



SOCIAL MEDIA

A GUIDE TO AUDIENCE RESEARCH AND TARGETING



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INTRODUCTION

Social media is growing, the number of platforms seems to increase year-on-year as people look to make connections more frequently, and the methods that are used to connect to a wider audience are ever changing.

Making sure that you are in the best position to understand and connect with your audience has never been more important and, whether you are a small independent trader or a big multinational, the events of 2020 are sure to have left their mark. We know from our own experience that converting a visitor into a sale is vital for businesses, in fact it's one of the key metrics that brands and businesses look at when they are considering their strategy.

The battle for businesses is to find a way to connect with as a wide range of people as possible, but ensure that those people they do reach are ready to engage or interested in the products and services the business chooses to sell or offer. Regardless of the size of your brand, one of the most important things you can do is understand your audience, this is something we have written about many times before, and in truth is something which very rarely changes as an end goal.

This step-by-step guide will look at some of the best ways to understand your audience, find out which social channels are best for you and then explain how to target them once they have been identified. If you follow the steps, take in the points and build your plan around identification, engagement and retention, then you are sure to see a positive ROI from your social activities.

Let's begin...



STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

In the age of search marketing, personalisation and relationship-building are key. Added to that, the growing complexity of today's customer journey means that understanding your audience is a vital first step towards a successful search marketing strategy, whatever your business' size or sector.

To attract visitors, increase brand awareness, convert leads and increase return on investment (ROI), you need to adopt techniques that will engage advertising-savvy, time-poor, multichannel and multi-device using individuals.

Consumer personas should be dynamic, and open to change based on the data you discover during the investigation process. However, it is important for you to have at least sketched an outline to build on, and here's how.



DEMOGRAPHICS

This will feed back into many other areas of your strategic planning, so it's a good area to start with. Whatever service you provide will fall into a few generic types – whether it is 'female marketing managers 25 – 50', or 'house husbands 30 – 40 based in the South East', knowing the audience you're pitching at will begin to give you an indication as to how to satisfy their needs with the services or products you provide.

GOAL AND CHALLENGES

What are your ideal customers' values and objectives, personal and/or professional (depending on whether your business operates a B2C or B2B model)? What motivates them and what frustrations do they face? This can help you to identify and improve the way you solve problems for your customers and prospects.

You could also include traits such as attitude and behaviour, or even a phrase they might use and complaints they might have, for example, "I know quite a bit about recruitment, but further guidance would reassure me", or "I can never find the right swimwear for my body shape". It can also be useful to think about what they don't want.

WHEN ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS MOST ACTIVE AND RECEPTIVE?

If usage peaks in working hours then this should be your focus or, if you run an eCommerce site, you need to work to your strengths during periods of high seasonal or holiday activity think Christmas for toy manufacturers, or summer for BBQ equipment and garden furniture.

It's not enough to be online for these periods, it is important to use gathered data and your customer personas to make your best pitches at times when your services are most required, in addition to creating meaningful content year-round. Though this is predominately of relevance to paid search campaigns, it is also useful when planning asset marketing for inbound sales and even for seasonal SEO updates to product feeds and for sharing on social.

Building out your customer personas allows you too:

- Identify customers' values, goals, challenges and interests.
- Think like a consumer, so that you can satisfy their needs with the services or products you provide.
- Improve the way you pitch your product or service offering.
- Identify potential new markets.
- Create engaging content that meets their needs.
- Deliver it in the optimum format, place and time.

STEP 2: PICKING THE RIGHT SOCIAL CHANNEL

The considerations that businesses have to make revolving around social media are not only about the correct platform but the correct posting strategy.

Regardless of the size of your team you should be able to build a plan that will communicate directly with those you are targeting and include your existing customers in terms of the latest developments products or services that you offer.

With so many different platforms to choose from it can be a real maze and one of the other considerations you have to make is the actual size of your team that will be in charge of the social media and how they are going to target customers on a regular basis. It really is all about the audience where social media is concerned and if you are finding a channel with which your customers can resonate then success will surely come.



WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

A study by the Digital Marketing Institute found that by spending just 6 hours per week on social media, two thirds of them found improved lead generation. This is a figure that highlights not only the importance of using social media but the difference it can make to your business.

One mistake that many businesses make is that they don't realise the difference between the individual platforms. They don't understand the reach these platforms have or indeed the dedication it takes to implement the perfect plan. Some of the most successful businesses on social media are food and drink companies, these businesses target the customers with highly structured posts including image heavy messages that show off particular deals or indeed products.

