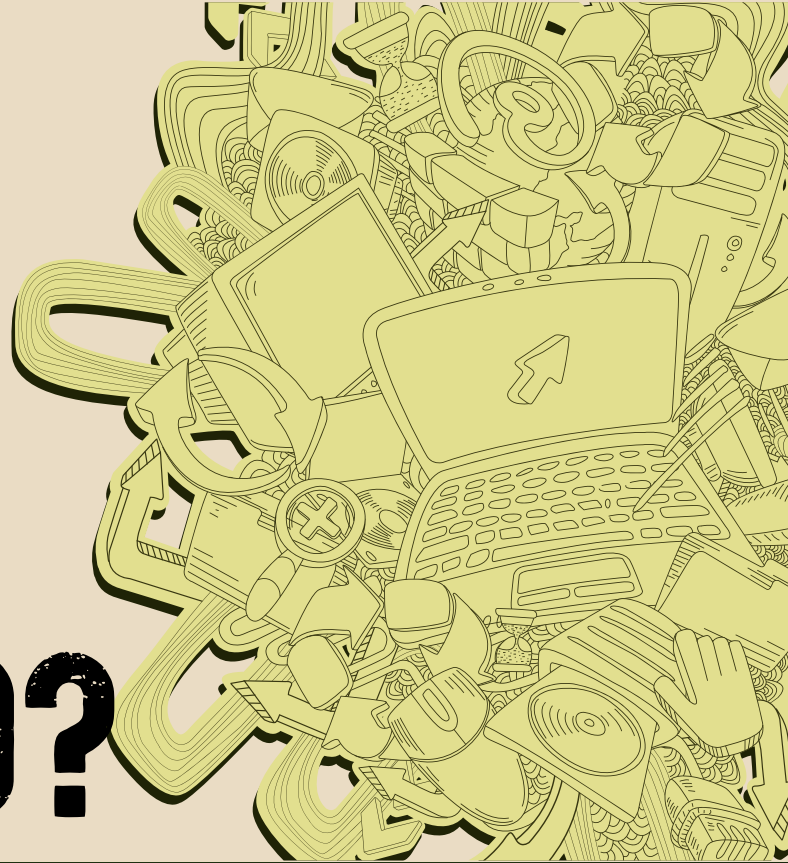


THE DEATH OF SEO





WHAT'S GOING ON WITH SEO?

Just a few years ago, search engine optimisation (**SEO**) was unheard of. But with the swift growth of the internet and countless new marketing opportunities for businesses, SEO has become a central element of the marketing strategy of many companies.

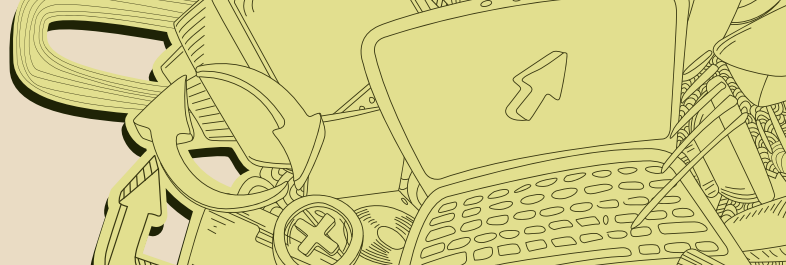
With an estimated 43.7 million internet users in the UK by 2012 (Source: eMarketer), the preoccupation with SEO has continued to grow. It has developed alongside the increasing presence and power of the search engines. Some major brands got their first big break with search marketing and now most ambitious businesses want a piece of the lucrative pie.

Yet while a hefty 22% of business marketing budgets are spent on search marketing, more than a third of business marketers say they do not know, for example, whether optimising for local search or social search is more valuable (Source: UK SEM Benchmark Report 2011). This kind of figure reveals the reality behind the big drive towards SEO. While many companies want the results, few understand the finer detail required to achieve them.

This confusion isn't helped by the continuous changes in the search engines themselves. Another issue is, that while there are lots of SEO companies out there offering SEO services, they cannot show which keywords create actual leads and customers at individual website visitor level.

This is in contrast with an inbound marketing approach that does allow companies to see exactly which keywords are bringing in which business. All these issues mean that SEO is leaving many companies behind, rather than winning them the web traffic and the leads they need.





THE RISKS OF BETTING IT ALL ON SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

In recent times, SEO has been viewed as the answer to all the questions around marketing online. The ensuing gold rush has led to companies undertaking piecemeal and potentially detrimental activities.

KEYWORDS ARE NOT SALESEOPLE

A common issue making SEO a risk rather than an asset for businesses is a common over-reliance on keywords. This focus means companies expect that liberally adding the 'right' keywords to their website content will sell their services all by itself.

This completely overlooks the value of a strategic approach, balancing keywords with content that matches the web visitor's journey – with landing pages and appropriate content. Keywords might drive visitors to your website, but keywords alone can't convert visitors into customers, however up to date they are.

They need to be fitted around a careful strategy to attract and nurture web visitors. New inbound marketing approaches make it much easier to integrate all marketing activities together so that they support, rather than fight against each other.

BROADEN YOUR MARKETING APPROACH

Many companies still rely on a very narrow approach to SEO, focusing on SEO alone

rather than using it as part of a well rounded marketing approach.



