Mainly it is very hard to remain at the top of the results with certain popular keyword and mostly these searches never turn into sales. When searching with keyword *jeans* users are usually looking for information about jeans without the aim to actually purchase them. For this reason it is also not wise to select only short tail keywords for on-page optimization. (MOZ Guide 2012, 24.)

Long tail keywords include multiple search terms and are more specific than short tail keywords. An example of a long tail keyword could be *Levis slim blue jeans* or *pink Puma hoodie size 36*. Long tail keywords are not as popular as short tail keywords and fewer searches happen every month by using these types of search terms. However, it is easier to rank high on SERP with long tail keywords because the competition is not as hard. (Newlands 2011, 149.) Furthermore, it is more likely that the user is aiming to buy a certain product when typing in long tail keyword; it can be a straight signal of willingness to purchase the product (MOZ Guide 2012, 24). The search demand curve illustrates the amount of long tail searches in the whole search traffic (MOZ Guide 2012, 24).

## The Search Demand Curve

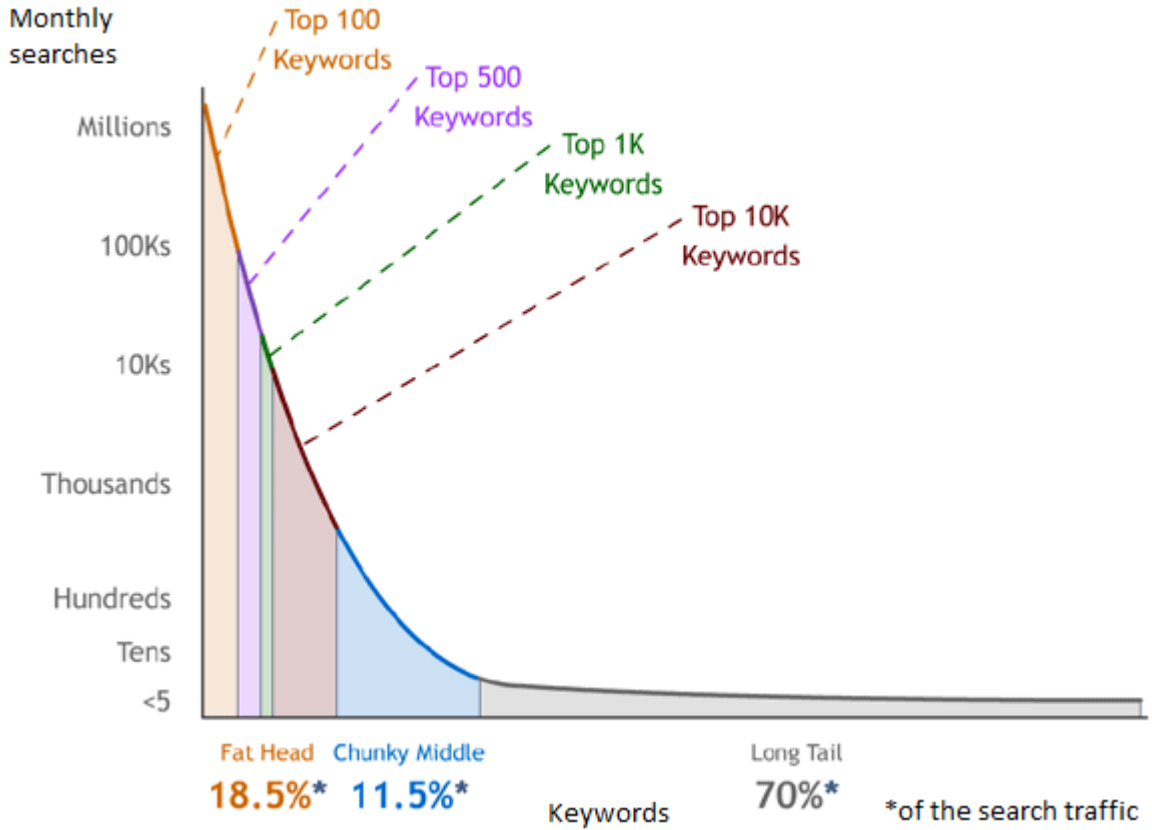


Figure 3. The search demand curve

As can be noticed from the search demand curve, 70% of the search traffic goes for the long tail keywords. The 100 most popular keywords have greater volume every month but the amount of the popular keyword searches is relatively small compared to the whole search traffic. Most of the users use longer, more specific keywords when doing a Google search. Naturally the competition is very high amongst the most popular keywords and lower amongst the long tail ones. Because of the lack of competition it is easier to rank well with long tail keywords and the likeliness to convert the search into a purchase is higher. Basically, there is a lot of potential in long tail keywords. (MOZ Guide 2012, 24.) In summary, it is recommended to select both types of keywords in order to get the best results (Viney 2008, 38).

### **3.1.3 URL structure**

After selecting and analyzing the best keywords that match with the business, the second phase in on-page optimization is to design the site structure according to these keywords. It is claimed that the URL structure is one of the most important factors in gaining visibility in Google. URL is the address of documents in the web that contains prefix `www.` and a domain name which forms the last part of the URL, e.g. `www.pizzahouse.com` where `pizzahouse.com` is the domain name of the URL. Search engines show the URL of the site directly in the search results. (MOZ Guide 2012, 19). Bailyn (2011, 36-37) introduces the URL structure as one of the five ingredients of Google optimization. The idea is to include the main keyword in URL and ideally the whole URL should be the keyword. For example if having again catering company in Helsinki and the main keyword catering Helsinki, the ideal URL could be `www.cateringhelsinki.com`. However, when the URL includes already the company name (catering company `www.topservice.com` for instance), it is possible to have separate web pages that have the keywords in it, e.g. `www.topservice.com/caterighelsinki`.

Googles own guide (Google SEO Starter Guide, [Ref.3.3.2015]) advises to have simple URL structure that is relevant and matches with the site content while in this case it is understandable for both search engines and users. Google guide does not reveal the real value of URL in SEO but several SEO experts claim it is one of the most important things that affect the ranking on SERP. MOZ Guide (2012, 19) recommends to have URL which already gives information about the web site content and is not too long. Moreover, in this guide the keyword usage in URL is stated necessary if the page is aimed for certain keyword although it is not advisable to overuse them.

### **3.1.4 Site structure and content**

The last part of on-page optimization deals with the technical issues in the site structure and content that have an impact on the search engine visibility. Firstly,

the importance of meta page title is emphasized. Meta page title describes the website content for search engine and its users, appearing at the top of the web browser and at the search results page, see Figures 4 & 5 below (Title Tag [Ref. 3.3.2015]).

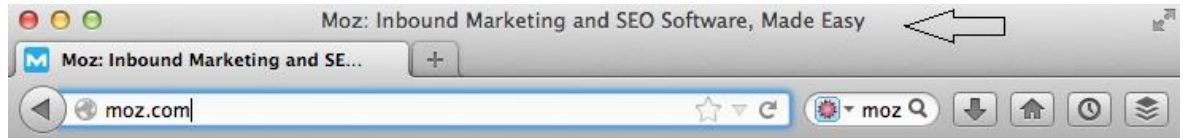


Figure 4. Screenshot from meta page title in browser

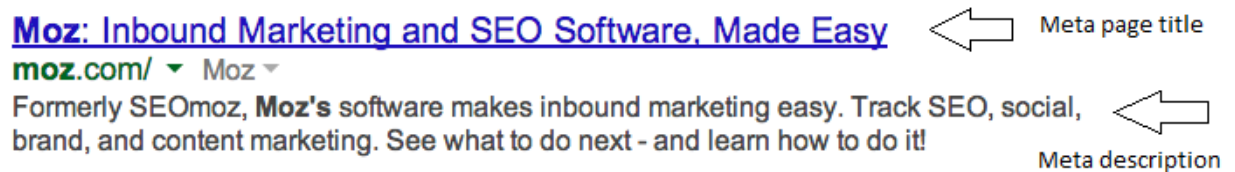


Figure 5. Screenshot from meta page title in search result page

It is argued that Google values the meta page title a lot. Meta page title could be compared to a newspaper headline: it should include all the necessary information about the site by using maximum of 100 characters. Google displays around 60 characters of them. Meta page title gives information both for the visitor and Google about the web page content and every page of the website should have page title and not only the homepage. In addition, there should be keywords included because then Google is aware for which keywords the site should be ranked for. (Bailyn 2011, 27-30.) Keywords should be placed already in the beginning of the title since then the page will rank better and also the users tend to click it more often (MOZ Guide 2012, 17).

