



Scientific Seller

Whitepaper

Stuff Words:

**How to Squeeze Every
Last Ounce of Traffic
From Your Amazon
Keywords**

Introduction

Amazon keywords are tricky.

If you're used to Google keywords, they're deceptively different.

When asked, most sellers would emphatically say they understand the importance of keywords and do their best to find as many as they can...

...but the Amazon results tell a different story.

Very few sellers show up for the majority of long-tail searches.

The difference between doing keyword research "well enough" and doing it ***perfectly*** can be massive. We're easily talking 10% more sales per month for most products, often more. And this is with hardly any additional work!

I believe this is the single biggest opportunity for most amazon sellers to quickly improve their sales.

It also raises an interesting question:

Why does Amazon make it so hard on us?

I have to assume they just don't realize how important this is, but it must have a negative effect on their bottom line.

Unlike Google (who will stop at nothing to achieve a marginal improvement in their search results), Amazon is perfectly happy providing no results at all for a search... or just a few absolutely irrelevant results.

Even if the search is stupid, Google tries to figure out what the searcher is thinking and match them with something appropriate. This makes them quite a bit of money, actually. Some results are always better than no results.

Amazon, on the other hand, will show any product that happens to have all of those keywords stuffed into the listing somewhere, even if it is completely irrelevant to the intent of the search.

“Meh,” Amazon grunts at the potential customer.

There’s more to this. I added further thoughts to a dedicated article on the Scientific Seller blog: [Amazon's Search Engine is Not That Smart](#).

But the point is, **you won’t hear me complaining**.

This scenario is actually a win for us intelligent sellers. We have a fantastic opportunity to win traffic from boatloads of low-competition keywords... and I’m about to explain to you in detail exactly how to do it.

Hopefully even experienced sellers will find a few nice ideas in here.

To your success,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bobby MacDonald', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bobby MacDonald
Co-Founder, [ScientificSeller.com](#)

The Basics: Amazon Product Listings

Amazon only searches 4 places in a product listing to decide whether or not a product is "relevant" to a particular search.

These are:

- The Brand Name
- The Product Title
- The Product Bullets
- The Hidden "Keywords" Section

Amazon doesn't pull keywords from the product description itself or anywhere else.

They do adjust for minor variations of root words, such as plurals. The extent to which they're able to do this intelligently is a little questionable, however.

(When in doubt, include both the root word and any conjugated versions. I'll explain this further in Step 5, "Trim Word Variations.")

Every Word Counts

In order for your product to show up in a search, **every single word within a multi-word keyword must exist somewhere inside the Amazon product listing.**

For instance, say we're selling a Frying Pan, and we're trying to rank for the keyword "non-stick frying pans."

If each of the words "non-stick", "frying", and "pans" aren't somewhere in the listing (they don't have to be anywhere near each other, or in any particular order for that matter) then the product won't be considered relevant to the search.

It also won't be eligible to show up in Amazon Sponsored Product Ads (PPC), no matter how high you bid on that keyword.

That's why "non-stick frying pans" has 7,403 results, but "great non-stick frying pans" has only 715 results. The word "great" breaks that search for most products, despite the fact that it's relatively meaningless.

This causes widespread effects across the entire Amazon ecosystem.

What's a "Stuff Word"?

Searchers are nutty.

Although the word "great" doesn't really make much sense in an Amazon search, the average searcher will often type adjectives like that in there anyway.

And that's just the beginning.

So, the name of the game is to add as many relevant words to your listings as possible, for two reasons:

1. If you don't, the searcher will never know your product exists.
2. When you do show up for a search like that, **the competition is so weak that your conversion rate goes way up.**

In fact, my business partner Kevin and I have talked about this at such length that it started getting very confusing whether we were talking about a "keyword" or just a "word within a keyword."

That's why we created the term "**stuff word.**"

A keyword is something you want to rank for, or bid on in PPC; a stuff word is something you need to include in your listing in order to do that.

The keyword "blender bottle" has two Stuff Words: "blender" and "bottle."

