



# **BARK**

ISSUE 10





This copy of

**BARK**

belongs to

.....



# CONTENTS

---

## 01 WORK

**10**  
HOW DIGITAL HAS EVOLVED THE ART OF  
ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

---

**12**  
FFLECSI BY TRANSPORT FOR WALES -  
WORDPRESS CASE STUDY

---

**14**  
BAR2 - UMBRACO CASE STUDY

---

**18**  
DIRECT TILE WAREHOUSE - DIGITAL  
MARKETING CASE STUDY

---

**22**  
TOPSTAK - FULL SERVICE CASE STUDY

---

**26**  
CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING -  
UMBRACO CASE STUDY

---

**30**  
WEBSITES WE'VE LAUNCHED THIS YEAR

---

## 02 TECH

**34**  
THE SPINDOGS UMBRACO INITIATIVE

---

**36**  
TEMPLATE VS CUSTOM WEBSITES

---

**38**  
SPOTLIGHT ON UMBRACO MVP'S

---

**40**  
SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SUPPORT TEAM

---

## 03 DESIGN

**44**  
MRS. BUCKÉT - BRANDING CASE STUDY

---

**48**  
THE SPINDOGS REBRAND

---

**52**  
ILLUSTRATION: COMFORT AND  
COMMUNICATION DURING A GLOBAL CRISIS

---

**54**  
MOBILE DESIGN: HAS NAVIGATION BEEN  
LEFT BEHIND?

---

**56**  
IBOS - BRANDING CASE STUDY

---

---

# 04

# DM\*

(\*AKA DIGITAL MARKETING)

**62**  
THE RISE OF ECOMMERCE

---

**64**  
LINKEDIN: THE DIGITAL PLACE TO BE  
FOR BUSINESSES

---

**66**  
A GUIDE TO GOOGLE ANALYTICS 4

---

**70**  
TIKTOK VS REELS

---

**72**  
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

---

# 05

# CHAT

**76**  
INTERVIEW WITH RAK KALIDAS AT LEVY  
UK & IRELAND

---

**80**  
INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN WINGROVE  
AT ITSETTLED

---

**84**  
INTERVIEW WITH KAT PITHER AT  
YOGI BARE

---

# 06

# NEWS

**90**  
NEW WEBSITE

---

**92**  
THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM ENGAGEMENT

---

**94**  
BEST OF... APPS

---

# CONTRIBUTORS



**ABIGAIL PHILLIPS**  
Content Strategist



**CHRIS TANTI**  
Data Marketing Strategist



**JENNIFER JONES**  
Support Team



**SIAN SIMMS**  
Frontend Team Leader



**AMANDA WILLIAMS**  
Community Coordinator



**CLARE TREVERROW**  
Senior Designer



**LIAM GILES**  
Managing Director



**TARA PETERS**  
Digital Marketing Account Manager



**ANDY CRISP**  
Head of Client Services



**EMILY HARRIS**  
Marketing Manager



**LUKE CARDY**  
Business Development Manager

**EDITOR**  
Emily Harris

**SUB EDITORS**  
Abigail Phillips  
Hope Meredith  
Jenny Cooper

**DESIGN**  
Natasha Manns



**BEN HAYWARD**  
Account Manager



**EMILY LEWIS**  
Digital Marketer



**RHIANNON HEADLAM**  
Digital Marketing Team Manager

**SPECIAL THANKS**  
Jane Purdie at fflecsi  
Jo Rowley at Bar2  
Angela Coyle at Direct Tile Warehouse  
Adam Pedersen at Topstak  
Joanne Delo at Chartered Institute of Housing  
Rachael Flanagan at Mrs Buckét  
Manoj Mistry at IBOS  
Rak Kalidas at Levy UK & Ireland  
Jonathan Wingrove at itsettled  
Kat Pither at Yogi Bare



**CATHERINE COX**  
Account Manager



**HOPE MEREDITH**  
Content Editor



**RHYS ASHMAN**  
Creative Manager

# WELCOME

**LIAM GILES**

Managing Director



---

Welcome to issue 10 of BARK! Wow, we're in double figures now. Looking back over the past ten issues we've come a long way. This will be our second issue we've produced during the pandemic and I think it's safe to say we've all learnt a lot over the past year about agile working and how quickly plans can change. The past 12 months have been both challenging and exciting for many businesses, Spindogs included, but with the support of our incredible staff, clients, friends and partners, we are excited to look to the future.

With many businesses looking for new ways to adapt, digital has been an integral part of many marketers' strategies. With this in mind, this issue focuses on 'Digital Transformation'. We have interviewed businesses about how digital has been essential for their business, we have delved into the pros and cons of new technology, we have looked at how ecommerce has changed the way we shop, and we have taken a closer look at some of the great work we've done with our clients.

There's been a lot going on too. We've launched 30 websites, welcomed 10 new staff members to the team, gained another Umbraco MVP and a Certified Umbraco Master, further strengthening our Umbraco capabilities. We switched our full training programme to virtual sessions and made it completely free - a commitment we made to businesses to help them upskill during the pandemic, training over 3000 attendees since April 2020.

Last but not least, we've rebranded! We've lost our ears, but we're still listening. Check out page 48 on why we rebranded and what it means to us and our clients - it's been quite a journey!

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Spindogs for their hard work over the past year whilst working remotely, and a huge thank you to our clients, friends and partners for their support and inspiration.

So, take a break and enjoy the read.

Take care, Liam

# 01

## IN THIS SECTION:

**10**

### **HOW DIGITAL HAS EVOLVED THE ART OF ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT**

Head of Client Services, Andy Crisp shares his insight on how to deliver a digitally-enhanced client experience and the changes account managers have made over the past year.

**12**

### **FFLECSI BY TRANSPORT FOR WALES - WORDPRESS CASE STUDY**

Account Manager, Cat Cox, tells all on how we worked with TfW to develop a streamlined user journey that would make it easy for its users.

**14**

### **BAR2 - UMBRACO CASE STUDY**

Learn more about the work we did for Bar2 on their recent Umbraco website from Project Manager, Ben Hayward.

**18**

### **DIRECT TILE WAREHOUSE - DIGITAL MARKETING CASE STUDY**

Find out how we helped Direct Tile Warehouse to increase its visibility and conversion with effective SEO from Data Marketing Strategist, Chris Tanti.

**22**

### **TOPSTAK - WORDPRESS CASE STUDY**

Hear how we helped Topstak to improve its website, design and onsite content with a range of services from Project Manager, Ben Hayward.

**26**

### **CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING - UMBRACO CASE STUDY**

CIH required a website that would become a community hub for members. Discover how we created an Umbraco website to meet the needs of the business and their users from Head of Client Services, Andy Crisp.

**30**

### **GO LIVES**

Did you know we launched over 30 websites this year? Take a look at some of the projects we launched in the last year.

SA  
O  
RE  
K

# HOW DIGITAL HAS EVOLVED THE ART OF ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT



ANDY CRISP

## DELIVERING A DIGITALLY-ENHANCED CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Here at Spindogs, we're big believers in the idea that "people buy people". It was a huge part of our original growth when we worked with the South Wales Networking Events and it has been baked into our DNA ever since.

We have developed long-standing relationships with clients of all sizes across different industries. We are proud of the effort that's gone into making them feel valued and the little touches we add to show each of our clients that we care. We even have a department dedicated to ensuring our clients have the best possible experience when working with Spindogs, headed up by myself as Head of Client Services.

## CHANGING THE WAY OUR ACCOUNT MANAGERS WORK

In 2020, our account managers were forced to adapt their entire approach to establishing client relationships, almost overnight. As we look back on the last year and what we have learned about client relationships, we've put together our top three observations on how digital has evolved the art of account management and has helped us to deliver a better experience for our clients:

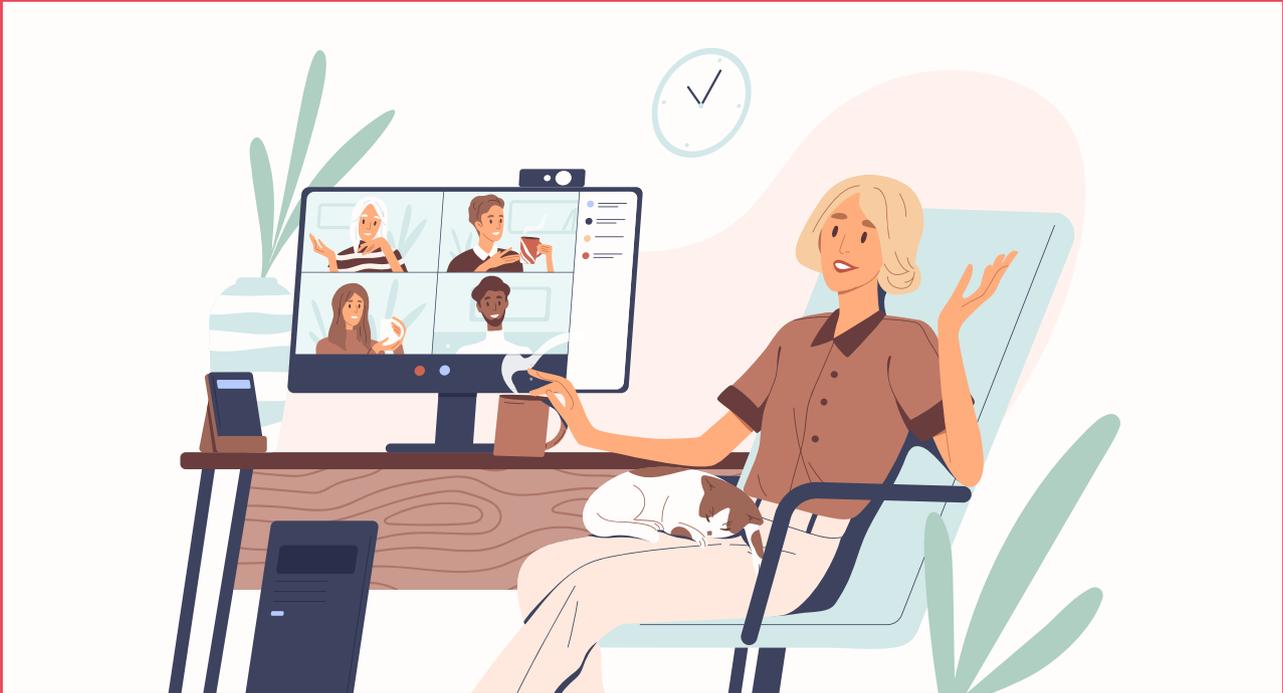
### 1. Communication

We've always made communication with our clients a priority. We have found ways to ensure we speak to them regularly, whether that's been on the phone for ad-hoc catch-ups and status updates or in person for something a little more significant. However, March 2020 saw video calls erupt in popularity as we all became overnight experts in Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and Houseparty (which already seems retro) as a way to maintain valuable human contact.

For our account managers, this has meant working with all of our clients to ensure regular calls are scheduled in the diary. Not only has this tested our communication skills, but we've also had to understand our clients' preferences and shape our approach to suit them accordingly. Do they prefer talking with their camera on or off? Do they want to speak weekly or fortnightly? Do they want a high-level run-through or a detailed deep-dive? As video call fatigue has begun to kick in, these regular catch-ups have needed to be closely managed to ensure that all participants are getting something out of the call. And, we've also become experts in adding new backgrounds and learnt the etiquette of the mute button. So, that's a tick in the 'better meetings' box!

### 2. Collaboration

As we have adopted a more flexible way of working, we have had to adapt the way we share and collaborate resources and information with our clients and the rest of the team. Shared activity trackers via the likes of Google Drive, have reduced the strain on our already-busy clients' diaries and allowed us to exchange information effectively and reassure them that things are on track. Sharing a screen to walk through a client's project with them or diagnosing a problem that they need our support team to take a look at over video call, has been a perfectly viable alternative to doing that sort of thing in person. Collaboration tools have also been helpful when we are signing off designs or copy with our clients. You'd argue that these things were already gaining popularity, but they now play a much more fundamental role in how we manage our client relationships, collaborate and share information and updates.



### 3. Consistency

Our final thought on how digital transformation has shaped our approach to account management: We've tried, where possible, to keep things 'business as usual'. We have put the necessary processes in place to ensure our clients still see and experience the same Spindogs in both our work and our attitude throughout the pandemic. While our approach and the technology we have used might have changed, the level of service and experience we provide to our clients remains the same.

We're not going to be able to recreate our famous client parties or have the chance to meet in person for a few drinks any time soon. But, there are certainly some fuzzy heads to show for the merits of virtual social occasions. Where it's welcomed, we're still happy to wax lyrical on the merits of Wales' Six Nations rugby victory, the proficiency of Taylor Swift's album generation or why Marvel's Phase 4 could be its most ambitious undertaking yet - of course, all via a video call!

Most importantly, we have continued to show up at our desks (whether that's in the office or at home) and adapt the way we work to ensure that our clients get the best experience that we can deliver and stay with us for the long haul.

**“HERE AT SPINDOGS,  
WE’RE BIG BELIEVERS IN  
THE IDEA THAT “PEOPLE  
BUY PEOPLE”.”**

# FFLECSI BY TRANSPORT FOR WALES

When it comes to creating a website, it obviously should look great, but making sure the user journey makes sense is just as important. Creating a simple user journey was fundamental for Transport for Wales' (TfW) new service, fflecsi. Users needed to be able to enter the website, find a trip, and book their seats in as few steps as possible. Find out how we worked with TfW and various local authorities and bus operators to develop a streamlined user journey that would make it easy for users to book trips.



CATHERINE COX



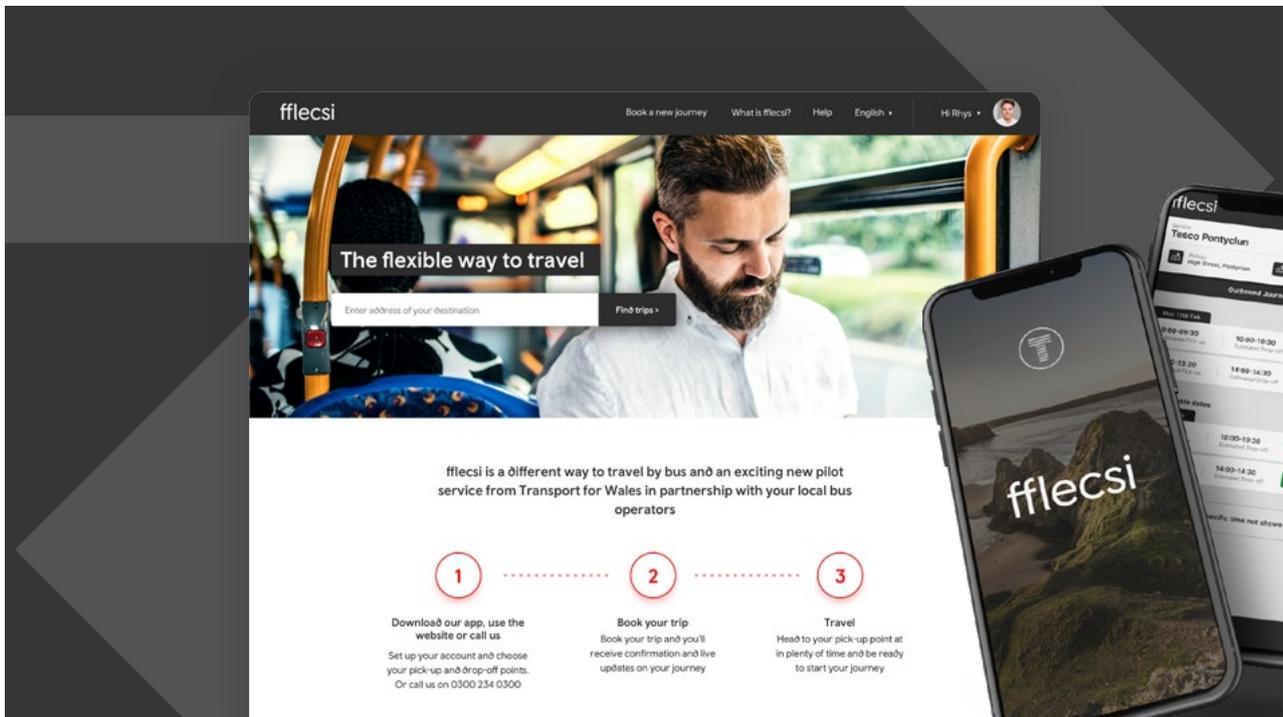
## TRANSPORTING COMMUNITIES

fflecsi is a flexible bus service developed by Transport for Wales. The concept helps passengers in rural and urban areas of Wales to access transport when and where they need to.

fflecsi is a pilot service from Transport for Wales that helps people make local journeys across several locations in Wales. The on-demand service runs alongside normal bus services and gives people in rural areas, where buses are irregular and limited, an opportunity to use public transport again.

Although fflecsi has a fixed start and end in some of its areas, passengers are able to create and book their own journeys in advance. Rather than passengers waiting at a bus stop for a bus to turn up, fflecsi has a fixed schedule of trips and routes to choose from, whilst providing passengers with the flexibility to select a pick-up and drop-off time and place that is convenient for them.

The concept involves commuters using a website or an app to book a pick-up and drop-off point on a collection of travel schedules available in their area. fflecsi enables users to be picked up as near to their house as possible.



### OFFERING A 'FLEXIBLE WAY TO TRAVEL'

fflecsi buses pick passengers up and drop them off in the service area, not just at a bus stop. The way fflecsi works is that a bus picks you up at your request, changing its route so that all passengers can get to where they need to go.

fflecsi helps people to make local journeys, especially where transport in rural areas is limited. fflecsi is also a more sustainable and economical way to travel, as buses will only run if passengers are booked on to the trip. Once bus operators know how many passengers to pick up, they can make sure they send the correct size vehicle on the route.

Transport for Wales wanted to create a small website integrated with existing scheduled bus routes that enabled passengers to use an on-demand service - that is where the Spindogs team stepped in.

### MAPPING THE USER JOURNEY

We kicked off the project with several discussions with Transport for Wales. To design and develop a website that worked for all communities where the fflecsi bus service would operate, we needed to understand each local authority's requirements. We held a workshop with stakeholders from across Transport for Wales, as well as local authorities and bus operators, to understand their local needs and what the user journeys on the website would look like for people in their area.

The website had to serve different types of customers. Transport for Wales wanted to encourage all commuter types to use fflecsi. From young people who want to travel to the nearest time and place to meet their friends to elderly passengers who need to be dropped off as close to their destination as possible, be it the doctors or the local shop. We had to consider all types of users to ensure they all had the same experience on the website and could book a trip with ease.

Designing the journeys was pretty simple. We were mindful that not all of fflecsi's users would be computer literate, so we had to make sure that the website was easy enough for everyone at all levels to use and be able to book a bus. We made sure that we implemented a basic design with simple language and instructions. We used strong calls to action (CTAs)

to guide the user through finding trips, browsing locations and booking their journeys. To make it as easy as possible, we designed a search bar on the homepage so that users were encouraged to find trips and browse locations from the get-go.

We needed to integrate the website with existing bus routes and schedules from local bus operators across Wales. Also, some local authorities had their own systems or used different software, so we had to consider these and integrate the new website.

### TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

The result? We created an easy-to-use website that enabled individuals around Wales to plan and book their journeys at times, pick-ups and drop-offs at their request. The simple user journey and minimal design make it easy for users to find a location, book a trip, receive confirmation and follow live updates of their journey.

Not only has the Spindogs team created an accessible website, but it's also mobile responsive, which means that users can book their trip from anywhere, on any device. There's also an option to download an app to use fflecsi on the go. Head to the fflecsi website to find out more about the service.

### DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS

**A search bar on the homepage** – Created an easy-to-use search bar so that users can find trips as soon as they land on the homepage.

**Clear CTAs** – Designed a set of clear CTAs to guide users through the website and make the journey of finding and booking a trip as smooth as possible.

**Questions in an accordion bar** – Designed an accordion for questions to sit nicely on the web page on both mobile and desktop.

**Mobile-friendly website** – Developed a mobile-friendly website and clear user journeys, so that users can seamlessly book a trip. The app was developed by a third-party company.

CASE STUDY

UMBRACO

# BAR 2



BEN HAYWARD

---

**“Spindogs have been an absolute joy to work with! From the very first stages, all the way through to the launch of our website, they really took the time to understand exactly what we wanted to achieve from the site.”**

Jo Rowley, Marketing Manager at Bar2

---

Bar2 are committed to revolutionising the contractor market, one temporary worker at a time. Having recognised the constant challenges faced by contractors with being paid correctly, legitimately and on time, Bar2 decided it was time to take action. By educating and guiding clients through complex contractor engagement processes, Bar2 have simplified the payroll process for both businesses and workers involved.

With a foundation of knowledge in tax and employment legislation, Bar2 needed a brand identity and website that would support them on their mission towards helping temporary workers achieve the financial security they deserve.

#### **SETTING THE BAR HIGH**

For Bar2, their primary goal was, and still is, to educate and direct operatives towards more beneficial services. They wanted users to leave their site with a better understanding of the payment options available and the services they could provide. We agreed their new website needed to be clean and simple, with easy to access information, straightforward navigation and a modern visual design.

Each of these factors would not only improve the UX (user experience) of their website, but enable them to deliver their services more effectively.

#### **A RUNNING START**

##### **Brand discovery**

The first step to any web design project is a website discovery session. At Spindogs, we believe discovery meetings are a vital part of the development process, with the purpose being to make sure we're all on the same page going forward.

For Bar2, the first step was to review their brand identity which would, in turn, inform the development of their website design. However, on this occasion, Bar2 were one step ahead and had already made a start on pinpointing their values. With a set of exterior and interior values, Bar2 were able to outline a SMART philosophy which summarised who they are as a brand and how they wanted to be perceived.

**S**upportive  
**M**asters in Innovation  
**A**rdent  
**R**eliable  
**T**ransparent

With an established brand identity, we were able to begin designing and building their website, using their philosophy to inform our decisions throughout the project.

