

# white paper

## Ten Ways Keyword Management Improves Search Marketing Campaigns

*How a keyword management solution can boost your SEO and PPC results*



**WordStream**

---

# Ten Ways Keyword Management Improves Search Marketing Campaigns

## *How a keyword management solution can boost your SEO and PPC results*

### Introduction

You probably already recognize the importance of incorporating search into your marketing strategies. These days, more and more companies do. But few people realize how beneficial full-fledged *keyword* management can be for both pay-per-click (PPC) and search engine optimization (SEO) initiatives.

SEO is often associated with keyword research, and PPC with bid management. In actuality, the work that takes place between researching keywords and publishing content or adjusting bids – the analysis, organization and workflow prioritization that happens in the middle – is both **the most critical and the most overlooked** part of search marketing.

Keyword management is what makes up this crucial middle ground. Keyword management is an innovative, multifaceted approach to discovering, analyzing, grouping and organizing large numbers of keywords. Effective keyword management is pivotal to search success, because it goes beyond mere research or bid manipulation to enable prioritization, collaboration and action in response to keyword data.

Any search marketing campaign needs a foundation to build on; that foundation is keywords.

Practicing keyword management brings clear benefits on the paid side of search, including:

- More targeted ad campaigns
- Higher click-through rates (CTR) and Quality Scores
- More conversions at a lower cost per acquisition (CPA)

As well as on the organic side:

- Higher natural search rankings
- More relevant, valuable content
- More traffic, and more of it qualified

And that's only the beginning. This paper outlines ten major ways that implementing keyword management techniques will improve your search marketing results with gains in productivity, relevance and value. You'll also learn more about WordStream, a powerful, unique keyword management solution that can help you bring all these benefits to fruition.

## The ten benefits of keyword management

### One: Your keyword research is relevant and real

Any search marketing campaign needs a foundation to build on; that foundation is keywords. You can't target potential customers through search unless you know *how* they search for the products or services you're offering. The terms and phrases that users enter into search engines like Google will make up your keyword list and form the basis of your website copy and PPC advertising.

The old way of doing keyword research started with brainstorming and depended on publicly available keyword suggestion tools for expansion. But there are a number of things wrong with this dated approach:

If you haven't tapped into private sources, you're sitting on a potential goldmine of keyword opportunities.

- **It's too generalized:** Typical keyword tools only show you the most popular keywords, and provide those same keywords to anyone who uses them. They offer you no competitive edge.
- **It's inaccurate:** These tools return vague search volume estimates that are dubious at best. Plus, you have no way of knowing if the terms are relevant to your specific business; if not, the numbers mean less than nothing.

Keyword management is a *personalized, data-driven* approach to keyword research. Rather than relying on public sources alone, it leverages private keyword data to ensure that your keyword list is as accurate and relevant as possible.

The WordStream keyword management solution mines your own Web analytics and Web server log files to create your keyword database. If you haven't tapped into these private sources of information, you're sitting on a potential goldmine of keyword opportunities. These are the keywords that actual searchers have used to find your site. Compared to keyword lists derived from third-party, public sources, your database is far more relevant, extensive, accurate and up-to-date, complete with a "long tail" of specific, high-intent keywords that you won't get from typical tools. Real data means better SEO and PPC decision making.

