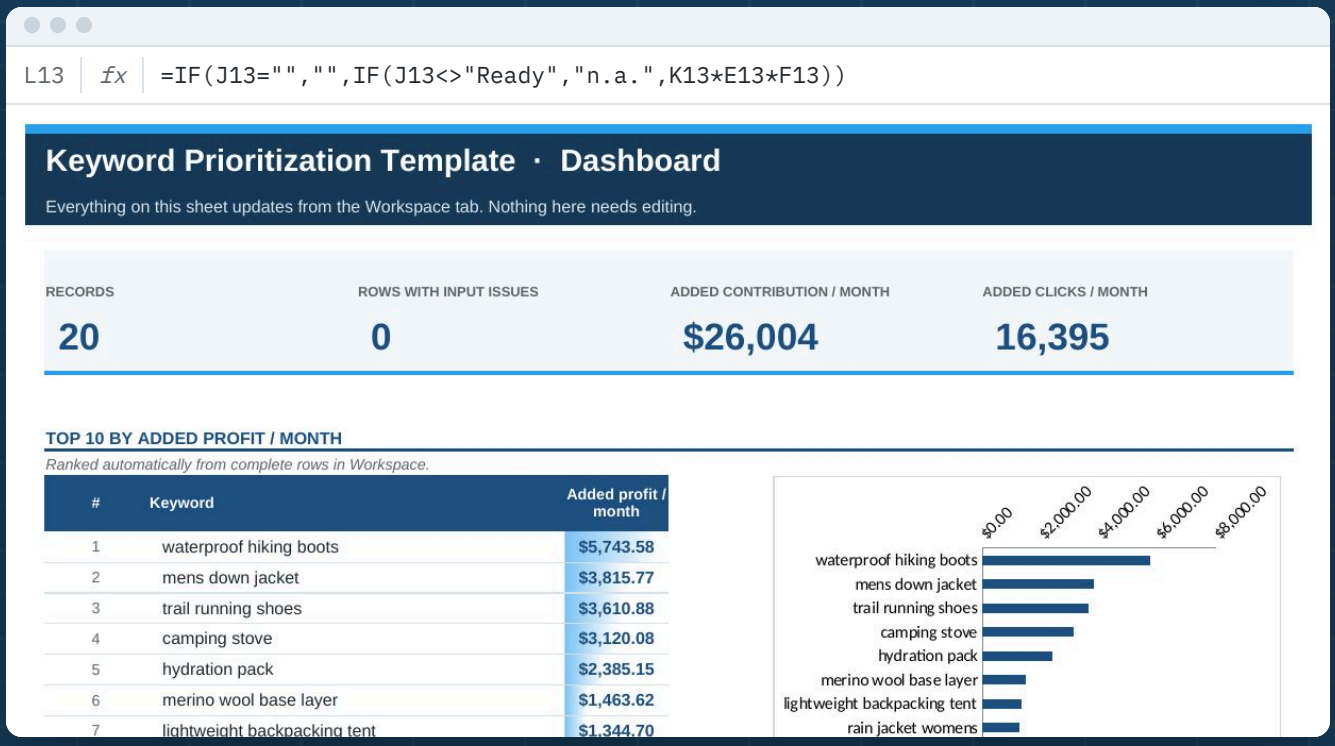
OptimizationTheory.com

Keyword Research Toolkit, resource 01

Keyword Prioritization Template

Rank every keyword by the profit it could add per hour of work, not by search volume alone.

Built for the DataForSEO API: Labs: Keyword Overview



Field guide, v3.0, November 2026

Jourdan Rombough, optimizationtheory.com

What this template decides

Which keywords deserve your next hours of work, ranked by the monthly profit each could add per hour invested, with every assumption visible and editable.

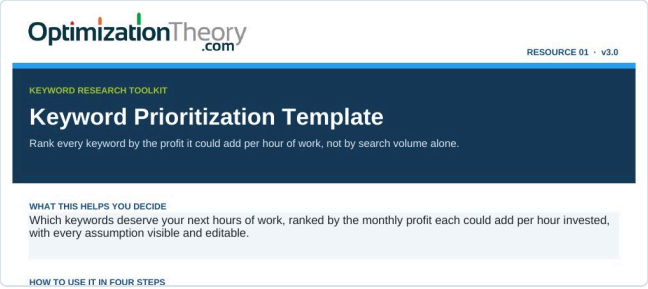
Most keyword lists get sorted by search volume, then difficulty, and that's where prioritization stops. The problem is that volume says nothing about whether the traffic converts, how much of it you can realistically win, or how many hours it will take to get there. A 40,000-search keyword you already rank fifth for can be worth less than a 2,400-search keyword you could move from page three to the top three with one good page.

