



Building a Search Intent-Driven Website Architecture

Understand intent and build a user experience to match it



Who am I?

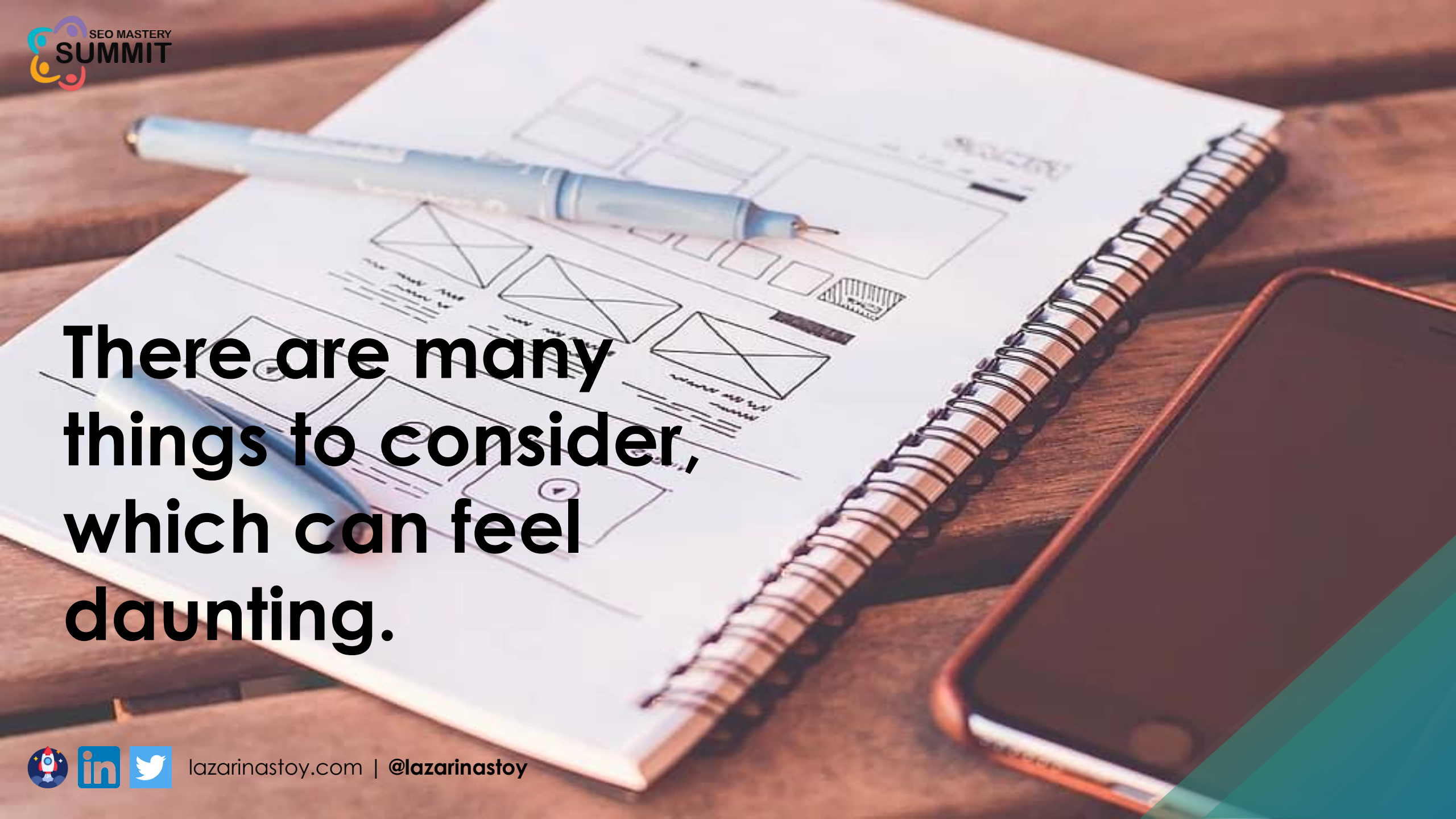


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Website planning is complex and can get quite messy.





There are many things to consider, which can feel daunting.



In this presentation, I will...

- 🔥 propose a continuous improvement planning approach for web architecture
 - 🔥 highlight the importance of goal-driven site architecture planning
 - 🔥 highlight the relationship between site goals, user personas, and search intent
 - 🔥 demonstrate ways of considering search intent in both page planning and structure planning
 - 🔥 highlight the benefits of having an intent-driven website architecture
 - 🔥 highlight different ways to troubleshoot for intent mismatch
 - 🔥 recommend some further reading to get set you on a path of success
- ✨ ✨



BUT BEFORE WE BEGIN...



WHAT IS SEARCH INTENT?



Search intent is **the reason** why someone would write a query and submit it to search engines.



It represents **an objective** that the searcher is trying to accomplish through their online journey.



WHAT ARE THE MAIN TYPES OF SEARCH INTENT?



Users with **informational search intent** query the web indicating an **intent to locate a particular information snippet**, which can help them **satisfy an knowledge need** they are struggling with.



Users with **navigational search intent** demonstrate a desire to be taken to a **specific location** of an organisation they are already **brand-aware** of.

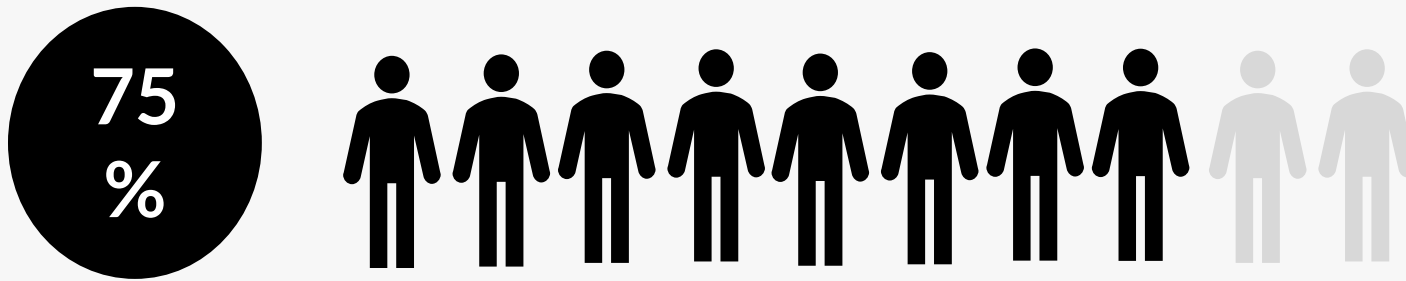


Users with a **transactional search intent** demonstrate a desire to obtain something other than information, typically **performing a web-mediated transaction.**



ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC STUDIES...

75% of queries can be classified into a single category of user intent



25% of queries can be attributed to more than one search intent.



From these 25%, we can already distinguish patterns, which form new categories of intent.



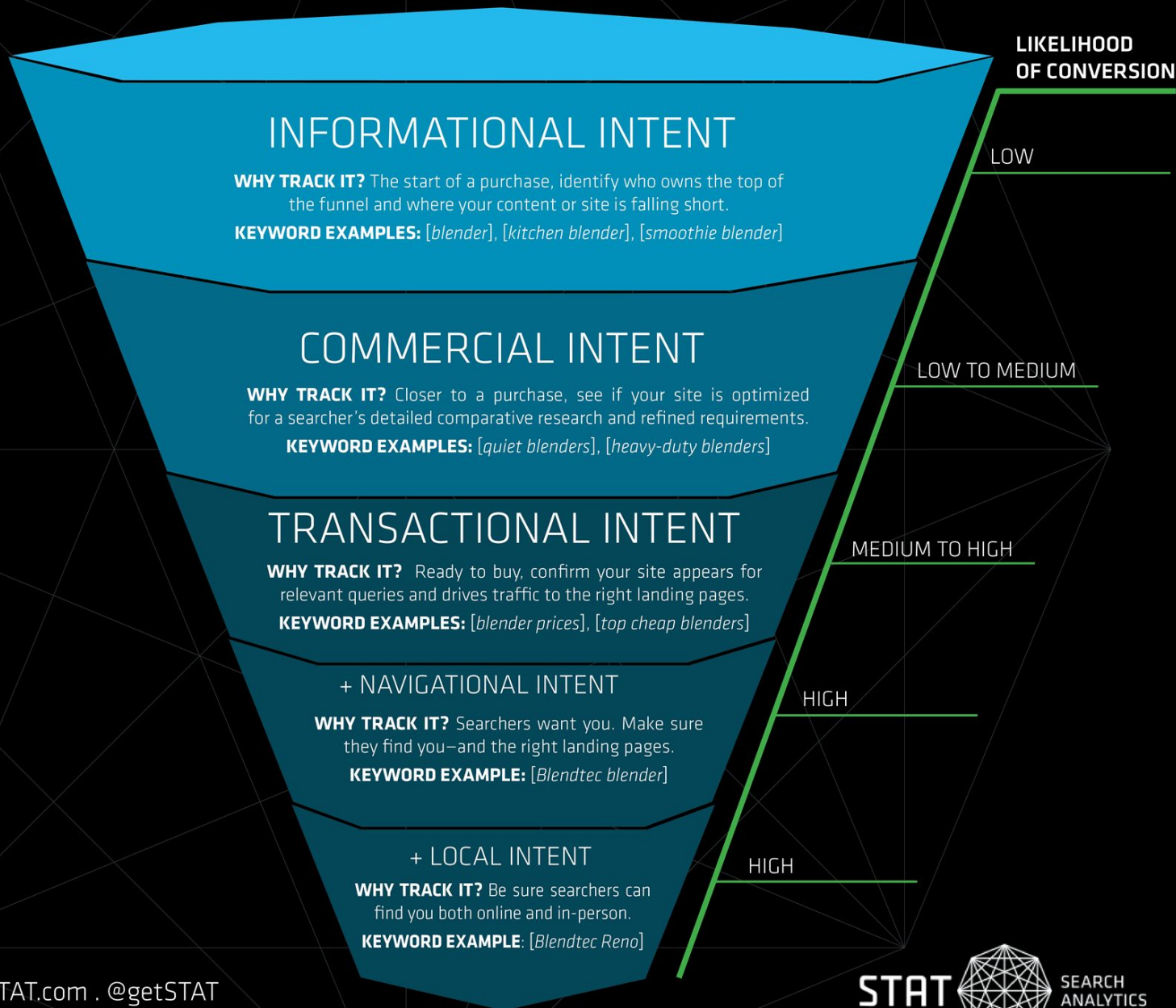
Which intent type component do they have?	Commercial Intent	Localised Intent
1 Informational	✓	✗
2 Navigational	✓	✓
3 Transactional	✓	✓

The user with localised intent indicates a desire to complete a transaction physically, or an effort to find a solution to a recognised need that is close in physical and geographical proximity to them.

