

How to Fix The Biggest Keyword Mistakes on Your Website

Step-By-Step Instructions to Fix Your Broken SEO

Most small businesses do SEO backwards. They spend hours doing keyword research, write a ton of content, hit publish... and then nothing happens.

No traffic.

No rankings.

No progress.

This tutorial walks through the **five biggest keyword mistakes** people make — and how to fix all of them using simple, repeatable steps. Follow this process and your content will actually rank.

Step 1: Stop Using “Near Me” on Your Website

Why this matters:

Google already knows where the searcher is. Writing “*landscaping company near me*” on your site doesn’t help — it makes your content look unnatural.

What to do instead: explain where you’re at

- Use real geographic keywords:
 - *Landscaping services in St. Catharines*
 - *Dentist in Brooklyn*
 - *Tattoo artist in Hamilton*

How to fix it:

1. Open your homepage or service page.
2. Find any instance of “near me”.
3. Replace it with your city, neighborhood, or service area.
4. Update your **title tag** and **H1** to include the real location.
5. Confirm your Google Business Profile location matches.

Result: You’ll still rank for “near me” queries because you’ve optimized for actual locations.

Step 2: Choose Keywords You Can Actually Rank For

The big problem: going too big, too soon

Most small businesses chase keywords that are way too competitive. If your site has low authority, you won't outrank big national players — no matter how good your article is.

What matters:

Every site has an **authority score**. Many small business sites sit around **5–20**, which is normal. It just means you should target lower-difficulty keywords first.

How to fix it:

1. Open your keyword tool (RankCheck Pro works great).
2. Search your main topic.
3. Filter for difficulty **0–29** (or **0–19** to play it safest).
4. Ignore high-volume “hero” keywords for now.
5. Look for keywords with **10–50** searches/month and note any with difficulty “**NA**”.
6. Build a starter list of **20–30** easy keywords.

Why this works: 20 easy keywords × 50 searches = **~1,000 visitors** you can actually win. That builds momentum and authority.

Step 3: Use Keyword Variations

The mistake: stopping at one keyword per page

People pick one keyword, write one article, and move on — leaving easy traffic on the table.

How to fix it:

1. Take your main keyword. Example: *best tattoo shop in Houston*.
2. Open your tool's “Related” or “Variations” tab.
3. Select **5–10** closely related variations, such as:
 - *best tattoo shop in Houston, TX*
 - *affordable tattoos Houston*
 - *fine line tattoos Houston*
4. Add short sections or paragraphs addressing each variation in the **same article**.
5. **Do not** create separate posts for each (avoids cannibalization).

Result: One article now ranks for 7–12 keywords instead of one — same content, more traffic.

Step 4: Match the Search Intent

This is Where Rankings Live or Die

The issue: not matching what people search for

You can have the perfect keyword, but if your **content format** doesn't match what Google shows, you'll lose.

Three core intents:

- **Informational** — “how to fix a leaky faucet” (guides, tutorials)
- **Commercial** — “best CRM for small business” (comparisons, lists, reviews)
- **Transactional** — “hire a plumber in Madison” (service pages, pricing, CTAs)

How to fix it:

1. Google your keyword.
2. Study the **top 3 results**.
3. Note the format: listicle, how-to, buying guide, video, etc.
4. Match that format — then make yours **better** (fresh data, examples, case studies).
5. Mirror successful pages' structure in your H2/H3s.

Example: If top results are “Top 10” lists, a salesy landing page won't rank. Create a superior “Top 10” with real comparisons.

Step 5: Check Backlink Competition Before You Write

The mistake: going too big (again)

People skip checking how many links the competition has – their link authority. Even “easy” keywords can be dominated by pages with hundreds of links.

Referring domains > total backlinks

Referring domains = unique websites linking to a page. Ten links from one site = 1 referring domain. Ten links from ten sites = **10** referring domains (much stronger).

How to fix it:

1. In your tool, open the SERP for your target keyword.
2. Check positions 1–5 and note each page's **referring domains**.
3. Compare to your site's ability to earn links.

Their Referring Domains	Your Chance of Ranking
0–10	Very high
10–40	Possible with strong content

Their Referring Domains

40–100

100+

Your Chance of Ranking

Hard without link building

Unlikely (choose another keyword)

If the gap is huge: pick a different keyword. Choose battles you can win.

SEO Keyword Checklist

Before you hit publish, run your content through this quick checklist. If you can check off every item, you're in great shape.

1. No **"near me"** keywords anywhere on the page
2. You've used **real cities, neighborhoods, or service areas**
3. You selected a keyword with **difficulty 0–29** (ideally 0–19)
4. You found at least **5–10 keyword variations** and added them naturally
5. Your article format **matches the search intent** of the top 3 Google results
6. You checked the competition's **referring domains** (not just backlinks)
7. Your chosen keyword is not dominated by pages with **100+ referring domains**
8. Your article answers the main question clearly and thoroughly
9. Your title tag and H1 accurately include your **topic + location** (if local)
10. Your page is more helpful, more complete, or more updated than the top competitors

If you can check off at least 8 out of 10: you've created something that can realistically rank.

If you nailed all 10: you're ahead of 90% of small business websites.

Final Thoughts

None of this is complicated — but most people miss these steps. Use this checklist every time you publish and you'll move faster with less effort.

Need easy-win keywords? Try [RankCheck Pro](#). Start with low-difficulty queries, add variations, match intent, and sanity-check referring domains before you write.

[Find Low-Competition Keywords](#)

Glossary

Quick definitions for terms used in this tutorial.

Keyword Difficulty

A score (from SEO tools) estimating how hard it is to rank for a keyword based on current competitors and their link strength.

Authority Score

A tool-specific metric that approximates how trusted/strong a domain is. Higher authority generally means it can rank for tougher keywords.

Referring Domains

The number of *unique websites* linking to a page. Ten links from one site = 1 referring domain; ten links from ten sites = 10 referring domains (much stronger).

Backlinks

All inbound links to a page or domain. Useful, but less telling than unique **referring domains**.

Search Intent

The reason behind a search. Common types:

- **Informational:** learn something (guides, how-tos)
- **Commercial:** compare options (best X, reviews)
- **Transactional:** take action (buy, hire, book)

Keyword Variations

Close alternatives of your main keyword (synonyms, qualifiers, location modifiers) you can target in one comprehensive article.

Keyword Cannibalization

When multiple pages on your site target the same keyword and compete with each other, hurting rankings for all of them.

“NA” Difficulty

When a tool shows “Not Available/Not Enough Data” for difficulty. Often means extremely low competition — a potential easy win.

SERP

Search Engine Results Page — what you see after you Google something. Studying the top results shows you the winning content format.

Title Tag

The clickable blue headline in Google. Crucial for relevance and click-through. Include your topic (and city if local).

H1

The main on-page heading — should match the page topic and support the title tag. Use one per page.

Google Business Profile

Your free business listing in Google (maps and local pack). Ensure name, address, phone, and categories match your site.

Local Keywords

Real places you serve (city, neighborhood, county). Use these instead of writing “near me” on your pages.

Link Building

Getting other reputable sites to link to your pages. Focus on earning **referring domains** from relevant, trustworthy sites.

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