This keyword prioritization template turns a raw keyword export into a ranked work queue. For each keyword it estimates the clicks you'd add by moving from your current CTR to a realistic target CTR, converts those clicks into monthly profit, then divides by the hours the work will take. The result is a single, defensible number for every keyword: added profit per work hour.

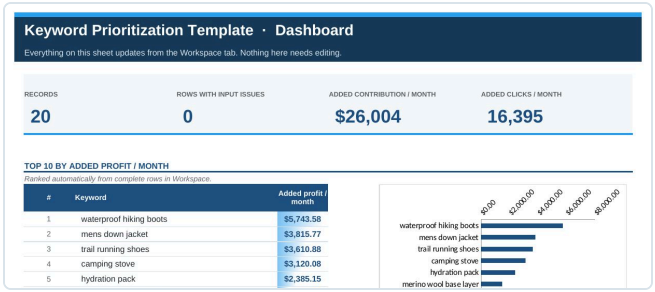
Who it's for

- SEOs choosing which pages to build or improve next quarter
- Agencies that need to justify a keyword plan to a client in money, not rankings
- Content leads with more ideas than writers
- Ecommerce teams deciding between category, product and guide content

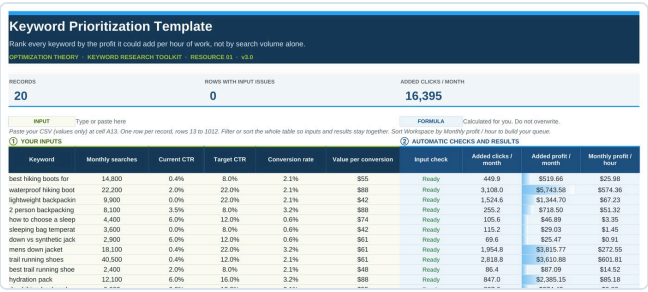
What's in the workbook



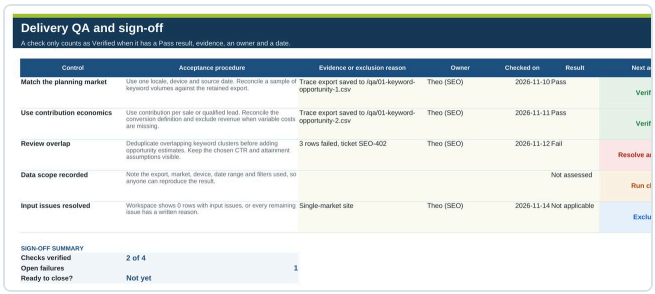
Start Here. Purpose, four-step setup and colour key.



Dashboard. KPIs, charts, Top 10 and an automatic action list.



Workspace. The working table, room for 1,000 rows.



Delivery QA. Evidence, owner and date for each validation step.

How the calculation works

Added clicks = search volume × (target CTR minus current CTR, never below zero) × attainment. Added profit = added clicks × conversion rate × value per conversion. Profit per hour = added profit ÷ work hours. Every input is a cell you can change, so a stakeholder who disagrees with an assumption can change it and watch the ranking move, instead of arguing about a black-box score.

The key formula, as written in the workbook

```
=IF(J13="","",IF(J13<>"Ready","n.a.",K13*E13*F13))
```

Result column	Plain-English formula	What it tells you
Added clicks / month	Monthly searches × MAX(0,Target CTR-Current CTR) × Attainment factor	Searches multiplied by the positive CTR gap and the attainment assumption.
Added profit / month	Added clicks ÷ month × Conversion rate × Value per conversion	Expected added clicks multiplied by conversion rate and contribution per conversion.
Monthly profit / hour	Added profit ÷ month ÷ Work hours	Monthly contribution opportunity per implementation hour.

How to use it, step by step

1

Export your keywords

Pull keywords with search volume from your keyword tool, and your current CTR per keyword from Google Search Console (clicks ÷ impressions). Use 0 if you don't rank.