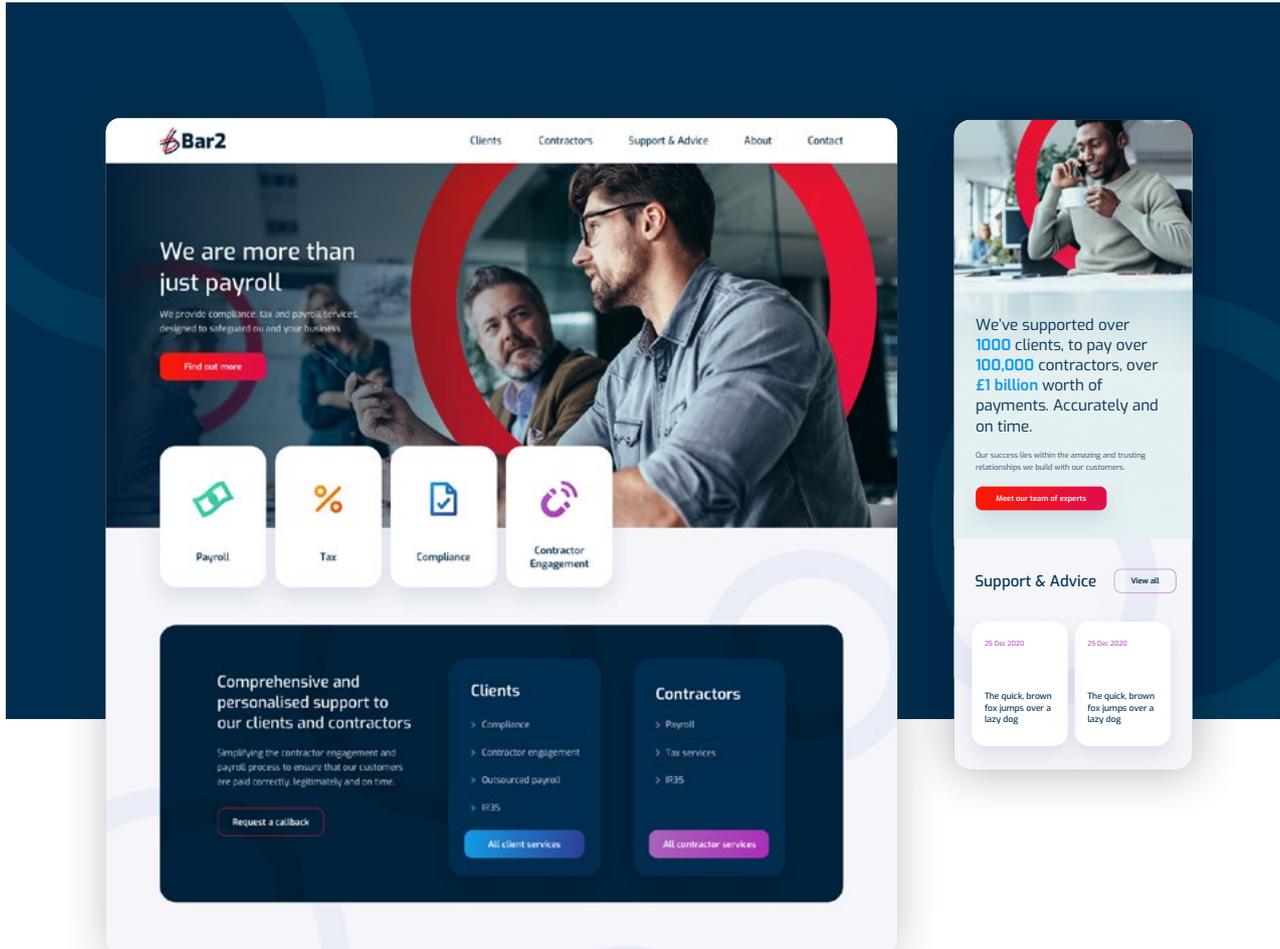
#### **TAKING THE LEAP**

##### **A new visual identity**

To kickstart the design process of Bar2's new website, our design and UX team got together to create a fresh set of layouts and page types. One of the issues Bar2 had raised with their previous website was that all the pages looked the same, which could be confusing for users accessing the site. With a new colour palette and plenty of imagery, our design team were able to provide Bar2 with a more modern and visually inviting appearance. Bar2's logo was also in need of an update, as previously the strapline was distorting the size of the logo. By excluding the strapline, we were able to make a cleaner and significantly smaller logo, more appropriately meeting the design of the website.

##### **Flexible page layouts**

Bar2's previous website was repetitive in design, with the majority of pages following the same layout. To provide more flexibility and freedom in the appearance of pages, we recommended using Umbraco as the CMS (content management system). Umbraco is ideal if you're looking to build page layouts without restrictions, as the flexible block feature makes it easy to create custom templates. Using these blocks, we were able to design a number of page layouts to create an overall, more visually interesting website design.



### Tailored content

Bar2 had a particularly wide audience demographic, with users of varying age, language and professional experience all accessing their site and requesting their services. Because of this, it was important for Bar2's web content to be as simple as possible, clearly communicating their services in a way that all users could understand.

To enable Bar2 to provide a tailored user experience for each of their user types, we used Umbraco to build them a blog with various flexible blocks. A blog is a fantastic way to target specific audience groups, as each article can be tailored around the needs of different users.

### Simplified contact forms

On their previous website, Bar2 had a long and complex contact form, which resulted in more users picking up the phone instead of attempting to fill it out. Inundated with calls, we provided Bar2 with a more simplified form design, as well as consistent signposts on the website to encourage customers to use the form to get in touch.

### Mobile friendly designs

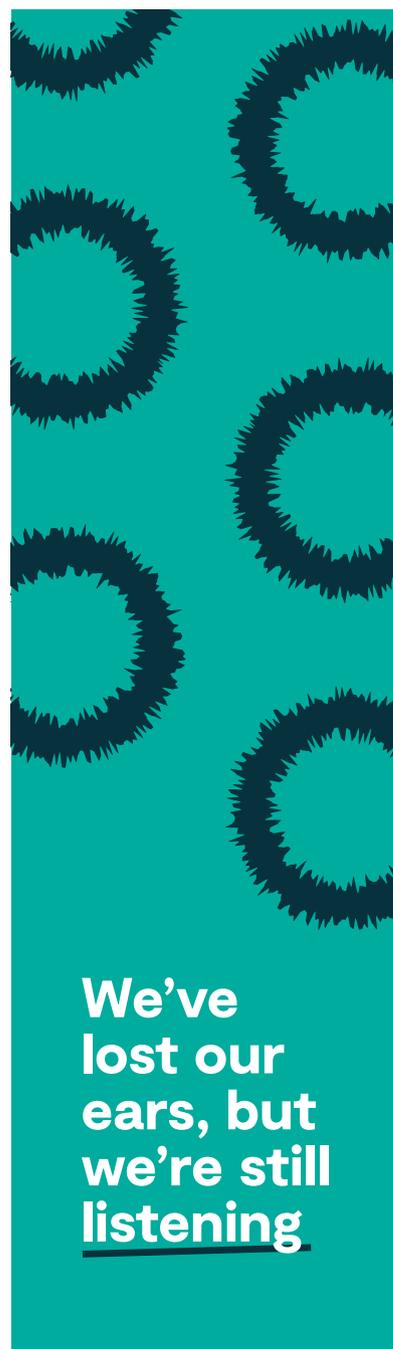
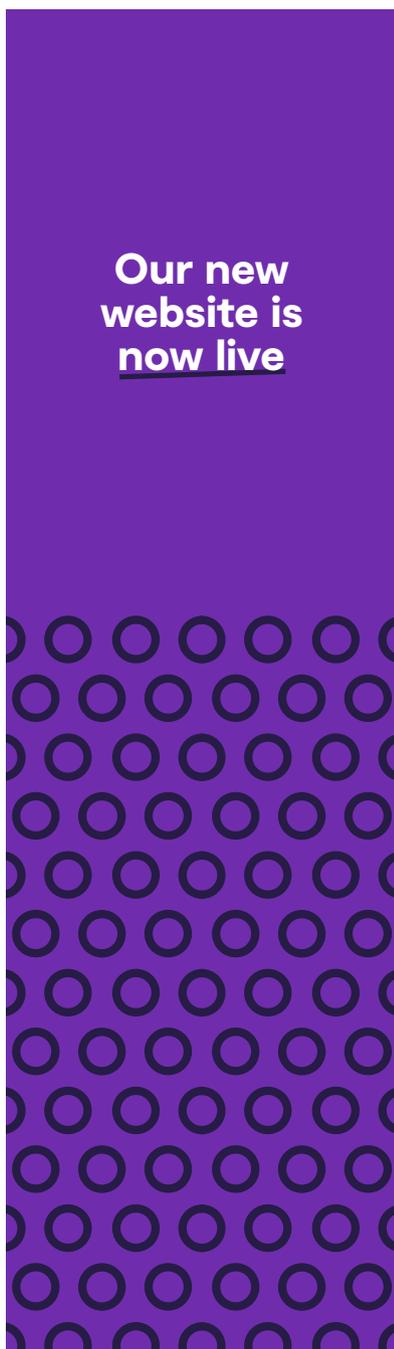
The final task to completing the design of the Bar2 website was making it mobile friendly. As a large number of operatives were using their mobile phones to access the Bar2 website, the new layout needed to be adaptable to different screen sizes. To tackle this issue, our design team created and built a mobile version of the website, guaranteeing accessibility across all device types.

### CLEARING THE BAR

The finished Bar2 website was one that supported users on their journey towards finding the right services for them. With Umbraco, we were able to tick all the boxes of what Bar2 hoped to achieve, with improved visual design, easy navigation, tailored content and mobile-friendly functionality, improving the overall user experience of the website. What's more, in reworking the design of the website and logo, we were able to reflect and reposition Bar2 as the professional organisation they are.

# BOOKMARKS

Print out these bookmarks on a separate piece of paper to help guide and mark out where you left off in BARK, or even in your new favourite true crime book.



# DIRECT TILE WAREHOUSE

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is an effective and critical marketing tactic that all businesses should include in their digital marketing strategy if they want to increase engagement, traffic and conversions to their website, and provide a better user experience. But how do you get these results across ALL of your product ranges? Increasing visibility and conversions across all product ranges is one challenge that our client Direct Tile Warehouse faced. Luckily, we were here to help them overcome it.



CHRIS TANTI



## INTRODUCING DIRECT TILE WAREHOUSE

Direct Tile Warehouse is an online tile store offering an extensive range of high-quality tiles to trade and retail customers at competitive prices. With more than 40 years in the industry, the company has built a reputation for providing a reliable, quality service and a product range that meets its customers' tile requirements, sourcing wall and floor tiles from leading manufacturers all over the world.

As well as providing a wide range of tiles at competitive prices, Direct Tile Warehouse also offers unrivalled customer service, delivering professional advice, free tile estimates and samples on request.

## THE CHALLENGE

With such a large product and category range, Direct Tile Warehouse was up against the challenge of getting the entire product catalogue in front of its target audience. While the business ranked well for some of its products, there was an opportunity to increase the visibility and rankings for some of its other product ranges, too.

Since last year, we have been working closely with Direct Tile Warehouse to look for other optimisation opportunities to improve category and product ranges' performance across the board. We devised an SEO strategy that aimed to increase the website's existing rankings and improve the position of other product ranges in search engine results pages (SERPs).

Read on to find out more about the SEO strategy we implemented and how we ended up doubling Direct Tile Warehouse's internet revenue by the end of their financial year.

**“Since we have implemented our SEO strategy, we have almost doubled the online sales compared to last year.”**



## **OUR APPROACH**

### **Laying the foundations**

Like any project, before we began with the optimisation work, we had to ensure that the foundations were strong and that the website was in good shape to build upon and optimise, so that the SEO work would be successful. Ensuring the website is fit for purpose is an essential part of an optimisation project. We need to be confident that the work we do is going to meet the business' objectives. For Direct Tile Warehouse, we wanted to improve the visibility of all of its categories and product ranges and increase its conversions on the website. The current website was averagely performing. However, it lacked the ecommerce sophistication that would enable Direct Tile Warehouse to attract a much wider audience and get ALL of its product ranges in front of potential customers.

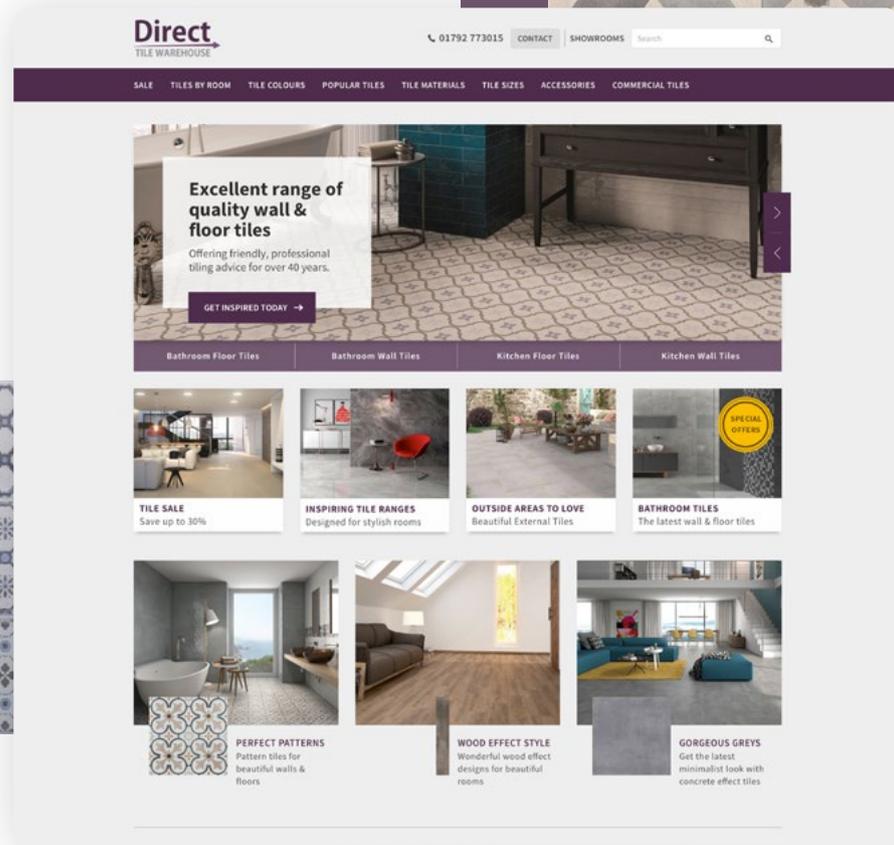
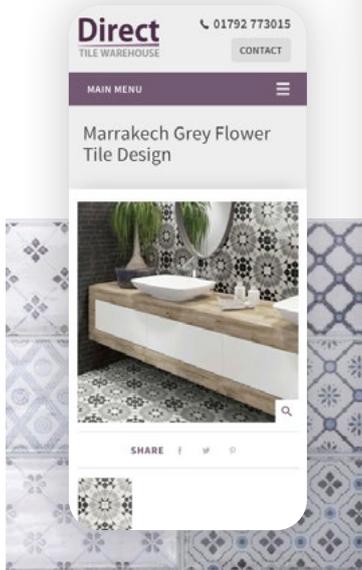
Our first task was to complete a technical SEO audit and review, which would help us to identify broken links and pages, and tell us what functioned well and what didn't work on the website. One significant outcome from the technical SEO review was that there wasn't any structured data on the site, which is a crucial element for ecommerce sites and fundamental when optimising a site for SEO. Structured data allows a business to label the name of a product, service, etc, so that search engines understand the content and know exactly what it is without using algorithms. We implemented custom structured data on every single web page so that the website had greater search visibility and would benefit from the optimisation work we were about to embark on.

We also conducted a behaviour analysis report using Mouseflow - a behaviour analytics platform. The report told us more about the UX (User Experience) and how users behaved on the site. We used this information to optimise the website to enhance the user experience. Lastly, our keyword research gave us insight into what users were searching for, what keywords competitors were ranking for, and what keyword opportunities we could tap into and target to reach a wider audience and increase conversions on the site.

### **Paving the way for success**

Once the foundations were in place, we were ready to start the next phase of the strategy and look for opportunities to improve the website's ranking for specific product ranges. All of the changes were informed by strategic research, which outlined Direct Tile Warehouse's strengths and weaknesses - where they were ranking well, and what other product and category pages we could optimise to increase their visibility. As with any large ecommerce site with many products and pages, there is potential for keywords to compete, which is a constant battle for ecommerce businesses. To avoid duplication of targeted keywords across the site, we created a keyword map that would guide us on what keywords to focus on which pages and untangle the competition.

The keyword research also identified an opportunity to improve the rankings for outdoor and exterior tiles. We were also implementing the SEO work during the pandemic, which meant that more people stayed at home and in their gardens, so more people were searching for outdoor and exterior tiles online.



We used the relevant keywords we identified in the keyword research to create content on the category pages. Including long-form content on category pages helps you to be seen as an expert in your field by search engines. Including in-depth content on the different types of exterior tiles, such as their uses and benefits, improves the page visibility and alerts search engines to the content.

Internal linking is another essential part of optimising a website and gaining more visibility across a particular product category. Not only does internal linking (linking from one page to another) help users to navigate a website, but it also provides search engines with a structure of your website and link equity (ranking power) throughout your site. We included links from the exterior tiles in related blogs/news articles - this helped improve the user experience on the site and increase the rankings of the product pages.

#### THE FINAL RESULTS

Our optimisation work has been a great success for Direct Tile Warehouse. Not only has the ecommerce business had a better conversion rate, but they have also increased the number of sales from organic traffic, proving that the optimisation work has paid dividends and attracted the right target audience to the company's product ranges. Since we have implemented our SEO strategy, we have almost doubled Direct Tile Warehouse's online sales compared to last year. We have also doubled the number of sample requests the company received - another example of the power of SEO and the impact it can have on your conversion rate.

#### REVIEWING THE STATS:

**ORGANIC WEBSITE TRAFFIC**  
+71% VS PREVIOUS YEAR

**OVERALL ONLINE REVENUE**  
+51% VS PREVIOUS YEAR

**ONLINE CONVERSION RATE**  
+24% VS PREVIOUS YEAR

**JUNE ONLINE REVENUE**  
+152.93% VS PREVIOUS YEAR

**JUNE ONLINE ORGANIC REVENUE**  
+218% VS PREVIOUS YEAR

**BUILD SOMETHING  
100 PEOPLE LOVE,  
NOT SOMETHING  
1 MILLION PEOPLE  
KIND OF LIKE.**

**NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF [BRIAN CHESKY](#).**

CASE STUDY

FULL SERVICE

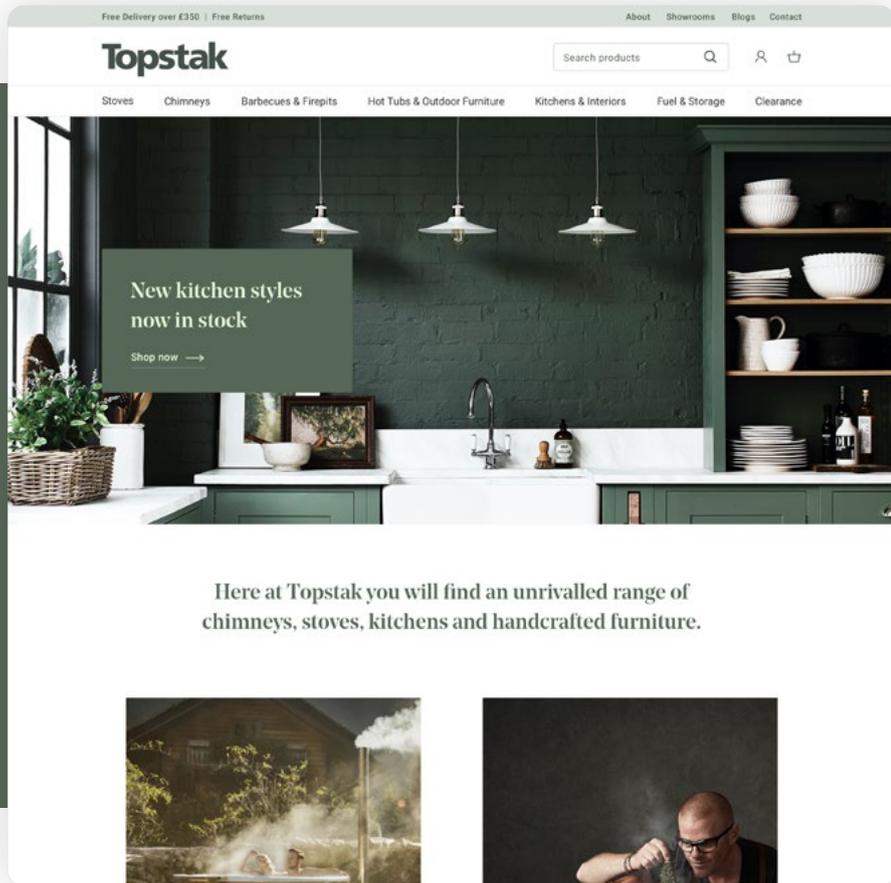


# TOPSTAK



BEN HAYWARD





### PREPARING THE GRILL

Backed by more than twenty years of experience, Topstak have successfully positioned themselves as leading suppliers in a wide range of industries. With an unrivalled selection of stoves, barbecues, kitchens and chimneys, Topstak are able to offer exceptional service and advice, no matter what product a customer needs. This means that, whether they're interested in purchasing a new gas barbecue or need to have their chimney system relined, Topstak can help.

With an abundance of knowledge and an impressive product range, all that Topstak needed now was a website that successfully reflected their products, services and expertise.

### LIGHTING THE FIRE

Topstak approached us when they realised their website was failing to meet both their business expectations and their customers' needs. As their previous website had been created in quick progression as a WooCommerce project, little time had been spent on the overall design of the site, leaving Topstak with a website that was poorly organised and visually uninspiring.

They needed us to create an organised, accessible and visually appealing website that would offer an overall improved user experience.

### SIZZLING NAVIGATION

When building a website, it's important to consider the user journey and make progressing from browsing to buying a seamless process for users. After all, if a user hits a bump in the road and can't find the product they're looking for, they'll likely make a quick U-turn and take their business elsewhere.

Topstak's website lacked a clear navigation menu, with some categories existing in multiple places and others appearing in unexpected locations, offering users a rather challenging task of locating certain products. This was made even more difficult with a search menu that was fairly hit and miss, delivering inconsistent and unreliable search results.

To kickstart this project, our digital marketing team analysed Topstak's entire product range. In doing so, they were able to create a clear sitemap with parent categories, sub-categories and even sub-sub-categories, organising Topstak's large selection of products into an easy to use navigation menu.

### SMOKING DESIGNS

During the design of the website, we wanted to bring back the branding and personality that was lost in the previous site.

Luckily, Topstak already had an impressive portfolio of imagery we could use to kickstart our design process. From their portfolio of images, we noticed a recurring colour palette of varying green tones. This pattern of green hues inspired the colour scheme we used for Topstak's branding, which enabled us to produce a cohesive and recognisable web design. Making sure to communicate Topstak's branding throughout the website, our design team got to work on creating flexible page layouts for the homepage, shop pages, products pages, news, events and contact page.





