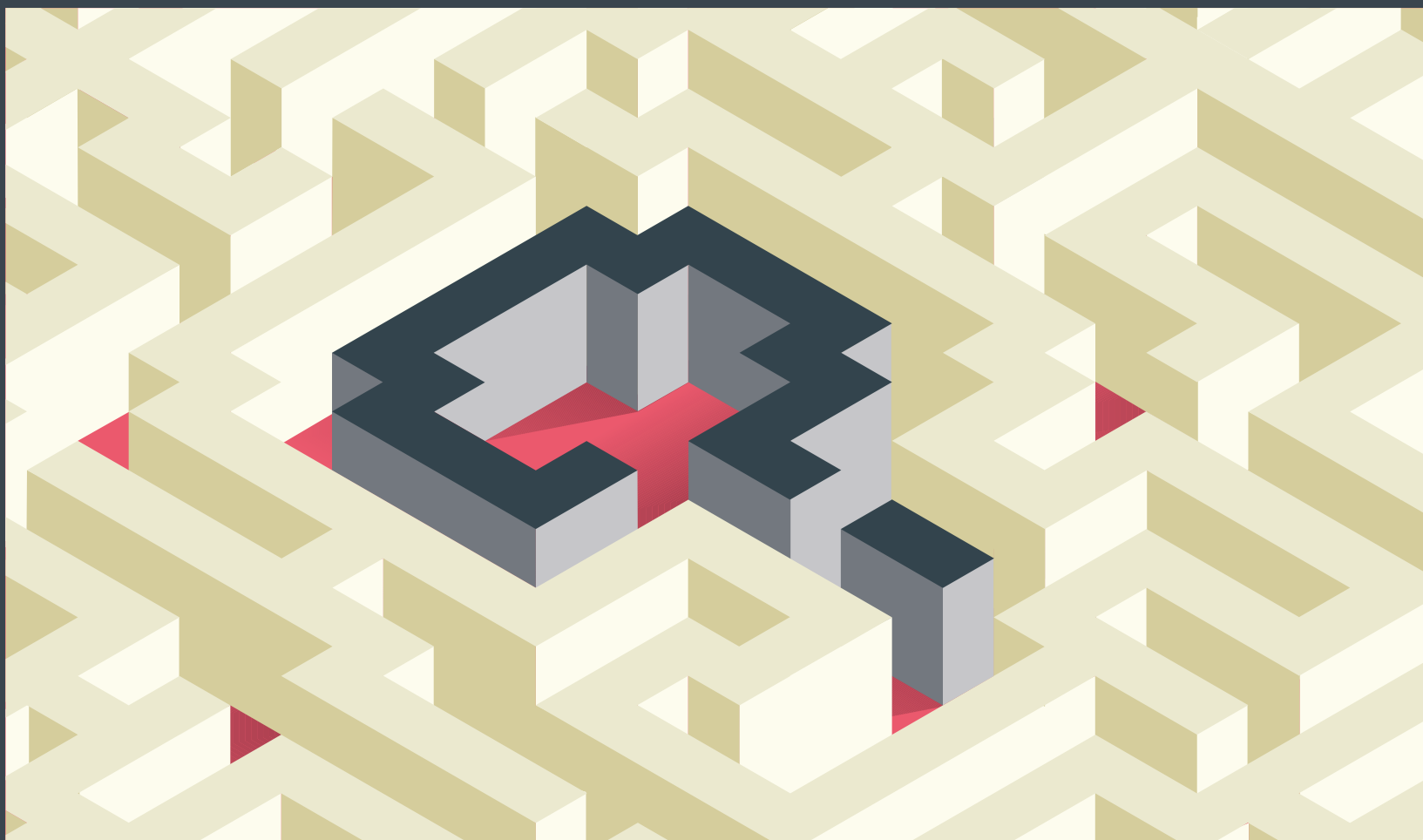


PUZZLED BY SEARCH MARKETING?

Click Consult can point you in the right direction



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CONTENTS

- 3// Interview: Matt Bullas
- 5// Inbound Marketing
- 6// Organic Search
- 7// Case Study: Landmark London
- 8// Paid Search
- 9// Case Study: Virgin Balloons
- 10// Link Auditing, Removal & Recovery
- 12// Content, Outreach & Social
- 14// Semantic Markup

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WELCOME

Welcome to this special Search Marketing supplement, a collaboration between the team here at Click Consult, an award-winning North-West digital marketing agency, and The Drum.

At Click Consult we have gone through huge changes to cater for the constant evolution of digital marketing and organic search. As a result of these changes, we are confident that we provide the best possible digital marketing solutions to our clients and that we can cement our place as a thought leader within the industry.

Having worked with The Drum for some time now, we decided to take this opportunity to showcase the talents of our team and give you an insight into how we operate.

The work that we do differs greatly from client to client, each project is different, but our principles remain the same. Our approach is ethical, our strategies are bespoke and our tactics are transparent. Our team of over 70 versatile staff, each experts in their field, means that we are able to deliver tangible results, every time.

Matt Bullas,
CEO and Founder,
Click Consult

CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY TO SEARCH SUCCESS

Matt Bullas, founder and CEO of Click Consult, believes the agency's core principles have always underpinned its remarkable growth and evolution....



"The story of Click Consult is a story of change, but also a lesson in consistency," says Matt Bullas, CEO and Founder of the Cheshire based Search agency.

"As the market for online search related marketing services has evolved and expanded over the past decade, we've brought in new talent and expertise and developed our service offering accordingly. What hasn't changed, however, has been our focus on being transparent and ethical whilst delivering tangible results and ROI for our clients."

