

# Search Overview – Paid, Organic, Stimulated

May 2011

# Purpose

Outline the strategic approach to search that will help drive stronger results for your DG campaigns. Why is this so important?

- Better connecting campaign assets to our audience search behavior will amplify results.
- Amplifying results is fundamental to the Midmarket Paid, Owned, Earned strategy

Three (3) MM program objectives for search:

- Drive three types of search rankings—Paid, Organic and Stimulated—to increase your company's presence while keeping an eye on efficiency
- Adopt a 360 approach in search buying to optimize results and budget

To achieve these objectives, this guidance will focus on:

- A. Best Practices for maximizing results
- B. Defining a 360 approach to search – paid, organic, stimulated -- and how to execute against it
- C. Search planning – Getting started

# Why Search Is Important

Search is the common behavior and medium across our two key audiences and the buying cycle:

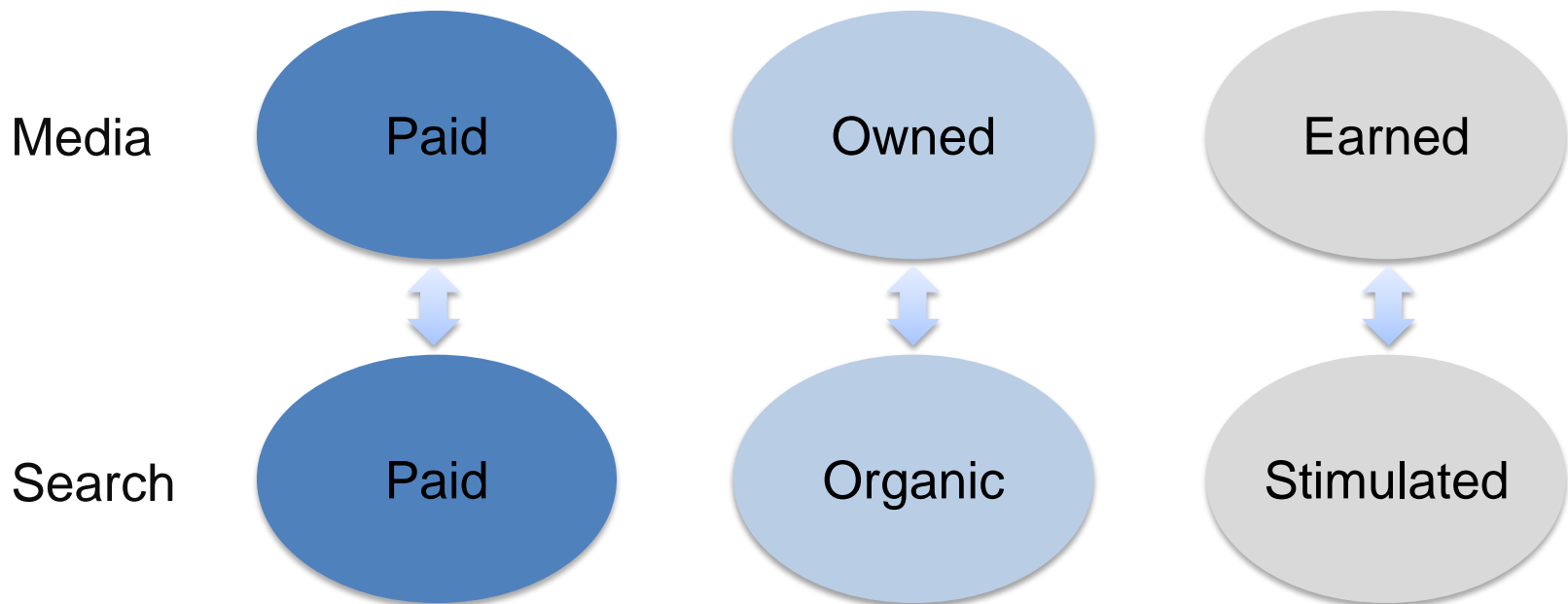
- 85% of IT buyers begin the digital journey with search<sup>1</sup>
- 87% of LOB and C-suite find valuable business information to their challenges via search engines<sup>2</sup>



To increase the likelihood of being found by the target, complement Advertising and Demand Generation with a focused effort on elevating Search rankings

# How Search Equates to Paid, Owned, Earned

There are three categories of search results, each one derived from a type of media targeted by the Paid, Owned, Earned strategy

