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# BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS
# WITH SEO TOOLS

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# INTRODUCTION

When it comes to search engine optimisation (SEO) one of the key things to remember is that there isn't a set way of 'doing it'. Every business will have a different set of objectives and a different starting point within the search engine results pages (SERPs). These two things mean that in order to fulfil their goals, these companies will need to adopt a bespoke approach to how the grow online.

As an agency who specialises in boosting the search performance of our clients we know only too well that you have to take a detailed, yet unique approach in order to see the desired benefits. In order to truly adopt a multifaceted strategy and to gain the increase in rankings there are numerous tools that are available. Having a full suite of these tools is vital and over the pages of this eBook we will look at some of them, their nuances and how you can utilise their features to boost your performance and get ahead of the competition.

# INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Long before you can start to use SEO tools to improve your performance online, you have to have a list of objectives in place that is rigid enough to work towards your end goals but fluid enough to be adapted as the search industry evolves. This plan will become your search marketing strategy and will be the cornerstone of your forward planning and future success.

In your strategy, you should have a clear idea of who your target audience is and how you want to attract them and retain them as customers. It should also include a list of goals and look at the keywords that you want to rank for. These keywords will be industry specific and this means that one of the key considerations is looking at you competitors. The final few things that you need to look at are how you go about implementing your strategy, this will include if you are going to use an inbound or social media element to your strategy, if you are building new webpages, writing fresh or longer form content, if you are optimising things such as meta titles and adding H tags or if you are going down a paid search (PPC) route. You should also consider the analytical side of things and make a plan to track your performance and act upon it to maintain an upward trajectory.

With all of this in mind, we have separated a typical search marketing strategy into five distinctive areas and will now look at some of the tools which are available and how they can guide you to the top of SERPs.

# PLANNING/COMMUNICATION

This is one of the most important factors to consider when it comes to using tools for search marketing performance. You need to be able to plan all of the content and changes that you need to write or implement and you also have to have a clear communication strategy so that your wider team, contributors and agency can work in unison.

In order to make sure that you are working towards a common set of goals one of the best tools on the market is **Pivotal Tracker**. This platform is a project management suite that allows the users to record the work they have done, share the details of a task and update others. In essence this ensures that users across all departments can work collaboratively to share ideas, set priorities and monitor project development.

From a planning point of view you will want understand where you can put your content and what type of content you could produce. Tools like **Vuelio** and **Gorkana** can be useful for this.

**Vuelio** contains a database of over a million different user editors, journalists, bloggers and influencers across 200 different countries, allowing for a more meticulous research process and editorial identification for your content and campaigns. These benefits mean that **Vuelio** is perfect for building relationships with potential customers, reviews and writers, who in turn may provide highly relevant, well written content for you or your business.

Once you have the content required to get your message over to your audience it will need you be outreached. **Gorkana** is a perfect tool for this as the UK's most comprehensive and accurate media database. This tool allows brands to connect with bloggers and publications that will provide relevant backlinks and help to build the profile and authority of a website.

# COMPETITOR ANALYSIS/AUDITING

When it comes to improving your rankings within your market, there are two things you need to know. Firstly it is vital to understand who your competitors are and secondly where/why they are ranking for your target terms. This all has to be done on a rolling schedule as your competition will be just as keen to outrank you as you are them.

Of the tools that are available, two of the most informative when it comes to competitor analysis are **Advanced Web Ranking (AWR)** and **SEMrush**. These tools offer powerful competitor analysis that means SEO experts are able to track and monitor the performance around a large set of keywords.

The beauty of being able to do this is that you are able to not only see your performance but to highlight any gaps in your strategy and unlock new keyword opportunities as they appear. **AWR** is particularly important for creating bespoke ranking reports that can be used to improve and update the overall search marketing strategy.

| | Keyword | | Position | SERP Features | Searches |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | grey corner sofa | No data | — | | 27,100 |
| ☐ | leather corner sofa | No data | — | | 18,100 |
| ☐ | l shaped sofa | ● | 26 | | 12,100 |
| ☐ | modular sofa | ● | 14 | | 8,100 |
| ☐ | large corner sofa | ● | 14 | | 8,100 |
| ☐ | u shaped sofa | ● | 5 | | 6,600 |
| ☐ | modern sofa | ● | 31 | | 3,600 |

Tables like the one on the previous page allows the user to utilise the features of **AWR** to see the number of searches for a particular keyword or long tail variant and where they rank for that term. If we take a sample client in the furniture market and expand the search for 'leather corner sofa' for example we are given a lot more detail. The client in question does not rank for this term but the high volume and the relevancy to the client means that it is a worthwhile target.