The user with commercial intent wants to gain more information to inform their comparative evaluation of organisations they are already brand-aware of, with the aim of better informing their purchase

Understanding intent and how to target it
can lead to **better performance
management.**





🔥 Conversion prediction

🔥 Full-funnel SEO-enabled marketing strategy

...and not to mention...

happy visitors 🎉.



Knowing this, we need to take a **continuous approach** to website architecture planning, which is **aligned with intent, user personas, and goals.**



What are the KPIs?

What are your key KPIs for the website? What is its primary purpose? How will you measure the pages' success? Organic visits? Revenue? Leads generated?

What type of visitors are needed to fulfill these goals?

What are the personas of these users? Where do they get their information from? What languages and terminology can you use to address them directly? What is their behavioural path on the website in the ideal scenario?

How can you evolve alongside the search intent?

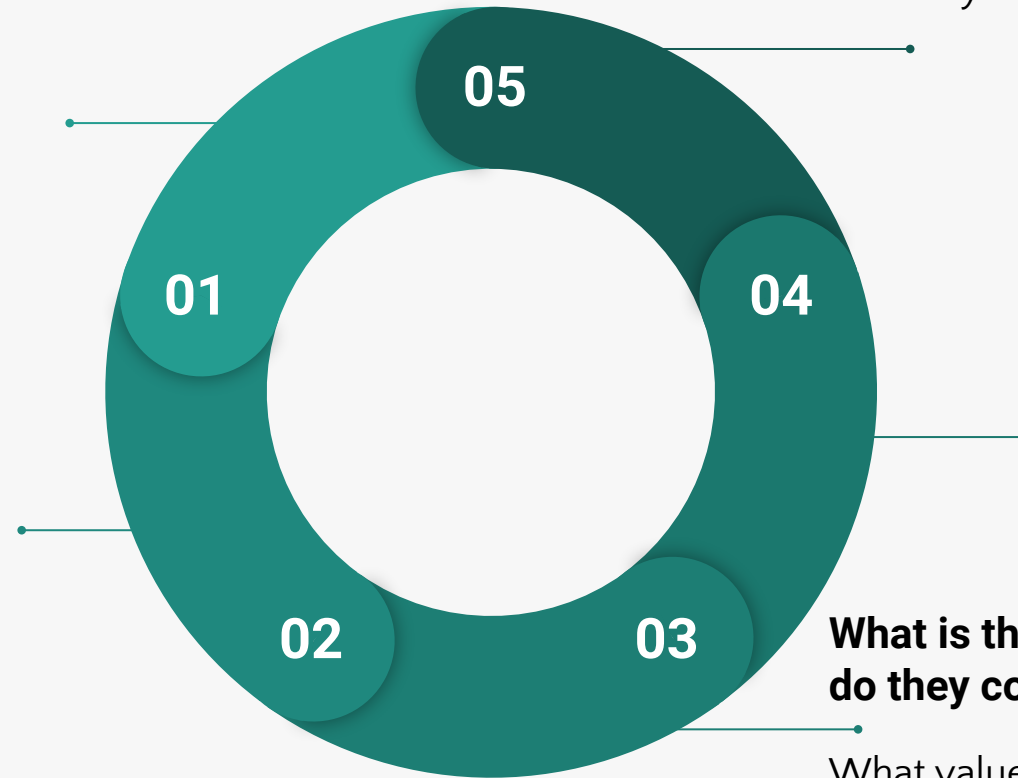
The user journey in reality is complex and intent is evolving. Being wary of the changes, benchmarking, and modifying the architecture is key for success.

What do you want them to see?

Which pages are your money-makers? Which bring the most traffic? Here we discuss positioning, messaging, optimisations, and internal linking strategies and tactics for maximising the impact of architecture.

What is the intent of your visitors? What do they come to see on the website?

What value does your website provide? How are you going to persuade visitors to choose your website and business over the millions others on the web. Here we will discuss competitive advantages, keyword intent matching, and value-driven planning.






KPIs & PERFORMANCE


Performance can be highly volatile,
however, changes often tell important stories
about intent alignment.



Here are some of the main KPIs and what they signal regarding search intent:



Organic Sessions, Clicks  , combined with a low  Bounce rate (and other engagement metric modules ) = Intent Match

Intent match typically results in higher keyword ranking positions  overtime for the target keywords.





The target **query characteristics** of an intent match page will **signal the prominent intent it has matched**.

➔ Short-tail, high volume queries are typically informational in nature and don't engage users for long

➔ Long-tail, low volume queries are more likely to align with a higher engagement.



Intent match for high-volume keywords will result in more impressions , and respectively higher search metrics  (Clicks, CTR, maybe even position).

However, high traffic for low intent keywords means a lesser likelihood of conversions (goal completions) 



INTENT-DRIVEN USER PERSONAS



Enterprise Erin

Ecommerce Manager at enterprise or large store / company with large operations.



Overview

- 100+ employees
- \$5m+ turnover (sometimes considerably higher)
- Already operates in many territories / marketplaces

Frustrations

- Has pressure from above to expand cross border and is looking for a self contained solution
- Has skills gaps in her team or organisation/doesn't want to build a cross border trade team herself
- Skill gaps are often unpredictable / random
- Has capacity and resourcing problems

Needs

- Looking for a reliable, proactive and flexible partner (who tailors services to her and proactively searches for new sales channels)
- Credibility (case studies)
- Reputation
- Stability



David Miller

- 28
- New-York
- Product Designer
- Living with his girlfriend

Bio

Lives in a rented apartment, 2.5 rooms, with his student girlfriend, works in a high-tech job. Likes hosting people. After a long day at work, he likes to throw on the couch with his girlfriend in front of the TV.

Wants & Needs

- Create a cozy atmosphere at home with innovative design.
- Design the house at low investment and without much effort.

Tech

- Internet ●●●●●
- Social Media ●●●●●
- Online Shopping ●●●●●
- Gadgets ●●●●●
- Early Adopter ●●●●●

Favorite Brands



Frustrations

- Don't want to spend money on interior designer and he doesn't have much time to deal with the design planning.
- He designs his apartment, but he thinks that she can look much better.

" I really want to create a lovely home, with my existing furniture... "

Building personas is all about **pattern recognition**. Shared pain points, shared experiences, shared expectations, and so on...







The process will also highlight the inevitable:





Your website will likely target different personas to satisfy vastly different goals.



And so, a spectrum forms...



-  New Users
-  Clicks
-  Goal completions
-  Bounce Rate

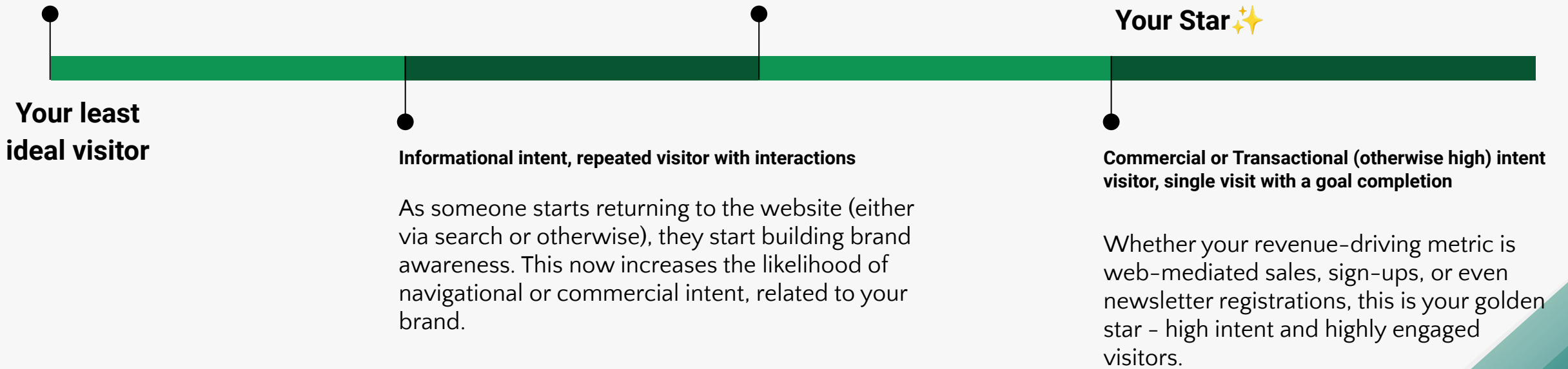
-  Sessions
-  Clicks
-  Interactions
-  Bounce Rate

Informational intent, one-time visitor

These are likely your least desired visitors. They can be bouncers, pogo-sticking, or simply information-driven. Some might not even notice the brand name or service.

Commercial intent, single visit no goal completion

While this user puts you into consideration, they are likely in the same category with the least ideal visitor. This is a purchase that was uncaptured, yet the intent was present.










Informational intent, repeated visitor with interactions

As someone starts returning to the website (either via search or otherwise), they start building brand awareness. This now increases the likelihood of navigational or commercial intent, related to your brand.

Commercial or Transactional (otherwise high) intent visitor, single visit with a goal completion

Whether your revenue-driving metric is web-mediated sales, sign-ups, or even newsletter registrations, this is your golden star - high intent and highly engaged visitors.

-  Sessions
-  Clicks
-  Goal completions / Interactions

-  Sessions
-  Clicks
-  Money-making interactions
-  Bounce Rate

Placing user personas on an intent spectrum, tied to goals and KPIs will change the way you see keyword research and link building.



Or, otherwise, it will streamline your perception of both on-page and off-page optimisations needed to reach your goals.



