

# Reverse Engineer Your Competitor's Organic Keyword Strategy

Last Updated / Reviewed: Jan 10th, 2023

Execution Time: ~1h



**Goal:** To reverse engineer your competitor's SEO keyword strategy.

**Ideal Outcome:** You have a standardized audit that shows you what the pages, keywords and topics that your competitor is ranking for organically.

**Prerequisites or requirements:** None.

**Why this is important:** Your competitors might currently be ranking for high-value, high-volume keywords that you might be able to rank for yourself. This can also allow you to replicate strategies or content that are working well for competitors.

**Where this is done:** In Ahrefs and Google Sheets.

**When this is done:** When you start your business. After that, you should be monitoring your competitor's moves at least every couple of months.

**Who does this:** The person responsible for SEO.

---

## ☐ Included Resource

1. Click below and make a copy of the "Organic Keyword Reverse Engineering" template:



[Click here to get the most up-to-date version of this SOP](#)

URL	Total Volume of Search Query	Total Current Traffic to URL	Average Keyword Difficulty	Keyword Bucket
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/</a>	2660850	522302	47	Branded - Compare The Market
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/c">https://www.comparethemarket.com/c</a>	1566400	363054	77	Car Insurance Comparison
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/t">https://www.comparethemarket.com/t</a>	778700	101188	66	Travel Insurance Comparison
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/t">https://www.comparethemarket.com/t</a>	772000	71489	69	Broadband Deals and Comparison
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/r">https://www.comparethemarket.com/r</a>	135400	70604	42	Branded - Compare the Meerkat
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/t">https://www.comparethemarket.com/t</a>	341400	55828	66	Home Insurance Comparison
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/e">https://www.comparethemarket.com/e</a>	286200	53378	75	Electricity and Gas Comparison
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/c">https://www.comparethemarket.com/c</a>	58350	45341	24	Branded - Cinema Tickets
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/</a>				down Cover Comparison
+ <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/</a>				rt Term Car Insurance

GET THE TEMPLATE

## Environment Setup

**Create an Ahrefs account** If you don't have one already:

1. Go to <https://ahrefs.com/>;
2. Select [a plan](#) that works for you.

**Note:** This SOP was created when Ahrefs' 7 day trial was still available, they've been discontinued since. If purchasing a paid plan on Ahrefs' is not feasible, then we recommend using a cheaper alternative like [Ubersuggest](#).

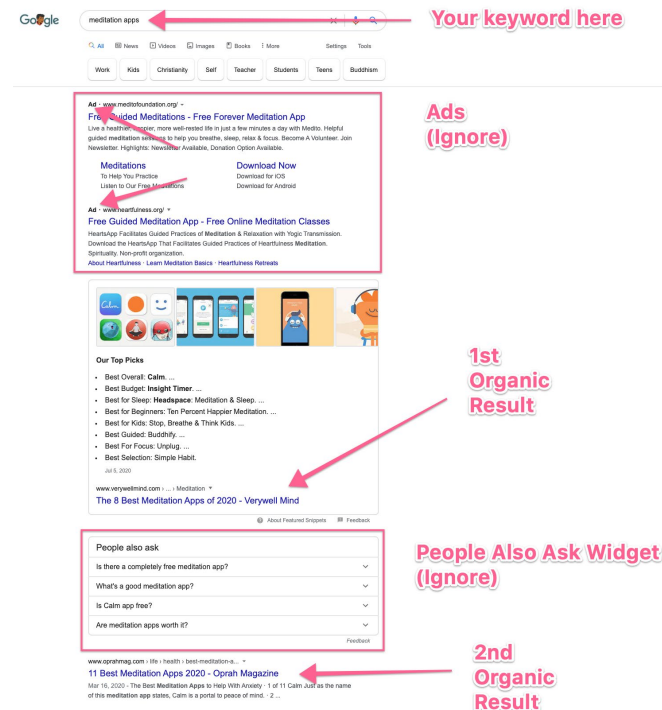
## Identify the competitor that you want to reverse engineer

1. Select which option applies to you (and click on it to jump to the right section):
  - a. [\(Option 1\) I want to identify who is competing with me for a given keyword.](#)
  - b. [\(Option 2\) I want to identify who my competitors are across all keywords.](#)
  - c. [\(Option 3\) I already know which competitor I want to use for this SOP.](#)
- a. [\(Option 1\)](#) If you're looking for competitors for specific keywords, your best bet is to simply Google your keyword using incognito mode and see which websites come up in the organic results.