Top Sites for the leather corner sofa keyword.

⧉ View HTML

| # | URL |
|---|---|
| 1 ➕ | https://www.dfs.co.uk/corner-sofas/leather-corner-sofas |
| 2 ➕ | https://www.dfs.co.uk/leather-sofas/corner-leather-sofas |
| 3 ➕ | https://www.sofology.co.uk/corner-sofas |
| 4 ➕ | https://www.furniturevillage.co.uk/sofas-and-armchairs/sofas/corner-sofas/leather/ |
| 5 ➕ | https://www.harveysfurniture.co.uk/sofas/shop-by/type/corner_sofas/ |

These results allow us to see the pages that are ranking for this term and means that we have access to some of the SEO insights which they may be using. Obviously duplicate content is a no go area and you wouldn't want to plagiarise the rivals but you can look at how they structure their content and optimise their webpages to give the URL the best possible chance of ranking.

Once you have a ranking for a particular term you are able to track the progress of the keyword and how you rank for it, meaning that you have true flexibility and can constantly test and tweak to improve or maintain your position.

**SEMrush** has similar properties to **AWR** insofar as it allows for good competitor research but one of the standout features of this tool is the ease at which you can complete a site audit. This audit will gives you the base from which you can start all of your activity.

Within the audit feature you can display things such as the number of errors, warnings and notices on a URL as displayed below.
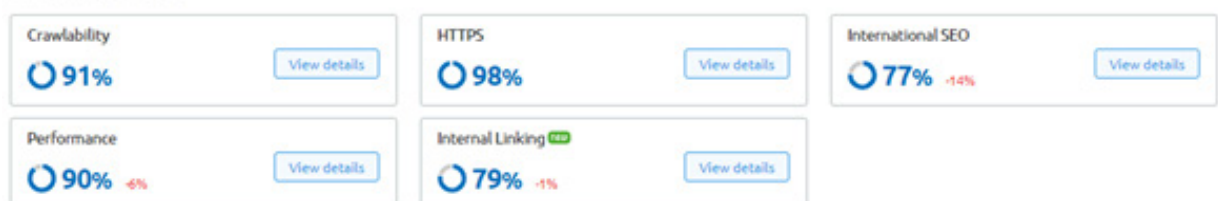


The audit allows you to see the health of a URL and the crawled pages from the website as well as a detailed breakdown of the issues in the issue log.
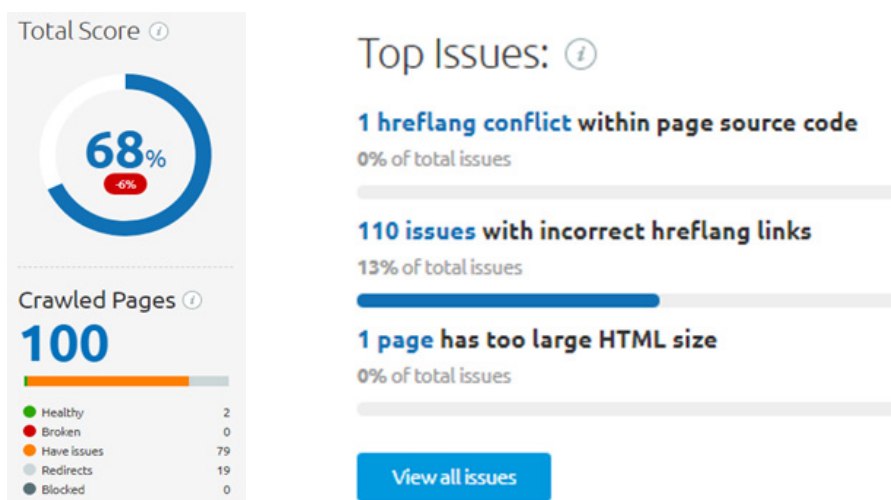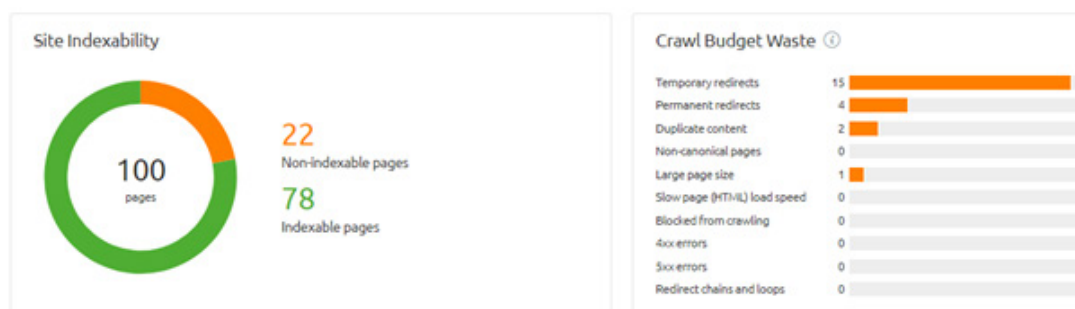


