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5 PILLARS OF ECOMMERCE SUCCESS
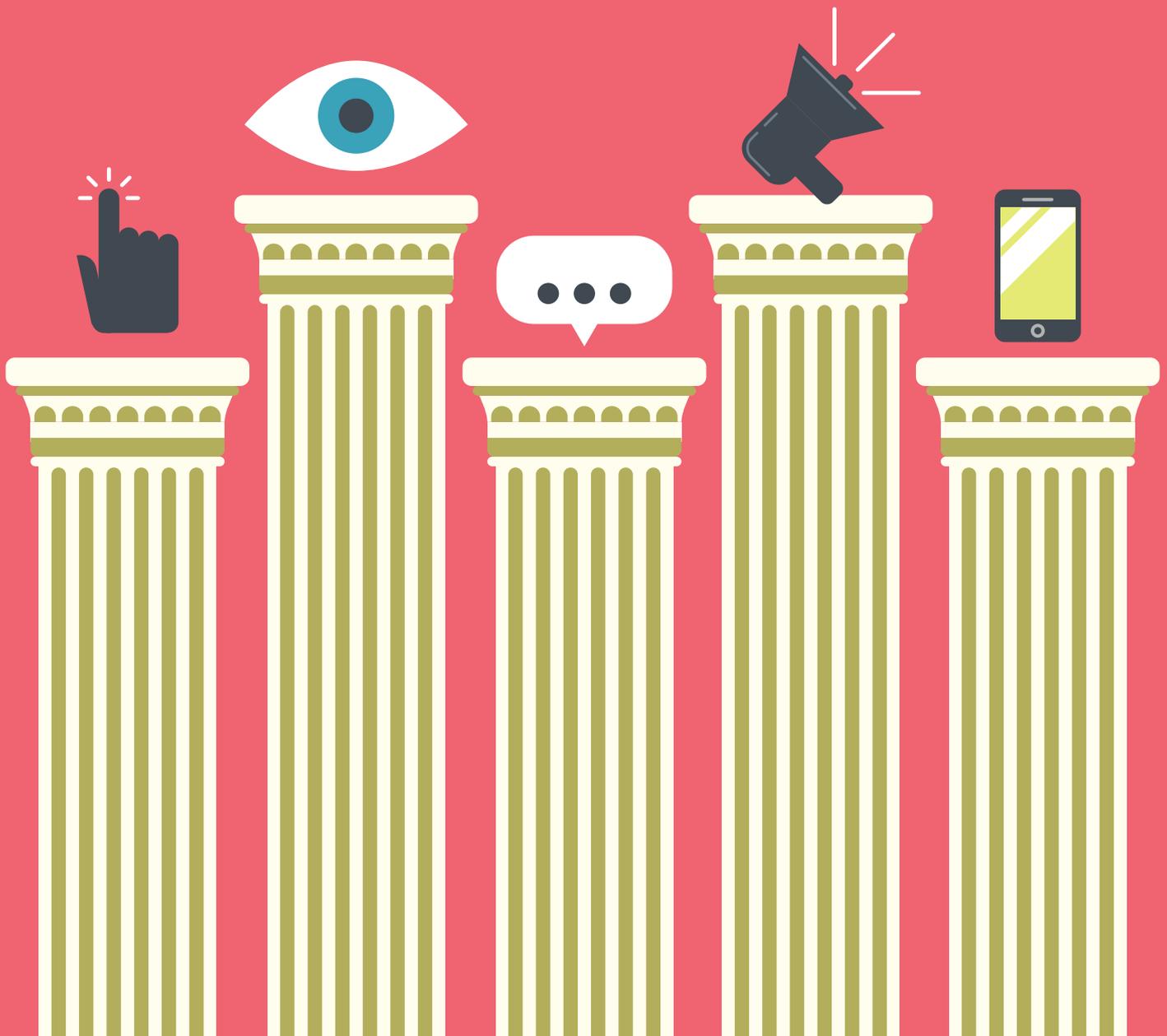
USABILITY
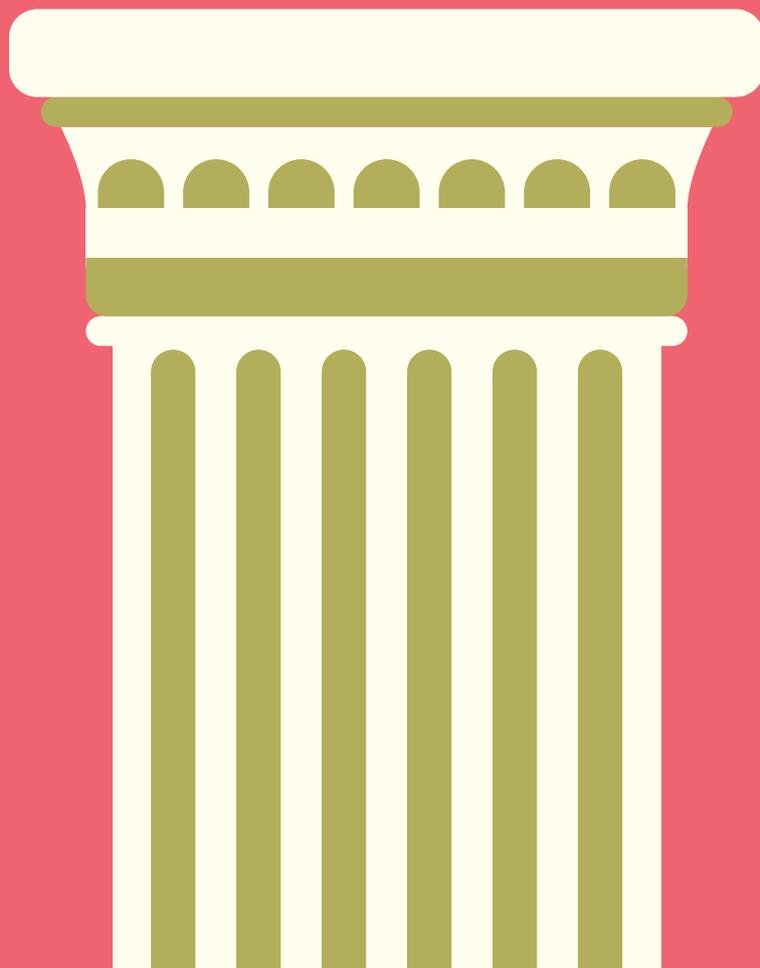
USABILITY