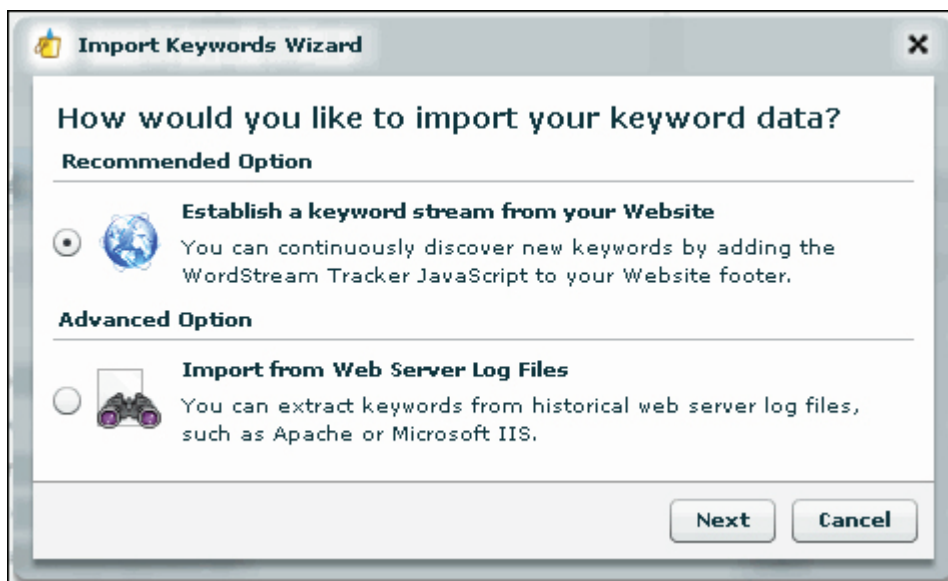


Figure 1: Import private, personalized keyword data.

Begin managing your keyword research the WordStream way, and before long you'll have hundreds, thousands, even hundreds of thousands of keywords on which to build your search campaigns, putting you at a huge advantage – but only if you can find a way to organize and manage them. Which brings us to our next benefit.

## Two: Keywords are organized in smart segmentations

Keyword management is just what it sounds like: the power to manage a vast sea of keywords and make them work for you. To reap the full benefits of keyword research, it's vital to *group* and *organize* those keywords. Beyond just making your life easier, segmenting your database into small, manageable groups of closely related keywords will improve your search marketing campaigns in a number of ways:

- **Better landing pages:** It's easier to write specific, informative Web copy around tightly knit keyword groups, and your landing pages will have better chances of ranking high in search engine results pages (SERPS).
- **Better text ads:** Similarly, it's much easier to write relevant, compelling ad text around close-knit ad groups. Your keyword group structure will translate into your Google AdWords ad groups.
- **More clicks and conversions:** More specific, relevant Web pages and ads get more clicks and drive more conversions.
- **Increased Quality Score:** High click-through rates and demonstrated relevance contribute to a high Quality Score, so you pay less for better ad positions and more qualified impressions.

Keyword management is just what it sounds like: the power to manage a vast sea of keywords and make them work for you.

As you can see, keyword grouping is a must for high-performing search campaigns. But even with a small list, figuring out the best way to sort your keywords and keeping groups updated as you discover new keywords can be extremely time-consuming and headache-inducing—especially if you try to accomplish it in a clunky, complicated spreadsheet.

The WordStream solution makes the process so much easier, because unlike Microsoft Excel, it was built to meet the particular needs of search marketers. With the keyword grouping tools, you can speedily organize your database into a logical hierarchy. And when new keywords enter the system, WordStream automatically sorts them into your existing segmentations and updates the statistics, so your database is always in order.

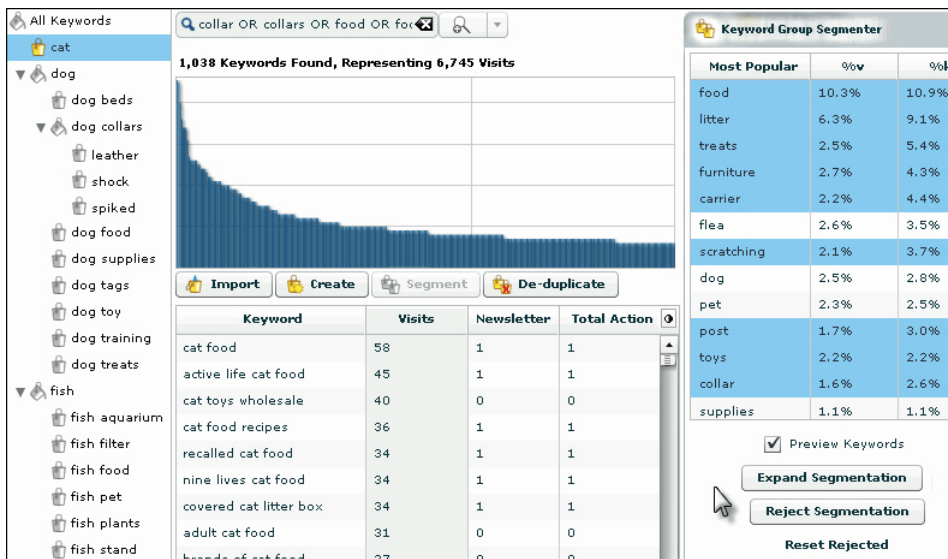


Figure 2: Quickly segment your database into tight keyword groups.