Secondly, the meta description of the webpage (in Figure 5) is claimed to be important for the users of Google since this informative text describes the website content and if the users type in keyword that appears in the meta description, the letters are bolded in order attract attention and make the user click this result (Google SEO starter Guide, [Ref.4.3.2015]). This piece of text does not help the

site rank higher in Google so it is not necessary to include keywords in it, yet it offers a good chance to advertise the website with a few sentences (160 characters) for the customer (MOZ Guide 2012, 18).

Thirdly, the website should be easy to navigate for Google and users; complicated or difficult site structure can make it hard for Google to crawl and index the page. In order to rank in search results, the text content is advised to be in HTML format. In addition there should be text description for each image so Google will understand also the visual content and can better determine whether the site is relevant for the search. (MOZ Guide 2012, 12.)

Finally, there are a couple of website content related issues that need to be considered in on-page optimization. First of all, it is recommended to have a content management system (CMS) that enables editing the website content and structure whenever there is a need for it. The most popular CMSs in the market are for example WordPress and Joomla. (Juslen 2011, 149-150.) The selected keywords play also a key role in the website content, since the amount of keywords in the content seems to have an effect to the ranking in Google. There are nevertheless multiple opinions about it.

Both Harnett (2010, 154) and Viney (2008, 116) suggest to merge as many keywords and their synonyms in the text content as possible and even bold these words occasionally in order to make it easier for Google to notice them. MOZ Guide (2012, 17) recommends to have main keyword at least in the title and depending on the text length, repeating the keyword and its synonyms natural way 4-6 times in the body text. Bolding is not necessary. Google SEO starter Guide ([Ref. 4.3.2015]) states that keywords should not be unnecessarily repeated in the content, more importantly the quality of the content should be good. Furthermore, the text should be aimed for the visitors of the page instead of the search engine. According to Bailyn (2011, 134-136) the density of keywords in the content used to matter before but nowadays Google does not value it anymore due to many spammers that begun to repeat the keywords too much on the site in order to receive high rankings. When it comes to this question about keyword density, the

researchers do not agree whether it has an impact on ranking. Therefore the best strategy seems to be relying on common sense and apply keywords in the text but only when it sounds natural and user-friendly.

Uniqueness and creativeness of the site content is claimed to have particularly good impact on search engine ranking. Although Google is not yet able to read text and understand its meaning, it can sense the quality of the text by observing the user behaviour on sites (part of the Google Algorithm). An example of certain user behaviour is the average time one visitor spends on the site (engagement metrics). The better quality the content is and the more there is content, the longer one visitor tends to spend on the site. Besides, Google improves constantly its Algorithm so that it can even better predict quality content sites. (MOZ Guide 2012, 27-28). Dahake & Thakre (2014, 3) suggest to update the content regularly since in this case Google crawls the page more often and updated content is a signal of freshness which have a positive effect on ranking.

Last content related on-page optimization technique deals with social media. Since websites social media activities have an impact on ranking in Google (this is discussed more detail in off-page techniques) this should be considered when creating content. Demers (2012) points out in his article the importance of share-buttons on the business site. This type of share-button makes it possible for visitors to share the website link in social media when they find it interesting. Sharing is a signal of quality content which is again valued by Google. Moreover, there should be a connect button so that the visitor can connect with the business in e.g. Facebook or Twitter.

### **3.2 Off-page optimization**

Off-page optimization techniques are related to the external factors that have an influence on the ranking in Google (Dahake & Thakre 2014, 2). These techniques deal with Google PageRank (introduced in chapter 2) which rates the website higher in search results depending on the number and quality of websites that link

to the website. Link means having something on the website that by clicking it, it will direct the visitor to another site. Search engines see the external linking as a sign of quality and trust. Off-page optimization is therefore all about links and more extremely, according to SEO expert Evan Bailyn (2011, 32) links are the most important matters in SEO. He claims that when the external linking is done right, it will count 85% of all the SEO efforts. Acquiring external links is called link building and being the most important technique in off-page optimization, it has the biggest role in this chapter. In addition to link building strategies, two other off-page factors social media and blogging will be discussed at the end.

### **3.2.1 Link building**

Link building is the most challenging part of SEO requiring time, effort, creativity and sometimes money (MOZ Guide 2012, 32). Link building means either actively asking for links from other sites or passively building attractive content on the site so that other websites would like to link to it (Viney 2008, 134). These kind of external links are also called inbound links, outside links or backlinks. As trust is one of the main things Google values and main factors for ranking the page (PageRank), the websites with most trust is commonly placed at the top of SERP (Bailyn 2011, 31). So as to gain this trust, there should be multiple inbound links acquired from relevant and trustworthy websites. For this reason, having many inbound links from low-quality websites does not help in receiving higher rank but even a one link from a quality, well-trusted website can deliver considerably higher rankings. (Viney 2008, 135). Next subchapter explains more in detail the ways to determine a reliable and trusted website. Figure 6 illustrates how inbound links from quality webpages result as higher ranking in Google's search results (Dahake & Thakre 2014, 2).

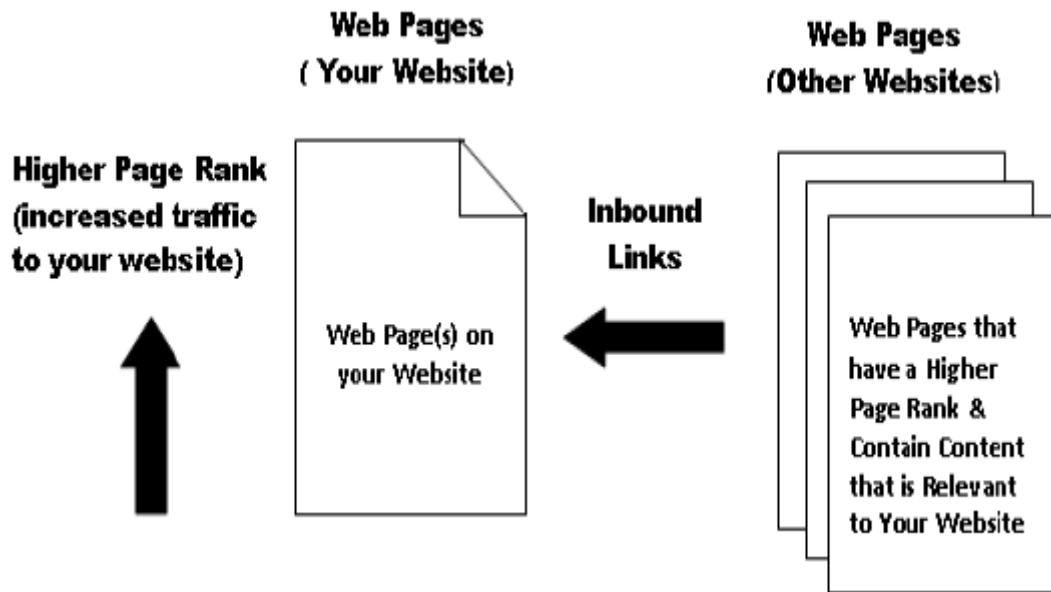


Figure 6. Influence of inbound links for the page rank

### 3.2.2 Link building strategies

There are various strategies for link building. Baily (2011, 16-17, 19) recommends to begin link building by analysing the most trustworthy websites that could be possible targets for link inquiries. The easiest way to see how reliable site is is to see its ranking in Google search with relevant keyword. Basically all the top 40-50 results for the most popular keywords in the business area are ideal websites to ask a link but especially the 10 first ones are very trustworthy. It is advised to look for sites that relate to the same business field, particularly organizations, resources and magazines in the same industry. Furthermore, sites that are not directly related to the business can be good for requesting a link too, as long as there is a good explanation how the business website would be relevant to the specific site content. (Baily 2011, 16-17.)

