

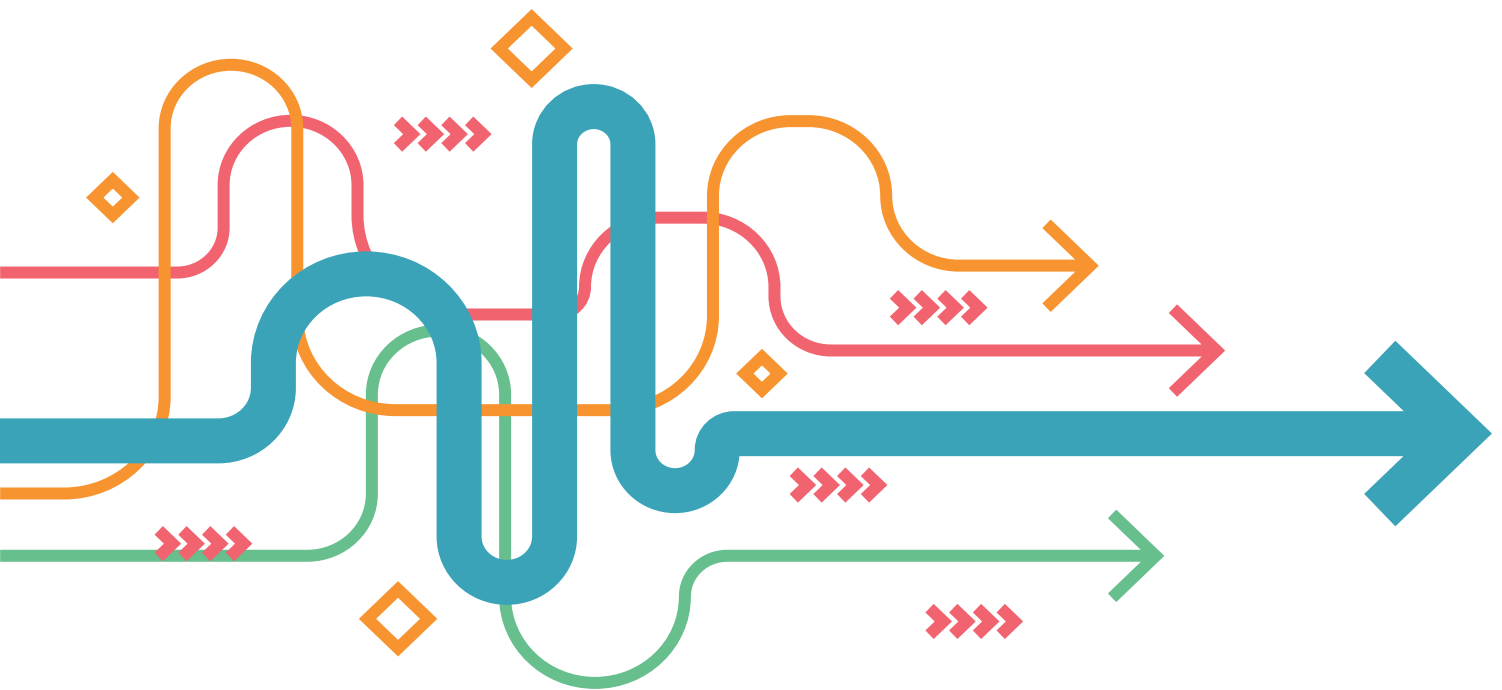


DIGITAL GROWTH STRATEGIES
TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS



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The economic challenges faced in 2021 as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic will still be felt in early 2022. The Government is looking to piece together a 'roadmap' back to normality but, as with everything, these plans take time and take a broad view... so must you.

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to even look at business on a sector by sector basis, let alone at individual companies, and so many of the top level concerns around safety, support, and pay mean that companies have to look out for themselves. This means focusing on markets which are open, such as digital and eCommerce, and looking at new ways to attract and engage with new audiences is vital in the new financial year.

When it comes to the direct impact digital marketing has on a business, there are a number of positives to focus on, and the remainder of this eBook will do exactly that. We'll look at what you can do in terms of strategy planning, how to conduct competitor analysis, the ROI various channels provide, and we will highlight some of the things you can implement today to make sure that you are growing online.