2

Set realistic targets

Enter a target CTR for the position you can credibly reach, your conversion rate, value per conversion and an attainment factor (0.5 = you expect to capture half the modeled gain).

3

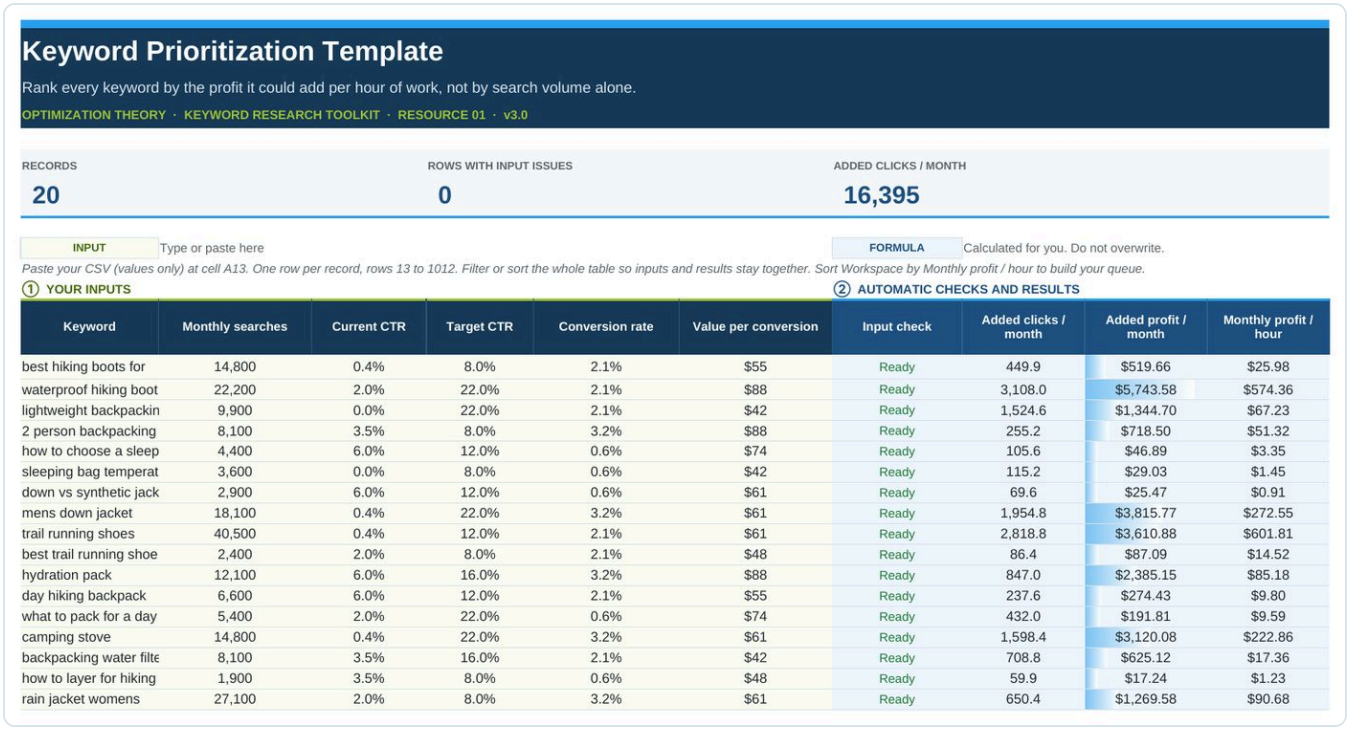
Estimate effort honestly

Add the work hours for each keyword: writing, design, dev and links. Effort is the denominator, so lowball guesses distort the ranking more than anything else.

4

Sort and commit

Sort Workspace by Monthly profit / hour, or read the Top 10 on the Dashboard. Commit to the top of the list and record the source export in Source reference.



Keyword Prioritization Template

Rank every keyword by the profit it could add per hour of work, not by search volume alone.

OPTIMIZATION THEORY · KEYWORD RESEARCH TOOLKIT · RESOURCE 01 · v3.0

RECORDS	ROWS WITH INPUT ISSUES	ADDED CLICKS / MONTH
20	0	16,395

INPUT Type or paste here — FORMULA Calculated for you. Do not overwrite.