Help customers to find what they're looking for quickly and easily, and complete a purchase, when they're on your site.

Make your search box stands out. Try experimenting with different colours and sizes of buttons, or varying the position or copy, as part of a conversion rate optimisation (CRO) exercise.

Ensure your site search can handle **long tail semantic searches**, as customers who search in greater detail are likely to be much closer to conversion. According to MyTotalRetail.com, sites with a semantic-based search bar experience a 2% abandonment rate compared to the 40% abandonment rate reported by sites that feature a text-based search bar.

Autocomplete allows customers to search smarter. Printerland.co.uk found that customers who landed on an autocomplete page were 4 times more likely to convert than those who didn't, and 6 times more likely if the autocomplete included product photos and prices.

Make it easy to filter results. Asos.com allows users to filter by product type, style, colour, size and price range (and include or exclude several options within each), as well as customise how they view results, with the choice to 'save' a product for later comparison.

Use custom algorithms and enhanced landing page content to cross-sell and up-sell by displaying alternatives when a product is out of stock, or by suggesting complementary products and services.

Checkout process

A smooth, secure checkout is crucial for eCommerce success. You need to ensure:

- Strong calls-to-action (CTAs) on your checkout page to entice your customers to do what you want them to do
- Prominent shopping basket buttons on your product pages
- A user-friendly payment process on your checkout page

The checkout process is often the first port of call for testing, because all visitors making a

transaction will have to go through this process. Our blog post contains further information on how to do this.