### SCORCHING CONTENT

A key part of any digital strategy is content creation. Content ensures your users have access to all the information they need on your website, without having to search for answers elsewhere. What's more, with the addition of keywords, content can play a key role in the ranking and visibility of your website.

With such a large product range, Topstak required a huge amount of content to be written. Using keywords, we were able to write over 200 pages of content, creating a website that was both user and SEO (search engine optimisation) friendly.

Creating content also provided us with the perfect opportunity to include valuable CTAs (call to actions), such as 'Buy now' and 'Explore now', directly encouraging users to continue their journey towards conversion.

### NURTURING THE FLAME

At Spindogs, we don't just work hard to complete the build of your website, but will continue to support your business with a bespoke digital strategy.

For Topstak, their main objective was driving higher levels of traffic to their website. To achieve this, we first recommended organic social media across Facebook and Instagram, sharing discounts, special offers and seasonal content with users, whilst showcasing their diverse product range. We also recommended implementing paid social media campaigns, which would enable Topstak to target specific users at two different levels

of the sales funnel, maximising their results. One campaign would focus on website traffic for a cold audience, while the other campaign would retarget those who had previously visited the site, encouraging them to progress from lead to conversion.

### READY TO SERVE FUNCTIONALITY

With functionality, we understand it's never a one size fits all, as the features of a website will depend on the requirements of the business and users.

### Trader discounts

For Topstak, they previously allowed users to sign up as traders and wholesalers for unique discounts. Having disabled this function on their last website, they now wanted to bring it back.

We were able to integrate a Wholesaler WooCommerce package into the site, which allowed customers to once again sign up as Traders. To provide these users with an improved experience, we built new product page templates, where Topstak could list their discounted prices. We even enabled a lock feature so that only Trade customers could access certain information.

#### Stove selector tool

As the most extensive product line that Topstak supplied were stoves, we started by categorising their stove range by type, fuel type and brand, for easy browsing and searching.

However, we were aware the sheer amount of products may still be daunting for some users, leading us to create a bespoke stove selector tool. By inputting details around the size of their home and the fuel type they wanted, users would receive immediate recommendations on which stoves would best suit their wants and needs.

#### Flexible layouts

A lot of Topstak's products experience seasonal spikes in popularity. Whether it's stoves for winter warmth or barbecues for summer feasts, the seasons have a huge impact on their sales. With this in mind, their website needed to be flexible and easy to update to meet these fluctuating consumer demands.

Using WordPress to build their site enabled us to make almost every aspect of the website manageable within the CMS. With fully flexible page layouts and complete control over design development, Topstak would be able to easily adjust the design of their site around the interests of their users.

**“From the get go, Spindogs came up with innovative ideas followed by a brand refresh, new website, social media strategy, SEO and even our showroom signage. We are delighted with the final product, our engagements with customers organically are at all-time highs.”**

Adam Pedersen - Director

# CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING



ANDY CRISP



## THE BUILDING BLOCKS

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation with more than 16,000 members worldwide. With the goal of supporting housing professionals to create a future in which everyone has a place to call home, CIH provides housing professionals with the skills, knowledge and experience required to truly make a difference.

Whether it's lobbying the government to change housing policies or training housing professionals through their Housing Academy, CIH aims to give all housing professionals a voice and a platform.

Committed to growing their organisation and attracting more like-minded individuals to become members, CIH needed a new website that would act as a shop window for potential and existing members.

## THE BLUEPRINT

As a membership organisation, CIH required a website that would become a community hub for members. With their members at the heart of their operation, CIH wanted their website to be a key communication tool for users, using events and content to share their knowledge and start conversations. Luckily, we understand that a great website really can transform the potential of a membership organisation to create a digital community.

We agreed their new website needed to be more commercial, reflecting the expertise of CIH and the value of their work to attract new users to become members. To help entice users to sign up, there would need to be an incentive such as events and publications that were only accessible to members.

# “The result was a website that was organised and easy to use, with the ability to filter content for a more bespoke experience.”



## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

We're committed to making sure our clients have a content management system (CMS) that will enable them to achieve their current business objectives and reach their future development goals.

As CIH is such a large organisation, we began by conducting a number of discovery workshops and a company-wide survey. Receiving 422 responses, we were able to gain brilliant insight into the page types and functions that would be key to the overall design of the site. From the results, it was clear that members sought enhanced flexibility for page layouts, more optimised events functions and custom filters on all content listings. These requirements led us to recommending Umbraco for CIH's new website design.

## BUILDING WITH UMBRACO

As a .Net Umbraco Gold Partner, we have a team of dynamic Umbraco developers, skilled strategists and creative thinkers, ready and able to build custom websites around our clients' needs.

### Easy management

The first reason we decided to build with Umbraco was for its flexible yet manageable back end administration. Previously, members of CIH had struggled with a CMS that was time consuming and cumbersome, particularly when attempting to create and upload content. With no central control coordination, they required a system that would allow content to be efficiently stored, located and uploaded. Luckily, Umbraco is an extremely powerful CMS, making it a more resourceful back end system.

### Improved structure

To start the design and build of the new website, we first analysed the current user journey and navigation menu. We quickly realised that due

to a silo structure and extensive amount of content, users were finding it challenging to locate certain pages. By restructuring the sitemap to form a standard dropdown menu, we were able to add parent headings and sub headings to more efficiently organise the content, creating a simpler user journey.

Once we had an organised sitemap, we were able to start designing the page layouts. Umbraco enables custom blocks to be created, providing CIH with plenty of design flexibility and customisation options. This was particularly important for the client when building landing pages for events.

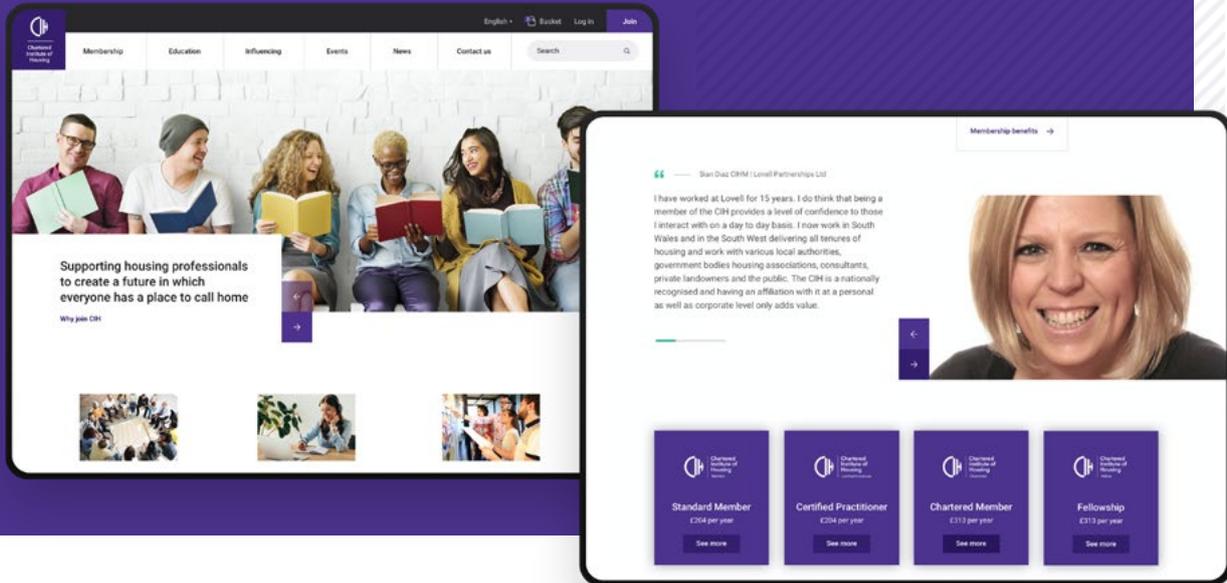
### Efficient events

For CIH, events are a key part of their membership package, so it was important each event could be easily accessed by users. Before, main event information often became lost in the details of other events, decreasing engagement and user experience. To remedy this issue, we used the flexibility of Umbraco to build designated landing pages for events, improving the site organisation. Able to accommodate for a whole range of event types including one site, multi-site and multi-programme, Umbraco would enable CIH to hold more events for their members. Within each event, Umbraco also contains the option to include pop-ups for speakers and sections to promote sponsors or exhibitors on a per event basis.

### Custom content

Yet, with all these events happening, it was important CIH had a way of making certain content accessible to members only. As new members signed up, they'd be taken to a third party site which would sync their membership with Umbraco's User Groups. With Umbraco User Groups, CIH would be able to set permissions on content by user type, meaning certain





events and publications would be limited to member access only. This would also prove beneficial in resolving a common issue of business areas generating content and failing to upload it to the correct website location.

Creating custom content for users is key to providing a bespoke user experience. With Umbraco User Groups, CIH would have the ability to create exclusive content and events for members, creating a more tailored and beneficial experience.

#### Location filters

When building a new website, we recommend tracking and analysing your audience demographic data to develop an understanding of who your users are. In doing so, you'll be able to create tailored content and build a website with bespoke features, improving the overall user experience of your site.

As CIH have members located all over the world, from England and Scotland to Canada and Hong Kong, it was important their new website accommodated for a wide variety of audience demographics. This was achieved by implementing a custom location filter on all content and event listings, to allow users to quickly locate and access information relevant to their location. After all, a user in Hong Kong will likely not need to read about an upcoming training course in Wales.

#### THE COMPLETED BUILD

Our initial discovery workshops allow us to build a checklist of client requirements, which in turn, enable us to produce websites that tick all the right boxes.

CIH required a website that was more commercial, more tailored and more streamlined, not only encouraging new users to join but offering them a better user journey. The result was a website that was organised and easy to use, with the ability to filter content for a more bespoke experience. So if you want to see a membership website that truly puts its members at the centre, take a look at the CIH site.

#### SCAFFOLDING SUPPORT

To help support CIH on their mission towards success, we have continued to improve and add functionality to their website, as the needs of their business and members have developed.

Most recently, CIH developed a set of professional characteristics for their members to follow as housing professionals. Aptly called the CIH Professional Standards, our task was to create a tool that could condense these standards without losing any of the information. As the content was particularly long, we set about giving each characteristic its own defining icon and colour, which we could then apply to clickable tabs for users to explore. This not only condensed the information into bite-sized blocks but encouraged users to interact with the page to continue their user journey through the site. When building the Professional Standards page, we made sure to use flexible content blocks and tabbed navigation, making for easy future development.

#### DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS

**Efficient CMS** – Created the website using Umbraco, making it easier for admin and content editors to build new pages and amend published content, encouraging continued development.

**New navigation menu** – Restructured the sitemap to replace silo based structuring with a mega menu option. A new drop down navigation menu with parent and sub categories made for easier browsing by users.

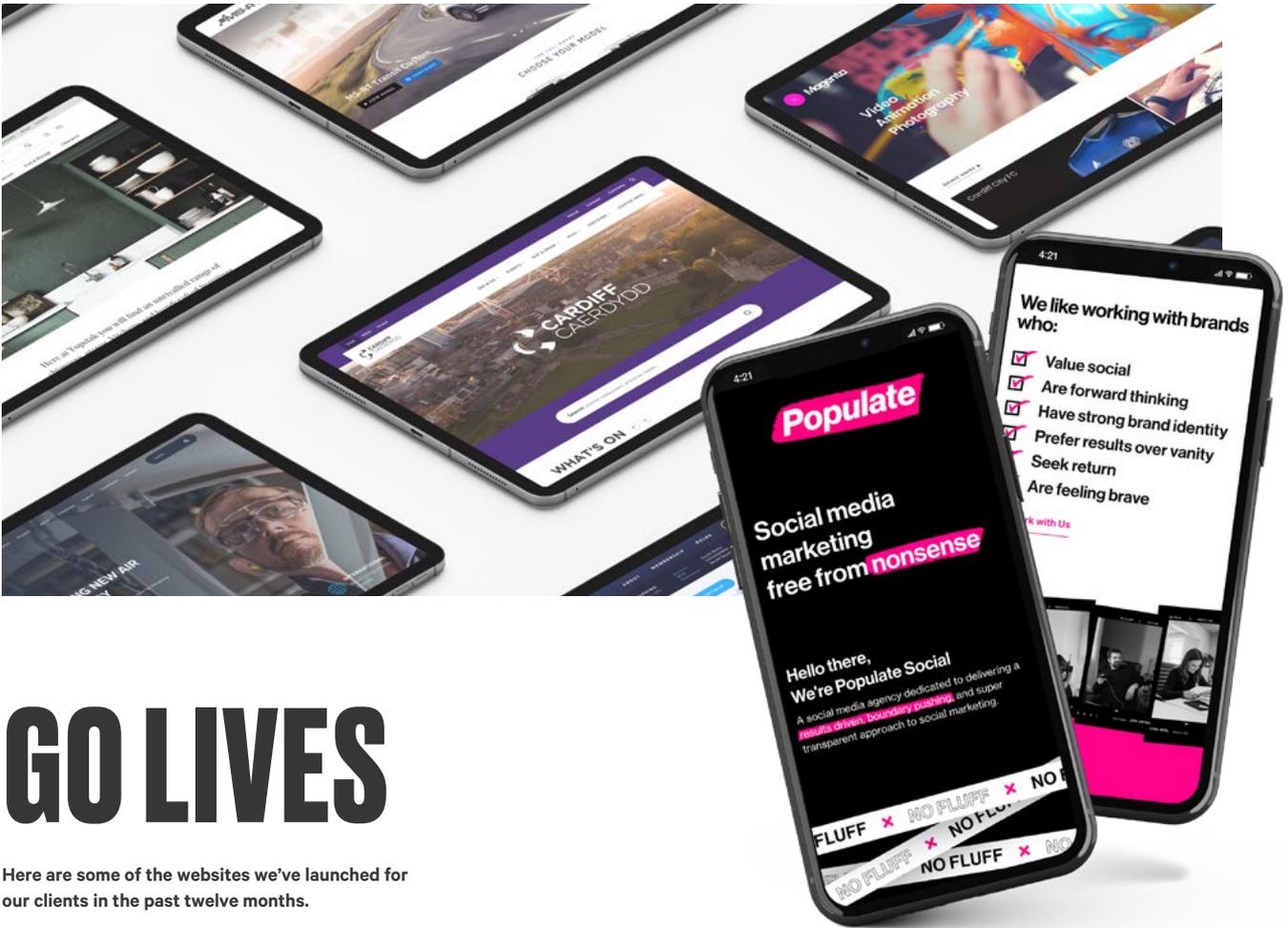
**Event sponsorship** – Umbraco's event calendar meant CIH would have more control over the presentation of their events, with the option of selling exhibitor space and displaying sponsorships on a per event basis.

**Custom filters** – Provided users with the function to filter content, events, training courses and programmes by location, making for a more tailored user experience.

**Member-only access** – Enabled CIH to create and publish member-only content that would be locked to non-member users, encouraging membership growth.

**AMAZING THINGS  
WILL HAPPEN  
WHEN YOU  
LISTEN TO THE  
CONSUMER.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF JONATHAN MILDENHALL.



# GO LIVES

Here are some of the websites we've launched for our clients in the past twelve months.


**ALWAYS PROVIDE  
VALUE. VALUE  
BUILDS TRUST.  
ONCE YOU HAVE  
THAT TRUST,  
YOU HAVE THE  
ABILITY TO DO  
SOME SELLING.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF [HUBSPOT](#).

# 02

## IN THIS SECTION:

---

**34**

### **THE SPINDOGS UMBRACO INITIATIVE**

Learn about the Spindogs Umbraco initiative from Frontend Team Leader, Sian Simms, what we will be doing and what our involvement in the Umbraco community means to Spindogs.

**36**

### **TEMPLATE VS CUSTOM WEBSITES**

Let the battle begin. Business Development Manager, Luke Cardy, delves into template vs custom websites and what they could mean for your business.

**38**

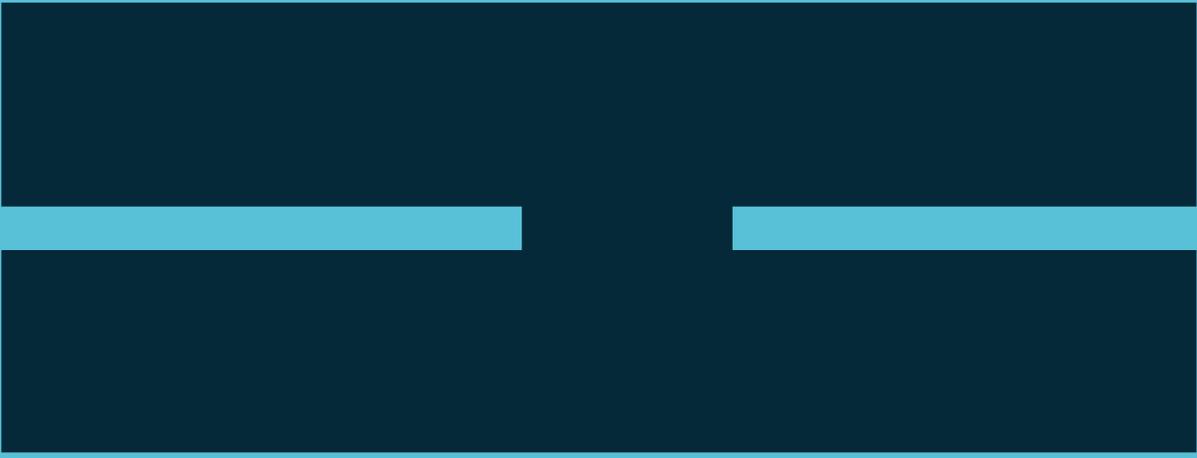
### **SPOTLIGHT ON UMBRACO MVPS**

After welcoming two additional Umbraco MVPs to the team, Abigail Phillips shines a spotlight on the team to learn more about what Umbraco means to them and Spindogs.

**40**

### **SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SUPPORT TEAM**

Hope Meredith catches up with our in-house support team.



# THE SPINDOGS UMBRACO INITIATIVE



SIAN SIMMS

## THE UMBRACO COMMUNITY

The Umbraco community is ultimately what makes Umbraco what it is today. People give their time, passion and energy to contribute in every way that they can. Everyone is so committed and friendly. I know that sounds so cliché, but honestly, everyone involved holds the same values and the Umbraco community is seriously something special.

There are many ways to get involved and contribute to the Umbraco community, such as attending meetups and festivals, where you can widen your social network and share your knowledge with others. Community teams include people who work at Umbraco HQ and are members of the community who work together to contribute to the Umbraco Open Source, from the Umbraco packages team to the documentation team and accessibility team.

We are very proud to have two Umbraco MVPs at Spindogs. Umbraco MVPs (Most Valuable People) have been honoured by Umbraco for their hard work in the community, including answering questions in the forum and contributing to packages and meetups. Nik (Senior .Net developer and one of our MVPs) and I have been developing websites using Umbraco for several years and both share an affection for the product and the community spirit which encompasses it. As a company, Spindogs are invested heavily in the Umbraco CMS (Content Management System) and its growing community, and as a result, we feel that it's only fair to find more ways to give back.

## INTRODUCING THE SPINDOGS UMBRACO INITIATIVE

The Spindogs Umbraco Initiative primarily involves developers who are a part of the everyday Umbraco team. However, we will also be asking for involvement from other colleagues across the business, including designers, project managers, and digital marketers, because there is so much valuable insight and talent that they can offer.

## WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?

Our in-house team will be partaking in a wide range of Umbraco community-driven activities, ranging from coding, blogging, and public speaking. Some activities will be purely internal, such as being responsible for Umbraco CMS base build configurations and maintenance, creating reusable plugins and helping to upskill Spindogs team members. Others will be externally orientated, such as blogging for Skrift (<https://skrift.io/>), speaking at Umbraco meetups, contributing Pull Requests to the Umbraco Core, and creating public Open Source Umbraco packages, which will be released under the Spindogs brand.

We see the Spindogs Umbraco Initiative as a brilliant way for Spindogs to get more involved with the Umbraco community, bring more value to our Umbraco clients and upskill our Umbraco team, while working towards our goal of becoming Contributing Gold Partners, which is a badge that rewards Gold Partners that go the extra mile for the growth of Umbraco and its community.



**“The Umbraco community is ultimately what makes Umbraco what it is today.”**

TECH

WEB  
WEB  
WEB  
WEB

SUS  
SUS  
SUS  
SUS



LUKE CARDY

## IN THE BLUE CORNER

# TEMPLATE WEBSITES

### WHAT IS A TEMPLATE WEBSITE?

A template website is a pre-built website, which can be customised to suit your needs, efficiently and affordably.

### ROUND #1 CUSTOMISATION

Template websites provide exactly that, page templates to be filled with content. Customisation is fairly limited with standard template designs, which can make it challenging to accurately reflect your brand's personality in the visual appearance of the site. With a template website, you'll be able to change basic design elements, such as header images, font style and logo.

### ROUND #2 SCALABILITY

While a template design can be a fantastic option if you're looking to create your first website, you may find yourself running into challenges later down the line, should your business grow. Standard templates usually don't have the flexibility required to accommodate scalability.

### ROUND #3 AFFORDABILITY

With a significantly shorter development cycle, template websites are much more wallet friendly. If you need a new website as quickly as possible, that costs as little as possible, a template website may be the perfect option for you.

## IN THE RED CORNER

# CUSTOM WEBSITES

### WHAT IS A CUSTOM WEBSITE?

A custom website is completely bespoke, with every aspect of the website tailored to your exact needs.

### ROUND #1 CUSTOMISATION

One of the biggest selling points of custom websites are their endless customisation options. A custom website will usually involve an extensive development process to ensure the branding, layouts and functionality align with the needs of your brand. With a custom design, you can rest assured that your website will be completely unique, enabling your brand to stand out from the crowd.

### ROUND #2 SCALABILITY

A custom website is designed around the needs of your business. This means, as your business grows, so too will your website. With a scalable, custom website you'll have the freedom and resources available to add new content and functions, should your business require it.

### ROUND #3 AFFORDABILITY

A custom site will require a longer design and development process. This means, with more time being invested in the project, custom websites tend to cost considerably more than template designs.

## VERDICT

### THE VERDICT - THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Want the affordability of a template design with the scalability of a custom design? If so, you're in luck!