**Important:** Make sure your IP address matches the market your website is competing in (for example, if you're going after the US market, make sure you're browsing using a US IP).

You can use [this website](#) to check your IP address. If necessary, use a VPN to change your IP address.

**Example:**



- Go through the list of organic results on the first page and select a competitor that is only a little bit larger than your business or smaller.

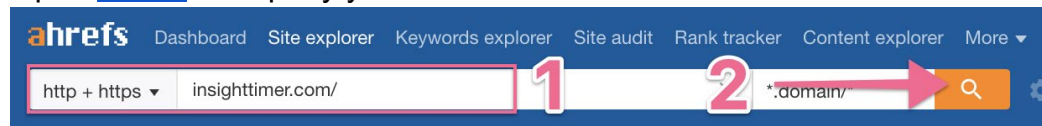
- Example:** Do **not** pick a competitor like Wikipedia or Coca-Cola. Those brands will likely have resources and assets that you will not be able to replicate. Considering them direct competitors might not be useful if your aim is to replicate their success (unless the brand you are working on is actually of such size)

	Name	URL
Brand:	Insight Timer	<a href="https://insighttimer.com/">https://insighttimer.com/</a>
Competitor #1	Headspace	<a href="https://www.headspace.com/">https://www.headspace.com/</a>
Competitor #2	Calm	<a href="https://www.calm.com/">https://www.calm.com/</a>
Competitor #3	Ten Percent Happier	<a href="https://www.tenpercent.com/">https://www.tenpercent.com/</a>
Competitor #4	Mindful	<a href="https://www.mindful.org/">https://www.mindful.org/</a>

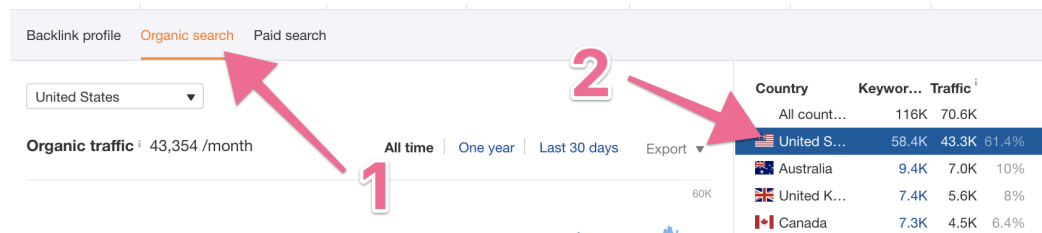
Your Competitors

b. (Option 2) If you're looking for overall competitors across all keywords:

1. Open [ahrefs](#) and query your own domain:



2. Click 'Organic Search' and then select the country where you want to compete:



3. Your top 10 competitor list will show up below:

#### Top 10 competitors<sup>i</sup>

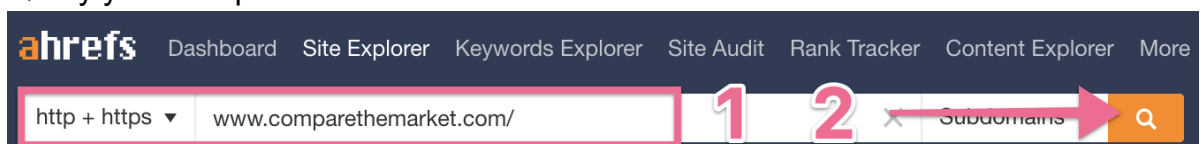
- 1 mindful.org ▼
- 2 headspace.com ▼
- 3 mindworks.org ▼
- 4 chopra.com ▼
- 5 mindvalley.com ▼
- 6 tarabrach.com ▼
- 7 eocinstitute.org ▼
- 8 lionsroar.com ▼
- 9 meditativemind.org ▼
- 10 mindfulnessesercises.com ▼



c. (Option 3) If you already know which competitor you want to use you can skip to the next chapter.