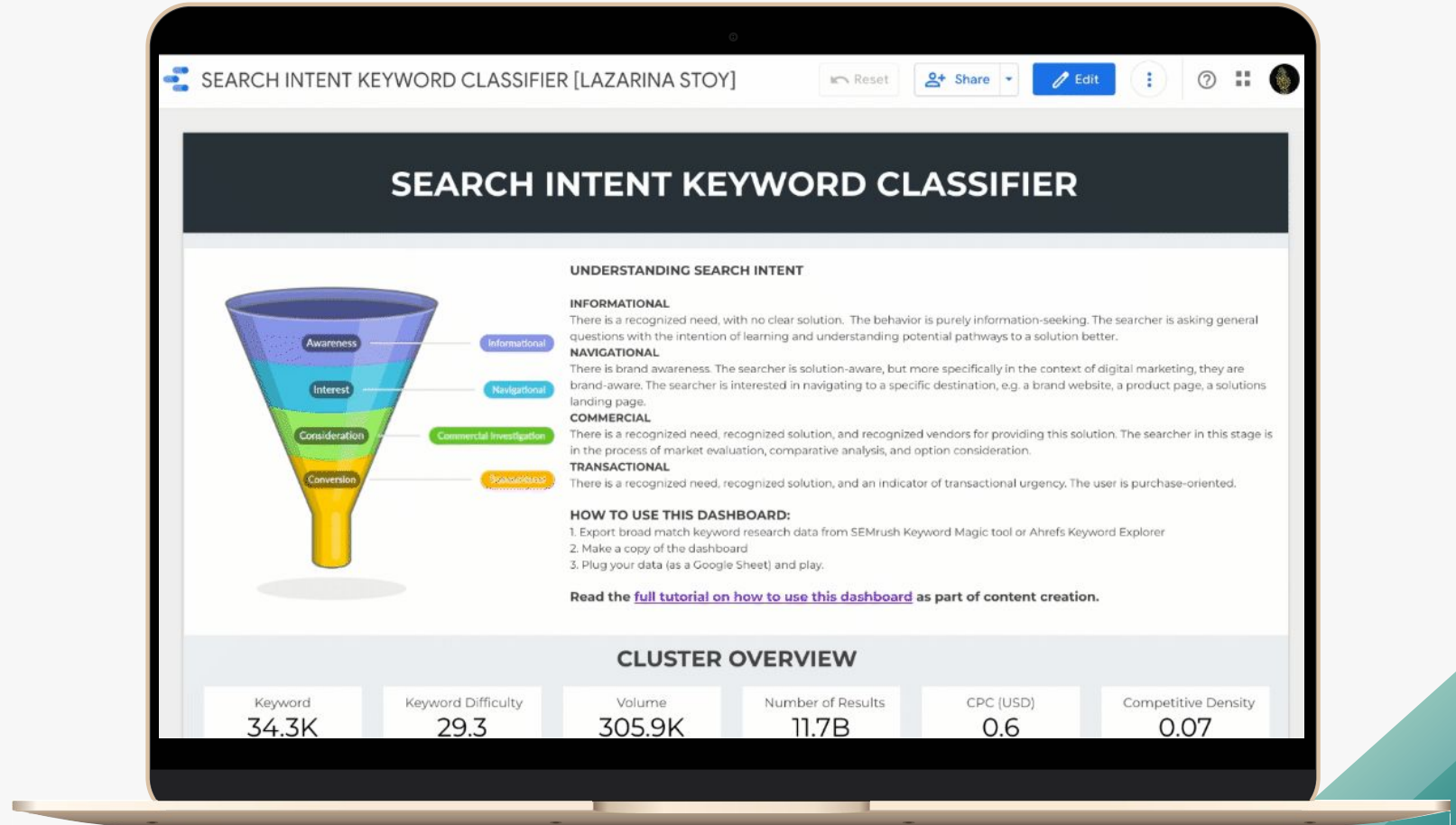
OPTIMIZE THE SITE'S MAIN PAGES, BASED
ON THE TYPE OF INTENT THEY SERVE



Intent-driven on-page optimisation starts with intent-driven keyword research and SERP analysis.



I've talked a lot about keyword research in the past, so I'll focus on SERPs...



SERP analysis is a crucial step in determining your **search** competitors, their unique advantages and limitations, and the market gap.



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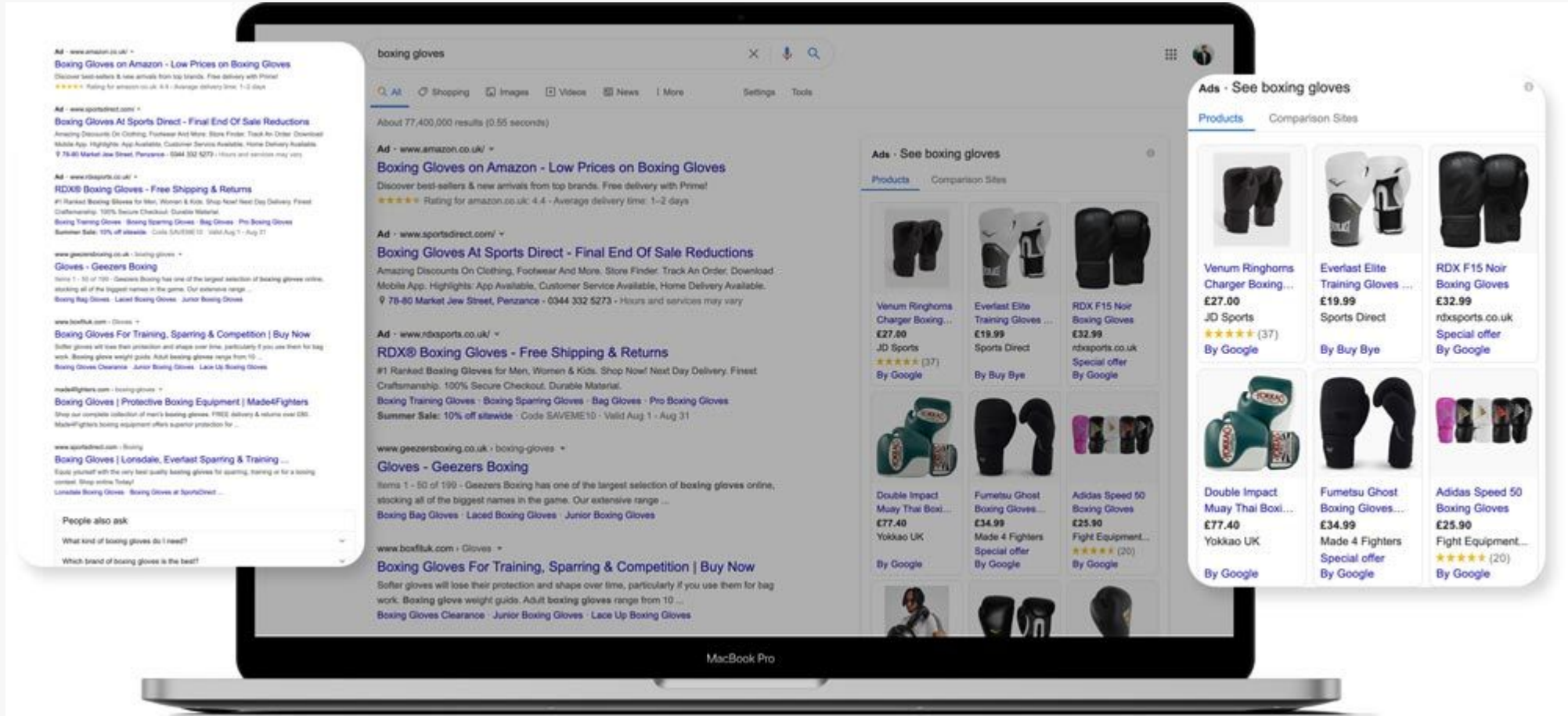


Google has the **advantage of scale** (in search patterns) and **hindsight**. This enables a great deal of **reinforcement learning** and **prediction of search patterns** and **user intent**.



Google **strives to satisfy user queries** with the most relevant content **as quickly as possible**.
Meaning that result pages are full of content reflecting what most of the searchers making a query will be looking for.





While in pages with mixed intent or uncertain intent, Google has introduced a variety of **rich results alternatives**, which can serve as **indicators of the potential intent distribution**.



BOXING GLOVES

When **boxing** first appeared in the Olympics in 688 B.C., Greek fighters wrapped their hands with oil-softened oxhide leather strips called himantes. Those evolved into a cestus, which is the ancient form of a **boxing glove** as we know it today.

www.titleboxing.com › history-of-boxing-equipment ▼

The Complete History of Boxing Equipment | TITLE Boxing Gear

en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Boxing_glove ▼

Boxing glove - Wikipedia

Jump to **History** · Boxing experienced a revival in Britain around the 17th century. Many bouts were fought with bare knuckles and with no standard rules until Jack Broughton introduced boxing rules known as Broughton's Law in the 18th century, where the **gloves** were used for practice purposes only.

Features · Types of gloves · Safety · Influence of boxing gloves ...

People also ask

When did they start using boxing gloves? ▼

What are boxing gloves filled with? ▼

Why do boxers wear gloves physics? ▼

What do boxing gloves symbolize? ▼

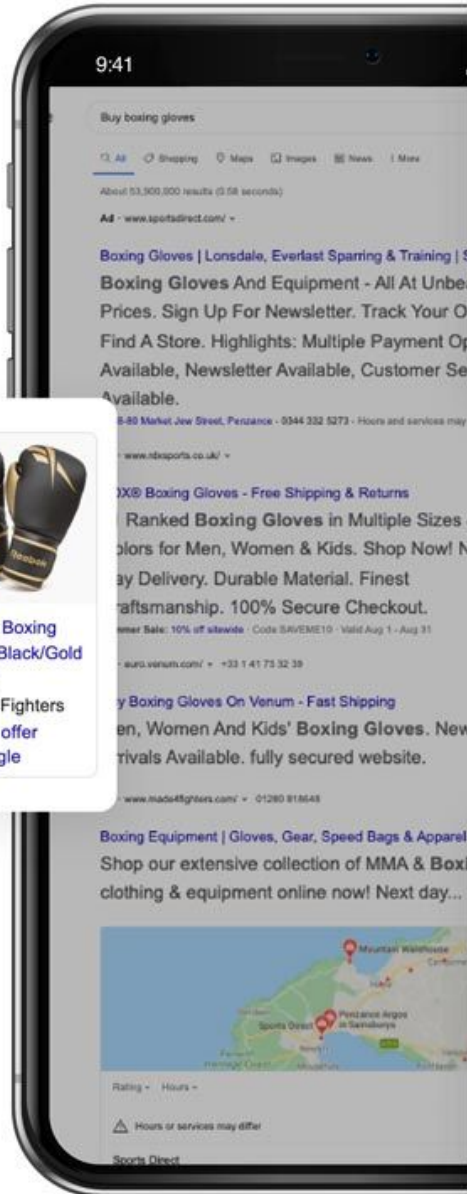
Feedback

boxingaddicts.com › boxing-gloves-history-and-how-t... ▼




Boxing Gloves History And How They Have Changed Over ...




The modern day boxing glove wouldn't surface until around 1773, invented by Jack Broughton who is considered the father of boxing by many. The gloves wouldn't ...




Ancient Boxing Gloves · Early Thai Form Of Boxing ... · Modern Day Boxing Gloves



Products Comparison Sites


 <p>Venum Ringhorns Charger Boxing... £27.00 JD Sports ★★★★★ (37) By Google</p>	 <p>Everlast Elite Training Gloves ... £19.99 Sports Direct By Buy Bye</p>	 <p>RDX F15 Noir Boxing Gloves £32.99 rdxsports.co.uk Special offer By Google</p>
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 <p>Double Impact Muay Thai Boxi... £77.40 Yokkao UK By Google</p>	 <p>Adidas Hybrid 100 Boxing Gloves £28.99 Fight Equipment... ★★★★★ (11) By Google</p>	 <p>Reebok Boxing Gloves Black/Gold £34.99 Made 4 Fighters Special offer By Google</p>
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Start by **researching SERPs** for intent-reflecting **keyword variations** of your main target phrases.



 to do this, you need a **solid grasp on the main phrases** and query characteristics **that signal intent**




A quick recap:



Understand **why the content in the top three ranks as it does** - what are your competitors' **unique characteristics** that help them **match the user intent?**



 **Break down these pages** and content characteristics **into components**, e.g. title structure, page structure, on-page elements, schema implementation, backlinks, internal linking...