At Spindogs, we've recently designed a variety of fully responsive, cross-browser-tested templates with increased flexibility. Our template options include:

**A variety of page types.** With a homepage, news listing, contact page and flexible content page that includes up to ten standard components, we can provide you with everything you need to build a well-structured website.

**Scalability for future growth.** Unlike other template options on the market, our template designs are completely scalable, allowing your website to grow alongside your business.

**Customisation options.** At Spindogs, we can customise our template designs to reflect your style and branding, using a logo and custom colour palette to complete the visual design of your site.

**Quick development and delivery.** Our template options are designed and ready to be customised, meaning you can expect a much shorter turn around time for the completion of your website.

# SPOTLIGHT ON UMBRACO MVPs

In 2020, we expanded our Umbraco expertise by welcoming two additional MVPs (Most Valued Players), Owain and Damien to the talented Umbraco development team. Since then, it is fair to say that our team is thriving, so we thought it was the perfect time to catch up with the team to find out more about what they do at Spindogs and why they love the 'friendly CMS' so much.



ABIGAIL PHILLIPS



## INTRODUCING THE UMBRACO TEAM

The Umbraco team has grown over the years. Sian is our longest-serving member of the Umbraco team, joining us back in 2017, and is an Umbraco Certified Expert and frontend team leader, ensuring our projects run smoothly and the team is happy.

Nik is the original MVP of the team and has recently earned the title of Certified Master. Nik has secured the MVP title for four years running with his outstanding contributions to the Umbraco community. Nik is also part of the Umbraco Packages team completing pull requests to the Content Management System (CMS) Core and the CMS Documentation. Like Nik, Owain is also a four-time MVP and Umbraco Certified Master. Owain is also part of the Umbraco HQ team that helps improve the CMS and Documentation. Lastly, our newest recruit, Damien, is an Umbraco Certified Expert and brings with him over 15 years of experience as a senior .NET Developer.



### OUR UMBRACO EXPERIENCES

Collectively, our Umbraco team has almost 25 years of experience using the CMS.

**NIK:** Since I started working with Umbraco in 2015, I have gathered over five and a half years of experience working with Umbraco version 7 and 8.

**DAMIEN:** I've been using Umbraco since 2013, so I have almost eight years of experience.

**SIAN:** I've been working with Umbraco since 2012 when I was fresh-faced and wide-eyed (newly graduated from university)!

**OWAIN:** I started looking at Umbraco back in 2017 and have been using it for personal and professional projects ever since.

### WHAT SETS UMBRACO APART FROM OTHER CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS?

**NIK:** There isn't another community quite like Umbraco. The community is welcoming, encouraging and rewarding, and there is plenty of opportunities to learn and give back to the community, too. The community space on [Our.Umbraco.com](http://Our.Umbraco.com) is full of great information and resources, including a forum where you can ask questions, link to meetups and other associated communities.

**DAMIEN:** Umbraco has the flexibility that no other CMS offers. Suitable for .NET developers, Umbraco makes it easy for users to override the default behaviour, which is something our client base value when using the editor interface. Also, the Umbraco community is something special that you don't see with many other CMS platforms.

**SIAN:** From a developer's perspective, the back office is so easy to use. The User Interface (UI) is really clean, making it easy to craft a CMS and for our clients to use it on their own.

**OWAIN:** Aside from the community, I love how it's all open source, which means I can edit the code as I wish. If I find a bug or think that I could implement something more effectively, then I can make the change and, if I am lucky, it will become part of the official CMS release.

### WHAT FEATURES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON UMBRACO IN THE FUTURE?

**NIK:** I'm excited to see the future of the new block list editor. The block editor aims to be the next generation of nested content that provides previews in the back office – something our clients will be excited to see.

**DAMIEN:** Likewise, the block list editor will be an important update for us and our clients. Clients want to see their content live and in situ before they publish, and this feature will enable them to do that.

**OWAIN:** Umbraco is working on numerous features with the community to make the CMS more accessible to individuals with disabilities. It's important to recognise that not everyone who uses Umbraco is using a mouse or even a screen, so making CMS work with screen readers, for example, will make it easier for everyone who uses it.

We think you'll agree that our Umbraco projects are in pretty safe hands with this team!



# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SUPPORT TEAM



HOPE MEREDITH

Our support team is at the heart of our work. When our clients need help with their website, whether that's fixing broken links or adding a new page to their website, our support team come to the rescue, ready to solve their issues and offer the support they need.

The support team go above and beyond for our clients daily. We sat down with Jennifer, a valued member of our client support team, to find out more about the types of support the team provides to Spindogs' clients, how our clients benefit from our in-house support team, and the celebratory wins the team has achieved during the last (dare we say it) unprecedented year.

---

**“We are that pillar of support that can react quickly to our client’s requests and reassure them that their website is up-to-date and fully functioning.”**

---

**FIRST OF ALL, HOW DO YOU AND THE TEAM SUPPORT SPINDOGS’ CLIENTS?**

**J:** Ultimately, we look after all of our clients’ websites at Spindogs. We support any changes that need making or that clients want to make to their websites. Once a client’s website has launched, it gets passed to the support team to look after and basically ‘support’. We work closely with the development team - each of our clients has dedicated time booked in with them for small development changes to the website or fixes to the site, such as bugs and defects.

As well as supporting website fixes and changes, we also manage small client projects. These small website projects can involve anything that the client wants to design or develop that take no more than two days of work for our team and doesn’t impact the overall website functionality. For example, these projects can include adding additional flexible content blocks, changing the logo or implementing redirects on the website. We create tickets in the support system - this helps us to delegate the right tasks to the right team members at Spindogs.

**WHAT ELSE DO YOU SUPPORT OUR CLIENTS WITH?**

**J:** As well as fixing bugs and resolving any urgent issues our clients have, we offer Content Management System (CMS) training. I regularly host our Spindogs’ WordPress training sessions for clients and anyone who wants to learn more about the CMS, how it works and how to use it.

**WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE HELP OUR CLIENTS TO OVERCOME?**

**J:** The support team helps to resolve our clients’ issues with their website. If something breaks on the website and they need immediate help, we’re here to react and solve the problem as soon as possible. We also help our clients to maintain and stay on top of their website by keeping it updated. For example, if there is a new release on a CMS that needs updating or new plug-ins that need installing.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ACCESSING OUR SUPPORT TEAM?**

**J:** Our clients benefit enormously from the support our team provides. Clients have support on-demand from our in-house team when they have problems with their website or any burning questions that need answering efficiently. Our clients can turn to us if they have any urgent issues that need resolving with their website, any broken links that need fixing, or if they want help with maintaining their website. As a team, we are that pillar of support that can react quickly to our clients’ requests and reassure them that their website is up-to-date and fully functioning, giving them peace of mind that their website performs exactly how they need it to for them and their customers.

**WHAT MILESTONES HAS THE TEAM REACHED THIS YEAR?**

**J:** Since last year, we have increased the number of clients we work with, to support this increase we have also doubled the size of the team, with Fern and Sarah joining us to support our clients at Spindogs.

**HOW CAN OUR CLIENTS ACCESS SUPPORT FROM YOUR TEAM?**

**J:** We’re always available for our clients to contact and access support from us and the rest of the Spindogs team. Our clients can reach us by email or by calling us – just press one to speak to the support team.

# 03

## IN THIS SECTION:

---

**44**

### **MRS BUCKÉT**

Mrs Buckét wanted to change people's attitudes towards the cleaning industry, so enlisted the help of Spindogs for a rebrand and to help define who they were. Creative Manager, Rhys Ashman, explains what we did and how a rebrand can really transform your business.

**48**

### **SPINDOGS REBRAND**

We've lost our ears, but we're still listening. Managing Director, Liam Giles explains how we found our new brand and what this means for not only the team and our clients, but also for the future of Spindogs.

**52**

### **ILLUSTRATION : COMFORT AND COMMUNICATION DURING A GLOBAL CRISIS**

Senior Designer and Illustration expert, Clare Treverrow, delves into how illustrations have played a pivotal part in communication and the role it's played during the pandemic.

**54**

### **MOBILE DESIGN: HAS NAVIGATION BEEN LEFT BEHIND?**

Senior Designer, Clare Treverrow, looks into the ever evolving use of mobile and if navigation has been considered along the way.

**56**

### **IBOS ASSOCIATION**

Hear how Spindogs helped IBOS, an international banking alliance, on their journey to a new brand and digital offering from Account Manager, Tara Peters.

DESIGN  
BRAND



# MRS BUCKET



RHYS ASHMAN

## MRS BUCKET TRANSFORMED

Mrs Buckét is a multi-award-winning commercial cleaning company, delivering commercial cleaning services and facilities to businesses in the public and private sector across the UK. Based in South Wales, Mrs Buckét understands the unique challenges different sectors face and uses its experience to offer support to offices, call centres, hospitals, manufacturing sites, schools and more to help them overcome them.

But Mrs Buckét isn't your average cleaning company. With a team of professional and reliable cleaners, Mrs Buckét gives businesses the power to thrive in their industries. Its high-quality cleaning services and facilities management help them increase their productivity, reduce sickness rates and costs, and maintain a high standard of hygiene in their workplaces to keep their staff and customers safe.



### **CHALLENGING THE PERCEPTION OF THE CLEANING INDUSTRY**

In addition to delivering high-quality commercial cleaning services and facilities, Mrs Buckét wants to change people's attitudes towards the cleaning industry.

Maintaining high standards of hygiene is more important now than ever. If coronavirus has taught us one thing, it's that cleanliness and hygiene shouldn't be compromised. The risk of cross-contamination and the effects of poor hygiene can be detrimental to your business and people.

Mrs Buckét recognises how fundamental a clean environment is to business operation and how important cleaners are in creating a safe and healthy environment for staff and customers to enjoy. With this in mind, Mrs Buckét wants to change the perception of cleaners and encourage businesses to acknowledge the value of their services.

To help Mrs Buckét with their mission, the team approached us to embark on a rebrand for the company. After being in the cleaning industry for more than a decade - recently celebrating their 15th anniversary - and moving from domestic cleaning to focus solely on commercial, it was time to give Mrs Buckét a refresh to reflect the shift in focus and cement its position as market leaders. And, what better way to celebrate an anniversary than with a rebrand?

A rebrand incorporating an updated digital presence would allow Mrs Buckét to develop a long-lasting brand, repositioning them in the industry and elevating them above the competition. A new website would establish their unique brand presence and provide opportunities to target new audiences, attract great people, and improve its current user experience.

Read on to discover how we helped Mrs Buckét challenge industry perceptions and take their brand to the next level.

### **DEFINING MRS BUCKÉT**

Branding is second nature to us at Spindogs. Whether it's creating a brand from scratch or transforming an existing brand into something new, we have the expertise and experience to take your brand to the next level. When it comes to branding, we know that it's more than a visual representation. A logo is the most recognisable part of your brand, but your positioning is what makes you authentically you. Your go-to-market messaging, tone of voice and values must sing from the same hymn sheet to ensure that your brand is consistent and reinforce your relationship with internal and external audiences.

We always take the time to get underneath the skin of a business and understand its goals and vision, and a brand discovery enables us to do just that. The brand discovery process was a collaborative project between our teams and the team at Mrs Buckét. Key stakeholders from across the company were essential to providing us with insight, research and opinion on everything from the brand, messaging, and core values, right through to the website requirements.

Running a series of workshops to evaluate the current perception of the brand and to determine the future of it, we uncovered not only Mrs Buckét's place in the market - through analysis of competitors and target audiences - but the personality and values at the core of the brand.

What became apparent was the commitment to people and an investment in talent was what made Mrs Buckét different from the rest. Recognising the human impact both on their services and their internal skill development programmes, we were able to help position Mrs Buckét as a transformative force for both their clients and their team.

This was documented in a compelling and aspirational Brand Blueprint, covering a Core Purpose, Big Idea, values in action and an instantly relatable value proposition. The Brand blueprint would enable internal team members to buy into and champion the brand, while giving a clear reason to engage to potential audiences.





# Mrs Buckét

## GIVING THE LOGO A SPRING CLEAN

As part of any brand project, the logo is the front man of the project. It's the visual identity that ties the brand together and communicates everything that the brand represents.

When designing a new logo for Mrs Buckét, we needed to recognise the equity of the original logo that so many clients recognise. We wanted to retain the DNA from the original logo and create a new interpretation that better represented Mrs Buckét and its position as market leaders in the cleaning industry. The logo also needed to reflect brand maturity and the shift from domestic to commercial cleaning.

With that said, we refined the shapes of the logo to make up the icon. We increased the segments' size to make them more impactful and visible when the logo is smaller.

The intention from the outset was to steer clear of clichéd industry tropes, with blue becoming a very tired industry staple. The colour palette was therefore crucial to the success of the new visual brand. The original logo was vibrant but ultimately it lacked impact because of the blend point where the primary brand colours met. We increased the colour vibrancy by tweaking blue, red and green and introduced purple and yellow to balance it out.

Combined with the new colour palette, some refinement of the iconography, and a refreshed typeface, the new identity reflected Mrs Buckét's intention to 'grow up' and hold a unique place in the market.

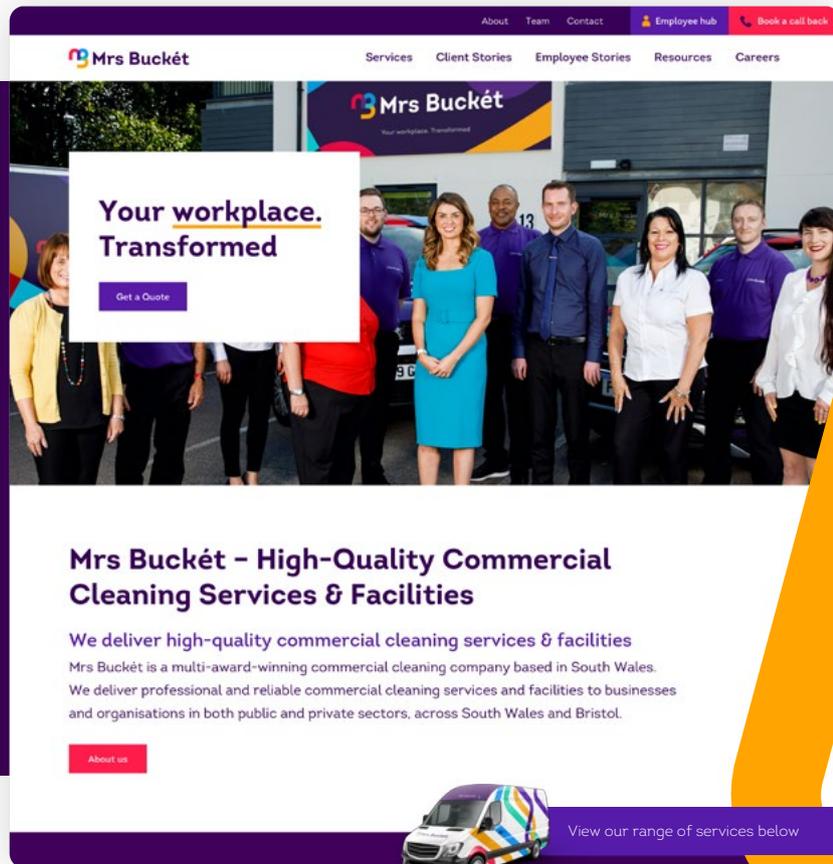
## TRANSFORMING THE WEBSITE

As part of the rebrand, we developed a website that reflected Mrs Buckét's position in the market and demonstrated the company's expertise in commercial cleaning. The website also encapsulates everything we set out in the Brand Blueprint.

Before we begin any website designs and development, we undergo a series of discussions and workshops to gain a deeper understanding of what the website requires. The new website needed to provide a better experience for Mrs Buckét's customers and staff. For example, the previous website didn't provide a positive experience for potential employees or reflect the target sectors effectively. Not only did the new website need to position Mrs Buckét as a desirable place to work, but the recruitment process needed to be improved and refined to provide a seamless experience for applicants.

To combat this, we created a dedicated 'Careers' section on the website. This section acted as a 'hub' for potential employees, where they could get easy access to the latest vacancies, more information about Mrs Buckét and why they should consider a career in commercial cleaning. It also challenged the perception of the cleaning industry as we put the focus on the people at Mrs Buckét and how the company invests in people and their careers, through unique Employee Stories, detailing the experience of a wide range of the Mrs Buckét team.

The website also needed to be user-friendly and engaging for a range of industry sectors. Mrs Buckét delivers a breadth of commercial cleaning services and facilities to multiple sectors, and this needed to be communicated clearly on the website. We created a sitemap to ensure we developed a website that served all types of users and customers. The sitemap helped us organise and group content appropriately on the website and make it easy for users to find what they were looking for. We recommended displaying services by sector, service type and facilities, as well as common challenges that clients face. This allowed Mrs Buckét to showcase its expertise and demonstrate how the team supports its clients to overcome their challenges. It was also important that we demonstrated the team's experience and expertise in the commercial cleaning industry, which is why we added 'Client Stories' to the navigation.



### RECLAIMING RANKINGS

With any new website, SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) work must be considered. After all, how else are you going to make sure your hard work is paid off and get your website in front of your target audience?

When creating a new website for a brand that's already established, we're always super mindful of the work that's previously been put in to get their website seen in search engines. We maintained the balance of current important rankings that Mrs Buckét had built and identified new ranking opportunities to increase the website visibility through extensive keyword mapping and research. This activity ensured that we were targeting the relevant keywords that Mrs Buckét wanted to be recognised for and had built up authority for with the old website. These keywords had to suit the new direction for the brand while also making sure the website was visible in Google search.

### ESTABLISHING MRS BUCKÉT AS A MARKET LEADER

The last task of the spring clean was to refresh the copy for the new website. Using the sitemap that we created to organise content and the navigation, we produced fresh, new content for the entire website, which consisted of writing copy for over 30 web pages. The keyword research and mapping activities informed what focus keywords we should use on each page to increase their visibility in SERPs (Search Engine Result Pages). Our Brand Blueprint was also invaluable when writing the new content. The guide was essential for ensuring our copy reflected the established tone of voice and brand values that we defined in the brand discovery process. The result? A collection of website content demonstrating Mrs Buckét's authority and expertise in delivering commercial cleaning for a wide range of industry sectors. Our copy also reflected the transformative impact that effective and expert cleaning services has on businesses.

### MORE THAN A CLEANING COMPANY

The greatest success of this project was our collaborative approach. We worked closely as a team and with Mrs Buckét to ensure we created a tangible brand that reflected the company's new direction. The new positioning along with the visual systems and website have not only given Mrs Buckét a competitive edge, but also the power to challenge the perception of the industry and maintain its title as the UK's leading commercial cleaning company. Head to the website to view the rebrand in action.

**“THE WHOLE PROCESS FROM START TO FINISH WAS IMPRESSIVE. REBRANDING IS NOT ABOUT A NEW LOGO AND WEBSITE, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, INVOLVING OUR TWISTER TEAM AND CONNECTING HEARTS AND MINDS TO OUR VALUES AND VISION. THROUGH THE WORKSHOPS SPINDOGS RAN FOR US, WE WERE DELIGHTED WITH THE END RESULTS.”**

Rachael Flanagan – Managing Director and Founder of Mrs Buckét

# HOW WE FOUND OUR NEW BRAND

What do you do when you've just celebrated your birthday, built a global client base and levelled up your skillset and experience? To most businesses, it would be a time to kick back and wait for years of similar success. Not us.



LIAM GILES

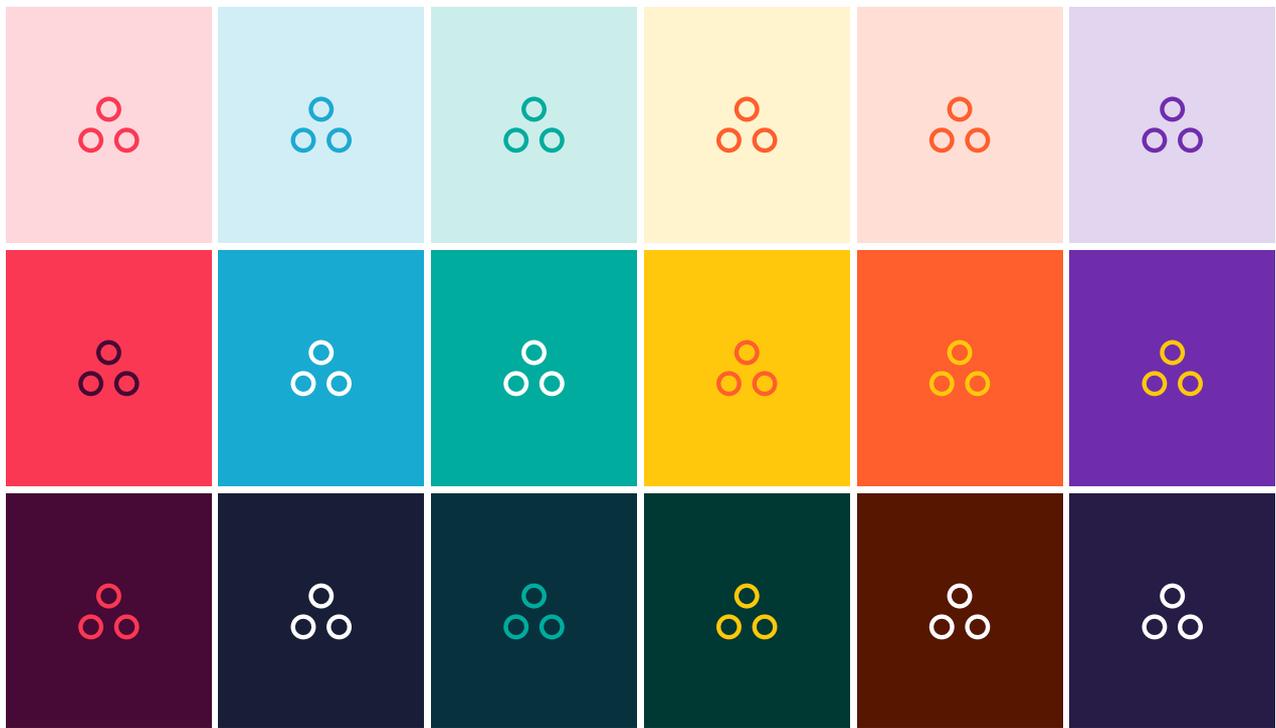
**We've lost our ears, but we're still listening**

## HOW WE FOUND OUR NEW BRAND

We knew it was the perfect time to reflect and start planning for the future. Not only had we established ourselves as experts in the digital marketing space, but we'd also experienced exponential growth and understood that we were a different beast to what we were a few years ago. We were stronger, more mature and ready to take on bigger holistic challenges. The Spindogs brand needed to reflect this.