WHY DIGITAL MARKETING?

Why not? The truth is that there has been a shift toward digital for many years now and, it continues to pick up speed. Choosing a digital strategy is a way to ensure that you are not only in the right place or space, but that you are there at the right time.

Customer behaviour has changed, and it's likely permanent. Yes you might have to go into a coffee shop for a coffee, but there is a market for quality and hence the increase in coffee cups, machines and beans in recent months.

Sure, this could be due to the time we are spending at home, but the truth is that people are more willing to adapt their behaviour for quality and lower prices. This has become the new 'normal'. If you offer the correct products or services, at a competitive price, quickly and efficiently, you can build your brand, your sales and your image quickly.

The need for digital marketing is great, but if you're reading this, and thinking about it for the first time, the chances are someone else has already started. Making smart investments in your strategy can get you on track for success in a digital future, and that's the real reason this is so important.



THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL MARKETING

There are many benefits to choosing digital marketing as part of your strategy, but the main one is that it is the most effective way of reaching potential customers where they spend their time and money. In the current climate there is a noticeable increase in the amount of time people are spending online. This is both as customers making purchases, and as people conducting research into products and services.

Digital marketing allows businesses of all sizes (if they get their message, content and [SEO](#) right) the opportunity to level the playing field. Yes, we know that companies such as Amazon hold a large slice of the market and this is largely due to their budget, marketing and ability to offer next (or same) day delivery, but for specific products, there is no reason why the 'little guy' can't win.

Digital marketing allows you to compete by exposing your brand to a wider audience on a much smaller advertising budget. When managed effectively, it gives businesses control over where and how they spend their money. When you have this kind of control and the data to support decisions, you make smarter ones and the returns are often better.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

As we often say here at Click Consult, the importance of a balanced, bespoke search marketing strategy is vital if you are to get the most out of your online performance. Businesses and brands across the country are looking for a competitive edge when it comes to improving both their search visibility and improving conversion and ROI.

In order to gain an advantage and stand out from the competition, it is important that businesses continually test new marketing methods and tweak their approach to ensure optimum performance. One of the best things that you can do is to perform an [SEO Audit](#), this will not only give you an accurate reflection of where you are presently operating online, but also what changes have worked and which areas still need technical improvements.

Whether it's weekly, monthly or annually, brands need to know where their site is performing well and what needs to be improved. It's unlikely that there'll be concrete guidance on Google updates anymore (barring big shifts such as the introduction of new areas to the ranking algorithm – as with mobile, speed and CWV), and how to adapt to them is left to us – so benchmarking where you are at any given point is an absolute must.

Not only can regularly auditing our organic performance help us to improve, it can also demystify changes in our organic rankings, traffic and performance.

The aim of a full technical website audit is to both assess current performance and highlight areas for future growth. A comprehensive technical audit seeks to find and highlight all issues affecting the implementation of technical on-page technologies, before providing guidance on how best to rectify the issue.

Some of the areas that it is vital to look at when conducting a technical SEO audit are as follows:

- domain and server profile
- canonicalisation
- indexing
- navigation and URL structure
- website/ webpage speed



In terms of how you are ranking in search results this depends largely on your link profile. I know as I write this that there are well over 200 ranking factors but conducting a link profile analysis as part of your audit is a good way to start. Businesses should look at the following areas when reviewing their link profile:

- link stats
- top authority links
- top authority domain
- anchor text
- link distribution
- link history
- link toxicity
- link geography and top level domains
- type of links

Speed and user experience

Today's consumers are not only savvy but they are time starved and, as such, they want what they want quickly; this means that the need to fill this demand is huge. User experience (UX) is one of the areas that businesses are focusing on to ensure that they not only offer the products and services, but also that their customers stick around (and return).

- The relationship between [SEO and UX](#) has never been bigger, largely because it is the 'end point' of most consumer journeys. Good SEO, in terms of ranking highly (visibility) and ranking for the correct or relevant keywords (optimisation) means you have the best chance of being chosen by the user. Once this user becomes a visitor to your site, it is the UX that bridges the gap between a visit and a conversion.

