



YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO DIGITAL
MARKETING IN A CRISIS



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INTRODUCTION

Well, this is all a bit new. With the declaration of a global pandemic earlier in the month, it has quickly become apparent that there is an immense need to get businesses online in order to prevent as much damage both to them and their staff. While we can only sympathise with those for whom digitisation is not an option, we're a digital agency – so we're going to focus on what we know best in order to offer the help we can.

Nobody has all the answers, but we're hopeful that this eBook will give some people what they need to keep the doors at least figuratively open during a difficult time, and that it may represent a win in the long term when we return to what passes for normality.

We'll be looking at ways to generate a quick online presence that you can use to allow customers to get in touch, to buy vouchers for a later date, or to sell online in a variety of ways – as well as to optimise as much as you can both quickly and for free.

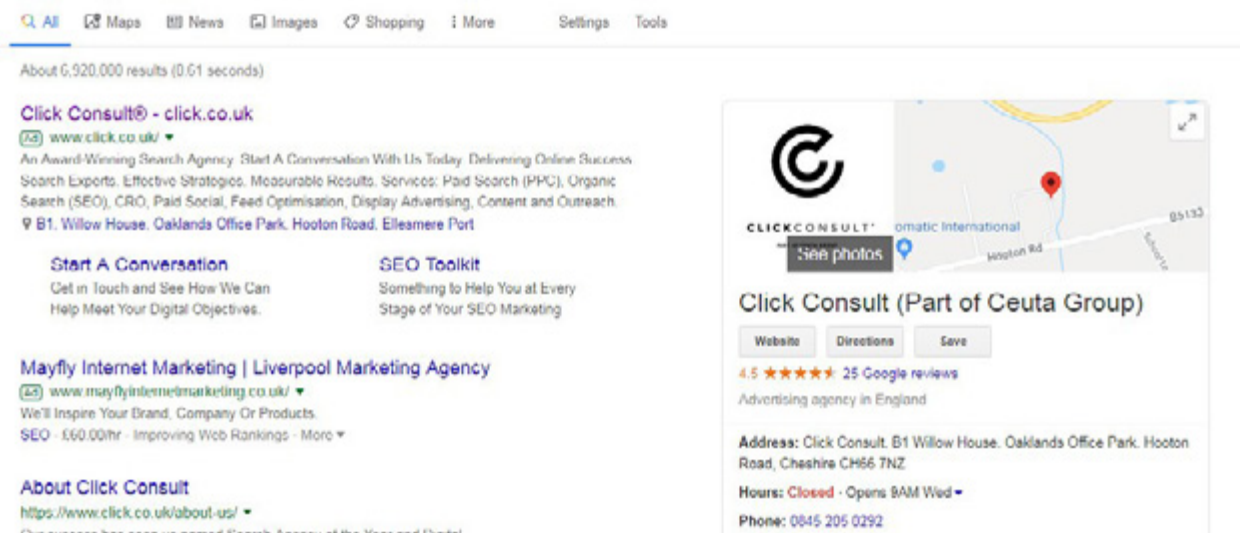


GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Google will make you work for your space in search engine results (SERPs) – not even an ad budget is a guarantee of page one – except in the case of Google My Business, a free resource for brands to lay claim to the presentation of their business information in a prominent position in the SERP. Not only this, however, it is also quick and easy to set up.

While the GMB rich result appears only for brand searches, the wealth of information you can offer prospective consumers directly on the results page should not be underestimated – if they're searching for your brand, this is the exact information that could lead them from the consideration to purchase level of your sales funnel – and also allow you to get out important information at moments of upheaval – whether changes to opening hours, or contact details etc.

So, while it represents minimal effort to set up, it does offer a great boost to visibility in branded searches.

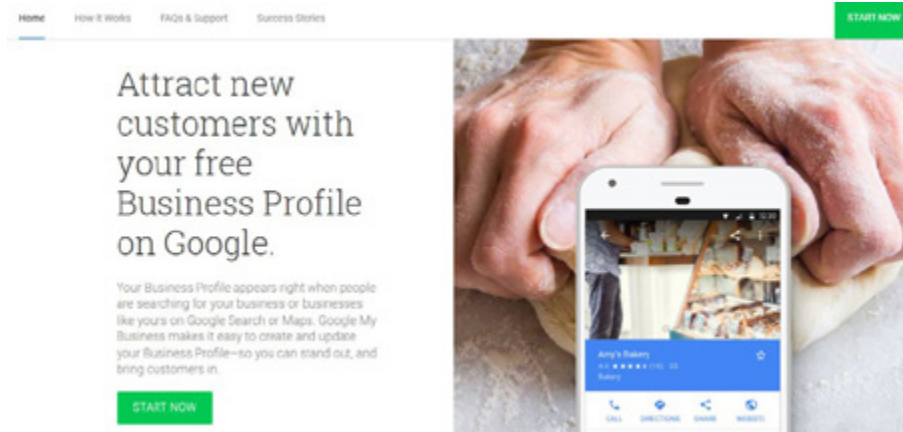


What is Google My Business

With a log in/sign-up page that promises to help you 'Manage', 'Connect' and 'Understand', [Google My Business](#) seeks to be a hub for a number of Google's small business products including (but not limited to) local listing info for maps, Google reviews, 'Insights' and the latest addition 'Website'. The platform (not to be confused with [Google Business Solutions](#)) is a good starting point for any start-up looking to hit the ground running.

Creating your account

Provided you have (a) previously used a computer, and (b) own a business, then the sign-up process is well within your ability – and mercifully short, starting here.



Upon clicking or tapping the 'start now' button, you'll be asked to confirm the name of your business:

A screenshot of the 'What's the name of your business?' form. It features a text input field labeled 'Business name' with a small calendar icon on the left. Below the field, there is a link for 'Terms of Service and Privacy Policy'. A blue 'Next' button is positioned at the bottom left of the form area.

This is followed by confirming whether you want to add its location:

A screenshot of the 'Do you want to add a location customers can visit, like a store or office?' form. It includes a sub-heading and a brief explanation: 'This location will show up on Google Maps and Search when customers are looking for your business.' There are two radio button options: 'Yes' (which is selected) and 'No'. A blue 'Next' button is located at the bottom left.

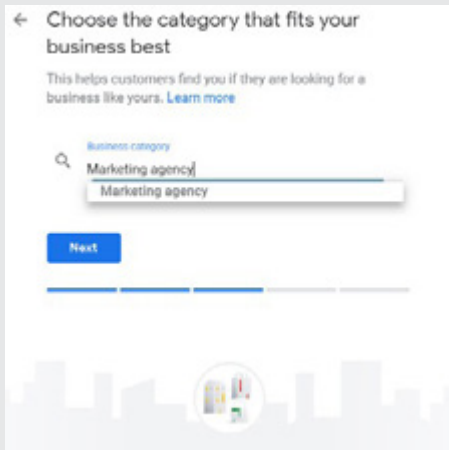
The next step asks you 'where you serve your customers' and can be as local as a borough of New York City, or as broad as the UK as a whole.

A screenshot of the 'Where do you serve your customers? (optional)' form. It provides instructions: 'You can list your service areas below. They will show up on your listing and help bring relevant customers.' There is a search bar with 'Manhattan, New York' entered and a note 'You can change and add more later'. Below the search bar, 'United Kingdom' is listed with an 'X' icon to its right. A blue 'Next' button is at the bottom left.

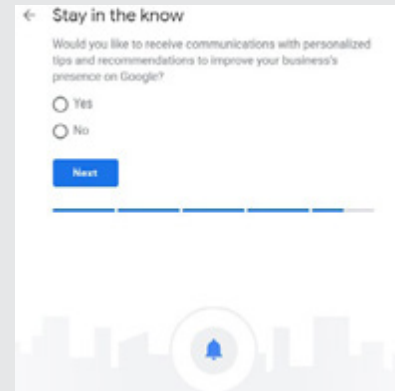
You'll then need to add your contact details and website address:

A screenshot of the 'What contact details do you want to show to customers?' form. It includes the instruction: 'Help customers get in touch by including this info on your listing'. There are four options, each with a radio button: 'Contact phone number', 'Current website URL' (which is selected), 'I don't need a website', and 'Get a free website based on your info. See details'. A blue 'Next' button is at the bottom left.