As part of our brand review we identified a need to redefine our vision for Spindogs, our mission, purpose and values, to cement our shifting perspective and reflect our growth. A rebrand is not something we take lightly, and it has been a collaborative project for all of the team.

Using the experience gained from rebranding and repositioning many clients, we naturally followed our trusted process honed from our expertise in brand. We held a mirror up to ourselves and were honest about who we were and what direction we wanted Spindogs to go in. But most importantly, we reassessed how we do what we do and what changes we can make that are going to have a positive impact on our clients.



#### WHY THE NEW LOOK?

Essentially, we had outgrown our brand presentation. Our core purpose and tone of voice no longer did justice to who we were, didn't reflect the years of experience and new skills we had accrued, nor the level of complex and wide-ranging challenges we were overcoming for our clients.

Our former brand no longer represented us. No longer confined to Cardiff or South Wales, we work with partners from a broad range of industries and locations, and we have colleagues across the UK. Our technology is more advanced, and we offer a wider breadth of services than ever before. So, we've been on a journey of redefining who we are, what we want to achieve and what our services mean to our clients.

#### INVOLVING THE TEAM

Our people are at the core of our rebrand. Like any rebranding project we undertake with our clients, we began the process by bringing a team of people together to reevaluate the Spindogs brand and map the strategy for change. This involved running numerous discovery workshops to get under the skin of the brand and establish a set of archetypes and emotions we wanted to convey through visuals, messaging and every touch point of the company.

During these discovery workshops, we set the foundations for how we wanted to be perceived by our team, clients and the rest of the industry. We defined the essence of who we are; our core purpose, value proposition and market positioning compared to our competitors. These discovery workshops also enabled us to confirm our business goals and audience's needs to ensure that everything we did going forward would benefit Spindogs and our clients.

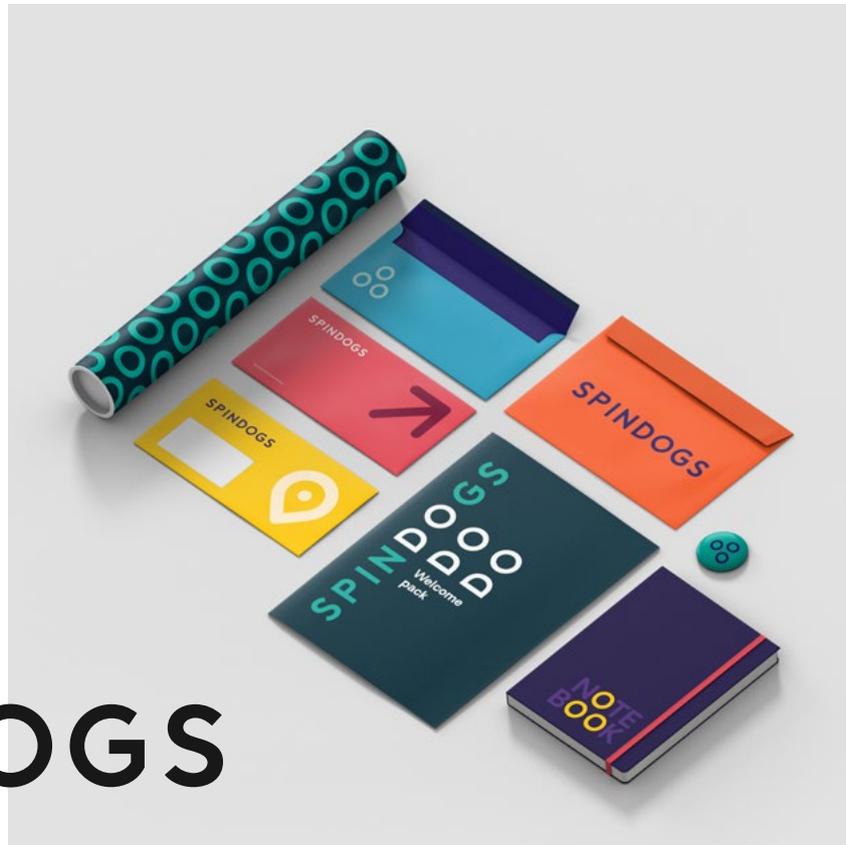
#### GATHERING EXTERNAL OPINIONS

Working on rebranding projects for our clients is second nature to us. We understand the process and the key elements that ensure it is a success. In the same way that we advocate for our clients to get an outside perspective on their brand, we knew we had to do the same when working on the project for ourselves.

While we wanted to control the process as much as possible, we knew from the get-go how important it was to have additional eyes from outside of the business to add an unbiased perspective. We're so close to the Spindogs brand that we needed third-party views to walk us through our own prejudices and help us cut to the core of what we're about - much like what we do when working with our clients' brands. It was also crucial that we involve our clients in the process - not in choosing from a beauty parade of logos, but in helping to hold up that mirror and to understand why they trust us and where we could do better.

#### DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO IN A NEW DIRECTION

We identified early on that the visual brand, while representative of who we were five years ago, was now underselling our capabilities. The ears on our logo had been with us for a long time. We knew they were synonymous with Spindogs and were a big part of our identity. But, we had to take a step back and ask, does a pair of ears really define who we are? The answer is no. We're so much more than a pair of ears on a logo, which is why we've adopted a new visual approach that reflects our three-dimensional thinking; our client-first mentality and commitment to providing solutions and results for them and their audiences.



# SPINDOGS

## “We’ve lost our ears, but we’re still listening.”

We might have lost our ears, but that doesn’t mean we have stopped listening to our clients and the industry. We still put our clients and their audiences first, and we still take the time to listen and learn from others in the digital sphere.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR OUR CLIENTS?

We might have changed how we look but the level and quality of services remain the same. Digital is still our business and is what we do best, day in day out, and we’re still here delivering effective and impactful solutions and sharing our expertise with clients, our peers and the wider industry. We’ve just made a few changes to ensure we reinforce the strong relationships we have with our clients and maintain them for the next 15 years and beyond.

Underpinning the new brand is something that we call ‘three-dimensional thinking’ - introducing the audience as an active third member of the client agency relationship. While always advocates of the client-first mindset, we believe that keeping the audience front of mind strengthens the structure of the relationship, providing a consistent point of reference that ensures our decisions are founded on genuine audience benefit rather than individual opinion or uninformed bias.

‘Full service’ means nothing if delivered in a sequence of independent activities, or you get hung up on channel or platform details. No matter

whether clients work with us in a single discipline, or have engaged with us across multiple services, we never work on projects in isolation; technical advantage, marketing performance and brand strength inform our thinking at all times. The really good stuff only happens when you think in three dimensions.

We no longer see ourselves as an agency. We’re your partner and an extension of your team, and we’re with you every step of the way. So, if you have a challenge, our digital experts are here to interrogate the status quo and find a solution that fits you, your business, and most importantly, your audience.

## WHAT’S NEXT ON OUR AGENDA?

As part of the rebranding process, we have unveiled our new logo and transformed our website to meet the needs of the business and better reflect what we do for our clients. Our new website gives us the platform to communicate who we are, demonstrate our expertise and how we support our audience. But that’s not it from us. We’re not here to stand still - we’re forever learning and growing to become better versions of ourselves. We continue to add to our global client base, tackle even bigger challenges than before and provide unique web solutions that work for our partners.

Head to our website to see our new brand in action and to learn more about how we can support you with your next project.

**CREATIVITY IS  
INTELLIGENCE  
HAVING FUN.**

**NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF ALBERT EINSTEIN.**

# ILLUSTRATION: COMFORT AND COMMUNICATION DURING A GLOBAL CRISIS



CLARE TREVERROW

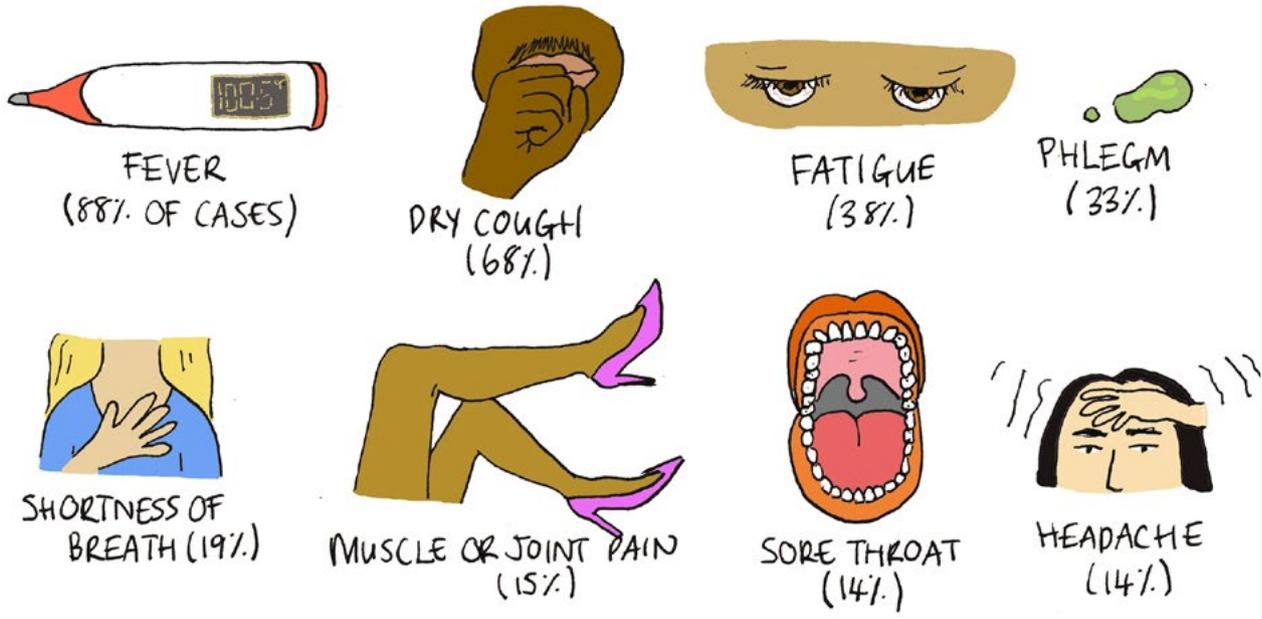


If there's one thing to learn from the pandemic, it's that people are surprisingly alike. No matter what divides us, we adapt and ultimately, want to do our bit to support each other through times of crisis. This is also true of the world of illustration. Whether we're learning about COVID symptoms from an illustrated infographic poster on the bus, or drawing rainbows on our windows to celebrate our front-line workers, it's fair to say that illustration has played a part in helping us through this pandemic.

## FINDING COMFORT

Art can provide comfort in times of crisis. With mental health concerns rising and negative news seemingly bombarding us at every turn, there's been an unconscious or conscious urge to surround ourselves with safe and comforting messages. Perhaps, as a result, there's been a rise in the trend of simplified illustrations; with the emergence of softer colour palettes, minimal line artwork, charming character designs, and soothing, organic shapes. It's fair to say that we've taken a U-turn from 2019's bolder, more disruptive trends. Many illustrators have addressed our collective anxiety in a way that has provided us with this comfort that we've been longing for. For example, illustrator Ella Masters' 'Positive Postcard Collection' aimed to restore a level of human connection via her bright and optimistic postcard illustrations. Even in a world of rising digital, going months without human touch has meant that tangible, printed sentiments are providing a deeper level of connection that screens cannot.

# Know the symptoms of coronavirus



## COMMUNICATING INFORMATION

Studies have found that visuals increase an audience's ability to retain important information. Illustrated infographics and data visualisation have proved to be invaluable communication tools as they are universally understood and convey mass information concisely and efficiently. They've been relied on heavily during this time, most notably by reputable sources such as The World Health Organisation. Even in a less official setting such as Instagram, infographic illustrations have proved helpful in spreading awareness and communicating lifesaving information. Mona Chalabi's illustration series shares advice on isolation, symptoms, and stockpiling. With Instagram now attempting to monitor false information, it's become a way for illustrators to collectively spread awareness and communicate on a wide-scale platform. A lot of these posts seem to be adopting tongue-in-cheek humour and 'ignorant' illustration styles. Ignorant illustration is a trend that voluntarily tries to produce an almost child-like, hand-drawn result that disregards convention. This style has become increasingly popular during the pandemic, again tying in with the notion of society craving comfort and softness during this time.

Due to social distancing regulations and privacy laws, there's even been an upturn in the use of illustration as a communication tool in place of photography. For example, Chris Ware illustrated the cover for the New Yorker's Health Issue, 'Bedtime' which displayed the grim reality of the life of front-line workers on the wards. Not only was illustration the only viable and legal option with this concept, but the intended shock factor was achieved without the insensitive or distasteful result that photography may have produced.

It may have gone unnoticed, but illustration has been important to us this past year. Whether it be to comfort us in times of anxiety or communicate life-saving information, it's helped us to navigate through our new reality. And as always throughout history, art has helped to unite us in a time of crisis, to remind us that we share a universal human experience, and we are not alone.

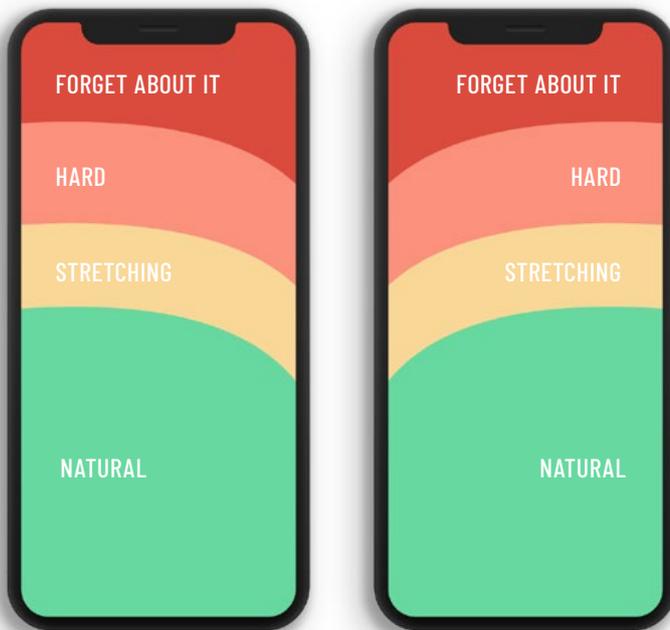


# MOBILE DESIGN: HAS NAVIGATION BEEN LEFT BEHIND?

Have you noticed how much easier it is for our thumbs to reach the bottom of our phone screens, rather than the top? Whilst phone sizes continue to increase by the year, on-screen navigation remains fairly unchanged. Yet, wouldn't it make more sense for bottom navigation to be used, much like app design, over the more traditional top menu? Let's find out.



CLARE TREVERROW



LEFT HAND

RIGHT HAND

## THE INDUSTRY'S STANDARD

The use of hamburger menus in mobile design has been the industry's standard since around 2001 when it was popularised by Ethan Marcotte's book, 'Responsive Web Design'. Since then, responsive mobile experiences have opted to hide the navigation elements via the hamburger menu at the top of the screen, to minimise clutter on smaller devices. Like desktop navigation, mobile menu buttons have traditionally featured at the top and over time it's become the go-to place people expect to find navigation.

## THE NEED FOR CHANGE

It's always a challenge to change something people have become accustomed to, but, if the easier navigation outweighs some initial confusion, it shouldn't be too long before users start to enjoy the benefits. After all, think about how angry everyone gets when Facebook or Instagram change their interface, followed by how quickly people get over it.

As designers, we aim to make the user experience as easy as possible, by constantly evaluating how our design decisions influence the user; what encourages interaction and what deters it? So, when we consider that most people use their thumbs when navigating a mobile screen and how much bigger phone screens have become, having navigation at the top starts to become less logical. Let's take a look at the thumb placement of users on smartphone screens.

This indicates that placing actions at the top of the screen discourages interactions from the user, by making them harder to reach without adjusting the phone or hand placement. Evidently, we are all that lazy, so why have one of the most used buttons where it's most difficult to reach?

---

# “As designers, we aim to make the user experience as easy as possible, by constantly evaluating how our design decisions influence the user”

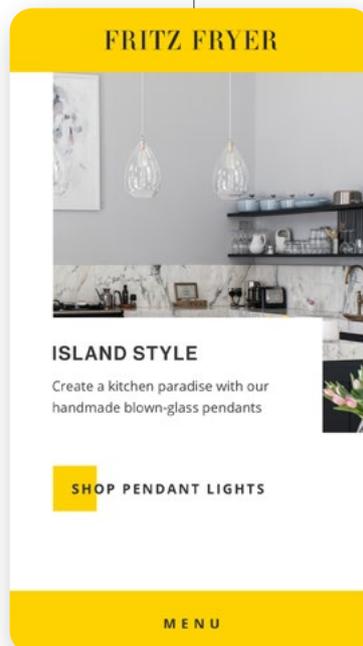
---

## THE SMARTER SOLUTIONS

The solution is as simple as moving key actions down the screen. App and mobile operating systems have been using this logic for years, mainly with a tap bar approach or simply having your most useful apps at the bottom closest to your thumb. (Side note: if you haven't arranged your most-used apps towards the bottom of your home screen on your phone, do it now!). A tap bar prioritises three to five of the most common actions and lists them in a row. It's likely you use these daily, however, tap bars are limited and don't support secondary navigation items. That's why hybrid solutions with tabs and a burger menu are best suited for sites with huge amounts of pages. For mobile navigation, the single burger menu positioned towards the bottom is still the best balance of flexibility and uncluttered UI (user interface) for most sites.

As some mobile web browsers have their own bottom navigation, it's key that the website navigation is clearly contained and visually separate from the native browser controls. One solution we're seeing more and more is a floating navigation bar or button that contains a menu icon and logo (home link). It might feel like it's initially in the way, but people tend to use the top of the screen to track their reading, so it actually makes it easier to digest content by having the menu out of the way. Plus, there's always the option to have the bar disappear when scrolling down and then reappear when scrolling up.

It's clear to see why dropping mobile navigation to the bottom of the screen makes sense but, it's not a common practice yet. Whilst early adoption might cause some initial user confusion, the benefits of usability are certainly worth it and we believe it will eventually become standard practice.



# IBOS ASSOCIATION



TARA PETERS



## CASHING IN A NEW WEBISTE

IBOS is an international banking alliance that provides connectivity for key corporates looking to expand beyond their borders. With an advanced online platform, IBOS provide local banking services on a global scale. Through collaboration and connectivity, IBOS have created a network with some of the largest banking corporations in the world and continue to gain more memberships.

With an already established business offering and growing brand awareness, IBOS approached us with the hopes of streamlining their digital presence to provide an improved UX (user experience) and ultimately encourage more users to become bank members. Overall, IBOS needed a new website that would present them as global market innovators and clearly communicate their vision to potential clients.

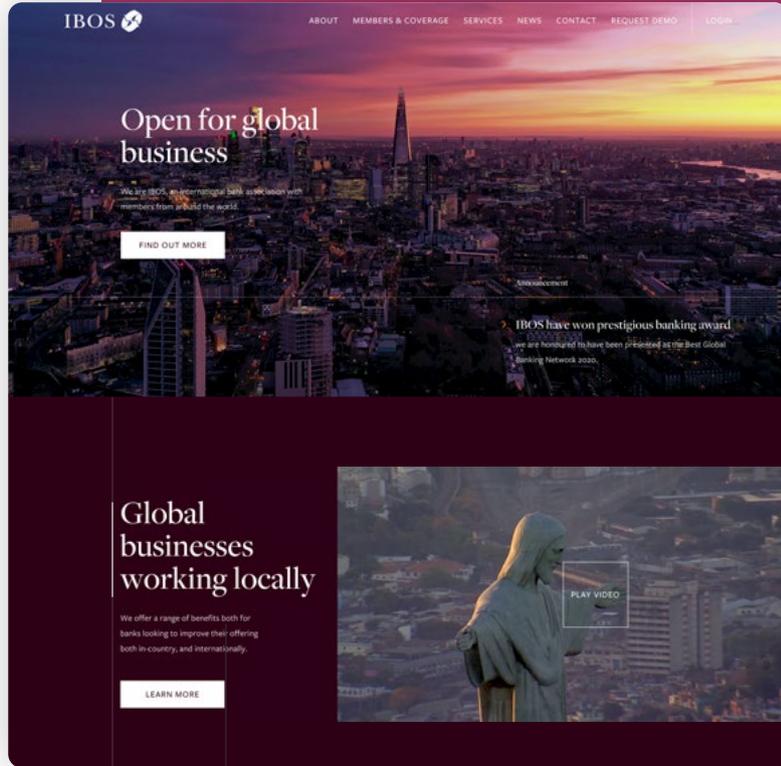
## PROJECT STATEMENT

### Reflective rebranding

At Spindogs, we start every project with a discovery meeting to brainstorm our ideas and receive direct feedback from the client. It's this initial connection with our clients that enables each of our projects to go off without a hitch!

IBOS were looking to start from scratch with a complete rebrand that could be implemented across both their website and a pitchbook. Previously, their design was outdated and lacked imagery due to the nature of IBOS being weighted towards digital opposed to visual.

To get started, we considered different ways we could present IBOS's position as a global brand within our designs. With their original warm-toned colour scheme in mind, we quickly landed on using images and videos displaying city sunsets and sun rises from around the world. This idea not only created a more visually enticing design, but placed IBOS at the centre of global destinations. Through the imagery, we were then able to pull a range of warm shades that we could implement as a colour palette across the website and promotional material, creating a consistent visual identity for users to instantly recognise.



### Simplified domains

Before we could begin building a new website for IBOS, we needed to assess their current website structure and identify key issues that needed to be resolved. Originally, IBOS had two websites, with their public facing website and member system operating on two separate domains: [ibosbanks.com](#) and [ibosassociation.com](#). However, as each domain presented a different brand name, clients began to perceive them as separate brands and businesses.

Instead, we suggested using [ibosassociation.com](#) as the core website domain and moving the member system onto a subdomain called [members.ibosassociation.com](#). In doing so, a clear brand identity was established, making for a more straightforward user experience going forward.

### Flexible multisite

At Spindogs, we always review our clients' requirements before recommending a CMS (content management system) to implement. In doing so, we can be confident that the CMS platform we use will continue to meet their needs and enable them to reach their future goals.

For IBOS, it was important they had an easy-to-use system that they could regularly access to update their content. As they effectively had two websites, their public facing site and their member system, we recommended building a WordPress multisite. This would allow IBOS to log in to one central system to update the content on both sites, without the hassle of juggling two separate CMS platforms. But, that's not all!