Instead many companies rely solely on getting web traffic from SEO - leaving them vulnerable to losing customers when the search engines change their algorithms. By using SEO in addition to other channels to drive traffic (alongside marketing automation to nurture previous web visitors and customers) you don't run the risk of losing business when the search engines update their algorithms.

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

SEO has to perform within the ever changing world of search engines. Recent changes to the leading search engine, Google, have made SEO an even trickier balance to pull off.

The Google Panda/Farmer updates have had a big impact on many websites, undermining some of the more well established tricks to win rankings. Instead of running to keep up, applying inbound marketing tactics helps companies more evenly spread which channels drive traffic



to their website, such as referring sites, SEO and direct traffic.

It also gives a clear view, through the right technology platforms, of which channels and even which keywords, generate the most visitors, leads and customers, providing a better sense of what you need to do to stay strategic.



ONE PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE

The reality is that SEO does work - but only to drive visitors to a website. However, it is possible to turbo charge the results you get from SEO by using website conversion tactics with dedicated landing pages and calls to action alongside with lead nurturing approaches to convert visitors into leads and customers, then employing marketing automation techniques to turn those customers into repeat customers.

With inbound marketing, SEO is part of a well rounded marketing approach to include content marketing, social media and lead nurturing. Inbound marketing lets business-owners know which keywords generate traffic, leads and customers, right down to individual customer level. This is

something most SEO approaches can never deliver.

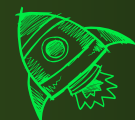
MAKING SEO WORK

SEO isn't dying - but it is in danger of becoming a dead weight rather than an asset to business. Changes amongst the search engines are adding to the challenges. Google recently announced that it is to stop providing marketers with details of the keywords that people use to find a website.

Having a well rounded inbound marketing approach is even more important as the limits increase around the information we can see on our web visitors. It provides more ways to understand the behaviour of potential customers and what really works in driving traffic, leads and customers.



SO WHAT CAN COMPANIES DO TO MAKE MORE OF A RETURN FROM SEO?



1. KEEP SEO UP TO DATE

Use SEO combined with inbound marketing to monitor and respond to new keyword opportunities - as they happen. A continually changing market and updated search engines demand an ongoing and potentially more profitable approach.



Inbound marketing comes with a host of resources such as online platforms and dashboards to allow you to view exactly which keywords drive visitors, leads and customers at an individual level.

2. DON'T DO SEO WITH OUT THINKING OF YOUR SALES FUNNEL

Thinking of SEO in isolation from the rest of your marketing strategy is very likely to deliver poor results. Great if you've got your SEO right and it's driving your website up the search engine rankings and drawing people to your website – the top of your sales funnel.

Not so great if your visitors get to your site but leave because there is no landing page or content specially created to nurture them. That's your online sales pipeline broken in the middle of the funnel.

Even worse, this could actually have a detrimental effect on your SEO because the search engines will see these visitors bouncing away from your website and may penalise you, pushing you lower down the rankings.

3. USE THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY TO SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING

SEO has huge potential, but only as part of a well rounded and integrated marketing approach. Used alone, with tools such as Google Analytics, it can be a lot more tricky to manage and if an agency is doing your SEO for you're likely to end up being bombarded with mountains of confusing reports and stats.

But by using the technology platforms

you get with inbound marketing, you can view which keywords are actually bringing in business – right down to the level of the individual customer.

You can also see which keywords are driving traffic and creating new leads, even if you are not already optimising for those keywords, which means you can change your strategy based on what generates business - not just the volume of local searches that you get from keyword tools such as Google AdWords Keyword Tool.



HOW TO GET BETTER RESULTS WITH SEO

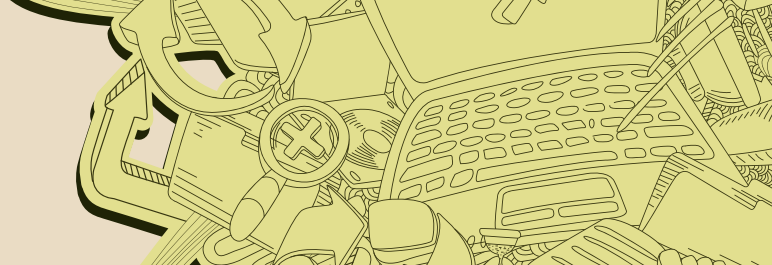


1. INTEGRATE IT

SEO used as part of an integrated inbound marketing strategy can create results that you can view as they're happening. So instead of guessing at what it's bringing into your business, you can use technology to monitor, view and analyse your leads and customers and where they are coming from.

2. UPDATE IT

SEO is not a once in a lifetime option. It's not an annual 'let's update the website' task. Using inbound marketing technology makes it easy to turn SEO into a regular and much more profitable marketing activity.



3. DON'T SEPARATE IT

SEO provides huge potential for driving visitors to your website - but you won't get its full potential if you use it on its own. Get more from your SEO by building your sales and marketing strategy around it.

It's part of your overall sales funnel, not a separate extension. Use it as part of an inbound marketing approach to attract, nurture and convert web visitors into new business.

WANT MORE?

Want more on updating your marketing approaches to win more leads and sales? Download our eGuide What Exactly is Inbound Marketing? now! by clicking on the link below

<http://bit.ly/pF8gVk>