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How to Use SERP Features to Inform Your Content Strategy

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Many marketers approach Search Engine Result Page (SERP) features from the wrong angle. Instead of asking what you can do to rank for SERP features, ask what SERP features can do to inform your content strategy. By flipping this thought process, you can build a successful content strategy that speaks to your audience at every stage of the buyer's journey, using the most efficacious language and content format.

SERP features are designed to provide users with the most relevant answers to their questions, and they're formatted to package this information in the best way possible. In other words, the exact language and format of each SERP feature is the most accurate representation of the type of language and content format that your audience seeks (at least according to Google). As a digital marketer, this is gold. With a little digging, you can now mimic the keyword topics, style, and format of the SERP features present for your target keywords, creating content that engages your audience exactly where they are in the buyer's journey, and in the format they desire.

Top organic SERP features

While chasing the sought-after SERP features, many marketers fall short because they overlook the most important clue: the SERP feature itself. SERP features contain meaningful knowledge about your audience and how they prefer to consume information. Here are a few of the most popular organic [SERP features](#) used on Google:

1. Knowledge Graph
2. Featured Snippet
3. Related Questions
4. Image Pack

5. Reviews

6. Video

7. In-Depth Article

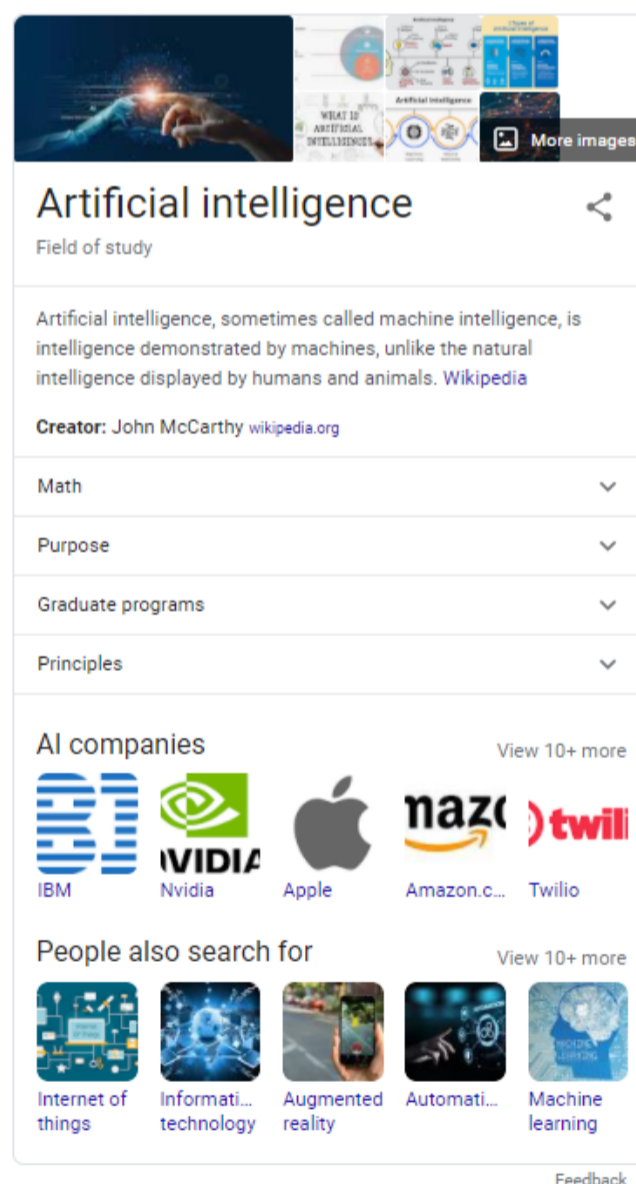
In this next section, I'll break down these features into stages of the buyer's journey and explain how they can inform your SEO content strategy.