For maximum benefit, you'll need to further segment your groups over time, keeping groups to a manageable size. Why? Because keyword management is all about growth and improvement.

### Three: Search marketing efforts grow and evolve daily

You can't look at SEO or PPC as a one-time assessment. Approaching a search campaign with a "set it and forget it" mindset will net you static results. To keep up with the ever-changing world of search and stay ahead of the competition, you need to expand your keyword list, update and improve your website and hone your PPC campaigns.

When you use WordStream as your keyword management solution, search marketing becomes a *continuous, iterative* process, allowing your keyword database to grow and your results to improve exponentially over time.

This starts with keyword research. Most search marketers struggle to find the time to discover new keywords, and end up working with a static, out-of-date list. With WordStream, a bit of JavaScript code tracks new visitors to your website every day, importing a continuous stream of highly relevant keywords. Reviewing new keywords is as easy as checking your email. And the tool automatically sorts new keywords into their appropriate groups, a huge time-saver for anyone used to cutting and pasting into a spreadsheet. You won't have to find time for keyword discovery and organization; it becomes a simple element of your daily routine.

Approaching a search campaign with a "set it and forget it" mindset will net you static results.

Keyword management applies the same principles to other repetitive search marketing tasks. Segmenting keywords, converting keyword groups to ad groups, refactoring new keyword opportunities into existing campaigns, writing new text ads and optimized Web content and more are all much easier to keep up on an ongoing basis when you implement a keyword management solution.

Continuous keyword discovery puts you miles ahead of competitors stuck on old-fashioned keyword tools and lists managed in spreadsheets. But however you do your research, not every keyword you find is going to be relevant to your business. How do you weed out those unwanted keywords from your search marketing garden?

### Four: Your keyword taxonomy is "clean" and high-quality

Another very important element of keyword management is *negative keyword discovery*. From a PPC perspective, negative keywords are the keywords in an ad group you don't want to bid on. For example, you may have a group for all keywords related to dog tags. But not all dog tags are for pets. When someone searches on "military dog tags" or "dog tags for men," you need a way to ensure that your pet store ad doesn't display. Otherwise, you'll be paying for useless impressions that will drag down your click-through rate.

Luckily, you can accomplish this by designating negative keywords. However, the traditional way of finding and setting negative keywords leaves much to be desired. You can sit around trying to think of all the potential negative keywords in the world, but guess what: it's impossible. You can use Google AdWords to sort through a list of queries that are triggering impressions for your ads, but it's an arduous, one-at-a-time process.

Keyword management provides a better method of negative keyword discovery. WordStream's negative keyword tools allow you to set large groups of keywords as negative with the click of a button.

You can set a rule to designate all keyword variations including the word “military” as negative, and this means that even keywords that haven’t yet entered your database or triggered an ad will inherit that rule. This doesn’t just save time, it saves money—with higher CTR and more qualified, relevant ad impressions, your Quality Score will climb, pushing your ad spend down and increasing PPC ROI.