Tie the insights of this research with
your **goals and user personas.**

Which elements help achieve
what you strive for?



Now... you are ready to build.

Generally speaking...

Resource Pages → **Informational**
Intent

Company Pages → **Navigational**
Intent

Product Pages → **Transactional**
Intent



1

Increasing traffic

Traffic-driven metrics can be moved via content, on-page and off-page optimisations. Primarily this is impacted by high-traffic content, that appeals to a mass audience from the market segment, yet who are unlikely to convert as well.

2

Increasing leads and conversions

Generating leads and conversions is a matter of understanding and matching pages to high-intent queries, and optimising the site for BoFu users.

3

Building brand awareness

Building brand awareness is essentially the aim of inspiring navigational intent. This can be done through effective PR (off-page), and skillful crafting of branded messages on and off site. Also, from a more technical standpoint building brand SERPs.



Resource pages...

- aim to increase organic traffic via serving an informational search intent
- sometimes serve more than one intent
- can be optimised to support other goals (e.g. CRO initiatives)



Company pages...

- assist with employer branding
- satisfy navigational searches
- help establish the credibility of the business



Product pages...

- are likely the **money-makers** ✨
- can be product listings, solution pages, features deep-dives, tech specifications, pricing pages, depending on the type of business
- **highly competitive, high value**
- the place where visitors convert



Search engines usually have a **way of categorising transactional searches** from non-transactional searches and adjusting the results accordingly.



In practice, this means that your transactional pages will receive fewer placements in search results, which corresponds with the funnel and the nicheness of these type of searches.



This is where the gap-bridging occurs...



After understanding your market, search patterns, and personas, and building your pages accordingly, you will **implement architecture elements that bridge the gap between what users want and what the business needs.**

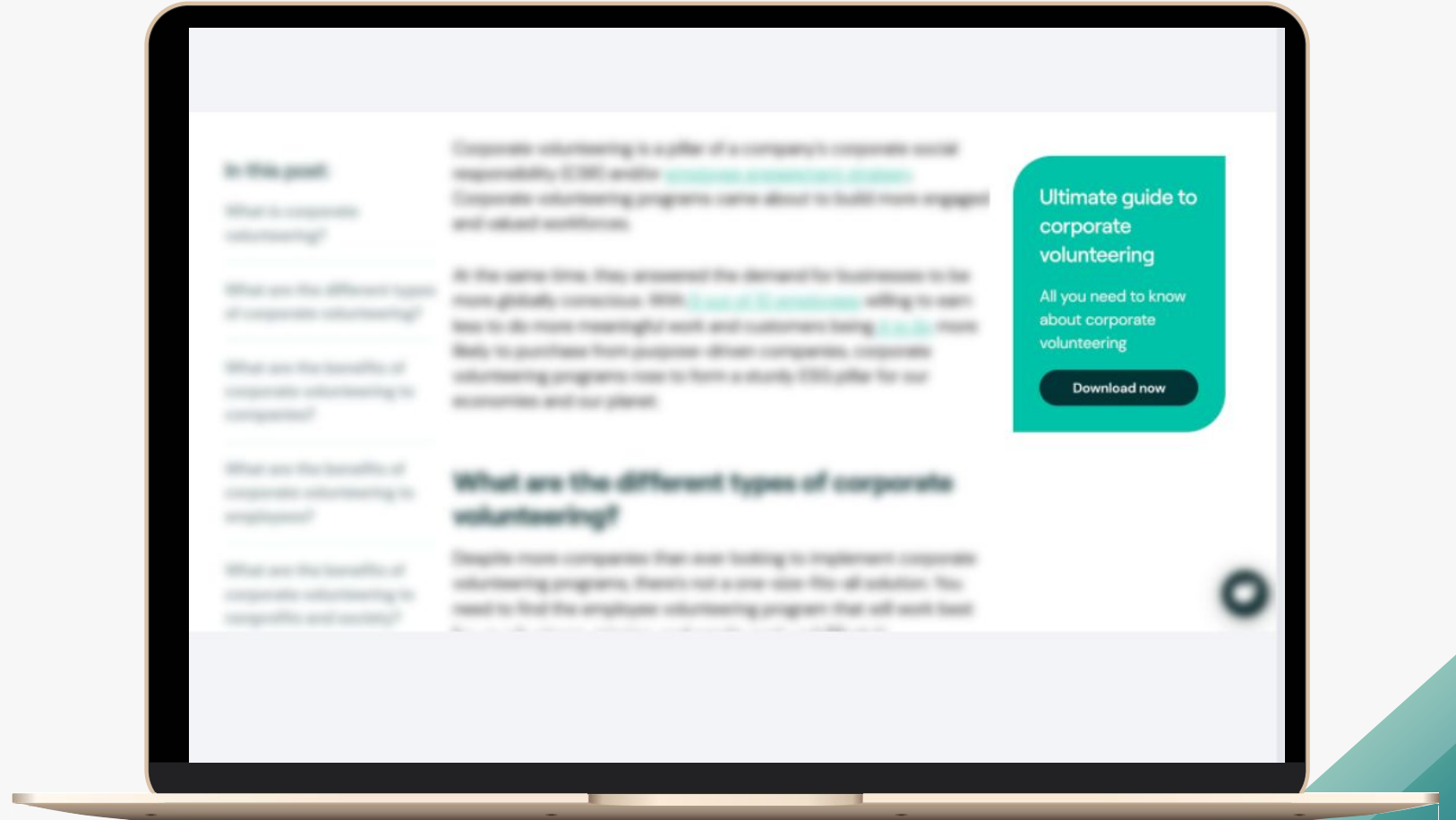


Here are some of my favourite tactics to help you **streamline the website architecture** from the get-go and enable better page discoverability.



Side box CTAs

- link from resource pages to sign-up or money pages
- can also be text-based content-based

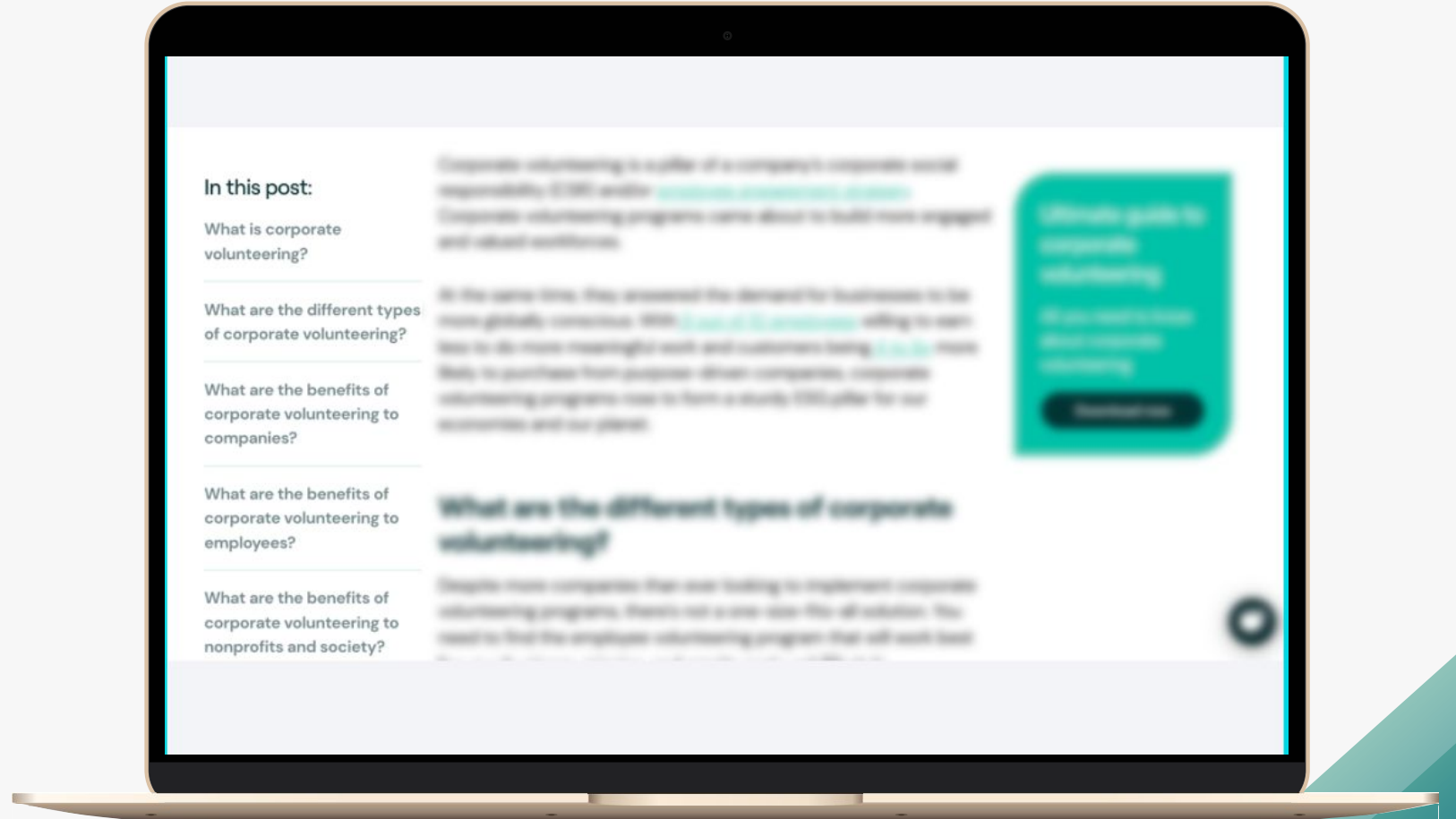


💡 For advanced performance, match the intent-type of the page, where the CTA is placed with the message on the CTA box and the action you require from the user.