If you are offering the product or service that you say you are, and it is easy to read more about it/ them, then you are increasingly likely to keep the interest of the visitor. Additional content that answers any questions they may have, or that gives them the technical specifications of a product will help your business appear more authoritative and knowledgeable. This, in turn, builds trust in the brand and can help lead to a purchase or conversion.

“

THE IDEAL ONLINE CUSTOMER JOURNEY IS A USER-FRIENDLY WEBSITE THAT COMBINES SEAMLESS NAVIGATION; A CLEAN CUT PURCHASING JOURNEY; DYNAMIC AND DIGESTIBLE CONTENT; TOP NOTCH CUSTOMER SUPPORT AND MOBILE DEVICE COMPATIBILITY. BY COMBINING THESE ELEMENTS A BUSINESS CAN CREATE AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT THAT CAN MAKE A BRAND.

- the Digital Marketing Institute

A survey that followed this definition of a good UX website revealed that **79% of all customers** admit to searching for another site if the one that they ended up on didn't live up to expectations.

When discussing the topic our Head of Technical SEO, Charlotte Chapman said:

“FOR ME THE FOCUS HAS TO BE ON SPEED AND USER EXPERIENCE.

“WITH THE PAGE EXPERIENCE UPDATE ROLLED OUT IN MAY 2021, IT HAS NEVER BEEN SO IMPORTANT TO ENSURE ALL KEY USER EXPERIENCE METRICS ARE OPTIMISED. THESE METRICS INCLUDE HOW QUICKLY EACH URL LOADS, IF THE SITE IS MOBILE FRIENDLY, HAS INTRUSIVE INTERSTITIALS AND IS SECURE.

“WE STARTED TO PREPARE CLIENTS FOR USER EXPERIENCE BECOMING A RACKING FACTOR IN 2021 BUT IT'S AN ON-GOING TASK THAT WILL CONTINUE INTO 2022.”

”

UX – think about the journey

There are six distinctive stages to the consumer journey when it comes to the link between SEO performance and user experience (UX) and by following this route you will gain better traction, build brand image and ultimately realise your KPIs.

- The first step is **the ‘user intent’ phase**. This is where the potential customer asks a question of a search engine that they hope will take them to the appropriate results, and which will ultimately begin them on the path to fulfilling a need.
- Next is the ranking stage, this is where the **SEOs optimise the content on a site** to make sure that it is picked up and that it hits the top of the SERPs – the higher the rank the more positive the correlation between the number of sessions and level of traffic.
- Up next is **the qualifying stage** where the SEOs use keywords and other tactics to qualify the traffic that has been received. They learn from this and alter strategies and approaches if there is such a need. Constant testing in the form of CRO with any SEO work is a must and can lead to a more polished, profitable performance.
- Stage four is **the digital interaction stage** where both teams (SEO and those tasked with UX) work together to optimise performance and boost conversions.
- Up next is **the work on the website footprint**. This is where the SEO team looks at the data and gives a larger viewpoint of the customer journey. Those working on the UX side of things continue to test.
- The final stage is **the review**, where teams build upon what they have learnt and update, the navigation of a site or things like meta data. This is also the stage where they refine the strategy for moving forward.