First of all, it is recommended to begin link building by asking friends and family members that already have a website or blog, to include a link to the business site. In addition, the other industry members, even competitors could offer inbound links when approached in a right way. The suggested way to ask for links is systematic

e-mailing to site owners. (Bailyn 2011, 43-47.) Links can be also exchanged with other sites that are preferably linked somehow to the same business (Viney 2008, 148). Another way is to ask popular bloggers to write about the business site and include the link in their blog, or it can be suggested asking whether it is okay to write a guest post. Links can be acquired also by writing comments to blogs and forums and after the comment posting a link, although this technique is considered as spam amongst some SEO specialists. Lastly, it is advisable to ask links from the business customers or partners who already are somehow linked to the business. (Bailyn 2011, 56.)

Paying for links is controversial topic amongst researchers. Bailyn (2011, 12) is strictly against purchasing links from other sites since he states that Google penalizes sites that are selling links and therefore it is a waste of money and has no effect to the ranking. Also Google SEO Starter Guide ([Ref. 5.3.2015]) advises not to purchase links since it does not rank sites higher. However, in some cases links could be bought from quality link directories that have a high PageRank (Viney 2008, 151-152).

Last linking strategy is a passive style of acquiring links and is simply related to creative and interesting website content. Absurd or surprising content, like top 10 lists can attract visitors or business partners to share the website link on another site and e.g. in their own blog or website. Interesting content is claimed to be excellent link bait. This strategy can be even more time consuming than active link building but when succeeding in creation of something unique, the effort will likely pay off as multiple links around web. (Bailyn 2011, 48-53.)

To conclude, the link building strategy is closely related to the business type and size and might be that for smaller business sites it is enough to conduct smaller-scale link building when bigger companies webpages need more active strategies (MOZ Guide 2012, 33). However, it might not harm smaller business website if the link building is done both active and passively, since the consequences are only positive in form of higher ranking and possibly higher amount of customers.

### **3.2.3 Social media**

Social media has an important role in off-page optimization and it is closely related to link building. Links are important to SEO and social media is a platform that can offer thousands of them if the strategy is right. In the first place it is suggested to create a page for the business for popular social media page Facebook and additional accounts for Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube and other similar platforms (Demers 2012). Next step is to create content on the business website and share this post in different social media by using the pages and accounts created. The key issue is not posting ads or necessary company related posts but interesting, creative content that interests people so much they want to share it. This content could be for instance a competition announcement with some special prices. When posting this competition announcement on the Facebook page, it is immediately in front of all the likers of the company and when someone posts again the competition announcement, it is immediately one link more for the business website. Popular content can be reposted unlimited times and this is the power of social media in off-page optimization. To acquire as many links through traditional link building techniques it could take years what social media can manage in a one day. (Bailyn 2011, 189-192.)

Moreover, it is estimated that these so called social signals (number of posts and other activity in social media) will gain even more importance in organic search rankings in the future and Google is constantly implementing new Algorithms that evaluate the value of a link shared in social media (Demers 2012).

### **3.2.4 Blogging**

Blogging is the last off-page SEO technique introduced in this theory chapter. Blog is a form of online journal which can have various types of content as written articles, videos or links to other interesting content (Viney 2008, 174). Writing a blog is called blogging and it has gained importance as communication channel between the writer and audience. Nowadays businesses have started writing own

blogs where the blog acts a channel between the customers and the business. Blogging is not only a tool for customer relationship management but can also be used as an effective technique to increase the ranking in Google (Newlands 2011, 88.)

Firstly, writing a blog increases the amount of quality content on the website and therefore it is a signal of trust for Google (Juslen 2011, 106). Secondly, writing interesting content that readers like can make them share and link the blog post forward which again increases the ranking in search results (Van de Rakt 2014). Thirdly, blog can be used as link building tool by including inbound links to the own business website in the blog text (SEO for idiots, [Ref. 9.3.2015]). Finally, writing frequently blog posts shows Google that the site is constantly updated with new content including the keywords the business want to be optimized for. This has naturally positive influence on ranking in Google results. (Viney 2008, 175.)

### **3.3 Result monitoring**

According to MOZ Guide (2012, 46), "In search engine optimization, measurement is critical to success." It can be assumed that as in any other type of marketing, also in SEO result monitoring plays an important role. Therefore this last SEO chapter will introduce the basic ways for measuring the success of SEO.

As SEO is an ongoing process, also monitoring the results of it has to be continuing. Since all the activities in SEO are mainly based on presumption and estimation about how the higher ranking is achieved, the only way to improve is to be active in following the results. (Larvanko 2012, 93). There are various ways to see how the website's ranking has developed during SEO activities. First of all, Bailyn (2011, 118-119) recommends checking every week how the selected keywords are ranking in Google. By checking the ranking with selected keywords the progress can be noticed immediately: if the website used to be on Google's page 7 and at the moment on 4<sup>th</sup> page, reasonable development has occurred and SEO activities have been successful. For another thing, he suggests seeing the traffic

statistics of the website frequently. By checking the traffic, it is possible to see if the amount of visitors on the website has increased, creating more traffic for the site. Standard traffic measuring tool is Google Analytics program but also other tools are accepted as long as they give precise information of the traffic. Moreover, it is important to see whether the SEO efforts have converted into sales. If Google ranking and traffic has increased but the conversion is low, there are possibly website-related issues which need to be optimized in order to achieve higher conversions (conversion rate optimization). (Bailyn 2011, 118-119.)

MOZ Guide (2012, 46-48) recommends digging even deeper into analysis of SEO results. For instance, it is advised to check how much traffic comes to the website through search engines and how much through other ways e.g. typing directly the website address, by clicking inbound link in web or clicking e-mail links. This analysis helps to determine what the real reason for low or high traffic is and does it have anything to do with SEO efforts. Furthermore, the best ranking keywords should be checked regularly and when the ranking has decreased, there should be something done on the website. The use of different tracking tools and software like Google Analytics and Google Trends is recommended. Lastly, it is emphasized that there is no universal way to track the results of SEO but it depends on the website what kind of key performance indicators (KPI) are chosen to measure the results best and what kind of tools are chosen for analysing the KPIs. (MOZ Guide 2012, 46-48.)

Some experts as Viney (2008, 142) have implemented their own monitoring systems for measuring effectiveness of a single optimization technique. He has for example developed own tool for measuring the results of link building, "link building tracking tool". This proves there are multiple ways to keep track of the results of SEO and in addition the results of a single activity as link building can be precisely measured when wanted.

In summary, the whole SEO is an ongoing and demanding online marketing activity including various techniques and in the beginning it is hard to estimate how much work it will require to see improvements in Google ranking. Furthermore, it is

claimed that it can take even two months until website has the chance to rank high with the chosen keywords (Bailyn 2011, 39). SEO is challenging because nobody knows exactly the Google Algorithm and what the most important signals are that have an impact on search results. However, there are combination of techniques that are claimed to be effective according to several SEO experts and guides. In addition new information is published on continual manner. (MOZ Guide 2012, 49.) After this literature review about SEO techniques, it is clear that this type of online marketing is not effortless but neither useless since when done right, it can result in increased sales for the business. The next part of the thesis will be the last theoretical chapter describing the basics of search engine advertising.

## **4 SEA**

Search engine advertising (SEA) is the type of search engine marketing that offers a chance to acquire more target customers by paying for the visibility in search engine results page. As stated in the second chapter, these paid results are amongst the organic search results and marked with yellow ad or sponsored link sign. The possibility to pay for ranking was not originally part of Google's strategy but it became part of the business in 2000 and has since been one of the main sources of revenue for Google (Harnett 2010, 43, Dreller 2010). Due to the simplicity of SEA it is more popular amongst online marketers in Finland compared to SEO and counts 90% of companies SEM budget (Larvanko 2012).