Aligning SERP features with stages of the buyer's journey

Awareness stage

The top of the buyer's journey is the awareness stage, where your audience is aware that they have a problem and will begin to conduct research to better understand and define this problem. At this stage, your audience is seeking a concise explanation of the problem and is not ready for a solution yet. SERP features that indicate an awareness stage audience include:

- **Knowledge Graph:** often illustrates high-level biographical information and keyword cluster definitions. This feature is a staple of the awareness stage.



- **Featured Snippet:** often provides concise keyword definitions and explanations of concepts or problems. This feature is also a staple of the awareness stage when it provides definitions or answers "what is" questions.

The simplest **example** of a **Conversational AI** application is a FAQ bot, or bot, which you may have interacted with before. ... The next maturity level of **Conversational AI** applications is Virtual Personal Assistants. **Examples** of these are Amazon Alexa, Apple's Siri, and Google Home.



www.interactions.com › conversational-ai

[Conversational AI | What is Conversational AI? | Interactions](#)

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- **Related Questions:** when the inquiries begin with “what is” and “how to” they align perfectly with the educational aspect of the awareness stage.

People also ask

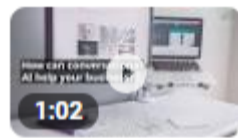
- What is conversational AI? [▼](#)
- Why is conversational AI important? [▼](#)
- Why do conversational AI customers work? [▼](#)
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- **Videos:** FAQ videos and how-to videos indicate the high-level thinking of the awareness stage.

www.youtube.com › watch traffic (us): 176.50M/mo - keywords: 10.61M

Conversational AI: More Than Just a Chatbot - YouTube



But most people think of **conversational AI** as a chatbot. Is there ... Your browser does not currently recognize ...
Feb 19, 2018 - Uploaded by Conversica

- **Images:** often indicate a one-word or short-tail keyword query, in line with the awareness stage.

Images for conversational ai

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Tips for content strategy

When creating content for an awareness stage audience, it’s important to remember that they have very little understanding about who you are, what you do, and why you do it. By addressing these high-level questions, you can introduce yourself in a way that frames your company as a thought leader in the industry. When doing so, pay close attention to the type of language you are using.

SERP features in the awareness stage of the buyer's journey take advantage of clear and concise language, so make sure you do the same. Avoid flowery descriptions or rambling explanations, and keep your definitions short and to the point (ranging from 40-50 words).

Likewise, this is your chance to develop trust with this new awareness audience. Keeping your content informative and easy to understand helps build trust, illustrating that you care about educating your audience without bogging them down with complex industry jargon or heavy handed branding.

Questions abound at this stage in the buyer's journey, and it's a good idea to include a [question and answer format](#) when you observe it in the SERP feature. Use headers, bullet points, and/or numbered lists when possible, and make it easy for your audience to scan the content without committing a chunk of their time. Images are especially useful at this stage, but make sure to include an [image alt tag](#).

Consideration stage

The middle of the buyer's journey is the consideration stage. At this point, your audience can identify and understand their problem (with the help of your educational awareness content), but they still don't know the best way to solve it. They're seeking information about various solutions, and want to learn more about how your solution can solve their problem. SERP features that indicate a consideration stage audience include:

- **Featured Snippet:** when the snippet is formatted for lists or comparisons instead of clear cut definitions, it indicates the consideration stage.

Top 10 Conversational AI Platforms to Look Out for in 2020

- **BotXO AI.** BotXO is a leading **Conversational AI solution** provider that delivers a powerful **AI Chatbot Builder** to companies worldwide. ...
- **SAP Conversational AI.** SAP **Conversational AI** automates your business processes and improves customer support with **AI chatbots**. ...
- Houndify. ...
- Passage AI. ...
- KAI. ...
- Kore.ai. ...
- MindMeld. ...
- Landbot.io.

