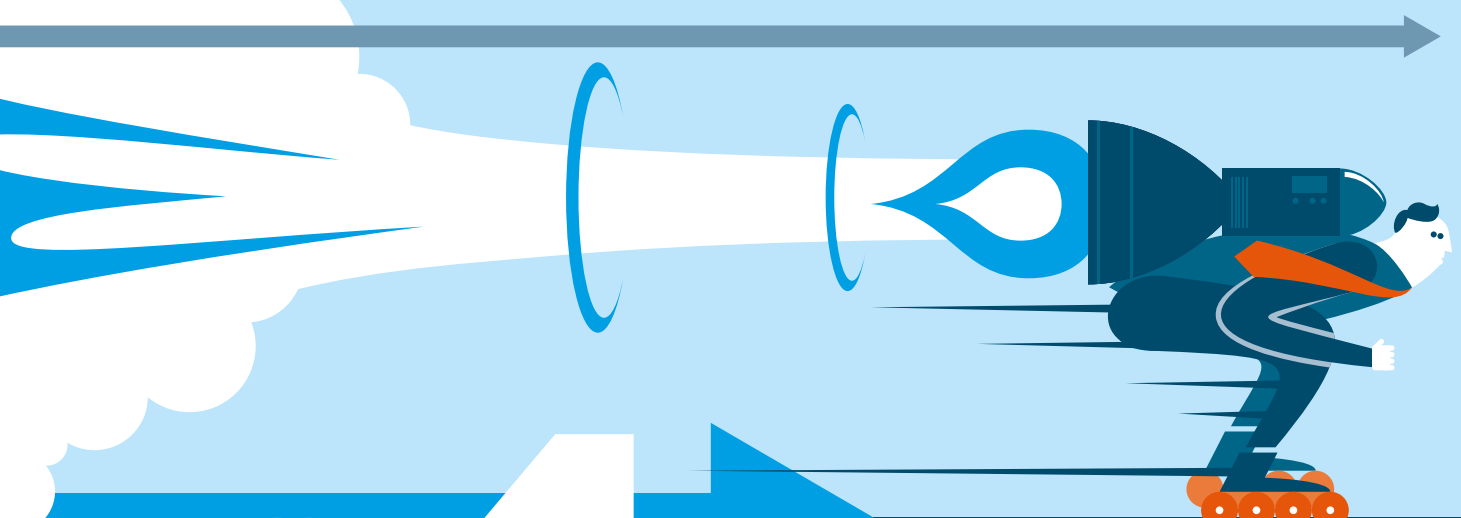


How to **MAXX**imise digital performance



A guide to



effective digital strategies to help
IT and tech companies improve
marketing and avoid missing out
on new opportunities...

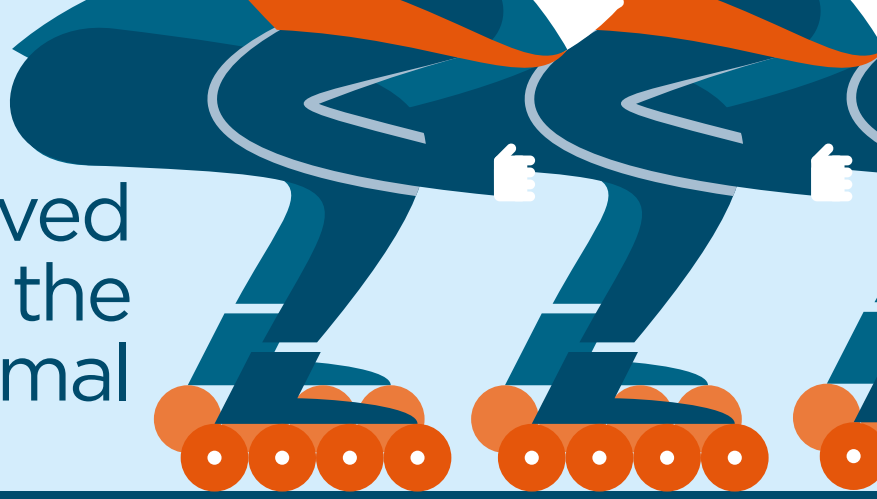
**even when the customer
comes first.**

Max®

Contents

Introduction	page 2 - 3
How to establish the next normal	
Strategy 1:	page 4
Make your website work harder for you	
Strategy 2:	page 9
Ride the social wave	
Strategy 3:	page 12
Demonstrate thought leadership	
Strategy 4:	page 14
Tactical sales get the win	
Conclusion	page 17

