

## WHAT IS USER ENGAGEMENT?

In a world full of acronyms and abbreviations you can be excused the confusion of working your way around the digital landscape. We often talk of SEO, PPC, CRO and CMSs, but what does it all mean really? Well these terms relate to some of the tools, platforms and approaches that we use to get a user to a website. However, once they are with you, it isn't really enough to say that they are 'engaged'; this comes later.

More and more, businesses are trying to make sure that they are not only getting 'eyes on' their content but that there is a secondary action and maybe a conversion of some sort.

In order for this to be part of your strategy you must understand what exactly user engagement is, and how to harness it for the good of your website. In our series of cheat sheets we look at giving you a succinct overview of how to implement these strategies and the importance of preparing your website to flourish online.

User engagement measurement assesses an individual's response to some type of offering, such as a product, a service or a website.

An individual's degree of engagement may be determined directly through interaction, or assessed through observation of the user's behaviours. A website user, for example, might click links, comment, download documents and watch videos, among other possibilities and this 'digital footprint' can offer businesses a chance to learn what is working and what isn't.

In a marketing context, user engagement is often referred to as customer engagement (CE) and looks at the point where a user first becomes aware of your business and how they move through the buyer's cycle to the point where they convert or become a regular customer.

## WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

User engagement is vital for businesses, as it correlates directly with profitability. If you can communicate with your audience or your target audience and get them to convert in terms of making a purchase, this has a direct impact on your bottom line.

A correlation exists between the amount of time that an engaged user spends on your site and revenue increases.

In terms of SEO, if you are easier to find due to your position on the search engine results pages (SERPs) or you appear across the board for a wide range of relevant keywords then you have a better chance of generating traffic and turning these visits into sales.

If the users activities are taking place in the right parts of your website and are tied to valuable outcomes such as purchases, signups, subscriptions, or clicks you are doing something right. If however, the user experience (UX) is poor then expect a drop off and run the risk of putting visitors off permanently.

In order to boost user engagement there are a few things that you must do. The first of which is to take an analytical approach to understanding the user's journey and their interactions. Look at what they consider to be valuable, this could be the content they consume, the ease at which they can find a product or service.

## CALCULATING USER ENGAGEMENT

In order to calculate user engagement, a business must decide what engagement means to them insofar as what sort of business they are if you are a media publication, every single website interaction could be considered positive engagement because the site makes money from advertising, the more eyes they get on a page the better the stats and therefore the more they can charge advertisers for running ads.

In the case of an eCommerce store they still want a high number of users but the website activity might only be considered positive if the outcome is a purchase, or at least adding an item to a cart and showing intent.

Different businesses, in different sectors with different objectives, might see the market differently. With that in mind here are some of the things they could count as positive user engagement:

- **Media site:** Daily usage, views, time on page, clicks, searches, comments, shares
- **eCommerce store:** Monthly usage, adding items to cart
- **Personal finance app:** Weekly usage, sync bank accounts, create a budget, enable notifications, view dashboard
- **Enterprise software:** Monthly usage, create reports, share reports, invite users

## CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TODAY

As we mentioned earlier there is a strong link between the profitability of a businesses through their online channels and the number of users that visit the website. Moreover there is a strong case for improving the user journey and the way in which you lead the consumer to a purchase.

A customer's failure to convert might seem like a negative but businesses must learn from the so called 'failures' as they can help to redefine a strategy. Ask yourself why customers are dropping off without making a purchase or why haven't they reengaged after the first interaction?

If you can make small tweaks to your approach, and maybe use a [more personalised](#) way of reaching out to new and existing customers, then you can improve the experience and boost performance.

In terms of personalisation, then, you should look to reward existing customers. You have to let them know that you appreciate their engagement. This could be done in a number of ways. You could offer exclusive deals or offers or allow early access to products ahead of general sale. Discounts based on previous purchases could also be offered.

