BARK

MAGAZINE ISSUE 8

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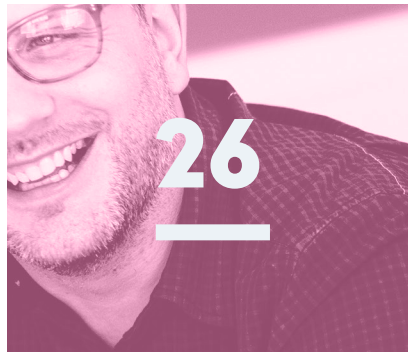CASE STUDY
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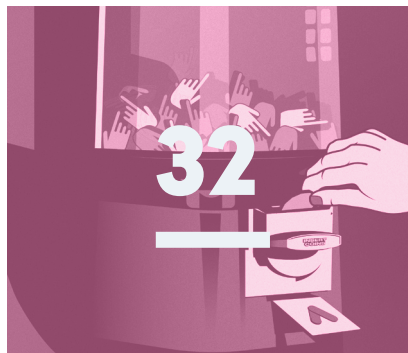How we gave a regional brand a powerful online presence

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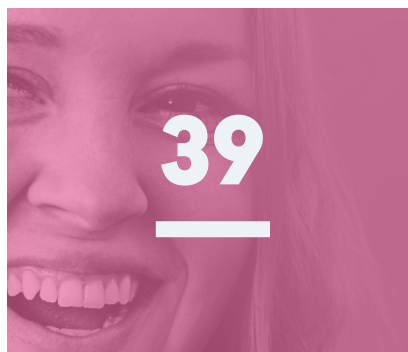
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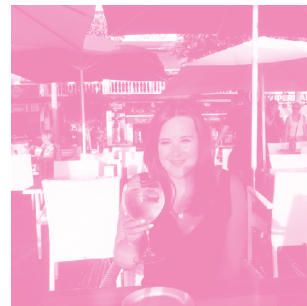
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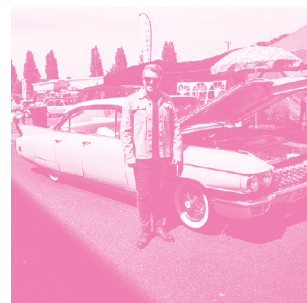
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Welcome

Liam Giles

Managing Director

Welcome to issue 8 of BARK! The last 12 months have seen some exciting changes for Spindogs, with the recruitment of more talent to the team across the UK and an expansion of our HQ in Cardiff to support our growing client base which now covers the breadth of the UK, as well as overseas.

The team have worked exceptionally hard to launch 36 new sites in the last 12 months, including Monmouthshire Building Society and more sites for the University of Oxford, and our support team is busier than ever, meaning more clients are accessing our expertise every day to improve and develop their websites, which is what we love to see!

Spring has seen 2 more of the team achieve the Kentico Marketing Qualification, and we remain the only team in Wales able to support Kentico clients with their EMS and we encourage you get in touch if you would like to know more.

We are also now an Umbraco Gold partner which really adds to our toolkit when advising clients on the best solution for their needs.

This issue sees us focus on some of the great projects delivered in the last 12 months, as well as highlighting what we think you can expect to see coming up in digital in the remainder of 2019 and 2020, so put the kettle on and have a read!

Monmouthshire
Building Society

How we gave a regional brand a powerful online presence

It's been one year since we launched the new Monmouthshire Building Society (MBS) website. Here we look back on the project where we created a visually impressive and powerful website for this well-known brand to reflect their focus on members and its identity as a mutual building society.

Ceri

Embracing a digital presence

In the digital world, where users are increasingly glued to connected devices, a website is a prime piece of digital real estate for building societies to target customers through multiple online channels, including digital marketing campaigns and search engine optimisation.

It's not enough any more for building societies to launch websites with simple designs and basic features. An original and functional design is more likely to hook in customers who need a seamless and enjoyable experience when researching savings accounts and mortgage products.

Creating a building society website that can accommodate a lot of information is a tricky balancing act, as content needs to be presented bit-by-bit in a clean, organised manner across clearly defined user journeys, or risk overwhelming customers trying to find the right product.

The project

When MBS first came to us in 2017, they felt the design of their current website came across as stiff and dated, failing to portray the building society's image as a friendly organisation that championed its members interests or reflect the excellent service customers experience at its branch locations. While existing members and brokers engaged with the business, they were struggling to get engagement from digital audiences.

As part of the brief, MBS wanted to create exceptional user experiences for their mortgage audiences that would guide them towards useful information that was relevant to their specific needs. They knew their audiences were actively searching online for information on mortgages, but they needed to provide content that was easy to find. Customers needed help understanding the types of mortgages on offer and mortgage brokers required easy access to affordability checks and pricing for clients.

About Monmouthshire Building Society

A mutual building society with its head office located in Newport, MBS has provided the people of Monmouthshire with competitive mortgage and savings products since 1869. Still offering the same levels of exceptional service as they did 150 years ago, MBS has since expanded across South Wales and the South West of England. A mutual building society, MBS is free to re-invest its profits back into the Society to benefit its members, who are savings accounts or mortgage holders.

The brief

- To build an engaging website that encompassed the newly refreshed MBS branding

- Improve the user experience for MBS' mortgage and savings account audiences, including mortgage brokers

- Improve the user journeys and ease of navigation

- Design and build tools to engage and assist users, including mortgage calculators and an online decision in principle form

Our approach

Discovery

Before starting design, we ran workshops with stakeholders and sent questionnaires to staff and brokers to gather insights into their requirements for the new website. The recommendations, which were also based on user persona insight and competitor analysis, informed a Discovery Blueprint document. The report's detailed breakdown of the required pages and functionality supported the creation of different user journeys throughout the site to ensure ease of navigation and optimise conversion.

Design

During the design phase we took a mobile-first approach with a focus on designing a mortgage application process that was visually appealing and seamless for users. To meet rigorous compliance standards, we had to ensure mortgage information was designed for ease of access and optimal digital engagement, while also providing a smooth user journey through the site.

Design highlights:

- **Mega navigation:** the new mega navigation makes the full range of MBS products visible to the visitor, eliminating scrolling and search frustration

- **Mortgage decision in principle form:** the new online form incorporates user experience best practice to create a seamless experience for the user and boost form completions

- **Mortgage calculators:** easy-to-use calculators help customers better understand how MBS' range of mortgage products would better suit their individual circumstances
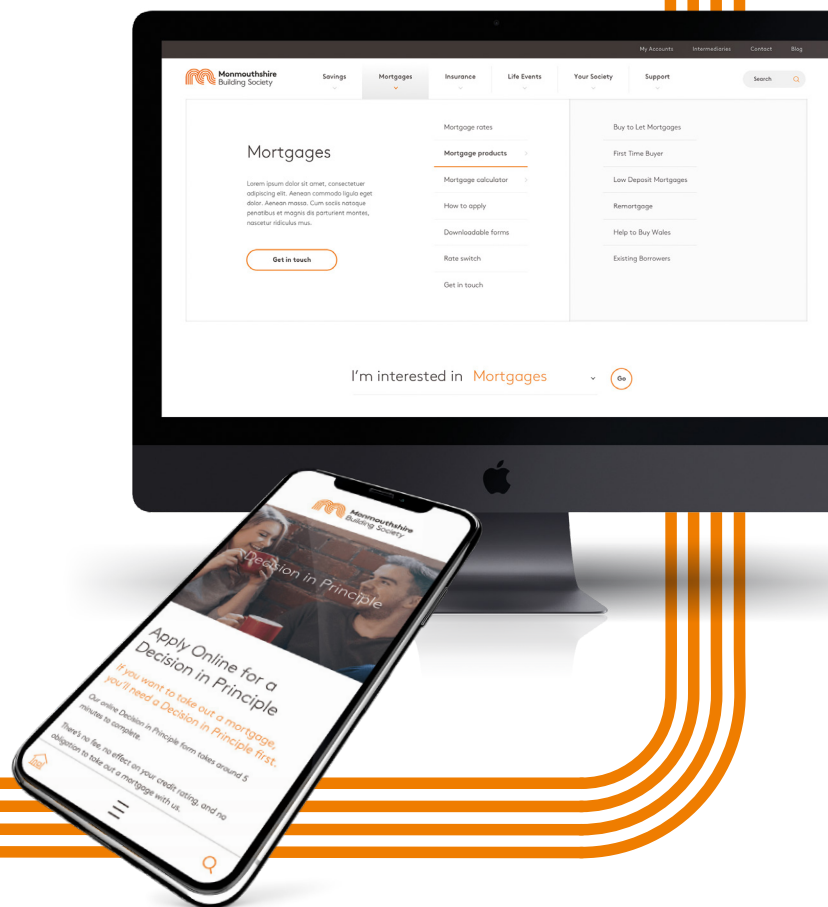
Build

Putting the right Content Management System (CMS) in place is essential to supporting the organisational goals of the project. To effectively serve the informational needs of both mortgage brokers and mortgage customers, MBS decided on the open source solution, Umbraco.

One of Umbraco's core features is its multisite functionality which can be managed from a single CMS. This functionality enables MBS to replicate its designs across two different sites, one designed to be customer facing and one with a B2B look and feel for mortgage intermediaries.

Umbraco's comprehensive in-built user permissions allows for different levels of access by role, restricting access to delegated areas of the site, for example to uploading blog content. To ensure compliance with financial services

regulation, the CMS also allows for the creation of an "authoring" site, a direct replication of the main website hidden from search engines, to internally approve content before it goes live on the website.

Other key functionalities included the build of an intuitive search function, easy-to-use mortgage calculators and a flexible online mortgage decision in principle form, allowing MBS to track the number of visitors completing the form.

Post launch

Three months following the launch of the website, we conducted further user interaction testing and undertook a fresh UX review to assess the new website's ability to meet users' needs and business goals, and identify any issues with user engagement and conversion.

An analysis of how customers interacted with the new website revealed:

- That savings was particularly popular with online audiences, so we looked at increasing visibility and prominence throughout the site. We suggested creating a CMS controlled mode switch, whereby the site focus (e.g. mortgages, savings etc.) could be changed to align with any external marketing campaigns
- Many clients were entering the site via landing pages, which presented us with an opportunity to make them more of a shop window (as you might with a home page)
- Mortgage calculators are very popular, but at a much later stage in the journey. We reduced the prominence and gave focus to other more important information earlier in the journey.

To the future

With two distinctive platforms for brokers and the general public, MBS now has an online presence which reflects its values of putting members at the heart of all they do. With engagement and conversions on the website increasing, MBS are truly leading the building society sector with an innovative digital presence.

"

Spindogs have helped us modernise our websites for the benefit of both the website users and our employees who manage the site. We are delighted with the clean design of the new websites, which align perfectly with our new brand.

The Umbraco CMS is easy to use and has helped speed up our process for updating web content. As an 'out of the box' CMS, Umbraco is also much more practical than our previous custom-built solution. We are looking forward to continuing to work with Spindogs to further enhance the functionality and performance of our websites.