[More items...](#)

<https://www.analyticsinsight.net/top-10-conversational-a-...>

Top 10 Conversational AI Platforms to Look Out for in 2020



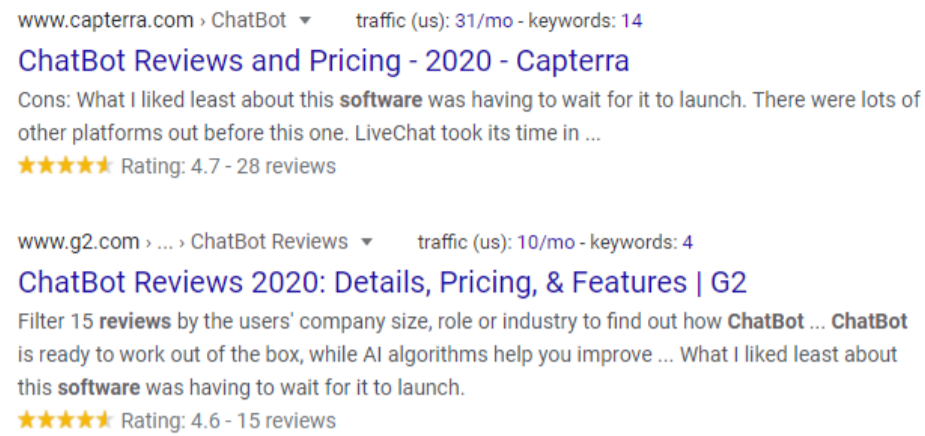
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- **Related Questions:** "why" and technical questions belong in the consideration stage of the buyer's journey.

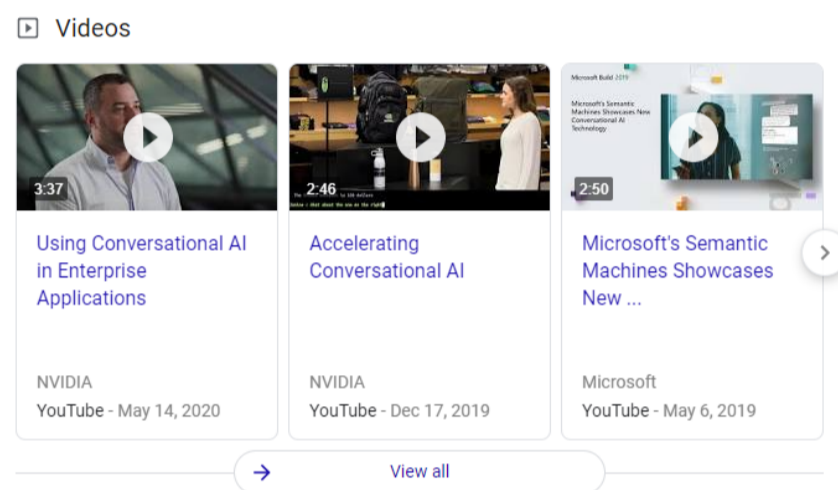
People also ask	
Why is conversational AI important?	▼
Why do conversational AI customers work?	▼
What is the best AI chatbot?	▼
What are the advantages of Chatbots?	▼

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- **Reviews:** service or product reviews indicate that your audience is actively searching for and comparing solutions, which aligns with the consideration stage.



- **Videos:** service and product videos belong in the consideration stage, as they explain why a specific service or product is a viable solution to your audience’s problem.



Tips for content strategy

When creating content for a consideration stage audience, it’s important to focus on building a comprehensive and compelling argument. By using specific examples to frame your service as the most valuable solution to your audience’s problem, you can illustrate how and why they should consider investing in your solution.

SERP features in the consideration stage of the buyer’s journey allow for content that is longer than in the awareness stage, and the language also employs more descriptors. Technical language is appropriate at this point, and this is your chance to explain what makes your solution stand out.

However, staying true to your solution’s capabilities is critical here, because you don’t want to over promise results that aren’t actually possible. Instead, use this moment as a chance to build trust with your audience. Keep your reasoning authentic and your examples specific to the value that your solution can deliver.