**You've
got this!**



How to be involved in establishing the next normal

36%

of organisations are in the process of revising their marketing plans and strategies to account for the impact that COVID-19 has had on their sales and plans for growth.

At a time when the country is in lockdown and isolation, we have no option but to move online. This presents a huge opportunity for companies wanting to build their reputation and social presence to get ahead in setting the agenda for the next normal, by leveraging the power of digital media, social networks and video.

This guide explores **4 strategies** to boost digital performance and some tricks and tips to sprinkle a little magic on your marketing.

Strategy 1:

Make your website work harder for you

- **Action:** Maintain a strong and robust security posture
- **Action:** Enhance the user experience to engage and convert

Strategy 2:

Ride the social wave

- **Action:** Use your content for good
- **Action:** Take another look at paid advertising

Strategy 3:

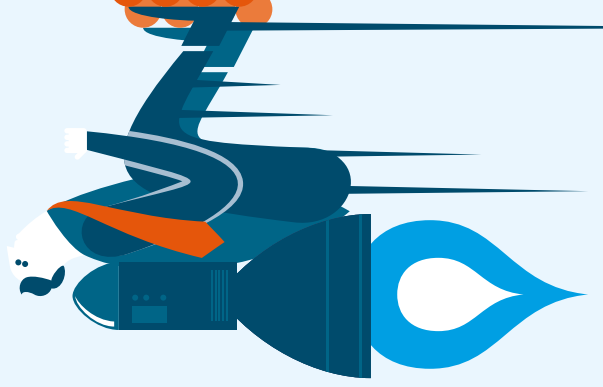
Demonstrate thought leadership

- **Action:** Author white papers that position you as an authority
- **Action:** Hook the audience in and convert them through blogging

Strategy 4:

Tactical sales get the win

- **Action:** Optimise SEO to get found by the right people
- **Action:** Try video outreach to improve your sales



Just in case business wasn't
challenging enough...

In March the UK went into lockdown, changing the business environment in which we operate for the foreseeable future, and bringing with it another level of challenges...

The biggest problem impacting scaling tech companies right now is sales, cited by **83%** of companies. Of course, the impact on sales has a negative knock-on effect for cashflow (**ranked joint second with securing new customers - 81%**), which we've seen resulting in job losses, furloughed staff and growth plans either scaled back or scrapped completely.

But hope is on the horizon.

Last year the UK was responsible for attracting more than a third of all investment into tech within Europe, and worldwide we attract the most inward investment after the US and China.

Right now we may be operating in a world where life is anything but business-as-usual, but if we can get through the next few months the opportunity to rebuild and/or continue our plans for growth remains strong.

It starts with
your website...



Regardless of the current situation, your website is the most powerful marketing tool at your disposal because:

- It works for you 24/7, promoting your business and converting leads.
- It delivers data to provide insight into what your customers want.
- It is best placed to meet your customers' expectations.

73%

of customers prefer to use a company's website, instead of using social media, SMS and live chat for support.

The trouble is that websites require a lot more care and attention than we perhaps realise. It's a common problem where a company launches their website, everyone's excited because they've worked so hard to get it live... and then nothing.

You're watching Google Analytics but you're lucky if you get a handful of visitors each day, which makes it highly unlikely that you're ever going to see a prospect complete that enquiry form to book a demo.



Now you have a business liability!