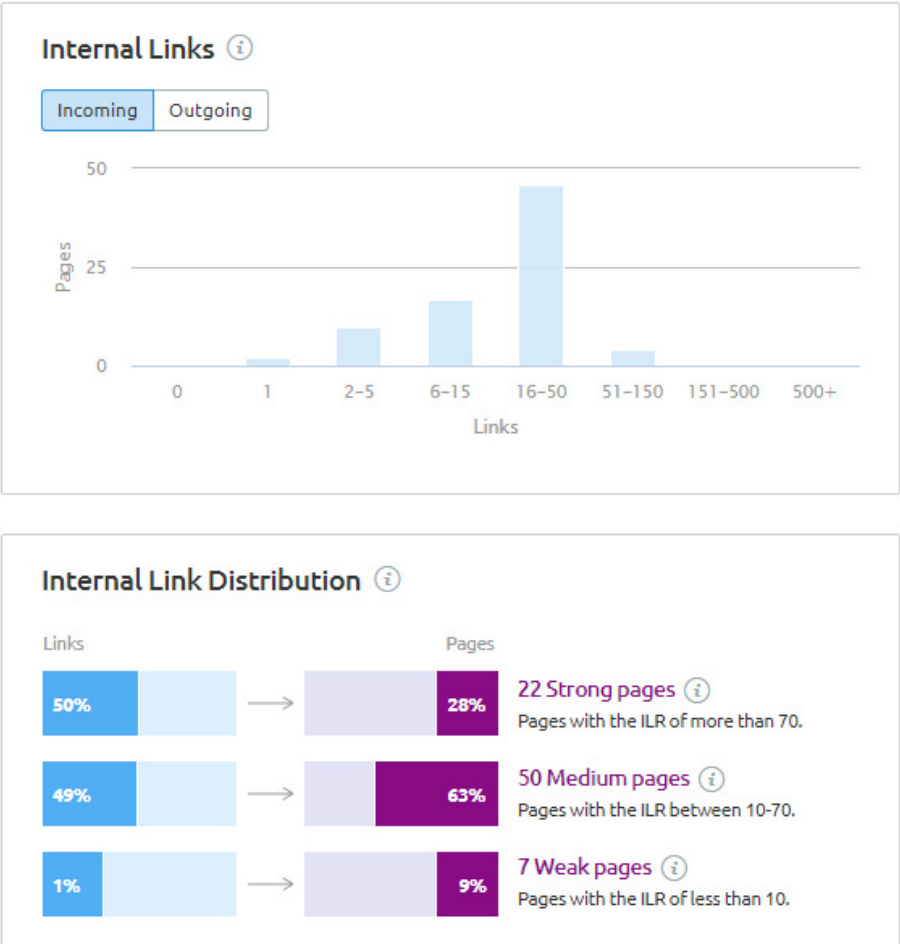There are also five other areas to look at, all of which form the thematic score of the site.