Caitlin Thomas
Digital Marketing Officer,
Monmouthshire Building Society

Impact

9%
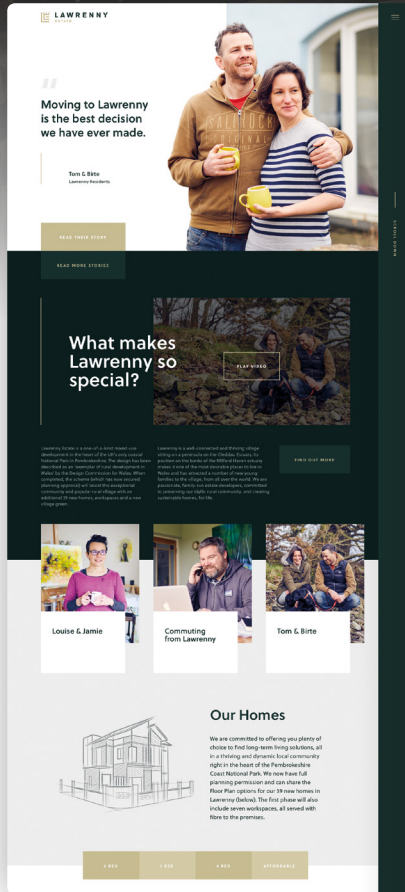increase in new users

6%
increase in sessions

8%
increase completion of forms on mobile

Go Lives

Some of the websites we have launched for our clients in the past twelve months.

lawrennyestate.wales
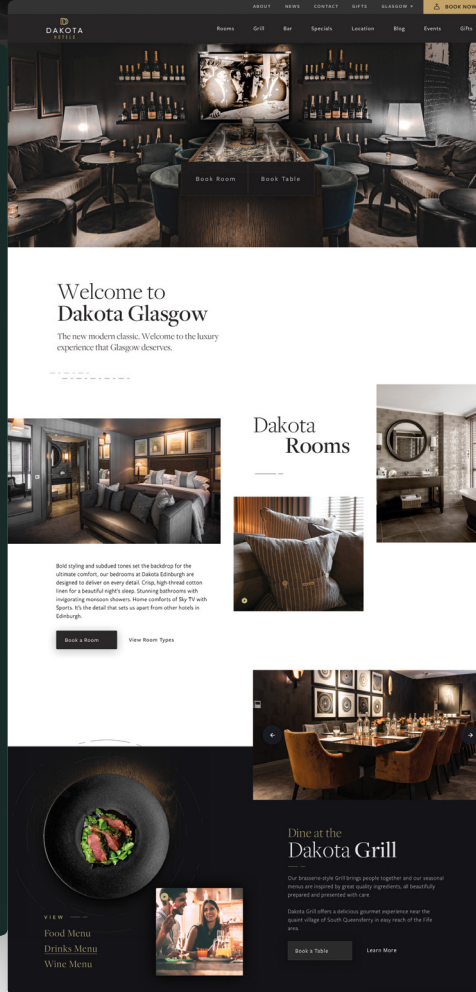
dakotahotels.co.uk

monbs.com

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR DISCOVERY WORKSHOP
WITH SPINDOGS

If you have started or are thinking about launching a new website for your business, then kicking off with a period of discovery is crucial to gathering the requirements and opinions of your different user groups.

There are lots of techniques available at the requirements gathering stage, from phone and in-person interviews to online surveys. However, when it comes to big-ticket projects, running workshops is an important way to get buy-in from stakeholders inside and outside of your organisation.

Ruth, our in-house UX Strategist, tells us what to expect from a user experience workshop, what they achieve and how to get the most out of the findings.

Ruth

WHAT IS USER EXPERIENCE?

User experience (UX) in the context of website production is the design and development of user-centric websites that create engaging and useful experiences for customers, leading them to take desired or profitable actions on the website.

Discovery workshops are an important tool for providing a forum to gather valuable information on the requirements of the website's target audience. The goal of the workshop is to put the user at the forefront of the project, whether they are external audiences such as customers or service users, or internal stakeholders who maintain and update the website.

WHAT IS A DISCOVERY WORKSHOP?

Discovery workshops usually consist of a series of activities, tasks and discussions designed to get people to feedback on the current website and identify needs for a new website. They are a great way to engage customers and staff in website re-design and/or development and don't have to be lengthy, starting at 2-3 hours per workshop to fit in with people's busy schedules.

The goal of the workshop is to understand the needs of different stakeholders better, get insights into their experiences, and work out how the website can better serve them.

WHY ARE DISCOVERY WORKSHOPS IMPORTANT?

All our projects start with a kick-off briefing, but even the most productive project meeting won't identify all the needs of your audiences. Workshops enable clients to learn things that might not have been recognised at the beginning.

For example, you might think you know what your users need from the new website, but they could have different ideas. Users feedback on all aspects of the website, from look and feel (does the current use of brand colours resonate with them?), to content (is your website too text heavy?) and ease of navigation (can people easily find what they need?).

The results can be surprising! Consumer participants are often very candid and can impact strategic decisions. One client, for example, is re-thinking its conversion rate optimisation strategy based on feedback from consumers that the excessive use of pop-ups to capture information on the website was more frustrating than helpful.

"

YOU MIGHT THINK YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR USERS NEED FROM THE NEW WEBSITE, BUT THEY COULD HAVE DIFFERENT IDEAS.

WHAT DOES A DISCOVERY WORKSHOP COVER?

The topics that are covered in a discovery workshop, and the time allocated to each topic in the workshop, depends on the needs and requirements of the project. Before embarking on the discovery process, your Project Manager will discuss the sessions with you to agree on the strategic priorities of the workshops, which can include:

ONE

Goal setting
Fine-tuning the goals that will be achieved with the design and build of the new website

TWO

Website review
Reviewing the barriers and successes of the current website, from navigation to design and content

THREE

Audience personas
Analysis of the different audiences and their website needs. What do you want them to do on the website? What do they need? What would make it more engaging?

FOUR

User journey mapping
Analysis of the typical website journeys of your key audiences from initial contact through to engagement and return to the website

FIVE

Task analysis
What happens when we set your audiences tasks on the current website? What benefits and pain points do they record along the way?

SIX

Competitor analysis
An assessment of your competitors' websites to investigate how they solve their customers' needs

SEVEN

Site mapping
A list of the key pages of your website, organised into a visual hierarchy

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN A DISCOVERY WORKSHOP?

Stakeholders are broadly internal or external. Internal stakeholders usually represent a mix of staff from across an organisation with different levels of seniority and interest in the website. External stakeholders are typically customers or service users but can also include other audiences such as corporate partners and sponsors.

Workshops are the perfect way to actively involve customers or clients in a new website project and have many, invaluable benefits. Not only can your customers provide first-hand feedback on their needs for the website, but they will also have knowledge and experience of your target audience that your project will benefit from.

Similarly, it's important to capture the needs of staff, especially those who maintain and update the website. Involving a range of roles, from customer-facing staff to senior managers, is also a great opportunity to tap into their wealth of knowledge of customers and the sector. Workshops carefully designed with exercises and tasks will get them thinking about users' needs and draw out valuable knowledge.

> "
> ## I'VE OFTEN FOUND THAT CUSTOMERS OR SERVICE USERS IDENTIFY CLEAR NEEDS IN THE WORKSHOPS THAT WEREN'T IDENTIFIED IN THE BRIEF.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE DISCOVERY WORKSHOP?

The outcome is a Discovery Blueprint which analyses the research findings and moulds them into actionable recommendations. For example, I've often found that customers or service users identify clear needs in the workshops that weren't identified in the brief.

These findings are gold dust and lead to discussions between clients and Project Managers around the features or functionalities which will address their needs and provide a more seamless experience. Once the outputs are agreed, the signed-off set of recommendations will inform the rest of the project delivery, from design to development.

UNCOVER MORE BENEFITS OF HOLDING DISCOVERY WORKSHOPS AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR NEW WEBSITE PROJECT OR WEBSITE RE-DESIGN BY GETTING IN TOUCH WITH US FOR A MORE DETAILED CHAT.
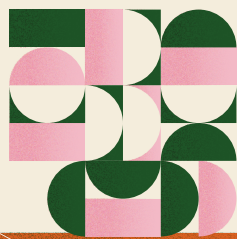
The future of social media
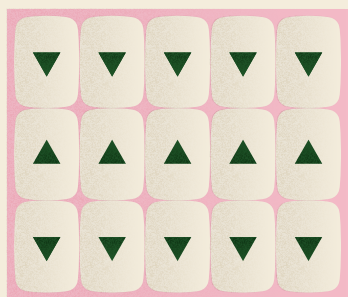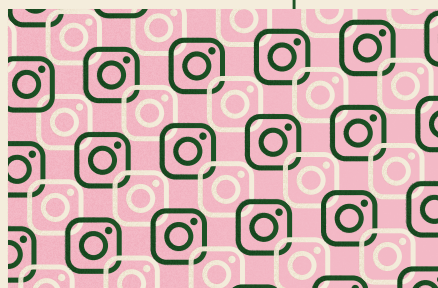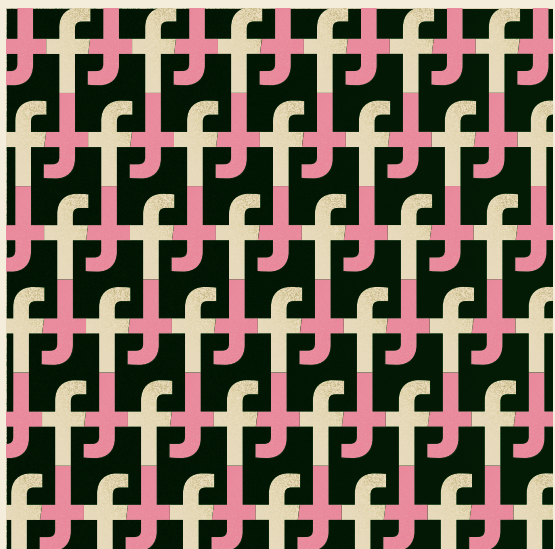
AS FORETOLD by Owen Williams

Scott

A s our quest remain one step ahead on all things digital continues, Account Manager Scott quizzed Owen Williams, Managing Director of Siml and former Head of Editorial Strategy at the BBC, on the trends defining the future of social media for businesses. Their springtime discussion provided an insight into the merits and pitfalls of video and chat bots which continue to drive growth across platforms, to engaging the sought after Gen Z'ers and catering to niche audiences. As we go to print, two of Owen's predictions have already come true, so buckle in for a journey back to the future, as we get a guided tour on the road ahead for social media.

S: **You have witnessed the evolution of social media first-hand during your time at the BBC and now at Siml, a social media creative content agency. What's the biggest change you've encountered?**

O: The pivot to video was huge, but the recipe behind what works and what doesn't remains a mystery to many. To me it's much like the early days of mixed media when advertisers switched from paper to radio, only to promote the same scripted message. When moving image arrived by way of cinema, screenings were little more than filmed radio. It has taken over a century for the television and cinema experience to get to where it is today.