With the website just sitting there doing nothing, it's sapping money from your business in hosting and maintenance but without the prospect of a return. It's also a security risk, because unless you have appointed someone to maintain and patch the site, you're leaving yourself exposed to an attack. **And it's damaging your brand because if it's not being updated regularly your audience starts asking questions:**

“Can I trust this company?”

“Are they even still in business?”

“Do they know what they're doing?”

The sad truth is that nearly three-quarters (70%) of tech companies fail within their first 2 years. And one of the top 10 reasons for failure (**behind funding, the team and the product**) is poor marketing.

Right now, at a time when your sales team is confined to the world of digital and unable to get out and shake hands with your prospects, your website needs to work harder than ever before.

75%
of consumers admit to making credibility judgments based on the company's website design.



business liability

It doesn't necessarily have to be a huge exercise involving an entire website refresh – often it's the smallest tweaks that can make the biggest difference. For example, fixing something blindingly obvious like a faulty registration/sign-up form, or re-thinking a process that's so onerous it makes people drop-off half-way through completing the desired action.

The trick to an instant performance boost is knowing which bits to tweak – and that's where we can help.

Strategy 1: Make your website work harder for you



Action: Maintain a strong and robust security posture

During the pandemic, cyber criminals have exploited the situation with **40%** of companies reporting an increase in threats against their organisation.

When it comes to points of weakness in your business, one of the biggest vulnerabilities is your company website. According to the Web Application Vulnerability Report 2019, on average websites have **46%** high and **87%** medium security vulnerabilities.

The challenge with websites is that they aren't static – things are always changing so they require regular maintenance to keep up with the latest security patches. The first thing to consider is your hosting. So often we see decisions made on cost, but as the saying goes, 'you get what you pay for'. We would always recommend leading your hosting discussions with security questions, rather than risk leaving your business exposed to hackers. For our clients, we include CloudFlare security as standard, simply because it provides an additional layer of protection for that peace of mind.

With your hosting in place, you then need to think about the Content Management System (CMS). Again, cheap and cheerful isn't always the soundest business decision, so grill the vendors about their in-built security to ensure you're using something with a strong security posture. We favour Drupal because it's used by some of the most security-conscious organisations in the world.

To-do list...

- Update your site so it's running on the latest version, apply any security patches that have been issued and consider adding plug-ins to enhance your security posture.
- Check who has access to your site and revoke access to any ex-employees or unnecessary users. And update the login URL to something unusual that's harder for hackers to crack.
- Outsource the hassle to someone that can afford to dedicate the time to it. We offer rolling support contracts covering everything from security to SEO and everything in between.



Action: Enhance the user experience to engage and convert

Did you know the top 3 reasons users hate websites are:

1. Slow load times.
2. Not optimised for mobile.
3. Poor navigation.

It happens when websites are born from the love and passion of the people within the company, rather than considering what the customer wants. It's really tempting to want to throw everything you have on your website, but do so at your peril. Don't try to do too much, simple and engaging content will help you appear as an ideal trusted partner.

57%
of Internet users say they won't recommend a business if its website is poorly designed for mobile.

When developing your website, the user experience (UX) must stay front of mind if you're to create a site that hooks visitors in, converts them into your sales funnel and ultimately wins them as a client.

In the spotlight

"Since we launched our new site we have had a 48% increase in website traffic!"

MAXX Client

Fail to properly consider your end user in your website design and development and ultimately you end up with a site that isn't fit for purpose because users have a poor experience on the device they are using. If they can't find the information they want quickly, they will move on.

To do list...

- Check how your website looks on your smartphone and consider updating it to a more responsive design if necessary.
- Adopt a 'one click to anywhere' approach through your navigation - don't make your user think or hunt, present them with the information they want.
- Don't focus purely on the need for them to 'book a demo', it's a big commitment. Think about a secondary softer call-to-action, like downloading a white paper or registering for a webinar.