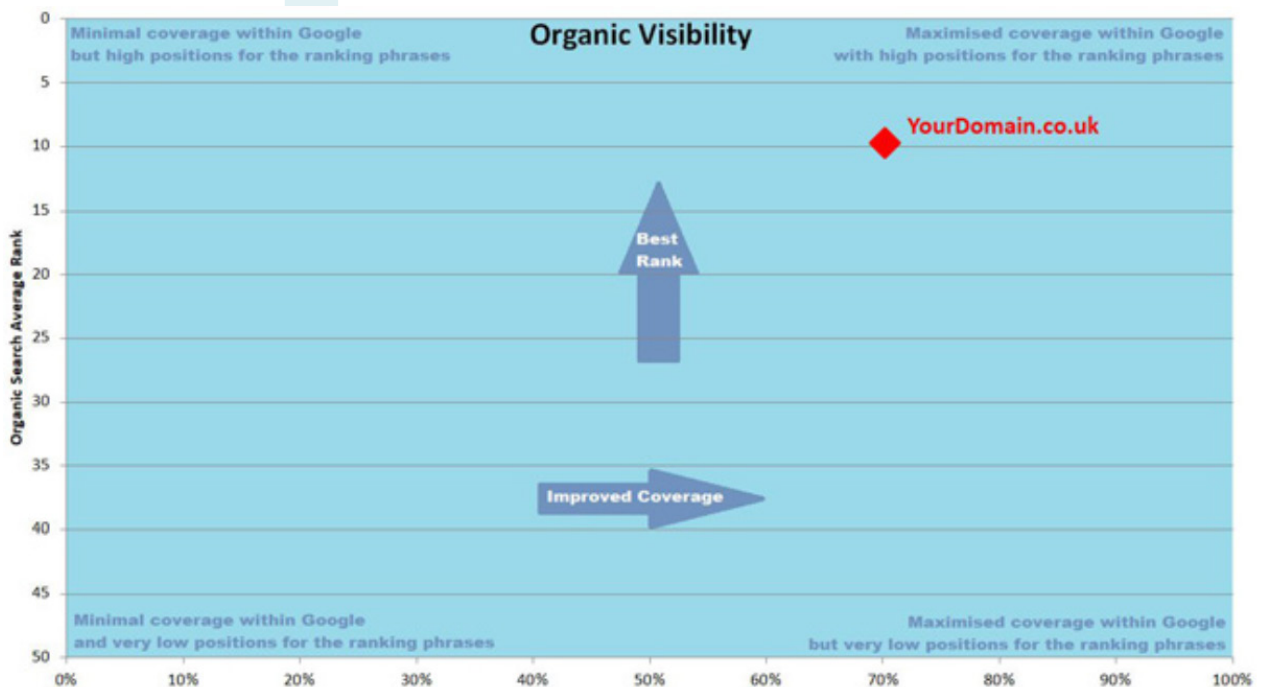


WHAT ARE YOUR COMPETITORS DOING?

Over the years, we have covered a variety of ways that businesses can conduct [competitor research](#) and how they are operating in a given market. In a speech at the Benchmark Search Conference our SEO Director discussed this further. He noted the following...

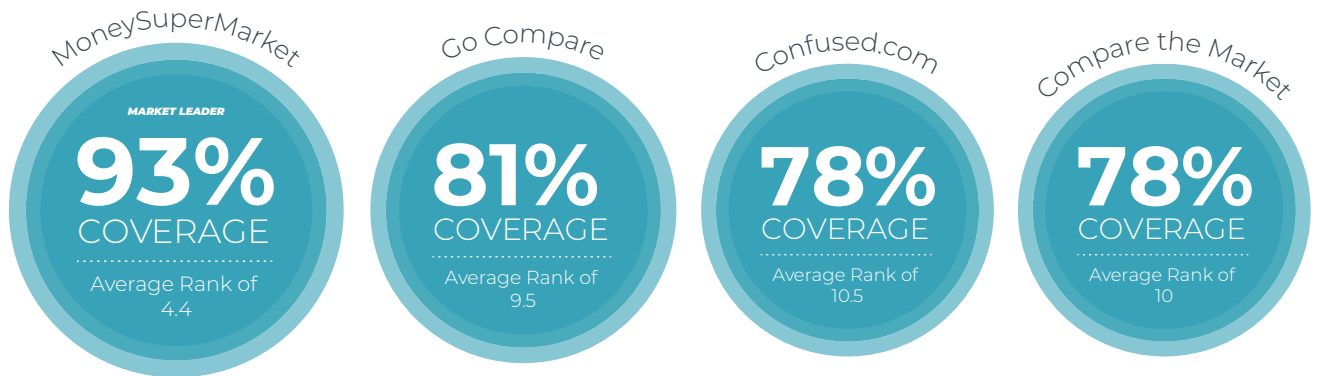
Firstly, you need to identify the market leaders in your industry, so that you can emulate their strategies and success. Find as many relevant keywords as possible – a minimum of 300 – using tools such as Google Keyword Planner, SEMrush or Moz.