Make sense? The keyword is what people actually search for. The Stuff Words are the words you'll want to have in your product listing so that you get found.

Note that Stuff Words "blender" and "bottle" do not need to be in the same order or even in the same part of the listing to show up for the combined keyword "blender bottle."

This becomes more important as you gather more and more keywords, and you realize how quickly you start to run out of space in your listing. This leads to ranking stuff words in a hierarchy, which I'll explain in Section 4, "Rank Your Stuff Words."

It all comes down to which stuff words appear more frequently across multiple keywords.

But we'll get to all of that soon enough. For now, we just need you to understand what a Stuff Word is.

...and now with a solid foundation, let's move onto the nitty-gritty.

A Step-by-Step Guide

For the rest of this guide, I'll be walking you through the process of researching and optimizing your listings.

First we need to find as many relevant Amazon keywords as we possibly can. Then we'll format them, in order, to squeeze as many into the listing as possible. Finally, we'll talk briefly about the PPC testing process that'll further improve our results.

The goal is to get you the absolute maximum number of sales by figuring out exactly which keywords combine to bring you the most targeted impressions possible.

Let's say we want to sell Tent Stakes on Amazon. I'll stick with that example throughout.

1. Google Keyword Planner

<http://adwords.google.com>

"Hey, I thought we were only dealing with Amazon keywords here"

Yes, but I don't know any place better than Google Keyword Planner for making sure we don't miss any root keywords.

You will unfortunately have to create an account if you don't have one already. Then go to Tools > Keyword Planner > Search for Keywords > Search for new keyword and ad group ideas.

Google Keyword Planner is better at "thinking horizontally" than any other keyword tool. It helps jump across different mini-niches to tell you about other sets of words that you may not have thought of.

I call these “root keywords” because other keywords tend to group closely to them. Missing a single root keyword can cause you to miss a whole branch of other keywords.

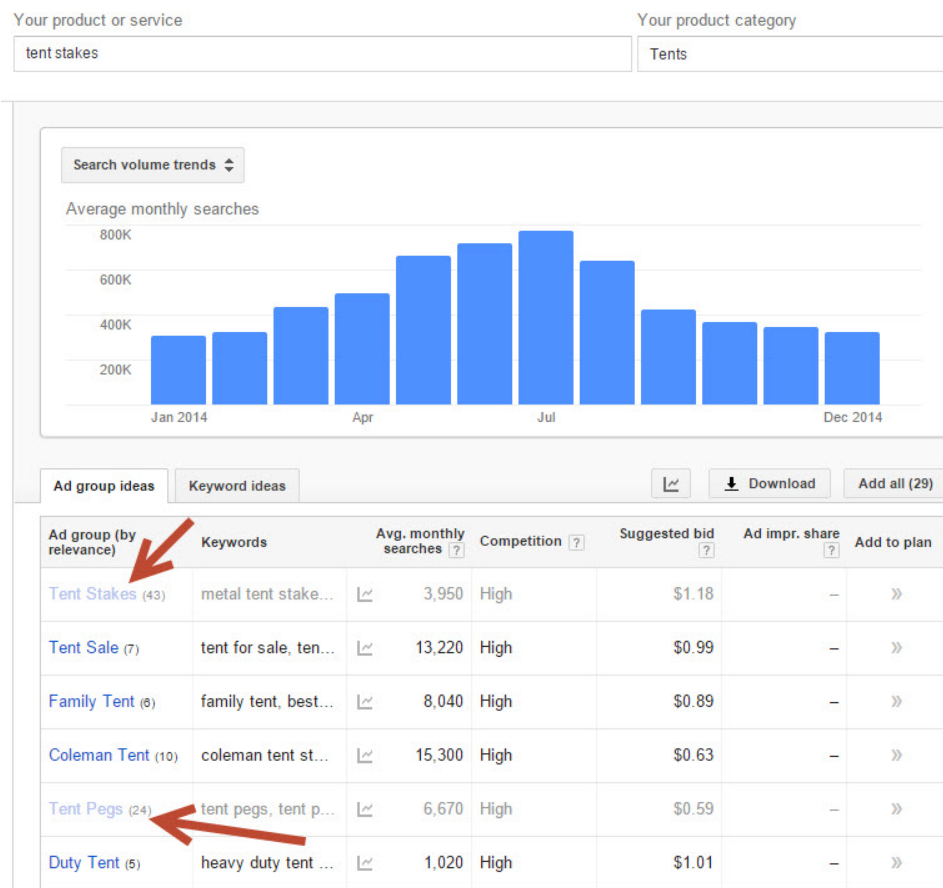
For instance, I went into this search assuming that "tent stakes" was the biggest keyword. It's even the name of the category on Amazon.