Strategy 2: Ride the social wave

Action: Use your content for good

The data is clear – since the outbreak of COVID-19 there's been a surge in usage of social media platforms.

In the first 2 weeks of lockdown, daily accumulated likes on Instagram ad posts rose

76%



It's a huge and growing opportunity to get your brand in front of people while more of us are working remotely and spending more time online.

However, there is a very fine line to walk with social content. Now is not a time to brag about how well you're doing compared to your peers, and it's equally not the time to share all your worries with the world. So how do you pitch it right?

According to Marketing Week, **80%** of consumers believe employee health should be a key priority for companies, while 78% believe brands should focus on how they can help them in their daily lives.

As well, there are numerous examples of companies launching free services, hosting webinars, installing free IT infrastructure to enable remote working and offering advice to those in need. The key is 'community' and what you can give to others that will help them to survive the pandemic.

So, what's the best way to get your message across?

According to Forbes, **50%** of social influencers believe that video is the most important content at the moment. And it makes sense. When we're not able to get out and meet each other face-to-face, video is the next best option for staying connected and adding the personal touch to your communications.

The uses for marketing videos are endless - from product demonstrations to customer testimonials, hosting tutorials and live streaming events - which is why **88%** of marketers say that video marketing provides them with positive ROI. Compare that with 2015 when only **33%** said the same and you can see that consumer receptiveness towards video marketing has grown considerably.



Did you know...Tweets with video attract 10x more engagements than Tweets without video?

To do list...

- Make your videos mobile-friendly by adding captions or subtitles for those watching without the sound activated.
- Include a call-to-action and encourage them to do something as a result of watching the video - book a demo, download a white paper, register for a webinar, leave a comment.
- Keep it relevant - get to the point quickly so the audience knows why it's important they watch, and include the right #hashtags to get your content found online.





Action: Take another look at paid advertising

While it's understandable that many businesses are being cautious about spending at the moment, it's important that the necessary due diligence has been done before pausing or cutting any initiatives that could have a severe impact on your sales pipeline longer term.

According to research from Econsultancy, **55%** of companies have postponed their ad campaigns due to COVID-19. But when testing the potential long-term impact this could have, the result was a **13%** decrease in sales and reduced market share.

Even before COVID-19, fewer companies were investing in paid advertising, which made it a lucrative opportunity since a reduction in cost-per-click led to larger returns overall. Given the current climate, now could be your perfect opportunity to try something new and get your brand in front of more people. And as there are less people spending, it's more cost-effective than ever to experiment with paid advertising.

Paid advertising is a great way to boost your digital performance because it's very targeted and very numbers-based. When defining who you want to see your adverts, you can be ultra-specific - even down to specific job titles, companies and locations. And because there's a cost associated with each click, it's very simple to calculate your return. **If you made £2 for every £1 invested, wouldn't you keep spending?**

The other great thing about paid ads is that they allow you to test your messaging and positioning very quickly. It's easy to set up multiple ads all pointing to the same landing page and see whether people are more excited by an advert for 'cloud', 'digital transformation' or 'the modern workplace'. This approach, 'Split testing,' allows you to focus your spend on ads that resonates with your audience the most.

If you made
£2
for every
£1
invested,
**wouldn't you
keep spending?**

To do list...

- Identify the platforms that your customers are present on because it isn't necessarily LinkedIn. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can prove extremely lucrative for tech companies.
- Set KPIs to measure success that focus on brand awareness as well as leads, because while you might not get hundreds of clicks the exposure is keeping you front-of-mind.
- Push your subject matter experts. LinkedIn's algorithm favours personal profiles over company pages, so think about publishing thought leadership content by individuals.

Strategy 3: Demonstrate thought leadership



Action: Author white papers that position you as an authority

In the IT and tech sector, white papers are one of the most sought-after marketing assets because they are so highly regarded by the audience.

73% of C-suite execs consider thought leadership content as 'critical' with nearly 40% spending 1-3 hours a week reading this type of content.