Once you have a list, find out **who's ranking in the top 50 positions for each term**. Then plot this on a graph – using a tool such as Tableau, as in this example:



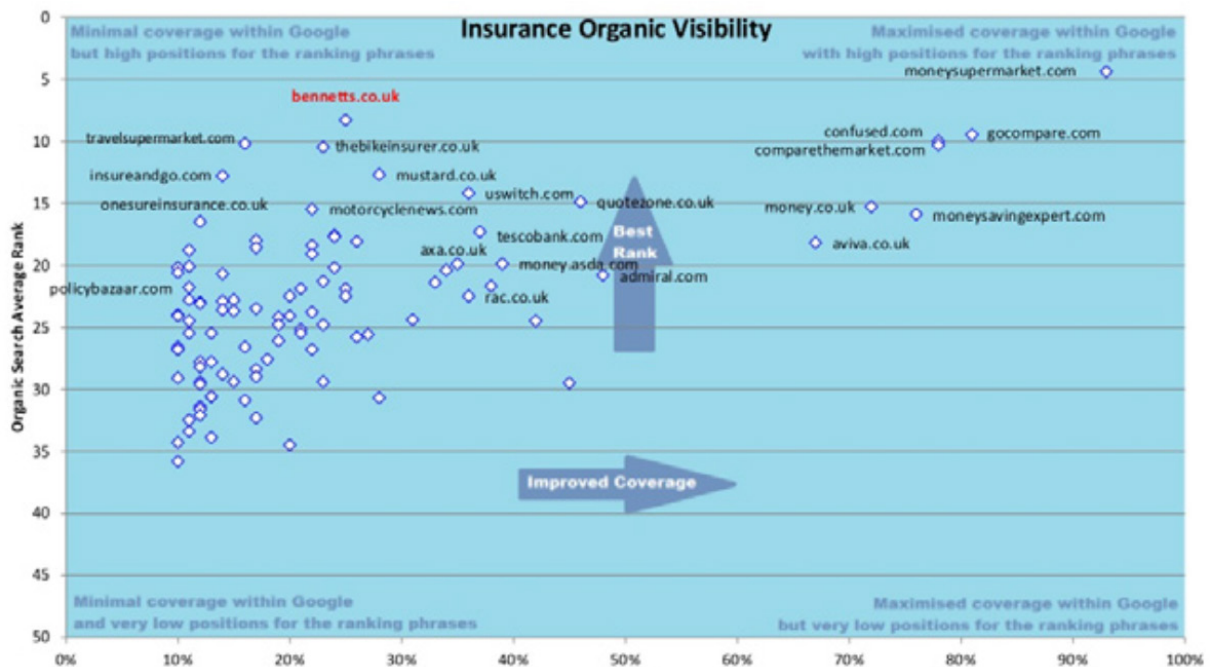
X axis shows coverage, while the Y axis shows average rank. YourDomain.co.uk has an average rank of 10 and 70% coverage. As a simple example analysis of 100 keywords, this would mean they rank, on average, position 10 for 70/100 keywords.

We looked at the insurance market covering car, home, travel, motorbike insurance etc, using over 2,000 keywords. As might be expected, the big four comparison sites appear in the top right quadrant.



All of the market leaders above will have vast link profiles.

The motorbike insurer Bennetts stood out:



We were intrigued that a couple of other motorbike insurance sites appeared in the chart. The graph wasn't a completely accurate representation of their marketplace because it contained keywords to do with travel and car insurance – which they don't cover. When we narrowed our research to just motorbike insurance keywords, Bennetts moved further to the far right, indicating them as market leaders, but still directly competing with the big four comparison sites.

The sites we decided to analyse were:

- Bennetts
- The Bike Insurer
- Scooter Insurance chosen (*for comparison as it's not ranking as well as the others*)
- Carole Nash