## ☐ Export your competitors' organic keywords from Ahrefs

1. Query your competitor's domain in ahrefs.

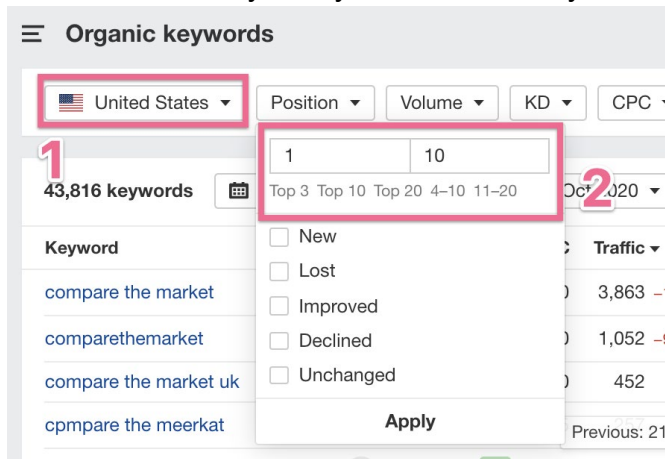


[Click here to get the most up-to-date version of this SOP](#)

- On the sidebar click 'Organic keywords'

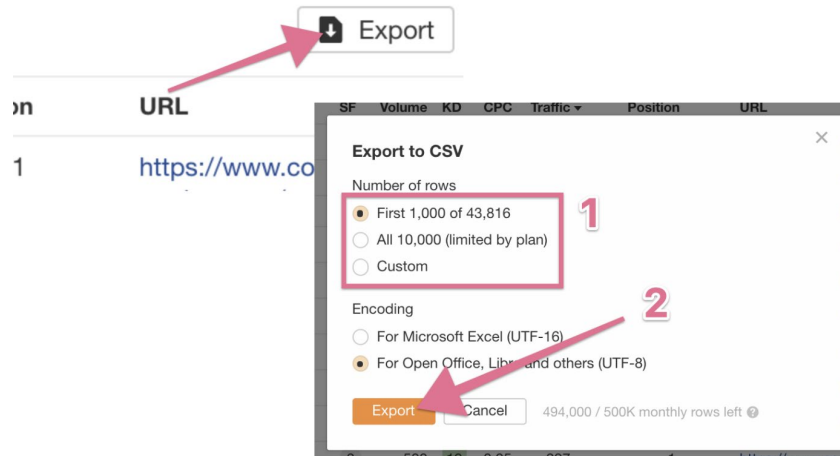


- Select the country that you want to analyze, and click "Position: Top 10"



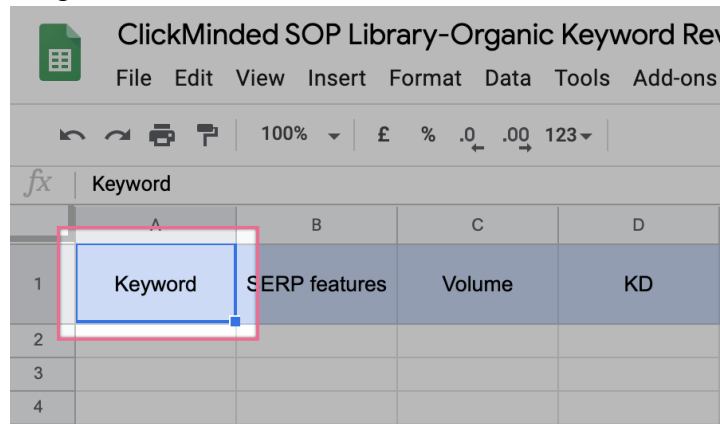
- Export the data by clicking 'Export' → 'Start Export'. This will export your competitor's keywords to CSV.

**Note:** Ideally, you want to export as many rows as possible. But keep in mind your Ahrefs account might be limited to a certain number of rows per month.