White papers get you major airtime in the board room because they're not seen as promotional, rather a deep dive on a particular subject that offers recommendations on how to overcome a particular challenge. In authoring a white paper, you're demonstrating your skills, knowledge and experience in action, without ever having to pitch your services. In fact, one of the main reasons senior executives read thought leadership content, like white papers, is to assess the expertise of the author (cited by **57%** of senior executives). And in educating, rather than selling, to your audience, you'll naturally start to establish the trust needed on which to build your relationship.

81%

of C-suite executives say their trust increases after engaging with thought leadership content.

And the added bonus...

It opens doors that you perhaps were unaware of previously. According to research by Edelman and LinkedIn, **46%** of decision makers have asked a previously unconsidered supplier to bid on a project after encountering their content, with **49%** awarding the business to a supplier as a direct result of their thought-leadership.

To do list...

- Talk to your subject matter experts about the topics that matter most to your customers now and identify the important insight that will help others like them today.
- Get some help. It's hard work authoring a white paper and time you could be spending with customers. Trust your project to a professional and they'll ghost write it on your behalf.
- Plan the wider marketing campaign to support your white paper - could you record an accompanying video? Host a webinar? Expand on the key themes through blogging?



Action: Hook the audience in and convert them through blogging

Blogging is one of the most wonderful forms of content there is because it can take so many different forms...

It can be short and snappy, or long and insightful.

It can be opinion-based, or based on research and data.

It can be very tactical and designed to boost your SEO, or more strategic to push a particular product.

It can be brand new content, or something you've re-purposed, like a white paper.

To do list...

- Perform SEO analysis to identify the keywords and phrases people are searching for and create tactical blogs around those search terms.
- Ask your sales team for a list of commonly asked customer questions and write content that answers them to create a rich FAQ section on your website.
- Find your existing thought leadership assets, like white papers, and think about how you could re-purpose them into a blog series by exploring different themes in more detail.

The most common pitfalls are:

- **A dump of information:** where everything has the same date because you launched your website but failed to implement a plan to create new and interesting content.
- **Bursts of activity:** one month there's 4-5 things published and then nothing for weeks. It's like you only have time to post when you're quiet with client work.
- **Everything stopped:** one moment you're posting weekly...and then something happened. Everything stopped and we haven't heard from you since.

To be most effective, you need to blog regularly and often. In one study of over 1,000 blogs, it shows companies that publish weekly blogs are nearly 2.5x more likely to report 'strong results' than those who publish monthly or less.

Marketers who prioritise blogging are 13x more likely to enjoy positive return on investment, with B2B marketers that use blogs receiving 67% more leads than those that do not.

In the current climate, blogging is an excellent marketing tactic because it's quick to create – ideal when our world seems to change and evolve on a daily basis. So while you're able to plan a schedule of content for the quarter, you have the flexibility to comment on timely issues and highlight the emerging trends to position yourself as an authority figure with your audience.



Strategy 4: Tactical sales get the win



Action: Optimise your SEO to get yourself found and by the right people

It's a hard truth, but **91%** of all web pages never get any organic traffic from Google. You may have crafted the most wonderful content the world could ever see, but if your site isn't optimised, you're not going to see the return on that investment because it won't be found.

I'm sure you've received the endless stream of emails promising you the Holy Grail of getting you onto the first page of Google. In our experience these are false promises that only leave the people who fall for them disappointed.

Yes, you need to get your site onto the first page of Google, but it has to be for the right reason – that traffic has to convert.

SEO is a science that you need to experiment with to get it right. Part of the task is about giving your site the best chance of success by employing the behind the scenes tactics to optimise the site for Google's elusive algorithm. But it's also about looking at the data and analysis around what people are actually searching for, creating content that speaks to those search terms, and then tweaking that content over time.

Often, we have clients who want to rank for a very generic search term, like 'big data', 'cloud' or 'digital transformation'. But the reality is that the quality of the traffic hitting your site for these search terms is likely to be poor, which will be reflected in your site's bounce rate.

