

LIONBRIDGE



UNDERSTANDING VOICE SEARCH

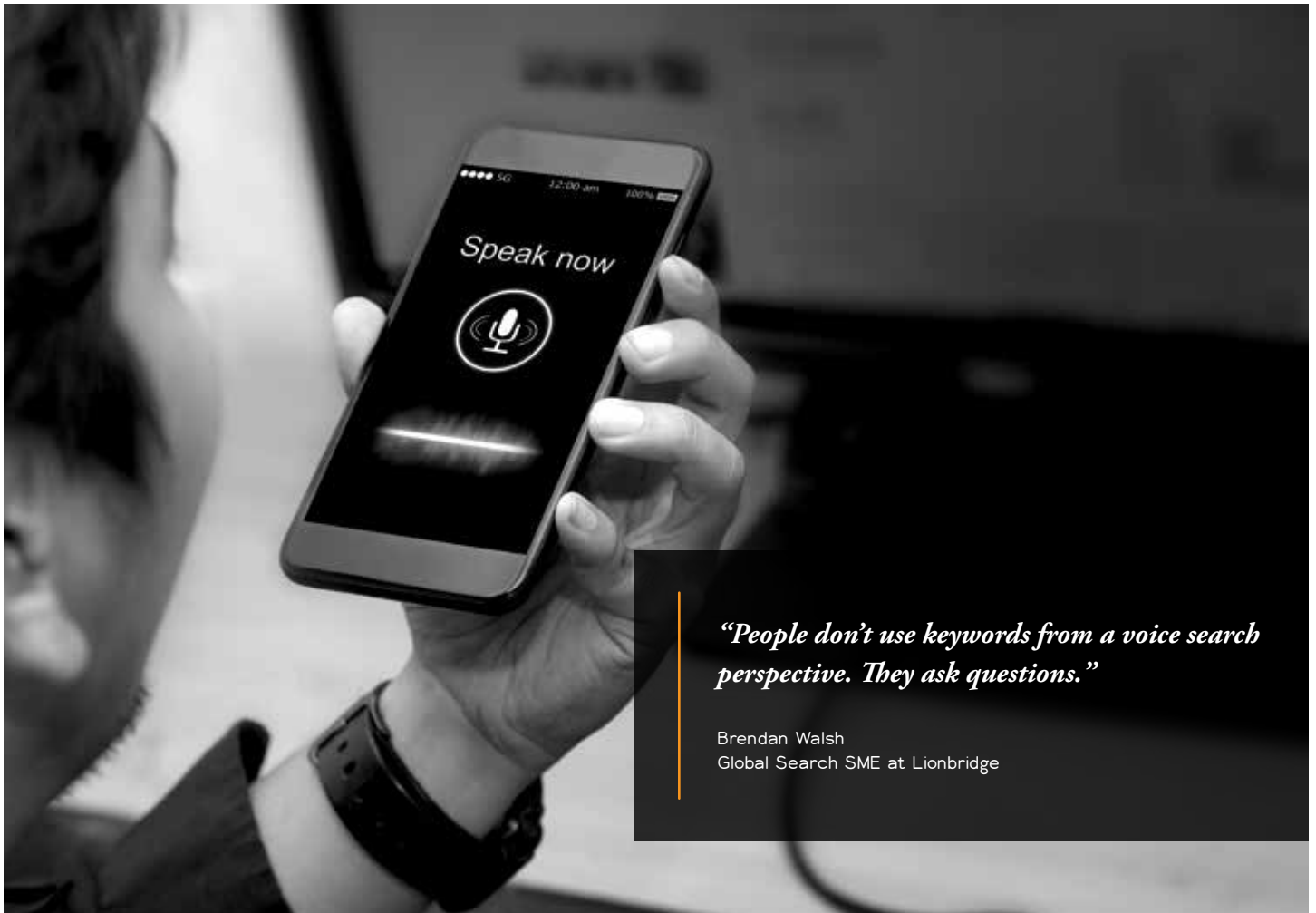
How to optimize your content for voice search





“Okay Google, tips for translating...”