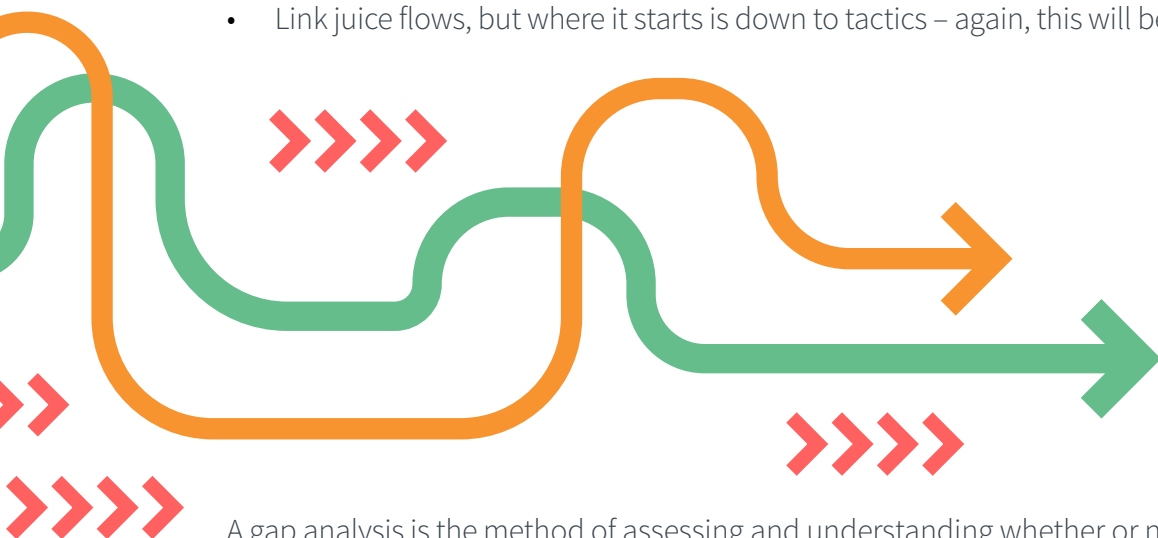
We used Searchmetrics to examine the visibility of keywords for which these sites were ranking, their position (and weighted by search volume), looking for major drops in visibility around Google updates – specifically Penguin.

Using data like this allows you to see where the gaps lie, the keywords you can target and the areas in which you can improve.

You can follow these points to ensure the best performance:

- Link features are still commonly the most important ranking factors.
- Analyse market leaders to determine what makes the best link profile in your industry.
- Keyword lists should consist of a minimum of 300 keywords.
- Unless you are number one for all of your keywords (and even if you are), there are things to be learned from your competitors.
- Plot links by DA (Moz) to determine your industry's natural distribution curve.
- Focus content marketing efforts develop a natural but great quality link profile.
- Monitor link acquisition rates to determine how fast you need to accrue links, or what would be deemed as unnatural growth.

- Find out what distribution of brand/exact and long tail anchor text works best in your industry.
- Link juice flows, but where it starts is down to tactics – again, this will be unique to your industry.



A gap analysis is the method of assessing and understanding whether or not a business' objectives are being met and, if not, the tactics that will need to be employed to ensure that they are. The 'gap' is the space between where a business currently sits and where they want to be within a certain time-frame.

In some circles, a gap analysis may also be referred to as a 'needs analysis', 'needs assessment' or 'need-gap analysis'. For the purposes of SEO, however, **a gap analysis looks at several things:**

- Missing content
- Undiscovered topics
- Undiscovered keywords
- Content your competitors are targeting
- New industry developments
- New product information

With testing, and a trial and error approach, playing such a vital role in a gap analysis, you need to ensure that your planning is prepared properly and that you can adapt your strategy as and when you need to. The following tips will help your discovery phase and can lead you to a successful gap analysis.

USING DIGITAL TO EXPAND YOUR AUDIENCE


Businesses which are at the ideas stage of a concept and which are looking to attract an entirely new selection of customers will have to come up with a comprehensive buyer persona.

Those which are at the expansion stage will be looking to increase their following. To do this businesses will have to decide the demographics of the people they wish to engage with.

Think about what your ideal customers' values and objectives are, whether to use a personal and/or professional model (depending on whether your business operates a B2C or B2B service)? Ask 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.

These demographics, for example could be based on things such sex, age, marital status, income and geography. **If this is the case then one of your target customers may look something like this:**



Sex: **Male**
Age: **21-30**
Marital status: **Single**
Income: **£25,000 – £31,000**
Geographical Location:
South East London

All of this information is great and it gives you a real feel for the types of people that you are targeting but you may find that you are still struggling against the competition that is pursuing the same individuals.