The potential reach and speed of production that social video offers means audiences are ever more demanding. Creatives lured by the newness of social video are using TV and cinema ad formats to make content for social, which

explains why the massive numbers don't magically appear...The best thing to do is turn to the professionals. Social media consultants like Siml can help companies create video content tailored specifically to social.

S: At its core, social media is all about conversation. How do you see brands interacting with consumers via social media in a future populated by chatbots and artificial intelligence (AI)?

O: Chatbots are a tool designed to aid a positive interaction between a brand and the consumer. The danger for brands lies with completely replacing human beings with automated solutions. Humans are complex and nuanced creatures, and I wouldn't trust a machine to convey intricate traits such as empathy.

I suspect that AI will reduce customer service resource requirements by expediting many basic consumer queries and flagging more difficult questions to a human.

The trick for brands will be presenting the difference between a robot and a person with a degree of transparency to help consumers get used to this new way of engaging.

They can make them aware that they're conversing with an automated system and notify them when that switch to a human happens.

S: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have all boosted their live streaming, TV and video sharing capabilities over the last couple of years. Will video be integral to the future of social media? Or is this just a fad?

O: Video is already an integral part of the social experience. An experience which will continue to evolve as devices, wearables in particular, become more flexible and intuitive.

In 2016, we saw Facebook's fascinating experiment with the Oculus platform via its Facebook VR interface. Despite the fact that augmented reality (via Magic Leap and Oculus Rift) is yet to become a true major player, continued development and evolution is underway. And to think the original iPhone was brand new only ten years ago... we've come so far so quickly!

S: All types and sizes of businesses, from Gabby's global courier brand to Paul's local café, are investing in social media advertising. How will social media adapt to this competition for advertising space?

O: The algorithms of the largest social media platforms are constantly tweaked to create a more 'meaningful' experience for communities. The challenge for business owners with small advertising budgets is to leverage the right platforms to reach the most desirable audiences and convert those audiences into buying customers.

The key for business owners is allocating appropriate resources to the platforms that deliver the greatest return on investment. There is categorically no need for a small business to maintain a highly active presence on every social platform, but there's a real need to understand what each platform can offer your business.

S: Younger audiences (Gen Z) grew up with digital technology and the internet at their fingertips. How do brands need to adapt the way they interact with these digitally savvy users?

O: We're already seeing brands employ the right people (or the right people in the right agencies) to manage their customer experience.

Moonpie, an American confectionery brand, is one of the phenomenal examples of brands who've cornered a market. Patrick Wells is their distinctive voice on Twitter and, at 27, he is racking up levels of engagement you'd see on the biggest Facebook accounts. He often trolls users or other brands in a hilarious fashion, but the level of trust he gets from clients is almost unparalleled. Patrick's tweets prove that worthiness is not a value that holds much cachet in Gen Z'ers when it comes to getting them to take action. Have some fun instead!

THE PIVOT TO VIDEO WAS HUGE, BUT THE RECIPE BEHIND WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T REMAINS A MYSTERY TO MANY.

S: Right now social media is more of a stand-alone product. Do you see it linking with other marketing efforts in the future e.g. content, SEO, PPC, offline marketing or email?

O: It's certainly part of the armoury and the cross-platform benefits shouldn't be understated. But given the immediacy of social media in terms of customer and audience engagement, and the flexibility it allows in terms of creative output, it needs a degree of reverence.

A frequent bugbear of mine is the tendency to lump all social media under one umbrella. "Social media" is a descriptor, in the same way "food" can be used to describe both Corn Flakes and anchovies, but the two are very different. In the same way, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram each require a distinct plan of action.

S: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have stood the test of time while new and 'revolutionary' social media channels rise and fall. Will these social giants be toppled? Or are they here to stay?

O: Short answer – no! Although I suspect Twitter may come up for sale again. Instagram's massive growth spurt will continue apace and rumours of Facebook's demise have no real merit. Don't discount YouTube's scale either!

S: Most social platforms cater for all niches and groups at the moment. In the future, are we going to see channels that focus on particular topics, hobbies or brands?

O: Don't discount Reddit, it does all of this and more. Its unusual interface may put off the masses, but this is part of the channel's charm. That mild impenetrability also keeps the size of the overall community relatively small, at least in comparison with Facebook.

The people behind Justin.tv pivoted to live-streaming video games when they realised the power of that community, giving birth to the massively popular Twitch.

To answer your question, it's already happening. And those niche audiences

A few examples of social start-ups catering to niches:

1 **Tingles** is a social video app with a total focus on ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) video content. YouTube simply can't cater for that niche audience

2 **Vero** is an alternative for people who got annoyed with Instagram shifting to a non-chronological feed (yes, it takes all sorts)

3 **Mastodon** is essentially Twitter without ads

4 **Peloton** is basically a new religion! It offers live fitness classes with professional trainers up to 20 times a day. It's inspired massive venture capital investment in a mere few years, and has some of the most devoted and invested users of any start-up I can think of

are tens of millions strong – which can mean a bumper payday for start-ups!

S: Touching on rumours of Facebook's demise, the platform did have a lot of bad publicity in 2018 surrounding the power it gives advertisers, as well as their data breaches. How can Facebook reinstall its credibility and win back people's trust?

O: Community-building is at the heart of trust. The core Facebook user interface is looking bloated and rather dated. It may be time for them to entice their community with an updated look and feel. Change can be as good as a rest.

S: And finally... why should brands use social media over the next few years? What does the future hold?

O: Social isn't going away. In fact, it will become even more intertwined with our daily routines. There are around 7 billion people on the planet and 2.3 billion of them use Facebook every month. Why would you ignore that audience?!

The ability to simultaneously reach millions, while speaking with an individual on their wavelength, is unparalleled. And being in the privileged position to immediately respond, react and – where necessary – reinvent, is just magical.
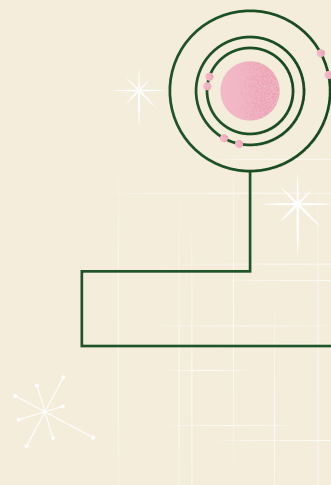
Taking care to the Nexus level

Claire

he quality of care homes in the UK has been the focus of negative media attention for a number of years, and is a harsh reminder that standards are continuing to decline rapidly in more than a third of local authorities.

In a climate of declining budgets and an aging population, Nexus Care approached Spindogs to develop an app that provides an innovative and high-quality solution to ease the pressure

of under resourced care homes. The Nexus Care Solution app is a powerful messaging platform that delivers critical alarms and messaging for carers.

We spoke to Neil McManus, Director at Nexus Care, to find out more about their journey with Spindogs, what makes the app a technological revolution for the care sector, and what's on the cards for version two.

> **Spindogs worked with us from the ground up to develop the solution as a whole, taking the lead on the technical design and the delivery of the user interface. The team are now working on version two of the solution.**

Neil McManus
Director, Nexus Care

How are patient alerts currently managed in care homes?

Traditionally, care homes use wallboard buzzers that sound and flash when a resident raises the alarm, creating a noisy and disruptive environment for both staff and patients. A member of staff has to man the wallboard buzzer at all times and, when alerted, visit the site and carry out an assessment of needs before returning back to site for equipment and staff support. A step-up from this is the pager system, but year-by-year this technology is also becoming outdated and obsolete.

### How does the Nexus Care Solution impact the provision of care in care homes?

Nexus Care uses a smartphone app to offer a real alternative to pagers without the need to replace the current system. Moving to an app-based nurse call system has huge advantages in terms of improving the quality of patient care. The nurse-patient relationship is also strengthened through effective communication.

With an ailing or out-of-date nurse call system, a care facility can run into a variety of problems, from delays in care to confusion about how the needs of the patient align with the role of the carer. A smartphone app gives staff the flexibility to move freely throughout the care home whilst remaining accessible to all residents. This can only result in improved efficiency.

What are the unique selling points of the Nexus Care Solution app?

The solution complements and enhances the current nurse call infrastructure without the need to rip out and replace existing equipment. Predominantly, the app decreases response times to resident alerts, resulting in a better level of care.

The app allows management to report on all staff performance and manage staffing levels in terms of response time and how many calls each staff member receives. With its in-built patient reporting software, we can also provide full transparency to relatives in regards to patient care levels.
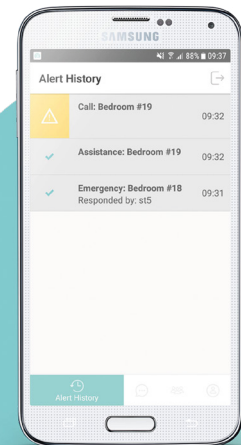
What we did

01 Android custom app development & design

02 User experience testing and improvement on-site at a care home

03 Version two development with enhanced features, including two-way voice calls, ring tone selection and silent/vibration modes

Why did you partner with Spindogs to develop the Nexus Care Solution app?

We were looking for a partner to collaborate with as we realised early on that the app development would require various different skill sets. We approached Spindogs with the initial concept and following three face-to-face meetings and several conference calls, Spindogs had already constructed a technical blueprint. Their development team were an integral part of the project from concept to design.

When was the Nexus Care Solution app launched?

We began working on the development of Nexus Care Solution with Spindogs in June 2017. As we had already sold the product to thirty care sites before we began, we needed a relatively swift turnaround on version one and we successfully launched the app to all thirty sites six months later.

How has the app been received?

The app has been widely adopted by clients, which is an achievement for a new concept in the marketplace. We have sold it into five of the top twenty care home groups in the UK and users have reported that it is very easy and simple to use. There are other third-party integration products available on the market that offer a similar solution, but these are reportedly not as reliable or user-friendly.

Feedback from year one has been really insightful. We are still on version one, but we now have a list of feature enhancements for version two, which we are looking to launch in 2019.

Features
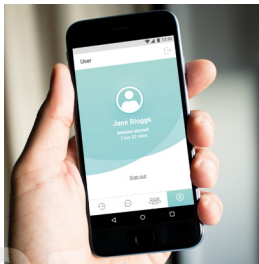
01 Individual staff log ons

02 Nurse call alerts

03 Staff presence

04 Zoning of alerts
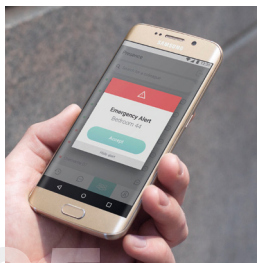
05 Reporting
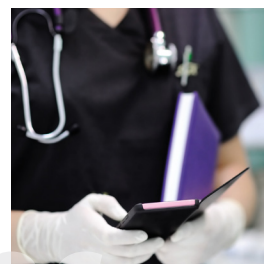
06 Future-proofing

> **Nexus helped our home to modernise the way of working, answering call bells and communication via the Nexus system.**

Bradley Hughes

Nexus Care Solutions App
Customer – Caring Homes

What is the future for technology in the care sector?