Matt Bullas seemed like an unlikely future CEO when he left school at 17 to join Safeway as a shelf stacker. By the time he left the company 7 years later, however, his hard work and commitment had seen him promoted to being a Head Buyer where he was responsible for buying more than £160 million worth of consumer electronics.

With the experience and skills he had gained over his years in the retail sector (working with some of the world's leading brands including Procter & Gamble, Vodafone, O2, Virgin, Panasonic, Sony, Alba, Bush, T-Mobile, BT, Philips, Tefal, Samsung, Toshiba, LG, Sharp, Bosch and Russell Hobbs) in 2003 Matt decided to branch out on his own and launched his first business, selling international phone card packages online.

"That was my introduction to the online marketing arena," says Matt. "It was only about a year after Google AdWords had come into the UK, so I became an early adopter and started to teach myself about Search. By the end of 2005, I had become something of an AdWords expert."

FIRST CLICK

Realising that the evolution of internet-based telephony was likely to seriously threaten his online phone card business model, Matt evolved his established business and created Click Consult as a dedicated Google AdWords agency in 2003.

In the years that followed, the agency



“MANY OF THE METHODS USED BY SEARCH AGENCIES 7 OR 8 YEARS AGO ARE NOW COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE...THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS TO SUCCESS ANYMORE.”

flourished, picking up clients such as Hill’s Pet, Virgin Balloon Flights, LloydsPharmacy and Mizuno at an accelerating rate. Where there was a clear opportunity for Click Consult to expand its service offering, it took it, building the agency’s expertise in line with the rapidly evolving Search market.

As a result, the agency now employs more than 70 full time staff at its headquarters in Hooton, Cheshire, with in-house teams dedicated to business development, account management, paid search, organic search, content marketing, blogger outreach, creative and technology.

Matt says: “We’ve changed a lot as an agency over the years. The changes in the market as a whole have had an impact on how all digital agencies operate. What’s key to me is that the fundamental goals underpinning the business are always the same: deliver a high standard of service

to our clients in a timely manner. We also invest in research to ensure that the knowledge of our teams is up there with what I think are amongst the best in the industry. Sticking to those core principles has brought us success and a loyal customer base.”

HOT TOPICS

Matt identifies the current hot topics in the world of search as ‘inbound marketing’, which he describes as “an excellent way for businesses to generate inbound leads in a very streamlined and cost-effective manner”, and ‘link auditing and removal’, which focuses on assisting those penalised by Google for old SEO practises of the past.

“Many of the methods used by search agencies 7 or 8 years ago are now completely unacceptable and will attract serious penalties from Google. There are

no shortcuts to search success anymore,” says Matt. “As a result, we use only ethical search methods that are aimed to deliver sustainable growth over the longer term.”

Having rebranded the company last year, bringing the various parts of the business together under a single domain name – www.click.co.uk – Matt believes that Click is all set to meet whatever changes and challenges the future of Search may present.

Matt says: “I hope that this special supplement, produced in association with The Drum, will provide readers with an insight into the valuable work that Click is doing for its clients across a whole range of industries and sectors. While we, as a business, may be at the mercy of external factors, such as changes to Google and an increasingly competitive marketplace, our central proposition and core principles will stay the same and keep us moving forward.

“It’s a hugely exciting time for the Search industry and Click Consult will continue to play its part in helping more businesses achieve success through Search.”

THE ART OF INBOUND MARKETING

The rise of 'inbound marketing' has been one of the most significant trends in the digital marketing industry over the past year. So, what is inbound marketing, why do you need it and how do you do it? Click Consult explains all...

Inbound marketing, simply put, is the process of helping potential customers find a company by utilising various forms of pull marketing, such as blogs, white papers, guides, eBooks, podcasts, webinars, events, Search Marketing and social media.

Inbound marketing involves creating relevant, valuable and original content, optimising it and distributing it across a variety of online media channels. The aim of this process is to attract audiences, increase brand awareness, convert leads and increase ROI.

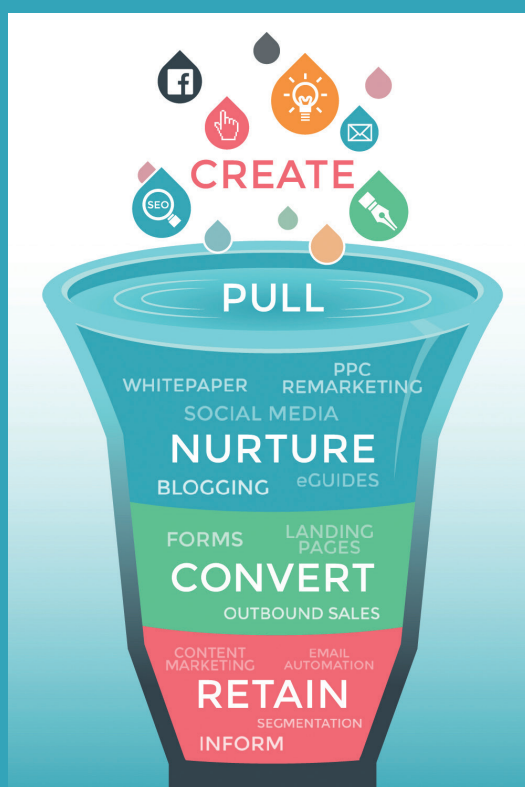
Inbound marketing is hugely important within a modern marketing strategy as traditional marketing methods are no longer enough to captivate and retain customer interest. Audiences are becoming increasingly wise to conventional marketing tactics and are more likely to 'switch off' when they know they are being sold to. Savvy marketers understand that they must adapt their strategies to create lasting connections using genuinely informative and personalised material.