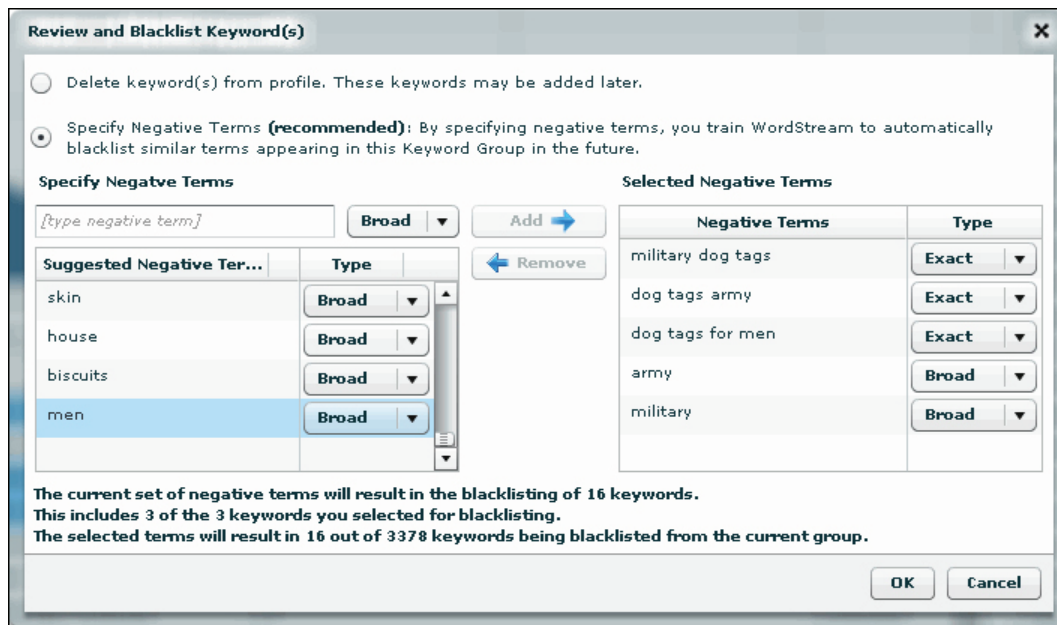


Figure 3: Set rules to cleanse your groups of irrelevant keywords.

Negative keyword discovery is also beneficial for SEO. While you’re cleansing your ad groups of unwanted keywords, you might as well eliminate them from your SEO research too.

It’s crucial to determine which search marketing tasks will provide the greatest and most immediate return on your time investment.

This will ensure you’re only targeting relevant keywords that will drive qualified traffic from both organic and paid search. With WordStream, negative keywords are removed from both your SEO keyword groups and your PPC ad groups in one easy step.

By now you’re several steps closer to search marketing success. But are all these management tasks starting to seem overwhelming? Don’t worry—keyword management actually *reduces* the time and energy you spend on search marketing. How?

## Five: Search marketing workflow is a piece of cake

Another benefit of keyword management is greatly simplified workflow. There’s a virtually unlimited amount of work you *could* do to improve SEO and PPC results, but you have limited time and resources. So it’s crucial to determine which search marketing tasks will provide the greatest and most immediate return on your time investment.

A keyword management solution helps you prioritize tasks so you know exactly where to direct your attention. WordStream’s workflow tools guide your time management and decision making with a built-in, evolving to-do list, with the most important and pressing tasks at the top. You’ll know exactly when you need to:

- Segment an unwieldy keyword group
- Convert a keyword group to an ad group
- Associate a group with a landing page
- Write text ads for an ad group
- “Cleanse” a group by finding and eliminating irrelevant keywords

As you can see, WordStream alerts you when any of the above actions are needed. The orange warning sign indicates that optimization in that area is required.

| <span>Keywords</span> <span>Negatives</span> <span>Workflow</span> <span>Revisions</span> <span>Settings</span> |               |                            |            |                        |         |                 |            |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|------------|------------------------|---------|-----------------|------------|
| Segment Keyword Group   |               | Associate AdWords Ad Group |            | Associate Landing Page |         | Cleanse Keyword |            |
| To Do List  |               |                            |            |                        |         |                 |            |
| Task  | Keyword Group | # Visits                   | # Keywords | Group Size             | AdWords | Landing Page    | Filthiness |
| 1   | All Keywords  | 286734                     | 24984      |                        |         |                 |            |
| 2   | dog           | 48560                      | 3378       |                        |         |                 |            |
| 3   | cat           | 16512                      | 1530       |                        |         |                 |            |
| 4   | dog food      | 5841                       | 429        |                        |         |                 |            |
| 5   | fish tank     | 2795                       | 428        |                        |         |                 |            |
| 6   | fish          | 4974                       | 318        |                        |         |                 |            |
| 7   | dog toy       | 1845                       | 272        |                        |         |                 |            |
| 8   | dog collars   | 2263                       | 261        |                        |         |                 |            |
| 9   | cat litter    | 1432                       | 225        |                        |         |                 |            |
| 10  | cat food      | 1880                       | 196        |                        |         |                 |            |
| 11  | fish filter   | 866                        | 191        |                        |         |                 |            |

Figure 4: Use the workflow tab to prioritize optimization tasks.

And you can adjust the settings so the tool knows what user-defined goals (be it a download or a newsletter signup or a completed sale) are most important to you and weights the relative priorities of tasks accordingly.

If you're working with typical search marketing tools, you hit a bottleneck at this stage. You might know what you need to do next, but actually doing it is a chore, involving switching between applications and trying to sync up disparate data. Not so with keyword management.

## Six: Your research and analytics are actionable

Most search marketers are unwitting victims of separate dashboards and workbenches. Their data sits inert in spreadsheets and analytics applications, and there's no easy or obvious way to apply that data for real PPC and SEO results.

