

eBook

The future of digital marketing: 2019 & beyond

Boost your online presence by evolving your digital marketing



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1. Introduction

The digital marketing landscape continues to evolve at an accelerated pace.



Stuart Ross, MD of Hallam

There are many new digital marketing trends and strategies that businesses must embrace if they are to thrive in 2019 and beyond.

Dive into our ebook to understand which technologies and strategies will have the most impact on digital marketing and how you can apply these to your business today.

The first chapter presents some top-of-mind trends that we'll see unfold throughout 2019. Then we continue by discussing more in depth trends that will impact specific areas of digital marketing such as SEO, analytics, digital PR and PPC.

If you're looking to freshen up your marketing this year, you're in the right place. Read on!



2.

Top digital marketing trends to watch in 2019

Here are the most important digital marketing trends we'll see coming to the forefront in 2019.



Artificial Intelligence

Businesses who embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 2019 will be able to get an edge over their competitors through saving costs and accelerating growth.

AI is now able to analyse consumer behaviour and search patterns, utilising data from social media platforms and blog posts to help businesses understand how users and customers find their products and services. For example, [Facebook messenger bots](#) can help you automate and optimise your customer service.

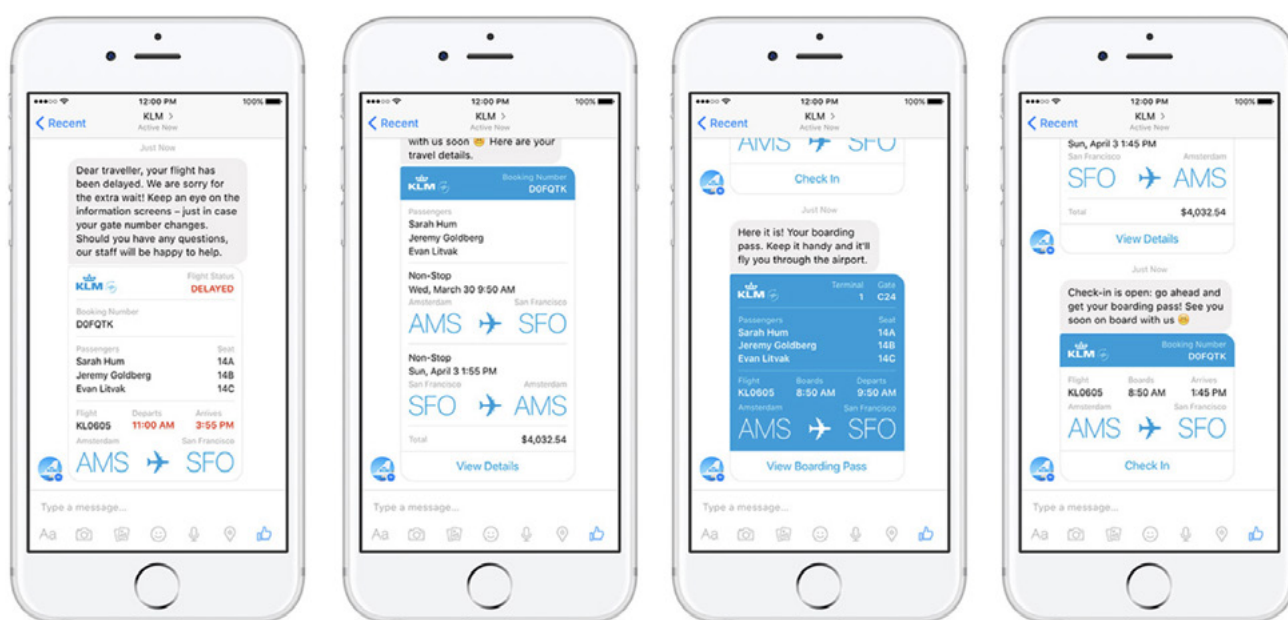


Image source: Engadget

AI also offers information and tips to users by getting into conversations. According to [Gartner](#), 25% of customer service will use chatbot technology by 2020, up from less than 2% in 2017.



Programmatic advertising

Programmatic advertising, a process in which automation technology is used to buy and sell online media, will continue to evolve in 2019 and in the following years.

We will see it encompass further online ads, video to digital out-of-home, voice and TV.

Using programmatic advertising enables companies to use data and technology to make real-time decisions regarding the advert they wish to deliver to specific customers. The tool will provide guaranteed impressions and the ability to reach a different audience beyond continuous campaigns.

A great advantage with programmatic advertising is that marketers and business owners will begin to finally think of marketing as an omnichannel journey as we humans don't just sit in one platform or see just one ad!

With lower barriers to entry driven by increased platforms and declining costs it is not surprising this technology is changing the face of digital advertising so rapidly that, according to [eMarketer](#), almost 90% of digital display ads in the U.S. will be programmatic by 2020.