Technology can only help care givers deliver a better level of care. It is not intended to replace carers or try to do their jobs for them. With technological advancement in the care sector happening at an accelerated rate, it is important for key stakeholders to be aware of technologies that will make running a care facility more efficient and impactful.

Many new technologies have bells and whistles, but those that can make patient satisfaction and cost savings a priority, like the Nexus Care Solutions app, are the most important to the future of the care home sector.

What features are in the pipeline for version two of the app?

Utilising two-way voice calls will be the next step in improving patient care efficiency. If you think about how many times a carer would be called to a patient's room, only to be asked if

they can go and fetch something. If that patient could make that request at the first point of contact, then it would save a lot of time. The patient would still receive the reassurance that assistance was on the way and the carer would be able to keep them updated.

Data obtained from the nurse call system has yet to be used holistically and the integration of nurse call alerts with a patient's medical records would complete the data set.

Hello, future

It's time to be ambitious about the change that can be delivered in the care sector, and there's no doubt that technology will play a major role in addressing the challenges that we are presented with.

We are proud to play a key role in a product innovation that is revolutionising the care sector – we wonder what our next 'apportunity' will be!
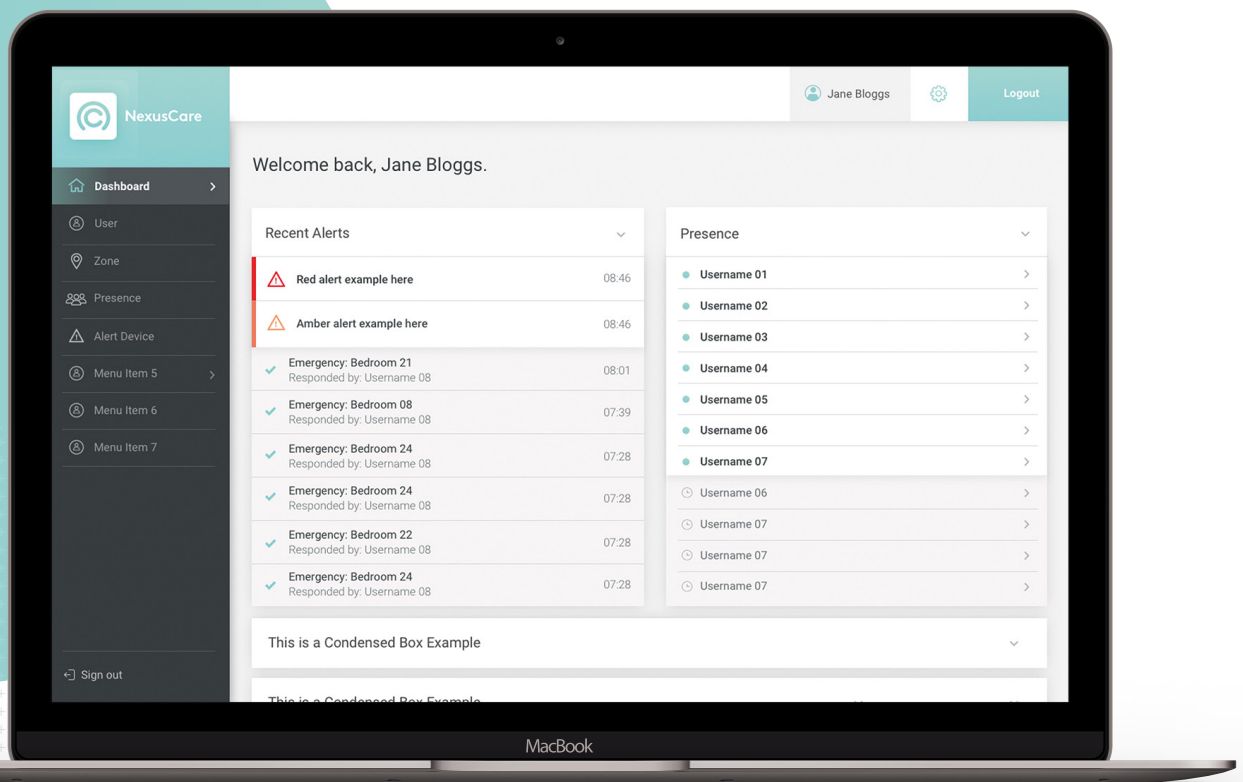
PRINT Vs DIGITAL

In recent years, growth in digital has had a major impact on how companies are run and how people engage with businesses. For marketers it feels like the battle of print versus digital is age-old (it's not, it's been around for about 15 years) but when it comes to publishing a company magazine, businesses are scratching their heads over marketing budgets and asking 'which is better?'.

Print Vs. Digital ⊗ Cancel

There are lots of opinions on whether it's best to invest in a print or digital company magazine, but we question whether the argument has any validity at all. Discover why as we take on this hot topic, balance the advantages of publishing magazines in print versus digital, and pitch them as friends not foes.

Aled

Vs.

Rhys

9:41

Senior Print Designer, Aled, says...

The cold, hard facts

Before we give our opinion, Your Honour, let's present the facts to hand. US-based Freeport Press conducts annual surveys to observe trends in print versus digital magazine readership*. In its most recent survey they found that, when it comes to magazines, people are reading more and consuming content for longer periods of time, and are more likely to subscribe to print than digital editions. It seems that, while publishers are embracing a digital-first future, most readers still prefer to read a tangible magazine.

A physical layer of creativity

There's something about holding a physical magazine in your hands and leisurely flipping through the pages (why do magazines smell so good?). The amount of time we spend in front of screens is terrifying. A recent study put it at around 12 hours a day*, which makes print a welcome break for our eyes.

The internet is a fast and easy access resource for news and stories, and content has become popularised with punchy titles competing for people's attention. Publishers like clickbait veterans Upworthy draw people in with enticing, hard-to-resist titles e.g. "This Brain Doc Has a "Repulsive" Idea to Make Football Safer".

There's just another layer of creativity to print which comes from being able to touch and feel the end product. You wouldn't normally associate innovation with print, which has been around for millennia, but there are more elements that physically come into play compared to digital publishing, such as paper stocks and finishes.

Your smart phone doesn't change weight, size or texture. Whether you're reading The New York Times or trying to resurrect the fortunes of Manchester United on Football Manager, the experience is homogeneous. While smartphones and tablets are undoubtedly versatile and an intrinsic part of modern life, they do have limitations and that is an area where print can be advantageous.

We shouldn't underestimate the power of work that appeals to our senses. By exploiting tactility, or even scent, we gain the potential to stimulate emotional responses in people that are (currently) not conceivable through digital means, thus improving the effectiveness and potency of our communication.

Picking up a printed magazine shows an intention to delve into its contents and, without the distraction of apps, notifications and near-endless jockeying for screen time, there is a greater likelihood that content will not only be consumed but, more importantly, engaged with and retained.

Benefits of print

You're reading our most valuable magazine asset – BARK! Now onto its eighth edition, here's why it's essential to our marketing strategy:

- **Trust & Credibility:** BARK communicates a high level of trust and credibility to our clients and prospects

- **Targeting:** Print magazines are ideal for targeting specific audiences. We send them to our lovely clients and take them to pitches and events for that warmer touch.

- **Popularity:** BARK is popular! People stare at screens all day which takes its toll on the eyes. A print magazine, packed with engaging and relevant content, stands out as a much more comfortable and enjoyable experience.

- **Longevity:** Our high quality, beautifully designed print magazines can linger for days or months in our clients' offices, giving them long-term exposure to our brand and building customer loyalty.

- **Value:** Spindogs' Print Designer Natasha Manns says, "Print is more memorable because you can touch it and have it right in front of you in the moment. Better yet, you can keep it and get back to it later – you don't get that with a website once you close a page."

Senior Designer, Rhys, says...

Publishing a digital magazine

Digital magazines are quick to produce and easier to distribute than their print counterparts. They can be easier to access and there's no printing or delivery costs; the magazine drops straight into the inbox of your loyal subscribers who can read it on their computer or scroll it on their phone.

It's easier to measure engagement with an online magazine, whether that's eyeballs on pages or number of link clicks, giving you a better idea of the magazine's commercial performance, as well as content that resonates with your audiences. If you have customer segment lists, digital has the personalisation capability to send them content that they are interested in, keeping them engaged for longer.

While a digital magazine might cost a fraction of what it takes to print and distribute a physical magazine, digital publications with an interactive and enjoyable user experience also require digital design cost and expertise to produce.

Interactive features of a digital magazine:

- Clickable links to product and services pages
- Scrollable image galleries, embedded videos, GIFs, pop-up content and more
- Additional content e.g. links to "behind the scenes" podcast/video

Friends not foes

Robin Hood vs the Sheriff of Nottingham, Frodo vs Sauron, Jon Snow vs the Night King and print vs digital. Are they really enemies or is it time to put the gloves away and re-think how they can work together? Here's just a couple of examples of how they can work hand in hand:

› **It's not an either/or. An interactive magazine can be an attractive addition to a print magazine. Consider publishing an enhanced version of your content online to mail out to your email subscribers or target a specific set of customers, reducing print and distribution costs**

› **Test the popularity of digital content, such as blogs, to gauge what audiences are interested in. Can these be re-purposed for your print magazine?**

› **Publish a version of your magazine online to cater for the different ways that people prefer to consume content, so no audience is excluded. Statistics show that, while the majority of people still prefer to engage with a physical magazine, there's still a decent chunk of readers who prefer to read online. When we designed The Scene for Thomas Carroll, they re-purposed the print edition by publishing it on their website to browse (https:// www.thomascarroll.co.uk/news/ scene-magazine-issue-8/)**

Hold the presses!

Both digital and print magazines have their place. Consider the unique advantages to each and build a publishing strategy around the benefits that work best for your audience and what you want to achieve with the publication.

Our strategy at Spindogs is to invest heavily in BARK because it benefits our brand and engages our audiences. We also produce a digital format that we share with our email subscribers and online audiences.

BARK

You've seen our print magazine in action

If you'd like to hear more about how magazines can boost your publishing strategy, learn more about print and web design services on our website.

Just do it.

Branding

Creating a *powerful* brand identity that works for your business

An interview with Spindogs Director, Daniel Lewis

Daniel Lewis is a Director at Spindogs and has more than 15 years' experience as a brand strategist in the fields of design, brand consultancy and beyond. He has a wealth of experience developing corporate identity and values, commercial identity design, multi-channel branding and brand asset management.

Daniel's client experience is diverse, ranging from the small to the large (and lots in-between), from institutions and companies to charities and individuals. He has worked with clients such as Airbus Defence and Space, British Land, money.co.uk and Alcumus. Daniel takes our questions on building a brand from the ground up and why branding is central to business success.