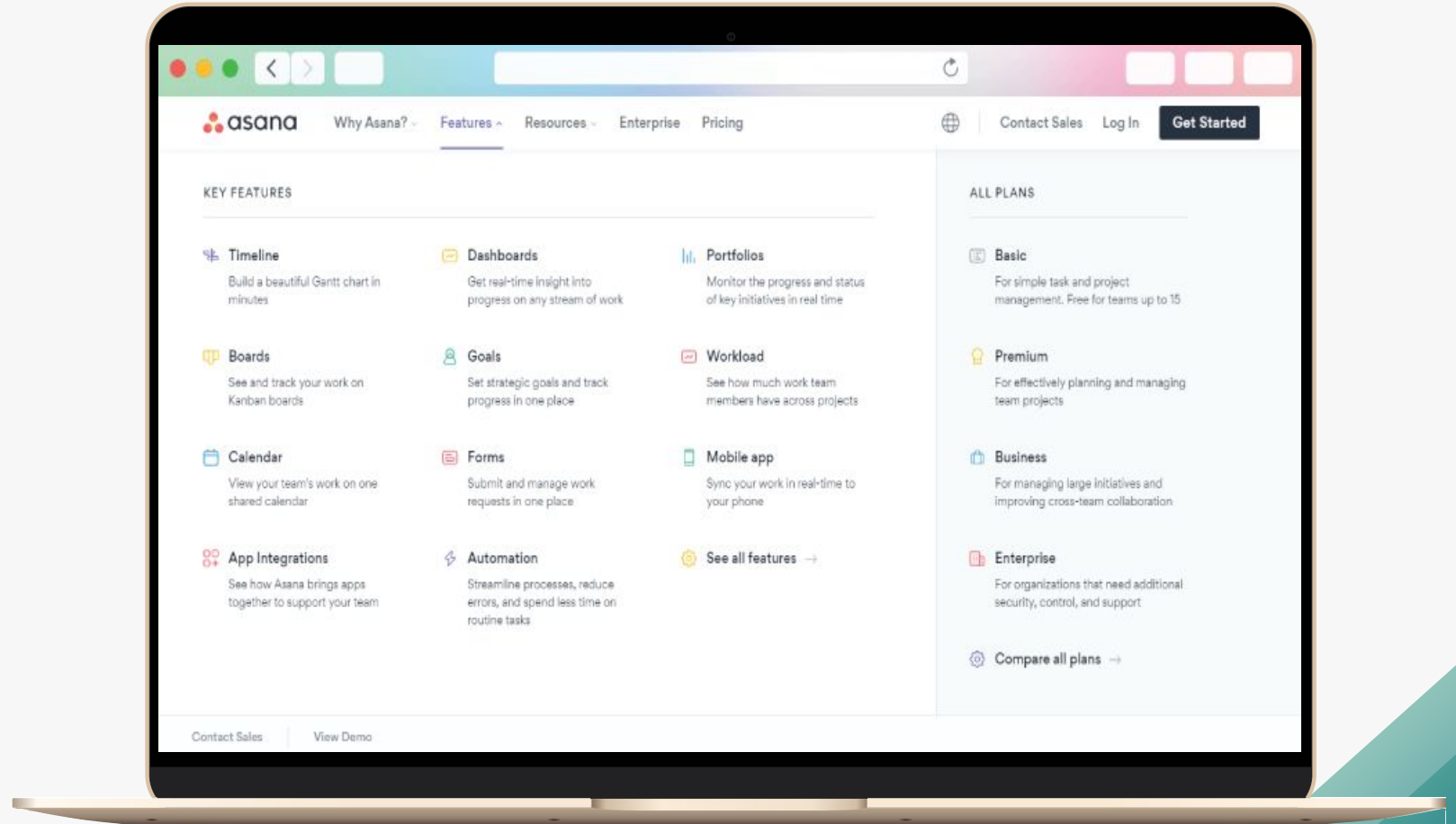
Jump-links TOC

- enhance BoFu and high-intent reading
- enable crawler page understanding



Mega Menus

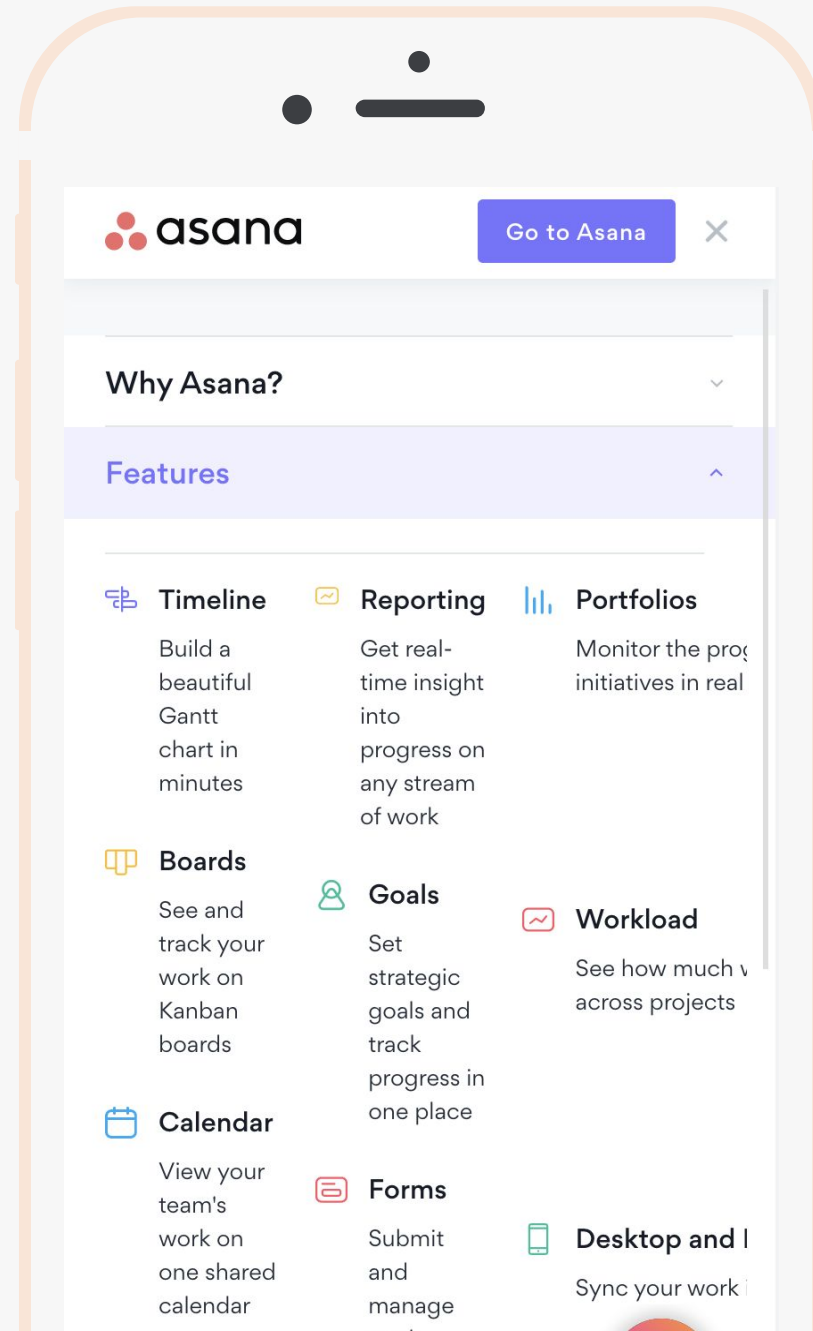
- enhance BoFu User Navigation
- Highlight money pages
- Highlight benefits, use cases, and USPs
- Persona-driven components





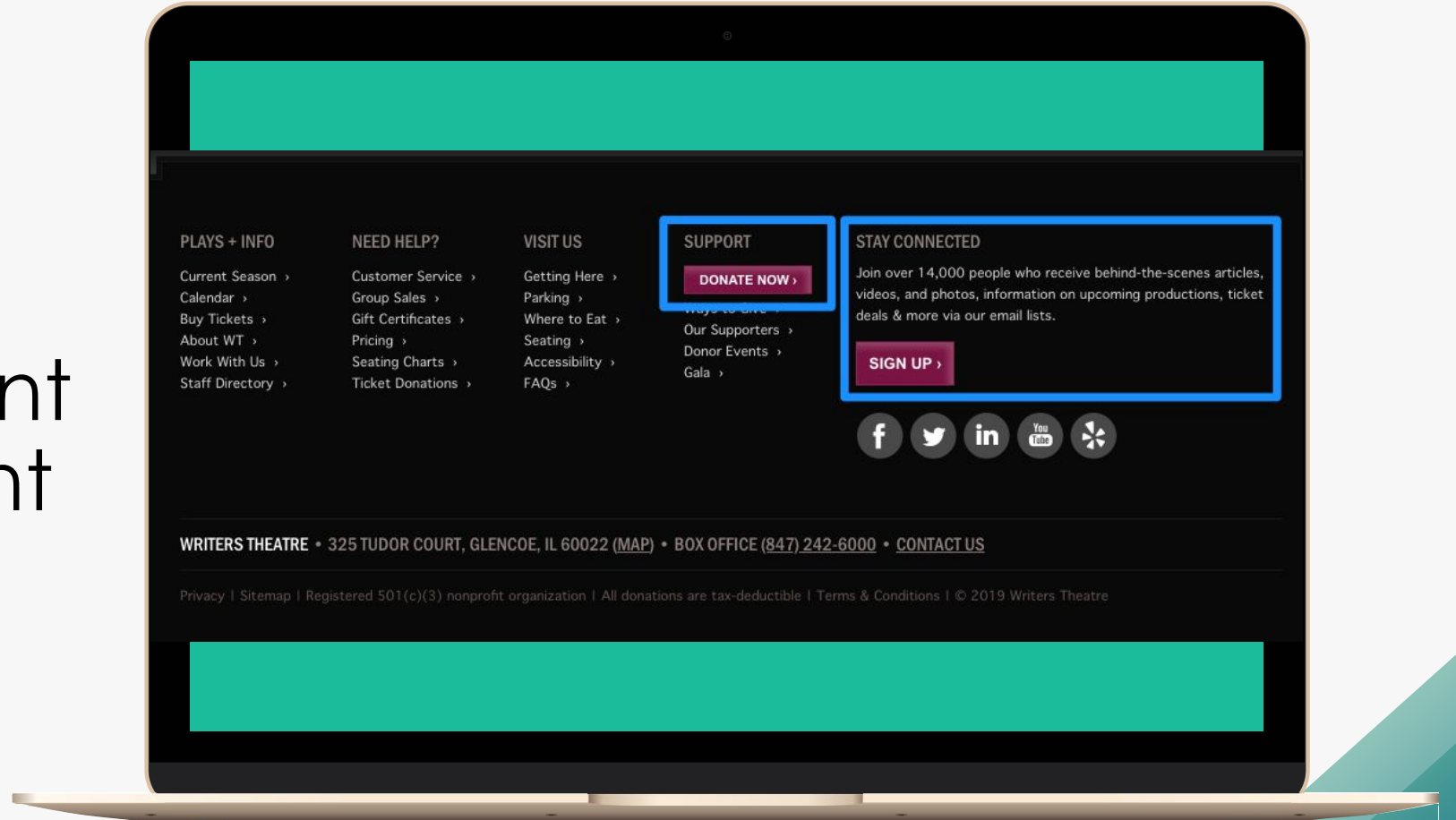
Beware: Mega Menus

- on mobile can be tricky to replicate successfully
- can hinder page equity of linked pages, when improperly organised or cluttered