For example, 'big data' encompasses technology from the large enterprises to the small startups across all countries and sectors, plus all the media outlets, analyst reports and vendor content. While the term 'cloud' could equally apply to a cumulonimbus as it could cloud computing. And 'digital transformation' spans every department from IT to marketing, finance, operations...

On the first page alone, the first 5 organic results account for

67%
of all clicks.

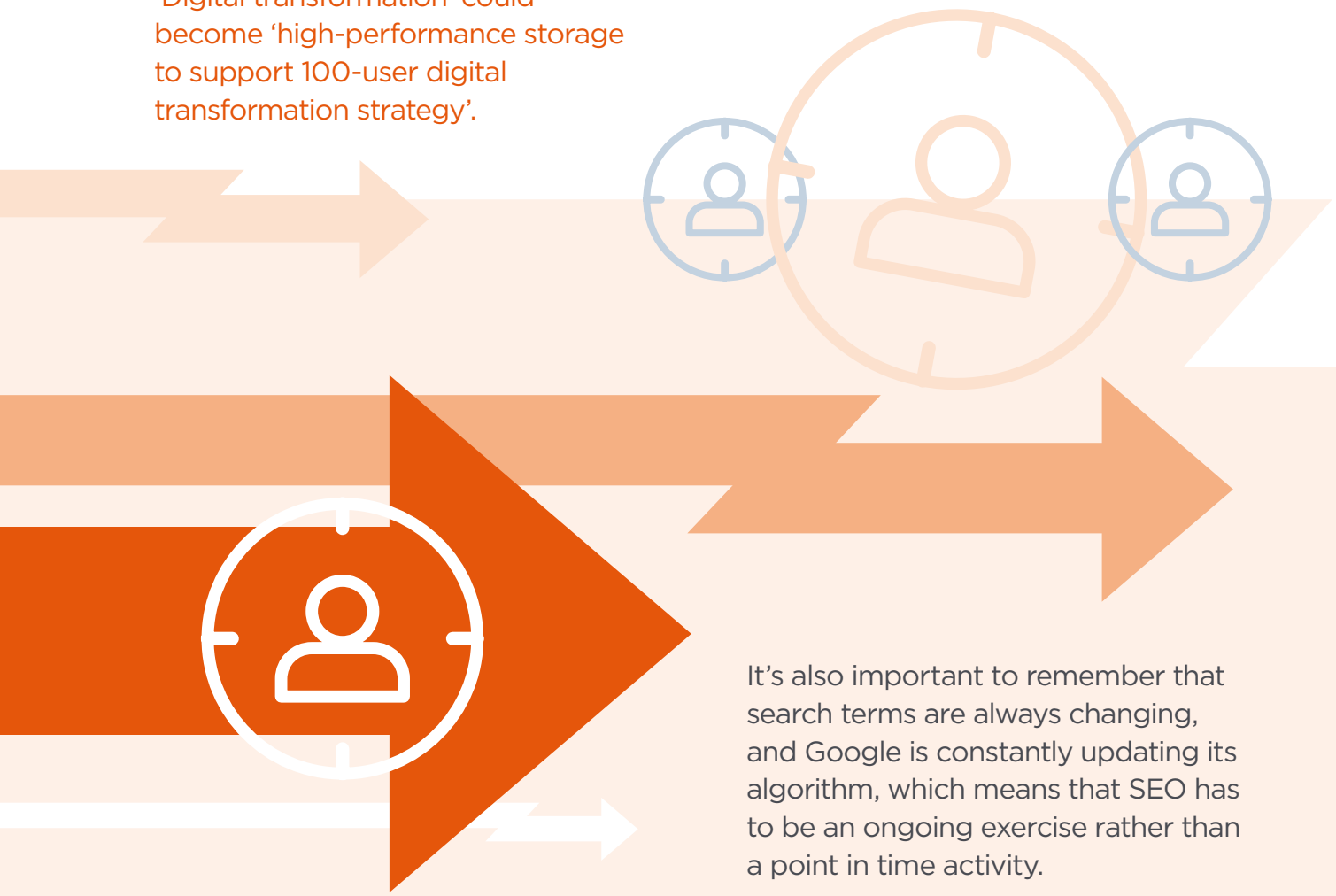
We know that if you want your site to be found by people who will genuinely be interested in your products/services, you need to focus your efforts on the long-tail. These keywords' click-through rate is **3%** to **5%** higher than for generic searches because people know it's more likely to be the type of content they're searching for.