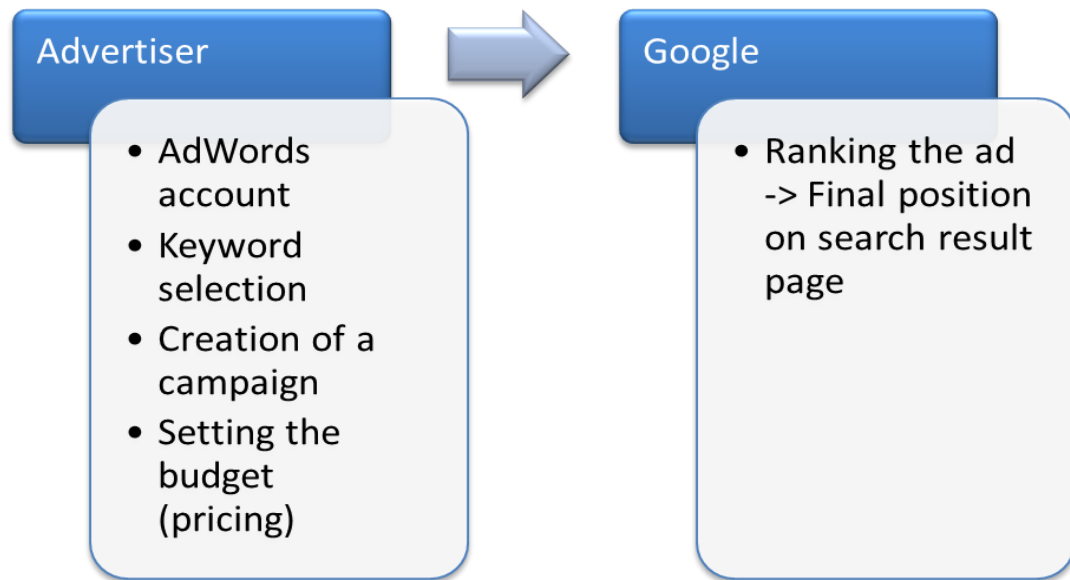
Keywords play also a role in SEA since the paid advertising is based on selected keywords. As mentioned before, sometimes no ads appear on the SERP while sometimes there are lots of them. The appearance of the ads is related to the keywords. Advertiser can choose by which keywords their ad will be shown on SERP and therefore usually searches made with the most competitive and general keywords e.g. *hotel* will result as multiple ads in addition to the organic results. These kinds of keywords are so called competitive keywords. The amount of ads on SERP shows how competitive the keyword in question is. (Juslen 2011.)

The purpose of this last theory chapter in the thesis is to study how SEA for Google is conducted in practise and give insight to the most important tools and strategic information there is to know in order to start advertising in Google. This information is gathered by studying relevant literature and guides. Since SEA in Google does not require mastering of various techniques like in SEO, also the amount of literature available is limited and mostly concentrated on few experts and Google's own guidelines.

SEA for Google requires the use of one specific system called Google AdWords (Juslen 2011, 167). This system was already mentioned in SEO chapter as one tool for keyword selection. Since this is the only system needed in order to conduct SEA for Google, it will naturally be the only system discussed. Basically knowing this tool is all an advertiser needs in order to begin with SEA. Nevertheless, there are couple of other issues that are related to advertising in Google like the pricing of the ads and the logic of how the location of the ad on SERP is determined. These issues will be discussed after AdWords and AdWords campaign creation subchapters. Like in SEO, also in SEA the result monitoring is claimed to be important and therefore the means of monitoring SEA results are explained as last part of the whole chapter.

The following table illustrates the whole SEA procedure in Google: the actions of the advertiser and Google itself (Mokaya 2010, 23). Each of these actions is discussed in this chapter in detail and in the same order as they appear in the table.

Table 2. SEA procedure



#### 4.1 Google AdWords

Google AdWords is a system which is used for creating ads to Google search results page. Without the use of this system it is not possible to place ads on Google. AdWords is a free system for advertisers' use, costs occur only when the marketing campaign is active. (Google AdWords, [Ref. 12.3.2015]). First of all, advertiser must create an AdWords account with valid e-mail address and password (AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref.12.3.2015]). When the account is successfully created, advertiser is ready beginning in creation of the first campaign.

The AdWords account consists of three main parts: account, campaign and Ad groups. Juslen (2011, 169) suggests advertisers to familiarize themselves with the system before the creation of the first ad campaign. Under the campaign part advertiser can find useful tools in optimizing of the ads as well as for analysing the effectiveness of created ad. Examples of these tools are keyword tool, keyword matching tool and Ad preview tool. Some of these tools are useful also in SEO, for instance the keyword tool. Moreover, in AdWords it is also possible to monitor the results of AdWords campaigns (more in chapter 4.2). (Juslen 169, 178-179.) The creation of the first SEA campaign begins with the keyword selection.

#### 4.1.1 Keyword selection

As with SEO, in the beginning of SEA it is also essential to select keywords. In contrast to SEO, in paid Google advertising the selected keywords determine when the ad will appear in the search results. So it can be claimed that the selected keywords determine the audience of the Google ad. (AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 16.3.2015].) Selecting keywords is the first thing to do in creation of the ad in AdWords system. In order that the ad will be shown in search results, the selected keywords need to be related to the business website and describe what is the good or service offered for the customer (Harnett 2010, 60). So it is not possible to choose as keyword *pizza Helsinki* if the business website is about hamburgers in Turku. If the keywords are selected right, the potential customers will more certainly find the product or service offered (Google AdWords, [Ref. 16.3.2015]). There are a couple of issues that are claimed to be important in keyword selection in SEA.

Carefully selected keywords ensure the viewing of the ad on SERP. Google's own AdWords Step-by-step starter guide ([Ref. 16.3.2015]) suggests "Putting yourself in the shoes of your customers" so as to figure out by what type of keywords the customers would look for the business. Furthermore, the use of more specific keywords instead of general terms is highly recommended, for instance keyword *flowers* is very general and rarely used when wanting to buy, while more specific keyword *buy yellow roses* is more likely to bring customers to the business website selling roses. These more specific keywords are also called long tail keywords (see chapter 3.1.2) and as mentioned before, the competition amongst long tail keywords is not as high as with more popular short keywords and for this reason it is likely to attract more potential customers to click on the business ad on SERP. Lastly, the use of AdWords' own keyword selection tool is suggested in the keyword selection process.

Also Harnett (2010, 60-61) states the importance of more specific, accurate keywords, since the more specific the keywords are, the greater chance is that the searcher is seriously interested in purchasing. Moreover, the selection of precise

keywords can reduce the money an advertiser needs to pay for the ad in Google because if the ad is popular and many users tend to click it, Google rewards the advertiser by smaller price (chapter 4.1.3: Pricing). Another Google guide (Google AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 16.3.2015]) advises advertiser to select keywords via three phases: first by creating a wide list of possible keywords, grouping them according to different themes and finally refining the list by selecting the most relevant keywords for each ad group. After the keywords have been selected, it is possible to create the first AdWords campaign.

#### **4.1.2 AdWords campaign creation**

The first step in creation of the AdWords campaign is to develop a plan for the campaign. This means considering what is the product or service offer for the public and how is this offer better or different compared to those of competitors. Moreover, it is suggested to consider the goals of the advertising in Google as well as the budget. The aims of the advertising need to be clear in order to conduct a successful SEA campaign in Google (Google AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 17.3.2015].)

It is advised to build the campaign around one goal and include ad groups under the campaign. These ad groups support the main goal of the campaign and consist of related keywords. (Google AdWords Step-by-step [Ref. 17.3.2015].) Figure 7 illustrates the relationship between ad campaign, ad groups and keywords in an example campaign whose goal is to sell more roses (Google AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 17.3.2015]).