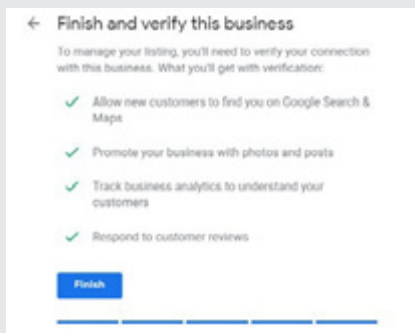
Probably the trickiest part of the process is selecting your 'business type' from a predefined list:



Before confirming whether or not you'll want to hear from Google with updates/offers etc.:



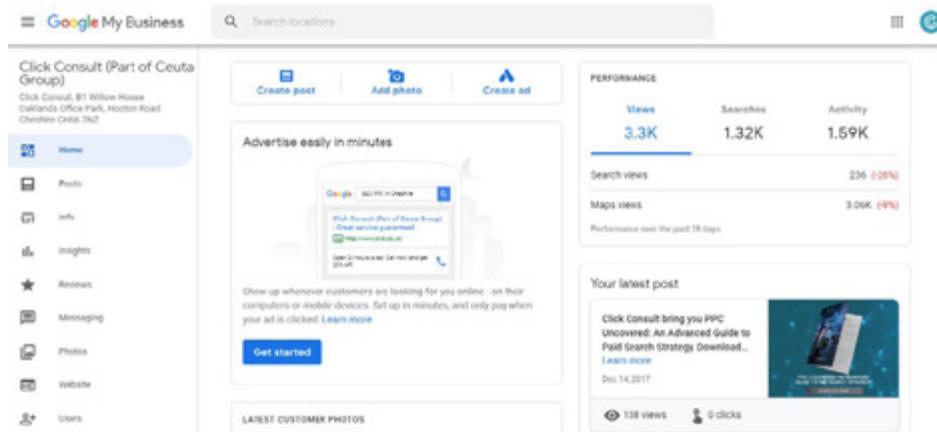
You can then choose to verify your business (which will involve the sending of a postcard to the business' physical location):



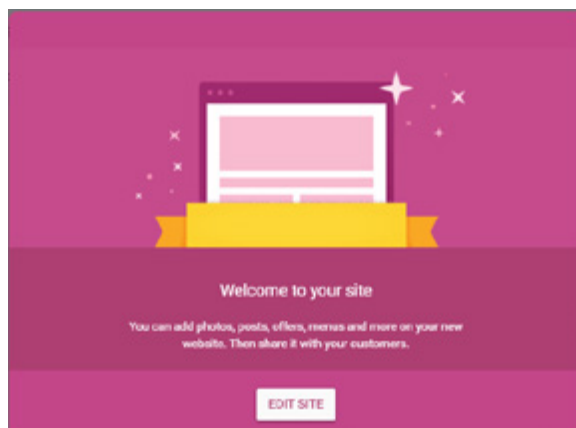
That's it! You have a Google My Business listing! Not only does this get your business online, it also opens up the option to use other connected functions.

YOUR GOOGLE WEBSITE

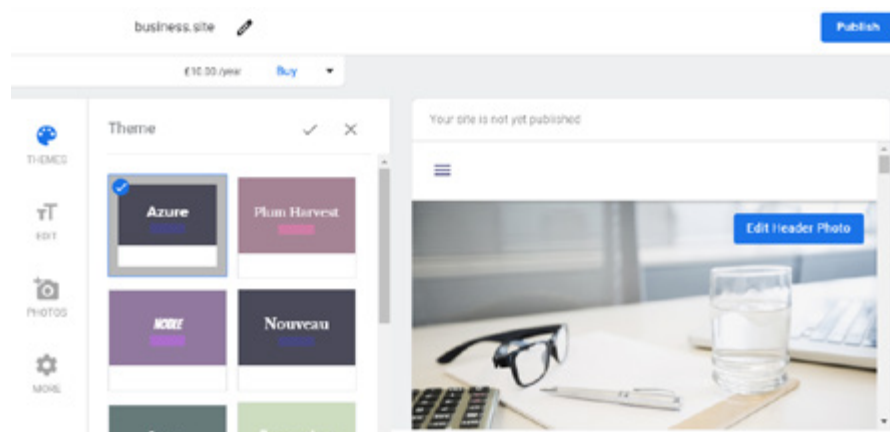
It's not overly customisable, it has limited functionality, but when quickly building a digital presence the Google Website function could well be a useful start. While in your GMB account, in the left hand menu, you'll see at the bottom a 'website' option.



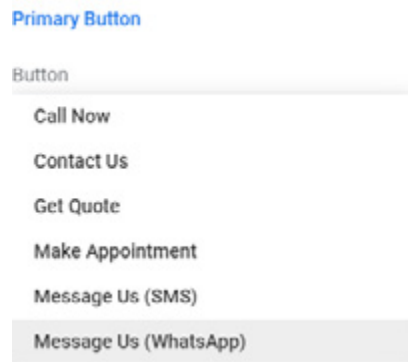
When you click on this, you'll be met by the following pop up:



The pop up promises a little more than it delivers, but in terms of trying to get online quickly, it should prove sufficient for the needs of some SMEs. Once you close the pop up, you'll be left with some choices to make:



You'll be able to choose your header image, the theme (from a selection of twelve), you can update the text that shows on the site (headline, description, summary header and summary), and you can also select a CTA button for the site.



Obviously, it's difficult to make any major plans at the moment, but by ensuring that you use the summary to make clear your intentions, and offer an appropriate button, this could give your customers a chance to help out during a difficult time.

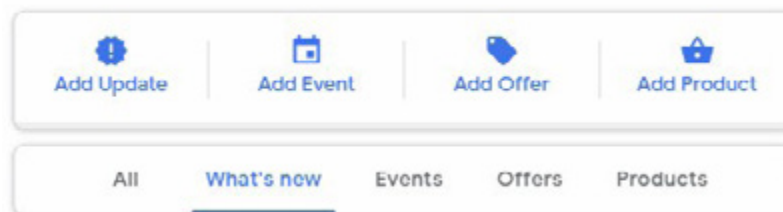
For example – for services such as hairdressers, tattooists or for independent booksellers or fashion shops, it could be an opportunity to sell vouchers for services redeemable at the end of the crisis. For tradespeople it could offer a chance to explain the safety measures they are likely to implement if they attend a job at your property.

Additional functions

Once you've set up your GMB profile and your 'website', you can also use a lot of other features:

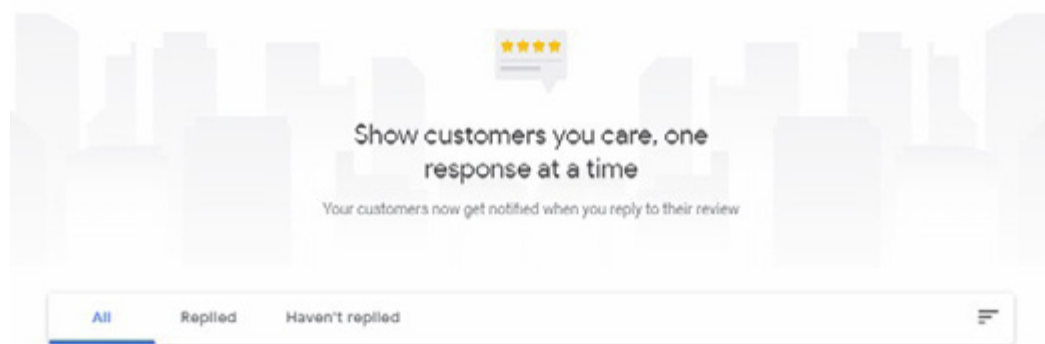
Google Posts

Allowing businesses to create content directly on Google (which then ranks for brand name SERPs), Google Posts can serve as 'business cards' (as Search engine Land called them a while back). In addition to this they feature above the SERP for various branded searches.