Paste your CSV (values only) at cell A13. One row per record, rows 13 to 1012. Filter or sort the whole table so inputs and results stay together. Sort Workspace by Monthly profit / hour to build your queue.

① YOUR INPUTS — ② AUTOMATIC CHECKS AND RESULTS

Keyword	Monthly searches	Current CTR	Target CTR	Conversion rate	Value per conversion	Input check	Added clicks / month	Added profit / month	Monthly profit / hour
best hiking boots for	14,800	0.4%	8.0%	2.1%	$55	Ready	449.9	$519.66	$25.98
waterproof hiking boot	22,200	2.0%	22.0%	2.1%	$88	Ready	3,108.0	$5,743.58	$574.36
lightweight backpackin	9,900	0.0%	22.0%	2.1%	$42	Ready	1,524.6	$1,344.70	$67.23
2 person backpacking	8,100	3.5%	8.0%	3.2%	$88	Ready	255.2	$718.50	$51.32
how to choose a sleep	4,400	6.0%	12.0%	0.6%	$74	Ready	105.6	$46.89	$3.35
sleeping bag temperat	3,600	0.0%	8.0%	0.6%	$42	Ready	115.2	$29.03	$1.45
down vs synthetic jack	2,900	6.0%	12.0%	0.6%	$61	Ready	69.6	$25.47	$0.91
mens down jacket	18,100	0.4%	22.0%	3.2%	$61	Ready	1,954.8	$3,815.77	$272.55
trail running shoes	40,500	0.4%	12.0%	2.1%	$61	Ready	2,818.8	$3,610.88	$601.81
best trail running shoe	2,400	2.0%	8.0%	2.1%	$48	Ready	86.4	$87.09	$14.52
hydration pack	12,100	6.0%	16.0%	3.2%	$88	Ready	847.0	$2,385.15	$85.18
day hiking backpack	6,600	6.0%	12.0%	2.1%	$55	Ready	237.6	$274.43	$9.80
what to pack for a day	5,400	2.0%	22.0%	0.6%	$74	Ready	432.0	$191.81	$9.59
camping stove	14,800	0.4%	22.0%	3.2%	$61	Ready	1,598.4	$3,120.08	$222.86
backpacking water filte	8,100	3.5%	16.0%	2.1%	$42	Ready	708.8	$625.12	$17.36
how to layer for hiking	1,900	3.5%	8.0%	0.6%	$48	Ready	59.9	$17.24	$1.23
rain jacket womens	27,100	2.0%	8.0%	3.2%	$61	Ready	650.4	$1,269.58	$90.68

The Workspace tab with the worked example. Lime cells are inputs; blue cells are formulas.

Fill it with DataForSEO

This template is built to run on **DataForSEO Labs: Keyword Overview**: search volume, monthly history, difficulty and intent for a list of keywords.

Most of the data columns fill automatically. Add the business inputs listed below, then paste.

1. Request the data

```
POST https://api.dataforseo.com/v3/dataforseo_labs/google/keyword_overview/live
[
  {
    "keywords": [
      "your keyword 1",
      "your keyword 2"
    ],
    "location_code": 2840,
    "language_code": "en"
  }
]
```

2. Save the full JSON response

Save the complete response, not just the task ID, next to the template folder.

3. Convert it to the input CSV

The script in the Automation folder runs offline: no API call, no credentials.

```
python3 Automation/dataforseo_import.py import --template 01 --input response.json --output my-inputs.csv
```

Fills automatically	You add
Keyword, Monthly searches	Current CTR, Target CTR, Conversion rate, Value per conversion, Attainment factor, Work hours

Source reference fills automatically with the task ID, endpoint, location, language, device and snapshot time, so every row is traceable. Paste the finished CSV at Workspace cell A13. Estimate the cost first with the DataForSEO Cost Calculator (template 38).

Input dictionary

Keep the CSV columns in this order and paste values at Workspace cell A13. A missing observation stays blank; use 0 only for a measured zero or a verified No.