Chelsea

You've worked with successful brands for more than 15 years. What is the importance of having a brand strategy?

Brands are integral in today's consumer society and are used to market everything from products and services to people, whether that's urban footwear that appeals to an individual's sense of rebellion like Dr Martens or pop culture icons like Kim Kardashian.

A brand, however, is more than a product or service. It represents the unique identity and values that define a business, organisation or individual, and is a promise to consistently deliver that experience every time a customer connects with them, forming lifelong relationships.

Whether it's a logo, choice of office furniture or the way you answer the phone to customers, everything contributes to the perception of your business and its values, which is why it's important to get it right with a successful brand strategy.

Creating a successful brand strategy is a highly complex but rewarding activity. For businesses still figuring out their brand identity, where's the best place to start?

When undertaking a brand project with our clients, we start with learning as much as we can about their business, the people within it, the services or products they offer and who their audience are to uncover and understand what makes them unique.

While we have a very involved role in developing your brand, our process involves a lot of listening. We typically give internal and external stakeholders a platform to openly communicate their thoughts about the organisation, its story and what sets it apart from competitors. By looking for common threads, reading between the lines and joining the dots, we come up with a unifying brand strategy document that encapsulates your big idea, core purpose, values and tone of voice.

This process is no different if you're conducting the process internally, but the biggest challenge for senior stakeholders is separating yourself from your brand and taking an unbiased and realistic view. A third-party facilitator ensures you don't dominate the process and will get genuine responses from all your stakeholders.

What's the relationship between logo design and branding?

It's important to understand that your brand is more than just a logo. You can have a very strong brand without a logo at all. A successful brand strategy provides a recognisable experience for staff and customers alike; it's the way you run a meeting, the way in which you go about your business and how your staff live and breathe the culture.

A logo is a manifestation of all the things that make you unique, but a brand runs much deeper than this. A logo without a unique brand proposition will look like window dressing and lack the authenticity to grow roots with your audiences.

Your brand is essentially the unique thing that makes you, you. If you can understand and articulate that in a way that resonates with your internal and external audiences, you've done the hard yards already.

> "A logo is a manifestation of all the things that make you unique, but a brand runs much deeper than this.

What brands do you most admire and how do they influence your creative thinking?

The most successful brands are ones that become a shorthand for communication. Think Apple or Coca-Cola, for example, and you will have an in-built understanding of what they want to stand for. Obviously, there are occasions where you can question the integrity of that message, but the basis of their success comes from an intuitive understanding of what it means to be an iPhone user or a Coco-Cola drinker beyond the product itself, as opposed to a competitor product.

On a personal level, I really respond to what Marvel have done in the last 10 years. Having been a long-time nerd, the popularisation of comic book culture has been enjoyable, but the construction of the Marvel Cinematic Universe has made it easier to buy-in to the culture, and for non-nerds has made it easy to know what you're going to get when you go and see a Marvel movie. Where they were particularly successful is in establishing a tone that was authentic to them as a brand, and while clearly considered, the evolution was allowed to breathe and find its audience more naturally (unlike DC who tried to 'force' their movie universe on a now more discerning public).

When considering our clients' brands, it's a reminder that while there are multiple audiences for your product or service, you still need to know who you are and communicate your message consistently with them in a way that they can adopt easily.

What questions should businesses ask before embarking on the brand creation process?

01 What is our reason for existing? Consider it abstractly. A house builder does not exist to simply build houses, they exist to give people a happy home.

02 Why are we unique?

03 What is our personality? Is it reflected in our materials (website, brochure, logo etc.)? Is it reflected in the way we do business and the way we work with each other? Be honest!

04 Why do customers come back to us?

05 Why do our staff like working here?

06 Have we documented and articulated our brand in a way that is easily understood by staff and customers?

How does an effective brand strategy drive a successful business strategy?

By choosing to invest in your brand you are adding extra value to your business. A business has a brand whether they've defined it or not, therefore it's important to take control of it. Define it and drive it, as otherwise it will take on a life of its own and people will make assumptions that will eventually become their truth. That applies as much to your staff as it does to your customers.

As well as increasing engagement with your business, a well-known benefit, a successful brand strategy will also have a positive impact on your balance sheet value. Customer goodwill and the value of a brand are considered valuable currency as part of the business acquisition process and companies will acquire other businesses solely for their brand history.

How important is getting the brand name right?

A brand name is an important element of brand identity, but it's not the be all and end all. Choosing a memorable name is always preferable, but make sure it resonates and says something to your audience. A successful brand-naming strategy is a fine balance. You need to believe in it 100% otherwise you won't fully commit to living and breathing the brand you build for it.

We advocate creative thinking when naming a business. In today's digital world, many domain names are taken and you have to work harder than the 'does what it says on the tin' naming approach to not only stand out but also create something you can more easily trademark.

Remember to think big – would a FTSE 100 or Silicon Valley giant consider nondescript or generic naming conventions? Think PlumbNation as opposed to ABC Plumbing. Start by defining your 'Big Idea', that is the reason for your existence, and identify the values that underpin your organisation. Your name should simply become an extension of that.

How does a brand strategy feed into other marketing efforts?

A strong brand has an inherent trust built into it. If it's authentic and believable then marketing becomes much easier as a result.

A strong visual architecture and personality also clearly helps you to stand out too. If a brand is clear about its audience and communicates directly to them (at the expense of communicating to other audiences), it will also help to build engagement and advocacy in your target audiences.

Do you have any tips on building a memorable brand?

Make it people-centric and make it authentic but also let it go. You can define it and set the parameters for it, but let your staff and customers take ownership of it and give it life. Both these groups will resonate more readily with it as a result and will become even stronger advocates for you.

Branding services at Spindogs:

01 Brand consultancy

02 Logo design

03 Visual brand architecture

"

Make it people-centric and make it authentic but also let it go.

George - Part-time barketing guru

GETTING YOUR WEBSITE SEO-READY FOR LAUNCH

When you first came across the acronym SEO, did it just pass over your head as marketing jargon? Don't worry, you're not alone...

We're here to tell you just how important those three letters are to the success of your website and what steps we go through here at Spindogs to ensure your website is ready to hit the search engines.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the process of making amendments to your website with the aim of improving your ranking in search engines like Google. This includes a variety of methods, such as adding specific terms and phrases to your content or augmenting links from external websites to your website.

Scott

So, how do you ensure a website is 'SEO-ready' and sets the foundation for future ranking improvement? Let Spindogs tell you how...

STEP ONE
COLLATE YOUR DATA

The first step to search visibility is to collect as much data as possible on how your website is currently performing.

We usually gather data using a range of specialist tools such as Google Search Console, Google Analytics, third party services (such as SEM Rush or AntRanks) and our own unique, custom-built SEO software, which gives us all the information we need about which keywords are working for the website and which aren't.

Keywords are important! They are the phrases or words that influence search engines in deciding how, why and when to rank your website in search results.

Site auditors can also be useful tools because they collate data on the number of pages on the existing website that are missing important SEO elements. We're fans of Screaming Frog as we like how it quickly highlights the pages that have issues with their browser titles, meta descriptions, headings and more, all of which significantly impact SEO.

STEP TWO
ASSESS YOUR DATA

Once we've compiled all the data, the next step is to assess what we've found. Which are the most visited pages? What keywords does the website rank well for? What is currently missing? What are the website's top competitors doing?

For each of these questions we will put together a report which, combined with the clients' input, helps us understand how the current website ranks SEO-wise. It also provides an insight into how this impacts the business, both currently and in the future.

STEP THREE
PLAN YOUR ACTIONS

The next step is to plan our actions going forward. Key to this is whether your content needs migration from a current site to a new website and, if it does, determine what content should be kept, removed or edited. Depending on the size and scope of the site, we typically conduct detailed content audits, ensuring they align with brand tone of voice, content strategy and keyword strategy, giving us a clear road map for content migration.

Crucially, when getting rid of old pages, it's key to make sure you redirect any inactive URLs to a suitable page on your new website. If you no longer have a page for that subject, it will default to a 404 page (which means it doesn't exist anymore), whereas it's better for both the customer journey and for SEO to redirect it to a relevant page within the site (ideally not your homepage) so you don't lose a visitor.

During this phase of planning, we usually arrange a few workshops to talk though the next stages and the goals of the website. We'll make sure every avenue is covered before the website launches so the transition between your old and new website is smooth.

STEP FOUR
GO LIVE

Once the research phase is over, and your site approaches Go Live, we will use the data we've collected and analysed to help inform any actions taken with your website. For example, if the content is being updated, the keyword research process will help identify the right keywords to maintain and build visibility on, to ensure traffic keeps coming to your website.

If not done already, we recommend linking your site with Google Search Console, so you can start collecting new search information as soon as possible. The same goes for Google Analytics, ensure it's set up on your website soon after it's gone live. These tools are key to figuring out if your SEO efforts are paying off.

There are also useful tools like AntRanks which can help you track your keywords, allowing you to keep an eye on which ones are rising up in the ranks and which ones are dropping.

Once you are done with this part of the process, you're ready to o live and feed your SEO-friendly website to the search engines (remember to re-index your site too!). Good luck!

THE BRIEF
BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, needed a new website to help modernise their existing online presence and support their digital goals (such as driving new memberships).

WHY DID THEY CHOOSE SPINDOGS?
After a tendering process, Spindogs were tasked with building the new BCS website, as well as mapping and implementing a 12-month SEO strategy covering everything from the new website launch to building rank and visibility.

PROJECT SCOPE
BCS had a vast online history and a colossal number of indexed pages – numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Alongside the traffic the website was driving, they also had a high domain authority score thanks to the age of the website.

We did not want to lose any domain authority with the launch of the new website, so the Spindogs team worked closely with BCS to identify and highlight the pages and keywords that were important to maintain. We also had to get to grips with the structure of the site including many subdomains, ensuring content could be transferred efficiently and sensibly.

THE PLAN
To help map out the SEO process, we drew up a 12-month strategy that outlined a series of monthly activities to ensure the website maintained its rankings for important keywords and continued to drive quality traffic. The plan included a pre-website Go Live audit (including technical SEO checks, a backlink review and site structure review), and a post-website Go Live plan (adding structured data, link augmentation, further keyword research and fresh content generation).

Our keyword research was key to this project. It helped us identify that, although BCS were ranking for thousands of keywords, not all of them were relevant, and many were competing against and cannibalising other pages within the site.

Removing these keywords and pages, despite an initial drop in traffic upon the site launch, will help ensure the more important pages gain higher quality traffic. In the long run, it helped to drive business goals such as new memberships, qualifications and training, and event attendees.

The new BCS website launched in January 2019, with further additions and development ongoing.