The 'crawlability' score allows you to see how indexable the pages on you site are and where there is any potential waste in the budget.

The HTTPS section of SEMrush is the best area to see that all of the certificates are in place and up to date whilst the international SEO tab looks at any possible errors pertaining to language. Such is the importance of internal linking as a ranking factor; this part of the tool can be very useful for monitoring incoming and outgoing links and the distribution of them.

**Internal Links** ⓘ

| Incoming | Outgoing |

Pages

50

25

0

0   1   2–5   6–15   16–50   51–150   151–500   500+

Links

**Internal Link Distribution** ⓘ

Links                    Pages

50%  →  28%   22 Strong pages ⓘ
              Pages with the ILR of more than 70.

49%  →  63%   50 Medium pages ⓘ
              Pages with the ILR between 10-70.

1%   →  9%    7 Weak pages ⓘ
              Pages with the ILR of less than 10.

Performance looks at things such as page load speed and average load speed as well as a more detailed review of the issues, warnings and notices that were previously mentioned.
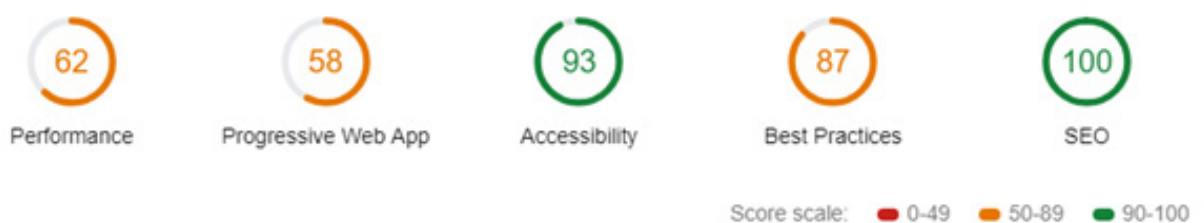
## Performance Issues

### Errors

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Large HTML page size | Why and how to fix it | 1 issue |
| Redirect chains and loops | Learn more | No issues |
| Slow page (HTML) load speed | Learn more | No issues |

### Warnings

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Uncompressed pages | Learn more | No issues |
| Uncompressed JavaScript and CSS files | Why and how to fix it | 4 issues |
| Uncached JavaScript and CSS files | Why and how to fix it | 2 issues |
| Too large JavaScript and CSS total size | Learn more | No issues |
| Too many JavaScript and CSS files | Learn more | No issues |
| Unminified JavaScript and CSS files | Why and how to fix it | 3 issues |

Another handy tool to use here is **Screaming Frog**, this platform highlights any technical SEO problems on your site. It works by crawling your site using a Google-like approach. It generates a report of potential issues like HTTP/HTTPS header errors, javascript rendering issues, poorly formatted HTML, and general crawl errors. One of the best features of this platform is the ability to ID pages that have duplicate content, a big 'no-no' in the SEO world.

One of the best tools when it comes to a site audit is the **Lighthouse Report** (Chrome extension). This is almost a 'health check' for the performance of your site. By working through the steps it is possible to improve all areas of your forward strategy. If we run a report for test site we get the following:

| 62 | 58 | 93 | 87 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Performance | Progressive Web App | Accessibility | Best Practices | SEO |

Score scale:   0-49   50-89   90-100

Generally this is a good example of a well optimised site, but highlights the areas where improvement can be made. If we take the 'performance' section and expand it we get a list of the following metrics:



Here we see things like site speed as a factor and the first meaningful and contextual paint (the time taken to load a given URL). This leads us on the third part of the tool, the actual information surrounding the changes you can make.