To make updating their websites as straightforward as possible, we even built a customisable text page with a wide selection of flexible blocks, enabling IBOS to continue creating dynamic pages and content once the project was complete.

### Optimised content

One of the key objectives of the new IBOS website was to clearly present the mission of IBOS as a brand. Previously, their website lacked clear direction and it could be challenging for users to fully grasp the purpose of IBOS in the banking industry.

To help reposition IBOS, we agreed to write keyword-rich content for the main pages of the website. This would not only enable users to immediately understand the IBOS offering, but also improve the overall SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) performance and visibility of the website, driving more organic traffic to the IBOS platform.

### CHEQUE OUT THE HIGHLIGHTS

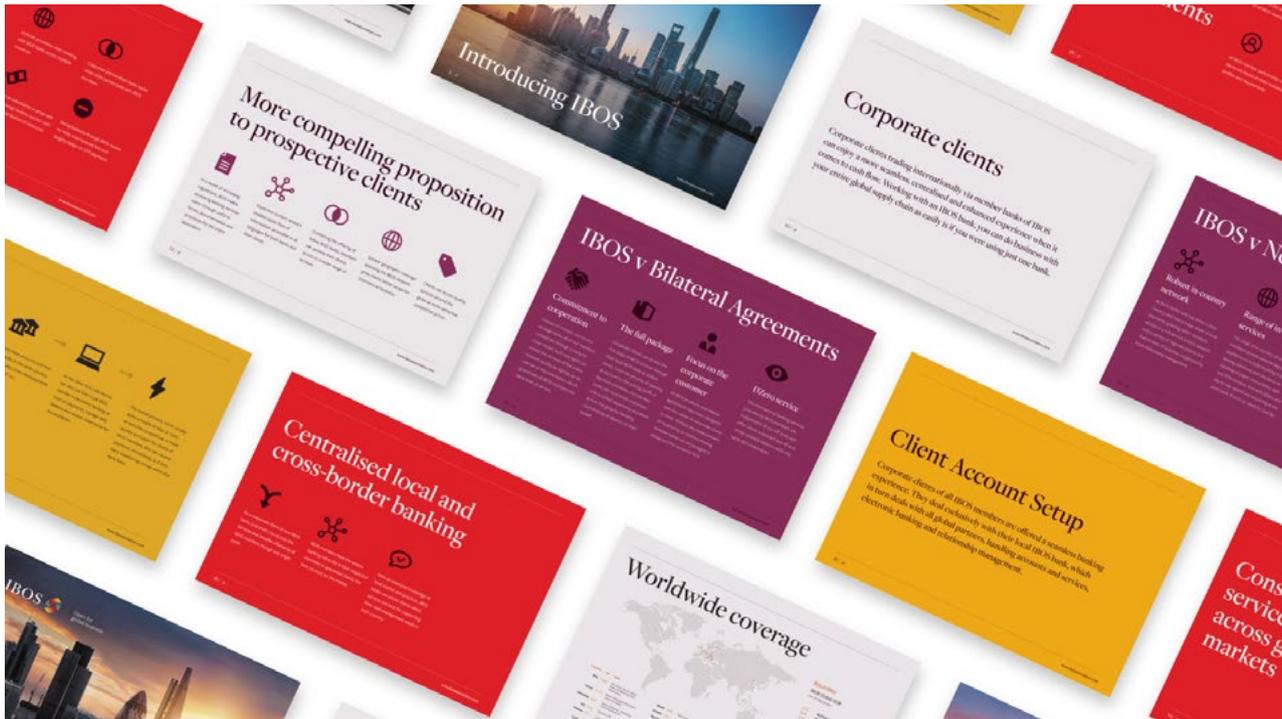
#### Pitchbook

For IBOS it was vital they had a professional pitchbook to present to potential clients. Previously, their pitchbook lacked brand personality and failed to create an enticing visual experience for users.

Implementing the sunset imagery and colour palette we'd created during the redesign process, we were able to create a pitchbook that aligned with their new brand identity. Using an image from a different location at the beginning of each section, the pitchbook took users on a journey around the world, signifying the global reach of IBOS and what clients could achieve in becoming members of the IBOS network. The pitchbook also opened with a sunrise image and ended with a sunset image.

As the pitchbook had large amounts of informative text, we created a set of icons to accompany relevant content to increase the visual experience for users.





**“THE SPINDOGS TEAM WORKED IN A COLLECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER TO DELIVER ALL KEY ELEMENTS. AS NOTED, IT’S NEVER GOODBYE - WE CONTINUE TO WORK ON NEW AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS WITH SPINDOGS AS WE TRULY BELIEVE IN OUR PARTNERSHIP APPROACH. SO, IN SHORT, THE JOURNEY HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.”**

Manoj Mistry, Managing Director, IBOS Association LTD

#### Members map

One of the key areas on the IBOS website was the members map, which displayed the geographical range of their clients. On the previous website, this map wasn’t immediately visible on the homepage and risked going unnoticed by users. Instead, we built a more visually engaging members map that can be accessed on both the homepage and on its very own subpage.

As IBOS effectively has two websites, we were able to connect the members map on the public facing site to collect data from the member system, automatically updating the map to display their global network.

#### News function

During the design and build of their new website, IBOS requested a News feature that would enable them to keep users and members up to date on company and industry developments. Using WordPress, we were able to add a News page that could be easily accessed through the CMS. Within the News feature, we included additional functionality which meant IBOS could tag an author to a post, link related articles and add category filters.

#### ACCOUNTING FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

With Spindogs, the end of your project doesn’t have to mean goodbye, as we will continue to support your business and website to reach your future goals!

For IBOS, we have continued to implement their new and improved branding across various promotional materials and documents, including their Annual General Meeting document, Ultimate Beneficial Ownership guide and Account Opening guide. With our continued support, IBOS have been able to consistently deliver visually engaging content to members that’s reflective of their brand identity.

**THE WORST  
ENEMY TO  
CREATIVITY IS  
SELF-DOUBT.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF SYLVIA PLATH.

# 04

## IN THIS SECTION:

---

**62**

### **THE RISE OF ECOMMERCE**

Ecommerce sales are now at an all-time high after the pandemic accelerated years of growth in just a few weeks. Read Marketing Manager, Emily Harris' tips on what the future of ecommerce looks like and how you can stay ahead.

**64**

### **LINKEDIN: THE DIGITAL PLACE TO BE FOR BUSINESSES**

Social media is now a key part of most businesses' strategies, but what's the best way to use LinkedIn to promote what you do? Check out some insider tips from Hope.

**66**

### **A GUIDE TO GOOGLE ANALYTICS 4**

Data Strategist, Chris Tanti, gives us his expert insights in to the newly-released version of Google Analytics.

**70**

### **TIKTOK VS REELS**

Welcome to the battle of the short-form video content with Digital Marketer, Emily Lewis, giving you all the need-to-knows to up your social game.

**72**

### **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

The world of digital marketing is full to the brim with acronyms and abbreviations, designed for efficient communication. Check out our guide to what common acronyms mean.

DM



\*AKA DIGITAL MARKETING

# THE RISE OF ECOMMERCE

Ecommerce sales are now at an all-time high after the pandemic accelerated years of growth in just a few weeks.



EMILY HARRIS

Record ecommerce competition has been fuelled by both established retailers and new businesses that launched during the pandemic. The new competition comes from products in categories that are not traditionally purchased online but in store. The pandemic has seen businesses switching from bricks and mortar to online retail so they can continue to sell their products, keep their business afloat and survive when selling from their physical stores wasn't an option.

Although the majority of businesses quickly adapted to sell online, many weren't equipped with the right skills to compete in this new and busy market successfully, often falling short with customer experience - a top differentiator for many businesses online.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS ESSENTIAL!

Today, customers expect an easy-to-use website and intuitive digital experience. With fierce competition in the ecommerce industry, there's no room for websites that aren't mobile-responsive or have poor navigation. Now's the time to bring your A-game and meet customer expectations to see profitable returns on your online activities and efforts.

## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR ECOMMERCE?

Here are a few trends to look out for in 2021 and beyond:

### 1. MOBILE SHOPPING

Have you checked your Google Analytics recently to see how much traffic is coming from mobile users? The chances are that the majority of your traffic is from mobile. Ever-increasing mobile traffic means that if your site isn't optimised for mobile users, you'll be missing out on those all important sales. Mobile shopping allows customers to shop from anywhere on their mobile devices, which has been a saviour for many during the pandemic. In 2019, Statista estimated that by the end of 2021, 73% of ecommerce sales would take place on a mobile device.

### 2. ON-SITE PERSONALISATION

On-site personalisation allows customers to have unique, custom shopping experiences. With even more ways to collect data, the opportunities to create personalised experiences for customers is easier now more than ever. Data allows your ecommerce website to dynamically serve the right content and product recommendations to the right audience, based on customers' recent search history and abandoned checkouts.

### 3. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are the newest trend in the ecommerce industry. With almost anything available via subscription, it means that we now don't even have to leave our homes or make choices in what we buy, as it's all set and delivered directly to our doors. There are subscriptions for almost anything these days, from toilet roll, deodorant, underwear, food to even tea towels. Why are they so attractive for consumers? They're convenient. For companies, subscription services create a way to plan for inventory and sales that are already locked in and help with future business planning.

### 4. SUSTAINABILITY IS IMPORTANT

Both consumers and businesses are now becoming more aware of the environment and the impact the way we do business has on the planet. Consumers are conscious and aware of the impact their shopping behaviour - how and where they shop - has on the environment. Businesses are finding ways to be more eco-friendly by going paperless, using biodegradable packaging, and using recyclable materials.

### 5. OPTIMISE YOUR DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR CONVERSION

Getting potential customers to your site is one task, but getting them to convert is another. One solution to improving conversion rates on your website is to optimise your product pages. Additional imagery, in-depth product specifications and descriptions, and customer reviews can help persuade customers to convert. Multi-channel selling is also a great way to get conversions through social advertising or shopping ads on Google.



#### FINDING WHAT WORKS FOR YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS

While it's important to consider future trends, they may not always be right for your business. Here's our handy tips to help you stay ahead of game:

1. **Get feedback from your customers to see what they think of your website and products**
2. **Take note of up-to-date industry research and trend reports, as these will help you to future-proof your website and business**
3. **Make the most of digital tools like Google Analytics to assess and review your customers' behaviour and make changes accordingly**
4. **Keep track of industry influencers and publications to find out what's new in your industry**
5. **Keep an eye on competitors to see what they are doing**

So, there's a lot of new things happening in ecommerce. Technology and consumers are forever evolving, so it's always a good move to be looking to the future and seeing what changes and additions you can implement to strengthen your website and customer experience online. One thing we know for sure is that it's never too late to get started. If you're already in the ecommerce industry, don't be afraid to try something new on your website and evaluate if it's right for your business.

But what's the secret to success? Well... that's your customers. Find out what they want, what they like and always stay true to your brand.

**“AT THE HEIGHT OF THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC, 10  
YEARS OF ECOMMERCE  
GROWTH HAPPENED IN  
JUST 90 DAYS.”**

- According to Shopify

# LINKEDIN: THE DIGITAL PLACE TO BE FOR BUSINESSES



HOPE MEREDITH

It's no secret that 2020 forced many businesses to adapt their methods of operating to be more digitally focused. With everyone required to stay at home, businesses had to find new ways of communicating and connecting with their customers. This is where, for many, social media became a key part of their overall business strategy.

One social media platform in particular that played a major role throughout the pandemic was LinkedIn. With more than 740 million active users, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional community, and still growing! Reporting record levels of engagement this quarter, with more businesses than ever looking to connect and interact, LinkedIn has become the digital place to be for businesses.

## LINKEDIN STATISTICS

- LinkedIn generates 46% of all social media traffic for businesses.
- LinkedIn produces a 3x higher lead conversion rate than Twitter and Facebook.
- LinkedIn drives almost 80% of all B2B leads.

## HOW TO USE LINKEDIN FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Whether you joined LinkedIn in the past year to network with others in your industry or you're looking to join LinkedIn in the hopes of growing brand awareness, take a look below to find out how you can make the most out of LinkedIn for your business.

### 1. JOIN LINKEDIN GROUPS

LinkedIn Groups enable businesses to join a community of users within the same industry. In doing so, you can participate in industry conversations, share your expert knowledge and network with users that are part of or interested in your sector. LinkedIn Groups are a fantastic way to get involved and grow the visibility and reputation of your business.

### 2. USE LINKEDIN SALES NAVIGATOR

LinkedIn Sales Navigator is a must-use tool for all ecommerce businesses. Providing advanced lead recommendations and real-time sales updates, LinkedIn Sales Navigator enables your business to improve the overall quality of your leads.

### 3. REACH OUT WITH INMAIL

With InMail messages, you can directly communicate with your target audience. Enabling you to contact any LinkedIn user, InMail is a great tool to use if you're looking to quickly and effectively increase brand awareness and encourage more users to interact with your business.

### 4. POST LINKEDIN STORIES

One of LinkedIn's newest features, LinkedIn Stories provides users with the opportunity to connect with their community in a more visual way. With the purpose of sharing professional experiences, opinions and industry developments, you can use LinkedIn Stories to share your insights and build a more meaningful connection with your professional audience.

### 5. GO LIVE!

LinkedIn Live allows you to communicate with other users in real-time. Whether you want to show your users a behind-the-scenes view of your business or share your thoughts on breaking industry news, LinkedIn Live can enable your business to create more personable relationships with users. And, with LinkedIn Live videos producing on average 7x more reactions and 24x more comments than native video content, now is the time to go live!

If you'd like expert advice on how you can use your business's LinkedIn account to reach your business goals, feel free to get in touch with the team at Spindogs.



**“LinkedIn produces a 3x higher lead conversion rate than Twitter and Facebook.”**

# A GUIDE TO GOOGLE ANALYTICS 4



CHRIS TANTI

Google Analytics 4 (GA4) was officially launched in October 2020 and is the latest tracking and reporting platform by Google. It is reported to have been in development since 2017 when Google launched their "Google Analytics for Firebase". However, a beta version was officially released in 2019 under the name "App + Web Properties."

GA4 is built using the Firebase Analytics backend and aims to make it easier to track both mobile and web properties under one platform.

Since Google's technology acquisition and eventual launch of the original Urchin tracker in 2005, it has rolled out three subsequent iterations of its tracking platform.

VERSION	RELEASED	KNOWN AS
GA1	2005	Urchin
GA2	2008	Classic
GA3	2013	Universal
GA4	2020	GA4

## GOOGLE HAS STATED THE FOLLOWING WITH REGARDS TO GA4'S PURPOSE:

- GA4 can measure, unify and de-duplicate user interaction data, helping businesses and digital marketers to understand the user journey.
- It adapts to a changing environment as it relates to privacy.
- It reveals intelligent business insights by using machine learning.
- It can help to act more effectively on your data to achieve goals.

## SO, WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UNIVERSAL ANALYTICS (GA3) AND GA4?

### MEASUREMENT MODEL

GA3 uses a model based on page views and sessions, while GA4 uses events and related parameters. Activities carried out by the user will generate an event (either using the auto tracked events or custom events).

### TRACKING

GA4 has been designed from the ground up to track users over a range of different device journeys. GDPR and other worldwide data privacy laws are continually developing and have changed how our information is collected and processed online.

With the change in privacy laws, cookies add a layer of complexity for data processors to manage within their policies. As a result, GA4 is designed to collect data when available via cookies or simulate metrics using advanced machine learning techniques. Also, by moving the focus away from user-specific data to more behavioural-based metrics, GA4 is repositioning itself, with many new features and functions designed to enhance the study of on-site behaviours. Google is making its move in response to GDPR and other worldwide privacy policies with additional tools within GA4 for managing user data and the deletion of user information.

### VIEWS

GA3 offers a maximum of 25 views per property. Each view could have its own filters and goals if you wished - best practice suggests creating at least three for filtered, unfiltered and testing data sets. GA4 has only one view currently, although multiple DataStreams have some similarities.

### EVENTS

Looking at GA4's history, we can see its origins firmly based in the mobile application paradigm, where many old GA3 metrics are no longer applicable, and customisable events offer more flexibility.

Event types include:

- **Automatically Collected** - these are automatically logged and include language, page\_location, page\_referrer, page\_title, screen\_resolution. This is a significant departure from GA3 and a core attribute of the GA4 data model, where all user activity can potentially be converted to an event.

# “GA4 can measure, unify and de-duplicate user interaction data, helping businesses to understand the user journey.”



- **Enhanced Measurement** - these are additional events that can be enabled or disabled via the GA4 interface. Events include file\_download, scroll and video\_start.
- **Recommended Events** - these are events with predefined names and parameters. Google recommends that you follow the suggested naming conventions where possible, but still offers you the ability to totally control how these events are fired using custom code (GTM etc).
- **Custom Events** - these are events that you name and implement yourself (similar to GA3). These events will require custom code to fire.

In GA3, an event is a special kind of hit (distinct from, for example, a pageview) that has a Category, Action and Label. By contrast, GA4 events have no Category, Action and Label but an event name and associated parameters.

Follow the below steps if you want to translate a GA3 event to GA4:

1. First, look for a matching automatically-collected event. If you find a matching event, you should not recreate a new event. If no matching automatically-collected event exists, proceed to step 2.
2. Look for a matching Enhanced Measurement event. If you find a matching event, you should not recreate a new event.
3. Look for a matching recommended event. Implement your tagging to trigger the recommended event using the naming convention suggested by Google.
4. Finally, if you cannot find a suitable equivalent event, create your own custom event.

The new debug feature is a great help when testing events, but new event parameters and custom events may take up to 24 hours to appear in the reporting platform.

It should be noted that while the GA4 event management offers a large amount of flexibility, the lack of automatically collected event varieties and the ability to totally customise events could create a rather confusing outlook for agencies and users as they attempt to replicate the familiar GA3 metrics. This is probably one of GA4's greatest strengths and weaknesses.

#### GOALS

Another significant change is the conversion measurement feature of GA4. In GA3, conversions occurred when a Goal was fired via a set of rules (for example, a landing page or event). You had a maximum of 20 potential goal place holders. GA4 no longer utilises goals as such, but you can switch any event over to a conversion.

#### REPORTS

GA4 offers a much smaller range of individual reports compared to GA3. The intention of increasing the focus on the most important information. It no longer has a "Customisation" section that previously housed dashboards, saved reports and custom reports. The following report types are available in the GA4 Analysis Hub:

- **Exploration:** allows you to create reports using tables, donut charts, line charts, scatter charts and geographic maps.
- **Segment Overlap:** create and select multiple audience segments to compare them and see where there are overlaps.

**“GA4 has been designed from the ground up to track users over a range of different device journeys.”**



- **Funnel Analysis:** create ad-hoc funnel visualisations. ‘Standard Funnel’, which shows how users are completing steps or a ‘Trended Funnel’, which allows you to see trends for each funnel step. You can also ‘Make Open Funnel’, which will include people entering the funnel at any step.
- **Path Analysis:** how people travel through your website and app with a tree graph.
- **User Explorer:** drill-down to view individual user actions and segment your users.
- **Cohort Analysis:** group users based on the dates they visited your website or used your app.
- **User Lifetime:** provides access to metrics that include all available data for your users. For example, you can use the report to see the total value generated by your users.

While the custom dashboard feature has now been removed, GA4 includes many pre-configured reporting dashboards, these include:

- **Home:** provides a top-level overview of your users and includes automated insights for the data generated by Google’s machine learning system.
- **Realtime:** lets you view current user activity on your website or app, including the number of users in the last 30 minutes.
- **Acquisition:** these reports show you how people are finding your website or app. For example, you can see the source and medium used to find your website.
- **Engagement:** lets you report on the pages people view on your website. The reports also include new metrics, like ‘Engaged Sessions’ which let you understand if people view more than one page or spend more than 10 seconds on your website.
- **Monetization:** shows revenue if you sell items on your website, accept payments in your app, or monetise your content with ads.

- **Retention:** provides cohort reports for your users, allowing you to see how often people return and engage with your website or app.
- **Demographics:** these reports let you view the geographic location of your users, along with other demographic information like age, gender and interests.
- **Technology:** lets you view details about the different devices people are using. If you’re tracking a website and an app, then you can also see a breakdown based on the platforms you’re measuring.
- **All events:** provides a list of all the events that have been tracked.

#### SHOULD YOU SWITCH OVER TO GA4?

Yes, partially. We would certainly recommend adding GA4 tracking to your existing site or new site, but we would also strongly suggest you do not stop using GA3. GA4 is still in its infancy, and Google will be adding more features as time goes on. The ecommerce tracking facilities are still not as sophisticated as GA3’s enhanced ecommerce, and third-party plugins and tools have a while to catch up with the service. Reporting, while sophisticated, can be a challenge due to its stripped-back nature. In fact, GA4 is a very stripped back service, with Google removing many of the metrics marketers have used for over a decade, probably preparing for a future with a much stronger emphasis on user privacy.

Adding the GA4 code now will build up a history of analytics data that will be useful when you feel that GA4 offers a better solution to your analytics requirements.

Note that while Google now defaults to GA4 in any new Analytics account setups, it is easy to create a property with both GA4 and GA3, or just GA3 if you prefer. How long this feature will be available is currently unknown.

**PEOPLE WILL  
FORGET WHAT  
YOU SAID, PEOPLE  
WILL FORGET  
WHAT YOU DID,  
BUT PEOPLE WILL  
NEVER FORGET  
HOW YOU MADE  
THEM FEEL.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF [MAYA ANGELOU](#).

# THE WEIGH IN



**INITIAL RELEASE**  
2020

**MONTHLY USERS**  
1 billion

**VIDEO LENGTH**  
60 seconds

**WEBSITE**  
[www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)



**INITIAL RELEASE**  
2016

**MONTHLY USERS**  
169 million

**VIDEO LENGTH**  
3 minutes

**WEBSITE**  
[www.tiktok.com](http://www.tiktok.com)

# TIKTOK VS REELS



EMILY LEWIS

Welcome to the battle of the short-form video content. In one corner, we have youngster TikTok, and in the other corner, we have veteran Instagram, which launched its new tool Reels last year. TikTok and Instagram Reels both offer short-form content with a maximum of 3 minutes on TikTok and just 60 seconds on Instagram Reels. Both make sure that your content stays relevant and is quick to the point. There's no time to raff about here.

Instagram released its Reels feature update on the platform in 2020, but whilst the feature is an infant, Instagram itself has been around for over a decade, launching in 2010. In that time, the platform has developed and grown slowly from simply posting photos and videos to implementing Stories, Ads, Live, Shopping, and now Reels. TikTok, on the other hand, only allows you to post videos.