Reviews

As with Amazon and Facebook, Google My Business allows brands to interact with their reviews – both for the purpose of building relationships and for complaint handling. While Google reviews are still vulnerable to manipulation, interaction with consumers is a major part of a modern digital presence so, while it does require improvement, the option to engage in conversation with consumers is an important one to have.

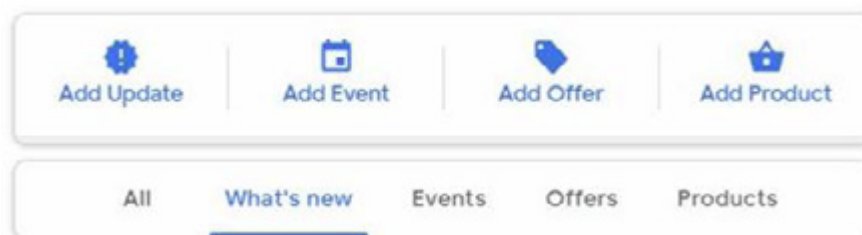


Book an appointment

Appropriate businesses can funnel users directly to a landing page to book an appointment - these appointment URLs are available for any local business, they will also play a part in your business receiving automated calls from Google Duplex – the Google Assistant’s automated booking system, which has begun to crop up more frequently in the last few years.

Optimising your profile

While the main advice is ‘fill in anything you can fill in and double check it’s correct’, there are several areas where a little effort can go a long way – some of these will only feature on your GMB listing, but it’s worth taking advantage of as much as possible.



Description

With 750 characters to play with, there’s little reason to worry about your word count, but do consider that only 250 (approximately) of these will be shown without the need for expansion. You’ll need to make sure that you communicate your USP early in the description – with the rest a condensed ‘about us’ or ‘mission statement’.

Services

If applicable, you can add services, service descriptions and even a price list – all of which will show up as part of your GMB listing and on the list that appears on the Google website.

Posts

While there's no hard and fast rule on these, it's fair to say that they were set up to compete with similar business page posts on Facebook. So, if you're posting something to Facebook – be it an award win or special offer – you should probably start using GMP posts too.

Reviews

While reviews are great to have (the more the merrier, in fact), you should look to respond in a professional manner to all reviews - not only is complaint handling in GMB considered a trust building exercise with consumers, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that such responses can improve rankings, as the activity suggests trustworthiness to Google (all the more important as authority and trust drive search forward).

Photos

There are plenty of reasons to add photos to your GMB listing – but we'll let Google do the talking here (taken from their support.google blog):

Your listing is a great place to showcase the photos that capture your business. Businesses with photos receive 42% more requests for driving directions to their location from users on Google, and 35% more clicks through to their websites than businesses that don't have photos.

Video

While you've only got 30 seconds to play with, you can say a lot about your business in that short time. The video – which can be uploaded in the 'Photos' section of your GMB dashboard – should, however, be done as well as possible. Think of it like any other piece of marketing – the better it is, the better it reflects on your brand. You can make great videos on a phone with no additional equipment and there are plenty of free video editing options online.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON GMB AND YOUR WEBSITE

The two really go hand in hand, so there's no reason to skip one or the other – and while they're far from ideal for every business, they could represent a bridge between no online presence and the next step.

SELLING THROUGH AMAZON

To begin with, you're going to need to set up a seller account on Amazon. While it's relatively straight forward, there's a detailed guide to everything from setting up to listing your products that can be found [here](#).

While selling on Amazon may not be the right fit for everyone, there is a great opportunity for resellers, independent stores and others to add a revenue stream to their business during this particularly difficult moment (if we can overcome their seeming inability to pay taxes).

Why sell on Amazon?

In 2018, Amazon overtook Google as the primary start point for product searches – with research from Jumpshot finding that Amazon and Google had switched places between 2015/18. During that time, Amazon had grown from 46% to 54% while Google had experienced the reverse.

This means that Amazon has become, essentially, the shopping search engine – and its popularity is likely to grow as long as the present situation lasts. For that reason, though it's a crowded marketplace, it is also a marketplace with a huge customer base.



Our advice

One of Click Consult's areas of expertise is in optimising for search engines and that is, to all intents and purposes, what Amazon is. So while we can't offer you much in the way of advice on your business in general, we can hopefully help you to optimise your Amazon listings to give you the best possible chance of succeeding.

For example, the same Jumpshot research mentioned above also found that 90% of all product views on the Amazon platform came from searches – rather than from ads or product aggregators - and 45% of all of those views went to products on the first three rows of the search result.

While these top rows increasingly feature ads, this isn't likely to diminish the percentage share of clicks for the top results by much – though the Google and Amazon SERP are not exactly interchangeable, the share of clicks is similar and, one can safely assume, consumer behaviour is unlikely to substantially differ between platforms.

This means that, if your brand operates on Amazon, it is important that your brand features in the top positions. While this can be achieved through advertising – [and we can help there, too](#) – the most cost effective method is to improve your Amazon SEO.

What is Amazon SEO?

To begin with, we should begin by defining the two terms.

Amazon

Beginning as an online marketplace for used books, Amazon has become the primary eTail site, making its founder Jeff Bezos the richest man in the world in the process. Amazon is now

responsible for the majority of product searches and while its growth is below the overall growth of the verticals it is represented in (for example, IKEA's online sales have increased, as have online furniture sales in general, more than Amazon's sales, but all have grown), it has become such a major player in eCommerce that brands as large as Nike now sell through the site.

SEO

SEO, or 'search engine optimisation', is the process of adjusting content, presentation and more to cater better to search engine ranking factors to improve performance in search engine results pages.

So, Amazon SEO...

Catering to Amazon's ranking algorithm – referred to as A9 (after the Amazon subsidiary that handles its SEO) – Amazon SEO is the process of optimising both your seller account and your product pages to appeal to the ranking method that underlies the Amazon search engine results pages. This shares some things in common with SEO for general search, but is heavily weighted for relevance and performance of your products.

How to implement Amazon SEO

Unlike Google, who prefer to keep their algorithmic black box sealed, locked and guarded by wolves, Amazon has been quite clear about the factors it expects sellers to optimise. There are four elements that we need to examine:

- Visibility
- Relevance
- Conversions
- Reviews

While not stated exactly, the Amazon help page (sign in required) carries a fairly explicit summary:

“Customers must be able to find your products before they can buy them, and searching is the primary way they can do that. Customers search by entering keywords, which are matched against the information (title, description, and so on) that you provide for a product. Factors such as degree of text match, price, availability, selection, and sales history help determine where your product appears in a customer’s search results. By providing relevant and complete information for your product, you can increase your product’s visibility and sales.”

There are a lot of crossovers between these factors – there aren’t too many things to optimise, so there are bound to be – but we’ll attempt to deal with each point independently.



Appealing to ranking factors

Visibility

Visibility, as far as Amazon is concerned, represents the consumer's ability to find the product and, therefore, relates to the effort sellers put in to completing the information sections for your listings. While you can do this en-masse using a spreadsheet upload, all of the fields for a solo listing should be present in the sheet you use for the mass upload. These include (not an exhaustive list):

In tab one:

- **Product name** – this should feature the keyword you're looking to rank for at the beginning or as close to as possible as the title length displayed varies depending on where on the screen or device the listing appears.
- **Manufacturer** – if you're selling your own product, this should be your own brand name, if you're a reseller, use the information from the original manufacturer.
- **Brand name** – as above, dependent on your inventory, your own or the manufacturer's name goes here.
- **Package quantity** – simply the number of packages that will arrive with the consumer.
- **Material type** – the material from which your product is made (there's a list of options if you click into the cell).
- **Shape** – while it may not be a searched for term in your industry (car shaped toy cars?), if your product has a shape which may differentiate it or be searched for, mention it here.
- **Size** – whether selling clothes or containers, list the generic sizes here (small, XL etcetera).
- **Hand orientation** – while it may not apply to every product, the left or right handedness of a product can be a selling point, so make sure you fill this in if it's appropriate.
- **Tension supported** – again, this is unlikely to be a feature for most, but if you're selling hanging baskets or hanging chairs or anything in between, the tension of the item should be listed here.

In tab two:

- **Variations** – this is where you can define any variations of the same product, whether that's size, colour or shape.