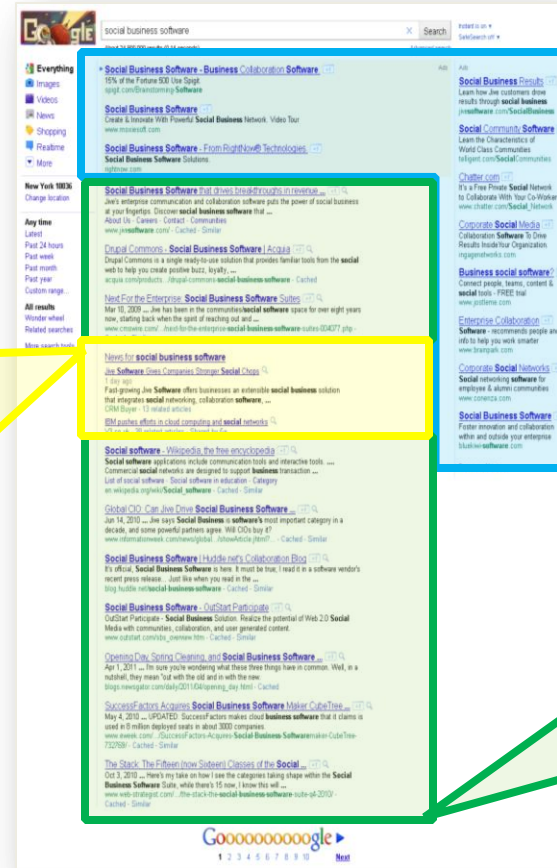


# Search Ranking Types

To effectively elevate our rankings for midmarket and ensure that we are present through the cycle, we must focus on all 3 layers of search:

- **Paid:** Businesses pay\* for placement; generally bought on a cost-per-click (CPC) basis
  - Paid search is an auction run by the search engine (e.g. Google). You bid against other companies, and “Winners” are selected based upon bid price and Web content quality.
- **Organic:** Also known as natural search, results returned based on relevance to keywords entered by ‘searcher’
  - Note: Google limits brands to 2 listings max
- **Stimulated:** The number of mentions across the web, generated from peers, experts and reviews
  - Although out of your direct control, it does reflect actions in the Paid and Owned channels

**Stimulated Search**  
News,  
Video,  
Social etc..



## Paid Search

Pay for placement  
Bought on a CPC basis

# Organic Search

## Optimize for rank

# Best Practices to Elevate Search Rankings

- Organic and paid search reinforce each other. Plan them together
  - E.g. For a key topic area, the keywords used to optimize content should be the same for all three types so that all search drives to the same optimized content. In this ideal situation, the content then shows up in both organic and paid search results.
- When defining keywords/phrases (organic or paid), use natural language that reflects how prospects actually search
  - *Natural* language tends to increase relevance for the searcher and hence increase results
  - Using words already found in the marketplace increases relevance and can help attach to stimulated search results
- Think about search up-front, at the inception of creative work if possible, not as a later activity
  - Allow natural language keywords – based on market usage -- to guide the development of creative copy in order to elevate rankings
- Start with organic (natural) search first: Optimize all campaign landing and web pages, as well as press releases, etc. for organic search
  - Generally 70-85% of clicks across the search engine results page (SERP) occur on organic listings, so Organic Optimization is critical
  - Studies show the majority of buyers don't go deeper than Page 1 of results, so again, Organic ranking is critical
  - Unaided awareness increases substantially when occupying BOTH the top sponsored AND the top organic positions vs. top organic alone (which reinforces why it's key to plan organic and paid together)

# The Foundation of Search: Content

- Think broadly – Content is almost anything that has a presence online and can fulfill the needs or wants of a searcher. Content can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Advertising landing pages
- Web pages
- Video assets on YouTube (including transcripts)
- Associated events and online event invitations

- Press releases
- White papers
- Slide presentations
- Print ads

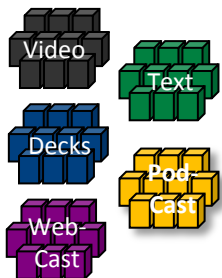
- Images
- Demos
- Podcasts
- Pictures
- Etc.

- For content to be found by someone searching online, it needs to be optimized for the keywords/phrases that person is most likely to use, when searching for content like yours
- Optimization denotes a deliberate use of both visible elements and code elements to describe the content (metadata) to help it “be found” by search engines
- For best results, optimizing ALL assets and other online content requires collaboration across the disciplines.

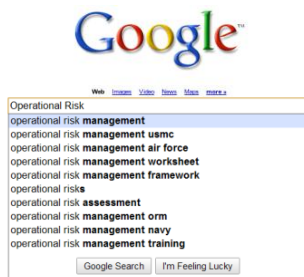
# Metadata is Key to Optimization

- Metadata is information about a piece of content that enables search engines to find the content and entice audiences to engage with it. After selecting relevant content to optimize (perhaps for distribution, perhaps a landing page, etc.), examine it to identify the keywords/phrases that would serve as the most effective metadata.
- Almost everything can and should be tagged with metadata (meta tags) and optimized for search results. This is fundamental to a 360 approach -- optimizing ALL content and assets for Search results. It will elevate search rankings and thus, increase effectiveness.