Footer Navigation

- CRO enhancement
- Intent enrichment
- Content spotlight

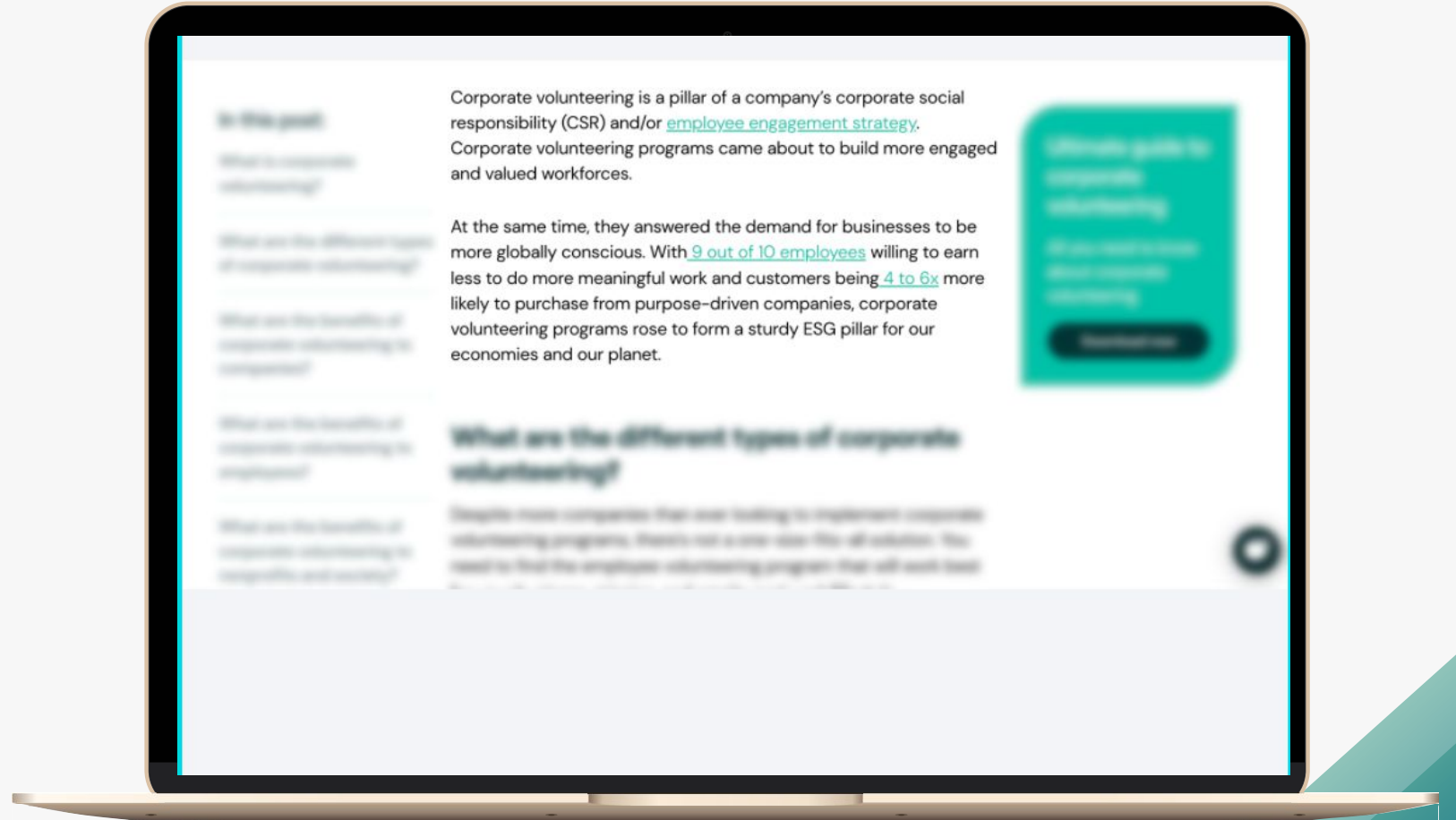


Last but certainly not least...



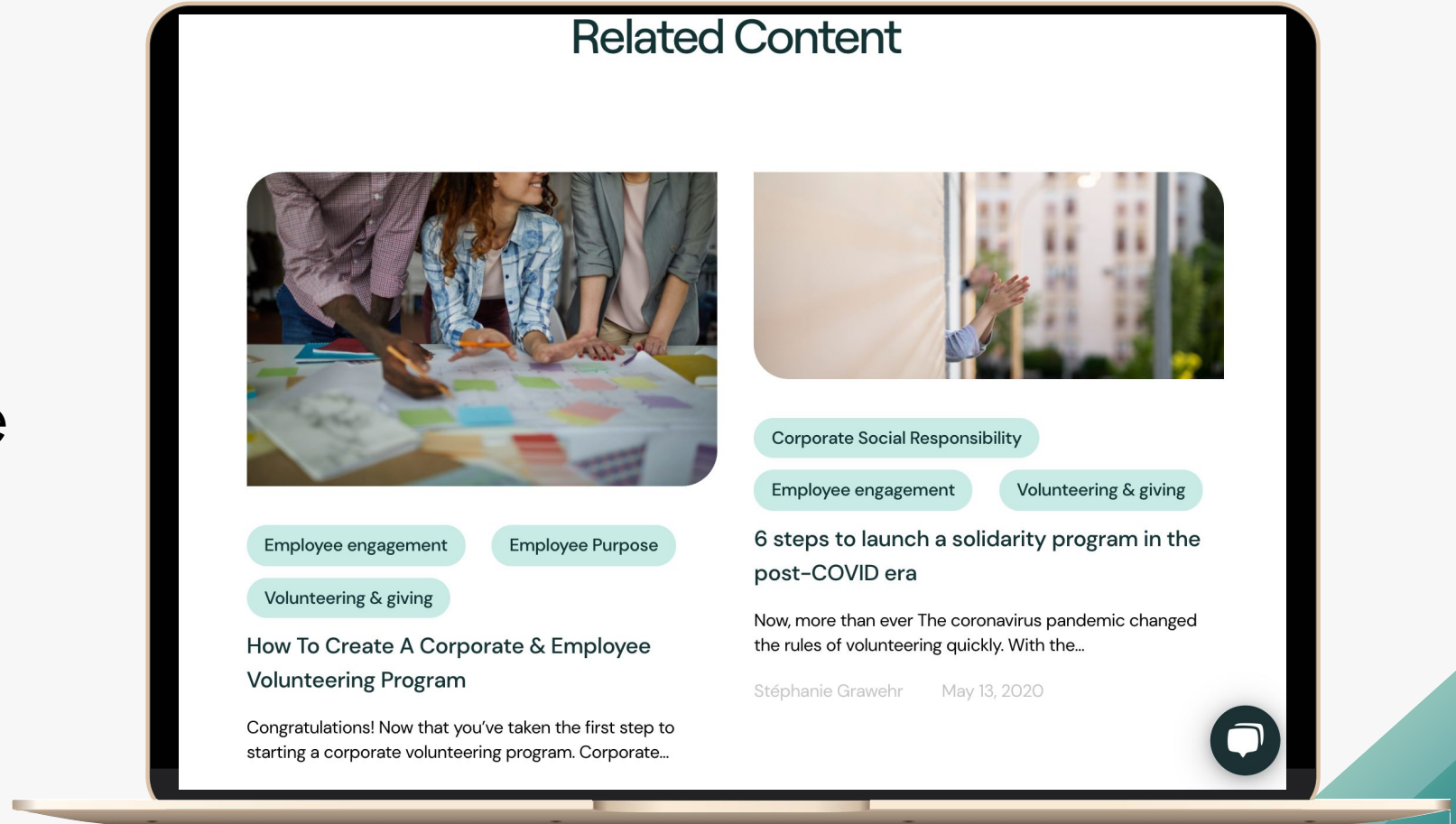
In-content internal linking

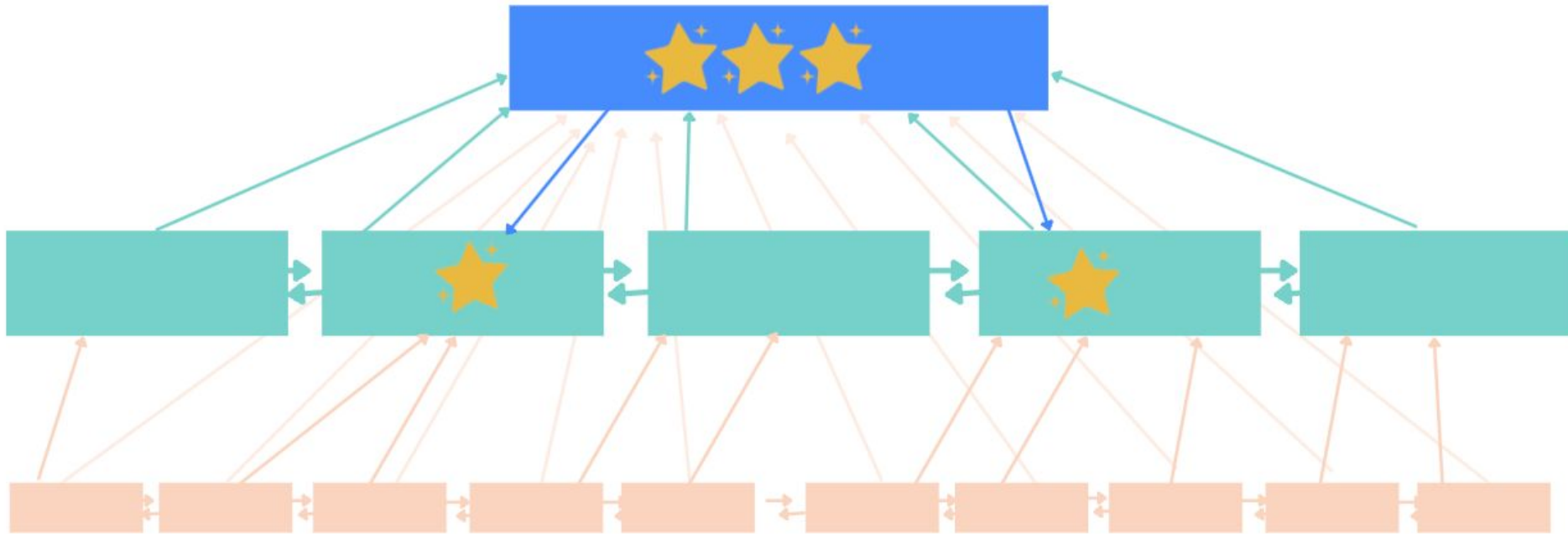
- intent enhancement
- enable click-throughs to money pages
- help crawlers understand page context & topic clusters



Related Content Sections

- help crawlers understand page context & topic clusters





Informational Intent Page

- 🔗 links to other informational content, based on similarity;
- 🔗 links to pillar page (money page, highest converting)
- 🔗 links to one other high intent page
- 🚀 receives link from one informational page, based on similarity

High Intent page

- 🔗 links to pillar page (money page, highest converting)
- 🔗 links to one other high intent pages
- 🚀 receives links from a few informational pages, based on similarity
- 🚀 receives a link from one high intent page, based on similarity

Pillar Page (🔥 conversion rate)

- 🔗 links to 1-2 high intent pages in the cluster (with the second and third highest conversion rates)
- 🚀 receives links from multiple informational pages
- 🚀 receives links from multiple high intent pages





Users,
beware...
linking
between
clusters is
equally
important.