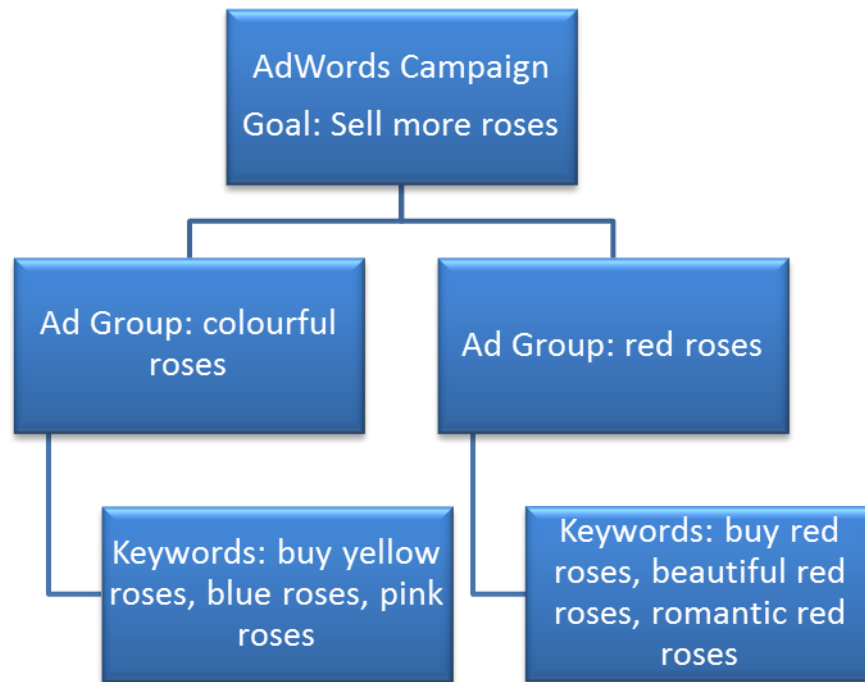


Figure 7. AdWords campaign, ad groups and keywords

After deciding the goals and sorting the selected keywords into different ad groups the first ad can be designed. The headline of the Google ad must not include more than 25 characters and the ad description no more than 70. These limitations can make the ad creation challenging when the ad message needs to be summarized into two lines of text. The ad should include information about the provided goods/services combined with “call to action.” This call to action is a recommendation that makes the ad active and tempts the searcher to click on the ad, like “Order now” or “Explore it here” (Harnett 2010, 72-73.) Furthermore, the ad description should be specific and clear. The goal is to assure customers that the business website offers them what they have been looking for from Google. Lastly, the keywords are recommended to be included in the headline and/or in the ad description since even if it is not necessary, the keyword appearance makes the ad look relevant to the search. (Google AdWords Step-by-step [Ref. 17.3.2015]). See an example ad created around keyword *red roses* from Figure 8.

<b>Beautiful red roses</b>	_____	Headline
<a href="http://www.red-roses.com">www.red-roses.com</a>	_____	URL
Lovely red roses, variety of sizes, home delivery. Order now.	_____	Description

Figure 8. Example AdWords ad

For another thing, the purpose of URL in the ad is to show searchers the business website so they can recognize the provider of the service or product. The URL which is displayed in the ad does not have to be the same with the web page the searcher ends up when clicking the ad. In other words, the destination URL can differ from the display URL. (Google AdWords Step-by-step [Ref. 17.3.2015].) When the ad is formulated, the selected keywords by which the ad is wanted to be shown in the search results are added to the AdWords system. Multiple keywords and keyword phrases can be chosen that will display the ad on SERP and by using different matching options it is possible to choose if the ad will appear also in searches that include only one same keyword or even a synonym of it. (Juslen 2011, 186, Google AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 17.3.2015].)

In the end, the advertiser can choose a geographical region in which the ad will be shown. If the business is concentrated on small specific area or country, it is recommended to set limit for the ad audience by using the AdWords audience setting. In this case searchers who are located in a specific area will see the ad when searching from Google with the chosen keywords. (AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 17.3.2015].) What is more, the viewing time of the ad can also be monitored. Advertiser can decide specific times of the day when the ad is displayed (Harnett 2010, 69).

### **4.1.3 Pricing**

The pricing of Google advertising is based on cost-per-click system (CPC). In this system, the advertiser pays only when someone clicks the ad on Google search results page. In other words, the advertiser pays only if the advertising has been successful. For this reason, advertising in Google is claimed to be cost-effective way to promote the business and gain new customers. (AdWords Step-by-step [Ref. 18.3.2015].)

Firstly, advertiser decides the maximum daily budget for the campaign that is worth investing into Google advertising. The daily budget does not have to be much in the beginning, it is claimed that 5 to 10 euros is enough for a start. When the daily budget is spent, the ad won't display anymore on that day. Lastly, advertiser decides the cost-per-click bid limit. This CPC bid limit is the maximum amount an advertiser is ready to pay for one click and it can be set to concern specific keywords or ad groups. It is advised to decide the CPC bid limit by evaluating the value of one customer who clicks the ad and ends up to the business website. Basically, one click could be considered as potential customer. (AdWords Step-by-step [Ref. 18.3.2015].)

In addition, if the advertiser is unsure about the CPC bid limit, it is possible to select "automatic bidding" option from AdWords. In this case the system will determine the CPC bid limit by using the daily budget as source. The automatic bidding option is recommended in the beginning of SEA when the advertiser is unsure about the CPC and wants just launch fast a certain campaign to see how Google advertising works. Later on the maximum CPC limit can be set manually for each campaign to achieve the best price benefit. (Juslen 2011, 182).

### **4.1.4 Ad rank**

Ad rank means the final location of the ad on the search result page. Especially with competitive keywords many businesses want to achieve the best location on

the SERP for their ad. Ad rank is determined by Google and it depends on two variables. The first variable is the maximum price the advertiser is ready to pay for one click. (Juslen 2011, 184.) The second variable is so called quality score, which compares the ads quality and relevance to the chosen keywords. By comparing these quality related issues, Google finds out if the created ad is relevant to the searches that are made by potential customers of the business and whether the ad makes them to click on it or not. Moreover, the relevance of the business website's content with the ad increases the quality score. (Google AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 18.3.2015].) According to Larvanko (2012, 87), also the previous AdWords history has an influence to the quality score; meaning that the CPC price paid before is also part of the quality score formula. Furthermore, Harnett (2010, 103) states that the popularity and effectiveness of the ad are part of the quality score, meaning that Google gives better location for the ads that perform well with lower CPC. To conclude, the location of the ad could be simplified by the following formula:

maximum price per click x quality score = the final location of the ad

As a result, the business operator with the largest investment into paid advertising in Google is not necessarily on the top position on SERP if a business with smaller investment has higher quality score. For this reason even a small company can compete from the same advertising space in Google with larger business operators on the same field. (Larvanko 2012, 86.)

## **4.2 Result monitoring**

This last chapter of the theoretical part of the thesis is about measuring the results of SEA. In order to have an effective SEA campaign that results as more revenue, monitoring and analyzing of the results is essential. By actively monitoring the results, it is possible to see which ads do not convert into paying customers and therefore ads can be removed and new campaigns created. By finding out which keywords work best, advertising can be targeted even better. Despite of the im-

portance of monitoring the results, only 11% of the Finnish SEA marketers follow the results of paid advertising in Google. (Larvanko 2012, 88.)

Result monitoring in Google advertising is made relatively easy, since the tools needed for tracking the results are integrated part of the advertisers AdWords account. In the Reports-part of the account advertiser can for instance see the most effective keywords that bring most of the visitors to the site. The term that is used to measure the effectiveness and success of a keyword and an ad is called click-through-rate (CTR). This rate indicates the amount of clicks the ad has earned divided by the amount of displays on SERP. In addition, advertiser can use AdWords conversion tracking tool to see how many of the users that have clicked the ad end up performing valuable action such as purchasing the product or service. The term used to track the performance this way is called conversion rate and is widely used to measure the performance of an ad. (Google AdWords Step-by-step, [Ref. 19.3.2015].)

As already mentioned in SEO result monitoring chapter, Google Analytics is a tool which can be used in measuring the traffic of a website. It is recommended to use this tool to the follow-up of how many users end up to the website through search engines. If the most of the traffic does not come from Google despite of active SEA, there might be something wrong with the website's visitor experience. If there is a lot of traffic but low conversion rate, it might be that the visitor ends up to the site but leaves immediately when the site does not seem relevant to the search. (Google Adwords Step-by-step, [Ref. 19.3.2015].)