Personalisation

To stand out of the crowd, you need to personalise your marketing. That means personalised content, landing pages, emails, and more.

With the availability of data like purchase history and links clicked, personalised content has never been easier. This year and onwards is going to be about capturing data about how your app is used and improving the user experience (UX) by driving the platform to change and adapt to this by itself.

This means that, depending on the data available on a user, the application will be able to act like a chameleon and change itself to provide the ideal UX for them. This will create truly personalised sites that behave differently and show different features depending on the individual using it.

Personalisation is not just restricted to websites. Email continues to be a major channel of communication, with [millions still using it](#) for personal, commercial, industrial, legal, scientific, and academic purposes.

However, email marketing is evolving, with generic marketing emails not being effective as they once were. It is now a combination of automation and, more importantly, personalisation that makes email marketing important for the future. When you can trigger your email marketing to something specific, such as a user browsing a particular product, and then follow up with a promotional price or demo video in a personalised email, this can be very effective. Email is often the final “trigger” to motivate an action, especially when combined with your remarketing techniques.

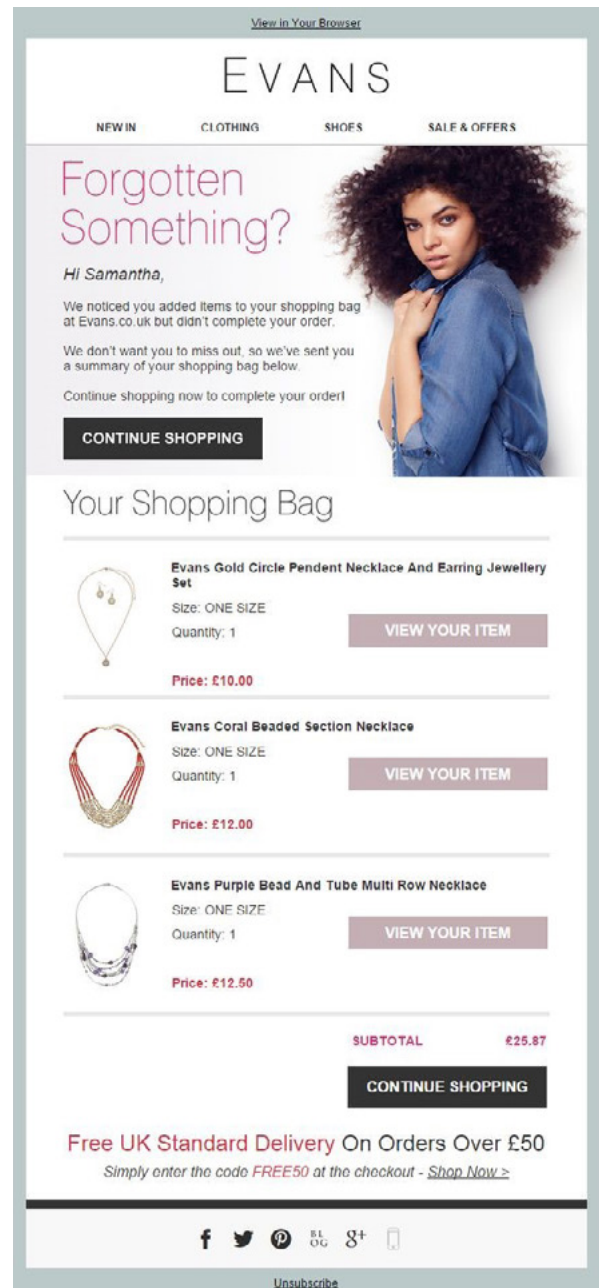


Image source: Coast Digital



Visual search

Visual search is another revolutionary development that is powered by AI, allowing us to [search by inputting images instead of text](#).

Despite being in its infancy, visual search is changing the face of ecommerce and tech, while still showing vast potential. Visual search caters to our very nature, and increasing expectations for speedy results via less effort.