OTHER USABILITY FACTORS

- Clear, simple website design
- Fuss-free, intuitive navigation
- Fast loading times (less than 3 seconds per page)
- Prices updated in real-time to ensure accuracy
- Contact details, including social media, clearly visible
- Ts & Cs and returns information easy to find
- Prompt responses to customers via email and instant chat
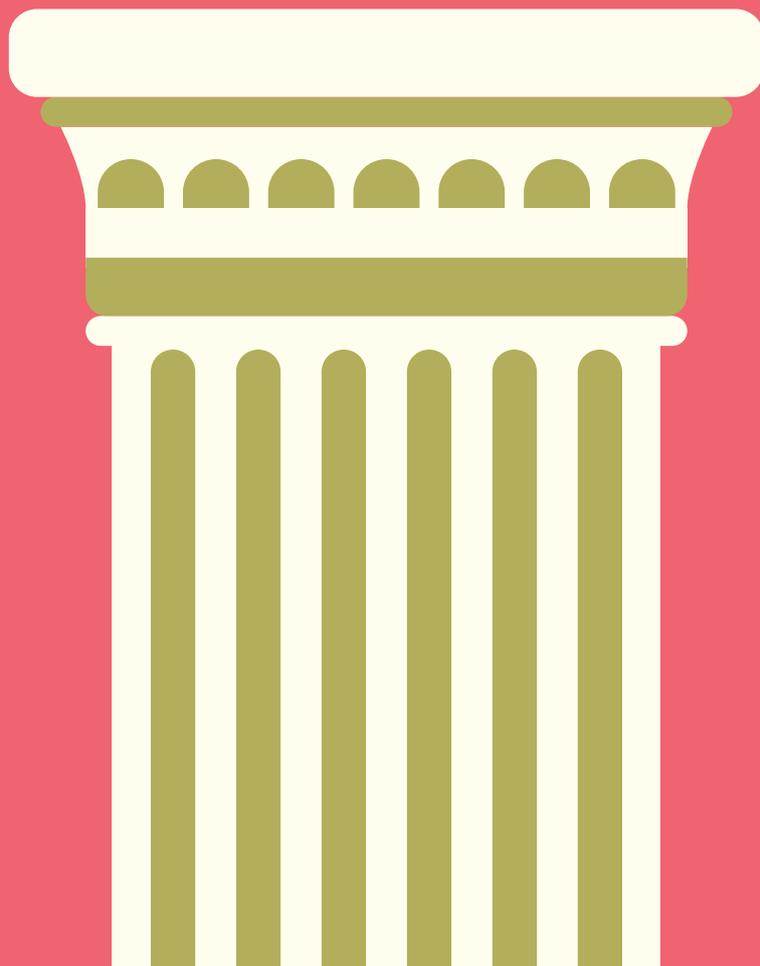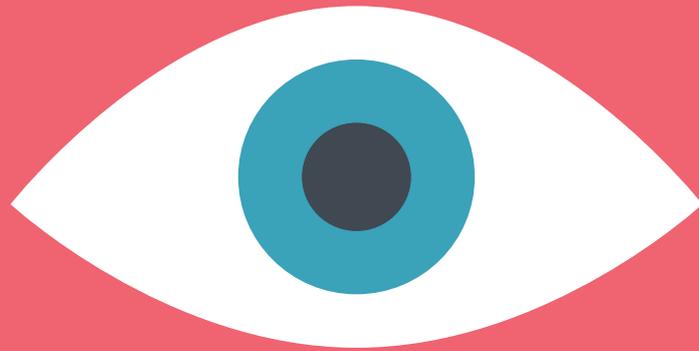
VISIBILITY

Organic search traffic has long been one of the most valuable sources of traffic for eCommerce sites – and user experience and SEO strategy are no longer mutually exclusive.

That means when you optimise your website for visitors, you're improving the chances of ranking well in search engine results (otherwise known as your organic search performance).

Keyword optimisation

Keyword research is one of the most worthwhile exercises in search marketing – and marketing in general. As well as enabling you to target the correct keywords, it will give you a much greater insight into what your customers want.

Search marketing is about quality as well as quantity: 'how many' isn't the only focus, but also 'how many of the right kind'.

Use **relevant, meaningful keywords** in your headers/subheaders, page copy, product descriptions, image filenames/alt tags, meta titles/descriptions and URLs.

For keyword research, try Google AdWords Keyword Planner Tool and Google Trends. Our Simple Guide to SEO also contains in-depth guidance on researching and selecting keywords, as well as lots of other useful info.

Product pages

These should be reachable by as few clicks as possible from your home page. A rule of thumb is to follow a logical structure of categories and sub-categories, and do not go more than three levels deep before reaching a product-specific page. This will make sure search engines can find the pages deep in your site that will serve long tail searches.

Semantic markup

You can insert semantic mark-up code on your page templates to communicate to search engines aspects of your business that you want to highlight, such as location(s), opening hours, reviews, photos, or offers and events.

This information then accompanies your search result listings, giving more exposure to your brand and allowing you to stand out from competitors. Search engines also use this information to help determine the relevance of your website's content to users' search queries, further boosting your organic search visibility.

Good quality content

Great content throughout your eCommerce site not only boosts customer engagement, retention and conversions – search engines also reward user-friendly pages in their rankings.

Aim to make every page compelling, with substantial, unique, relevant and engaging content. This goes for the copy on your product description pages as well as in your blog posts. AO.com – renowned for its engaging, user-friendly approach to the potentially dry subject of white goods retail - features high-quality, product-specific copy on its content pages:

As well as in-depth buyer guides, helpful articles and FAQs http://ao.com/help-and-advice…

And a blog in the form of a 'lifestyle hub, featuring news, reviews and video round-ups…

Outreach

Blogger outreach adds a further strand to your content marketing activity by having it featured on relevant third party blog sites. This means developing and maintaining relationships with relevant bloggers and offering them unique, relevant, high-value content that their audience will find useful and interesting.