CSV field	Column	Meaning and rule	Typical source
`keyword`	Keyword	Exact query in the selected country and language.	DataForSEO: keyword
`search_volume`	Monthly searches	Provider monthly search-volume estimate. Use one market, language and source date.	DataForSEO: search_volume
`current_ctr`	Current CTR	Assumed organic click-through rate as a decimal. Calibrate by device, brand and SERP layout. Decimal, 0.08 = 8%.	Your records or manual review
`target_ctr`	Target CTR	Assumed organic click-through rate as a decimal. Calibrate by device, brand and SERP layout. Decimal, 0.08 = 8%.	Your records or manual review
`conversion_rate`	Conversion rate	Conversions divided by eligible organic sessions for the same segment. This is an assumption. Decimal, 0.08 = 8%.	Your records or manual review
`value_per_conversion`	Value per conversion	USD contribution profit per conversion or expected lead profit. Use one value basis.	Your records or manual review
`attainment`	Attainment factor	Planning haircut for uncertainty, 0 to 1. This is your assumption, not a probability supplied by the API. Decimal, 0.08 = 8%.	Your records or manual review
`effort_hours`	Work hours	Estimated implementation hours, greater than zero.	Your records or manual review
`source_ref`	Source reference	Task ID, export filename and observation scope. Retain the untouched source response separately. Optional.	DataForSEO: source_ref

The worked example

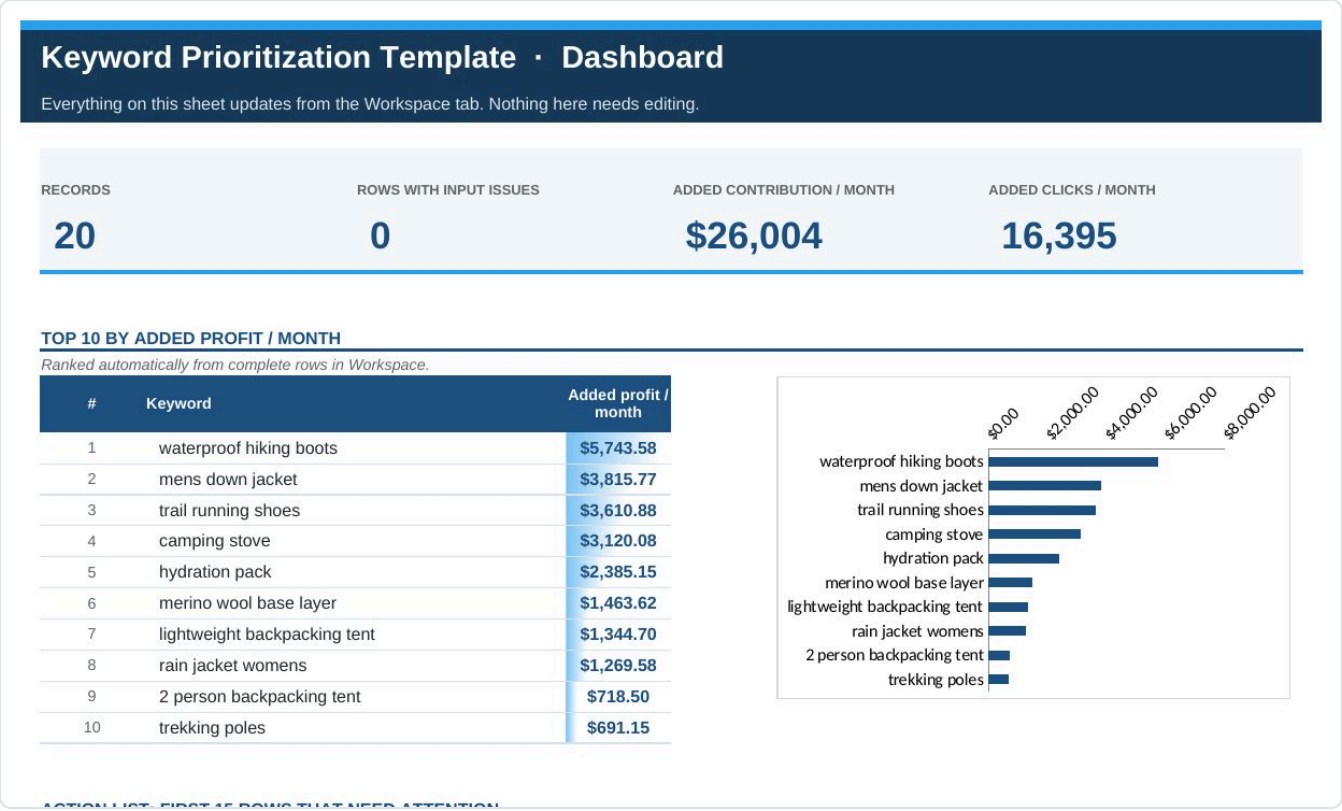
Every workbook ships filled with data from Northbeam Outdoor, a fictional outdoor-gear retailer. This one has 20 example rows.