There are two sections to this part of the report – opportunities and diagnostics – these sections give a detailed breakdown on what is causing the score of 62 for the performance section of this site. Making amendments here and using it like a checklist can greatly improve your rankings.
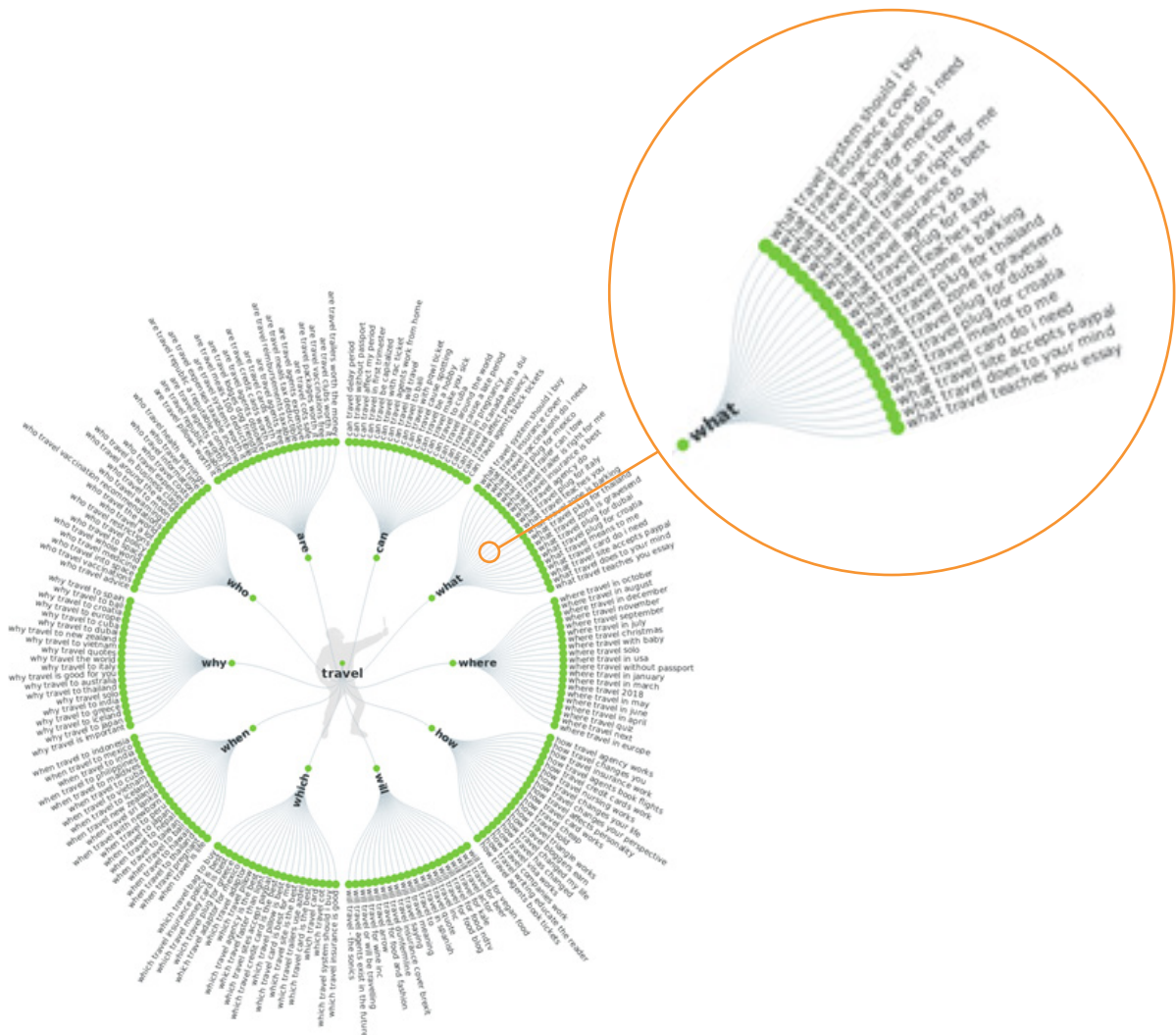
# CONTENT

Writing engaging content is not only key for your audience but for the search engines in general. Users want their searches to be answered with the most relevant information possible and so there has to be a structure to your content. You have to make sure that the content is keyword optimised and that it is also unique. Some of the best tools for idea generation and SEO friendly content are **Answer the Public** and **Google Keyword Planner**.

**Answer the Public** is a great tool for looking at ideas around a keyword or phrase. It takes into the 5w's (who, what, where, when and why) and generates ideas based on the search query.