Identify Keywords  
Found Within The  
Prioritized Content



Identify High-Demand  
Search Terms Synonymous  
With Asset Keywords



Generate Metadata  
For Each Asset



### Metadata

- Title
- Link
- Tags
- Description
- Transcript

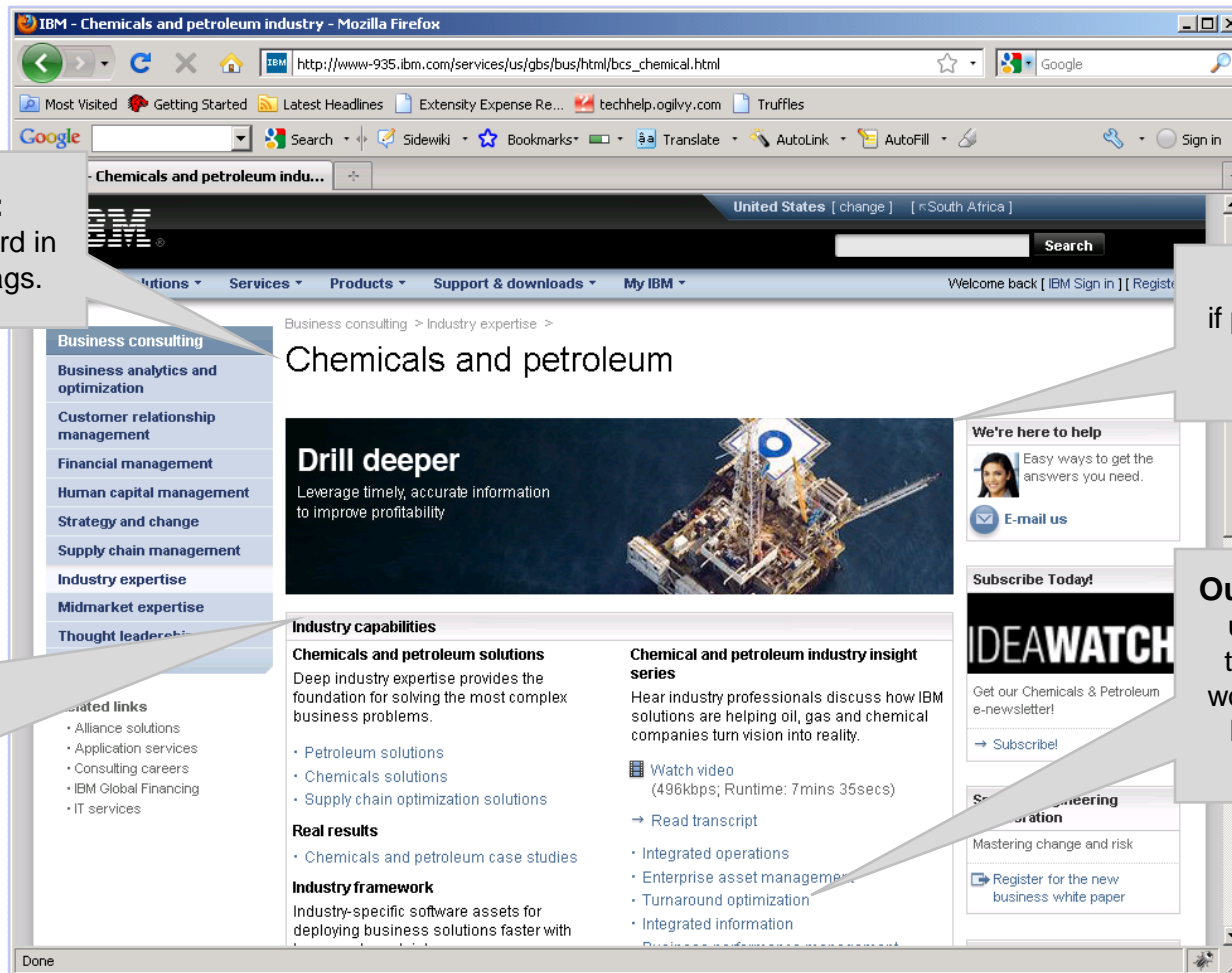
Drive to IBM.com For  
Relevant Information





# Optimizing Content for Search

- Visible Elements (using IBM.com as an example)



**Headers:**  
use the keyword in the Header tags.

**Images:**  
if possible, include keyword in alt attribute

**Content:**  
use the keyword within the content – preferably within the first paragraph - and write great copy!

**Outbound Links:**  
use keyword or topically-related words in outbound link text, where relevant

# Optimizing Content for Search

- Code Elements

**Page Title:**

The most important element. Use the Keyword, and keep the title to 65 characters or less