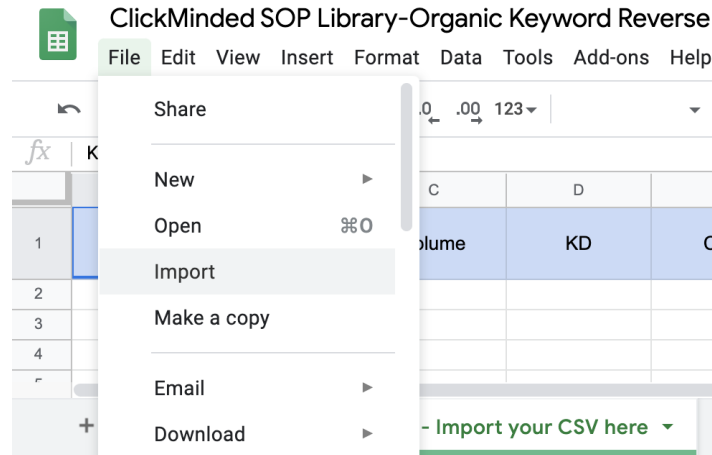


## ☐ Import your competitors' organic keywords to your template

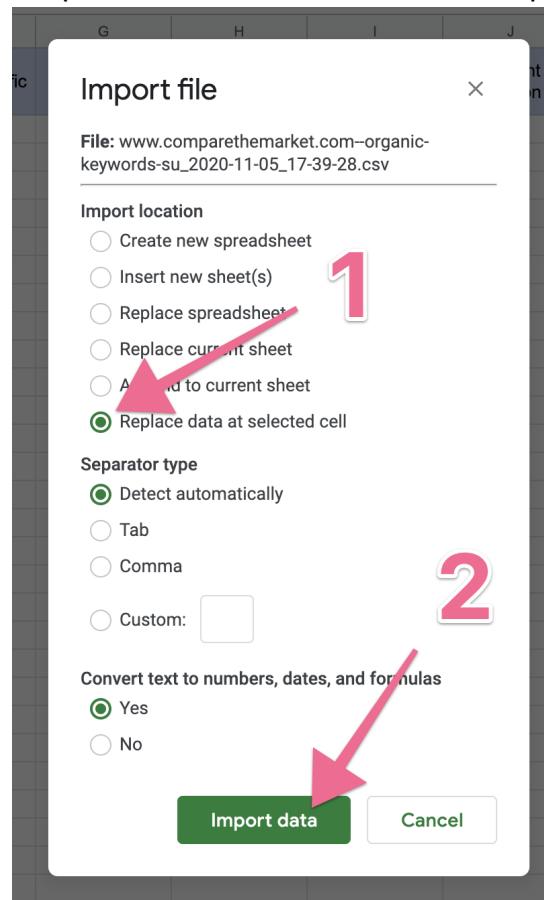
1. On your copy of "[Organic Keyword Reverse Engineering](#)" make sure your cursor is selecting Cell A1:



2. Click 'File' → 'Import'



3. Select 'Replace data at selected cell' → 'Import data'



4. Click the “2) Keyword Buckets By Page” Sheet and you’ll already find a table with your competitor’s page ranked by current organic traffic.



ClickMinded SOP Library--Organic Keyword Reverse Engineering ☆ 📄 ☁

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help Last edit was made 2 minutes ago b

100% £ % .0 .00 123 Default (Ari... 10 B I S A

URL	Keyword	Total Volume Search Query
https://www.comparethemarket.com/ Total		266085
https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/ Total		156640
https://www.comparethemarket.com/travel-insurance/ Total		778700
https://www.comparethemarket.com/broadband/ Total		772000
https://www.comparethemarket.com/meerkat/ Total		135400
https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/ Total		341400
https://www.comparethemarket.com/energy/ Total		286200
https://www.comparethemarket.com/customer-rewards/ Total		58350
https://www.comparethemarket.com/breakdown-cover/ Total		258400

1) Ahrefs Keyword List - Import your CSV 2) Keywords Buckets by Page

**Note:** This is how to interpret that table:

URL	Keyword	Total Volume of Search Query	Total Current Traffic to URL	Average Keyword Difficulty	Keyword Bucket
https://www.comparethemarket.com/ Total		2660850	522302	47	Branded - Compare The Market
https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/ Total		1566400	363054	77	Car Insurance Comparison
https://www.comparethemarket.com/travel-insurance/ Total		778700	101188	66	Travel Insurance Comparison
https://www.comparethemarket.com/broadband/ Total		772000	71489	69	Broadband Deals and Comparison
https://www.comparethemarket.com/meerkat/ Total		135400	70604	42	Branded - Compare the Meerkat
https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/ Total		341400	55828	66	Home Insurance Comparison
https://www.comparethemarket.com/energy/ Total		286200	53378	75	Electricity and Gas Comparison
https://www.comparethemarket.com/customer-rewards/ Total		58350	45341	24	Branded - Cinema Tickets
https://www.comparethemarket.com/breakdown-cover/ Total		258400	36501	45	Breakdown Cover Comparison
https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/tem		157350	31503	40	Short Term Car Insurance
https://www.comparethemarket.com/mortgages/	best mortgage rates	29000	711	54	
	cheap mortgages	1300	379	55	
	compare mortgage	1300	587	55	
	compare mortgage rates	4000	564	55	
	compare mortgages	23000	3757	55	
	compare mortgages uk	700	320	55	
	compare the market mortgage	500	290	53	
	compare the market mortgages	1000	290	53	
	compare the mortgage	1000	290	55	
	find a mortgage	1000	290	58	
	mortgage compare	1000	290	55	
	mortgage comparison	1000	290	55	
	mortgage comparison uk	1000	290	54	
	mortgage deals	1000	290	54	