But it turns out that many more people actually search for "tent pegs", and the word pegs would have never crossed my mind if I hadn't found it in Google Keyword Planner.

Some other good ideas in here are "camping stakes", "ground stakes", "aluminum stakes", “tent spikes”, etc.

You'll find a ton of ideas. Save them all in a spreadsheet with the exact match search volume. We can filter them through Amazon later.

Here's what it looks like:



2. Check Top Amazon Competitors

Next, we're going to search for both "tent stakes" and "tent pegs" in Amazon, and click into each of the top 5 competitor results.

Look closely over their **titles** and **bullet points** for any words that stand out that you haven't thought of.

Write down any words that look like they might be something someone would search for.

This may sound obvious, but by doing this you will jump right ahead of the majority of the listings for many keywords.

For instance, Tent Stakes is an actual category on Amazon with 883 results. I clicked on that category to search within it, and typed in the word "pegs" into the search box. Only 424 results were left.

That means less than half of the products in the entire category performed our first step of keyword research! (And we haven't even gotten started.)

Every product in this entire category should show up for the word pegs. There is more search volume for it than the word stakes, and they mean the exact same thing.

More profoundly, this actually means that all those sellers who forgot about "pegs" lost the Amazon battle before they ever started. They don't show up for the majority of searches in their niche, therefore their sales will never get as high as some of their competitors'. **They won't ever get a shot at ranking at the top of their category.**

If you ever start to feel discouraged about your chances of success on Amazon, just think about how few products are actually set up properly. Then pat yourself on the back :)

3. Use Our Free Scientific Seller Keyword Tool

Generally I like to provide other options first instead of pointing directly at one of my own software products. However, in this case we really haven't found anything quite as good as what we provide for free.

And since it's free, I don't hesitate to recommend it.

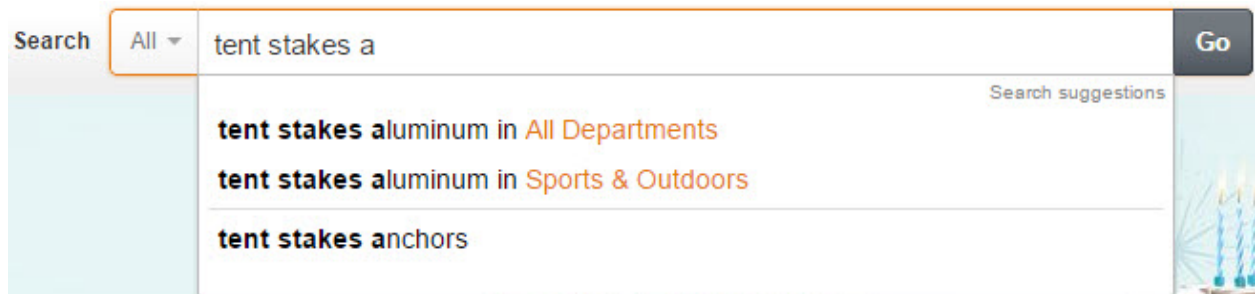
<http://app.scientificseller.com/keywordtool>

Enter your root keywords, plus any other strange ones you might have found in your competitors' listings, and let it get to work.