It's a great inbound marketing strategy, and it can also boost your organic search visibility (SEO) when bloggers with trusted and established sites (ie, those with a high domain authority/DA) link back to your site. For more information, download our Link Building Through Outreach eBook.
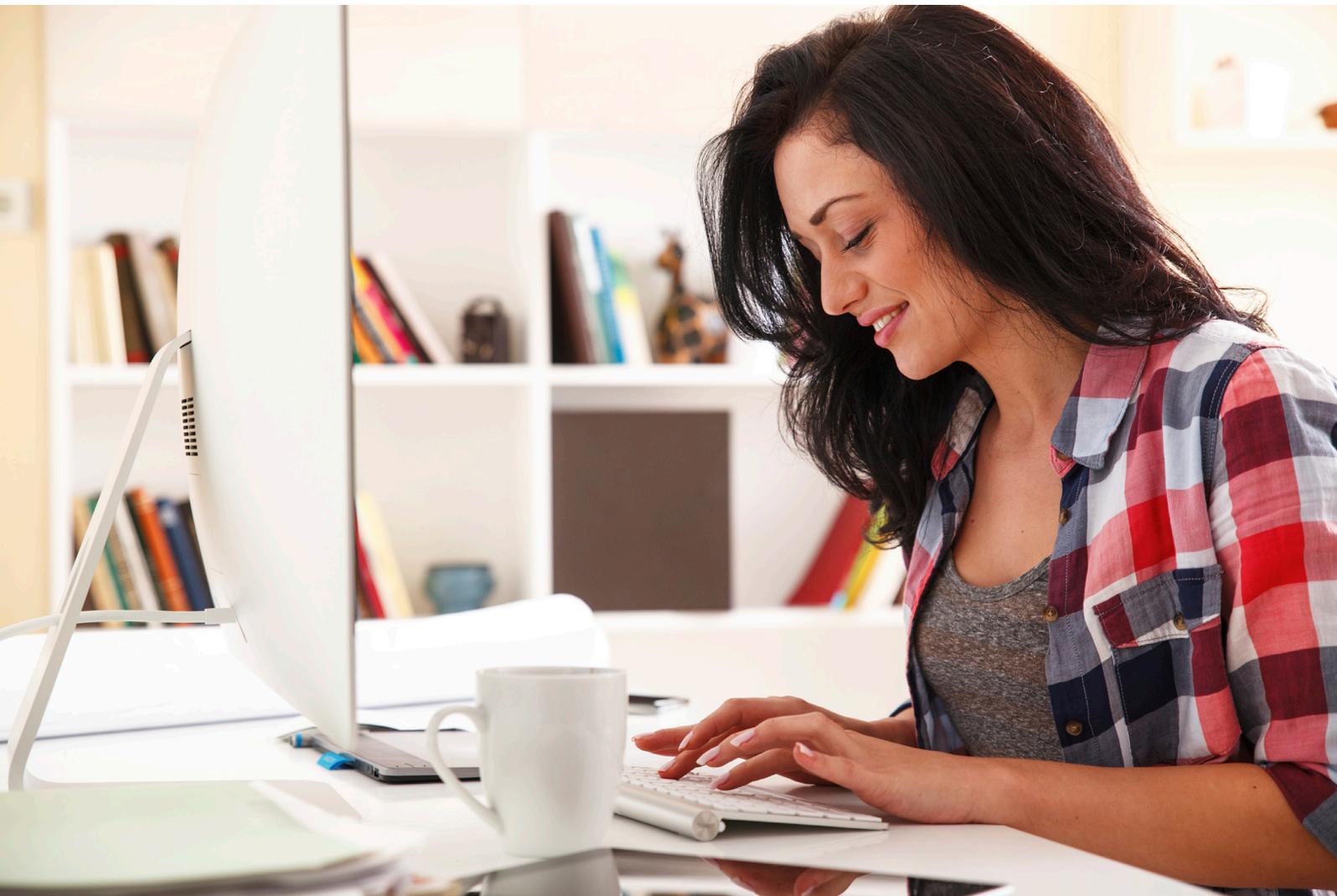
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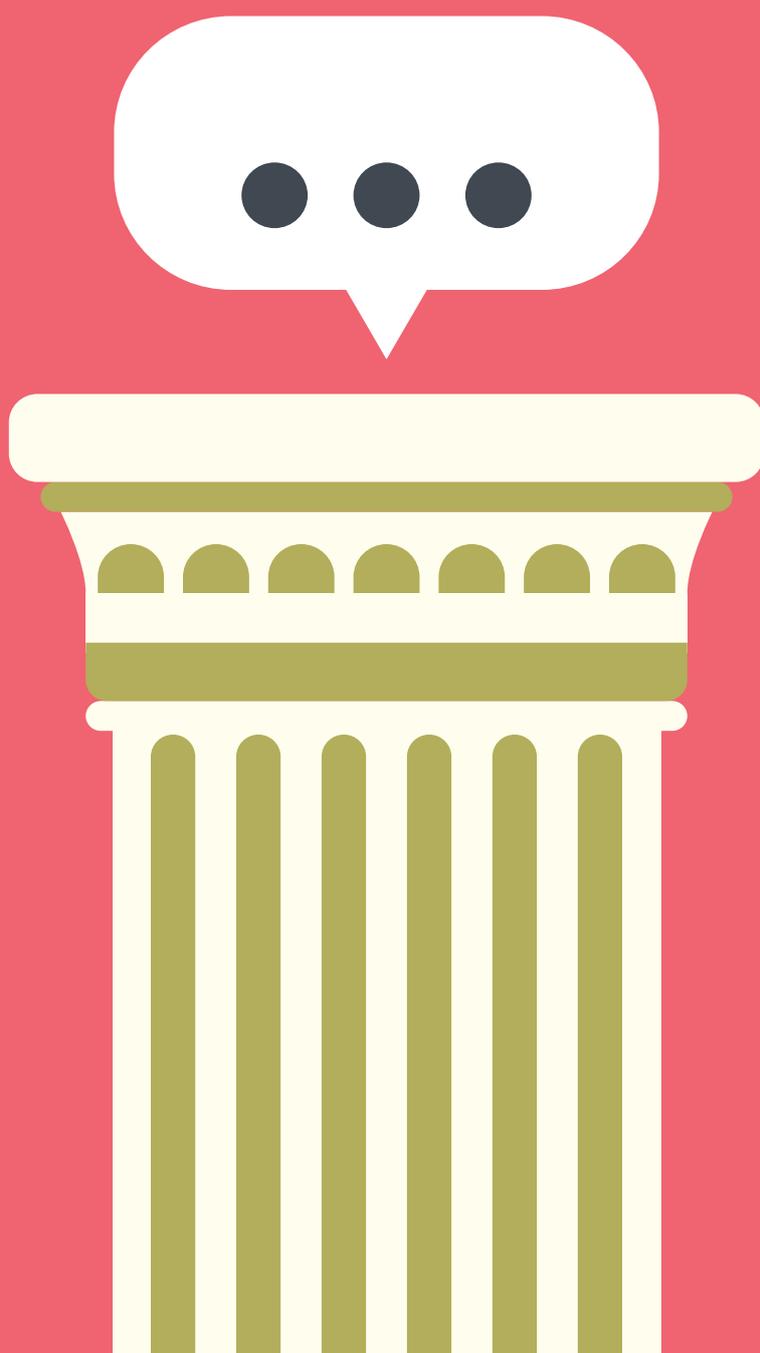
COMMUNICATIONS