According to the Hubspot 2013 State of Inbound Marketing Report, almost 60% of marketers have adopted inbound marketing strategies and over 80% of those practising inbound marketing have integrated it into broader company goals.

When carried out effectively, inbound marketing allows you not only to generate an increased volume of leads, but to:

- create brand awareness;
- create and maintain positive associations around your brand in the minds of your target market/customers/fans/brand advocates;
- build trust between your brand and your target market/customers/fans/brand advocates;
- become an authority within your industry.

Unlike traditional marketing techniques, inbound marketing does not intrude on or interrupt audiences so is unlikely to cause



THE INBOUND MARKETING PROCESS

CREATE

Utilising owned, earned and paid media to generate traffic and awareness of your brand among your target audiences.

NURTURE

Nurturing is the process of developing marketing qualified leads through the funnel (by providing the user with additional engaging content) and transforming them into sales qualified leads.

CONVERT

The point at which the user becomes sales qualified is the perfect opportunity to approach the lead as they are engaged and ready to discuss their needs.

RETAIN

Inbound marketing is a continuous process. No matter the status of the lead, fresh content should be used to continue to engage, entertain and educate, encouraging upsells and future conversions.

“UNLIKE TRADITIONAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES, INBOUND MARKETING DOES NOT INTRUDE ON OR INTERRUPT AUDIENCES...”

annoyance. What's more, with impressive ROI and the ability to deliver leads for significantly less outlay (up to 62% less per lead) than other marketing channels, the case for inbound marketing starts to become very attractive indeed.

For larger enterprises with lots of customer data being produced every day, inbound marketing used in combination with marketing automation software allows companies and brands to engage and nurture customer relationships at scale through the sales funnel (see graphic). Highly

personalised, relevant content helps to convert prospects into satisfied customers and also helps to retain those customers in the future.

At Click, our team of inbound marketing experts are highly adept at implementing complex inbound marketing campaigns using the marketing automation software platform, Act-On.

To find out how our experts can develop an Inbound Marketing strategy to meet your business objectives, get in touch with Click Consult today.

IT'S ONLY NATURAL



Chris Norton explains why, in a world where web links must be earned

‘organically’ or ‘naturally’ rather than bought, interpreting customer and market data accurately is the key to producing quality content...

Over the past 12 months, Click Consult has completely reinvented its offering in relation to organic search.

The old way of doing SEO had nothing to do with the quality of the content being linked to or the reputational quality of the site hosting a link. That wasn't the fault of the SEO industry, it was a weakness of Google and the natural search ranking algorithm at its heart.

If you had enough links (with the proper underlying anchor text) pointing back at your website, you would rank highly in the search results, increasing your click through rate, driving more traffic and revenue through your site.

Over the past few years, however, algorithm updates by Google including but not limited to Panda (which looks at duplicate, plagiarised or low quality content) and Penguin (which looks more at the use of anchor text and also the perceived reputation and authority of links) have changed everything.

Lots of big name brands (such as JC Penney, Interflora and Halifax Bank) have suffered serious Google penalties as a result, causing the search rankings of certain web pages or even entire sites to fall off a cliff suddenly. Even the most recent Panda 4.0 update led to a considerable percentage of eBay's content being de-indexed by Google, so clearly this is an issue for businesses of all sizes.

In light of this, it's never been more important to have the right organic search process in place and to ensure that every element of that strategy is adhering to industry best practice. There are no shortcuts anymore. Today, links can't be bought; they have to be earned.



EARNING LINKS

You earn links by producing informative, remarkable, humorous or useful content and promoting this content to relevant audiences across social media. There are lot of bloggers, journalists and media outlets out there (who we know via our outreach process) happy to publish that content. They need a constant flow of new material to help maintain their own search rankings, as fresh content is rewarded by Google.

The ultimate goal of this process for us is to deliver high-quality, natural links back to our client's website. Whenever we work with a client, we take the time we need up front to establish the type of links we want, the volume we want and what's required to earn those. That is, essentially, modern organic search in a nutshell.

At Click Consult, we have the full range of skills and talent needed to manage that process from start to finish: data analysts, strategists, SEO programmers, web developers, specialists in outreach, PR and social media, copywriters, creative designers and account managers. We're also a multilingual agency, currently running organic search campaigns in more than 15 different countries.

THE DATA CHALLENGE

Of course, the organic search strategies we implement for clients don't exist in isolation: they are simply a key element within the client's wider search marketing strategy, including PPC, display, and other traditional marketing channels such as TV, radio and print campaigns. The various teams within Click work very closely together as a result: the 'organic' and 'PPC' teams actually sit next to each other, sharing knowledge and insights to the benefit of our clients.

Contemporary SEO is data driven and that data is being drawn from an ever-increasing number of sources, such as Google Analytics, Webmaster Tools, other client performance data, ecommerce reports, and so on. There's a lot of information out there, but it is only meaningful or valuable if you have the right people and appropriate tools to disseminate, interrogate and understand that data.

At Click, we can make sense of the data that you are collecting every day to make sense of how tiny, miniscule, micro (rather than macro) decisions and tweaks to campaigns and minor realignment of marketing budgets can have a significant impact on the bottom line of a business.