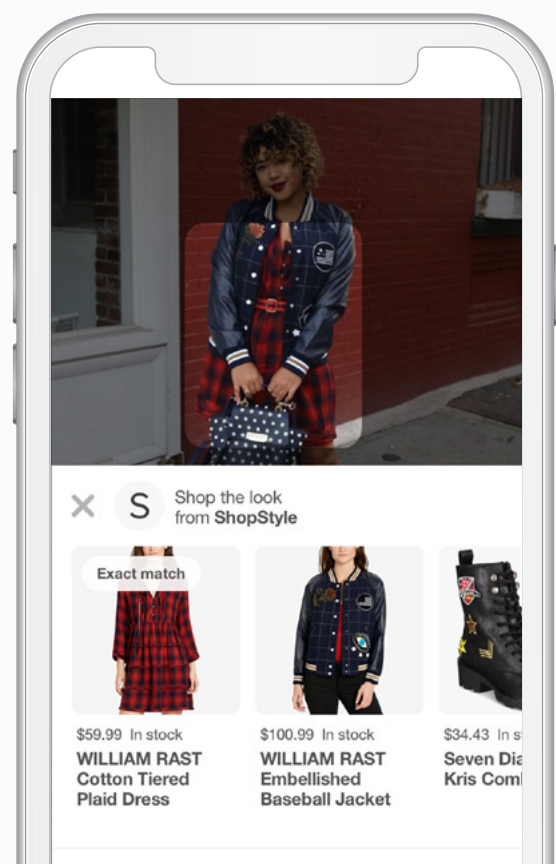
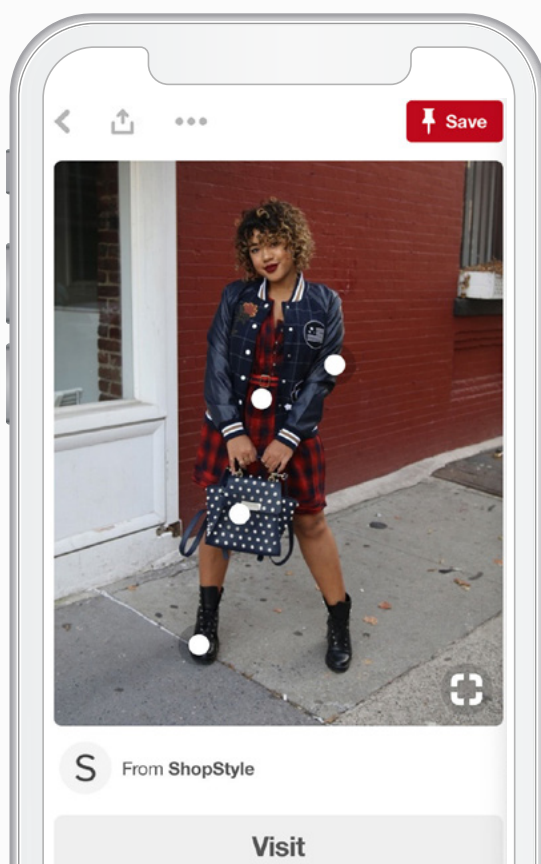
[Google Lens](#), launched in 2017, makes the whole process even easier with the input of augmented reality. A photo doesn't need to be physically taken. Just by pointing a phone camera will return one or numerous points of interest to explore, depending on how many places or objects are shown on screen. Alternatively, with visual search, users can upload an image to conduct a search and get more specific results, taking the user experience to a new level. As 93% of consumers consider visuals to be the key deciding factor in a purchasing decision (Kissmetrics), visual search engines are set to revolutionise the retail industry.

Pinterest has also jumped on the visual search bandwagon launching Lens, a new visual search tool that allows users to take a photo of an item to find out where to buy it online, search for similar products, or view pinboards of related items.



Image source: Engadget

Image Source: Search Engine Watch



Content is still king

People have been running away from traditional ads for years.

[A Nielsen study from 2015](#) showed that the top four most-trusted sources of advertising were: people you know, branded sites, editorial sites and reviews. Ads are near the bottom of that list and that fact hasn't really changed.

[Statista](#) reported that 41% of respondents to a survey used ad blockers in 2018 in the UK, meaning traditional ads now won't even reach considerable parts of possible target audience members.

We predict that people will further put more trust in reputable content instead of relying on advertisements. This denotes that more engaging and informative your content is, the better your chances are to be noticed online.



Micro moments

According to [eMarketer](#), adults in the UK will spend 2 hours 14 minutes a day on their smartphone in 2019, meaning mobile devices will be the medium that gets the most minutes in the UK.

This is changing the way brands must work to capture consumers' attention.

Micro Moments is a “new consumer behaviour,” as termed by Google, that delivers your marketing message clearly and concisely in a way that is of interest to the consumers – all within a span of seconds.

People generally make instant decisions on what to eat, which restaurant to choose, what to purchase, or where to go etc. Micro-Moments that every marketer should know about are:



Image source: Google




Ultimately, the whole consumer decision journey is a combination of these micro-moments across all channels and devices. The successful brands of tomorrow will be those meeting their consumers' needs in these micro-moments.

To take advantage of micro-moments, be where consumers search for information in the moment – such as Google, Google Maps, Amazon, YouTube, and anywhere else people search for information at a moment's notice.


Take a look at how a variety of [brands are using Micro-Moments](#) in their marketing:

See how brands are using Micro-Moments




How one beauty brand is predicting intent to drive growth

Perspective - July 2018



How digital is helping one retail giant deliver on its brand purpose

Interview - May 2018



How 'Near Me' helps us find what we need, not just where to go

Perspective - May 2018

Image source: Google



Voice search

With [50% of all searches set to be voice searches](#) by the year 2020, companies are rethinking their digital marketing strategies.