Keyword management changes all that by *connecting analytics with action*, so the potentially valuable insights in your analytics dashboards can be instantly translated into actions that realize that value.

For instance, you may learn that a certain keyword group is driving organic search traffic. You can increase that traffic, and turn more of it into completed sales, if you create and optimize a landing page for that keyword group, turn it into an ad group, and write strong, targeted ads to address those queries. Or if the keyword group is too large and broad to write targeted content around, you can segment it into smaller, more tightly related subgroups. All of these actions are just clicks away in WordStream, with no hang-ups or process gaps. You can manage your keywords *and* your AdWords account in one powerful, fully integrated platform.

Keyword management connects analytics with action, so the potentially valuable insights in your analytics dashboards can be instantly translated into actions that realize that value.

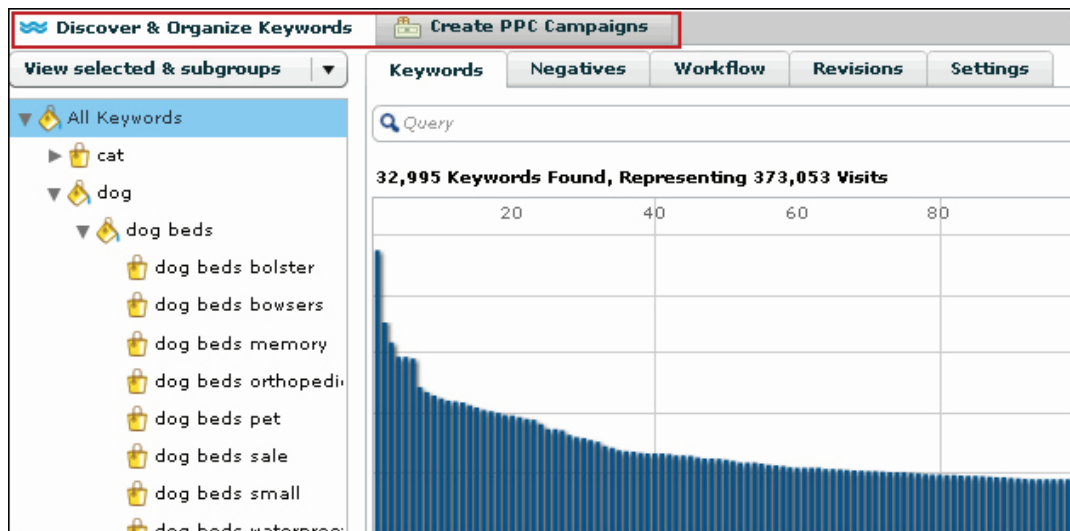


Figure 5: Click the PPC Campaigns tab to work in your AdWords account.

Using a single, unified platform for keyword discovery and analytics as well as PPC marketing activities facilitates another search marketing benefit.

## Seven: PPC and SEO are mutually beneficial

Keyword management closes the gap between PPC and SEO efforts, so the two areas can inform and gain from each other. These two complementary sides of search marketing are too often siloed off and treated as entirely separate disciplines. This is a big mistake and a lost opportunity. Success in one can lead naturally to success in the other, if your tools and processes encourage this mutual benefit.

SEO has a lot to learn from your PPC campaigns:

- Tracking your PPC results gives you fast answers on which keywords perform well for your business, without no wait for pages to index and gain authority. Use these keywords to prioritize content creation for your website, so you can rank organically for those searches as well.
- The keyword group hierarchy you create and maintain for your PPC campaigns also suggests a natural, branching information architecture. This translates into a logical and navigable site design, and well-organized, user-friendly sites are favored by search engines.
- WordStream helps you author highly relevant text ads by pointing you toward the keywords in an ad group that drive the most traffic. You can use those same suggestions to generate URLs, titles, headings, page copy, ALT tags for images and meta tags—important factors for on-page SEO.

Keyword management closes the gap between PPC and SEO efforts, so the two areas can inform and gain from each other.

The reverse is also true—SEO efforts can inform PPC. For example, keywords and landing pages that attract a flow of organic traffic may be good candidates for full-fledged PPC campaigns. Ranking in both natural and paid results tends to encourage brand trust and increase conversions. Plus, pages that are well-optimized for organic search also make strong destination URLs for paid ads and have a positive impact on your Quality Scores.