Food photography has become one of the social media trends that has grown enormously over the last 18 months. If you are able to entice customers both new and old to your business with these types of products and product shots then it is fair to say that sales will increase. For this reason Instagram is the go to platform of choice for many in this industry but that is not the case for all businesses and all industries.

Facebook is one of those platforms that doesn't really have the B2C offering of other platforms, but it is great for sparking conversation between friends on why they would buy a product or use a service from a company. In truth this may be the best platform for building brand reputation.

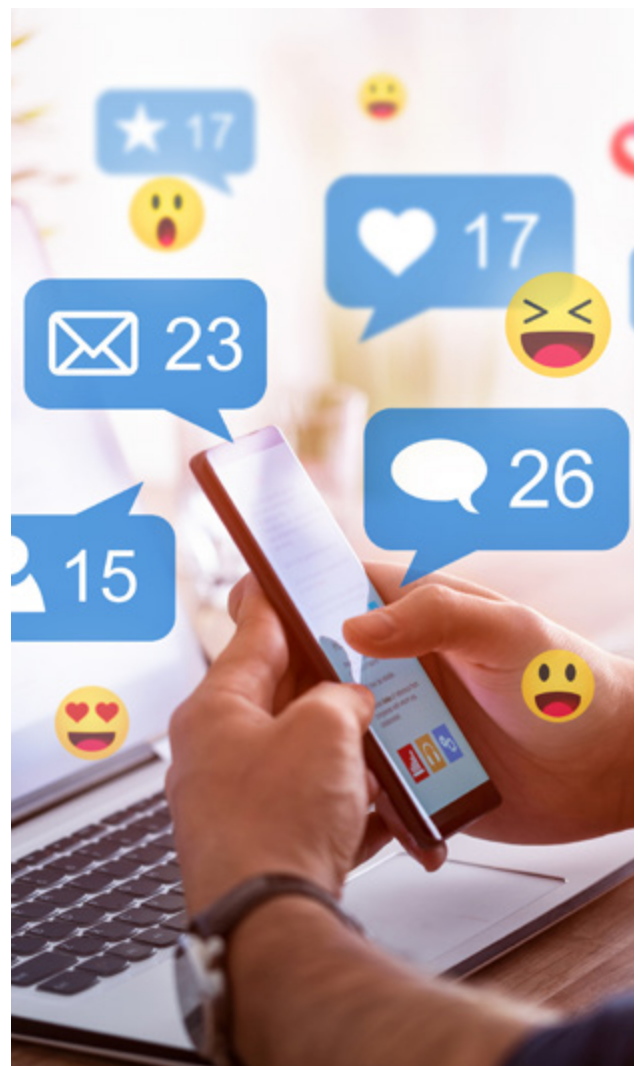
Twitter on the other hand is a fluid social media platform insofar as tweets appear for a very limited time especially if the person following your business has many different accounts that they follow.

People like this can expect to miss your message should you not be posting regularly this is where the strategy is vital for this particular platform.

If, as a company, you can plan to target customers regularly throughout the day or at key business times ie your trading or opening hours, or again, as a reference food businesses ahead of mealtimes when potential customers are making their own plans, then success can be fruitful.

YouTube and Instagram are also considered social media platforms, YouTube in particular is handy if you want to show the creative side your business by making videos or interactive content with which the customers can relate to.

LinkedIn is benefits are that you can communicate directly on a B2B level with people that may be able to help, this includes recruiting new staff or opening up dialogues between other influencers and other businesses that may be able to provide you with the products you need to grow your business.



TYPE OF CONTENT

If you want to share industry updates, company news and whitepapers - These content formats are traditionally suitable for B2B audiences who can be predominantly found on professional platforms such as LinkedIn and SlideShare. If you have a company Twitter account or an individual one that you use for professional purposes, these are also ideal platforms on which to engage fellow professionals with industry-specific content

If you want to share video content - If your video content is short-form and targeted at a younger audience, you may want to consider Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok. If it's longer and more universal in its appeal, Facebook and Twitter can also generate high levels of engagement. Not to mention YouTube, the world's second largest search engine with over 3 billion searches a month.

If you want to share image-based content - If you're a B2C brand with an engaging product to sell, you might want to consider Pinterest. According to Shopify, 93% of users leverage the platform to plan purchases. Instagram is ideal for building an aspirational visual brand story and Tumblr is a channel that leans heavily towards imagery that's suited to a younger demographic.