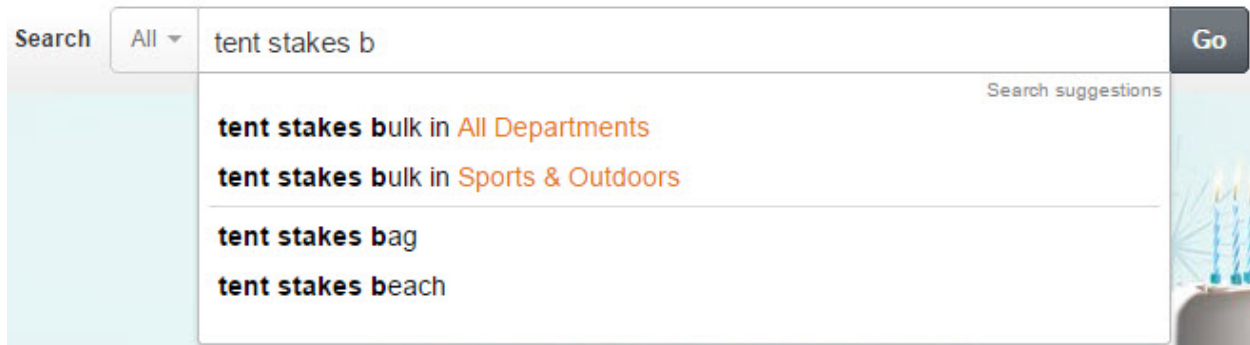
Here's what it's doing:

Essentially, this step stands in place of you going to Amazon and typing your root keywords into the search bar, writing down every keyword Amazon recommends, and then typing "keyword a" "keyword b" "keyword c" etc. into the search box in order to get all the words that start with every letter of the alphabet that are commonly searched in Amazon.

And then it starts following keywords down thousands of different branches to make sure it doesn't miss anything.



...



...etc.

You can imagine, this would take an eternity without software. It regularly attempts hundreds of thousands of different searches (!) in order to exhaustively locate related keywords.

The really nice thing about it is that **it will only return keywords that Amazon itself says are searched frequently on the site**. This is important, because an information-type keyword from Google's keyword tool is not necessarily going to be searched often on Amazon.

Most of the other “Amazon” keyword tools out there (and there aren't all that many) will mix in other keyword sources but then they won't filter them all that well. We've also seen some that gave out completely absurd search volumes that didn't stand up to real-life PPC impressions. We think that's more counterproductive than actually useful.

Long story short, we decided to build our own so we could feel completely sure our data was reliable. It also is designed to set your keywords up perfectly for the following steps, which will save us time.

There's a ton of intersection between Amazon and Google searches, but when you have a limited number of Stuff Words that you can fit into your product listing, you want to make sure you're only using Amazon keywords.

Our tool generally blows up your keyword list pretty well. Some niches are much more ridiculous than others, returning thousands of keywords. It all depends on the popularity of the product and the quality of the root keywords.

Tent stakes are about as simple as a product gets, and I still found 169 keywords.

This is just an example, though, so I may have missed a few keywords back in the initial stage. In a full search I would likely find more root words.

4. Rank Your Stuff Words

The other really nice part about our free keyword tool is that it does the following step for you automatically. But you should still understand exactly what we're doing and why.

The tool arranges your Stuff Words in order from most- to least-frequently found words within your keyword list.

So, imagine if you only had 3 keywords:

- Tent stakes
- Tent stakes aluminum
- Tent pegs

Your stuff words would be: Tent, stakes, aluminum, pegs.

Tent appears 3x, so that would be the highest-ranking stuff word. Having it in your product description would be most valuable, because it opens you up to the largest amount of potential keywords.

Stakes shows up 2x, so that would be the next highest-ranking stuff word. The other two tie at 1x each.

Make sense? This is how we can decide which words are most important to try to stuff into our product listing when we're running out of space.

There are a few things to consider here, though, that aren't taken into account automatically by the tool.

Search Volume - The free tool doesn't take search volume into consideration, which is obviously important. The reason why is because Amazon doesn't make search volumes publicly available and we didn't want to deceive you by throwing in some estimation that's not guaranteed to be true.