BCS
THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR IT
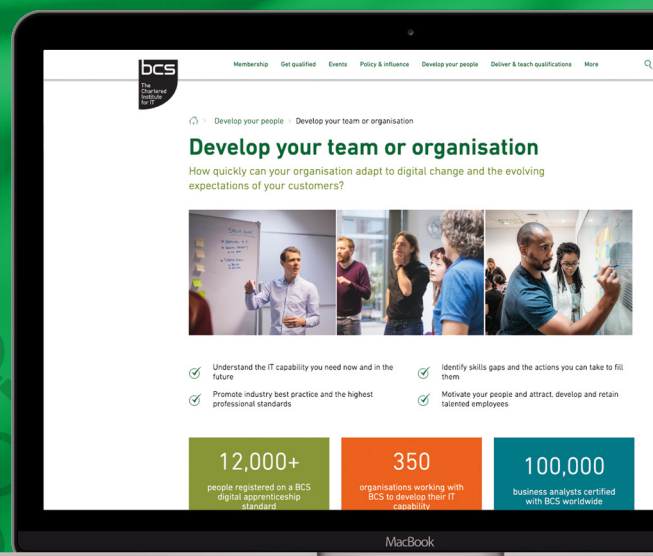
ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

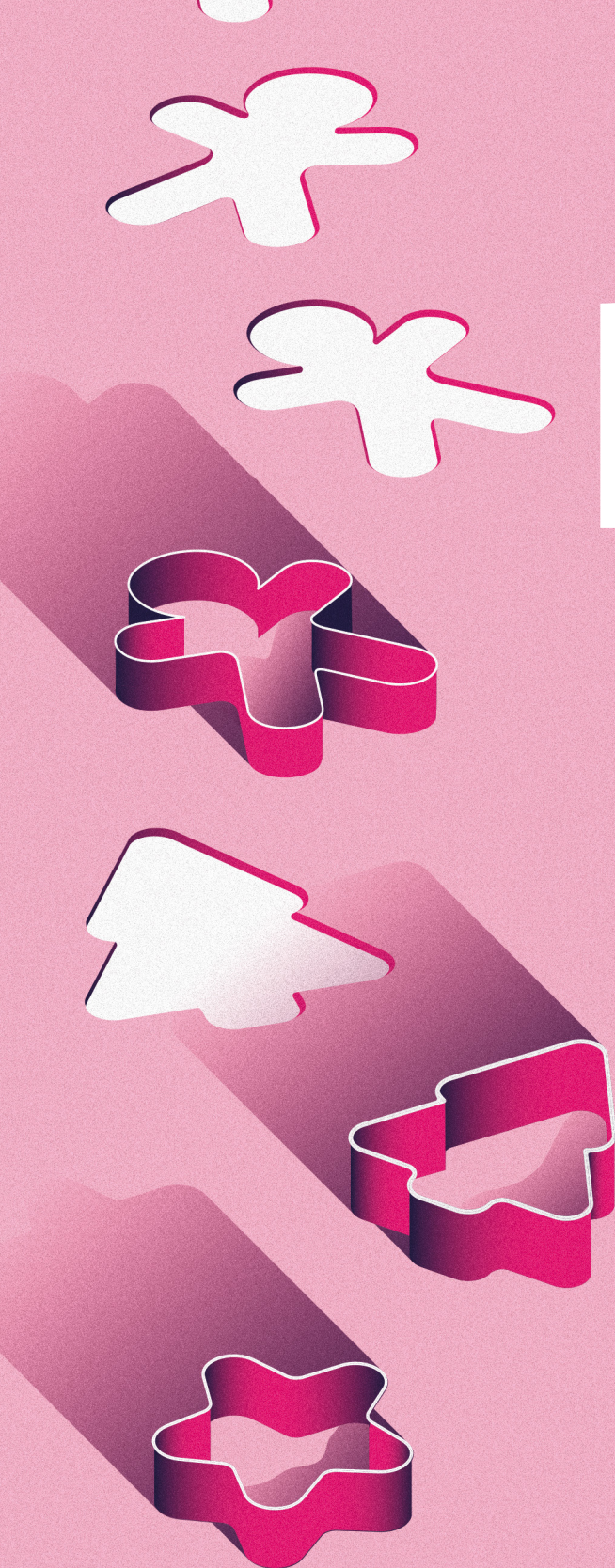# FIVE SIMPLE BUT SMART CHANGES TO MAKE TO YOUR GOOGLE ADS CAMPAIGN TODAY

Rhiannon

Harnessing the power of pay-per-click (PPC) advertising is a fantastic way to get in front of your target audience and make your brand known via search. Largely dominated by Google Ads, which owns the majority market share of online advertising, getting the most out of this platform can result in improved online performance for your business.

Intense competition and lack of expertise means that some businesses fail to see a return on their investment. Here's five simple but smart tips from our Paid Advertising Specialist, Rhiannon Headlam, to help you to improve the performance of your Google Ads. Whatever your budget, these tricks will go some way towards helping you improve the click-through on your ads and maximise your return on investment.

Managing Google Ads during seasonal periods, such as Christmas or Easter, can be stressful. Planning ahead is important to beat off intense competition and maximise the opportunities presented by the season to increase the profitability of your campaigns.

According to Google, bidding on seasonal keywords and investing in season-specific copy and creative boosted ad results by 20% in 2018 alone. We recommend preparing for busy periods with the creation of separate, seasonal Google Ad campaigns on your account.

If time and budget are an issue, holiday ads can use similar content to your regular ads but with small and simple changes so they are tailored to the season. Tweak your text to promote the 'Christmas sale' and edit your keywords to fit within seasonal searches. Simple changes show your customers that you care and make your ads more relevant and enticing.

As well as helping you target the right people, a separated campaign allows you to track results more efficiently. Best of all, when next year's holiday season comes around, you can just switch it back on, saving both time and resource. Seasonal campaigns also reveal the search terms that generate the most clicks during that period so, when it comes to bidding on keywords the following year, budget can be allocated more efficiently to revenue-increasing terms.

TIP#1
ADJUST YOUR GOOGLE AD CAMPAIGN DURING SEASONAL PERIODS
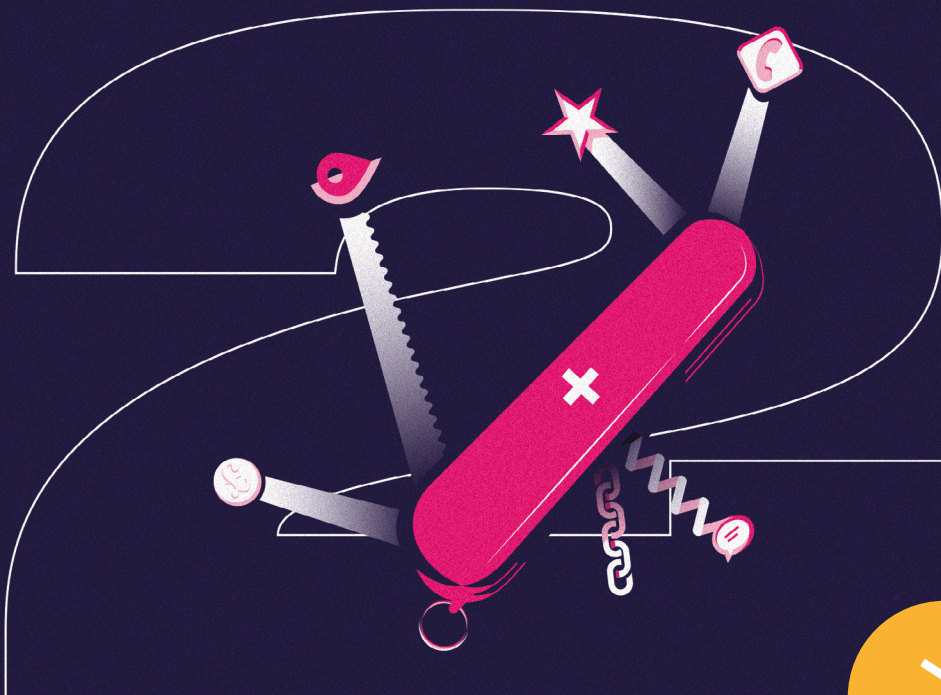
TIP#2
CONSIDER USING AD EXTENSIONS

Arguably one of the best features on Google Ads, ad extensions increase the size and scope of an advert giving businesses more space to add valuable information, CTAs or links to attract customers.

Whilst adding extensions can lead to a higher click-through rate and more revenue, it's important to remember that using ad extensions is only likely to be successful for your business if the extra space enables you to create the best call to action within the primary ad copy.

There are a variety of different extensions you can apply to your adverts, including location, phone number, reviews and links to landing pages optimised for conversion. One of our favourite types is the promotion extension, where businesses can highlight sales discounts, deals and clearance offers.

It doesn't cost extra to include extensions on your advert and Google encourages you to use site links within your ads to increase conversion. You can opt for links to be automatically generated, although we recommend creating your own so that you can control which part of your website you're sending your visitors to.

TIP#3
WORK YOUR AUDIENCE

Like any other digital marketing channel, understanding your audience and utilising customer insight is key to creating a successful campaign. You may think your adverts look good, but if no one is engaging with them you may need to reconsider whether you've captured the search intent of your target audience.

Start by viewing the keywords that your adverts are currently appearing in Google for. Are there words or phrases which aren't relevant to your business? Excluding these from your ad campaigns will ensure your budget is allocated to match audiences' search intent. For further investigation, delve into the 'audiences' section of Google Ads to get a brief rundown of your target audience's search behaviour.

Google Ads has a lot of features to optimise content for target audiences. Have you ever moved off a website only to see an advert for the same brand on another website? Welcome to the world of remarketing, a highly effective method of recapturing users who have already visited your website with a subtle reminder or a special offer.

Google Ads allows you to use something known as remarketing lists for search ads (RLSA) which lets advertisers show customised adverts to people who have previously clicked onto the website via a Google ad. Ads tailored directly to those customers are highly relevant and more likely to convert.

For example, a furniture retailer could create a remarketing audience for users

who have recently visited sofa product pages. With this audience set up, focused adverts would target highly interested customers with an extra incentive such as free shipping or a discount code.

Google Ads also has a useful in-market audience feature, which allows you to advertise to those who are currently 'in the market' for something. This method of advertising can connect you with consumers who are currently researching and comparing products on sites which are linked to Google's Display Network and YouTube. Selecting an audience that is currently looking for something you're selling will help you target those most interested in your products.

TIP#4
TRY SOMETHING NEW

Experiment! It's always a good idea to try out the new things Google has to offer. It's no secret that Google Ads has changed a lot, especially in the past year. Now more than ever, it's very important to keep up-to-date with the latest features and keep your campaigns optimised for revenue generation.

Video has made its stamp in the last couple of years and it's not going anywhere anytime soon. If you want to make bigger changes to your campaigns, why not try and spread awareness through a different medium instead of doing the same old text ads? Eye-catching and effective video is becoming an increasingly important tool in digital marketing to engage people into taking action, and Google Ads is not exempt from this.