Social media and review sites mean there's now more than you and your customer involved in the decision to buy: third party reviews and other user-generated content are increasingly influential.

Social media

Social media is the ideal platform to showcase products, demonstrate how they look or work and even allow users to indulge in a little fantasy browsing with aspirational images and inspirational ideas, as well as allowing customers to upload their own content. Research indicates that visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than text. Furthermore, 40% of people respond better to visual than to text alone.

With sites such as Facebook and Pinterest featuring 'buy now' buttons, it's even possible to use social media as an additional sales platform.

Ikea's Pinterest boards feature a range of ideas for the home, as well as tips and DIY how-tos:
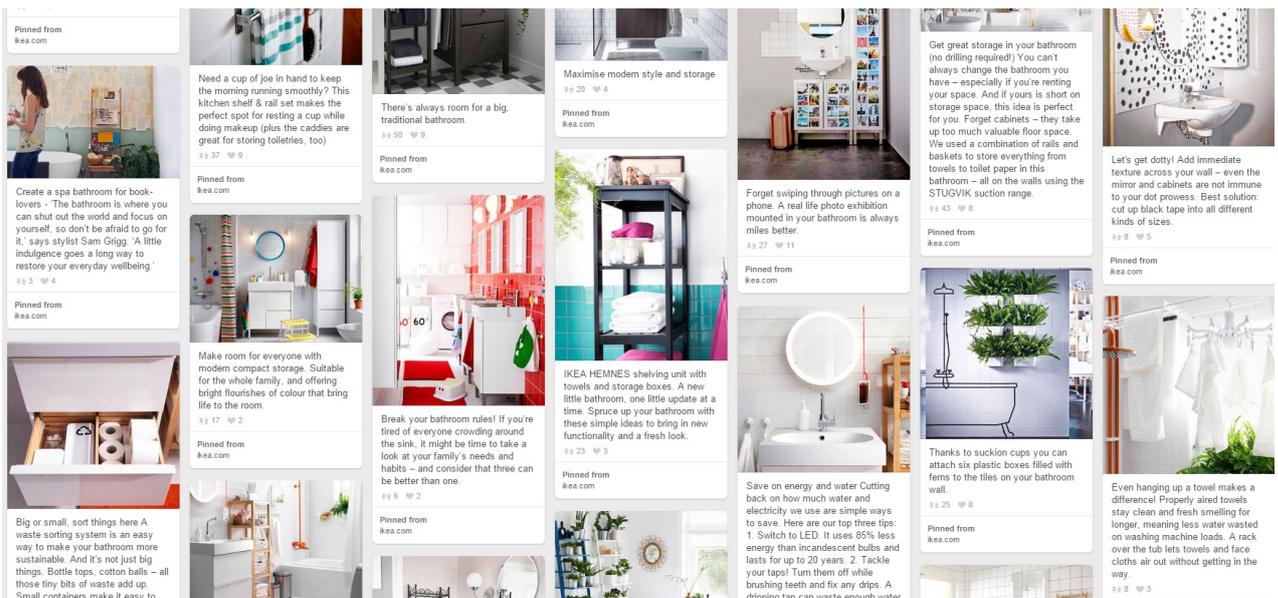
Increase your shareability factor by aiming to provoke a response with your content, especially interest, amusement, pleasure or excitement - research shows that buying decisions are based on 80% emotion and 20% logic.