As virtual assistants and AI technology become parts of our homes and cell phones, voice search has become a pivotal tool to reach those looking for a quick and definite answer to their questions. Twenty percent of the global online population uses voice search, according to a 2020 [study](#) by SEMrush, an SEO strategy and analytics platform. Virtual assistants have vastly improved in their capabilities in recent years: Just over a year ago, up to 35% of questions could not be answered by voice assistants, while that number is now down to 6.3%, according to the SEMrush study.



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Brendan Walsh
Global Search SME at Lionbridge

WHAT IS VOICE SEARCH?



Voice search, or asking a question verbally to a voice assistant, is becoming a much more popular tool, making it a key resource in [content marketing](#). One in four U.S. adults [owns a smart speaker](#), creating an eager audience for voice search. Google Assistant is installed on over 1 billion devices and Siri is available on over 500 million devices, globally.

Voice search differs in one major way from typical web search: Since voice assistants tend to only read out one search result, it’s crucial to appear in the top three search results. A 2019 [SEMrush study](#) found that almost 80% of voice search answers came from the top three organic results.

Voice search requires a separate strategy than typical SEO strategy, shifting the focus away from keywords and toward complete thoughts. Most of all, you have to create useful content.

“People don’t use keywords from a voice search perspective,” said Brendan Walsh, Global Search SME at Lionbridge. “They ask questions.” How can you make your content stand out in different voice search markets?

A Strong Technical Foundation

Before you go on your global content journey, you need to ensure your website(s) are in a good position technically. To succeed in voice search, you need to succeed in mobile. Your site needs to be fast and mobile friendly. Your [URL structure](#) needs to work globally, making it easy to separate content for [different regions](#). Supplement this structure with hreflang tags to ensure Google understands what region each piece of content is meant for. Finally, use structured data to help you communicate your content directly to bots, making it easier for them to understand your content and allowing them to enhance your search results.

RESEARCH YOUR MARKET(S)

Voice search requires understanding your target demographics—and doing research separately within each market.

“People ask questions completely different in all markets,” Walsh said. Even markets sharing a language—the United States and Australia, for example—may frame their queries in different ways. To home in on the cultural and linguistic nuances of each market, use in-market SEO specialists.

Conduct topic research, basic keyword research, competitor research and user intent research for each market. Ask yourself:

- Are there any obvious content gaps where questions are not being answered? How might these gaps differ from language to language?
- How can you gather questions organically? Which social media channels or forums can you explore in each market?

The best opportunities for voice search might lie outside of English. English speakers account for 25.9% of internet users in 2020, according to [Statista](#), but English accounts for almost 60% of content. Therefore, your richest voice search opportunities might be in German, Japanese or French.

Make a Plan.

Voice search strategy is more complex than simply translating content into different languages. It requires dedicated in-market content creation.

“Translation doesn’t really work for voice,” Walsh said. “You need to go a step beyond translation, whether that’s transcreation or from the ground up content creation.”

Transcreation refers to taking the same content idea and writing it for different markets, while original content creation is creating content unique to a certain market.

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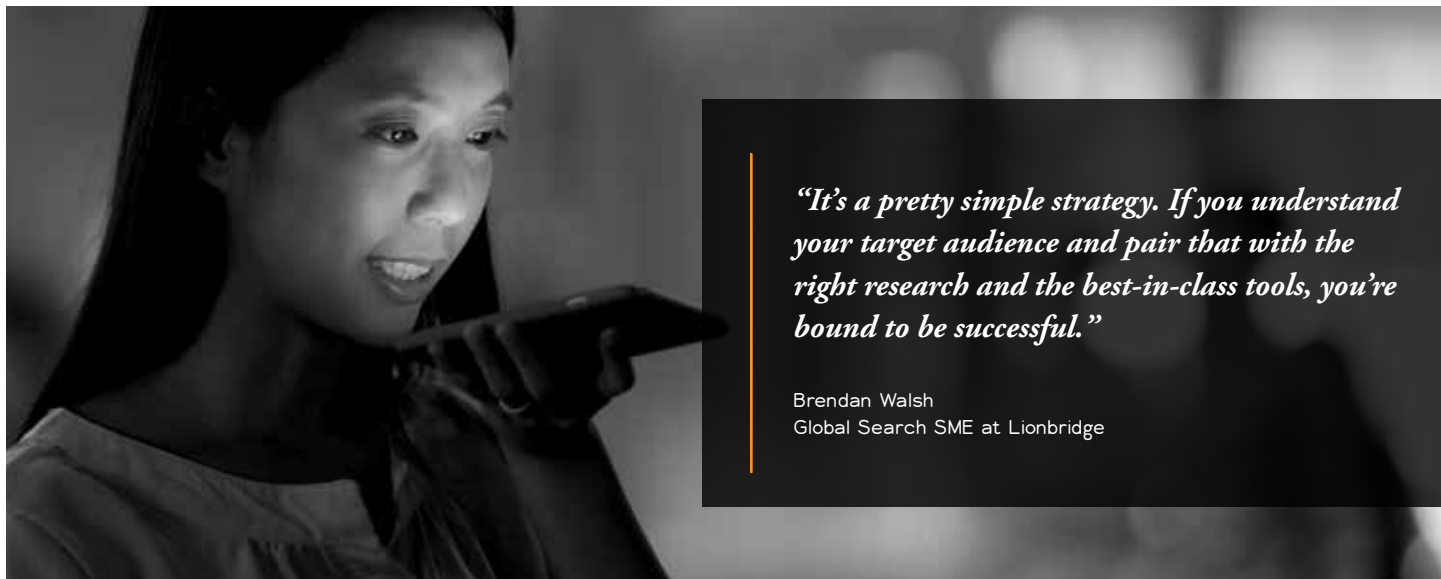
60%