It is recommended to begin SEA with one campaign and follow the performance with patience. Since it is hard to make changes to the created ads before there is enough report data available, it is suggested to wait until the ad gains 100 clicks. After reasonable amount of clicks it is easier to see what kinds of changes need to be made to the keywords or the ad headline and description. (Harnett 2010, 99.)

In conclusion, SEA requires continuous monitoring and experimenting so as to achieve the best return on investment (Google AdWords Step-by-step [Ref.

19.3.2015]). Newlands (2011, 196) states that if the SEA campaign through Google AdWords is successful, advertiser can confidently apply the same keywords and knowledge in other platforms that use the same CPC pricing method and get positive results. When SEA is done well, it can result as immediate return on investment but when done carelessly it may result as loss of money. It can be concluded that in both SEO and SEA knowing the customer matter. Without knowing by which keywords customers are looking for the business most of the search engine marketing techniques presented here are useless. However, when the keywords are set right and monitoring of the results goes hand-in-hand with the improvements, Google takes care of the rest in driving new customers to the business web site.

## **5 RESEARCH STRATEGY**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the results of this study are obtained. Firstly, the research method is explained followed by arguments why this method is chosen for conducting the study. In addition, the compatibility of the research methods and the research question is explained. Lastly the research process is described for the purpose of other researchers that are interested in conducting similar study.

As mentioned in the introduction, the commissioning company in this thesis is Clean Solutions Finland Kb which manufactures eco-friendly and certified detergents and cleaning products in Finland. One of their selling-channels is an online store. Their interest is to increase the online stores visibility in the search engine results in order to attract more target customers for the online store. The visibility in search engines is achieved by online marketing activities as search engine optimization and advertising (SEO & SEA). For this reason, the research question this thesis seeks an answer is how to reach more target customers to the online store by SEO and SEA. The following sub-chapter explains the methods that are used in this research so as to answer this question.

## 5.1 Methods

The research method used in this thesis is case study. According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009, 145-146) case study can be defined as “strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.” That is to say case study is testing of certain theory in real life in some specific situation. There can be multiple cases that are tested or only one, single case. (Saunders et al. 2009, 145-146.) The phenomenon investigated in this thesis is online marketing, more specifically two forms of it: search engine optimization and search engine advertising. The techniques of both online marketing types are tested in real life context and applied to the case company, Clean Solutions Finland Kb.

The case study method was chosen as research method because it allows the researcher to study the theory (search engine marketing) and test it in a real world situation, in a company. These two parts, theory and the real world situation are together the case which will be studied in detail. Case study offers a way to develop new concepts for a company based on the existing theory and for this reason it is appropriate method for a development project type of thesis as this is. Moreover, case study method is claimed to deliver answers to research question “how?” which is also the main question in this research (Saunders et al. 2009, 146). Also the flexibility of the case study method was reason for selection. Within a case study, all the methods that seem suitable can be used as data collection methods (Silverman 2013, 138).

Multiple data collecting methods can be used in a case study and generally it is common to employ combinations of different data collecting techniques (Saunders et al. 2009, 146). Two qualitative methods are used in collecting data for this study. First, semi-structured interview is used for acquiring the necessary data from the case company. This interview consists of themes that cover the most important information for the researcher (see the interview themes and sample questions from Appendix 1). The interviewee is the CEO of the case company, since she has all the necessary data that is relevant for the study. Semi-structured inter-

view was chosen as data collecting method because the necessary information needed to meet the second objective of the thesis, identifying the target customers of the online store, wouldn't be possible without consulting the person who has this information. Since the data is collected only from one person, semi-structured interview was considered relevant method. In addition, personal interview was considered the best way to collect other general information about the company and its goals in online marketing as a base for the study.

Secondly, observation is used as another data collecting method. This was chosen as the second method because the expertise gained from the observation offers practical hints for developing recommendations for the case company about the techniques related to SEM. Furthermore, practical observation and the theory support each other when finding answers to the research question.

The observation is done during the internship period of the researcher (June 2014 - December 2014) in an online marketing company specialized in search engine marketing amongst other online marketing activities. During the internship the researcher has observed the most commonly used techniques for search engine optimization used by the SEO manager of the company. The SEO manager was in charge for all the SEO made for the websites in Scandinavian countries. The researcher observed the practical techniques the manager used for optimization: every day routines and different techniques, meetings, future plans & goals and monitoring the results of the SEO campaigns and activities made in each Scandinavian country. In addition, the researcher observed other interns and junior managers who worked in SEO department in order to gain understanding of the practical side of SEO. These observations will be used as one source of data when searching answers to the research problem.

Furthermore, literature about SEO and SEA strategies and techniques provided by experts and various related guides are studied as a base for the case study. This theory gives guidance and basic information about search engine marketing which is vital in order to be able to answer to the research question and meeting the first objective of the study: research of both SEM types.

To conclude, the advantage of this method is that it provides a clear framework for the study by allowing the researcher flexibly investigate the techniques of SEM in order to develop recommendations for the real life's use. The results of the study are not generalizable to any other company, which can be seen as disadvantage. However, the research can be repeated by using the same methods and following the research process (see the next sub-chapter) for any other organization's needs.

## 5.2 Research process

The research process consists of three different phases which all contribute to the results of the study. The steps in the process are described here in the order which was suitable for the researcher. Nonetheless, the order of the phases can be changed when necessary without it having an impact on the results. Figure 9 illustrates the phases of the research.

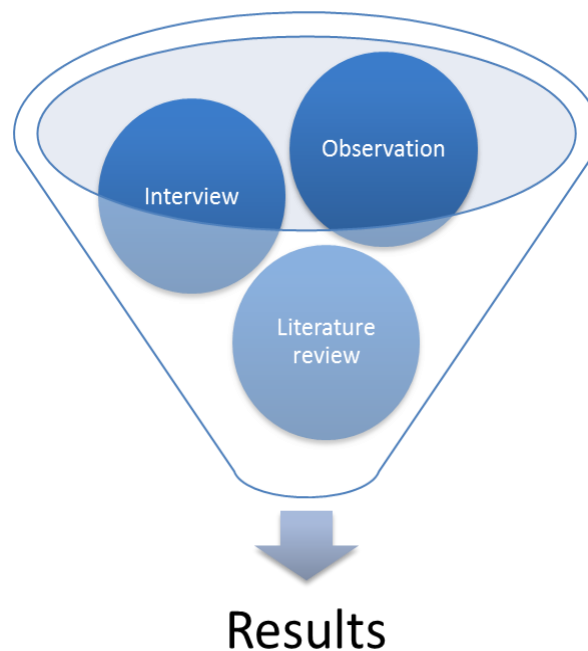


Figure 9. Research process

The process begins with observation in an online marketing company. In this phase it is vital to pay close attention to what techniques the SEO department used in online marketing campaigns and if possible, also SEA techniques. Second phase is to conduct a literature review and familiarize oneself with the logic of Google search engine as well as recent and relevant studies about SEO and SEA strategies. It is recommended to study the opinions of SEM experts and guides provided by Google itself so as to gain full understanding of the topic. The literature review forms the theoretical part of the study. Thirdly, a semi-structured interview will be organized and planned around the themes introduced in Appendix 1 so as to find out relevant data about the case company. The objective of the interview is to find out the target customers of the case company's online activity and the goals in search engine marketing. The interviewee should be the person in the organization who is responsible for the activities related to online marketing.

In conclusion, these three phases in the research process are essential in answering the research question. The results of the research are based on the findings from the case study and presented in a form of recommendations. These recommendations form the empirical part of the study and give practical information for the case company of how to utilize SEO and SEA in their online marketing strategy in order to attract more target customers.

## **6 RESULTS**

This is the empirical part of the thesis which presents the results of the case study aiming to give an answer to the research question how the case company can reach more target customers by the two types of online marketing: SEO and SEA. As stated before, the results of the study are presented in a form of recommendations for the company Clean Solutions Finland Kb. Only the most relevant findings from the case study are filtered in this section in order to meet the objectives of the study and to give basic guidance for the case company in these two types of

online marketing for reaching more customers. First, the data collected by interview and observation is described. Last, all this data is put together with the information collected from the literature to form the recommendations for the case company. The recommendation chapter is separated into two parts, first part introducing the recommendations related to SEO and second part for SEA.