The advances made in recent years in the fields of natural language processing, conversation interfaces, automation, and machine learning and deep learning processes have enabled virtual assistants to become increasingly intelligent and useful.

Perhaps not surprisingly, smart speakers like Alexa and Google Home are also on the rise. According to [YouGov](#), the number of UK homes with at least one such device rose from 5% in Q3 2017 all the way up to 10% in Q1 2018. It's not quite as high as the Americans, but it's still a pretty spectacular climb.

This has resulted in almost one-third of the 3.5 billion searches performed on Google every day to be voice searches now, with personal assistant devices leading the way.

Voice search differs from the typical desktop or mobile search. When you open Google on your browser and type in your search query, you'll see hundreds of pages of search results. It's not that hard to be one of them.

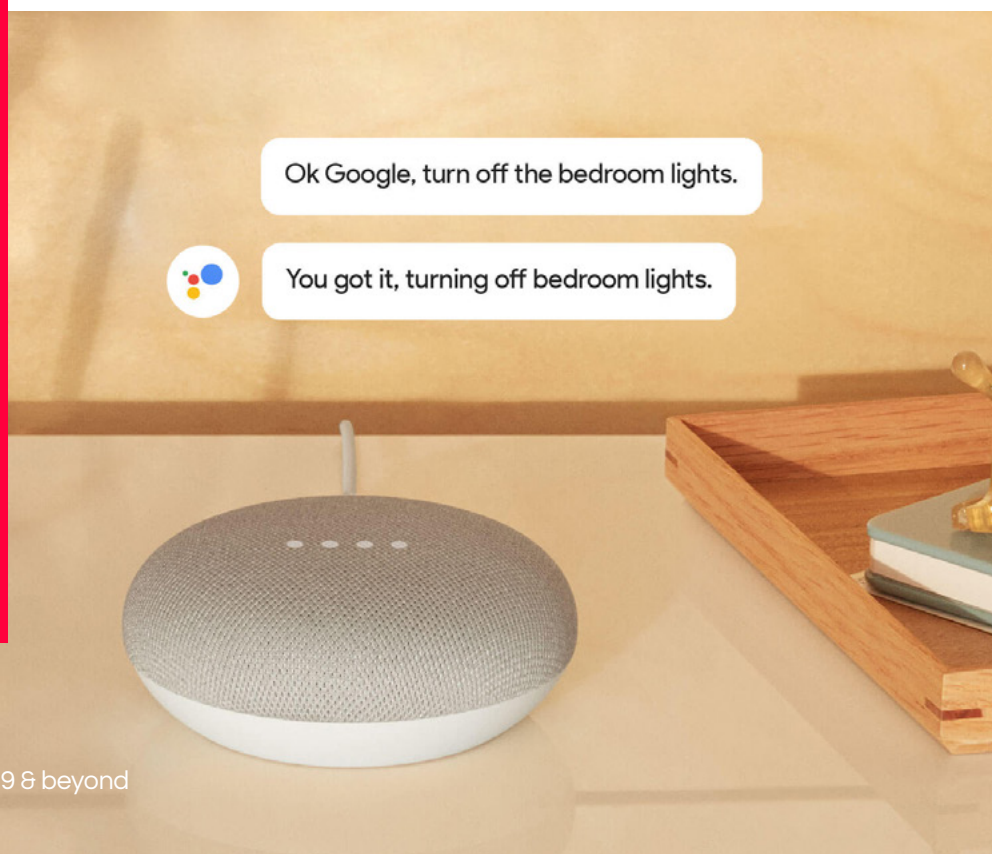
When you ask Siri a question, it will give you just a few results. More often than not it will only give you one result. If your website is one of them, the click through rate (CTR) can potentially be much higher. However, it needs to be there in the first place. Therefore, tailoring your website and SEO strategy for voice search will be crucial in the near future.

Recap

In 2019 and onwards, digital marketing will be about a quality customer experience with personalisation, great content, automation and AI-powered technology.

As you explore these areas, don't hesitate to [contact Hallam](#) to assist you on your journey.

Image source: wch.thegoodguys.com.au



3.

Foundations of SEO in 2019

Ranking organically is a long process: it takes time, effort and commitment, but 2019 should be the year you go beyond the basics of SEO and up your search engine game.

We'll go through five aspects of SEO that can help to increase your organic visibility.

These are trends that have emerged in the last year and have been proven to make a real difference to your rankings and organic traffic if implemented correctly.



Optimise for Google's mobile-first index

Back in March 2018, [Google announced they would start the shift over to a mobile-first index](#); having encouraged companies to focus their efforts on mobile websites for years prior to this.