If your business operates in the food and drink sector of the market, and has a café in Greenwich, then you may want to target these individuals with a general blog post titled; 'Ten best cafes in South London'. This general approach may raise some awareness and leave the decision with the reader.

For this reason, it is vital to make sure that your buyer persona is as detailed as possible. This is where psychographics come in. Demographics essentially tell you who the clients and customers are, yet psychographics will tell you why they make a purchase. Fundamentally, psychographics is the study and classification of people according to their attitudes, aspirations, and other psychological criteria, especially in market research.

Things falling under the psychographic tag could be focus, social media preference, perception of quality, personality, political stance, newspaper of choice or values. If you take these into consideration and add them to the original you may find that your buyer persona looks something like this.



Sex: **Male** : Focus: **Enjoys socialising**
Age: **21-30** : Social media preference: **Twitter**
Marital status: **Single** : Perception of quality:
Income: **£25k – £31k** : **Enjoys luxury over economy**
Geographical Location: : **and is willing to pay**
South East London : Personality: **Outgoing, music fan**
: Political Stance: **Socialist**
: Newspaper of choice: **The Guardian**
: Values: **Charity is important**
:



When added together these two pieces of data help to build a clearer buyer persona and offer a more targeted approach when it comes to marketing, advertising and selling.

If your business is a modern café in Greenwich that opens until midnight, plays some live music and serves craft beer in the evenings, then you could engage with this same user on Twitter, targeting them with a link titled, 'Ten best, late night cafes in London' or 'Ten hidden music spots in South London'. The offering here is more bespoke and indeed enticing and could lead to further conversions.

Obtaining answers to some of the secondary questions means that you may be able to further decipher buying factors. If the person who answered the questions above were a real client and you knew that their newspaper of choice was the Guardian, then you should ask the question, who are the Guardian's readers? This could give you an insight into other potential targets. In a similar vein, you could find more about a person through social media.

If you were a health and fitness brand releasing a new range of healthy snacks you may want to better understand your market. Looking at similar items made by competitors or researching certain trends such as food and drink alongside health and well-being, you may end up finding a user on Pinterest.

This person could be a female in her 20s with a focus on health and whose hobbies include cooking at home and yoga. The first part of this profile is the demographic; the later part is the psychographic. Together they form a larger buyer persona.

Posts which might help her to engage and buy or download from your brand may cover topics such as the health benefits of your product, personal posts about people who have lost weight eating your product or people that use your produce as a healthy snack before a yoga/fitness class. These types of post are far more likely to resonate and be shared.



PICKING THE RIGHT DIGITAL CHANNELS

Looking at what has made people connect, click or call in the past is a huge clue to why people are using your services. If a customer has responded to a particular call to action (CTA) this could be a clue to the type of person they are when interacting with a brand.

If a visitor, or the recipient of an email, clicks on a link offering a big discount, this may mean they fit into the thrifty sector of the market, regardless of whether they believe they are a bargain hunter. If you gather enough of these types of people in your database or in your target market then it may be possible for you to re-engage with them further down the line.

So how do you choose an audience?

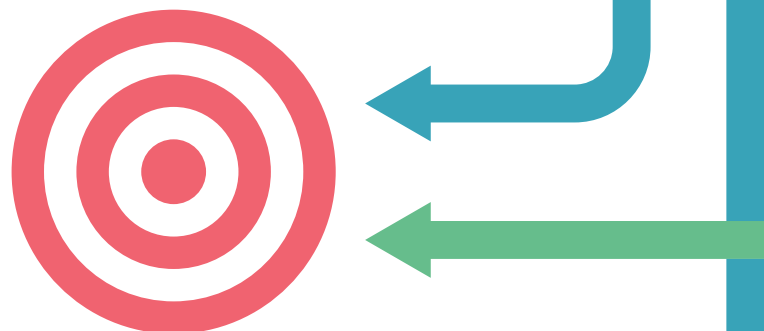
In the age of search marketing, personalisation and relationship-building are key. Added to that, the growing complexity of today's customer journey means that [understanding your audience](#) is a vital first step towards a successful search marketing strategy, whatever your business' size or sector

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.

Creating meaningful, authentic, lasting connections with your customers is impossible without first understanding your audience. The growing complexity of today's customer journey means that thorough research is a vital first step towards a successful search marketing strategy. The aim is to offer high quality content in a relevant context to create a rich, personalised experience.