THE LANDMARK LONDON

Raising the online visibility of one of London's most prestigious hotels



THE CLIENT

Opened in 1899 as 'The Great Central Hotel', The Landmark London is a five-star hotel located on Marylebone Road in central London. The last Victorian rail hotel built during the golden age of steam, today it is one of the capital's leading luxury hotels.

THE PROBLEM

The Landmark approached Click in October 2012. Until then, most of the hotel's revenue came from direct traffic, i.e. customers who already knew about the hotel and wanted to stay there specifically, rather than those who booked after comparing similar hotels via a search engine. The Landmark wanted to increase its visibility in search engines for generic keywords, such as 'five star hotels in London'.

THE STRATEGY

Click developed an organic search campaign targeting generic key terms to boost the number of times The Landmark's website would appear in search engine results pages (SERPs), to increase organic traffic and to grow revenue from organic traffic. Click also monitored The Landmark's competitors to gauge how they ranked in comparison for specific keywords.

THE RESULTS

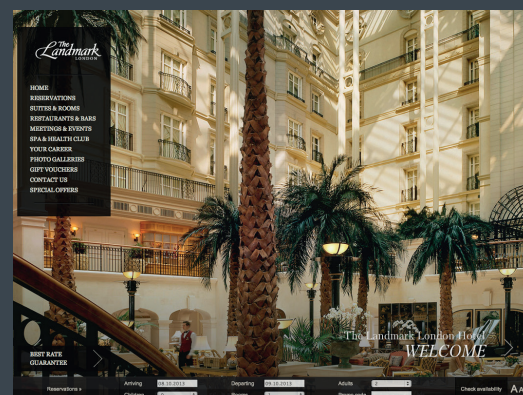
- 138% increase in organic traffic
 - 45.2% increase in revenue
 - 28% increase in online transactions
 - 50% of keywords increased ranking
- Organic traffic driven to the Landmark site (excluding brand key terms) for October-November 2012 increased by 138% compared to the same period the previous year. Click optimised 112 keywords that weren't getting traffic previously and saw over 50% of Landmark's keywords increase in ranking. Click also helped with significant increases

"THE STRATEGY DEVELOPED BY CLICK DELIVERED A 138% INCREASE IN ORGANIC TRAFFIC AND A 45.2% INCREASE IN REVENUE"

in various metrics across a 12 month period.

A campaign which targeted industry keywords searched for alongside a particular county, delivered impressive results (comparing figures from April 2012 to April 2013):

- 33.4 % increase in overall traffic
- 84.4 % increase in mobile traffic
- 29.7 % increase in organic



KEYWORDS USED

- 72.8% increase in mobile revenue

THE FEEDBACK

"In the 12 months that we have worked with Click Consult, they have helped us significantly with our search marketing efforts. We're delighted with the results that we have seen so far."

Joi Chuku - Head of Marketing

THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE OF PAID SEARCH

Alan Reeves, Paid Search Director at Click Consult, explains why Universal Analytics could make a world of difference to the success of your next marketing campaign...



In April 2014, after a year in public beta, Google officially launched Universal Analytics: the most radical upgrade of their Google Analytics product ever.

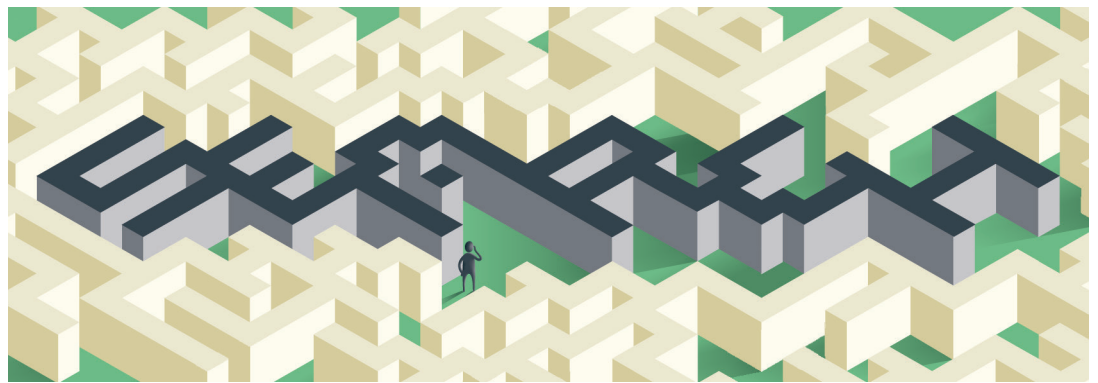
I, personally, have been a little surprised at the lack of buzz that has accompanied this truly game-changing moment. Perhaps the fact that Universal Analytics was available in public beta for 12 months prior to launch means that many people have already developed a basic understanding of the new free software and don't feel the need to rush into upgrading their classic Google Analytics account.

While the 'classic' version will be supported for two more years, at Click Consult, we are strongly recommending that all our clients upgrade to Universal Analytics as soon as possible. Don't wait two years. Don't wait two weeks. All the functionality of Google Analytics is present in the new version, plus Universal Analytics includes a growing list of new features that will only get longer.

At Click, as an added incentive for our clients, we've been simultaneously implementing Google Tag Manager for those who upgrade. This provides clients with greater flexibility and the ability to add extra tracking code to their site on demand without the need for a web developer.

Universal Analytics is Google's response to a world where the web is much more than a bunch of sites accessed from a desktop computer. The new software allows companies and brands to collate information on user behaviour across a range of platforms and web-enabled devices, from smartphones and tablets to point-of-sale systems, creating a watershed moment in the ability to track cross device conversions.