In tab three:

- **Offers** - if you have any reductions in price or offers applicable to specific areas, they are entered here.

In tab four:

- **Images** - there's plenty of space for images, so you can use as many high quality product snaps as you need to show off your product.

In tab five:

- **Key product features** - these will be the bullet points near the top of your listing, so make sure you help your product stand out. In addition, while it has not been stated explicitly, there is anecdotal evidence to support the idea that keywords placed in the product features can have a positive impact on rankings, so use them if they can be used organically.

In tab six:

- **Keywords** - you're looking for as many unique, applicable keywords as possible. In this regard, your general PPC keyword research will come in handy. Help your consumers to buy your product by ensuring you think about it from their perspective and how they may look to find you.

Optimising this process is the key to achieving visibility for your products, so ensure that you're giving this as much thought as it deserves.

Relevance

While this is also determined by the data you enter in to your product listing, relevance is something you should consider separately – you want to make your products discoverable, but you also need to make sure that the keywords you're targeting are entirely focused on those your ideal consumer, or buyer personas would be using to find your product. While increasing the number of keywords, or using branded keywords from competitors may (probably temporarily) increase visibility, leaving a consumer disappointed with your product is a poor first impression.

Conversions

Sales and 'sales velocity' seem to be the key factors for ranking on Amazon – while there may not be too much you can do to influence this at first, you can use paid search to boost your initial sales figures through both Amazon and search PPC. While boosting in this fashion will improve rankings, it should be noted that it is lasting sales volume that produces lasting ranking improvement.

Reviews

Whether it's a friendly note with the product, or an email following the purchase, you need to pick up reviews – not only is it beneficial for sales (as most consumers will prefer to purchase an item which has been rated), but it is also a ranking signal to get those reviews rolling in.

Featuring in the 'buy box'

The 'Buy Box' is akin to the rich result in Google search – it features in pride of place, with research suggesting that sales are made up 80+% from products listed in that position. While there are no guarantees, there are a few things you can do to increase your chances of featuring.

- **Account health** – by reducing key metrics such as Order Defect Rate (ODR), Cancellation Rate, and Late Shipment Rate, you can improve the health of your account – the lower the percentage the better.
- **Order volume** – while it varies by category, featuring in the 'Buy Box' requires the reassuringly vague phrase 'sufficient volume' to judge performance, likely a determination of trust in the seller.
- **Competitive pricing** – while it's not encouraged to price lower specifically for Amazon, do bear in mind the prices of your competition there; you'll need to represent value (not necessarily the lowest price) to feature in the box.
- **Shipping** – 'Fulfilment by Amazon' is the gold standard here, but attractive shipping rates and free delivery also improve your chances.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON AMAZON

There are few solutions that will be ideal for everyone, but for those businesses with goods to move, it could be a partial holdover until normal business resumes. This is one of the more complicated to get right; so ensure you make time to get things right and hopefully you'll see it as another revenue stream when your business reopens.

SHOPIFY

Shopify is a platform designed to help independent ecommerce vendors get their stock online. I won't spend too much time on this, as in the time I've been writing this guide @katiecerar has put together a fantastic presentation to walk you through the steps you need to get your stock online. In 62 slides, you'll be able to set up a Shopify store – you can access it for free (no forms to fill in) [here](#).

	Basic Shopify All the basics for starting a new business	Shopify Everything you need for a growing business	Advanced Shopify Advanced features for scaling your business
Monthly price	USD \$ 29 _{/mo}	USD \$ 79 _{/mo}	USD \$ 299 _{/mo}
FEATURES			
Online Store Includes ecommerce website and blog.	✓	✓	✓
Unlimited products	✓	✓	✓
Staff accounts	2	5	15
24/7 support	✓	✓	✓
Sales channels Sell on online marketplaces and social media. Channel availability varies by country.	✓	✓	✓
Manual order creation	✓	✓	✓
Discount codes	✓	✓	✓
Free SSL certificate	✓	✓	✓
Abandoned cart recovery	✓	✓	✓
Gift cards	-	✓	✓
Professional reports	-	✓	✓
Advanced report builder	-	-	✓
Third-party calculated shipping rates Show calculated rates with your own account or third-party apps at checkout.	-	-	✓

Building a Website

For many businesses, a fairly basic website will suffice – and there are plenty of easy to use, drag and drop options available. The decision you'll have to make as a business is whether you're likely to develop your website once the current situation clears (or during, if it proves to be successful).

If, for example, you're looking for a one page contact form, or a simple site to keep customers up to date and offer contact details, then you'll be fine with most of the website builders (even – whisper it – Wix) which all provide relatively intuitive drag and drop site builders. However, if you think you're likely to grow your digital presence, then a larger investment at this stage is probably recommended.

Despite this being the most complicated option, we won't be spending a great deal of time on this subject – but wanted to touch on it to give you some information to get you started if this is the route you decide to pursue.

Platform

As stated, there are plenty of platforms for building your site – those of you who listen to podcasts will doubtless be aware of Squarespace, for example, but for the most part [WordPress](#) is likely to be the best option (likely why more than a third of the web is powered by the platform). The benefits of WordPress include easy customisation, free domain registration, a wide selection of possible themes (starter designs) and, for websites requiring further customisation, a huge variety of potential plug-ins.

The main issues here are time and investment. For your basic package, you'll be looking at £0-12 p/a, then one of a range of packages. If you're thinking of a simple one page site, you can think in the region of £7-10 p/m (billed annually), this rises to £20-50 depending on how much you want to be able to customise – though if you're looking to install Google Analytics, a package at this rate is unavoidable (and Google Analytics would be recommended for most businesses).

The price rises again for eCommerce sites, for which you'll need to purchase a domain (or move a domain) to [WordPress.org](#).

Hosting

The WordPress download itself is free, but you'll need to pay for hosting at anywhere from £6-30 p/m. WordPress itself recommends either [Bluehost](#).

Plan	Price	Best For
Basic	£3.05/mo*	Perfect for a new blog/website
Plus	£4.54/mo*	Perfect for multiple blog/websites
Choice Plus	£5.42/mo*	Perfect for growing blog/websites

*Taxes not included. Price term of 36 months.

Features include: Single/Unlimited Websites, 10GB/Unlimited Storage, Free Domain 1st Year, Customizable Themes, 24/7 Support, Microsoft Email - 30-day free trial.

Or [DreamHost](#):

Plan	Price	Best For
WordPress Basic	\$2.59 /mo	WordPress for new sites
DreamPress	\$16.95 /mo	Managed WordPress
VPS for WordPress	\$27.50 /mo	Power many sites

Save up to 47% with a 3-Year Plan. Save up to 75% with an Annual Plan. Save up to 8% with an Annual Plan.

Features include: Professional staging, daily & on-demand backups, custom caching + email.

There's an article dedicated to the top ten hosting platforms on the TechRadar site (whose popups, it seems, must be hosted on http and are therefore causing their site to report as insecure – tut tut). You can find that article [here](#).

- Important things to look for include:
- Ability to host email
- Out of the box SSL support
- 50+GB of space (more if you're looking at hosting a lot of images or video).
- cPanel and SSH access
- Free website caching
- Spam protection
- A staging environment
- Speed and scalability
- Dedicated hosting (if affordable) or fast shared hosting (see [this article](#) for help here)

Don't be afraid to have a chat with multiple companies – treat it as you would any other service, take quotes from multiple vendors and assess their offering versus your needs and budgets.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON BUILDING A WEBSITE

The main cost of building a website will come in either the time it will take to build the site or the developer to build it for you. While there is a lot to be said for this as a long term solution, there are obvious drawbacks in terms of cost. It's a tough choice to make – but with the government presently releasing information on low interest loans to see businesses through, it may be possible to treat this as an opportunity to add a layer of security against what is likely to be a recurrent situation over the next few years.

OPTIMISING YOUR EXISTING WEBSITE

For those businesses with an existing, but underperforming website, the opportunity presented by the current situation (if there are any bright sides to look on) is for you to optimise. As an SEO agency with almost 20 years experience, we can offer a little advice here ([with plenty more available on our site](#)).