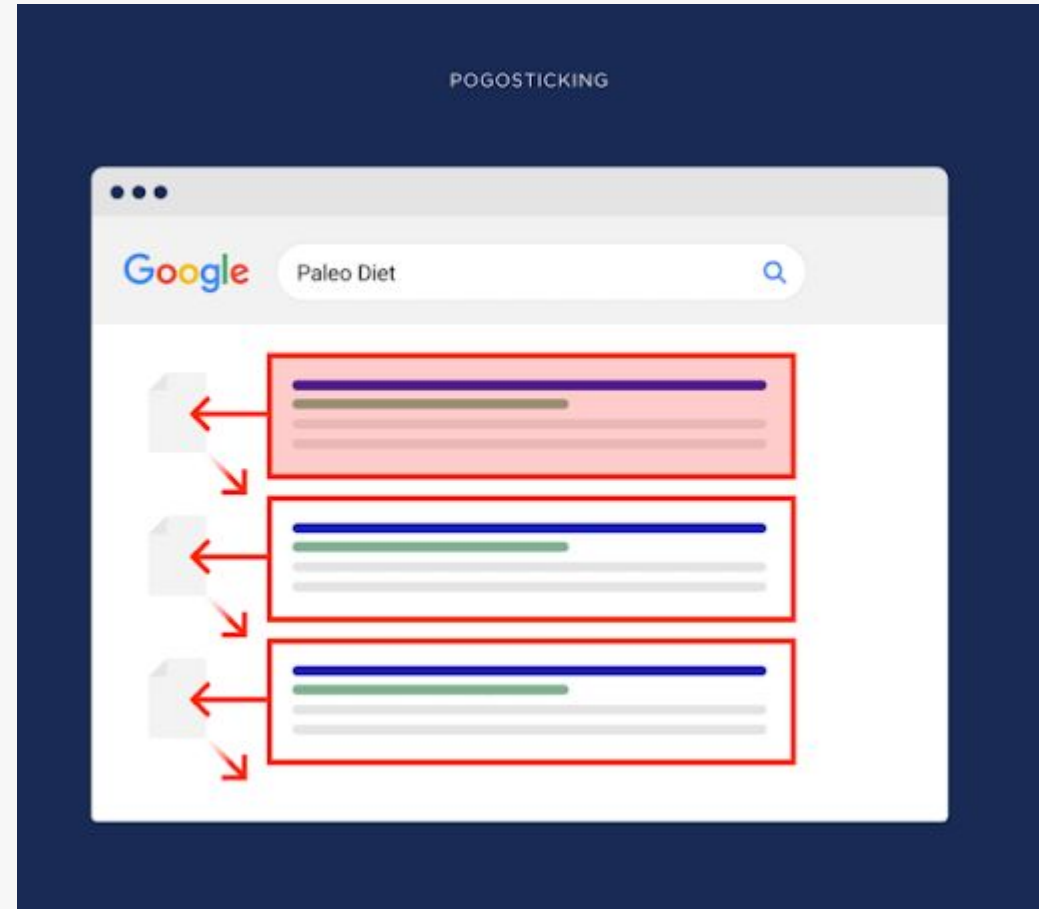


Why is intent-driven internal linking so crucial?



Save resources.

Internal linking is important in the sense that it **prevents visitors from 'pogosticking'** or otherwise – going back to Google with their additional questions and it prevents Google from having to re-rank the million websites it has again, based on the new input.



Provide new perspectives.

Search intent enrichment is what I like to refer to the practice of **guiding the user from one search intent to the other**. For instance, from problem-aware, to solution-aware, to brand-aware, and finally to purchase-ready, all without them having to leave the website.



The aim of the website structure is to facilitate intent shifts to the highest extent, without burdening users with having to go through a search once again. Or otherwise – **to guide the user from one search intent to the next closest one down the funnel in a seamless, smooth, and organic manner.**



Resource to Branded & Case Studies

Provide links to facilitate the move from informational to navigational search intent and commercial search intent.

Case Studies to Service & Contact

Provide links to facilitate the move from commercial to transactional and localised search intent.

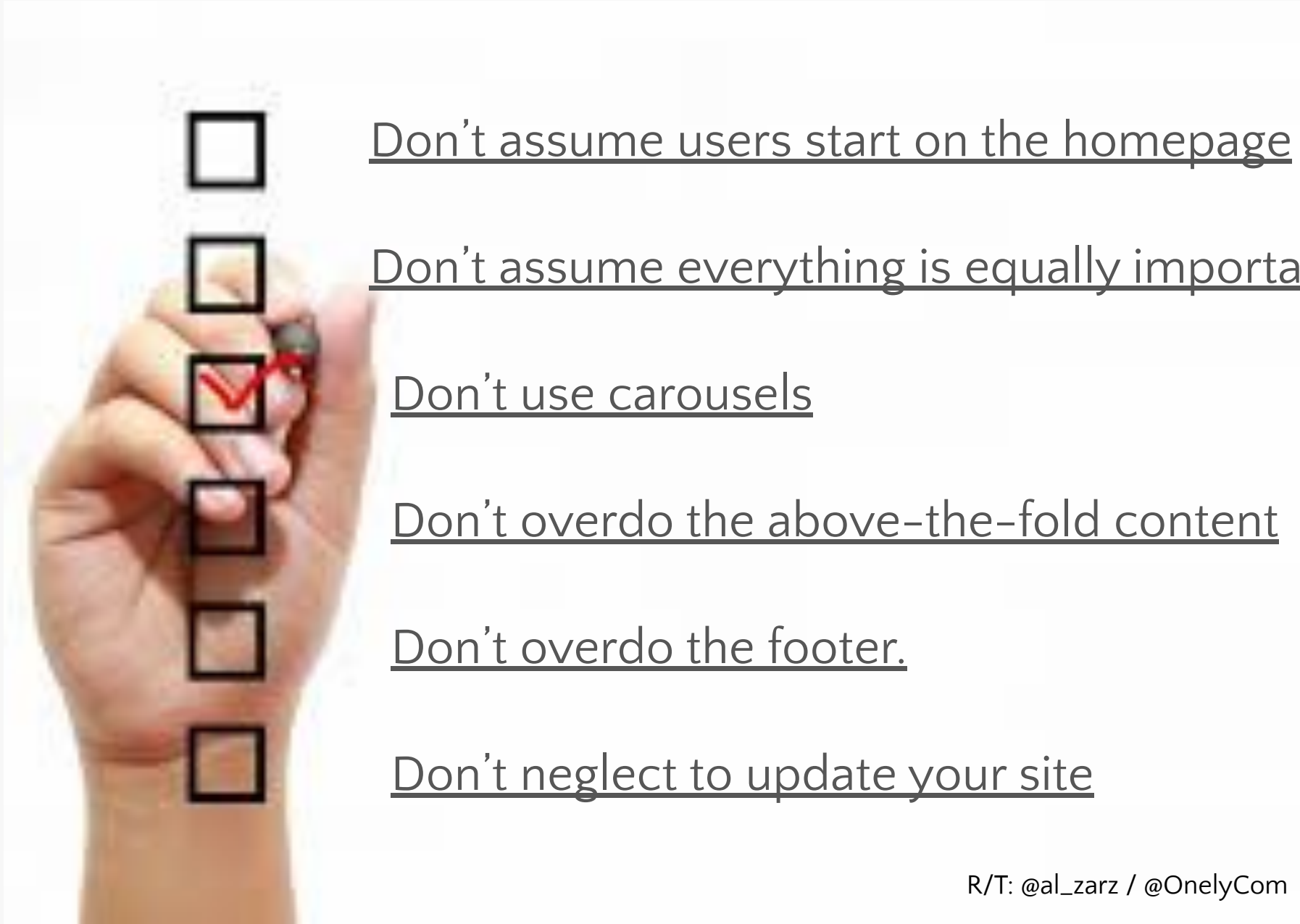
Case Studies, white papers, and branded to Services and Contact

Provide links to facilitate the move from commercial and navigational intent to transactional and localised search intent



Finally... a word on what you should avoid.





Don't assume users start on the homepage

Don't assume everything is equally important

Don't use carousels

Don't overdo the above-the-fold content

Don't overdo the footer.

Don't neglect to update your site

R/T: @al_zarz / @OnelyCom



EMBRACE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



In reality the user journey is much more complex and rarely as straightforward.

💡 This is where data comes in to assist you to analyse how users interact with your site, or even in your industry and niche behave, using a variety of available data touchpoints.





Ensure the **technical SEO** hygiene of the site is good

Ensure **content alignment** with intent, personas, and goals

Prune underperforming content for topical authority

Analyse **user behaviour** and performance (also **MCF**).

Identify and address **drop-off points** relative to personas

Identify **restructuring opportunities** and pain points via user searches



Incorporating search intent in the process of planning and link structure is so important and beneficial

...

and hopefully I've demonstrated the WHYs and HOW-TOs of ensuring it is achieved.



This can not only assist for a **pleasant journey throughout the site (UX), personalised based on the visitors' previous experience** with a given topic, and their **content expectations**, but also **signal to crawlers** about the **links, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness of the site.**



BUT BEFORE WE GO...



 HERE ARE SOME **AMAZING**
RESOURCES FOR YOU TO CHECK OUT
NEXT...