Although TikTok has had its share of breaking news such as Trump threatening to ban the app in the US and India completely opting out of the app, Instagram hasn't always had the cleanest of records for controversy. Taking the 'Stories' feature from Snapchat and copying TikTok to create the 'Reels' feature, to name a few. However, Instagram is Goliath, part of the Facebook company, which has the money and resources to do what it wants.

Each social media platform has its own supportive following - TikTok with 689 million users, while Instagram boasts 1 billion users! So, who will win the battle?

## ROUND 1 - AESTHETIC AND DEMOGRAPHICS

There's a clear divide between the two platforms over the aesthetic of the video content. To some, TikTok is anti-aesthetic, which means the aesthetic of the video doesn't need to look polished or even consistent with their other videos, as it's more about the content rather than the videography vibe. TikTok gives people the freedom to create without worrying about the colour palette of the video. However, this could be down to the demographics of each platform, as TikTok is mainly embraced by Generation Z, although more and more demographics and businesses are joining the platform slowly. Instagram, which comprises mainly of Millennials, still puts a heavy influence on their aesthetic and brand. One of the reasons for this could be that Reels sit on users' grids, which means that the size and format of them need to look consistent with their other photos and videos.

## ROUND 2 - CONTENT AND NETWORK

Although TikTok and Instagram are both very similar in regards to short-form content, they are structured differently. Instagram uses a network-based system, which means that your friends, family and existing followers are most likely to see your Reels as they show up in their feed. In contrast, TikTok is content-based. TikTok displays content based on videos the user has watched in the past, meaning it shows relevant interest-related content, even from strangers. As a result, this makes reaching your videos to new people much easier on TikTok and why so many people have found followers fast due to their content going viral.

## ROUND 3 - ALGORITHM

Following on from Round 2, the two apps work in different ways because of their algorithms and each one is highly personalised. TikTok currently reviews what content you've previously interacted with to curate a bespoke 'For You' tab, of new video content to explore. They achieve this by analysing video content you've liked, shared, commented on, or flagged as not interested in.

Instagram, on the other hand, is secretive with its algorithm and is constantly updating. However, content creators have noticed that they are gaining traction when posting to Reels. Instagram is evidently trying to push this new feature by giving more attention to Reels and using its algorithm to promote them.

Which platform do you prefer? Only you can decide the winner!

# GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

The world of Digital Marketing is full to the brim with acronyms and abbreviations, designed for efficient communication. But, if you need to look up what an acronym stands for or the person you're talking to needs clarification about an abbreviation, that designed efficiency quickly becomes ineffective. To help, we've put together a complete list of marketing, web and Spindogs specific acronyms, putting you and your correspondents back on the same page.

## MARKETING ACRONYMS

**B2B** – Business to Business  
**B2C** – Business to Consumer  
**CMS** – Content Management System  
**CPA** – Cost per Acquisition  
**CPC** – Cost per Click  
**CPL** – Cost per Lead  
**CPV** – Cost per View  
**CR** – Conversion Rate  
**CRM** – Customer Relationship Management  
**CTA** – Call to Action  
**CTR** – Click Through Rate  
**KPI** – Key Performance Indicator  
**MoM** – Month on Month  
**PPC** – Pay per Click  
**PPL** – Pay per Lead  
**PPV** – Pay per View  
**PR** – PageRank  
**PV** – PageViews  
**QS** – Quality Score  
**ROI** – Return on Investment  
**SEM** – Search Engine Marketing  
**SEO** – Search Engine Optimisation  
**SERP** – Search Engine Results Page  
**SMO** – Social Media Optimisation  
**UI** – User Interface  
**UX** – User Experience

## WEB ACRONYMS

**ACF** – Advanced Custom Fields  
**AI** – Artificial Intelligence  
**AMP** – Accelerated Mobile Pages  
**API** – Application Programming Interface

**ARIA** – Accessible Rich Internet Applications  
**BE** – Back End Development  
**BI** – Business Intelligence  
**Bps** – Bits per Second  
**BSOD** – Blue Screen of Death  
**CDN** – Content Delivery Network  
**CMD** – Command  
**CPU** – Central Processing Unit  
**CSS** – Cascading Style Sheets  
**DHTML** – Dynamic Hypertext Markup Language  
**DMS** – Database Migration Service  
**DMS** – Dealer Management System  
**DQL** – Data Query Language  
**EPS** – Encapsulated Postscript  
**FE** – Frontend Development  
**GPU** – Graphics Processing Unit  
**HTML** – Hypertext Markup Language  
**HTTP** – Hypertext Transport Protocol  
**HTTPS** – Hypertext Transport Protocol Secure  
**IDE** – Integrated Development Environment  
**IGP** – Interior Gateway Protocol  
**IMAP** – Internet Message Access Protocol  
**IP** – Internet Protocol  
**JS** – JavaScript  
**Kb** – Kilobyte  
**Kbps** – Kilobits per Second  
**LAN** – Local Area Network  
**Mbps** – Megabits per Second  
**MI** – Management Information  
**NFS** – Network File System  
**PII** – Personally Identifiable Information  
**RAD** – Rapid Application Development  
**RAM** – Random Access Memory

**ROM** – Read-Only Memory  
**SAN** – Storage Area Network  
**SDK** – Software Development Kit  
**SOE** – Standard Operating Environment  
**SQL** – Structured Query Language  
**SSH** – Secure Shell  
**SSID** – Service Set Identifier  
**SSL** – Secure Sockets Layer  
**UAT** – User Acceptance Testing  
**UI** – User Interface  
**URL** – Uniform Resource Locator  
**VB** – Visual Basic  
**VBS** – Visual Basic Script  
**VLAN** – Virtual Local Area Network  
**VoIP** – Voice over Internet Protocol  
**VPN** – Virtual Private Network  
**WAI** – Web Accessibility Initiative  
**WAN** – Wide Area Network  
**WAVE** – Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool  
**WP** – WordPress  
**WPA** – Wi-Fi Protected Access  
**WPAN** – Wireless Personal Area Network

## SPINDOGS ACRONYMS

**AM** – Account Manager  
**BD** – Business Development  
**Dev** – Developer  
**DM** – Digital Marketing  
**OM** – Online Marketing  
**PM** – Project Manager

**CONTENT IS  
FIRE. SOCIAL  
MEDIA IS  
GASOLINE.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF JAY BAER.

# 05

## IN THIS SECTION:

---

**76**

### **INTERVIEW – RAK KALIDAS - LEVY**

Ready to fight back after a year that shook the hospitality industry, we interview Levy who adapted their business strategy, focusing on digital technology to provide its legendary food and drink experiences this year and beyond.

**80**

### **INTERVIEW – JONATHAN WINGROVE - ITSETTLED**

The UK's first automated cashflow management platform, itsettled, provides businesses with an easier way to manage cashflow with the added guarantee of receiving results. Check out our interview with founder, Jonathan Wingrove.

**84**

### **INTERVIEW – KAT PITHER - YOGI BARE**

To help us through the pandemic, many of us have invested in our wellness and developed a new self-care routine to aid our mental health. Read our interview with the founder of Yogi Bare who explains why wellbeing is at the heart of what they do.

ST

SE

SE

SE

SE



## LEVY UK AND IRELAND

# RAK KALIDAS

One sector, in particular, that has felt the effects of the pandemic is sports and hospitality. Ready to fight back in 2021, Levy has adapted its business strategy, focusing on digital technology to provide its legendary food and drink experiences this year and beyond.



EMILY HARRIS

2020 was the year that shook several sectors and forced businesses to stand still. Sporting events at arenas and leisure venues were put on hold last year as most of us stayed at home. Now, the sports and hospitality sector is opening up once again as we start to venture out and gain a bit of normality. The sector has changed its business strategies and is relying on digital technology to operate safely.

One business that's put digital first is Levy UK and Ireland. The sports and hospitality sector of Compass Group UK and Ireland is the market leader in the provision of legendary food and drinks experiences at some of the UK's most significant sporting arena and leisure venues, including the likes of The O2 Arena, Twickenham Stadium, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and the All England Lawn Tennis Club at Wimbledon. With strong client partnerships, Levy creates bespoke food concepts, service standards and pioneering design, and implements a guest-first approach at every venue. With a company-wide passion for food, Levy creates menus and food experiences that feature fantastic seasonal dishes, with a strong focus on British ingredients.

Marketing Manager, Emily, caught up with Rak Kalidas, Commercial Director at Levy UK and Ireland since Oct 2018, to discuss the impact the pandemic has had on Levy and the rest of the sports and hospitality sector, and what changes they have made to adapt and cope with the changes in 2021.

**E: TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT LEVY AND A BRIEF HISTORY OF YOUR CAREER TO DATE.**

**R:** As the Commercial Director at Levy UK and Ireland, I oversee the strategic design and implementation of commercial projects across the Levy portfolio of stadiums, arenas, and conference and exhibition events venues. I work with our teams to design bespoke, industry leading business strategies for some of the UK's most significant events and hospitality venues. As part of my role, I have strategic oversight of marketing and innovation channels, and support the mobilisation and operational delivery of projects at Levy venues. As well as my specific role for Levy, I am also Head of Diversity and Inclusion for the wider Compass UK & Ireland group. Overall, I have more than 20 years of experience across the broader food, beverage and hospitality industries.

**E: HOW HAS 2020 IMPACTED YOUR OVERALL OPERATIONS WITH THE REDUCTION IN EVENTS AND THE CLOSURE OF MANY HOSPITALITY VENUES?**

**R:** Two years ago, it was almost inconceivable that stadiums and venues would lie empty for the vast majority of 2020. While few industries, if any at all, have been able to navigate the coronavirus crisis unscathed, it's no exaggeration to say that events hospitality has been one of the hardest hit sectors. Stadium and arena-based hospitality providers are part of a fairly limited cohort where their entire operational model has been all but impossible to deliver during the pandemic.

**E: HOW HAS THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY CHANGED THIS YEAR AND HAVE YOU SEEN ANY SUCCESS STORIES OF BUSINESSES USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO ADAPT THEIR STRATEGY TO COPE WITH THE CHANGES?**

**R:** A technological shift was already well underway in many stadium and arena venues pre-pandemic. Levy and its partners have been pioneering the use of pre-ordering systems, dynamic queuing, cashless payment solutions and other technologies for several years. For example, the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium became the first fully cashless venue in the Premier League when it opened.

These kinds of innovative technologies, which have always helped to improve the speed and quality of customer service in venues, have been repurposed to allow for the safe return of fans to venues across the country. By analysing every step of the customer journey, we have looked to implement technology solutions where they will be most effective and enable guests to move more seamlessly through venue spaces, avoid congestion in normally busy areas and enable a greater level of hygiene, health and safety. We have seen a rise in the use of personal devices in stadiums for activities like pre-order and payment. Operators should be mindful of this and may look to introduce or upgrade fan apps to create a much more digitised stadium experience.

---

**“Digital also offers a great opportunity to listen and learn – whether that’s engaging with a client or picking up insights.”**

---

We know it remains a long road to returning to a life that’s similar to before the pandemic, and an even longer one to fully recovering – especially as we have seen how quickly official guidance can change. However, we have seen the positive indicators that the recovery will be eminently possible. We worked hard throughout 2020 to conduct a series of test events at venues including Edgbaston, The Twickenham Stoop and the Oval – the latter of which involved over 2,000 cricket fans – which were all met with an overwhelmingly positive response. We were also busy in the run-up to Christmas preparing for the gradual return of fans to venues that were announced in November. We used the insights gained from test events around the customer journey, health and safety, interactions in venue spaces, managing guest expectations and more to guide our preparations for the return of fans to venues as restrictions lifted.

Seeing fans return to Twickenham, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, Stamford Bridge and elsewhere allowed us to demonstrate that it is possible to deliver safe and enjoyable experiences in stadiums despite the pandemic. It’s been fantastic to see the return of fans to sport again, and we can’t wait to see this more as we move further into 2021.

**E: WHAT BUSINESS PLANS HAVE YOU HAD TO PUT IN PLACE THAT YOU HADN’T EVEN CONSIDERED A YEAR AGO?**

**R:** While there will be, understandably, some changes to the experiences that we expect to deliver in a post-COVID world, it’s often been a case of building on existing plans and trends rather than implementing wholesale changes. We’ve always observed strict hygiene standards and cleaning protocols in our venues for example, and many of our venues are already partially or fully cashless.

Naturally, the entire industry is currently looking towards recovery, identifying what this may look like and how it will manifest itself in real terms. Before the pandemic, our industry had made great strides in implementing greater sustainable and ethical practices into our business models, and Levy has been at the forefront of this shift. In our continued response to the impact of the pandemic, we’ve always been clear about seizing the opportunity to continue driving these principles, rather than finding excuses to renege on them.



**“Before the pandemic, our industry had made great strides in implementing greater sustainable and ethical practices into our business models, and Levy has been at the forefront of this shift.”**



**E: HOW IMPORTANT IS DIGITAL TO LEVY, HOW IS IT USED TO REACH YOUR AUDIENCE, AND HAS DIGITAL BECOME MORE OF A PRIORITY FOR LEVY THIS YEAR?**

**R:** Digital has always been important to Levy for communicating with our audience, but more so than ever during the pandemic because of lockdown measures and the lack of in-person meetings or events. As a business, we've used the pandemic as an opportunity to reflect on our work and how we communicate and deliver our services. We've also tried to be forward-looking and forward-thinking throughout the crisis, using social media and blog posts to offer insights and thought leadership that is both optimistic and pragmatic about the situation our industry is facing.

Digital has also been vital for staying connected with colleagues, clients and our wider industry partners. Our digital channels offer reassurance that we, as a business, are not only thinking the same things and having the same conversations as our venue partners but that we've worked hard to develop practical solutions to address each aspect of the reopening. The monthly forums we've hosted with our venue partners have also given our clients the chance to engage with each other, share tips and offer advice on best practice around everything from health and safety to seat-mapping software, e-ticketing and more.

**E: HAVE YOU SEEN MORE OF A DIGITAL DEMAND FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, AND HOW HAVE YOU ADAPTED YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE TO COPE WITH IT?**

**R:** Before the pandemic, we certainly saw a rise in digital interaction between venues and their guests. This was happening inside stadiums and arenas because of the technological shift that had been occurring for some years. There are more app-based engagements around food and drink, for example, and greater use of digital ticketing solutions. Fans are also increasingly looking to engage digitally with clubs outside of the matchday experience, on social media and elsewhere.

**E: DID YOU HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR COMMERCIAL APPROACH IN 2020 TO REMAIN AGILE AND HOW DID YOU DO THIS?**

**R:** We were unable to offer our services to guests inside stadium and arena venues throughout much of 2020 due to COVID-19. But outside of this, we largely took a 'business as usual' commercial approach. Clients understandably wanted to know what we could offer them once their doors could open once more, even if the specifics of in-venue experiences are different in the short term. Likewise, a digital-first approach to pitching for prospective clients doesn't impact the longer view of what we're looking to deliver to our partners over a five-year or ten-year period, which remains unchanged. We're still just as committed to reducing food waste, using technology to enhance experiences, and designing plant-forward menus that are good for people and the planet, and delivering on these core values will always be at the heart of what we do.

**E: AS THE COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR AT LEVY, HOW DOES DIGITAL PLAY A PART IN YOUR ROLE?**

**R:** Being active on digital and social channels is a key part of my role, lockdown or otherwise. As the Commercial Director at Levy, I need to be visible to both current and prospective venue partners to increase potential touchpoints and ensure I'm consistently advocating for the great work that we do. Digital also offers a great opportunity to listen and learn – whether that's engaging with a client or picking up insights and advice shared by others across the industry.

**E: WHAT DOES THE DIGITAL FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR LEVY AND ITS CUSTOMERS?**

**R:** We're going to see the digitisation of venues being accelerated throughout 2021 and beyond. That means more e-ticketing as a standard and increased use of guest data to create more impactful experiences that appeal to each individual.

**STOP INTERRUPTING  
WHAT PEOPLE ARE  
INTERESTED IN AND  
BE WHAT PEOPLE  
ARE INTERESTED IN.**

NOT OUR WORDS, BUT THE WORDS OF [CRAIG DAVIS](#).

## ITSETTLED

# JONATHAN WINGROVE

Now, more than ever, the economy needs protecting. Armed with an automated cashflow and credit management platform, itsettled is committed to providing business owners with the tools they need to take back control of their cashflow.



EMILY HARRIS

During 2020, the economy was pushed to breaking point on more than one occasion. For SMEs, in particular, the impacts of the past year have been significant, with even a small drop in revenue having a detrimental impact on the survival of their businesses. As small and large businesses alike struggled to adapt, those who faced late payments were forced to consider permanent closure.

Luckily, itsettled stepped in to help. As the UK's first automated cashflow and credit management platform, itsettled provides businesses with an easier way to improve their cashflow. Understanding that the process of chasing delayed payments can quickly become a huge headache for business owners, the itsettled platform enables businesses to effectively collect their debts, saving time, hassle and stress.

Our Marketing Manager, Emily, caught up with Jonathan Wingrove, COO of itsettled, to discuss the challenges of starting a new business during the pandemic, and how they used digital to make the launch of their brand a success.

#### **E: TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT ITSETTLED AND A BRIEF HISTORY OF YOUR CAREER TO DATE.**

**J:** I originally graduated in 2000 with a degree in Graphic Design before moving into marketing and brand management. In 2019, I was asked to join Credebt, which is itsettled's sister company. Now, I'm the COO of itsettled, where my role consists of overseeing everyone in the team and further developing our platform and offering.

#### **E: ITSETTLED LAUNCHED IN 2020, HOW HAS IT BEEN LAUNCHING AND STARTING A BUSINESS DURING A PANDEMIC?**

**J:** Like many businesses, we've found the pandemic challenging - but it has also allowed us some valuable time for growth and expansion. We've welcomed four new members to the team so far this year, so that's been really exciting for everyone.

We're very lucky as we're also on two NatWest accelerator programmes, one focused on the South West and one focused on FinTech. Being on the accelerator has been invaluable for us, especially given the ongoing situation with COVID, as we've been able to build a really strong network with our business neighbours here in Bristol, as well as further afield.

#### **E: WHAT CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES HAVE YOU FACED LAUNCHING A NEW BUSINESS AND WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO OTHERS STARTING A NEW BUSINESS?**

**J:** One of our first challenges has probably been our biggest as well. We really struggled to find a development team for our platform who shared our vision and would devote enough energy to itsettled. However, after a few wrong decisions, and much validated learning, we're really proud of what we've created.

In terms of advice, persistence is key. Make sure you have faith in your product or business offering, as that's what will get you through the challenging times. I'd also say that sharing decisions is really important. At itsettled, we make decisions together as a team and we drive the company's direction together.



**“Make sure you have faith in your product or business offering, as that’s what will get you through the challenging times.”**

**E: WHAT IS THE MAIN PROBLEM ITSETTLED IS TRYING TO SOLVE AND HOW IS ITSETTLED UNIQUE TO THE MARKET?**

**J:** We founded itsettled to target the late payment culture in the UK. We're unique because we're the first of our kind - an automated cashflow and credit management platform. We're rewriting the rules of the industry by improving our customers' cashflow position and protecting them from future risks. We have a one-of-a-kind process that's built on our experience in the financial industry. The itsettled platform doesn't require any training to use it, so that makes us different, and to my mind, better - as our customers don't have to spend time learning how to use our platform before they can start chasing their invoices.

**E: HAVE YOU SEEN AN INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR SUPPORT FROM BUSINESSES NEEDING TO ADAPT THE WAY THEY CONTROL THEIR PAYMENTS? WHAT HAVE BEEN THEIR BIGGEST FRUSTRATIONS AND HOW CAN YOU SOLVE THEM?**

**J:** Definitely - the pandemic has really forced businesses to take a good look at their finances and their cashflow. There's been a lot of government support for businesses, which is great, but at some point in the near future businesses are going to have to start repaying their loans, and I think that's when we'll see a lot of issues, unfortunately. With itsettled, our process is really easy to use, so busy business owners who perhaps don't employ a credit controller can use our platform. We also offer a lot of valuable content for our members, with articles on topics such as common excuses for late payment, so our members have lots of information at their disposal which they can use with clients who are refusing to pay.

**E: HOW HAVE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES PLAYED A PART IN ATTRACTING NEW USERS AND COMMUNICATING WITH EXISTING USERS, AND HAS THERE BEEN A NEED TO INVEST MORE IN ORDER TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF WHAT YOU DO?**

**J:** Digital technology is a massive part of itsettled - after all, we're a digital platform! We do a lot of our marketing via digital channels, so it's important for us to spend time on getting that perfect. We hired a digital marketing manager in February, so we understand the importance of investing in digital communication.

**E: WHAT HAVE BEEN THE KEY MESSAGES OR CAMPAIGNS FOR ITSETTLED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? WHAT'S BEEN ON THE AGENDA AND HAS THE PANDEMIC SHAPED THE FOCUS OF ITSETTLED CAMPAIGNS?**

**J:** We launched our #GetTheUKPaid initiative earlier this year, in which we offered 1000 UK businesses the chance to get ten of their invoices paid for free, before the end of the summer. We were really excited by the response we saw, and the impact we made during that campaign.

We also launched our partnership with two accountancy software providers; FreeAgent and Sage, and we have many other partnerships on the way. To celebrate this, we hosted a series of webinars earlier in the year.

We also co-hosted a campaign with Leapers, a mental health organisation for freelancers and the self-employed community, for Mental Health Awareness Week - this is really important to us and a key part of our business.





**E: HAVE YOU SEEN A SHIFT IN THE NEED FOR APPS TO CONTROL FINANCES FOR BUSINESSES AND HAS THERE BEEN A SHIFT IN THE TYPES OF USERS?**

**J:** Yes, definitely. With the rise of digital technology over the past ten years, there's been a huge shift in how people interact with traditional services, such as banks. More and more people want digital access to services, and so apps and platforms like itsettled work great for those customers.

However, as the internet has grown, I also think the wealth of information available can be overwhelming for some. When you google 'how to collect late payments from customers', there are a staggering 484,000,000 results. The point of itsettled is that everything is written out for you, so you don't have to waste time looking for the best way to improve cashflow, as you've already got the most effective process at your fingertips.

**E: WHAT WILL BE THE KEY FOCUS FOR ITSETTLED IN 2021? HOW WILL DIGITAL PLAY A PART IN THIS?**

**J:** At the moment, our key focus is growth and building on our existing partnerships. We're really looking forward to launching some exciting collaborations in the next few months with leading financial providers and institutions.