We felt that would be misleading.

That said, it's a pretty rare case for high-volume keywords not to be showing up towards the top of the frequency list naturally, since higher-volume keywords pretty much by default end up as parts of other keywords as well. So I usually just go with the order it provides.

Conversion Rate - This also doesn't take into account how relevant your product is to the actual keyword, which is a pretty good predictor of the rate you'll convert at.

A great conversion rate can easily cause a lower-volume keyword to be more valuable to you than a higher-volume one.

When in doubt, if you're trying to decide between which keywords to test first, go with the ones that sound closest to the actual product you're selling. If your product is red, you may not get too much mileage out of including "blue" as a Stuff Word.

Side Note: These considerations are only temporary while deciding what to test first. In a later step, if you run PPC properly, you'll have 100% accurate Amazon keyword and conversion data so we won't have to guess any more. Don't stress.

5. Trim Word Variations

Amazon does make some very small concessions to try to make your life easier as a seller. It tries to pick up on different variations of the same words.

For instance, "Stake" and "Stakes" both count as the same word to Amazon. You don't need to stuff both of them into your listing. It makes sense to always go with the shorter version of the word to save space.

This can get a little hairy when you move towards other variations, like "-ing" "-er", etc., because you never know for sure exactly how good Amazon's interpretation engine is in each case.

If you want to know for sure, just include one of the variations in your listing and then run a search for the other variation a few minutes later (once it's indexed in their search engine) to see if your product shows up.

6. Place a Few Stuff Words into Your Title & Bullets (Without Sounding Unnatural)

Seriously, your #1 goal with your title and your bullets is to get clicks and convert sales. It's not worth hurting your conversion rate in order to fit extra keywords, but you will be able to place a few in there anyway, so go for it.

Any words that you can't figure out how to fit naturally into a sentence will be saved for the next step.

One factor to consider is that there are some "universal stuff words" that are easy to fit into titles and bullets, which also increase conversions. Words like "Best", "Review", "Top", "Discount", among many others.

Even if they don't show up in the keyword tool for your particular search, they show up so often as Amazon keywords that we feel it's almost always worth including them if possible.

That's certainly not an exhaustive list above, but we may put one together in the future.

7. Fill the "Search Terms" Section with as Many Remaining Keywords as You Can Fit

If you go into your inventory and click "Edit" on a product listing, then click on the "Keywords" section, you'll find 5 fields labeled "Search Terms".

I often refer to this as the “**Hidden Keywords**” section.

These don't show up anywhere on your listing, not even in the source code, but they do allow you to rank for a ton more keywords than you otherwise could.

Amazon doesn't even explain how to properly use this Search Terms section, so it's highly likely that you don't know how to set this up for best effect. If that's true, you are missing out on a ton of opportunities.

Amazon's explanation of this section would lead you to believe that you should enter one keyword into each box, or possibly use commas, but none of that is true.

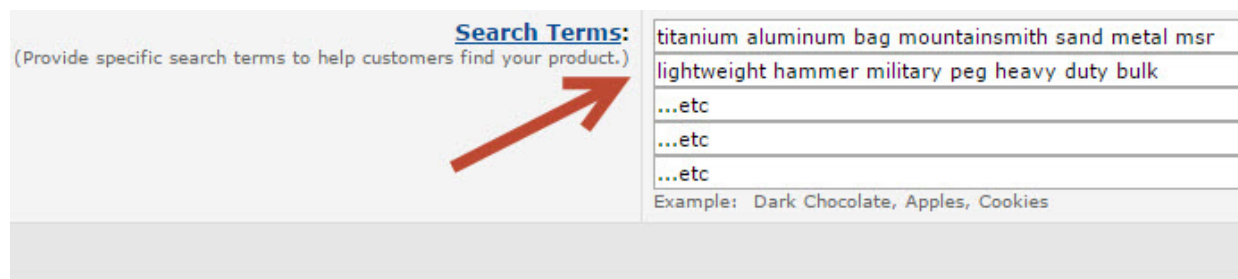
What you should do is stuff as many stuff words in here as you possibly can, separated by spaces, in no particular order.