Know your audience

One of the most important things you need to do to increase the SEO performance of your website is to make sure that it's brimming with great content.

The first step in writing great content for the web is learning about your audience. You aren't writing web content simply because you enjoy writing and you (hopefully) aren't writing just to make the search engines happy. That means that you should be writing (mostly) for humans not robots, making the content something that users will genuinely want to read, engage with and share on their social channels. This will, in turn, make for good SEO and help to pull users through the buying process, helping to increase conversions.

In the early years of the web, overly optimised meta tags and pages of content that were stuffed with certain keywords and phrases were able to rank highly in search engines. Although it was often unreadable, site owners didn't really care as long as it was picked up and ranked well by search engines. They were writing for the search engines and not humans, so, although they may have been getting traffic to their site, their conversion rate would have remained fairly static as the content they produced did not encourage visitors to make a purchase or trigger them into repeat business.

Now, however, Google penalises sites that produce this type of content. This is why there has been an even greater focus, in recent times, on content. If you produce content that is informative, entertaining, solves problems and provides readers with something worthwhile, this will generate traffic, will be more shareable on social media sites and will better place your brand as a good source of knowledge about your industry. This is what will get you good results in the search engines.

You should have a specific purpose in mind for the content and a specific type of reader to write for. If you're new to writing for the web, or are trying to reach a new audience, it's worth going through a formal process to define your buyer personas. This is a series of fictional, character representations of those individuals that define your brand's audience, helping you to better understand their needs and write content specifically for them.

Understand why people may search for your content

Great, so you've identified your audience. Now you need to make sure that the content you produce connects with them. If it addresses the needs of your persona(s), it will be read more and shared more, helping it to rank better in search engines. People search for a variety of reasons. Common reasons in the B2B sector include searching to:

- Understand a product category
- Learn about a product or solution
- Solve a specific business problem
- Be informed about new approaches

Common reasons in the B2C sector include searching to:

- Find the best deal
- Find the closest location
- Locate a product or service that's advertised

As above, a basic buyer's journey includes the following stages:

Awareness > Interest > Consideration > Purchase > Post Purchase > Re-Purchase

You can think about this before beginning a piece of content. Is your persona:

- Looking for a general category of information? (Awareness)
- Looking for a solution to a specific problem? (Interest)
- Looking for an enterprise solution? (Awareness-Interest)
- Identifying and comparing specific products or vendors? (Consideration-Purchase)
- Looking for help with one of your products they already own? (Post-Purchase)
- Looking to replace or upgrade a product, and planning to remain loyal to you? (Re-Purchase)

Optimising your content

Keyword research is a vital part of any organic search campaign, whether it is used to mould onpage copy or to develop brand or product positioning – it is imperative that it is not only done, but done thoroughly and well.

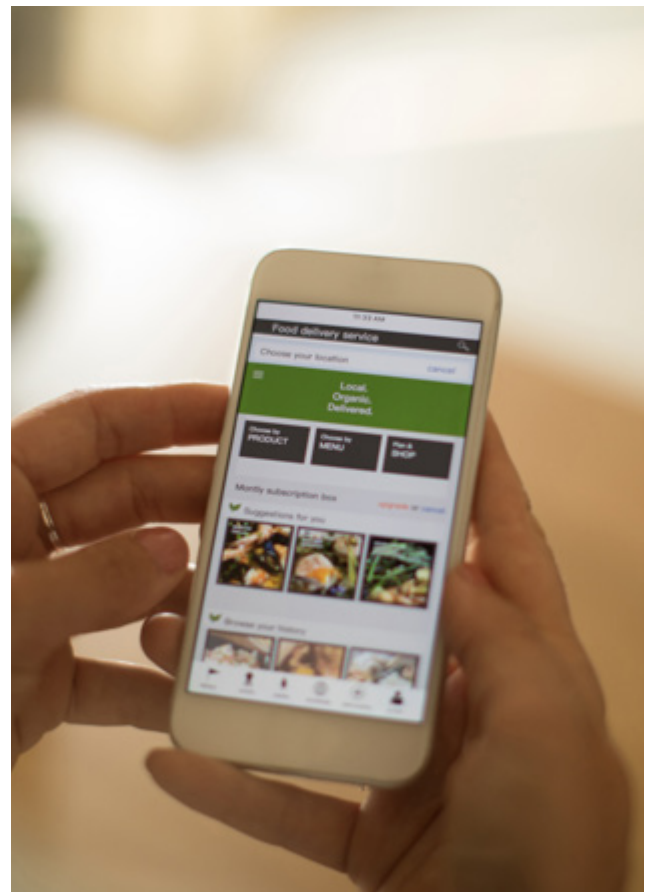
As search engines have improved their ability to ‘understand’ natural language (from the advent of the Hummingbird update in 2013, to the new levels of query relevancy offered by RankBrain and the introduction of BERT), a lot of brands and agencies have begun to place less importance on the role of keywords in content.

The worrying possibility this raises, however, is that, though it frees our writers to express themselves with fluency and style without having to rely on keyword anchoring, the reduced importance of keywords in on-page copy can sometimes carry over into keyword targeting. Keywords should not and must not be overlooked, and their importance in attracting a potential consumer can be underrated.

Take, for example, someone looking to make a purchase for a new hobby. They are interested in the hobby, but lack a degree of knowledge when it comes to hobby specific key terms; in this case, they are going to be searching for more general keywords and are going to rely on brands using search marketing strategies that account for this.

The best keyword research will identify themes – around price size, colour, etc. as well as gaps in the market with low competition from competitors. By grouping such terms into ‘themes’ (groups of keywords), they can be converted into pages of content which will represent a thorough match to a number of targeted searches, increasing relevancy and usefulness for consumers – again heightening UX at the same time as improving chances of conversion.

This is a good time to refer back to your buyer personas, what are they looking for, what will they want to know and at what stage in the buying cycle will they want to know it? Think about how you search on a phone as opposed to on a laptop. Are there differences in your own search methods from one device to another? What are your intentions across devices?



Think about the levels of interest and expertise possessed by your buyer personas – are consumers looking for brand specific items, using specific industry jargon more or less likely to want to buy or to need information than those searching for generic, non-specific terms? How can your keyword targeting nurture the buyer journey by delivering the right content at the right time? If you have run PPC campaigns for your goods or services in the past, there may be a wealth of useful information available to you in your Search Query reports.

Once you have assembled lists of key terms and questions, use online tools (such as Google's Keyword Planner) to quantify search density and, therefore, which of these keywords, terms and themes should be the focus of your efforts.

Ideally you're looking for the golden ration of low competition and high volume. Also, use Analytics to monitor in-site searches – those terms which consumers are searching for while on your page – as well as popular landing pages and seek to consolidate these terms externally.

The role of keywords in modern search marketing is in flux at the moment – and there are some which, with good reason, have suggested that the industry should be looking to move away from using specific keyword rankings as a success metric – especially as trophy keywords are likely to diminish in importance (as the way we search shifts and queries continue to trend longer).

However, regardless of the relative importance for monitoring progress, keyword research will retain its importance when determining positioning and importance as well as when considering audience targeting.

Four simple steps

- **Think like a consumer** – pick short and long tail keywords likely to be searched by your buyer personas. Ranking for many, low volume, but relevant keywords will serve you better than vanity terms.
- **Look for gaps** – in a crowded marketplace it can be difficult to compete against established companies. So don't compete, find where they aren't present.
- **Rank for priority** – it is counterproductive to spread yourself too thin, so choose your targets wisely and look for the golden ration of high volume, low competition.
- **Consolidate gains** – if you begin to rank for certain terms, don't rest on your laurels but continue to target these keywords as you expand your target list.

How to optimise a page

It is a fact that organic search has evolved significantly since its early beginnings. Producing content that meets the needs of your audience and customers is now at the core of effective SEO.

However, there are still a few things that are important that you must remember to consider in order to give those search engine robots just that little bit extra help.

Meta title tag

Though it is ultimately limited by pixel length, your meta title tag should be as accurate, concise and precise a description of your content as is possible in 56 characters. It is one of the most important sources of information for Google's algorithm when it comes to deciding relevance (and therefore affects SERPs position) as well as aiding in the ease of browsing for the consumer – it should always contain key terms relating to the page.