The other 'quick wins' that a business can implement rely heavily on business engagement. If you want to see your results and statistics improve then you have to give a bit back. Ask your audience what it is that they like, what makes them engage and what doesn't work so well. This builds trust but also gives you a real insight into how the business comes across to the user. This can be done through surveys or questionnaires.

Encouraging active participation through interactive forms of content is a no brainer and evaluating your audience's current needs and reflecting on your audience's opinions can garner the greatest returns. If you can get the user to review a product or write a testimonial in terms of you as a business, then you are building reputation a little or no cost which makes good financial sense. In a similar vein you should respond quickly to problems or negative comments and use these to your advantage, learn from these comments and improve the offering in the future.

If you can engage a customer with content and offers which interest, entertain, excites or informs them, you are one step closer to building loyalty around your brand. A promotion can go a long way to attracting the attention of customers but remember that content is also king when it comes to engagement. Newsletters, blogs, videos and social media posts don't necessarily directly sell to the user but they do reinforce your brand or point to a call to action which can be equally effective.

## LONG TERM CHANGES TO IMPLEMENT

When it comes to the overall state of a business' web presence and how well your services are connecting with the user there are a number of things that can't be changed overnight. Some of the changes that you should be looking at include:

- **Reduce page load time** – Page load time and overall site speed are major factors when it comes to poor UX and are the reason that many exit the site before converting. A study conducted by Soasta found that pages loading just one second slower can experience a 56% increase in their bounce rate. Conduct a page speed test and see if your site loads within two seconds. If not, take the steps to improve the load speed by removing unnecessary elements from your pages. Images can be engaging but cause delays so use them wisely and sparingly.
- **Fix the basket** – If the basket or checkout part of your site has a poor payment or conversion area such as the basket on an eCommerce site then you can expect to see a large rise in abandonment and users who do not return. In a time savvy environment, users want you to bring down the walls, they want to find the product or service, add it to the basket and then make the payment.
- **Automation** – This is a big one; businesses should be looking to reduce friction at the users end, especially in terms of basket as we mentioned before. Automation plays a part in this, are you able to show similar products or send offer by email once a conversion has been made? If you can do this and the products or services are relevant, then you are effectively giving the user another chance to convert. This can also be implemented when they don't convert - such as with 'abandoned basket' emails and retargeting campaigns.
- **Look at your internal links** - In addition to boosting your SEO ranking, a good internal linking structure will enable users to navigate your site easily. Then you'll be able to generate more page views with each visitor and decrease bounce rate. When it comes to your links make sure that they have descriptive anchor text, that they are specific, and hyper-relevant and that they go somewhere new.
- **Make it responsive** - Statista reported that 61.2% of the world's population used their mobile phones to access the internet in early 2018. For Internet marketers, this means that building responsive websites is critical to engage both desktop and mobile users. It could be frustrating to navigate your desktop website on a mobile phone, which prevents good website user engagement. Mobile eCommerce is expected to reach 20% of all purchases by 2020.
- **Collect their details** - Website user engagement isn't just about engaging with a new visitor once. It also concerns your ability to drive visitors back to your site. You can do this by collecting their email address or other contact details, which you can use for sending new content updates.

## ABOUT US

Located in North West England, Click Consult is a multi award-winning search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC), with over 70 professionals employed and with a portfolio of over 60 clients from across the UK, Europe, Americas and Australia.

Click was named Best Digital Agency in 2017, adding to its long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within both RAR's and Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Blog

Click Consult regularly posts actionable insights on its blog – dealing with all aspects of search marketing. From technical SEO to PPC, content marketing and Analytics advice, the Click Consult blog has something for everyone of any ability.

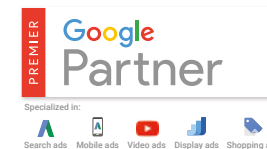
### eBooks

Click Consult produces in depth eBooks on aspects of search marketing on a regular basis, dealing with the latest best practices, changes to standard practices, methods of improvement and more.

### Infographics

Sometimes what you need is a quick point of reference about complex subjects. Thanks to its team of highly talented designers, Click Consult is also able to distil its vast experience into easy to understand visual content.

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