This essentially means that Google will crawl your mobile pages first, only resorting to desktop pages if you don't have an equivalent mobile page available.

In 2018, [52.2% of worldwide traffic](#) was through mobile phones (up from 50.3% in 2017). Mobile searches overtook desktop searches long ago; so it's crucial in 2019 that [your mobile website is fully optimised](#).

The first step? If you haven't already, you need to switch to a responsive website as soon as possible. Use Google's [Mobile Friendly Testing Tool](#) to see how your website shapes up, and get tips on how you can make it friendlier for mobile.

Mobile page speed is a hugely important aspect to tackle in upcoming months and years. In July 2018, Google confirmed that page speed will be a ranking factor for mobile searches, and if your website is slow, you're losing out on lots of potential sales – [53% of all visitors](#) leave a mobile site if a page takes more than three seconds to load.

You can check your site speed on [Google PageSpeed Insights](#), and compare your speed with competitors on [Google's Mobile Speed Scorecard](#).

Both of these handy tools will advise you on ways to increase your speed, but the most common resolutions we've come across are:

- Reducing your number of redirects
- Optimising your images
- Minifying your code
- Using browser caching



You should also consider implementing [Accelerated Mobile Pages](#) (AMP) onto your most important pages – such as your homepage and product pages – as it will enable them to load almost instantaneously.



Optimise for voice search

(but don't get too wrapped up in it!)

The use of personal assistants is increasing: [2 out of 5 adults conduct at least one voice search a day](#). 46% of voice search users look for businesses daily, and 53% perform daily local searches.

So, in 2019, you can't really afford not to optimise for voice search, but don't forget that it's only one aspect of SEO.

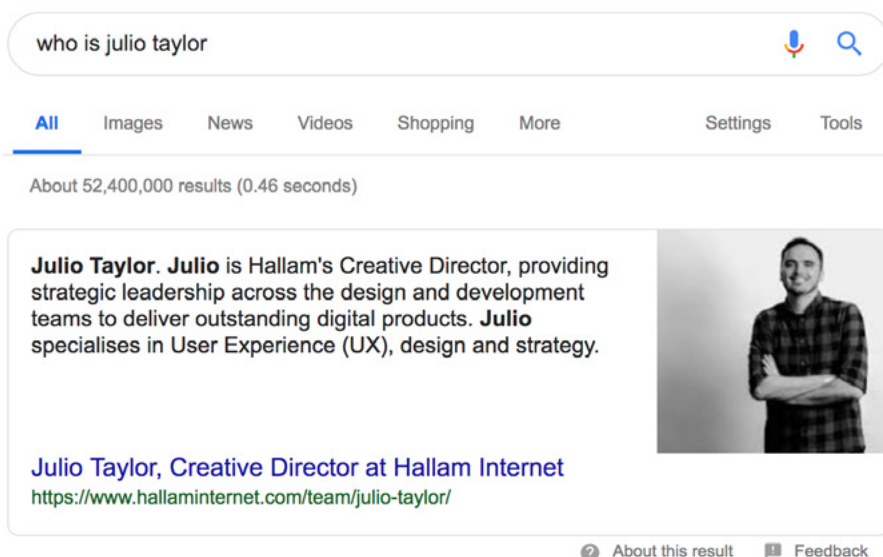
The great thing about optimising your site for voice search, is that you're automatically strengthening your position for mobile and desktop searches too, so it's a win/win situation. Here are just a couple of ways in which you can increase your chances of appearing on voice searches:

Aim for featured snippets

Voice assistants typically read out featured snippets (also referred to as position 0), so you'll want to aim for that elusive position.

