



WAV GROUP

BROKERS MISSING THEIR CUSTOMERS

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Brokers Missing Consumers on Search

If I ask a brokerage how their website ranks for top keywords in the markets they serve, they give me a rather exact answer along with a recent report.

As a follow up, I ask if the information displayed about agents, brokerage offices, addresses and phone numbers on search engines is correct. After a long pause, the response drifts into obscure ambiguity.

This is a classic situation where the cart is in front of the horse. Brokers are focused more on winning long tail search than they are at perfecting short tail search. In doing so, they are hunting for customers who do not know them – ahead of customers that are seeking them out. This is a big mistake. If you fix this mistake, you will see dramatic increases in your traffic volume and lead conversion to your website.

Here is how you can look at your brokerage traffic to see how big of a mistake it is. If you look at your website analytics, you will see that the case outlined below matches up identically to your traffic ratios. Instructions follow:

- Open Google Analytics or whatever website tracking program you use.
- Select Traffic Sources on the left hand side navigation
- Select Sources: All Traffic. All traffic will show you where your traffic comes from by source.

Sample Case Study

In order to supply a data sample to illustrate this point, I selected a broker client of ours and hid their company information to protect their privacy.

Example and Screenshot


Total Traffic			
Visits	Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% New Visits
311,024	8.89	00:07:46	37.03%
% of Total: 100.00% (311,024)	Site Avg: 8.89 (0.00%)	Site Avg: 00:07:46 (0.00%)	Site Avg: 37.03% (0.00%)


Primary Dimension: **Source / Medium** **Source** **Medium** **Other** ▾

Plot Rows

Secondary dimension ▾

Sort Type: Default ▾

 **advanced**



Source / Medium	Visits	↓ Pages / Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	% N
1. google / organic Search Traffic	103,300	11.07	00:09:06	
2. (direct) / (none) Typed in your URL	101,303	8.26	00:07:26	
3. yahoo / organic Search Traffic	11,267	16.20	00:13:33	

<https://www.google.com/analytics/web/trendoftrafficsources-all-traffic/a1151304w14552082n15346608/>

<https://www.google.com/analytics/web/#report/traffic/sources-all-traffic/a1151304w14552082p15346608/>

This brokerage gets about 300,000 visits a month. 1/3 of the traffic comes from search. This is unusual for a brokerage.

Most of our clients get about 1/5 or 20% of their traffic from search. If you want to see a report that we performed a few years ago that pulled the data from a bunch of brokers covering 1 Million consumer visits, you can download it [here](http://waves.wavgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/WAV_Group_Broker_Website_Effectiveness_Study.pdf) (http://waves.wavgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/WAV_Group_Broker_Website_Effectiveness_Study.pdf).

Clearly, search is important, but to understand the need to focus on your brand, your brokerage name, and the name of your agents. You need to look at the keywords that consumers type into search that result in them going to your website.

Understanding the Value of Brand in Organic Search

To understand the keywords that drive visitors to your site, select the search drop down and look at Organic. What you will find is that 80% of all search terms include some version your company name. *These are people that already know you, and they are the most likely consumers of your services.*

Overview

▼ Sources

All Traffic

Direct

Referrals

▼ Search

Overview

Organic

Paid

Campaigns

► Search Engine Optimization

► Social

Content

Conversions

Help

Jul 8

Jul 15

Jul 22

Visits

Pages / Visit

Avg. Visit Duration

126,040

11.95

00:09:53

% of Total: 40.52% (311,024)

Site Avg: 8.89 (34.40%)

Site Avg: 00:07:46 (27.26%)

Primary Dimension: Keyword

Source

Landing Page

Other ▼

Plot Rows

Secondary dimension ▼

Sort Type: Default ▼

	Keyword	Visits	↓	Page
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Company Name	43,565		
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. (not provided)	20,637		
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Company Name	4,074		
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Company Name	1,720		
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Company Name	1,461		
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Company Name	1,278		

For this particular broker, we looked at the top 100 keywords. Out of the top 100 keywords that drove traffic to their website, 93 out of 100 included a version of the broker name, an agent, or a broker listing address. Listing addresses began to show up at rank number 35 and represent 17% of the traffic in the top 100 search keywords, 6% of traffic overall.