Meta description

The best explanation of the 'meta description' tag is as a short summary of the page – a clear and concise 155 character description of the on page content (with a minimum of 90 characters recommended). However, as this is the text visible in SERPs, it should also serve to draw consumers to the page – featuring, wherever possible, some form of enticement or call to action. A good 'meta description' can drastically improve your click through rate.

```
<meta name="description" content="This is a concise web-page description">
```

Though a brand may publish a novelty blog titled '10 uses for unwanted Christmas knitwear', in order to ensure the bounce rate is kept low and your potential readership is given a full and attractive account of on-page copy (detering the searchers that may be looking for recycling or upcycling advice), you may wish to describe it as: "A Humorous List Of Unexpected Uses For An Unpopular Christmas Gift".

** Note: if you don't include a meta description, or if Google believes it to be incorrect, then the search engine will create its own description based on what it thinks the user should see.*

Breadcrumbs

Like most of the other suggestions in this eBook, breadcrumbs are a useful tactic to help both your site visitors and the search engines crawling your site. Breadcrumbs take their name from the Hansel and Gretel story and are useful for helping your visitors find their way. They differ in a significant way; they are not a literal representation of the path your visitor took to get to the page they are on. Breadcrumbs are instead a representation of where the current page lives in the site hierarchy.

Breadcrumbs typically live in the upper left corner of a page (below the primary navigation) and are an easy way to both set the context of where the content lives in your site and to help your visitors navigate to higher level content. Since these are standard links, search engines will follow them, so breadcrumbs increase the odds that a search engine will discover your content.

Google believes breadcrumbs are important in helping visitors to understand the structure of the site and how the specific page fits into the site hierarchy. It will include breadcrumb navigation in search results when it can.

Header tags

Headers summarise the pages you create for both consumers and search engines – and should be easily read by both. They are also important stylistically.

`<H1></H1>`

Though wit and humour are desirable for a page title, it is more important in the digital age for it to convey the information you wish to rank for. While ‘Book lack in Ongar’ is a great headline (one of my favourites), Google’s search algorithm is looking for ‘Funding cuts for Essex libraries result in severe book shortages’ for search queries regarding library funding. Though there is no definitive limit, best practice dictates that you should attempt to keep your titles unique, between 60 and 80 characters, and featuring keywords near the beginning.

`<H2></H2>`

This is a more appropriate place to flex your creative muscle and generally serves as a sub-title. The

tags are also good for use as stand-alone subheadings when seeking to break up content for ease and speed of understanding. Again, it is still recommended that keywords feature somewhere in the subheading – as each header is important to framing the relevance of page to search queries.

`<H3></H3>`

This is a tertiary emphasis tag – or your ‘sub-sub heading’, formatting of which should adhere to its role as a paragraph leader, or stand-out line. As above, ensure this header is relevant to the text it precedes or is linked to – using keywords from the text to add relevance to the passage to promote ease of reader and search engine understanding.

Alt text

Alternative text is used with images (and other non-text content) to describe what the image shows. The words used within an image's alt attribute should be its text equivalent and convey the same information or serve the same purpose that the image would. This helps the visually impaired understand what an image is about using screen reading software, and it also helps those people that use browsers unable to download images. It's also another chance to tell search engines what the image and your page is about.

When writing the alt text for an image, ask yourself: if you were to replace the image with the text, would most users receive the same basic information? Every image on a page should have alt text.

What makes good alt text?

- Shorter than 65 characters (including spaces)
- The alt text should be a short 'stand-in' in the event that the image itself is not available.
- The alt text should accurately represent the image

Structured data

While structured data (referred to as schema from here on – as a tip of the hat to schema.org) involves a little more code awareness than much of the rest of that mentioned in this eBook, the likelihood that schema will play a big role in the future of search makes it worth a mention.

In addition to the prospective importance of schema, there are free plug-ins for many CMSs (such as Yoast) which can make implementation much easier. However, whether you're using a plug-in or not, it's worthwhile ensuring that you run your site through Google's free checker once in a while in order to make sure everything is working as it should.



What is schema markup?

The result of collaboration between Yahoo, Bing and Google back in 2011, there came into being a site called schema.org, this site seeks to unify the language used by webmasters to provide metadata on pages which can be easily read by search engine spiders and parsers. Schema markup is how we refer to the microdata code that provides this metadata.

If structured data is, to extend the metaphor, the scaffolding that allows for better understanding of information, then markup is the individual scaffolding poles. With hundreds of varieties of possible markup types, the aim is to create a machine readable internet – or in the words of the creator of the world wide web, Tim Berners-Lee, a semantic web:

“I have a dream for the Web [in which computers] become capable of analysing all the data on the Web – the content, links, and transactions between people and computers. A “Semantic Web”, which makes this possible, has yet to emerge, but when it does, the day-to-day mechanisms of trade, bureaucracy and our daily lives will be handled by machines talking to machines. The “intelligent agents” people have touted for ages will finally materialize.”

While there is a lot to cover with regards to schema, it would not make sense to cover too much of it here – instead, you can download [a designated guide to schema](#) from our website which will give you everything you need to get started.

Specific schema introduced following Covid-19 outbreak

In addition to the standard schema types, there has also been a series of new schema types added since the pandemic was announced. This includes markup to indicate test centres, to make emergency announcements and for various event issues. You can find a list of those, as they develop, [here](#).

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON OPTIMISING A WEBSITE

It's a long process, but one – if you are keen to succeed online – that is well worth getting underway now. In addition to the advice here, you can find a complete beginner's guide on our [website](#).

PROMOTING YOUR SITE WITH PAID SEARCH

If you're lucky enough to have some money to invest at this time, you can perhaps look to promote your website or products using Google Ads or Microsoft Advertising.

What's in it for my business?

Paid search can be a win-win for you and for your potential customers; you drive highly targeted traffic to your website, while they get to see ads that are relevant to them.

Paid search also gives you greater control over your presence on SERPs than a reliance on organic search results alone. In fact, spend on paid search overtook that of traditional SEO back in 2017, according to Forrester Research. As Google's algorithm continues to develop, sustained organic traction takes more effort to achieve, making paid search a good option for immediate results (although, in the long run, most businesses find that using a combination of both paid and organic search techniques is the most effective strategy).

Paid search campaigns are quick to implement, easy to track and amend, and have the potential to yield immediate results with most studies concluding an average of \$2 returned on every \$1 spent on PPC.

Business goals

One of the problems with trying to add anything new to the marketing mix is making a business case for the additional budget.

Is paid search right for my business?

This depends on what you want to achieve - so you'll need to begin by defining your goals. Once you are clear about what you want to get out of a campaign, you can then begin researching keywords, estimating cost and return and setting KPIs (key performance indicators).

Paid search can help businesses achieve a variety of goals, as set out in more detail below. However, it's not all about getting people to click on your ad - if you want a respectable conversion rate, you also need to put careful thought into what they see when they arrive on your landing page.

Lead generation

Your ads will appear when people are actively searching for the products and services your business offers. You need to ensure you send searchers to a landing page containing content that is specific to their search and includes a clear call-to-action such as a call-back request form, email subscription form, and/or a downloadable brochure.

How will you measure performance?

Your target may be to generate 100 leads at a CPA (cost per acquisition) of £10 per lead. You can set a CPA target in Google Ads directly.

Revenue generation

Your ads appear when people are looking for a product or service you sell triggered by one of your keywords, or when they are searching for a need or solution that one of your products could offer. Here, it's important that your landing page includes relevant products - remember to emphasise the benefits they offer, rather than simply listing features.

How will you measure performance?

In terms of KPIs, you might have a target to get 200 sales at a ROAS (return on ad spend) of £5 revenue for every £1 spent. Again, you can set a target ROAS in Google Ads.

Brand awareness

Your ads aim to promote your brand to a highly relevant audience, with the potential to increase traffic to your site. It is vital here that your ads are creative enough to engage people with your brand and promote brand recall – the content on your landing page should reinforce this message, and offer users options to interact further.