**Page URL**: Total Query Volume for All Keywords the page ranks for



**List of Keywords the page ranks for**






















**Total Traffic the page (or keyword if in a breakdown) is getting from All Keywords the page ranks for**

**Keyword Bucket**: You will manually fill-out this column. A Keyword Bucket that fits the keyword list for that page.

- **Page URL:** The URL of your competitor's page that is ranking in the search results.
- **Keyword:** This column will only display information when you expand the URL column. (Clicking the '+' button). When you do, it will show you a breakdown of all the Keywords that the page ranks for in the top 10 results of google. For each keyword it will also show you the 'Total Volume Search Query', the 'Total Current Traffic to URL' and the 'Average Keyword Difficulty'.
- **Total Volume of Search Query:** Total monthly estimated query volume for all keywords that the page currently ranks for in the Top 10. This means the sum of the number of times any of those keywords is queried on Google per month on average.



- **Note:** When you expand the URL line it will display the breakdown of this metric for each keyword as well.
  - **Total Current Traffic to URL:** Total monthly estimated traffic that is driven to that page by the group of keywords that ranks on Top 10.
    - **Note:** When you expand the URL line it will display the breakdown of this metric for each keyword as well.
  - **Average Keyword Difficulty:** The average Keyword Difficulty (on a scale of 1 (easy) - 100 (very hard) it evaluates the chance of getting into top 10 of search results) of all the keywords that the page currently ranks for in the Top 10.
    - **Note:** When you expand the URL line it will display the breakdown of this metric for each keyword as well.
  - **Keyword Bucket:** This field you will manually fill-out yourself on the next step. It represents the parent topic or parent keyword that that page is ranking for.
5. For each URL (one at a time), click the  icon to expand that line. This will expand it and show you a breakdown of all the keywords for which that page is ranking on the Top 10 → Skim through all the keywords → In the “*Keyword Bucket*” column type a *Keyword Bucket* that you think would fit that group of keywords. → Click the  icon to minimize that URL → Move to the next URL → Repeat until all URLs have *Keyword Buckets* assigned to them.

URL	Keyword	Total Volume of Search Query	Total Current Traffic to URL	Average Keyword Difficulty	Keyword Bucket
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/</a> Total		2660850	522302	47	Branded - Compare The Market
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/</a> Tot		1566400	363054	77	Car Insurance Comparison
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/travel-insurance/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/travel-insurance/</a> T		778700	101188	66	Travel Insurance Comparison
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/broadband/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/broadband/</a> Total		772000	71489	69	Broadband Deals and Comparison
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/meerkat/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/meerkat/</a> Total		135400	70604	42	Branded - Compare the Meerkat
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/</a> "		341400	55828	66	Home Insurance Comparison
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/energy/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/energy/</a> Total		286200	53378	75	Electricity and Gas Comparison
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/customer-rewards">https://www.comparethemarket.com/customer-rewards</a>		58350	45341	24	Branded - Cinema Tickets
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/breakdown-cover/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/breakdown-cover/</a>		258400	36501	45	Breakdown Cover Comparison
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/tem">https://www.comparethemarket.com/car-insurance/tem</a>		157350	31503	40	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/mortgages/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/mortgages/</a> Total		216850	25667	54	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/pet-insurance/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/pet-insurance/</a> Total		178500	24088	54	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/customer-rewards/meerkat-meals/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/customer-rewards/meerkat-meals/</a> Total		26250	20077	17	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/motorbike-insurance/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/motorbike-insurance/</a> Total		101300	19596	47	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/contents/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/contents/</a> Total		52700	18276	35	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/life-insurance/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/life-insurance/</a> Total		183900	18101	55	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/van-insurance/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/van-insurance/</a> Total		98600	17149	50	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/loans/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/loans/</a> Total		269400	16284	57	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/mobile-phones/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/mobile-phones/</a> Total		82500	16264	57	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/landlord/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/home-insurance/landlord/</a> Total		50900	14502	40	
 <a href="https://www.comparethemarket.com/loans/insurance/loans/">https://www.comparethemarket.com/loans/insurance/loans/</a> Total		66600	14203	54	

6. That's it! You now have a document that shows you the pages that are bringing the most traffic to your competitor, and the keyword buckets and topics that they are using to achieve those rankings.