OF INTERNET CONTENT
IS IN ENGLISH

70%

OF VOICE SEARCH
RESPONSES CAME FROM SERP

Sources: 2020 SEMrush Voice Search for Local Businesses Study and Statista



“It’s a pretty simple strategy. If you understand your target audience and pair that with the right research and the best-in-class tools, you’re bound to be successful.”

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CREATE YOUR CONTENT

Create Your Content.

Although using tools like SEMrush to pinpoint certain keywords or questions to answer is important, the content created after researching a market must be high quality as well. Well-written, user friendly content is more likely to rank higher in search.

The SEMrush 2020 voice study found that 70% of voice search responses came from SERP (Search Engine Result Pages) features, like a Featured Snippet or People Also Ask. Therefore, ranking highly in a search result is crucial to being discoverable via voice search.

“It has to be high quality content laid out in the right way: strong H2’s with questions in them, short paragraphs and short lists after them,” Walsh [recently shared with SEMrush](#). “It’s a pretty simple strategy. If you understand your target audience and pair that with the right research and the best-in-class tools, you’re bound to be successful.”

In-Market Content Creation

A technology company discovered that their American-created content wasn’t resonating in different markets due to the difference in search terms for queries related to taxes and expenses among markets. They approached Lionbridge to create dedicated content for the United Kingdom and Canada based on

in-depth SEO research. In the UK, the U.S. content only generated around 60 to 100 visits per month, while the dedicated UK content garnered almost 100,000 visits per month over the course of 18 months. SERP positions rose 689% in the UK and 194% in Canada over the same time period.

Share and Analyze.

Try to publish a regular, steady stream of content in each market, and use social media sharing to extend your reach. Tap into your networks and excite your company employees to organically share content.

Focus on how you can improve your content by analyzing each piece of content once it is published. Ask yourself:

1. What’s working well? How can we repeat that?
2. What makes this content work well? Is it ranking well? Is it driving conversions?
3. Which authors resonate best in this market?

By creating distinct, high-quality content in different markets for voice search, you can take advantage of a rising trend in technology and AI and connect with your global audience. As your Google Assistant, Siri or Alexa device becomes an integral part of your life, it also plays a key role in the future of global marketing.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO RANK IN VOICE SEARCH?

Our voice experts can help you create dedicated in-market content to boost your rankings and discoverability, connecting you to more customers. Contact us today at lionbridge.com/get-in-touch to get started.



About Lionbridge

Lionbridge partners with brands to break barriers and build bridges all over the world. For more than 20 years, we have helped companies connect with global customers and employees by delivering localization and training data services in 350+ languages. Through our world-class platform, we orchestrate a network of one million passionate experts in 5000+ cities, who partner with brands to create culturally rich experiences. Relentless in our love of linguistics, we use the best of human and machine intelligence to forge understanding that resonates with our customers' customers. Based in Waltham, Massachusetts, Lionbridge maintains solution centers in 26 countries.



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