Reviews

Customers trust people more than businesses, so reviews on social media sites like TrustPilot, or left on your own site, can be a powerful way of driving sales and brand awareness for your company. For example, you could encourage your customers to leave short reviews after they purchase something and reward them with a special discount on their next order.

According to Internet Retailer, you can increase your eCommerce conversion rate by up to 76% by adding product reviews to your online store, while Jupiter Research found that 77% of consumers read reviews before purchasing online.

Email campaigns

Email should be a key part of any eCommerce marketing strategy as it's an effective way to keep in regular contact with your customer base, establish brand identity and build trust, all factors that are key to securing repeat visits and purchases.

Hook customers in with an irresistible subject line, snappy copy, enticing imagery and a strong call to action, such as this Boohoo example:

When planning your campaign, think in terms of developing an ongoing dialogue with your customer base; encourage and provide the opportunity for recipients to engage with your brand.
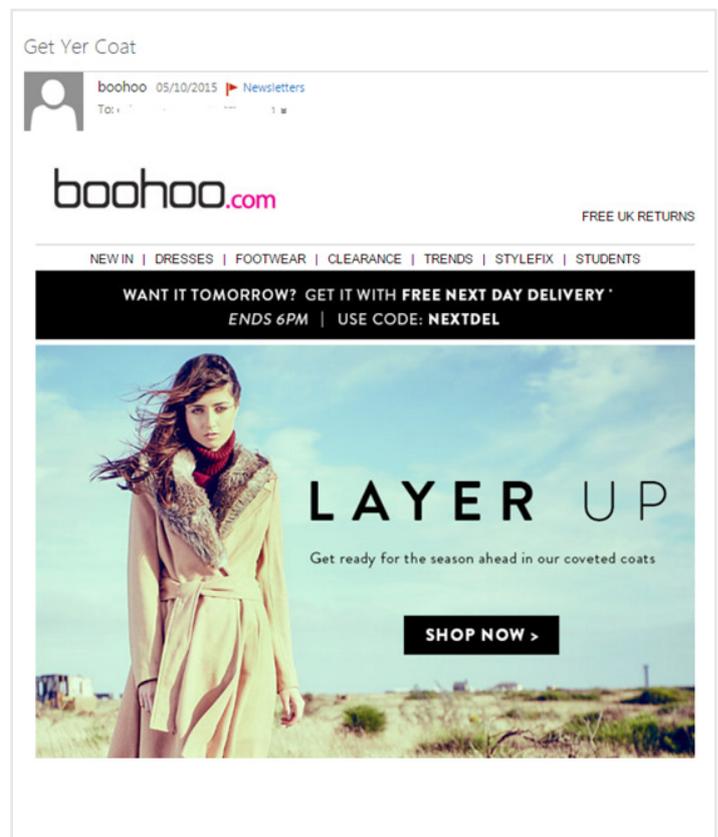
PROMOTION
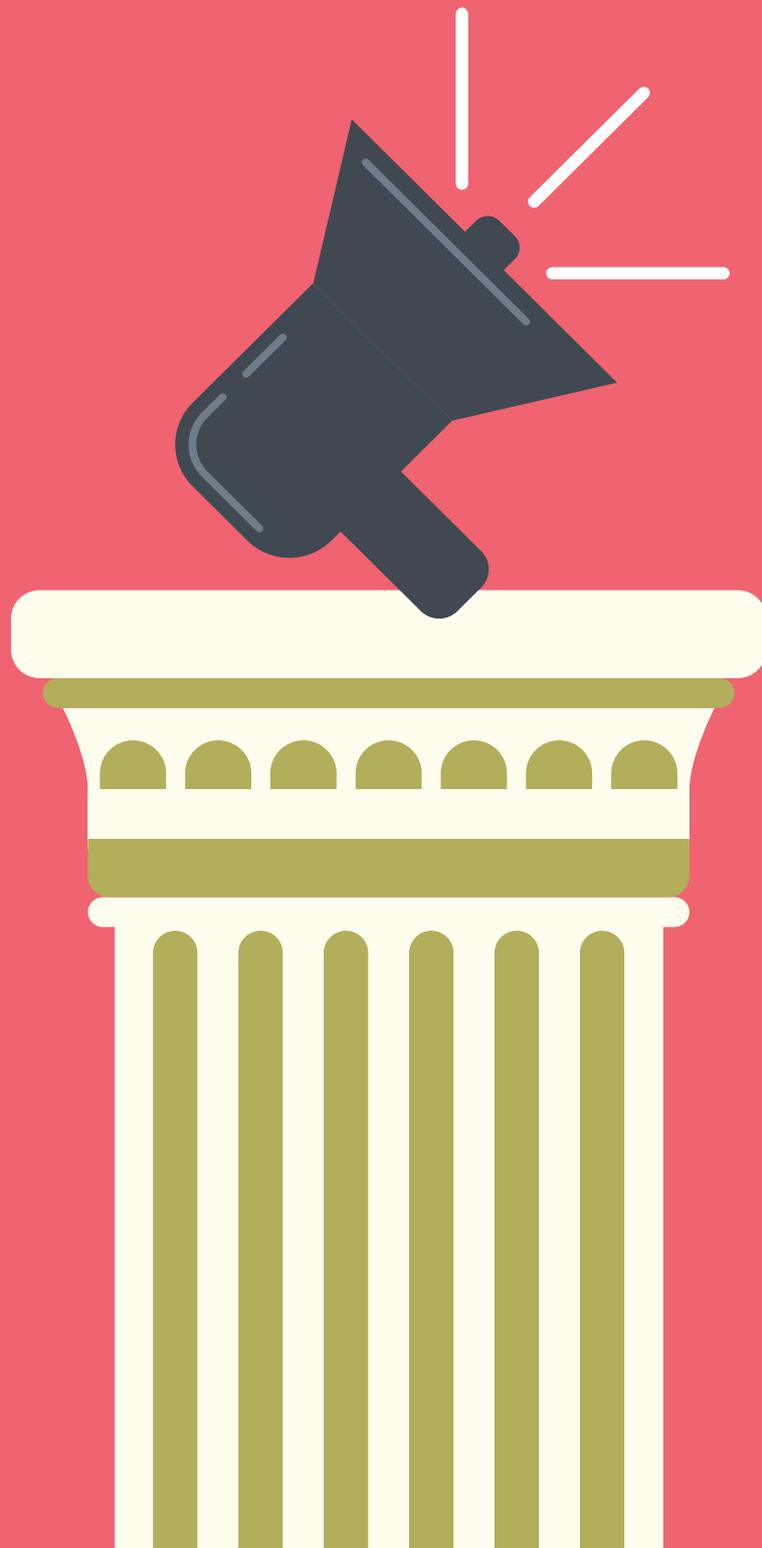
PROMOTION

Paid search (PPC) advertising gives you greater control over your presence on SERPs than a reliance on organic search results alone.

Shopping Campaigns

Shopping Campaigns have become an increasingly crucial part of a marketer's online strategy. They are a powerful way to showcase your products across Google and Bing to drive high quality traffic to your site.

Ads can include a product image, title, price, extensions, promotions and your domain name. Their visual nature means that conversion rates are typically higher than for text-only ads.

You create ads that target specific keywords related to your business, and your ads appear above organic search results on Google when people search for these keywords (as shown in the image below). The cost of your ads depends on a range of factors, including the competitiveness of the keyword you're targeting, but you only pay if visitors actually click on your ad.