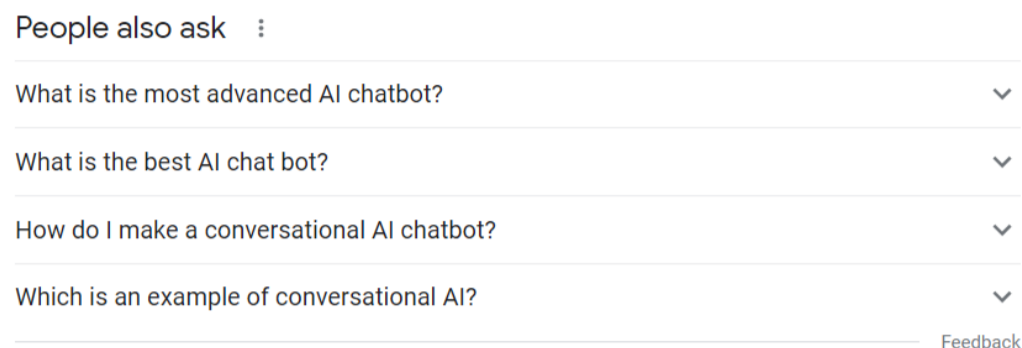
Comparative language is also more prevalent in the SERP features at this stage, so include detailed reviews that demonstrate why your service or product is the best. When using video, make sure your content is also searchable on [YouTube](#).

Decision phase

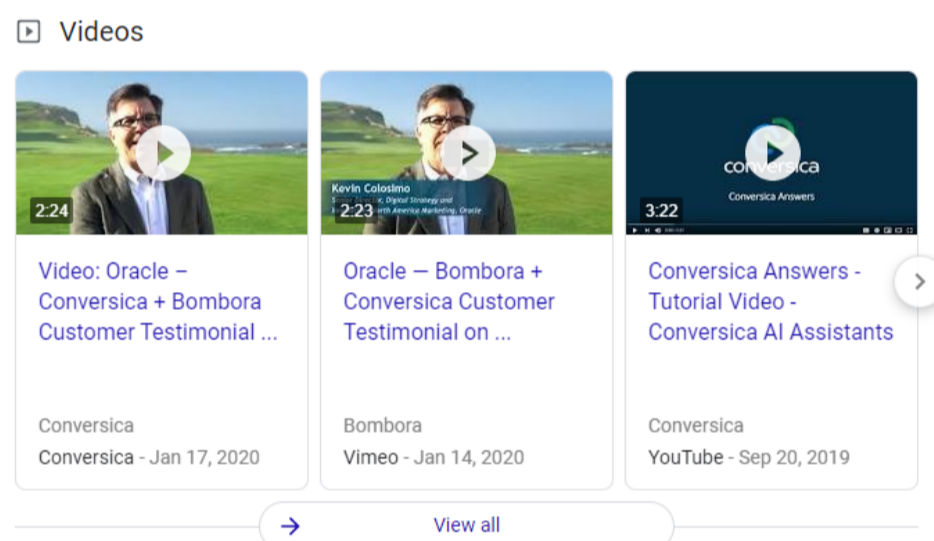
The end of the buyer’s journey is the decision phase, where your audience has already identified their problem, compared different solutions, and is now ready to commit to a final decision. At this point, your audience knows how to talk about the solution they’re looking for,

and now they want to know exactly why they should commit to you. They want content that proves that other customers have had a positive experience with your solution, and are willing to commit more of their time to confirming their final choice.

- **People Also Ask:** questions leveraging phrases like “the best solution” or “most advanced solution” indicate users transitioning from the consideration to the decision phase of the buyer’s journey. Customers want to confirm that they’re making the right decision, and are looking for hard proof.



- **Videos:** customer testimonial videos align with the decision phase, providing your audience with proof about whether they should commit to your solution or not.