This requires thorough research into your target audience using analytics tools such as Google Analytics, and by studying their online behaviour:

- How and when they use the internet
- The search terms they use
- The way they interact with your content
- Their social media activity



The best way to start this research is by defining your target audience through the creation of customer personas.

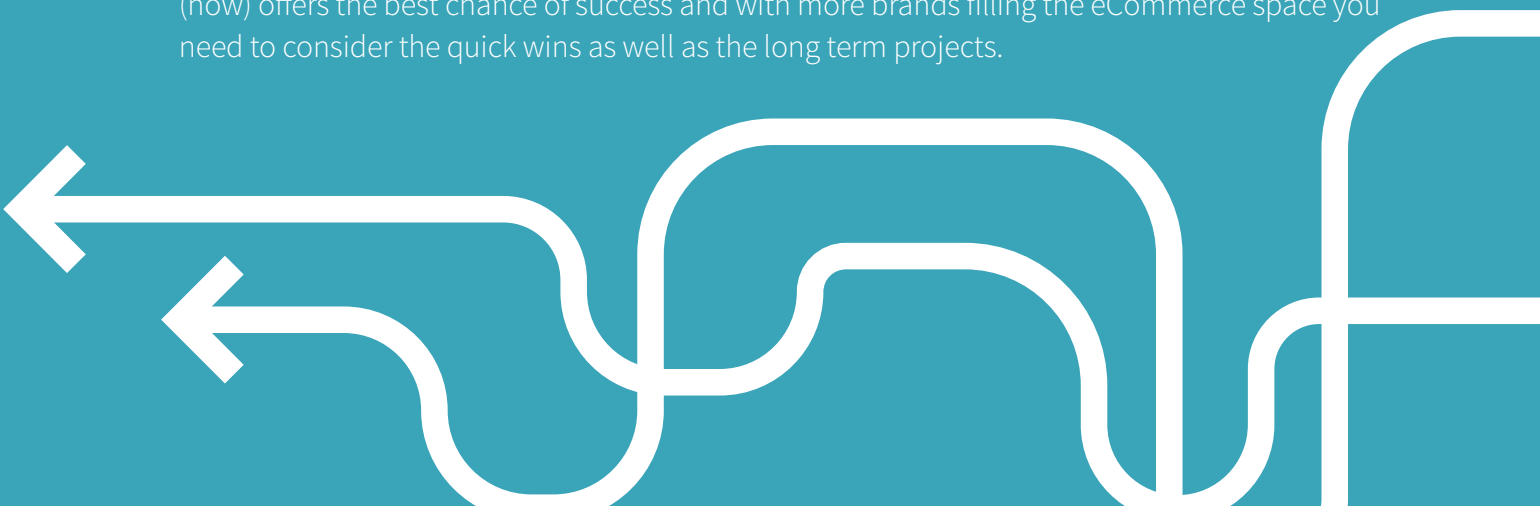


In order to attract your target audience to your site, you need to engage them with irresistible content that inspires them, educates them, and provides answers to their questions. But first you need to define your target audience – their characteristics, behaviour and interests – by creating customer personas – fictional representations of your ideal prospects and customers. These are tools specific to your own business, so can be as in-depth or as brief as you need them to be, and as formal or informal (as the examples below demonstrate).

Consumer personas should be entirely dynamic, 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.

FINAL THOUGHTS...

As we have said throughout there are numerous changes you can make to your strategy in order to get the most from your online offering. Allocating budget in the right areas and at the right time (now) offers the best chance of success and with more brands filling the eCommerce space you need to consider the quick wins as well as the long term projects.



GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

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 Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020, 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.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

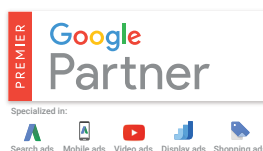
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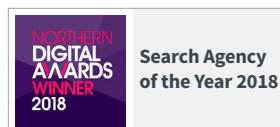
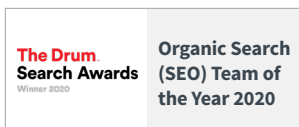
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OUR AWARDS



OUR TECHNOLOGIES

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