 IBM - Chemicals and petroleum industry**Meta Description:**

about 180 Characters. Make it enticing and use the keyword within

```
<meta name="description" content="Reliance on volatile natural resources and a supply-push production and distribution environment present major challenges. IBM business consultants offer smart opportunities."/>
```

**URL:**

Include the keyword, when possible, in the URL (directory or file name)

 [http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/html/bcs\\_chemical.html](http://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/gbs/bus/html/bcs_chemical.html)

# Optimizing Content for Search

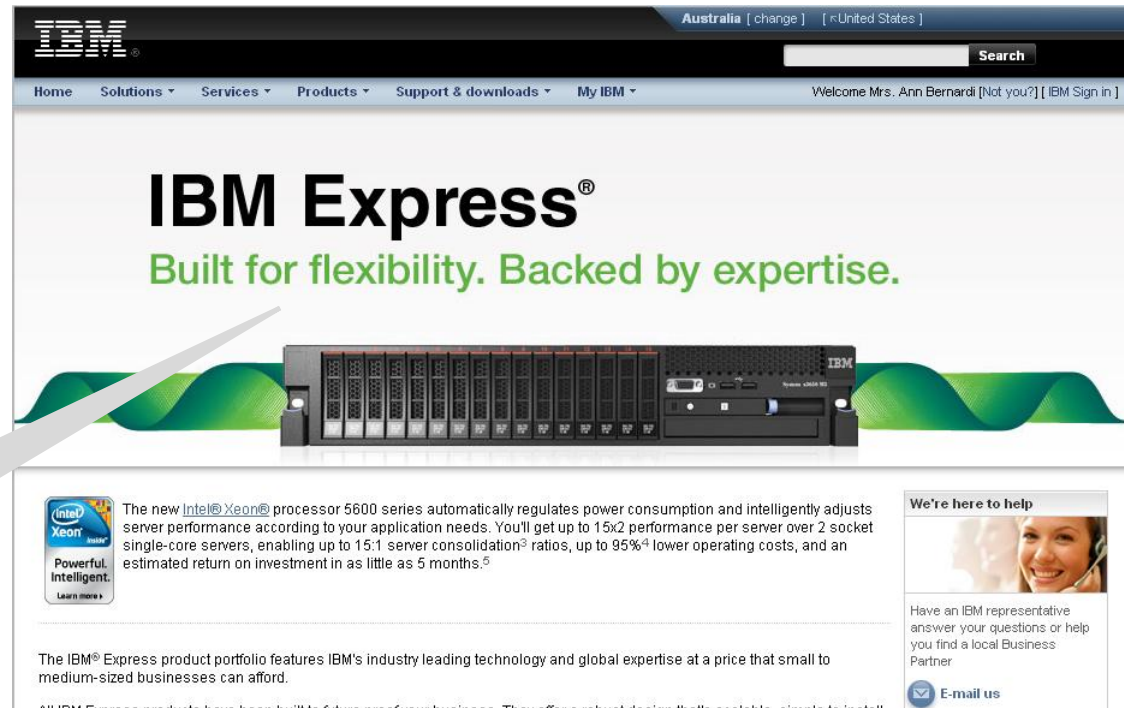
Images with alt tags allow search engines to match the description to the site's content aiding in search engine rankings.

- Try to use text instead of images to display important names, content, or links. The Google crawler doesn't recognize text contained in images.
- If you must use images for textual content, consider using the "ALT" attribute to include a few words of descriptive text. See example below.

*\*Source – Google WebMaster Guidelines*

### Images:

If possible, include keyword in alt attribute & limit flash usage. "alt" attribute in source code of the page. See below...



```
<img src='/systems/au/resources/systems_ap_GL_express_930x300.jpg' alt="IBM Express® Built for flexibility. Backed by expertise." data-bbox="19 857 990 879"/>
```

# Getting Started: Leverage Insights Up Front

- Insights from keyword research can provide valuable intelligence to help steer communications planning, destination and content strategy and more. Leveraging these insights at the start of your project can increase both awareness and opportunity.
- Optimization should occur throughout the campaign based on performance.



# Suggested Actions to Implement Guidance

- Determine the midmarket business area(s) for deliberate search planning/execution
- Identify the online content that's important for the selected business area(s).
  - Consider the breadth of content described earlier.
- Based on market usage, define the important keywords/phrases associated with content / the business area(s)
- Optimize ALL relevant content for organic search
- If you plan to conduct paid search
  - Ensure deliberate coordination with other internal groups to avoid competing for the same keywords
  - Monitor competitor landscape to inform your plan
- Going forward, make search planning a standard part of initial campaign planning