## 6.1 Interview and observation

The recommendations are based on the data collected from the case study. The interview with the case company's CEO revealed that the target customer groups of the online store are households and the goal is to attract more customers from this group to visit the online store and to buy eco-friendly cleaning products. In other words, the target customers are the ones that decide which cleaning products are to be used at home, in every day-use. For this reason, the recommendations for SEO and SEA presented are done focusing on this group of customers. Moreover, it came up in the interview, that the online store ([www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi](http://www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi)) is built around the products under the brand name *Pohjan Neito* but in addition there is a product line called *Pohjan Akka* and these detergents are as well meant for household use. Furthermore, it was also found out in the interview that the case company aims for growth in selling these products for households online even more in the future. Lastly, the researcher found out in the interview that the control management system (CMS) called Prestashop is in use within the company to maintain and update the business website.

During the observation the researcher collected data related to the everyday routines of the SEO manager of an online marketing company. Following issues were under observation: how she was managing the junior managers and interns and teaching relevant techniques of SEO, what kind of work she did herself in practice, how did she conduct the meetings with the SEO team, how she monitored the SEO results and what kind of plans she made for the future. First of all, her behavior was very calm and she seemed to know well what she was doing. She was very motivating when managing the SEO team and taught relevant techniques

related to the tasks within SEO. Within the meetings, she was asking other team members about the progress of certain SEO campaigns and made suggestions for improvements. The researcher noticed as well how she was doing her daily job; she used different Excel tables in measuring the results of SEO and implemented new ideas of how to improve rankings in Google by reading recent articles of SEO experts. In addition, the researcher saw her explaining about her previous SEO experience and organizing brainstorming for gathering ideas for new marketing campaigns.

For another thing, the researcher observed other SEO team members in the company for gathering data for the study. It was noticed that the SEO interns were busy writing quality content for the company's websites so as to boost the rankings in Google for certain keywords. In addition, the observation revealed that the interns were doing a lot keyword research and off-page link building by using various tactics. Basically they searched relevant bloggers who could be interested in placing an inbound link to their blog to the company website and writing to different forums and posting links whenever it was possible. Finally, it was observed how the junior managers assisted the SEO team leader by helping her in result monitoring and implementing new campaign ideas.

This observation gave to the researcher the first impression of search engine marketing and insight to the techniques used for Google optimization. The data collected during the observation period is especially helpful in this empirical part of the thesis when implementing the SEO recommendations for the case company. The next subchapters explain how the research objectives can be reached by following the implemented recommendations in SEO and SEA.

## **6.2 Recommendations for SEO**

Clean Solutions Finland Kb has already an existing web site and an online store, so the recommendations are made from the perspective of what can be done in optimization for Google when the website already exists. The recommended strat-

egies aim for search optimization in Google and therefore achieving better ranking in organic search results and reaching more target customers, which is the objective of the study. The optimization recommendations are made for the keywords household customers could possibly use when looking for such products from Google. To make the process of suggested SEO activities more clear, the recommendations are presented in a form of table for both on-page optimization and off-page optimization activities. At the end of off-page recommendations, also suggestions for SEO result monitoring are listed.

Furthermore, there are two main company websites that could be used for optimization: [www.pohjanneito.fi](http://www.pohjanneito.fi), including general information about the company and [www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi](http://www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi), which is the URL of the online store. Since the goal is to rank high in search results and thus reach more target customers that directly could make a purchase, the URL that will be used in SEO recommendations is chosen to be the URL of the online store. Moreover, the recommendations presented here are designed so that all the changes for optimizing can be made with the present CMS (Prestashop) without needing to change the system in order to follow the recommendations.

### 6.2.1 On-page

Table 3. Recommendations for on-page SEO

Keywords and keyword phrases	<i>ympäristöystävälliset pesuaineet, ekologinen pesuaine, suomalainen pesuaine, ekologiset puhdistusaineet, ympäristöystävällinen kodin puhdistusaine, luontoystävällinen puhdistusaine, kodin ekologinen puhdistus, kodinsiivous ekologisesti, ympäristöystävällinen siivous, ekologinen puhdistusaine verkkokauppa, ympäristöystävällinen puhdistustuote verkko-kauppa, kotimainen puhdistusaine</i>
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URL	<p>Create separate web pages having the main keywords in it, e.g.  <a href="http://www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/ymparistoystavalliset-puhdistusaineet">www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/ymparistoystavalliset-puhdistusaineet</a>,  <a href="http://www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/ekologinen-puhdistusaine">www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/ekologinen-puhdistusaine</a>,  <a href="http://www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/kodin-ekologinen-puhdistus">www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/kodin-ekologinen-puhdistus</a>,  <a href="http://www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/kotimainen-puhdistusaine">www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi/kotimainen-puhdistusaine</a></p>
Meta page title	<p>Add keyword to the page title:  Pohjan Neito verkkokauppa   Ekologiset puhdistusaineet joka kotiin</p>
Meta description	<p>Write more precise site description:  Pohjan Neito &amp; Pohjan Akka ekologiset puhdistusaineet nyt verkkokaupasta suoraan kotisiin! Yli 50 euron tilaukset ilman toimituskuluja.</p>
Site content	<p>Include the main keywords to the site content:  <i>ekologiset puhdistusaineet, ympäristöystävälliset pesuaineet, kotimaiset puhdistusaineet etc.</i>  To the headers of the site (h1 &amp; h2) and in the body text 1-2 times depending on the length, for example to the online store home page, text must sound natural though</p>
Social media	<p>Include the social media <i>share</i> button and <i>like</i> button to the site content (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), these are available in the Prestashops own applications as “Social media plugins”</p>
Extra recommendation	<p>Update the site content frequently, fresh content results as better rankings in Google and increases the PageRank</p>

## 6.2.2 Off-page

Table 4. Recommendations for off-page SEO

<p>Link building strategy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request inbound links by e-mail from trustworthy, business related websites: magazines (kotivinkki.fi, kotiliesi.fi, omakotilehti.fi), business partners &amp; customers websites, friends and family (kesko.fi, Inex partners and other S-group sites), cleaning and household related sites (siivous.info)</li> <li>2. Blogger outreach: request popular bloggers for cooperation and ask for inbound links in their blog texts under one or two main keywords, main focus on bloggers writing for household customer group</li> <li>3. Passive link building: create interesting content e.g. top10 lists, competitions, exciting stories and news which make people link to the web site and share the content further in social media</li> </ol>
<p>Social media</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create company accounts and pages for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube</li> <li>2. Add link to these social media platforms to the online store and post a link always to the new content which has been created to the site, for instance competitions like “win our products now for 50 euros”. Share this interesting content on kauppa.pohjanneito.fi on the social media accounts, videos in Youtube with the link to the online store</li> <li>3. Be active in social media and keep posting and sharing interesting content with the link to the kauppa.pohjanneito.fi</li> </ol>

<p> Blogging</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start writing a company blog to the online store site, information about the company and latest releases &amp; achievements, ask for customer feedback (customer relationship management), interesting stories about household cleaning and eco-friendliness and improvements in this field. All kinds of blog posts that could interest potential customers and make them share the content in social media or other sites</li> <li>2. Merge some inbound links to the blog to other URLs of Clean Solution Finland Kb, like <a href="http://www.pohjanneito.fi">www.pohjanneito.fi</a>, <a href="http://www.pohjanneito.fi/yritys">www.pohjanneito.fi/yritys</a>, remember also to include the main keywords to blog texts every now and then</li> <li>3. Update the blog frequently</li> </ol>
<p>SEO result monitoring</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check the main keywords rankings in Google every week (what is the websites ranking with the selected keywords on SERP), collect the information for instance on an Excel sheet (keyword, rank, week number)</li> <li>2. Check the website traffic by using Prestashops own tracking tool, Google Analytics or relevant, see: conversion rate, traffic source (search engines &amp; direct traffic), this information can also be recorded on the same Excel sheet on weekly basis</li> <li>3. See the results of link building: how many requests have been made and how many successful inbound links were created</li> <li>4. Monitor the social media sites: see which content is the most shared &amp; liked and implement more such content in the future</li> <li>5. Follow-up: If the keyword rankings have went down, make changes to the keyword appearance on the website content/titles/meta titles/description and see what happens, new keywords can also be created. If the traffic to the online store seems to be on a good level but no conversion into sales happen, check the website structure and content again, does it encourage buying?</li> </ol>

### 6.3 Recommendations for SEA

The last section in this empirical part of the thesis provides recommendations in SEA for the case company Clean Solution Finland Kb by using the literature review as well as the interview data as a basis. The suggestions are made into a form of numbered list. The purpose of this list is to describe and summarize the most important actions in creation of the first Google AdWords campaign as a recommendation for the case company, starting from the keyword selection to the example campaign ad and budget recommendations. The last recommendation introduces the means of monitoring SEA campaigns performance.