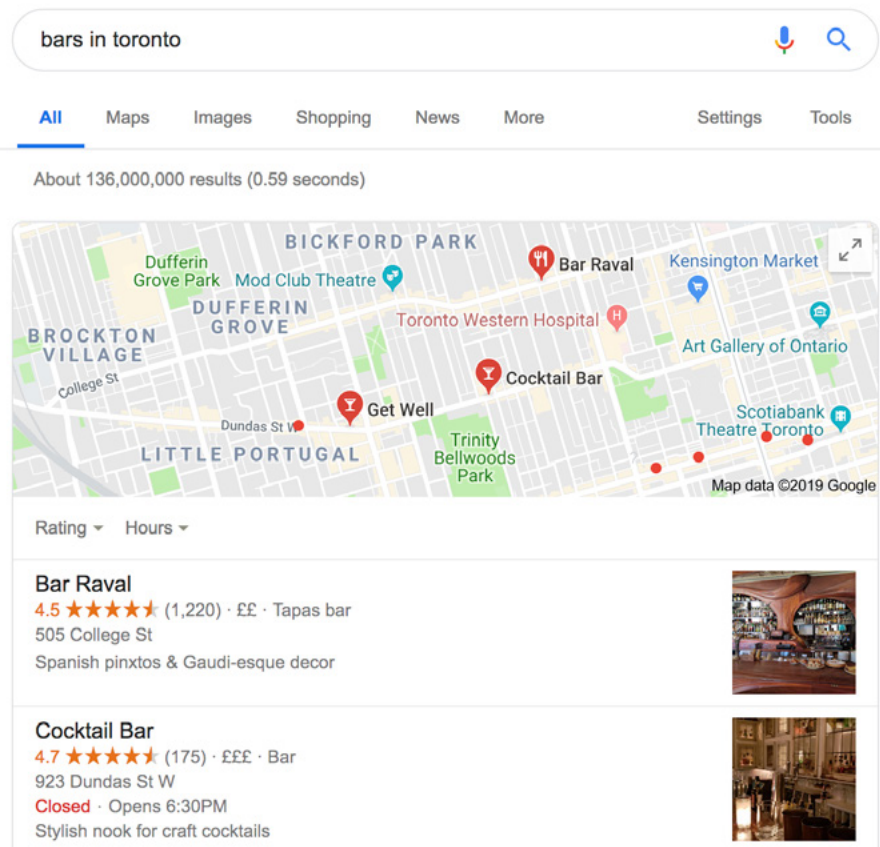
The question is, [how do you become a featured snippet?](#) Well, the best way is to answer specific questions that searchers are asking. Conduct keyword research to discover the types of questions surrounding your products/services – [Answer the Public](#) is a great source of inspiration too.

The layout of your copy is equally as important. Include the question in your H2, and then answer it concisely below. If it makes sense, you can lay your answer out as a bullet point list – popular amongst featured snippets.



Strengthen your local SEO game

We know that [53% of all voice search users perform local searches on a daily basis](#), so you need to make sure your business is at the top of the list.



This is basic local SEO, and should be something you're doing anyway, but make sure your [Google My Business Page](#) (GMB) is up to date! Check that it includes the correct address, contact details and opening hours – there's nothing more frustrating for a user if they searched for your opening hours, and turned up to your store to find that you're closed.

Something to bear in mind is the recent addition of the "Product" and "Offer" posts that businesses can now utilise:

Product: this enables you to emphasise a specific product or service. You'll need to include a title, and either a photo or video, along with some key information. You can also include a CTA button through to the relevant page on your site.

Offer: this allows you to highlight discounts and offers on specific products or services – e.g. a hairdresser may decide to offer 15% off cut and blow dries for a week. In addition to a title and "View Offer" CTA button, you'll need to post the start and end date of your offer.

Here is more about the [different types of Google Posts](#), including how to set them up, and measuring their success. Alternatively, discover in-depth [how to optimise your brand for voice search](#).



Quality links from authoritative sources are still essential

Don't underestimate the importance of good quality backlinks.

It's great for SEO as each external link acts as a "thumbs up" that your content and website is of good quality.

The more links from websites with high domain ratings (DRs) you get, the more authoritative you are seen by Google, which will help to increase your rankings on the search engine results page (SERPs).

There are several ways you can build links, and we'd definitely recommend creating a comprehensive backlink strategy.

[Guest blogging is a great way to gain links](#)

– you just need to ensure your content is engaging, informative, and relevant to the audience you're targeting. For quick wins, monitor brand mentions and broken backlinks in a tool like [Ahrefs](#). Once you've gained a list, you can get in touch with each website to politely ask if they will either add or update the link to your site. Sure, you won't get a reply (or result) every single time, but you should start to see your backlink profile expand.

You should also take the time to conduct some good, old-fashioned citation building: [BrightLocal](#) is a great tool, as it will identify all the directories in the area(s) you operate in, and will show you which directories you're already mentioned in and whether your information needs updating.

It's important that when you build links to your site, they're from good quality websites; because lots of spammy links can actually be detrimental to your SEO. Sure, one or two won't do any harm, but if you have several, then it's worth getting rid of them. The most effective way is to collate a list of links and use [Google's disavow tool](#).



Create great quality content

It's never been more important to recognise the fact that quality content is a fundamental part of SEO, and will continue to be so in 2019.

You just need to make sure that the content you produce is something your audience wants to consume.

Content can come in many forms; from blog posts targeting specific keywords you've identified, to larger projects including interactive maps, videos, quizzes and influencer campaigns.