If you want to share editorial content - For businesses who want to establish themselves as a trusted industry thought leader, publishing an article on LinkedIn's publishing platform can expose their brand to over 300million users. Medium is another highly popular publishing platform, 95% of whose readers are college graduates and 43% of whom earn six figures or more.

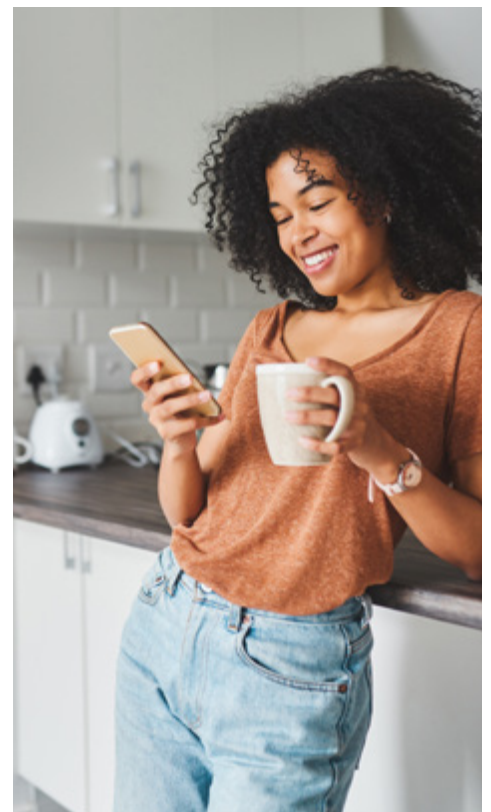
STUDY THE COMPETITION

Equally important as analysing and choosing the channels your target audience engage with is taking into account what social media accounts your competitors are managing.

Ask yourself what type of content do they post? How regularly do they post it? How many likes or shares do their posts gain?

By checking how active your competitors are on social media, as well as how well their followers engage with what they post, will provide you with valuable insights that you can then replicate to guarantee success for your own strategy.

Again, you can use social listening tools to ascertain which brands in your industry have the most extensive reach and largest influence on social media.



STEP 3: AUDIENCE TARGETING

When it comes to targeting, the best thing to do is run a social media audit. Like any audit a social media audit is the practice of compiling all of the key information from your social media accounts, and getting behind the data to develop your future strategy. Performing one will create a clear picture of your current social efforts and show you the best way to improve results.

TRACK DOWN ALL OF YOUR ACCOUNTS

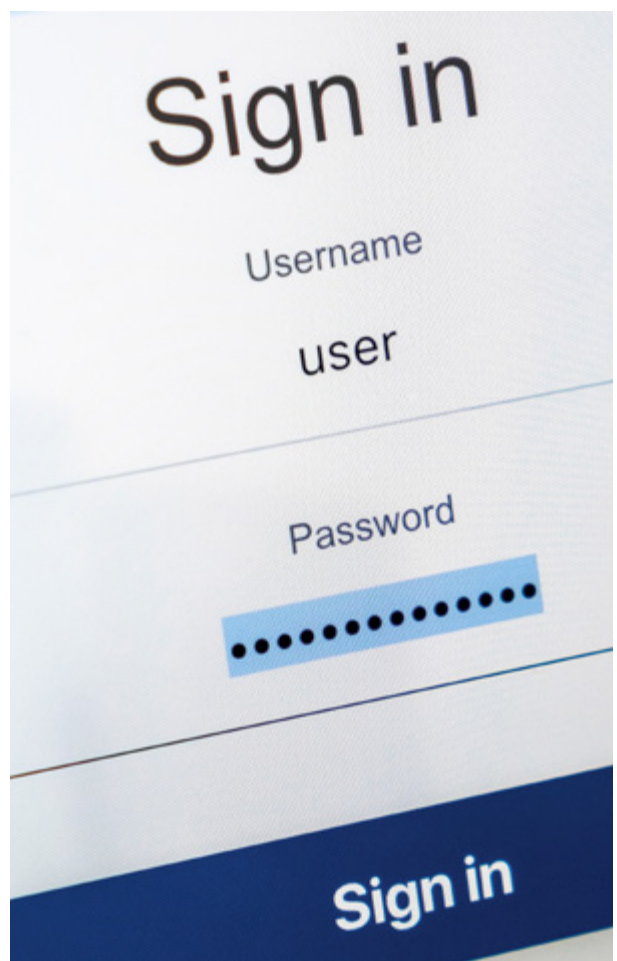
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It is vital that if you are to run an audit you track and monitor all of your social accounts. Whilst the content you publish might be different across various channels and the audience may vary, the message should still be the same. This is the best way to ensure that you are on brand and gives you the greatest change at social conversions, whether they be sessions on your website or purchases.