If we try a search in the tool for the term 'Travel' we are greeted with the following results:



This 'word wheel' gives well over 100 different topics and questions pulled directly from the Google auto-complete feature and lets you see exactly the sort of content that your audience or potential audience is looking for.

Whilst **Answer the Public** offers you a list of topics, the keywords that you should place in your articles (so long as they are relevant to your business) come from tools like **Google Keyword Planner**. This tool, at its core, offers a search function (remember you need to have a Google Ads account to sign in) that gives you a comprehensive set of results. The metrics associated with the generated keywords include:

•       Avg. monthly searches
•       Competition for the keyword (low, med, high)
•       Ad impression share
•       Top of page bid (high range and low range)
•       Account status
•       Relevance

The keywords can then be sorted by any of these metrics and exported. Users can also search by language and location, something that is particularly useful for multinational, multimarket businesses and international SEO.

In the last section I mentioned that Google hates duplicate content and therefore one of the best tools to use is **Copyscape**. This tool identifies websites that have republished stolen copy from your site, meaning you can then take action to get the stolen content removed.

# ANALYTICS

So, you've discovered all of your keywords, tracked what the competition is doing, written all of your content, optimised for mobile, added the images and audited you site. What's next?
Well this is where the real magic happens, it's the stage of SEO where you monitor performance and analyses the effectiveness of your content before deciding what has worked and starting all over again.

**Google Analytics (GA)** is essential; in fact it is virtually impossible to run an effective strategy without it.  Businesses need the data in Google Analytics to see whether or not their SEO efforts are paying off.

The data included could be:

• Organic traffic
• Bounce rate
• Traffic sources
• Time on site
• Page speed



Taking a snapshot of information and processing it can be a good way of seeing exactly where you conversions and traffic is coming from. The charts above list the top channels. If you are investing in some area more than others and they are not converting or performing then you can either scale back and concentrate on your better performing areas or invest more to bridge the gap. Tracking your sessions is also as good way to see if you are growing in terms of your online presence. This is, although not strictly an exact science, a good way to assess growth.  Below you can see a snapshot of the top level metrics on **Google Analytics**, these are the stats that are deemed most useful in giving an overview.

Another key feature in GA is the chart showing where your visitors are coming from. If the number of site visits increases in terms of sessions and these sessions are from new visitors, then you know that you are expanding your audience, some of who could have previously used a competitor.
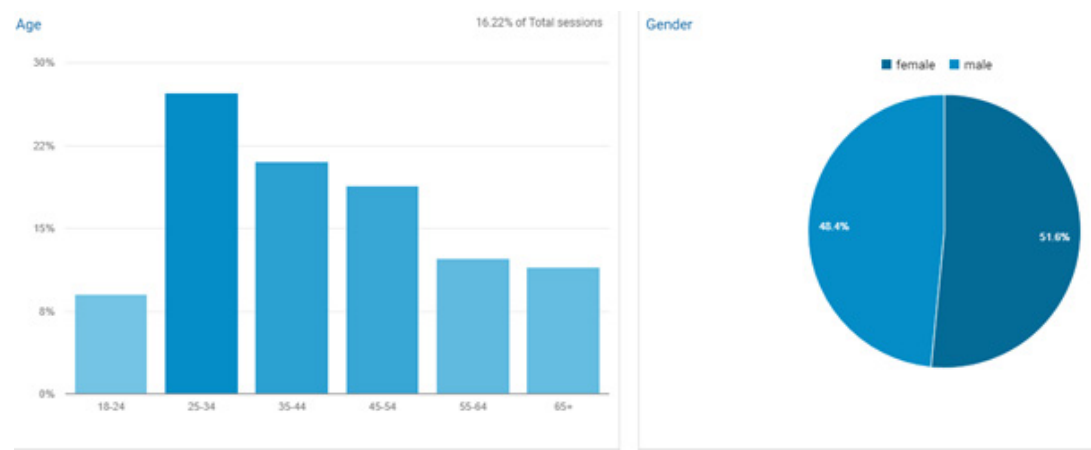


Other metrics that can be tracked include demographics such as age and gender (see above) and the type of device your site is being reached by. The below client example shows the importance of optimising content for mobile with over 60% of their traffic generated this way.