20	0	$26,004	16,395
Records	Rows with input issues	Added contribution / month	Added clicks / month

Trail running shoes tops the per-hour ranking because its fix takes only 6 hours, while waterproof hiking boots adds the most profit in absolute terms. Sorting by both tells you what to do this week and what to plan for the quarter.

Top 10 by added profit / month

#	Keyword	Added profit / month
1	waterproof hiking boots	$5,743.58
2	mens down jacket	$3,815.77
3	trail running shoes	$3,610.88
4	camping stove	$3,120.08
5	hydration pack	$2,385.15



The Dashboard updates automatically from the Workspace tab.

Reading the result honestly

Compare opportunities on a consistent value basis. A high result can come from an optimistic assumption, so inspect the drivers.

Limits. Keyword difficulty is context, not a calibrated probability. Deduplicate overlapping keyword clusters before summing forecasts.

Mistakes to avoid

Using a generic CTR curve as your current CTR. Your current CTR is a fact you can measure in Search Console. Use it. Save the curve for the target CTR, where you're modeling a position you don't hold yet.

Setting attainment to 1. An attainment of 1 assumes you'll capture the entire modeled gain. Almost nobody does. Values between 0.4 and 0.7 keep forecasts honest and protect your credibility when results come in.

Treating revenue as profit. Value per conversion should be margin or contribution, not order value. Revenue makes every ecommerce keyword look three times better than it is.

Ignoring effort. Two keywords with equal profit are not equal if one takes 6 hours and the other takes 40. The per-hour metric is what turns a wish list into a plan.

Tips from the field

Group near-duplicate keywords first with the SERP overlap template, so you don't count the same page's traffic twice.

Re-run the sheet each quarter with fresh Search Console CTRs. Keywords that moved will drop down the list on their own.

Add a column for the target URL and feed the winners straight into the keyword mapping template.

Questions people ask

What is a keyword prioritization template?

It's a spreadsheet that scores each keyword by its likely business value so you can decide what to work on first. This one scores by added profit per work hour, using search volume, CTR gap, conversion rate, value per conversion, an attainment factor and effort.

How do I prioritize keywords for SEO?

Estimate the extra clicks a better ranking would bring, convert them into profit with your conversion rate and margin, then divide by the effort required. Rank by that number and sanity-check the top of the list for intent and feasibility.

Where do I get the CTR values?

Current CTR comes from Google Search Console (clicks ÷ impressions for the query). Target CTR should come from your own site's CTR by position, or a published CTR curve if you don't have enough data.

Does this work in Google Sheets?

Yes. Upload the XLSX to Google Drive and open it with Google Sheets. All formulas use functions that work in Excel, Google Sheets and LibreOffice.

Is keyword difficulty included?

Not as a score. Difficulty is captured more honestly through the target CTR you choose, the attainment factor and the hours you estimate. A hard keyword should carry a lower target, lower attainment and more hours.

Templates that work well with this one

Keyword Mapping Template

Assign every keyword to exactly one URL and catch conflicting assignments before they become cannibalization.

SERP Overlap Keyword Clustering Template

Decide whether two keywords belong on one page or two by measuring how much their Google results overlap.

Keyword Gap Analysis Template

Find the queries your competitors rank for that you don't, and size each gap in potential clicks.

SEO Forecast Template

Project added clicks and contribution per keyword cluster with CTR, attainment and seasonality you can defend.

Ecommerce SEO Prioritization Template

Rank product pages by potential orders, unit contribution and profit per hour, and catch out-of-stock or noindex SKUs.

SEO Roadmap Template

Sequence 90 days of SEO and GEO work by weighted opportunity per hour, dependencies and acceptance criteria.

Read the full tutorial online: **optimizationtheory.com/download-view/keyword-prioritization-template/**
Get all six templates in the **Keyword Research Toolkit**, or all 40 in the **Complete SEO & GEO Toolkit**.