- **Long-Form Content:** long-form pieces of content range from 2,000-5,000 words. These pieces of content can appear as organic site links, scholarly articles, or in-depth articles. They tend to position themselves as thought leaders in the industry, and explain the overall problem and solution. Quite often they take the form of buyer’s guides, providing in-depth information about each solution and answering questions with long-tail keywords.

Scholarly articles for [article on artificial intelligence in sales industry](#)

... : Machine learning and [artificial intelligence in sales](#) ... - Syam - Cited by 141

Retracted: A hybrid [artificial intelligence sales-](#) ... - Lee - Cited by 72

... of [artificial intelligence in the apparel industry](#): a review - Guo - Cited by 64

Tips for content strategy

When creating content for a decision stage audience, make sure to address any questions that haven’t already been answered in your previous pieces of content. While this may sound intuitive, it’s an essential part of the process seeing as an unanswered question can trigger your prospect to leave your site and go to a competitor’s site to find the answers they’re looking for. At this point in time, don’t underestimate the depth and detail of information your audience is seeking.

SERP features in the decision phase of the buyer's journey address the audience as pseudo-experts in the subject matter, as should you. At this stage your audience is able to string together long-tail keywords that include modifiers, and your content should provide detailed answers to these highly specific inquiries that address your audience as knowledgeable members of the industry.

Leverage compelling statistics and results-oriented examples that explicitly frame the value that your solution provides. By using clear data points and specifications, your audience can easily see for themselves how your solution can benefit them.

Technical language is widely understood, and the audience wants to hear the nitty-gritty details of your solution. Long-form content is encouraged at this point, so don't shy away from a high word count. Cite your customers when possible, and consider using video to break up the heavy reading.

Content strategy takeaways

Google SERPs are designed to anticipate user needs, and the SERP features present for your target keywords are some of the most telling clues about the type of audience associated with your keywords. By taking note of the SERP features present for your target keywords and paying attention to the style and format of the content, you can leverage Google's search engine algorithms to your own advantage.

Once you've identified the types of SERP features present for your keyword, you have also discovered your audience's stage of the buyer's journey and the keywords, style, and format of content they prefer. As a digital marketer, you can use this information to craft a content strategy that perfectly aligns with your audience's desires. This takes the guesswork out of your content strategy and ensures that your content resonates with your audience exactly where they are in the buyer's journey.

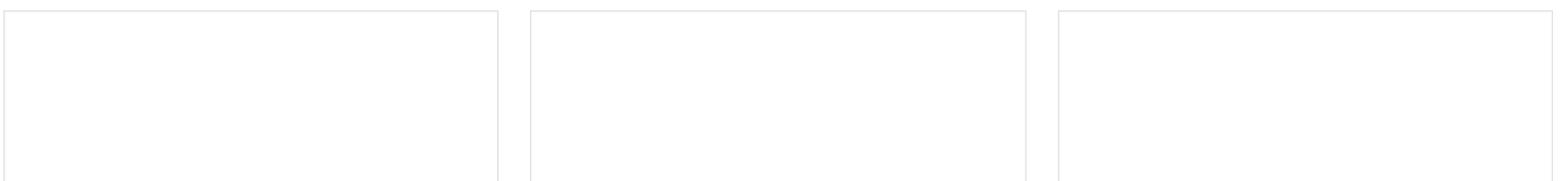
About Rhianna Hixon —

Rhianna is an experienced content writer that loves languages and enjoys playing around with words. She is a trained artist with a proclivity for all things creative and aims to infuse this creativity into each piece of content she writes.

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Brilliant article. Explaining SERP features with the sales funnel gives an exact solution where we can add which features. This explanation will help people to know how SERP features will play an important role in boosting sales.

And after every stage of the funnel, given tips for content strategy helps me to uncover many other things.

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fantastically well written. Thank you. Not only did I learn a few new concepts, but this article solidified and entrenched concepts I was already familiar with, but not enough to concisely describe.

Please know that I fully intend to use some of your verbiage in my own sites budding knowledge base, very soon :D

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