The fact that Universal Analytics allows you to upload your own offline data through its measurement protocol is also highly



significant and means that it can be used as more than simply an online analytics tool. The ability to accommodate layers of extra information (such as insights from your own CRM system) means that the potential for innovation is practically unlimited. If you have data, for example, on lifetime value or profit margins or anything you like, all you need to do is to link the data to an existing dimension in Universal Analytics and then it will be appear alongside your online data.

At Click, we partner with DoubleClick Search to help us optimise our clients' bid management in Paid Search campaigns. The cutting-edge software allows us to make decisions at a macro level and provides the tools to implement the changes at a micro level. Its ability to continuously monitor millions of keywords across multiple date ranges simultaneously lets us unearth valuable insights, for example, information relating to long-tail keywords that would be impossible to discover manually. This microscopic level of data analysis becomes even more important with tools such as Universal Analytics providing more information than ever. Utilising this information to uncover actionable insights is where the real benefit lies.

The end result of our approach is not just relevant, personalised content and offers for the end-user, it's also a highly cost-efficient

and effective way for advertisers to target their available advertising budget to their best advantage.

As Paid Search Director at Click, I'm responsible for ensuring the growth, profitability, delivery and quality of our PPC (paid search and display advertising) services and of our conversion rate optimisation service (including data analytics). I'm also heavily involved in making sure that the Paid Search strategy we enact on behalf of clients stays closely aligned with their commercial objectives: an approach that has seen Click achieve real success for ecommerce brands and specialist suppliers such as Hill's Pet, Europe's market leader in prescription pet food.

The great thing about Paid Search is that, because it is so agile and measurable, anyone new to search marketing (or a company or brand entering a new territory for the first time) can test the water with a relatively short, highly-focused campaign to accurately gauge the ROI that a larger, longer-term campaign might deliver.

I've spent practically my entire career working in Search Marketing and I believe that, once the SME market has caught up with the technology that Google has made available for free, Universal Analytics will be at the heart of a whole new age of digital marketing.

VIRGIN BALLOON FLIGHTS

Helping the UK's largest passenger hot-air balloon carrier to target specific locations with online advertising



THE CLIENT

Virgin Balloon Flights is the largest passenger-carrying balloon provider in the UK, with over 100 launch sites across England, Scotland and Wales. The roots of the business were established in 1987, when founder of the Virgin Group, Sir Richard Branson, flew across the Atlantic in a hot-air balloon. Virgin Balloon Flights now carries over 30,000 people in its fleet of balloons every year.

THE PROBLEM

Despite having over 100 launch sites across the country, the brand felt that the awareness of a number of their locations was significantly lower than others. Virgin Balloons wanted to target specific geographical locations in the UK and approached Click Consult in April 2011 for a paid search (PPC) campaign that would deliver results.

THE STRATEGY

Click devised a series of location-based campaigns where the ads contained county/city/region related keywords in accordance with Virgin Balloon Flights' target launch sites. Click also suggested that Virgin Balloons target more generic keywords through paid search, so delivered campaigns

"CLICK DEvised A SERIES OF CAMPAIGNS THAT RESULTED IN A 50% INCREASE IN TRANSACTIONS"

based on brand and non-brand search terms. In addition, Click started to monitor Virgin Balloons' competitors to react to their latest campaigns with offers promoting the Virgin brand through paid search simultaneously.

Click also began a Remarketing campaign, with ads targeting those that had previously visited the Virgin Balloons site and rolled out a Product Listing campaign, which provided users with more information and richer text about Virgin Balloon's product within an ad.

THE RESULTS

- 50% increase in transactions
- 31% increase in average R.O.I.
- 60% average increase in revenue (June 2011 compared with April 2013)

THE FEEDBACK

"Click Consult's Paid Search work continues to contribute to our online commercial success. Using their highly analytical approach, they crafted campaigns to achieve our specific objectives and we're very pleased with the results."

– Virgin Balloons



LINK AUDITING AND REMOVAL - IT'S TIME TO CLEAN UP YOUR ACT!

ARE LOW QUALITY BACKLINKS DAMAGING YOUR ONLINE VISIBILITY?

There used to be no such thing as a bad backlink. Website owners would employ automated tools to spam the web with links and super-charge their way up to the coveted top spots on Google's SERPs. It worked.

As a result, online searches would be littered with irrelevant, low-quality website pages.

With SERPs being Google's most precious asset, the search engine set out to eliminate unnatural linking techniques as part of their perpetual mission to find sites that provide a great user experience and fulfil the searcher's information needs.

On April 24th 2012, Google introduced its Penguin algorithm, which unveiled and devalued websites with unethical backlink profiles. Two years on, Penguin has changed the linking landscape forever. As well as eliminating spam from search results with Penguin, Google takes manual action on sites that employ unethical linking techniques by demoting them in search rankings or, in serious cases, removing them from search results altogether.

While the search engine's users have undoubtedly benefited from increasingly relevant search results, online businesses have been suffering. Luckily, there are strategies that can be implemented to identify, remove and recover from unnatural backlink initiatives.

WHAT ARE BACKLINKS?

Backlinks refer to incoming links to your website from other domains; they indicate to search engines that your site is valued by users. To detect the quality and relevance of a backlink, Google's spiders analyse a number of factors, such as:

- The authority of the linking site
- Whether or not the link looks natural
- The relevance of the link's anchor text
- The subject matter that appears on the linking page

Websites that have a healthy backlink

"A GOOGLE PENALTY REFERS TO A RESTRICTION PLACED UPON A SITE WHICH PREVENTS IT FROM RANKING HIGHLY IN SERPS OR, IN SERIOUS CASES, REMOVES THE SITE FROM SERPS ALTOGETHER."

profile are likely to be valued by users and it's probable that they will ultimately be favoured in SERPs by Google, too. It should be noted, though, that Google's algorithms also consider a multitude of other factors when determining your site's position in SERPs, such as the quality of the content on its pages and how easily your site can be navigated.