**E: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR ITSETTLED? ANY EXCITING PLANS WE SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR?**

**J:** We'll be continuing to grow, and we're looking to introduce our customers to our sustainability targets very soon. Being a Bristol start-up, it's very important to us that we share our environmental impact and our goals to improve it with our customers. We want to help as many businesses as possible and eradicate the late payment culture we have in this country.

Mostly we're just really excited for what the rest of 2021 brings. You can find itsettled on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook at @itsettled.

# SPINDOGS SERVICES WORD SEARCH

Print this word search out or access it online by clicking this link: [thewordsearch.com/puzzle/2442985](http://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/2442985).  
The online version changes with every access or page refresh.

R	E	P	I	I	T	W	T	G	O	E	E	K	P
N	S	O	T	N	S	O	L	N	P	R	T	T	N
P	N	G	K	O	E	R	O	I	R	T	I	W	E
K	O	O	S	C	O	D	G	T	I	A	E	E	S
G	I	C	U	I	N	P	O	E	N	S	C	B	C
A	T	R	S	T	I	R	D	K	T	U	O	D	I
T	A	C	L	N	N	E	E	R	T	P	M	E	T
R	R	I	R	E	E	S	S	A	C	P	M	S	Y
A	G	T	A	K	S	S	I	M	A	O	E	I	L
I	E	E	R	G	A	A	G	L	O	R	R	G	A
N	T	P	P	C	N	S	N	I	M	T	C	N	N
I	N	P	N	U	M	B	R	A	C	O	E	T	A
N	I	I	U	R	I	M	E	M	I	N	T	R	D
G	R	A	P	H	I	C	D	E	S	I	G	N	S

TRAINING  
ANALYTICS  
ECOMMERCE  
EMAIL MARKETING

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
KENTICO  
LOGO DESIGN  
PPC

PRINT  
SEO  
SUPPORT  
UMBRACO

WEB DESIGN  
WORDPRESS  
INTEGRATIONS

YOGI BARE  
**KAT PITHER**

Marketing Manager, Emily, caught up with Kat, founder of Yogi Bare, to discuss the impact digital has had on her business in the last year.



EMILY HARRIS

---

# “I never see our community/social media followers as only consumers; I see them as real people, real friends.”

---

If last year taught us anything, it was the need to slow down. To help us through the pandemic, many of us have invested in our wellness and developed a new self-care routine to aid our mental health. In fact, self-care was one of the biggest trends to emerge from the pandemic - Google Search Trends showed a 250% increase in self-care related searches since the first lockdown in March 2020.

As part of our self-care routine, many of us have turned to yoga to give us the space to breathe and step away from our busy schedules, or whatever life has thrown at us. As we haven't been able to go to our usual yoga studios, we have had to set up studio spaces in our homes, where we can burn incense and roll out mats to continue our practice. One yoga brand that has allowed its customers to do just that is Yogi Bare. Kat Pither, the founder of Yogi Bare, tells us more about the brand and how she continues to connect with and support her community through the power of digital.

## **E: TELL US MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOGI BARE...**

**K:** Hey, my name is Kat and I am the founder of Yogi Bare. We are an eco-conscious (without the ego), high-performance yoga mat and equipment company. My team would probably describe me as a chief troublemaker (or the eco-conscious version of the nutty professor) but I prefer Yoga Lands Cupid. I connect yogis and movers with their souls and mats and help build their confidence and find their flow. Yogi Bare was founded in 2016 in beautiful Penarth (original HQ was SafeStore in Cardiff Bay - you can imagine the glamour!).

## **E: WHAT IS YOGI BARE'S ETHOS?**

**K:** My favourite Nirvana lyric is "Come as you are". I feel like those few words truly sum up what Yogi Bare means. It's not yoga mats - it's a feeling, I'm not here to sell you anything. Through the brand, I want to make you feel something. I discovered yoga at a young age while in rehab struggling with addiction to relieve PTSD and anxiety. I am not afraid to share my personal story; it's an important stitch in the Yogi Bare story and hopefully, it shows how real the brand is and is something that people can connect

with. If it helps people to feel like they have space and a place to belong in yoga land instead of feeling like they don't fit in, and that ripples into them learning techniques to find happiness and flow in their life and managing their mental health, well, then that is the thing I am most grateful for and proud of.

## **E: HOW HAS DIGITAL HELPED YOU TO FIND A CONNECTION, MAINTAIN AUTHENTICITY AND SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY?**

**K:** Social is our little portal to the outside world. It's our own Truman Show and, as much of a weird reputation it can sometimes have, I really believe that you can use social media to do good things. I think the trick is to not get too wrapped up in what you think you or how a "proper" brand "should" be on social media. Just think how you would like to be spoken to and cared for and work from there. I never see our community/social media followers as only consumers; I see them as real people, real friends - and they do become that! So, work from there. Support them in the way they support you.

## **E: HOW DO YOU USE DIGITAL TO PROMOTE WHAT YOU DO, AND HAVE YOU SEEN A SHIFT IN THE TYPES OF DIGITAL MARKETING YOU DO TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS IN THE LAST YEAR?**

**K:** Without digital marketing and social media, we would have been voiceless. Social media has been our little High-Fidelity Boombox to play romantic mixtapes to the world from. You can really use it for good - from IG takeovers, hosting classes and discussions on Instagram, creating YouTube meditations, writing honest blog posts and sending emails that make people feel safe and seen. You can find a way to balance honest heart and soul with the more practical pieces of brand messaging.

There were times in 2020 where social media became a really sad and scary place to be, but it's important to not look at what others are doing. Go back to the essence of why you started your brand and how you want to make people feel, and then align your marketing strategy to those two things.





**E: RUNNING AN ONLINE BUSINESS CAN BE 24/7. HOW DO YOU SEPARATE WORK FROM HOME TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY?**

**K:** It is hard. The boundaries kind of went out of the window for everyone in 2020. We relied on technology to WFH (work from home) and as a doorway to connection. So, my advice is: get outside and surround yourself with real things – nature, food, friends, laughter and dogs. But, not the dogs you see in YouTube videos! Sometimes all you need is to breathe in the fresh air and realise that most of our stresses and problems are associated with a pretend world that lives on our phones, in our inboxes, on television, or in magazines. As soon as you step away from those things and the hold they have on you, you feel free.

Running your own business is the wildest ride I've ever experienced. It's challenged me and I have had to learn to cope, think, and act faster than I ever did before.

I think you need to constantly edit your life as you go along. If something is causing you anxiety or pain and it's not passing, then maybe it's not worth it. Also, we need to start doing things just out of pure joy. We shouldn't pressure ourselves to be the best or make a career out of it. If you like art – draw! If you love running – run! It doesn't mean you have to have a gallery opening or sign up for a marathon, just do it for the love.

**E: HOW HAS 2020 IMPACTED YOUR OVERALL OPERATIONS AND PERFORMANCE?**

**K:** I felt guilty that we survived 2020 in the way that we did when a lot of my friends struggled. It was so bittersweet for me. However, the fact that we managed to create jobs (some of which went to my talented friends who got let go during the pandemic) I hold on to that. It feels quite emotional and is the thing I am the most proud of.

It's been an interesting year navigating the constant changes in shipping, the extreme price flux in freight and limited warehousing staff due to social distancing. But as long as we communicate openly with everyone, then it's okay. People just like to be informed, and that's where digital has helped massively.

It's been a dream to work with some new key accounts, like Sweaty Betty, Oliver Bonas, Anthropologie, David Lloyd and Virgin Active, which I'm really proud of. But as cool as household names are, you don't ever forget about the people that built your brand - every studio and teacher - you look after them first and foremost. Otherwise, you might as well quit.



**E: HOW HAVE YOU ADAPTED THE WAY YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?**

**K:** We have always treated our platform as a personal place but the rebrand changed everything. The strength of our community floored me and I knew I wanted them to become even greater guardians of the brand, and to feel a part of it. During lockdown, I wanted to find a way to support them more. Our social media platform is an open doors policy - teachers and those with something to say can take it over. We mostly use user-generated content, so people get excited about becoming part of the brand DNA. What's been especially lovely is getting the community involved during the early product development stage and finding out what they want.

**E: HAVE YOU SEEN A CHANGE IN THE WAY YOU CONVEY YOUR MESSAGING VIA YOUR DIFFERENT CHANNELS? E.G. WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS?**

**K:** Only slightly. We have always been really chatty, informal and poetic, but in some ways, I had to remember I am still a yoga brand and people may need advice and support (albeit still in a BFF way). I am beginning to understand the value of informative blogs and SEO (search engine optimisation) terms - it means new people can find us easier and information is important for supporting our people.

The other most important thing we have recently put out there is our transparent sustainability diary. Sadly, there is so much greenwashing in the industry. There is a lot of smoke and mirrors and manipulation of terminology to make things sound shinier than they are.

**E: WILL YOU BE CONTINUING THESE NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH CUSTOMERS IN FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS?**

**K:** Definitely. As well as what we have been doing, we want to conduct consumer market surveys. These will be invaluable to getting people involved at the earliest product stages so they feel a sense of ownership and excitement in the making of the brand. Also, from a sustainability point of view, it ensures we are only creating products for a genuine need and purpose.

**E: DO YOU FEEL THAT YOGI BARE HAS BEEN AGILE TO THE CHALLENGES FACED THIS YEAR, AND ARE YOU IN A STRONG POSITION MOVING INTO 2021?**

**K:** I think so. I think it's because we approached the whole situation as a human, as myself. I still run the social media and I don't try to make it anything other than a human profile. I feel like the social media world has become like Blade Runner - we are essentially living in an advert. It's drawn away from its essence and why it started. It used to be about connecting with people. I like to think we maintain that because it's all so personal and honest.

Yogi Bare has thrived from word-of-mouth, and if anything, I'm proud of how far it's come because of the friendships, so I hope people feel that through everything we put out into the world - like they have a friend here. We navigated and approached the challenges of 2020 with honesty and openness. We didn't pretend to have it all together or be above the wave of emotions - we felt them too, alongside our crew. 2020 taught me how important it is to do that, and it's something we will carry into 2021 and beyond.

**E: WHAT DOES THE DIGITAL FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR YOGI BARE? ANY INTERESTING CAMPAIGNS OR COLLABORATIONS WE SHOULD BE KEEPING AN EYE OUT FOR?**

**K:** We just shot our first proper campaign that will launch in late spring (2021) - Together, but apart. It was the first time for many of us to come together and be around people post-lockdown, even if we had to create optical illusions on-set of people being close when they were actually stood apart! It was a very emotional experience as the chemistry transcended everything. I am so proud of this campaign and I know people will feel what I felt on set when they see the images.

We're looking forward to seeing the campaign too!

# 06

## IN THIS SECTION:

---

**92**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM ENGAGEMENT**

Now more than ever, boosting staff engagement and morale is absolutely imperative and it is important for the whole team to stay connected. Community Coordinator, Amanda Williams, explains how we've kept the team engaged during one of the toughest of years.

**94**

### **BEST OF... APPS**

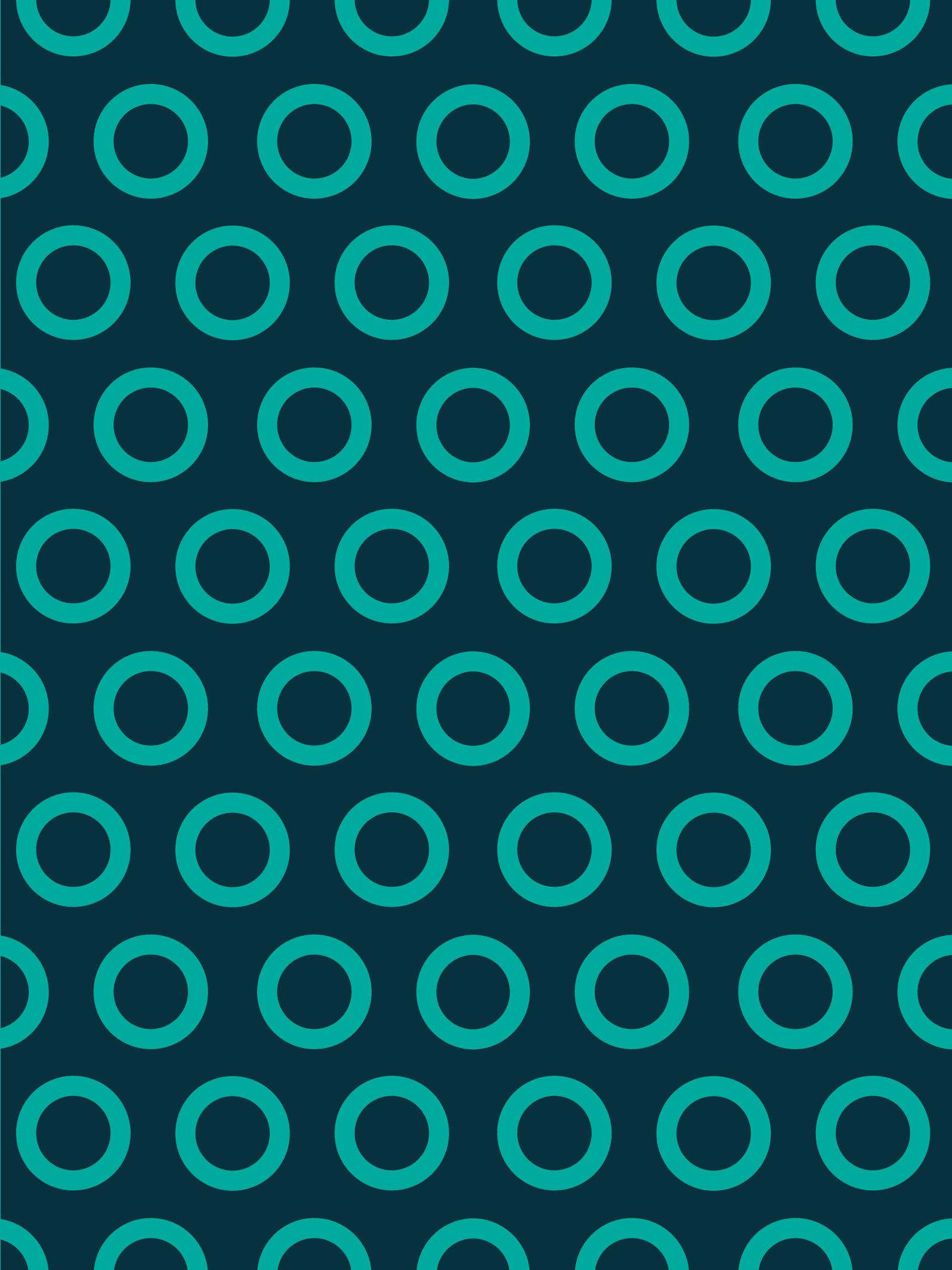
We share what we've been downloading and what's been making our lives easier with our top apps from the Spindogs team.

ES

SPINDOGS

**We've lost our  
ears, but we're  
still listening**

Our new website is now live





---

# THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM ENGAGEMENT



AMANDA WILLIAMS



Now more than ever, boosting staff engagement and morale is absolutely imperative and it is important for the whole team to stay connected.

2020 was a year of change. Most companies, ourselves included, leapt from working in the office to working remotely. What started as an initial hope of returning to the office soon turned into remote working being the new norm. We were used to meeting colleagues for lunch or even just around the coffee machine in the kitchen. One thing that was important to us at Spindogs while we were all working from home was to keep things as social as possible. We are lucky at Spindogs to have a team called Culture Club. The team includes individuals from across the company who take care of the company culture, provide a forum for team members' opinions to be heard and provide regular fun socials for the team to get involved. We have held screen-time socials, including two escape rooms, multiple quizzes, quarterly film chats and games, amongst many other activities.

However, as the months progressed and lockdown went into various different phases, it became increasingly hard for many of us to be constantly on the screen, even for those social moments. Our one word of advice for businesses is to be mindful of having too many activities that involve using a phone or computer screen, as people can definitely feel like they have had enough screen-time and need to take a break from their screens.

#### **MORE THAN JUST A QUIZ**

With this in mind, we have tried to think of a few ways to boost morale and give our staff treats that don't just involve another quiz. Every month in the last year, we have sent something in the post to our staff members, ranging from postcards with positive affirmations to Halloween decorations. We were used to having regular hot chocolate afternoons in the office on behalf of the Culture Club, so we sent out a package with hot chocolate and marshmallows to the team.

In the summer, we got in touch with a local entrepreneur who owns a plant store in Cardiff. We asked him if he could run an online class for staff members and give advice on how to look after our house plants. We all turned up with potted plants and asked him where we were going wrong and how we could stop our leaves from drying out and dropping.

#### **TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING STAFF ENGAGED WHILE WORKING FROM HOME**

Over the last year, we have held several activities to ensure our team's spirit remains high while we work from home. Using what we have learnt, here are our top tips for keeping staff engaged:

- Hold classes/courses that might appeal to your team. You can also try and engage local businesses, where possible, by asking them to provide advice and pass on their expertise to your team.
- It is a good idea for team leaders to have regular check-ins with their team. Make sure you schedule those one-to-one meetings!
- Check on your team's wellbeing and offer support if needed. It is worth bearing in mind your team's home life. For example, do they have pets, children, or care for a member of their family? These things, amongst many others, need to be factored in, and a more flexible approach to work has become necessary.
- Encourage personal development within your team. While everyone is working from home, some colleagues can feel like they are working in isolation, so it's important to ensure they have goals they can reach while they aren't in the office.
- Show gratitude and appreciation for your team and reward them for their hard work. You can do this by organising something fun for the team, like an online social or sending a card to say thank you - it's the little things that count.

# BEST OF... APPS

We asked the team at Spindogs to share their favourite apps. From health & fitness to finding places to pitch your camper van, there's a world of useful apps at our fingertips. We share what we've been downloading and what's been making our lives easier. Tag us @spindogsdigital with your top apps. We're always on the lookout for inspiration.

**1. EMILY HARRIS - 'PARK4NIGHT'** My favourite app is called park4nite - it shows me all locations I can wild camp in my camper van with reviews on services, activities, location, number of spaces and coordinates. This has meant I've slept by all kinds of reservoirs this year, all for free! **2. AMANDA WILLIAMS - '1SE'** The app enables users to record 1 second of every day, or lots of 1 second clips from the same day to create some very cute films. I used this app to create a 1 second clip of every day in 2020 and have used it multiple times on trips away. They collate all the clips and edit them to make a single film, producing a lush little film, full of memories. **3. TEGAN MALE - 'NOTION'** It's a wonderful notetaking/workspace app that is available cross-platform and is free! It helps me keep track of my projects at work, but also helps me plan my vegetable garden and Dungeons and Dragons characters. **4. CLARE TREVERROW - 'DAYLIO'** I love an app called 'Daylio'. You're able to log things about your day (e.g. food, exercise, periods and your mood). Then you can track your stats through graphs that tell you what daily activities contribute to certain moods, what your best month/day is etc. Also good if you're like me and have a memory of a goldfish and want to know when you last did something, haha. **5. LUKE CARDY - 'LETTERBOXD'** Letterboxd is an app to discover films you want to watch, as well as making lists of your favourite films. So many social media platforms are based on what you have, what you look like or about projecting an image of yourself, but the really fun thing about Letterboxd is that it's purely about sharing thoughts on films, discovering hidden gems and planning your watchlist. The pro version even tells you which of your streaming services a film is available on. **6. JAMES BRETT - 'VITALITY HEALTH'** With this app, I can connect to various other health apps I run in order to build up points to get a free coffee (1 per week), free cinema tickets (when they're open), free Amazon prime and money off our Waitrose order. **7. CHELSEA BROWNHILL - 'TIKTOK'** Great to just cheer you up with silly videos and their algorithm is incredibly intuitive and only shows you things you'll like. **8. ESME DEE - 'LIGHTROOM APP'** I find the Lightroom app really handy for Instagram posts! You don't need to pay for the mobile app like you do with the proper desktop version, and you can create your own presets in there, so once you have a style you like for your insta feed, you just select that preset for each new photo. **9. ANDREW MAISEY - 'NEXTDOOR'** It allows (amongst other things) neighbours to buy/sell/give away for free, things they no longer need. I have a fantastic big pine dining table and leather Laura Ashley sofa from there - both were free! I have also done loads of garage and cupboard clear outs during lockdown and it is great to give away what is no longer of use to me but is of value to others. Checking it every night for bargains!



1



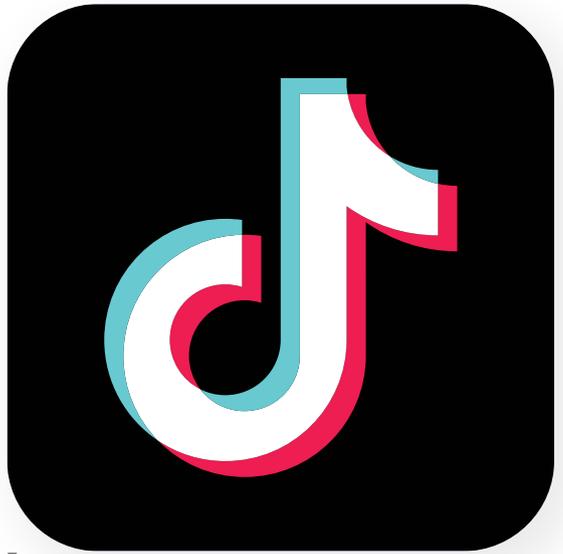
2



3



4



7



5



8



6



9



# CONTACT US



## ABOUT SPINDOGS

A full-service digital partner, we love delivering great website design & development, marketing and brand solutions for our clients. So, whether you're looking to drive more value from your digital marketing budget or bring your business to life with a visually stunning website, we have the full package to take your online presence to the next level. That's how we've built successful, results-driven relationships with clients for over seventeen years.

## WEBSITES

- Web Design & Development
- Ecommerce
- Multiple CMS platforms including WordPress, Umbraco and Kentico
- Intranets & Extranets

## CREATIVE

- Brand Consultancy
- Logo Design
- Graphic Design
- UX
- Website Design
- Print
- Branding

## MARKETING

- Outsourced Digital Marketing
- SEO
- PPC
- Social Media Advertising
- Analytics
- Conversion Rate Optimisation
- Email Marketing
- Training & Workshops
- Content Creation

## GET IN TOUCH

To learn more about partnering with Spindogs, get in touch with our business development team:

**E: [info@spindogs.com](mailto:info@spindogs.com)**

**T: 02920 480 720**



**BARK**

Until next time...



**BARK**