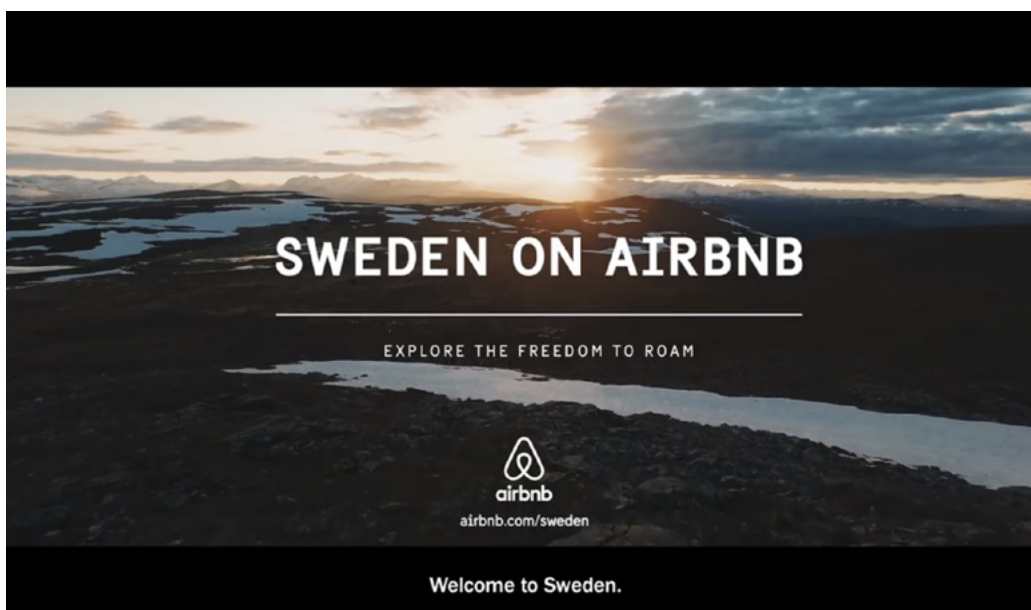


Image source: Airbnb

Larger content marketing pieces are a great way to build backlinks (as mentioned above), which is why it's so important to ensure it's relevant to your audience. Creating content that people want to share and talk about on social media, and link back to, will help to increase your position on the SERPs, as well as building brand awareness and positioning you as an authority in your field.

Video is one form of content that you should really be focusing on. [According to Cisco](#), videos will account for 80% of all online traffic by 2021, and [YouTube is the world's second largest search engine](#). With [55% of all Google search results](#) containing at least one video, you have a real opportunity to be seen – find out how to [rank your YouTube videos here](#).

Content can work for all types of industries – from [fashion](#) to [life sciences](#) and everything in between; you just need to make sure it's unique and serves a purpose. If you want to incorporate content into your SEO strategy, take a look at our [five tips for improving your content marketing](#).



Remember: SEO and UX go hand-in-hand

You may think you have a website with all the content you need, and beautiful, inspiring imagery, but that won't count for anything if you offer a bad user experience.

Your website needs to make considerations for both SEO and your users. You need to take visitors through a seamless process of entering your website, consuming your content, and ultimately purchasing or making an enquiry (depending on your end intent).

If your website is difficult to navigate, slow to load, or showing irrelevant content, then you can't blame users for getting frustrated and abandoning your website. If you're constantly suffering from high bounce rates, then Google will start to take note, and you'll likely see your rankings suffer.

Make 2019 the year you tackle UX - here is more on how you can get the perfect [balance of UX and SEO](#).

If you need help with creating and implementing an SEO strategy, or simply need some advice, then just [get in touch as we'd be happy to help](#).



4.

Data and insights trends for 2019 and beyond

2019 is proving to be an exciting year for digital marketers with data and insights playing a massive role in many of the upcoming tech changes and top news stories.



Customer brand interactions

Brands need to engage and interact with increasingly savvy customers online.

No longer is a brand just a provider of a great product or service, they need to be part of people's lives to differentiate themselves and data has a massive role to play in this:

Chatbots and voice search

Customers want answers with minimal fuss and chatbots provide a low-cost solution to presenting FAQ information or finding the answer to questions never asked before. As [chatbots become smarter and more widespread in 2019](#) they may replace call centres, especially as voice search is now integrated into all mobile devices allowing for a more conversational interaction.

Drones and driverless cars

Speedy drone delivery may become a reality in the upcoming months allowing businesses to deliver a product within minutes of a purchase, bypassing delivery woes. Driverless cars will also soon become the ultimate taxi service to cheaply ferry around food orders, big products or people at any time whilst being fully tracked on GPS. Ironically, data collected from people working for companies such as Uber and Deliveroo will go towards the very same automation to replace many of the same workers.

Augmented reality apps

Apps that interact with the real world are collecting valuable data on where people are and who they interact with. Advertising will likely be added alongside the killer augmented reality apps in 2019 (most likely the upcoming [Harry Potter Pokemon Go Clone](#)) or the data will go towards better ad targeting methods.