Recommendations list for SEA: the first Google AdWords campaign

1. Create an account in Google AdWords
2. Select the keywords for the first campaign by using AdWords' own keyword tool: *ympäristöystävällinen pesuaine, ekologinen pesuaine, ekologinen puhdistusaine, ekologiset kodin puhdistusaineet verkko-kauppa, luontoystävällinen puhdistusaine, ympäristöystävällinen siivousaine, kodinsiivous ekologisesti, suomalainen puhdistusaine, kotimainen puhdistusaine*
3. Set a goal for the ad campaign: Sell more Pohjan Neito & Pohjan Akka products for the households interested in ecological and Finnish cleaning products, increase the sales for the target customer group in online store
4. Create different ad groups according to different keyword themes under the goal of the campaign, set the keywords under the ad groups: Ad group one, theme could be eco-friendliness (keywords: *ympäristöystävällinen pesuaine, ekologinen puhdistusaine* etc.) and the ad group two theme could be Finnish product (keywords: *suomalainen puhdistusaine, kotimainen puhdistusaine*)
5. Create the first ad, remember the character limits (headline 25, description 70, URL 35)

## Ekologiset puhdistusaineet

[www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi](http://www.kauppa.pohjanneito.fi)

Ympäristöystävälliset puhdistusaineet

helposti verkkokaupasta. Tutustu nyt!

6. Set a geographical area in which the ad will be shown: Finland.
7. Set the budget by deciding the daily budget and CPC bid limit for the ad: recommended daily budget at the beginning could be 10€. The CPC bid limit for this campaign could be 0, 30€ per click. This is the maximum price for one click and together with good quality ad (quality score), it results as high ad rank with the chosen keywords.
8. Result monitoring: Use AdWords own tracking tools in Report-part of the account to see daily or couple of times per week the best performing keywords (click-through rates) and the conversion rates. Check also with Google Analytics the traffic amount through search engines.
9. Follow-up: Wait until the ad gets at least 100 clicks before making any changes. Then, if no traffic comes from Google despite the paid campaign, improve the visitor experience of the online store; make it more user-friendly and attractive for potential buyers. Last, see which keywords perform well and invest in them. It is also possible to create new ads for new keyword groups after seeing which ones work best and set a new budget.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Search engine optimization and search engine advertising are nowadays inseparable part of the online marketing field and their power in achieving better visibility in the internet can not be underestimated. By using different techniques in search engine marketing it is possible to reach more customers than ever with normal means of marketing. Besides, hardly any other type of marketing is as targeted as

search engine marketing which is only aimed at the people who already show interest towards certain kind of products or services. For this reason, it is important to study the SEO and SEA techniques and how to utilize them for reaching more customers. Especially small and medium sized companies as the case company in this study can have a great benefit from knowing different SEM tactics and therefore gain competitive advantage.

The results of this study are presented in a form of recommendations for the case company and the findings are based on case study research method along with interview and observation. The goal of the research was to find out how to reach more target customers by SEO and SEA for the online store of the case company Clean Solutions Finland Kb. The results of the interview revealed the target customer group of the online store being households and for this reason the recommendations are built to aim specifically this group of customers. The findings from the observation and literature reveal variety of activities that are needed to do in order to gain more visibility in search engine Google and reaching the targeted audience.

To mention some of the most important recommendations, it can be stated that the keywords play the biggest role both in SEO and SEA. These keywords need to be carefully considered and researched since they build the base for search optimization and determine when the business website will be shown in the Google results in the paid advertising. After selecting the keywords, all the other activities are easier to conduct. In SEO the techniques are separated into on-page and off-page optimization techniques. On-page optimization techniques are related to the URL, meta title and content of the website and the key issue is to include the main keywords into all of the on-page elements. Hence, off-page activities include the external activities of SEO: link building, social media and blogging.

In contrast to SEO which can be done independently, SEA requires the use of Google's own advertising tool Google AdWords and all the advertising activities are done by using this tool. The process includes selecting keywords, planning goals for the campaign, designing the ad and setting the budget. However, without

active follow-up and result monitoring neither of these search engine marketing activities will immediately result as positive results and therefore tracking the performance of the optimization and paid advertising is essential in achieving the best results.

## **7.1 Strengths and limitations**

There are certain issues that set limitations for this study. First of all, the literature available from the research topic was not in each case objective due to the fact that there were always two opinions about SEM tactics: the official Google guidelines and the opinion of independent experts on this field of marketing. Also some of the experts seemed to favor Google's own guidelines and were afraid to present deviant ideas. Especially in SEA it was challenging to find any other data than Google's own guides since the tool which is used for SEA is Google's own tool. Furthermore, the articles found from SEM were not in each case highly academic. However, the researcher has tried to describe both opinions and aspects into the literature review in order to find the golden mean.

Secondly, the results of this study are not entirely generalizable to any other company because the recommendations include data that only the case company can utilize in their search engine marketing. Nevertheless, the study can be repeated similarly following the research process described in the chapter five and in this case the results can be applied to any other company or organization. For another thing, the fundamental explanation of Google's logic, SEM key terms and techniques make this thesis a simple guide to the complex world of search engine marketing for each marketer or entrepreneur who is interested in improving the business visibility online.

## 7.2 The future of SEM

To stay on the top of Google requires constant work and monitoring, keeping an eye on what Google values most and how the search Algorithm is changing. The challenge of the ever changing nature of SEM is especially true when it comes to optimization for Google, because Google does not want SEO experts to track which elements makes sites to rank high. When Google realizes someone has found out its secrets, it can change its ways of act rapidly. Nonetheless, the core factors that have an influence on ranking are not likely to be changed easily, because for instance quality inbound links and keywords in the on-page elements are proven to bring good and relevant search results for Google's customers. Above all, Google wants to guarantee excellent customer satisfaction and keep its number one position amongst all search engines. When it comes to SEA, it is not as challenging to keep up as SEO. Since the paid ads are an important source of revenue for Google, they want to make AdWords as easy tool as possible for advertisers and are not likely to make rapid updates.

The importance of knowing the main techniques of search engine marketing can be assumed to grow even more in the future when the area of online marketing is expanding within the diversifying internet. Hardly any company can soon manage without an online marketing strategy and even a small investment into it. There will be also more and more marketing agencies offering online marketing services and these are the ones that profit when businesses do not have the time to familiarize themselves with e.g. search engine optimization. The competition of the best rankings in Google is increasing also in Finland when more businesses realize the importance and the potential of SEM. At this point the ones that already know the basic techniques of SEO and SEA introduced in this thesis are already one step ahead.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1. Company interview: Clean Solutions Finland Kb, Yvonne Peltola (CEO), January 2015**

Interview themes and sample questions

#### 1. Basic company information

When was the company founded? What are the selling channels of your products? When was the online store founded and what products do you sell online? What is the market area for your products?

#### 2. Target customers in the online store

What is the target customer group of the online store? How about other customer groups?

#### 3. Online marketing strategy

Have you marketed the online store in internet? What are the means of online marketing you have used? Have you ever optimized the online store website for search engine Google? What is the content management system (CMS) you are using at the moment? What are the goals of your online marketing strategy in the future?