| | Device Category ? | Acquisition | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Sessions ? ↓ | % New Sessions ? | New Users ? |
| | | 20,049<br>% of Total:<br>100.00% (20,049) | 72.73%<br>Avg for View:<br>72.73%<br>(0.00%) | 14,581<br>% of Total:<br>100.00%<br>(14,581) |
| ☐ | 1.  mobile | 12,548 (62.59%) | 72.77% | 9,131 (62.62%) |
| ☐ | 2.  tablet | 4,887 (24.38%) | 67.51% | 3,299 (22.63%) |
| ☐ | 3.  desktop | 2,614 (13.04%) | 82.29% | 2,151 (14.75%) |

# CONVERSION TRACKING

Engagement is crucial for businesses. Once they rank in the positions they want to and for the keywords that are most relevant, they will want to look at performance in terms of user engagement. One of the best tools for this is **ResponseTap**.

**ResponseTap** is a call tracking and web analytics tool that tracks which online traffic sources drive offline phone calls to a business. This tool integrates fully with Google Analytics allowing you to analyse visitor engagement metrics, such as bounce rate and time on site alongside goal and call conversion rates.

By creating unique phone numbers and placing them, on certain areas of your site it is possible for you to see exactly where the conversions are coming from and this will give you a better idea of what resonates with your audience. This tactic can also be implemented in things like email marketing where you can track the exact piece of content or marketing that pushed the user to you. As well as phone conversions through this platform business should make sure that they have tracking links set up so that they can view social conversions and other website visits and through which medium they arrived at the site.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Whilst this eBook and a selection of the others that we have written contain valuable information on the theory of SEO, we have to once again say that it is not an exact science. In terms of your business a bespoke strategy is highly recommended and every website will have a unique set of targets to achieve. The tools mentioned in this eBook are just a small sample and whilst there are handy features in all of them, the overwhelming benefit is that they are used to track performance and highlight potential. The key to SEO is to test, test and test again. Make sure that your content is relevant and that you are targeting the correct keywords.

You need to understand your position in the market, your audience and the performance of your competitors and have a clear plan of action moving forward. SEO is technical and in reality is a real art form, those that put the investment of time, money and education in are usually those that reach the top, especially in competitive markets.

# GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

## 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 Search Agency of the Year 2018, 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'.

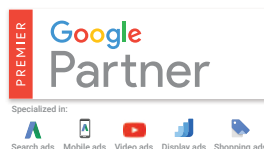## YOUR BESPOKE ORGANIC SEARCH (SEO) ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

REQUEST NOW
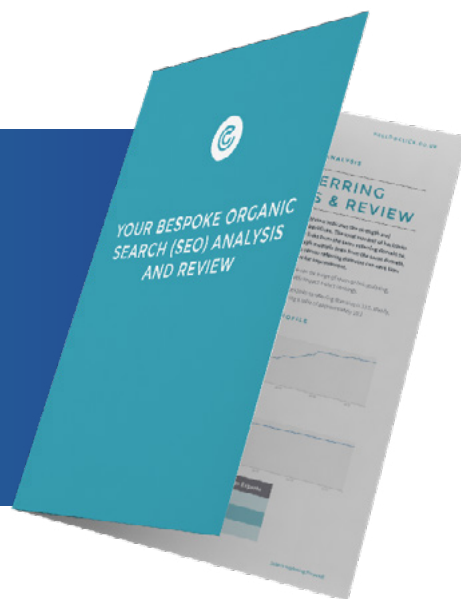
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## OUR ACCREDITATIONS

The Drum Recommended

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VWO CERTIFIED PARTNER

## OUR AWARDS

NORTHERN DIGITAL AWARDS WINNER 2018

PERFORMANCE MARKETING AWARDS

THE DRUM SEARCH AWARDS AWARD WINNER 2017

UK AGENCY AWARDS 2017 WINNER

NORTHERN MARKETING AWARDS 2017 WINNER

NORTHERN eCOMMERCE AWARDS 2017 WINNER

## OUR TECHNOLOGIES

monitor TRAX    rank TRAX    feed TRAX    link TRAX    pro TRAX    page TRAX