WHAT IS A GOOGLE PENALTY?

In its simplest form, a Google penalty refers to a restriction placed upon a site which prevents it from ranking highly in SERPs or, in serious cases, results in the site being removed from SERPs altogether.

The offending site will be issued with a manual penalty or, the next time Google's spiders crawl it, the site may automatically be demoted in SERPs by Penguin. This is commonly referred to as an "algorithmic penalty".

Regardless of the form of penalty your website has received though, even a small dip in traffic is bad news for companies operating within the competitive online sphere.

Manual Penalty

A manual penalty is issued by Google. It places restrictions upon individual websites that violate Google's Webmaster Guidelines. If you have been issued with this form of penalty, you may notice that one of your website's pages – or a number of them – have stopped appearing in SERPs. This indicates that your site has been issued with a partial-match manual penalty. If your website has been eliminated from SERPs altogether, this suggests that you have been issued with a site-wide manual penalty.

Algorithmic penalty

Unlike a manual penalty, an algorithmic penalty occurs naturally when Google's spiders crawl a website and discover recent unnatural linking strategies. Google has released various algorithms that unveil and penalise different forms of spam; in terms of linking, it is Penguin's rules that websites must conform to.

HOW COULD YOU GET A PENALTY?

Any links that have been created to manipulate a website's place in SERPs may be considered part of a link scheme, which violates Google's Webmaster Guidelines and could result in your site being demoted in search results, or extricated altogether. Here are some examples:

Bad Neighbourhoods

A bad neighbourhood refers to a collection of interlinked websites or link directories that have been penalised in the past. Sharing your server with a large neighbourhood of websites that have a penalty history could put your site in jeopardy of being demoted, no matter how ethical your links are. Similarly, backlinks that point to your website from a bad neighbourhood can harm your site's authority.

Bought Links

Buying links to manipulate your site's position in SERPs includes exchanging goods or services for links and trading money for links. Such actions are classed as a defilement of Google's Guidelines.

Link Networks

The phrase 'link networks' refers to multiple websites that operate with the sole intention

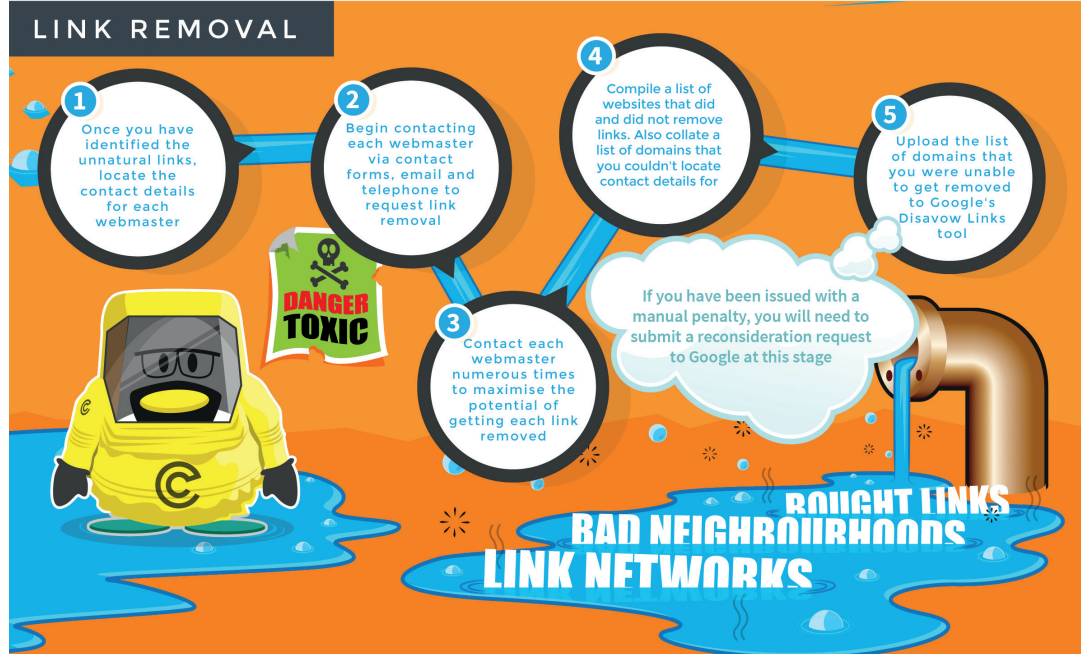
OUR LINK REMOVAL PROCESS

As part of its uncompromising mission to stamp out spam from search results, Google's Penguin algorithm automatically demotes sites that use unnatural linking schemes to supercharge their way up SERPs. Additionally, the search engine giant issues manual penalties to individual sites that violate the linking rules set out in Google's quality guidelines. An increasing number of sites are getting caught in Google's net; if this includes your website, you should conduct a link audit, removal and recovery procedure.

LINK AUDITING



LINK REMOVAL



RECOVERY



of increasing the ranking of websites in SERPs. The content found on link networks is rarely high quality as, by their very nature, most link networks are built purposely to dupe Google.