To create a video campaign, select a YouTube video you'd like to use for your advert (either from your own videos or another video suitable for your campaign). You can then choose your target location, audience and budget for this campaign. Provided you've followed the Google Ads guidelines, your advert will then show before the videos that they view. Since many people conduct their research on YouTube prior to buying, you may find that this is the best audience for you, as they will be highly invested in purchasing.
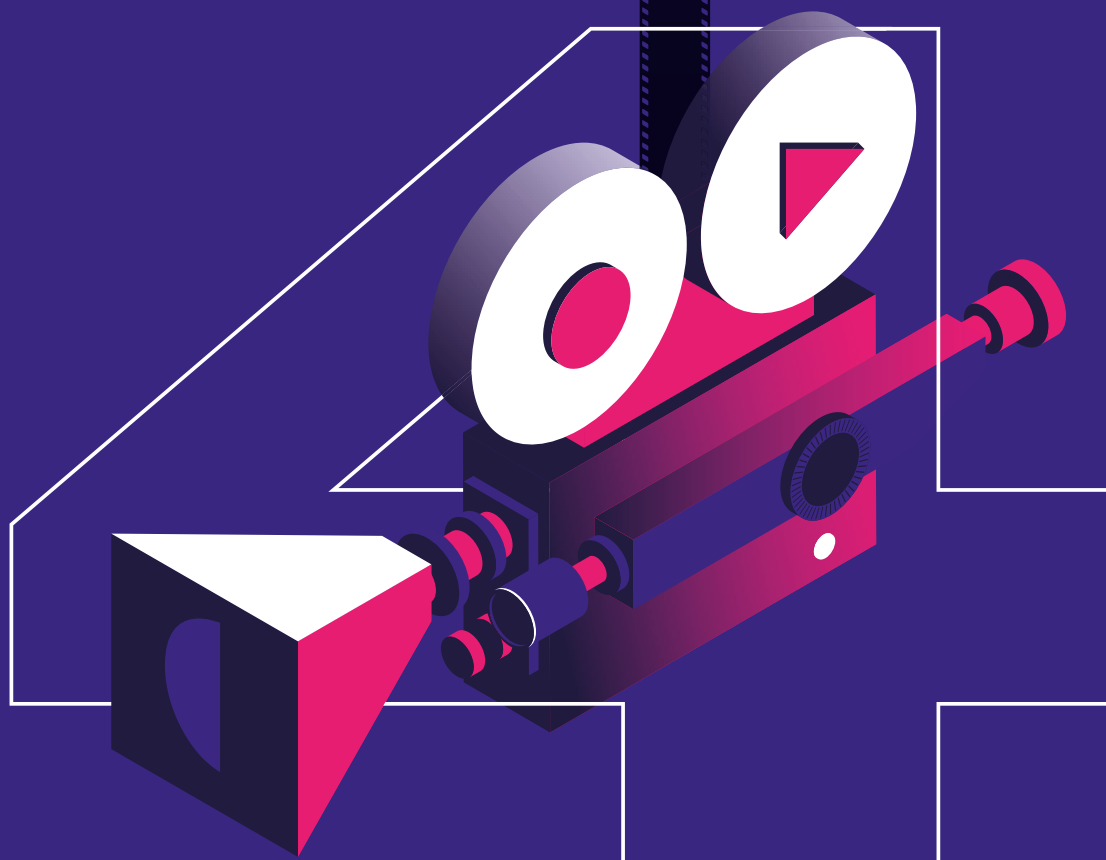
Finally, it's always best to start preparing your campaigns as soon as possible. Don't leave creating your campaigns until the day they're due to go live – there's always a risk of something going wrong. For one, Google needs time to read and approve your adverts before they go live. What's more, you also need time to review the campaigns and ensure they're in top shape before they go live.

If you're preparing for a holiday season, plan your campaign out carefully before setting it up. Choose the right keywords, analyse what worked well in previous years, create optimised copy for your adverts and then set it up. If you set your campaigns up before they're due to go live, you can pause them until the right time. For seasonal campaigns, you can pause these campaigns once the holiday period is over and then reuse them the following year.

ARE YOU READY?

These are just a few of our top tips on how to manage your Google Ads campaigns effectively, but there are plenty more tricks and functionalities you can use for your business. Google Ads is a massive platform which may seem a little overwhelming at first, but we know from experience it's one of the most effective marketing efforts for any business. A little determination will take you a long way, so keep going!

Need a helping hand to maximise return on your Google Ad spend? Our team of PPC professionals can help you achieve your marketing goals and keep those conversions coming.

Cardiff University:

Skills & Employment Survey

Chelsea

The Client

This year, we worked with The Skills and Employment Survey, a joint project between Cardiff University, University College London and the University of Oxford, to leverage digital technologies to improve the promotion of the survey, and streamline submission and collation of some of their research data.

The Survey, which has been running for more than 30 years, researches the views of a random survey of workers who are interviewed face-to-face for an hour. The aim of the project was to take a sub-set of these questions to produce a quiz where users can compare specific elements of their job, such as discretion, security and intensity, with others in similar roles.

The Brief

Our task was to design, build and market a website (**www.howgoodismyjob.com**) that would collect and store survey responses on the quality of working life from people across the United Kingdom. The website would replicate some of the data collected using the previously more time-intensive method of face-to-face interviews.

To achieve this, we needed to ensure two things: first that the website provided an intuitive and rewarding user experience and encouraged visitors to complete the quiz. Secondly, through social media campaigns, we needed to drive as much high-quality traffic to the website as possible.

The Website

To create a quiz which performs without any hitches, the website needed to be built to handle and store large volumes of data effortlessly. At the same time, it needed to be easy and fun to use. Taking a compelling and modern design (nice work design team!), the development team took an unusual route to developing the site to ensure it delivered on its UX-centric brief.

To build the website, we used a JavaScript library called React which is exceptional at handling data within browsers, doing a lot of the heavy lifting whilst creating a streamlined experience for the user. It was the perfect solution for the quiz function because the script is robust at managing a lot of data that could change or be manipulated. We were really pleased with the end result!

The Marketing Campaign

To make sure the quiz was seen by as many people as possible, we chose Facebook as the main avenue for social advertising. Facebook was our first choice because of its detailed range of targeting options, allowing us to select people with different job titles working in specific industries. We also know from past experience that Facebook audiences love a good quiz!

To start with, we needed images for the campaign that would engage our target audience. We ran a split test between three different visual styles (each with different copy) to see which one performed best. We chose photographs of older workers (30–50-year-olds), younger workers (18–25-year-olds) and an illustrated graphic depicting people in different jobs. We felt such a wide range of images would appeal to a variety of different audiences.

Interestingly, we found that the illustrated graphic performed far better than either of the photos. As a result, Facebook's algorithm chose it as the image used to promote the quiz going forward. During the first phase of the campaign in July, we were amazed by the amount of people who completed the quiz during such a short time period. After

just one month, we had **over 13,000 submissions**. Even more importantly, many people commented and shared their results on Facebook, which was testament to their engagement with the quiz.

For the second phase of the campaign in October, we trialled other visual alternatives but the graphic approach was still the clear leader, attracting a large volume of people to respond to the survey. After another month-long campaign, we collected just over 39,400 quiz submissions.

The last survey in 2017, which collected data via traditional marketing channels, reached a total of 3,306 submissions. This means our digital marketing efforts have increased the visibility of core parts of the Survey by **1089%**.

Read on for our interview with Cardiff University Professor Alan Felstead >

Q&A with Professor Alan Felstead, project lead from Cardiff University

We spoke to Professor Alan Felstead about The Skills and Employment Survey and his experience working with Spindogs to digitally transform the project.

Tell us more about the work of The Skills and Employment Survey?
Every 5 or so years, we carry out a large-scale face-to-face survey with workers employed in Britain. The survey has been carried out on seven separate occasions, the first in 1986 and the latest in 2017 when 3,306 people took part.

How did you carry out the research before the website was created?
By conducting 60-minute-long interviews on a random sample of British workers.

What was the goal of the How Good Is My Job quiz?
The aim of launching the quiz was to extend the survey reach to a wider population who would not have otherwise accessed the survey via traditional media channels such as press coverage, TV and radio.

What did you like best about the website and campaign?
Working with Spindogs has been great in terms of creating the quiz design and layout, as well as getting over 39,000 individuals to take part!

How will the volume of data collected by the website help with future research?
It will be used to highlight the value of using digital methods in academic research and to write articles analysing the responses. One article has already been written and is awaiting publication.

What's the future of the project now?
The aim is to get more institutional 'sponsors' to promote the quiz. However, direct marketing to encourage engagement and responses via Facebook has proven very effective.

Would you recommend using digital marketing techniques to other researchers as a way to promote research participation?
Yes. In fact, based on my Spindogs experience, I plan to include a dedicated social media budget in future bids to request funding for surveys of this type.

In Conclusion

Our project with Cardiff University shows that, although the change from offline to digital marketing may feel daunting at first, it can prove an extremely valuable return on effort and investment. We found the results of each project phase exceeded expectations.

The 'How Good Is My Job' website provided an exceptional user experience, as evidenced by the vast number of visitors who stayed on the website and completed the quiz. Meanwhile, the social campaigns provided a huge uplift in visitors and submissions.

By choosing to take their marketing in a digital direction, the project has increased the amount of data collected by eleven times over compared to the previous study.

The Skills and Employment Survey now has a much broader data set and will improve future research findings, as well as transform how the research is carried out. We're very proud to have worked on this project and we hope it may change how research is done in the future!

SPOTLIGHT
in the

The
PROJECT
Managers

In this issue of BARK, we go behind the scenes with our Project Managers to discover what goes into the making of a website at Spindogs. How do Project Managers ensure projects run smoothly? What encapsulates the Spindogs' approach to project management?

The
MAKING OF...
A Spindogs website

Polly

When clients start a website project with us, they are assigned a dedicated Project Manager (PM) to manage the entire lifecycle of the project from conception to Go Live, to deliver websites that combine seamless design and custom functionality.

The PM is a consistent point of contact for clients throughout the project and they have several roles and responsibilities. PMs are tasked with defining a project's scope and planning for delivery, which is everything from estimating workloads and budgets to developing schedules for activity across teams. Working closely with clients, they ensure the financial and business goals for the website are met.

Successful websites don't just happen, they're the result of the careful application of a flexible and simple methodology that can accommodate any complexity or size of projects. Here's our approach to website project management:

> ## A great kick-off meeting is the key to a successful project.

Cast and crew

Our project process begins with a kick-off meeting where our business development team introduce clients to the skilled hands of PMs, who will build on the initial project scope to get a detailed picture of the goals of the website, explore requirements and functionalities in more depth, and survey the competitive landscape.

The output of the meeting is an agreed approach to managing the project going forward, from finalising the timelines and schedules of delivery to agreeing on the frequency of update meetings. Anything that could bear relevance to the project is shared at this point, including brand guidelines and audience insight.