Across our eCommerce client base, we find that on average, Shopping traffic is up to 50% higher than for traditional Search.
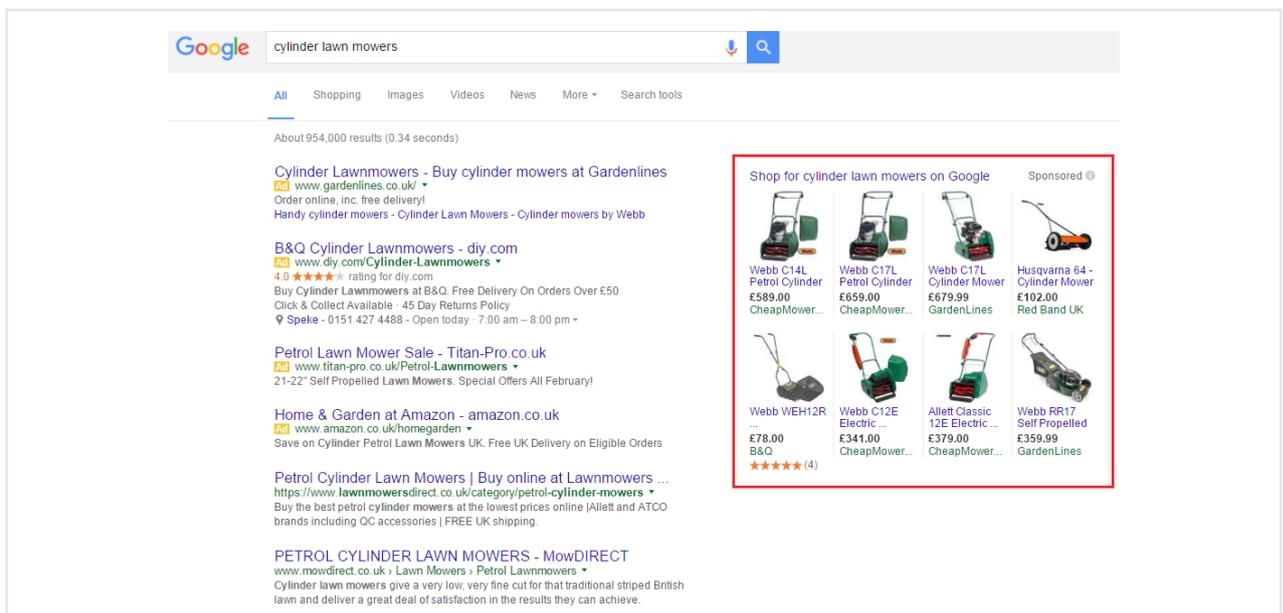
For more guidance on paid search, download our Simple Guide to Paid Search (PPC).

Shopping Campaign best practice includes:

- Ensuring you have a Shopping Campaign set up for both Google and Bing

- Investing in a Feed Optimisation solution, such as feedTRAX™

- Considering Amazon and eBay platforms as part of your advertising strategy

- Identifying profit margins to optimise to profit rather than just revenue/ROI

Display advertising

This is where your ads appear on third party websites next to content that's relevant to your product or of interest to your target audience. Ads can take the form of banners, text, images and video.

Remarketing

A powerful way to reach people who have previously visited your site or used your app by tracking items in which they've shown interest, then targeting them with highly relevant ads across third party sites they subsequently visit. Remarketing ads could include an added incentive to re-engage your prospect, such as a discount or special offer. Learn more about remarketing in this blog post.

MOBILE COMMERCE

MOBILE COMMERCE

Desktop is no longer the default for customers and marketers need to take this shift seriously, if they haven't already.

More people now visit online stores on mobiles and tablets than on desktop computers, according to Shopify and 'mobile friendliness' is an important ranking signal for Google.

Mobile-optimised, not just mobile-compatible

It is no longer a valid workaround simply to have a second, mobile friendly site: not only do these sites tend to have reduced functionality; they can often be overlooked when updating the desktop site. The solution is to go with either a responsive or adaptive site. A responsive website automatically resizes site content to match the users screen size, thereby giving mobile and desktop users the same online experience, while an adaptive site is intent-led, catering the content to the likely needs of each potential device.

It's important to remember that your website needs to be mobile-optimised, not just mobile-compatible. This means getting a clearer understanding of customers' mobile search behaviour (for example, quickly looking up a business' phone number on the go, or researching prices while in a physical store or venue), and its role in the purchasing path, so that you can focus on maximising your business' mobile experience.

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ABOUT US

We are a multi award-winning search marketing agency working with brands & SMEs that want a tangible, measurable return from their online budget.

Our website features an online resources section, full of useful eBooks. We also write a blog, where you can find an abundance of search marketing tips. If you're feeling social, get in touch on Google+, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

Call us today on

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WHAT OUR ECOMMERCE CLIENTS SAY

"The team at Click put together a campaign that underpinned our objectives and have achieved fantastic results within a very short space of time."
Tom Wilcock, Julian Charles

"Click have really stepped up to the plate when it comes to performance marketing, their tenacity and desire to help us as a company improve is second to none. They're always offering up the best in cost per lead performance, which is seeing our ROI on digital marketing grow exponentially as our relationship goes on. Brilliant project planners, superb project delivery and results to boot, what more could you ask for?"
James Lane, Adjustamatic Beds

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