Don't forget that there might be old profiles created before your company had a social strategy or accounts that were abandoned at some point. It could also be that multiple departments within your company are using social media, but there's no unified system. To properly audit social media accounts connected to your company, you have to have a full list of them.

Simple web searches and searches on the social platforms should help you discover old or lost accounts. Once you have all of the accounts associated for your business there are two things to consider:

- How are you going to monitor accounts moving forward
- Are there any platforms that you are not active on that you should be?



THINK ABOUT YOUR BRANDING

Whether or not you identify as a brand or a business, the truth is you still have a 'brand'. This could be your name, your logos, certain colours or slogans that you use and many other things. It is vital that you make sure all of your profiles are working together to promote the business and that you're using up-to-date images, hashtags, keywords, and brand voice.

Hootsuite gives the following tips for aligning your social networks to maintain a strong brand:

- **Profile and cover images:** Make sure your images reflect your current branding and adhere to the social networks' image size requirements.
- **Profile/bio text:** You have limited space to work with when creating a social media bio, so it's important to make the most of it. Check that all fields are filled in completely and accurately with current brand messaging.
- **Handle:** Are you using the same handle across all social channels? In general, it's a good idea to do so if you can. Of course, you might need different handles if your accounts serve different purposes. (For example, Hootsuite has Twitter accounts @Hootsuite and @Hootsuite_Help.) Take a look at your handles and record in the notes if you want to make changes for consistency across social platforms.
- **Links:** Make sure you link to your homepage, an appropriate landing page or blog post, or a current campaign. You don't have to link to the same page from all your social accounts, but it's important to have a record of what's linked from where.
- **Pinned posts:** Evaluate your pinned posts to ensure they're still appropriate and up-to-date.
- **Verification:** This is a simple yes-or-no question. Is your account verified with a check mark badge? If not, should it be? We've created easy and clear instructions on how to get verified on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook if this is something you want to pursue.

Another consideration this year is local targeting. Just like with SEO, local targeting can bring in more traffic to social media. Brands can use it to reach out to and attract possible customers from a specific geographical location. Geo-targeting posts and stories (adding a location to your social media posts) will automatically draw in a local audience.

On some platforms, like Instagram, a user can also search for posts from nearby places or from a particular location, which means your brand will show up in these results if a location has been added to a post, helping potential local customers find you.

Geo-targeting goes hand in hand with promoted posts as this feature allows you to target the right audience, this works particularly well if you're trying to encourage more attendees to a local event or conference you may be holding, for example, users are likely to use a location filter when searching for these.

Although local targeting on social media has always been available, it's not always used in the best possible way so we think it's time to start leveraging it as part of your social strategy.

STEP 4: PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Each social media platform has native analytics that are useful for showing you basic engagement metrics. But to really see the impact social media is having on your business, you need to analyse what users are doing when they click on a social link to your website and, importantly, whether they're meeting your objectives.



Luckily, Google Analytics (GA) can provide the data you need to identify which channels are delivering the most value, make informed decisions about your future strategy, and allow you to justify your investment in social media marketing to stakeholders.

To really demonstrate the impact social media is having on your business, you need to be able to analyse:

- What kind of posts drive the most engagement and desired action among your audience.
- Which channels and content are reaching, growing, and converting your audiences so you can decide where to invest your time, efforts, and budget.
- What users are doing once they click on a link posted on social media.
- Whether they're meeting the objectives of your website.
- Social media's role in conversion.
- The value of your social media marketing efforts

Knowing why statistics are important and the benefits you can gain from them is vital. Businesses love cold, hard stats that can tell them more about how their campaigns are performing, who their audience is and where conversions are coming from.

The analytics tools that are available to brands and businesses through the social platforms they use can tell you a lot about your audience, engagement and post performance. To give you an example of the things that you can track, we'll look at one social network - Twitter.

For many, Twitter is the go-to social media platform, especially for businesses and getting a grip on the figures behind the post can help to tailor strategies and target future posts. The Twitter Analytics platform offers a wide range of information and can also help track performance.