[Site Architecture: How To Build A Website That Ranks And Converts](#)

by

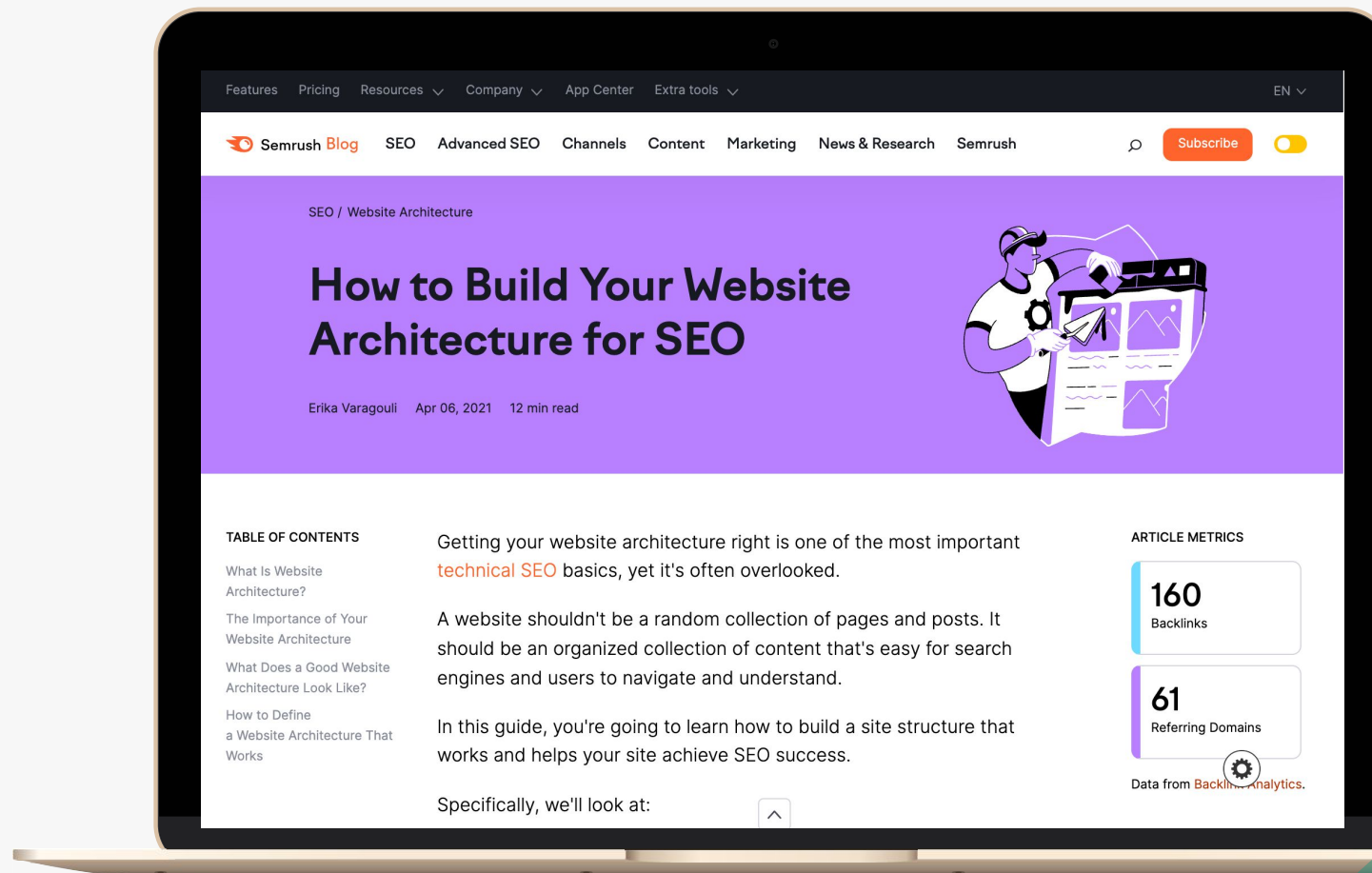
Aleksandra Zarzycka, Onely



How to Build Your Website Architecture for SEO

by

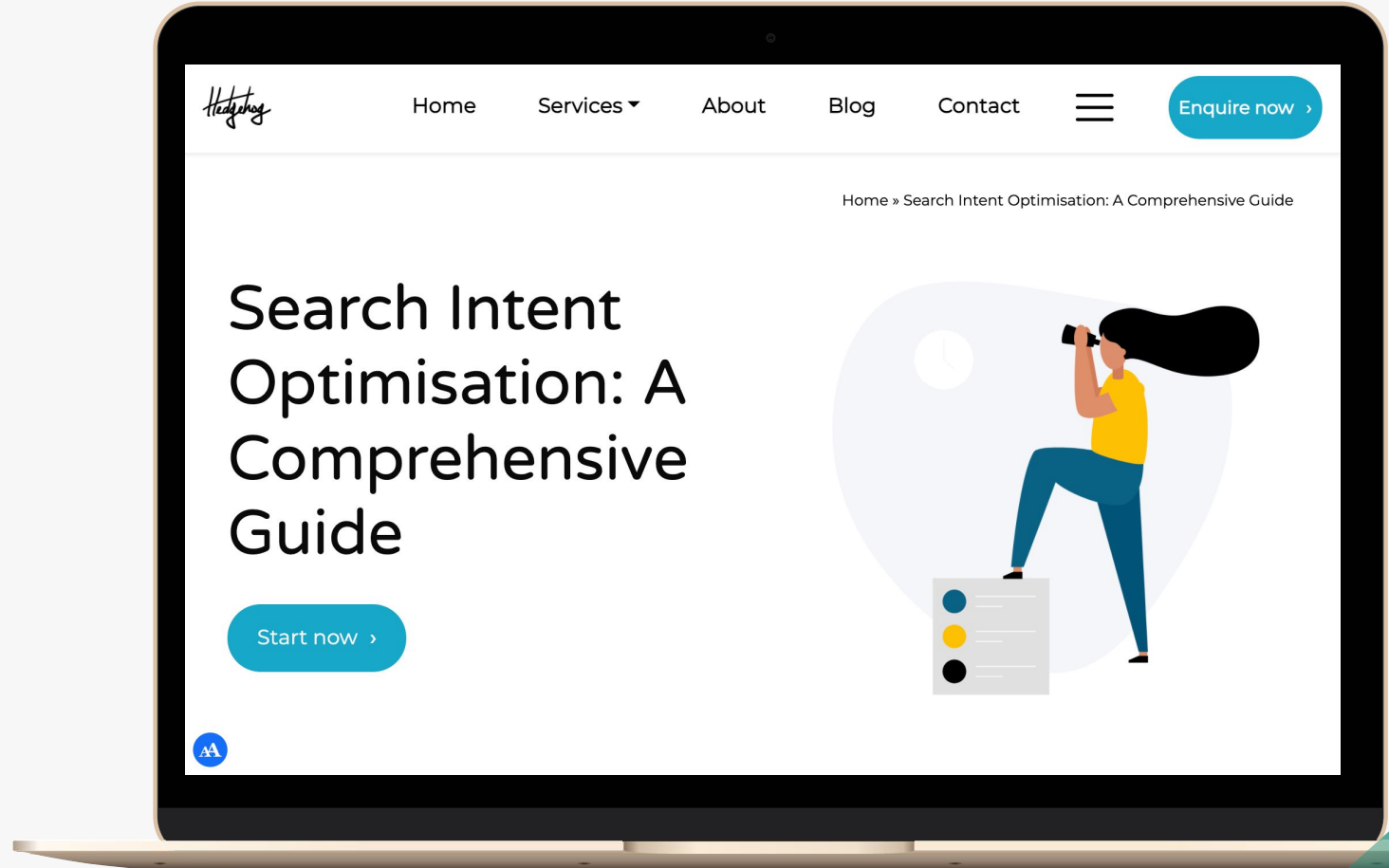
ERIKA VARAGOULI, Semrush



[Search Intent Optimisation: A Comprehensive Guide](#)

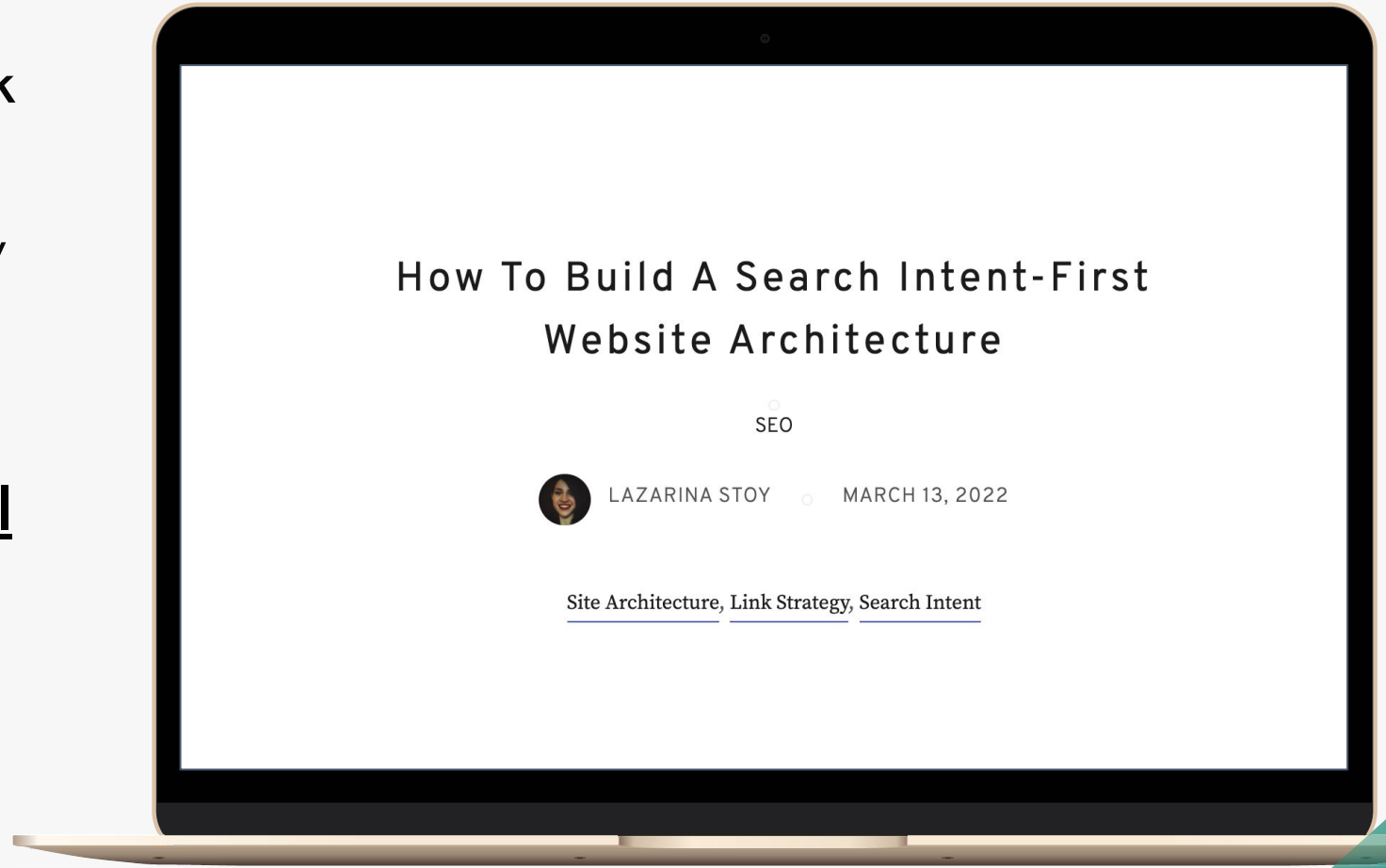
by

Hedgehog Digital



If you need a **re-cap** of the talk or prefer a **written format**, check-out the write-up on my website 🚀

<https://lazarinastoy.com/building-a-search-intent-driven-website-architecture/>





Building a Search Intent-Driven Website Architecture

Lazarina Stoy

THANK YOU