Rank	Keyword	Search Volume
2	Not Provided (Google could not track)	20,673
7	City Name + Real Estate	864
30	City Name + Real Estate Listings	146
32	Real Estate + City Name	129
54	City Name + homes for sale	72
68	City Name + realty	60
96	City Name + REALTORS	39

The point of this exercise is to use real broker data to illustrate a point: *brokers need to focus on optimizing their website for keywords related to their company before focusing on generic keywords like City Name + Real Estate.*

If you want to understand the importance of City Name + Real Estate, you may want to read this [WAV Group Whitepaper that focuses on that topic](http://waves.wavgroup.com/2009/04/30/wav-group-releases-localism-whitepaper).
<http://waves.wavgroup.com/2009/04/30/wav-group-releases-localism-whitepaper>

**Note: I imagine that the search engine optimization Gurus will take issue with this illustration. To them, I submit the following. WAV Group monitors broker online effectiveness for many of the top brokerages in America. In this particular case, the brokerage holds the #1 organic ranking in the top 5 local cities that they focus on for the keywords: City Name + Real Estate, City Name + Homes for Sale, Real Estate + City Name; along with a host of other popular real estate related searches in their area. This broker is mostly out performing Realtor.com, Zillow, Trulia, Homes.com, et al for those keywords. If you have data for a website that gets more than 50,000 unique visitors a month that is performing differently than this pattern, please contact [Victor Lund](http://waves.wavgroup.com/company/our-team/victor-lund/). <http://waves.wavgroup.com/company/our-team/victor-lund/>*

When brokers focus on optimizing around their brand-related keywords, agent-related keywords, and listing keywords, they protect their brand online and reach more consumers that have a higher likelihood of converting for business to the brokerage. If you offer homes services like mortgage, title, home insurance, home warranty, property management, commercial leasing and sales be sure to optimize around those keywords too!

Check Mobile

There is a transition that began with the release of Google Maps on the iPhone. Consumers spend a lot of time doing location-based searches. They are looking for directions to your offices, your agents, and your listings. It is absolutely imperative that you test the user experience on popular search engines for mobile search results. They vary from results on PCs.

Check Accuracy of Company Information Online

Remember, search is all about data. Search engines crawl the Web to collect data to use in search. They also sell the data to third parties, and offer data through APIs. Data is a big business. It is likely that your old office is still being published through these data networks. It is also likely that your new office is indexed on some search engines, and not on others. Your company information is likely complete or somewhat distorted everywhere, especially if you have more than 20 offices. If you have more than 100 offices, it is a mess.

One way to quickly check the accuracy of your company information online is to visit Yext.com. I have nothing to do with this company, but have clients that have used them and are satisfied. Yext.com provides a service that looks up your business information on 38 search databases. They offer the assessment for free. If you want to correct your information, you need to contact each search database and manually correct everything. If you want to pay Yext.com, you can submit the correct information to them in a spreadsheet and they will update them for you for a fee. There are a lot of benefits to the paid service beyond what I am outlining here. My point is not to introduce you to the company. My point is this: *Focus on improving the accuracy of your company information on the Web, and to gather more consumers who are looking for you online.*

Master Fundamentals

In truth, business success has always been about mastering the fundamentals. There are always going to be upstarts that find a method to accomplishing a business goal by using some fancy technique, but those companies typically fail to sustain their success unless they master the fundamentals too. There is nothing more fundamental in online effectiveness than making sure that the information on the Internet that allows consumers to contact you or find your office, agents, or listings. It is the easiest goal to accomplish online.

In your next meeting with your website vendor or IT staff, talk about this. Ask this question: “Is our company information on search engines correct, and do they display correctly on mobile?” If the response drifts into obscure ambiguity – have them do something about it. If they need help, suggest that they call us.

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