These are not keywords, they are Stuff Words. If you have a few spaces at the end of the line, find a short word to toss in there.

(This is a great place to put competitor brand names and any other sneaky keywords you don't want competitors to be able to see.)

Then click Save and Finish.

Check out the first two lines in the image below for an example:



The image shows a screenshot of the Amazon Seller Central interface for the 'Search Terms' field. The field is titled 'Search Terms:' and has a subtext '(Provide specific search terms to help customers find your product.)'. A red arrow points to the first two lines of the search terms. The first line contains 'titanium aluminum bag mountainsmith sand metal msr' and the second line contains 'lightweight hammer military peg heavy duty bulk'. Below these are three lines of '...etc'. At the bottom of the field, there is an example: 'Example: Dark Chocolate, Apples, Cookies'. Below the field are two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Save and finish'.

Cancel Save and finish

8. Assemble Your Extra Keywords into Four Lists

It's important to keep track of all your keywords for testing purposes. When you come back in a few weeks, you'll have forgotten how they were arranged.

The Advanced Mode of our keyword tool does this stuff automatically, but you can do it yourself too.

Here are the four lists:

- Keywords
- Stuff Words
- Future Test Keywords
- Future Test Stuff Words

Whatever words you couldn't fit into the last round get filed under the two Future columns. You can rotate those in later to see how many impressions and conversions they get.

Edit (3/31/16): The "hidden keywords" section used to hold a max of 250 characters, but they've increased that to between 1,000-5,000 characters (depending on your product category). That means you may get lucky and be able to fit all of your stuff words into your product listing on the first attempt, depending how many you find. Woohoo!

9. Run Amazon Sponsored Product Ads (PPC) for Every Keyword

You can only run PPC on "relevant keywords," which in Amazon's language means keywords where you have all the stuff words included your product listing. Otherwise you won't get any impressions no matter how high you bid.

PPC is very cheap on Amazon (though getting pricier every year), and often ends up earning a nice amount of money. Particularly the long-tail keywords we've been finding in this report.

But one side benefit of PPC is that **it's also the only way to get accurate search volume data for keywords.**

Note: You have to be fully out-bidding your competitors in order to get true search volume data, otherwise you may not see every impression.

PPC is really a whole giant topic for another article. We built an entire PPC management tool, in fact. Today, we'll focus mostly on keyword research.

Once you've been running PPC for a few weeks / months you'll have an idea of the average search volumes for your keywords. We could get really deep into all this stuff, talking about seasonality and whatnot, but again this is really not a PPC guide so I'm trying to keep this section reasonable.

Statistically significant conversion data will take much longer to achieve than search volume data, particularly with small keywords. So just keep that in mind as you're running your campaigns over time, and the longer they go, the bigger an advantage you will build.

10. Analyze Your Impressions, Rank Keywords Biggest to Smallest and By Profitability if Available

By comparing the search volumes of various Stuff Words and routinely swapping weak ones out for new test words, you can truly maximize the amount of impressions that your listings receive.

By keeping track of your conversion data, you can figure out what your best keywords are and then go fight for organic rankings on those. Fortunately, if they're long tails that you found through this method, they shouldn't be tough to rank for.

Just remember that zero impressions can often mean you're either not bidding high enough or you're missing a Stuff Word in your product listing.

At this point in the game, all there is left to do is occasionally swap in new test keywords and gather more data. Wash, rinse, repeat.

Summary

I hope this guide has been helpful. I love Amazon; there's just so much opportunity for us.

Despite its flaws, it's actually really nice to work on a platform that has a few imperfections. These imperfections open giant opportunities for analytical people like you and I.

Finally, since you read to the end, would you consider taking a quick second to reply to the email I sent you (from info@scientificseller.com) and let me know what you thought of this report?

I read every response.

And remember, you can find our free keyword tool at:

<http://app.scientificseller.com/keywordtool>