Over-Optimised Anchor Text

While most SEOs have understood the importance of natural anchor text for years now, Penguin has recently underscored how imperative it is to avoid over-optimising anchor text. When used excessively or irrelevantly, anchor text indicates to Google that you are attempting to manipulate your place in search rankings.

LINK AUDITING

Removing a Google-imposed penalty is rarely an easy process and, if the link auditing and removal process is conducted incorrectly, it's likely that Google won't revoke the penalty. If you suspect that your website has been hit with a manual or algorithmic penalty as a result of unnatural links, you should conduct a link audit. This will allow you to identify unnatural backlinks that point to your site from websites that break the rules set out in Google's Guidelines.

While a link analysis can be executed manually, this is a time-consuming process. We recommend streamlining the link analysis procedure by utilising a trusted link analysis and cleansing tool.

LINK REMOVAL

The backlink removal process involves contacting the owner of each site on your finalised list of URLs that need to be removed and asking for the links to be deleted.

- Work through the list of URLs you compiled during the link audit process, contacting each webmaster to request removal of the offending backlinks. Some webmasters may not be contactable - keep a note of these.
- Once you have requested link removal from each website a reasonable number of times, create a document listing the websites that did not remove the links. Compile a separate list of websites that have honoured your link removal requests. You can submit this with your reconsideration request to Google, to illustrate your link removal efforts. Simply 'disavowing your links' without attempting to get them removed will probably result in your reconsideration request being rejected.

WE CAN HELP

With a 100% success rate in recovering penalised web sites, Click Consult can assist you with any element of the link auditing, removal and recovery process. To download your free 'Link Auditing, Removal & Recovery' eBook, visit: www.click.co.uk/resources/ebooks/link-auditing-ebook/

REACHING OUT TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Gino De Blasio, Click's Head of Content, Outreach and Social, explains why a well-planned and professionally executed outreach strategy is a crucial component of modern SEO and shares some tips for outreach success...



Many believe that link building has become harder than ever since Google released algorithm updates such as Penguin and Panda. However, at Click Consult, we believe the changes were needed to encourage

site owners to cultivate an ethical link profile by offering unique content to visitors.

Creativity has always been at the heart of marketing. A creative outreach strategy can potentially earn valuable links by engaging key online audiences and influencers with great content. This approach ensures that your content is seen by your target customers and attracts the kind of traffic you want to your site.

Quality is crucial when it comes to link building. A few links from relevant sites of real importance are likely to have a far more beneficial effect on your search rankings than many low-quality links on suspicious sites.

We earn those links for our clients (and ourselves) by devising, writing and designing engaging sharable material and then placing that material in front of key influencers, such as:

THE PRESS

Building press awareness in the mainstream media isn't an easy task. A lot of effort is required to build relationships with target media outlets. We invest time in discovering the right sites and publications - national, local and trade - for each client and getting to know the work of the staff writers and news teams on each title. With the right relationships in place, we ensure that each

writer is offered content that is relevant to their own interests and specialisms, which further strengthens the relationship over time.

BLOGGERS

Popular bloggers tend to be people who are very knowledgeable on a particular subject, whose opinions are highly valued and respected among their engaged audience of readers. These readers will often share the blogger's content via their own social accounts.

A key element of your outreach strategy is to locate influential blogs relevant to your industry and build relationships with the owners. We're talking real relationships here. Read their blog regularly and get a grasp of their editorial style. Over time, point them to the work you've created on your own site and discuss the possibility of becoming a contributor. Pitch some ideas that will grab attention; ideas that are creative, original and haven't been featured anywhere else.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

Social media is a great way to reach out to the right people, attract attention to your own content, and approach industry influencers. Remember, quality is the watchword when link building. Search for people that have a prominent voice in your industry and are well connected. Different influencers will use different media: some may prefer to tweet while the more business-focused may spend the majority of their networking time on LinkedIn.

Contact influencers and build relationships with them by engaging with their posts/tweets, actively contributing to discussions.

THE

Only when established as part of that community can you start pointing them to your content and showing them that you have something of interest to say about your industry.

WHERE'S ALL THE CONTENT?

The most effective method of link building is creating your own unique, original content that's designed to be both engaging and sharable. Why would people want to share, link to or tell others about content that says the same thing as everyone else and doesn't offer anything of value to the reader/audience?

Consistency is important when creating content, so it's a good idea to create an editorial calendar full of ideas (tied to topical events or key dates in your company calendar) that span blogs, videos, images, infographics, and anything else within your creative means. By planning your activity in this way you can help to ensure consistent standards in line with your brand values no matter what channel you are using.

Coming up with ideas for fresh content can be demanding but there are a few classic ideas that, if managed correctly, never seem



SHORT CUTTS

to grow old. Competitions, for example, are a fantastic way to not only generate some links but also attract a lot of traffic and attention for your brand. You'll need to familiarise yourself with terms and conditions when it comes to creating competitions if you want to use social channels such as Facebook to promote and spread the word. Once you're up to speed, however, you'll have the knowledge and skills to create some truly effective backlinks.

Remember though, that when running a competition you have to be as ethical and transparent as possible, so make it clear how you choose your winners and that everything was conducted in a fair manner.

HERE'S OUR TAKE ON THINGS

Another great way to gain inspiration for fresh content is to respond in an interesting way to what others are doing online or to take information published elsewhere and repackage it in a way that adds value for the target audience you are trying to engage.

That's exactly what we did for ourselves when the search team at Click Consult devised The Short Cutts website, based on the influential video blogs of Google's Head

"A CREATIVE OUTREACH STRATEGY CAN POTENTIALLY EARN VALUABLE LINKS BY ENGAGING KEY ONLINE AUDIENCES AND INFLUENCERS WITH GREAT CONTENT"

of Spam, Matt Cutts.