The five main benefits of using Twitter Analytics are:

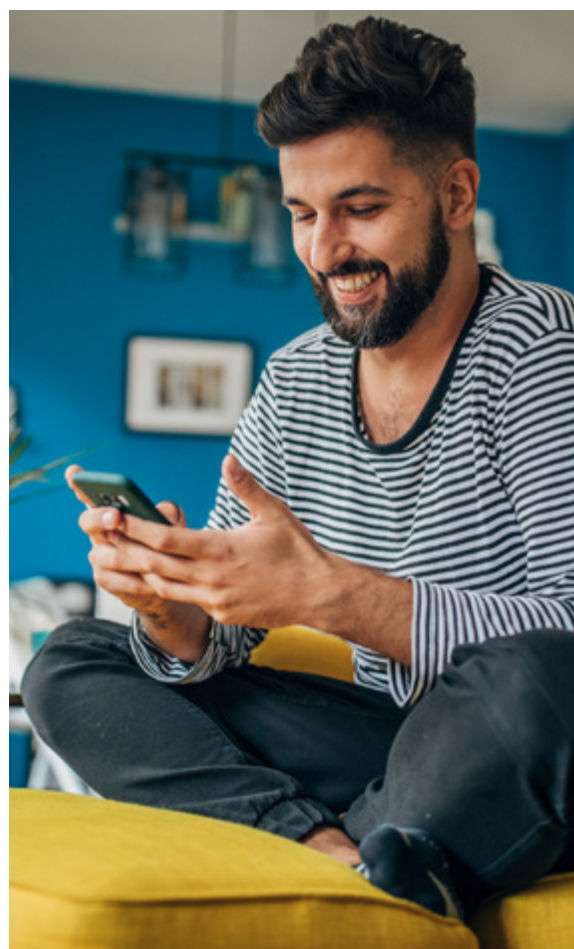
1. LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

It's impossible to conduct a targeted Twitter campaign if you don't know who you're targeting. An understanding of the overall demographics of Twitter users is a good place to start, but it's important to get a clear picture of exactly who your followers are, rather than just who uses the network in general.

Using Twitter Analytics, you can dive deep into your follower demographics, learning what languages they speak and how they're divided along gender lines, as well as their age, country of residence, and even household income. You can also gain valuable intel about their interests and online purchasing behavior.

2. FIND OUT WHAT CONTENT RESONATES WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

In general, tweets with photos get 313% more engagement. But is that true for your audience? It's something you can test by tracking engagement through a Twitter analytics report. If it is true, what kind of photos do they want to see? Do photos of people work better than, say, charts and graphs? By keeping an eye on your engagement Twitter metrics, you can learn precisely what connects with your followers, so you can develop a Twitter voice that speaks directly to them.



3. POST AT OPTIMAL TIMES

An analysis of more than 40,000 @Hootsuite tweets shows that for the B2B Hootsuite audience, 3pm Monday to Friday is the optimal posting time, but others have seen different results. Part of the variation is based on geography. After all, 3pm in Vancouver is 6pm in New York, and 11pm in London. If your audience is primarily in the U.K., and you're on the West Coast of North America, posting at 3pm your time is likely not ideal. Using Twitter Analytics, you can determine where most of your followers are based, so you can post at times that make sense based on when they're likely to be online.



4. DETERMINE IF ADS ARE WORKING

When you're investing money in promoted tweets, you want to know if you're making good use of your advertising spend. By using Twitter Analytics for business insights, you can compare organic and promoted impressions to get a sense of how far your promoted tweets are expanding your reach.

You can also set up conversion tracking to measure return on investment (ROI).

5. REPLICATE SUCCESS

Carefully tracking your top tweets allows you to look for commonalities in the tweets that get the best results, while tracking your poorest performing tweets can provide hints about what your audience does not want to see. Knowing what works and what doesn't, sets you up to replicate success while learning from misfires.

Once you have opened up Twitter Analytics page you will be instructed to login and sync the platform with your profile. The first thing that you will notice is the Tweet activity dashboard (main dashboard) which shows a detailed analysis of a businesses Twitter activity both over the last 28 days and as a succinct report by month.



If we look at the main overview (above) you can begin to see the picture of the last 28 days. You can track the number of tweets that have been sent from your account to ensure that your strategy is continuous and also that you are increasing activity at key times. The number of impressions can give you an insight as to whether or not you are posting at the right time. If you use a trial and error method of posting any research the optimum posting times you can increase this statistic and, in theory, the visits to your profile.

The number of followers is the clearest indication of who is looking at your profile and who follows your brand. When this fluctuates, for better or worse, you are able to track growth and look at where the followers are coming from or going to.