How will you measure performance?

Success should also be measured simply in terms of impressions – with the campaign running on a CPM basis, attempting to get as many (relevant) eyes on your ad as possible.



Remarketing

Your ads are shown to a group of people that have already engaged with your site, this is known as remarketing. Whether those who have performed a specific action (downloaded a resource), completed an eCommerce transaction or abandoned a basket. Your ad will remind them of incomplete purchases, of complementary products or services.

How will you measure performance?

Success in this instance could be an increase in recurring revenue, or average lifetime value of users – or simply treated in the same way as a lead or revenue generation campaign.

Campaign structure

Paid search campaigns are built around your business goals, split by category or business area. To start a campaign, you need to create an account with your chosen search network – Google Ads or Microsoft Advertising. Each campaign contains ad groups – which is a way of organising keywords that are closely related or ‘themed’ and then pairing these with relevant ads.

Ad groups should contain no more than 20 keywords and 3 ads.



Creating campaigns and ad groups relating to specific products or services, and which also mirror your website’s structure, makes it simpler to create ads that link directly to a relevant area on your site. This in turn will help you gain a higher [Quality Score](#), and help you to achieve a lower relative CPC.

Quality Score is a 1 to 10 metric used by Google to measure the quality of your ads and the landing pages they trigger. This will influence your ad rank and CPC.

Ad formats

Your ads can consist of text only, or can include images or video. The ad formats available to you depend on the type of campaign you choose (there's more detail about campaign settings later on in this eBook), but for the most part this eBook will deal with standard text ads as we concentrate on paid search.

Keywords

One of the biggest advantages of paid search is the control it gives you over your advertising message and spend. It's important to focus on the keywords that best suit your business goals, without paying more than necessary.



Selecting keywords

There are many tools available to help take the guesswork out of choosing keywords – including the free Google Keyword Planner which will give you some keyword data (though the accuracy of this data does depend on your spend, so it can only be assumed to be indicative in early campaigns).

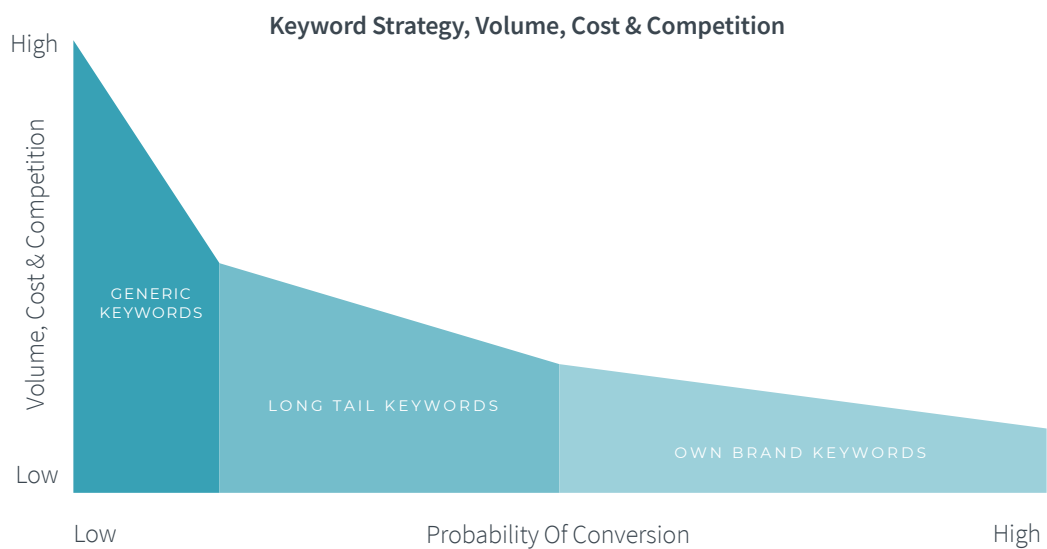
To make the most of your budget, you will need to strike a balance between the keywords which are most relevant or useful to your business and those terms that potential customers are actually searching for. Achieving this balance doesn't always have to be a matter of trial and error, however, you can use Keyword Planner to research potential keyword targets. The tool will also provide an estimate as to how keywords may perform in terms of traffic and cost.

This consideration of consumer intent means that you also need to consider words which indicate these levels of intent – for example, 'buy', 'cheap' and 'sale' have a purchasing intent while 'sample' and 'review' have research intent.

However, continually monitoring the performance of your keywords in a live campaign and fine-tuning your keyword lists allows you to focus your spending on the ones that yield the best results.

Using generic keywords (for example, ‘socks’) means your ad will reach a larger number of people, but will mean it appears to users who are at a stage of the buying cycle that isn’t catered to by your ad. More specific keywords will help you to target a more qualified audience.

This is where you will see the phrase ‘long tail keywords’ – these are phrases with less volume, but generally with a more explicit intent (for example, ‘buy yellow socks’) which allows you to target people with greater purchasing intent, boosting the chances of conversion. Another advantage of long tail keywords is that, as they have less search volume, there is also likely less competition for them, which will reduce your cost-per-click.



Match types

For each keyword, you set a match type to control how closely that keyword needs to match someone’s search term in order to trigger your ad.

Broad match

The default selection for ads, broad match will deliver your ads not only to the keywords selected, but also misspellings, related keywords and more. While this option offers the greatest traffic potential, it is also the least effective at targeting, so this isn’t an option we’d recommend if you are looking to preserve your ad budget.

Broad match + modifier

Denoted by the addition of a plus symbol (+football socks), your ad will show when a search contains the words within your keyword, or close variations of the words (close variations can include synonyms, abbreviations and misspellings).

Phrase match

Phrase match is indicated by the addition of quotation marks (“football socks”) and your ads will show when someone searches for a term that contains the keyword within the phrase, either matching completely or with additional words before or after it but not within the phrase), as well as close variations.

Exact match

Indicated with square brackets ([football socks]), exact match isn’t as exact as it once was. While your ad would once have only appeared when someone searched for your exact keyword, or close variations – the current definition (according to Google) is as follows:

Close variations here may also include a reordering of words if it doesn’t change the meaning, and the addition or removal of function words (prepositions, conjunctions, articles and other words that don’t impact the intent of a search), implied words, synonyms and paraphrases and words that have the same search intent.

Negative keywords

In addition to the match types, you can also use negative keywords – which, as you would expect, is a list of words for which your ads will not be shown. This is achieved using the minus sign (-ballet socks) and is useful for excluding products or services you do not offer.

	Example keywords	Could appear in a search for...
Broad match	yellow socks	yellow christmas stockings
Broad match + modifier	+yellow +socks	socks in yellow
Phrase match	“yellow socks”	buy yellow socks
Exact match	[yellow socks]	yellow socks

Writing ad text

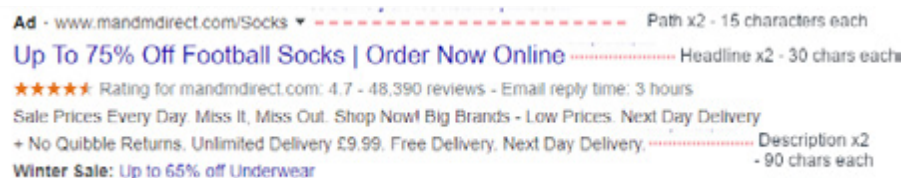
You've selected your keywords and match types - now you need to put careful thought into actually creating your ads. Writing effective paid search ads requires constant revisions and experimentation.

Here are our top tips:

- **Create very specific ad groups** – ensure each ad group within your campaign contains tightly themed keywords, perhaps focusing on a single product or service, so that your ads appear more relevant to customers.
- **Emphasise ad relevancy** – include your main keywords in your ad text, particularly in the headline, to emphasise to potential customers how your ad is relevant to their search.
- **Use a strong call-to-action (CTA)** – give potential customers a reason to click your ad and help them understand what they can do once they reach your landing page.
- **Ensure consistency between ads and landing pages** – the content of each landing page should follow logically from the ad that triggers it, giving users a consistent message.
- **Leverage your display URL** – the domain name of the website shown in your ad (the display URL) must match the domain name of your landing page. However, anything that comes after / can be used to indicate the relevancy of your landing page for example:

Display URL:	www.yourfootballsocks.com] Not allowed as the URLs don't match
Landing page:	www.yoursocks.com/all-football-socks.html	
Display URL:	www.yoursocks.com/football] However, this would be allowed
Landing page:	www.yoursocks.com/all-football-socks.html	

Here's an example of an ad that would display for someone searching for 'football socks':



Bidding

Once you've selected your keywords, you need to decide the maximum you are willing to pay for each click and set a bid, taking into account your budget and the potential value of each click to your business. Popular keywords and those with a lot of competition from other advertisers will require a higher bid.