Since early 2009, Cutts has recorded a huge number of videos to help struggling site owners understand their site in search. While the videos are great, some are relatively long-winded. With that in mind, we watched every Matt Cutts video to pull out simple, concise versions of his answers: The Short Cutts! Our site provides additional value by extracting the essential concepts from Cutts' videos and transforming the information into condensed versions intended for easy-viewing. Not only has the site gained a strong following of thousands, it has also earned the engagement and approval of Matt Cutts himself.

A feature of the site is its unique t-shirt filter that categorises the videos in accordance with the colour of t-shirt Cutts is wearing during the clip. On April 1st 2014, a video blog was posted of Cutts in which his t-shirt repeatedly changed colour throughout the duration of the clip. In a

post written on Hacker News, Cutts has admitted that the video was part of an April Fools' Day joke that was intended to trick the classification system of the t-shirt filter on The Short Cutts webpage.

The search team at Click Consult has since responded to by creating a 'psychedelic' t-shirt category on The Short Cutts site to classify the spaced out shirt. More seriously, we have also recently added a Google language toolbar to the site in response to the demand to convert Cutts' videos into different languages, with French currently taking the lead for the most popular conversion.

The enduring popularity of the site is a testament to the diligence and creative abilities of our organic search team here at Click Consult. That's why we'll continue to reach out with great content in the future on our own behalf and on behalf our clients.

www.click.co.uk/blog/the-short-cutts

SEMANTIC MARKUP: PUTTING IT ALL IN CONTEXT

If you're looking for an ethical 'quick win' in relation to your search-generated traffic, providing extra context for search engines in the form of semantic markup could be your best move...

It's sometimes easy to forget that major search engines such as Google are machines. Despite their incredible ability to aid our research and to lead us to the information we need, they don't have the eyeballs to read our search requests or the brain to consider the content of queries we make.

So while Google can find content – lots and lots of content – based on the keywords used in our search requests, it doesn't actually understand that content. For example, when the search engine identifies a piece of copy as containing the word 'apple' it doesn't automatically know whether the copy is referring to the fruit or the company.

As human beings, we would be able to discern the correct meaning by placing the word within the context of the wider discussion taking place or previous discussions.

One use of semantic markup is to provide this context for search engines by inserting additional lines of code that sit in the HTML source code of a web page. This extra code provides search engines with information about the relationship between objects or different items of content. (This code is invisible to the user unless they actively choose to delve into the source code themselves.)

There are already a number of areas where you can add semantic markup data to assist search engines and this is growing all the time, but a classic example would be to include location information. It is important to remember however that just because your contact details are included in your web copy, it doesn't mean that Google understands where you are based – it doesn't, but it would like to.

After all, if someone in Liverpool searches for a plumber, there is little value in Google providing a link to any extremely well-optimised website in Kent.

Likewise, for different businesses, it may be useful for the company to provide semantic



“BY INCLUDING SEMANTIC MARKUP, WHERE RELEVANT, YOU CAN SECURE MORE SPACE FOR YOUR SEARCH LISTINGS AND EARN MORE CLICK-THROUGHS.”

markup to add data on product descriptions, stock quantities and availability. They could also choose to offer information relating to price, or in the case of events, a specific range of dates.

Another popular use of semantic markup is to link content to third party reviews elsewhere on the web and display them in Google search results within your pages listing. The combination of semantic markup and webmaster tools mean that different reviews are displayed for different pages, optimised for different keyword search terms. For example, a cosmetic surgery client of ours recently employed semantic markup to provide reviews from a third party site, categorised not only by brand name but also providing more specific reviews on each procedure and each individual surgeon. This allowed us to display the average star rating (out of 5) per surgeon, procedure or for the whole company.

By including semantic markup, where relevant, you can also secure more space for your search results listings. It's human

nature that anything which occupies more real estate on the screen is more likely to grab the reader's attention. These pages can earn more click-throughs, even in places where your listing doesn't rank as highly as a competitor and even if they aren't using a semantic markup strategy. This means that a competitor may have a stronger site in terms of SEO generally but, without structured data, and without semantic markup, their organic search listing won't be as attractive as yours.

Semantic markup isn't a new practice but it is one that's starting to move into the mainstream. If your competitors aren't doing it already, now is the perfect time to steal a march on them. If they are, then it's time to catch up!

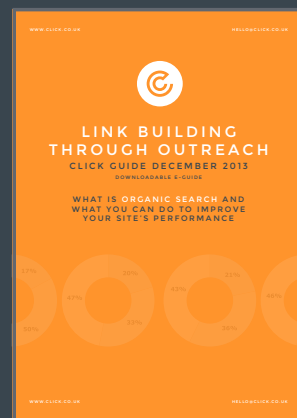
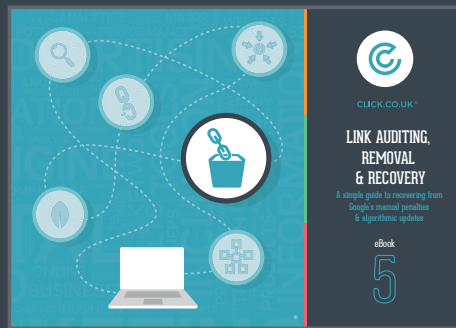
At Click Consult, we're highly experienced at advising businesses and organisations of all sizes on how to use semantic markup to form an integral part of their business strategy.

If you'd like to know more, get in touch with Click Consult today.



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