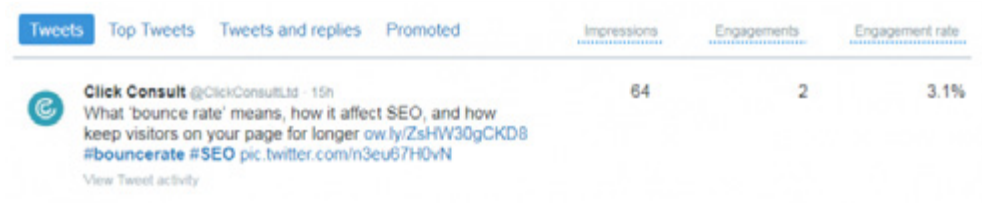
The last one of these metrics is the 'mentions' statistic, this will give you a clear indication if the content you are tweeting is informative, sharable and if it is sparking conversation.

Another handy feature is that you can see both your top tweet and the monthly summary. These allow you to look at what has worked both individually and collectively. Using the MoM comparison you can track growth and plot your strategy moving forward.



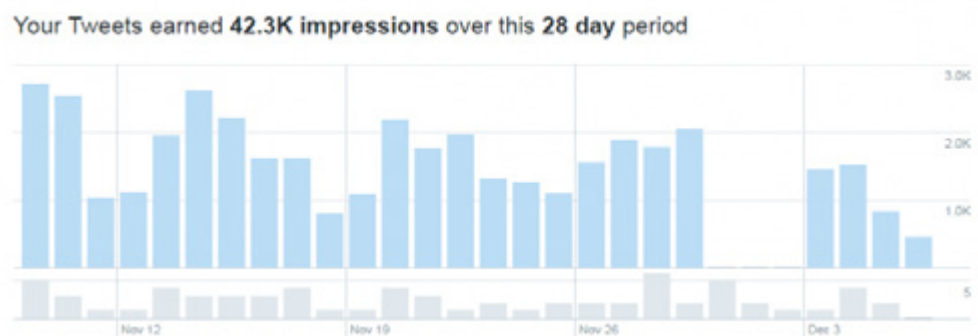
In terms of each individual tweet that is sent, you will be able to track:

- The number of impressions
- The number of engagements
- The engagement rate (impressions divided by engagements)



Clicking on the individual tweets you can also pull up more specifics on engagements, such as the number of:

- Video views
- Link clicks
- Photo or video clicks
- Likes
- Retweets
- Replies
- Detail expands
- Profile clicks



Clicking on the Tweets tab on the top level navigation offers an increasingly detailed analysis of how businesses tweets are performing. All of this data can be exported to curate reports and improve traction for the wider social media campaign.

- Monitoring your social channels and the analytics side of them will allow you to see:
- Which topics are most popular, and how can you incorporate this into future content, eg, repurposing or offering series of guides to capitalise on engagement.
- The types (eg, lengths, styles, formats) that work the best.
- Your biggest brand ambassadors and the top influencers in your sector and among your follower-base – powerful targets for leveraging your content.
- How to plan your social media posts to capture your audience when they are most likely to be active and to help amplify your posts.
- Whether well-received content on your social channels can be expanded into longer-form Material?

These questions should form the basis of your future strategy in terms of posing new content.



STEP 5 : REPEAT

Once you have your audience nailed down in terms of who they are and where they are engaging with you, it is vital that you repeat the steps above to ensure that you are always widening the net. New customers arrive daily and it can take very little for somebody to need the products and services that you require. This all means that targeting is a never ending task and you need to make sure that, alongside refreshing your strategy, you are going back into the social media pool and pulling new audience members out.

This is something that demonstrates your growth and with the word of mouth nature and 'recommended to me' way social media works it is possible to expand your audience daily and we all know that more traffic, to the right places, at the right time, leads to higher conversions and more sales. So what are you waiting for?



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ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). 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.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named both SEO Agency of the Year and Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020; ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, and a Microsoft Advertising Select Agency Partner.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

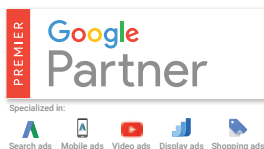
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OUR ACCREDITATIONS



OUR AWARDS



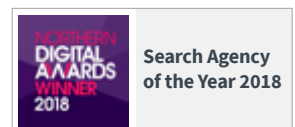
SEO Agency of the Year 2020



Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020



SEO Agency of the Year 2019



Search Agency of the Year 2018

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

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