Your bid ultimately determines not only how much each click will cost (your CPC); it is also a deciding factor in where your ad will be ranked on search engine results pages:

$$\text{YOUR MAXIMUM CPC (BID)} \times \text{QUALITY SCORE} = \text{YOUR AD RANK}$$

Introduction to optimisation

In this eBook we have only touched upon three variable aspects of paid search:

- Keywords and bidding
- Creating ads
- Targeting and settings

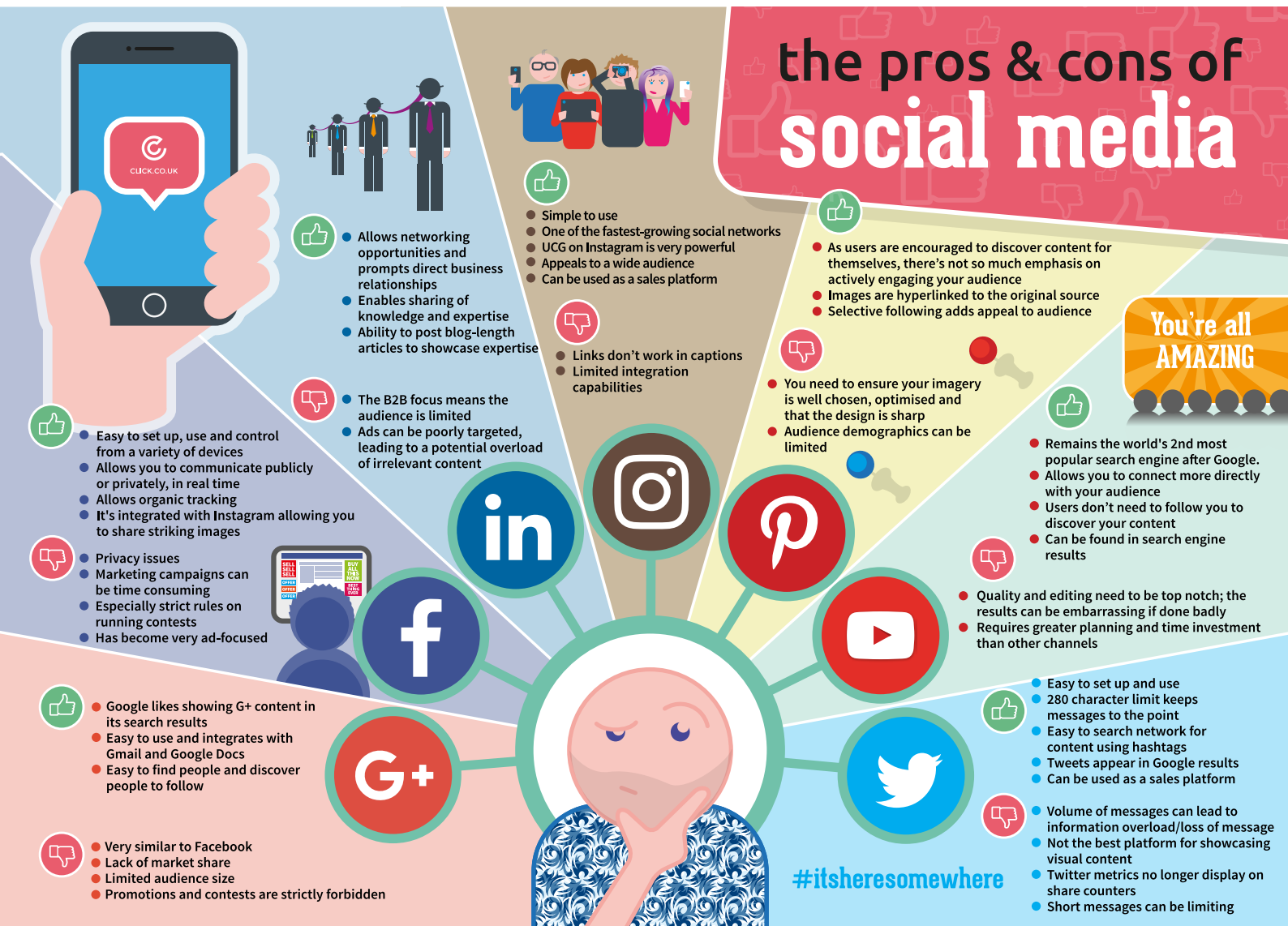
These are all areas that you can influence and optimise to improve the performance of your campaigns and this is something we cover in our eBook series – [PPC Uncovered: An Advanced Guide to Paid Search](#).

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON OPTIMISING A WEBSITE

Paid search isn't for everyone – even without the circumstances being as they are – however, if you believe there's a business case for it, then hopefully we'll have given you a bit of a head start. However, if there's more you think you could use, then you can check out the advanced guide linked to above, or you can download the full [beginner's guide](#) from which some of this section was taken.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Most people are using social media in one form or another, but if you're looking at getting your business online, the following may give you some indication of what will be useful for you.



We have plenty of guides to help you optimise your social media presence on each platform – however, the important thing to remember is that your social media channels may well be your primary point of contact with your users in the coming weeks and months.

For that reason, our main advice with regard to social media is:

- Be present
- Be responsive
- Be clear

WORKING FROM HOME

Following the total lockdown on the 23rd of March, all employees who can be should be working from home. For that reason, we thought we'd include some information on how to get started. However, for the sake of getting this resource together as quickly as possible, we won't duplicate the great work done elsewhere.

So, for help and advice for working from home, there is [a series of articles from The Verge](#) which should help you get started.

The only thing we'll say now – though it has been said elsewhere – is that when working from home it can be difficult to separate life and work as your home becomes your workplace. So make sure to partition the two – whether physically or temporally.



CONCLUSION

While it may seem glib to say it, digital marketing has always been about facilitating contact between people, and at times like these it's incredibly important that that remains at the heart of what we do. At Click Consult, we're passionate about what we do – and we know that the businesses we work with are too. With such upheaval, our passions are the things we cling to, and we're fortunate that we work in an industry so well placed to help under such circumstances.

The main advice for businesses reading this is – don't worry about getting everything in this eBook done, focus on the things that are going to make a real difference to your business. One thing done well is going to serve you better than several things done in a panic (and the empty toilet roll aisle will tell you all you need to know about panic).

So focus on spending a few days building out a plan for your business – use things like the PIE (potential, importance, ease) systems to evaluate your options and focus your efforts on where they are going to make the most difference.

In the meantime, we're looking at what we can produce to help you through the coming weeks and months and are always available using hello@click.co.uk if there's anything specific that you or your industry could use in order to help you through. We know you'll hear a lot from various CEOs (our inboxes are filled with them) about what particular businesses think about the situation, but we'll be continuing with our usual output, trying to make it easier for businesses to go digital and to grow.

We hope you're well, we know you're working hard, we'll help where we can.



GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning search and digital marketing agency with two decades of experience. Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

We're here to help - whether you're looking to hire an agency to undertake technical and creative work behind the scenes until the present situation is clear, or you just need some free advice. You can get in touch using hello@click.co.uk.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

CONTACT US



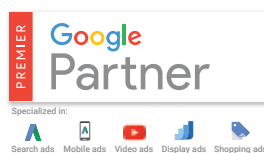
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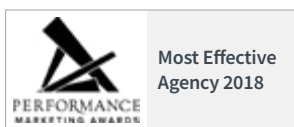
OUR AWARDS



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the Year 2019



Search Agency
of the Year 2018



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Agency 2018



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of the Year 2018

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

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