You'll see better results all around when you allow PPC and SEO to work together. And everyone on your team—from those focusing on SEO (copywriters, developers) to those concentrating on PPC (such as marketing managers)—can easily work together too, because keyword management makes this benefit possible.

## Eight: Search marketing efforts are collaborative

Keyword management tools enable *coordination and collaboration* across your search marketing team, so everyone can strive toward common search marketing goals. This is a huge advantage over using a handful of disconnected applications and a labyrinthine spreadsheet.

Unlike Excel, WordStream is a single, shared, scalable workspace for multiple users so that SEO and PPC processes can be coordinated and streamlined. At any stage in your marketing campaign, everyone who contributes to search marketing efforts will be on the same page. WordStream identifies the tasks that need immediate attention, ensuring effective division of labor.

The WordStream solution enables collaboration with two main features:

WordStream is a single, shared, scalable workspace for multiple users so that SEO and PPC processes can be coordinated and streamlined.

- **The Workflow tab:** Divides your keyword taxonomy into atomic units; each unit of work is associated with a different task, like publishing a landing page or a text ad.
- **The Revisions tab:** Displays a list of actions in reverse chronological order, so managers can keep track of who does what and when.

With a collaborative keyword management tool, work isn't duplicated and your team wastes less time. Everyone knows what jobs are most high-priority and who is working on what. All your team members have a shared, up-to-date knowledge of best practices as well as specific objectives and targets.

Even better, everyone will be adding real value, not just slogging through mindless busy work.

## Nine: The mindless busy work of search goes away

Search marketing can't be fully automated – nor should it be. Your search campaigns need intelligent operatives at the helm. But if you find yourself doing the same tedious, repetitive and time-consuming tasks over and over again, there is a place for automating those processes, and doing so can bring huge gains in productivity.

Part of keyword management is knowing when to embrace automation to streamline repetitive, mindless SEO and PPC processes so search marketers can focus time on adding value through more complex, strategic contributions. WordStream automates many of the most painful search marketing time sucks that are nonetheless necessary for long-term success, such as:

- Continuous keyword discovery
- Negative keyword discovery
- Keyword sorting and organization
- Keyword analysis and research
- PPC and SEO workflow
- Ad text generation

If you find yourself doing the same tedious, repetitive and time-consuming tasks over and over again, there is a place for automating those processes, and doing so can bring huge gains in productivity.

And it does them faster, better, and in far greater volume than any person or team alone could achieve. When you start using a keyword management solution, you'll experience huge leaps in productivity thanks to these automated features. Yet, you're always in control—you choose the level of automation you're comfortable with, and your strategic input is always required.

Keyword management enacts all the above benefits so you can take full advantage of your keyword taxonomy's value for search marketing.

## Ten: Your keyword database becomes a true marketing asset

Your keywords can only reach their full potential and worth if you adopt and embody the tools and best practices of keyword management. Keyword management unlocks the power of your keywords, allowing you to leverage them as the truly valuable *proprietary asset* that they are.

Keyword management unlocks the power of your keywords, allowing you to leverage them as the truly valuable proprietary asset that they are.

Your organization's success in search is rooted in your ability to strategically manage keyword research, expansion and organization and take ongoing keyword action, effectively transforming keyword data into tangible results for SEO and PPC campaigns.

Say goodbye to static keyword research and simplistic bid management. Under the auspices of keyword management, you'll possess a growing, evolving, self-organizing database of actionable insights, so you can start enjoying increased traffic and sales and more cost-effective pay-per-click advertising right away.

WordStream can help you achieve levels of productivity and relevance unattainable without keyword management, adding self-reinforcing value at every level of your search marketing campaigns.

## About WordStream, Inc.

WordStream is a provider of innovative, integrated keyword management solutions that simplify complex search marketing processes. Our patented software provides search marketers with a private, scalable online workbench for efficiently and continuously conducting PPC and SEO tasks including keyword research and negative keyword discovery; search query analytics; keyword grouping and organization; search marketing workflow and prioritization; and relevant ad copy and Web content creation.

WordStream believes that organizing, prioritizing, coordinating and executing PPC and SEO efforts around a comprehensive, well-researched and up-to-date taxonomy is the key to achieving search marketing success. The benefits of using WordStream solutions include increased productivity and greater relevance, enhancing the value of both paid and natural search marketing efforts. For more information about WordStream keyword management solutions and to sign up for a free trial, visit <http://www.wordstream.com>.