Likely attendees of a kick-off meeting include the client's project team and the PM may bring in specialist team members, such as a designer or user experience strategist, depending on the nature and scope of the project.

Table reads

Most of our larger website projects kick off with a period of discovery to gather the requirements and opinions of different user groups. Using various techniques, including workshops, interviews and surveys, the discovery phase ensures stakeholders have their say and the new website meets their needs.

The results are compiled into a Discovery Blueprint outlining the key findings. Learn more about getting the most out of your discovery workshop on p12.
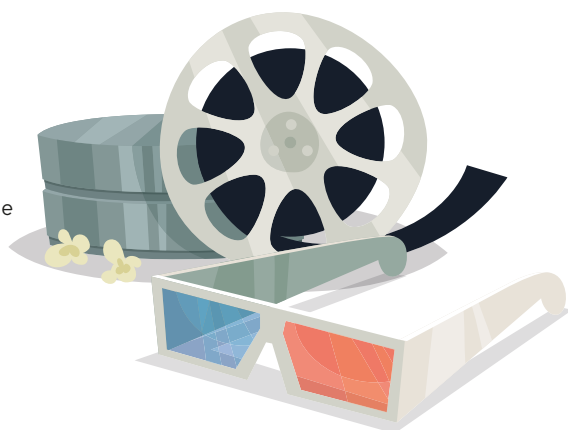
Pre-production

The next stage of our project management process is website design. Kicking off with the design brief, clients work closely with their PM and lead designer to discuss the creative goals and visual representation of the brand and agree on design priorities for the website.

The look and feel of the website is a crucial part of a website's development and the work of our experienced team of designers is influenced by industry best practice, discovery phase outcomes and a client's business goals.

Here at Spindogs, we start by designing the homepage to set the style for the website before moving onto the subpages. Once these are completed, the project moves into the technical development stage.

Production room

It's the task of our development team to take the visual design of the website and build it into a functioning and interactive website. This is where the core components of the website are built or integrated, from the content management system (CMS), to bespoke contact forms and ecommerce platforms.

At the end of the technical development stage, developers carry out comprehensive quality checks to ensure the complete functionality of the new website. We check each page on the website to make sure it works correctly, from the structure and organisation of content to testing key functions for errors or bugs, such as forms or ecommerce transactions. All of our websites are tested on primary browsers, across the main device types.

Post-production

With the quality checks in place, the project moves into the final stages of completion with CMS training. During this session, the PM walks the client through how to complete tasks, such as uploading content, on their new CMS.

One of the more time-consuming tasks that remains is populating the new website with content. To ensure a seamless process, we can take care of the content upload as part of the website project. Once the content has been uploaded, the PM will pull together an internal group of people across teams for a final review of the website before its launch. Together we assess the website and look for opportunities for improvement. The changes at this stage are usually minimal: sometimes the menu needs a bit more room or a small style tweak may improve the look and feel of an image gallery.

The official première

The official website launch is a collaborative effort of the development and IT teams, with the PM overseeing. The website is moved to a live server, and the team set up redirects to the new website, launch the search engine optimisation (SEO) package (if included), and activate Google Analytics for monitoring and insight.

Our service doesn't just stop there. Your dedicated PM will stay in touch for a couple of weeks post launch to make sure that everything goes smoothly. For long-term support to manage ongoing updates and maintenance work, flexible support packages are available from our in-house customer support team.
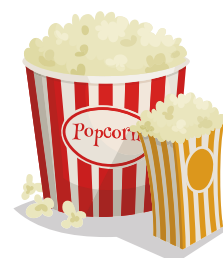
Advice Reel

The PMs have spoken! Reflecting on their past experiences working on projects big and small, our Senior Project Managers offer their top tips that will help clients get the most out of their new website

01 **It's all about the brief.** A great kick-off meeting is the key to a successful project. We want to learn as much as possible about the new project, so any background information or ideas you can bring along, such as statistics, stakeholder feedback or a rough site map, can really help get the ball rolling. Over the years we have developed a tried and tested briefing document which we will take you through in order to make sure we cover all the essential points. Once we understand how your website can work for you and what you want to improve, it's up to us to meet the challenge.

02 **Get the experts involved.** We're lucky to have so many web experts under one roof and we make sure to get everyone involved at all stages of the project. From designers and developers, to our genius online marketing team, everyone contributes to make each project a roaring success.

Ceri Bower

01 **Be realistic about the project plan.** We all want to move through to a successful launch as quickly as possible, but don't underestimate the time some things may take. For example, make sure to allocate enough time to create content that speaks to your audiences and then the time it takes to add it to the website using a Content Management System (CMS) that you may not have used before.

Another key area of the plan to check as soon as possible is the availability of your team members. Can they do what you need, when you need it? A common mistake is not including your IT team in discussions around licences and hosting early on.

02 **Have a test plan.** These range in complexity enormously, but as soon as possible you should at least define how you will ensure that you are happy with what has been produced. What does success look like? Who would check this and how?

03 **Keep on talking!** At Spindogs we make sure we establish regular points of contact to check in with clients, share progress and identify any potential issues. Successful projects are fuelled by responsive, focussed and regular exchanges of information. Something just occurred to you about the project that you think we need to know about? Call your Spindogs PM and share it!

Andrew Maisey

SP💡TLIGHT
in the

Project Process

1. Project brief
Kick-off meeting with client's project team and Project Manager (PM).
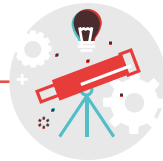
2. Discovery phase
Internal and stakeholder research (if applicable).

Discovery Blueprint that sets out findings of research phase and recommendations for design and functionality.

3. Design phase
Design brief kick-off where client, PM and lead designer agree on design priorities for the website.

Design kicks off with homepage design before moving onto subpages.

4. Development
The website enters the frontend and backend stages of technical development.

Core components of the website are built or integrated into a functioning and interactive website.

5. Quality checks
Developers conduct comprehensive quality checks to ensure the complete functionality of the new website.

6. CMS Training
The PM walks the client through the features and functionality of the new website.

7. Content Upload
The website is ready to be populated with content.

PM is on hand to help with any questions or blockers.

8. Go Live
A two-hour Go Live slot is booked in with our development team.

The website moves from the development to the live server.

THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL

Whether you are actively immersed in the world of digital or you are looking to build your digital portfolio in the upcoming year, keeping on top of trends is a mission in a constantly changing and versatile environment. As we hurtle towards 2020 at light speed, our fearless team leaders tell us what they expect to encounter in the digital space in the upcoming year.

Futuristic development

In 2018 we collectively broke the social taboo of talking to a machine. All of a sudden many people are more comfortable having a chat than with Alexa than their partners! So it only makes sense that in 2019 integrating digital products with a voice recognition system will be a top priority for many businesses. Now that every household seems to have an Amazon Echo or a Google Home speaker,

it's a race for which platform can get the best uptake from developers and render the competition redundant (remember Windows phone? No, didn't think so!).

Oli Salisbury
Technical Manager

The dark side of design

Ever-advancing digital technologies give designers more freedom to push the boundaries of what a website can become. We are now able to use less rigid shapes, banish boring traditional web layouts and craft new and exciting experiences for users. Going forward, we see web becoming even more organic.

Meanwhile, screens are getting enormous, bringing physical buttons a step closer to extinction in this all-screen galaxy. As an industry, we've been adapting to this by making the mobile experience more thumb friendly. Let's face it, no one wants to adjust their grip and so bringing menu options closer to the thumb will be essential this year, as well as educating clients on the subject so they feel comfortable letting go of the 'top right' position.

Matt Gadd
Head of Design

Stellar automation and personalisation

If you use digital marketing to promote, advertise, communicate or sell, at some point or another you would have likely used automation software. When a new customer signs up to a newsletter, you can automate entire email threads and warm them into becoming a brand advocate. When a potential customer queries you on social media about a service, a sophisticated chat bot can auto-reply and give them all the information they need, without you having to touch a keyboard. You can even use machine learning systems to automatically adjust your bidding strategy on Google Ads campaigns.

In 2019, marketing platforms will combine automation with personalisation techniques to improve adverts, messages, emails and display campaigns, making them feel unique and timely to the user. We've already encountered advanced technology that is capable of automating digital campaigns based on the weather, what's on TV, browsing history and in-market tendencies (such as noticing when you're about to buy a car). Artificial intelligence, along with browsing history and purchase habit tracking, is helping us marketers to better understand audiences.

When combined with rule-driven strategies, automation and personalisation can power a new approach to marketing, targeting the right person at the right time in a way that feels unique to them. It's easy to see why we love it!

Scott McCaffrey
Online Marketing
Account Manager

Astronomic support

As 'good' bots evolve, so will spam bots, and we predict more and more people will be hit by them. We can help our clients combat these by adding a Google Captcha to website forms. Although it's not an absolute solution, it will certainly help to reduce spam emails (these are not the subscribers you're looking for). Our team has already started adding Google Captchas to a number of different sites as it seems like people are getting hit more often.

Over the last year Google Chrome has started flagging websites that do not have an SSL certificate as 'Not Secure'. In the aftermath of this, over the year we expect to see more people requesting that we add SSL certificates in an effort to remove this message.

With new projects comes new support retainers, our client base is always growing and so is our team. Look out for some fresh new faces in Spindogs HQ in 2019!

Kirsty Jones
Client Support
Team Leader

SEO launch packs

We're working alongside our online marketing experts to rollout our SEO Launch packages to all new websites. As part of producing a website that meets the business needs and targets of our clients, the SEO launch package gives a new website the best possible start. It includes URL redirects from your old site to the new, the creation or transfer of meta description and titles, and a full technical review. We can then help you set up Google Analytics to monitor progress and look for opportunities to make your organic traffic skyrocket.

Ceri Bower
Project Manager

Team make-up

Where people are based

Cardiff	Clacton-on-Sea
Reading	Witney, Oxfordshire
Bourne End	Leicester
Theale	High Wycombe
Cookham	

Musicians
20

Preacher
1

Bikers
2

Personal Trainer
1

Sixteen Parents
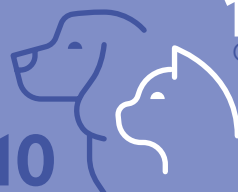
Coffee vs Tea
20
26

Four
Siaradwyr Cymraeg
Welsh speakers

10 Cats
10 Dogs

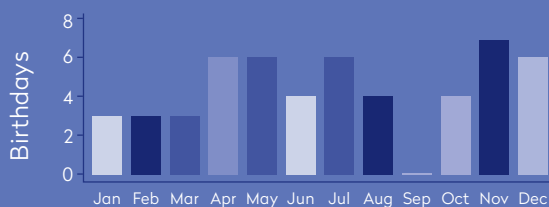Fifty four pints a week

Twenty Two
Females

Twenty nine
Males

20 Welsh

29 English

1 New Zealander

1 Bulgarian

Birthdays

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	3	3	6	6	4	6	4	0	4	7	6

About Spindogs

A full-service digital agency, 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 14 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
T: 02920 480 720