For example:

- 'Big data' could become 'case study on how big data tech is supporting financial services'.
- 'Cloud' could become 'cloud computing applications to support remote working'.
- 'Digital transformation' could become 'high-performance storage to support 100-user digital transformation strategy'.

To do list...

- Check whether you have Google Search Console set up and submit your sitemap to Google so your site is indexed and more likely to be found.
- Set up a **Digital Dashboard** to continuously monitor your SEO. It pulls in core metrics from a range of sources to give you the intelligence you need to make better decisions for your site.
- Identify the long-tail keywords that are best for your business and create blogs that hook into these specific search terms.



It's also important to remember that search terms are always changing, and Google is constantly updating its algorithm, which means that SEO has to be an ongoing exercise rather than a point in time activity.



Action: Try video outreach to improve your sales

Just as we explored the idea of video being one of the best types of content you can create for your social channels at the moment, it's also one of the best channels for sales.

It's cliché, but people really do buy from people. And while telemarketing is now pretty old-school, and much more difficult when the majority of the UK's workforce is working from home, you need something that captures your audience's attention and starts to build that personal connection. Video allows you to do this with ease.

At the moment your prospects are being bombarded with emails – on average, 100 emails per day. Video cuts through this clutter because it's new and different. Research shows that using a video within a sales email boosts open-to-reply rates by 8x. And we know this to be true based on our own experience...

Previously, our outbound sales process involved 6 touch points before we could close an opportunity. But we recently introduced video into those emails. Immediately the number of touch points halved, and we were booking an average of 6 qualified sales appointments per month.

Using video content in sales emails inspires action – **85%** of prospects who view videos are more likely to buy, and **65%** of executive say they've visited the vendor's site after watching a video.

But it may be that you're reluctant to push a hard sale at the moment, in which case, think about how you can use video marketing to help your audience in their daily lives...

Why not:

- Send daily/weekly tips.
- Introduce your subject matter experts.
- Provide reassurance about maintaining business-as-usual – particularly if you operate a managed service or support desk.
- Share stories/ideas from your customers.
- Invite them to a webinar.

To do list...

- Talk to your sales team about how they could best use video as part of their current outreach programmes.
- Look for opportunities to highlight your marketing initiatives, like webinars or white papers, through your videos so you're always adding value when you hit someone's inbox.
- Provide guidance about recording a professional video – you don't have to hit Hollywood standard but you do want your people upholding your brand values.



You've got this!

It's time to start building your reputation and social presence to get ahead in setting the agenda for the next normal, leveraging the power of digital media; social networks and video to achieve stronger digital performance.

When you're busy taking care of your clients, let us take care of you.

MAXX is a leading UK marketing agency, working with ambitious organisations who are ready for meaningful change, to create marketing you can finally be proud of.

Listed as one of Wirehive's top 25 digital agencies in 2019, our work is recognised as delivering impressive results for our tech clients, who include; Axians, Infradata, RingGo, Opensignal, Enghouse Interactive, Osirium, Q-Associates, Viavi and more.

Maxx[®]

We're here to help

We'll always be here to talk through your marketing challenges.

Whether you're thinking about building brand awareness, optimising your website for lead generation, or looking for new ways to reach your audience, we're here to help.



Book a virtual coffee

maxx-design.co.uk/heretohelp

maxx-design.co.uk

in

f

🐦

📷

blog