Image source: Tech Funnel



Predictive customer targeting

People are becoming increasingly demanding online:

- Selling a product? Many people will search for a cheaper price elsewhere
- Providing a service? Many people will research your business reviews and testimonials
- Providing customers with options? Many people will want to contact you or find out information immediately

Digital marketers can no longer place products or services online and sit back comfortably, they need to catch people in the **micro-moment**, the point at which they are either:

- Researching into a product/service
- Looking for a place offering a product/service
- Need help towards a related topic
- Want to buy a product/service

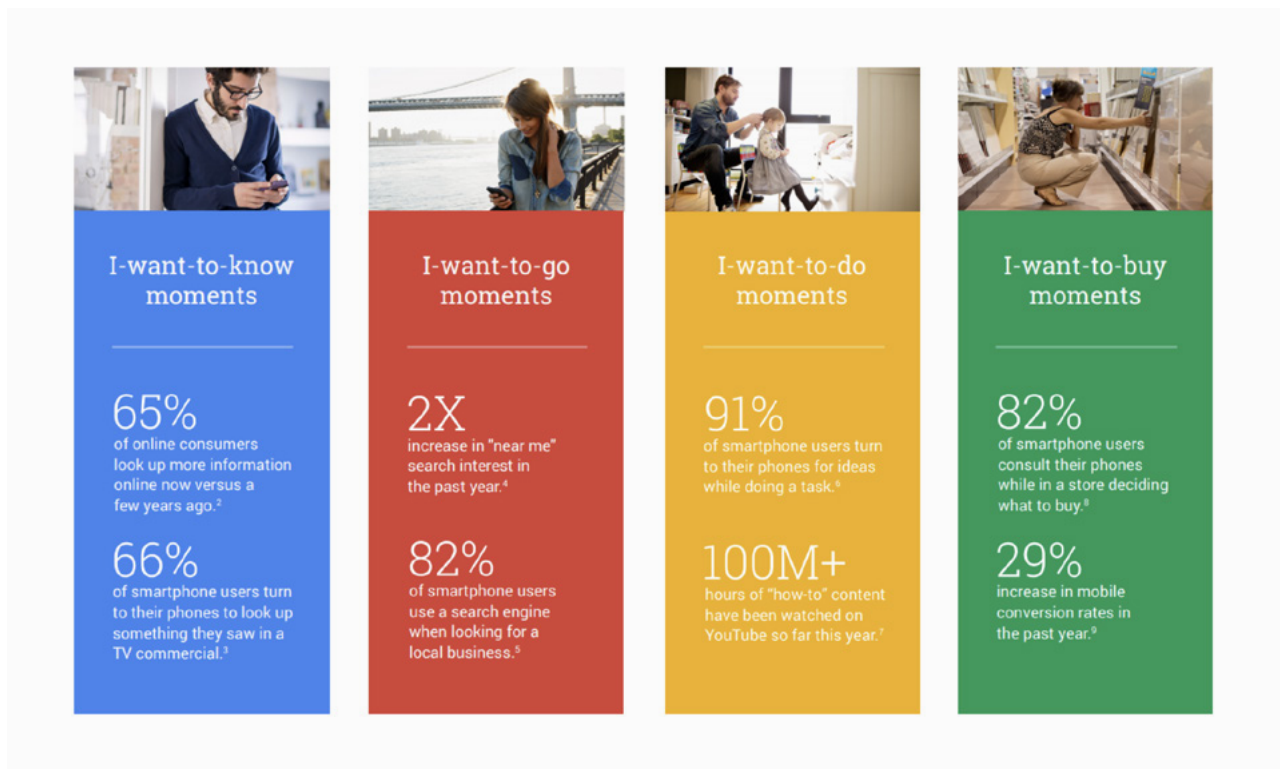


Image source: Google



Traditionally marketers looked at user search terms, affinity audiences or demographics to differentiate between people in different stages along the funnel. With search engines, communication providers and social networks utilising machine learning and artificial intelligence on the vast amounts of data they have on each user, it's becoming possible to predict to the user's needs instead of being reactive to the user's needs.

One example of this currently is Google Ads, which [extended in-market targeting methods to search campaigns in 2018](#) and is likely to extend this to shopping in 2019 – which will make a huge impact on those not participating. This audience target method allows you to either boost bids or actively pick out people who are looking to make a purchase based on their search history and other behind-the-scene factors. This same targeting method can be found on Facebook and Bing Ads, plus a new [“life event” targeting method is available for Gmail and YouTube currently](#) which continues to evolve and expand.

Another big change from Google Ads to come in 2019 will be [product price benchmarks](#), an Amazon-style comparison chart to ensure that your product is the cheapest on the market:

It may create a race to the bottom for advertisers but it will also enable advertisers to stop wasting ad spend on products which are no longer competitive.

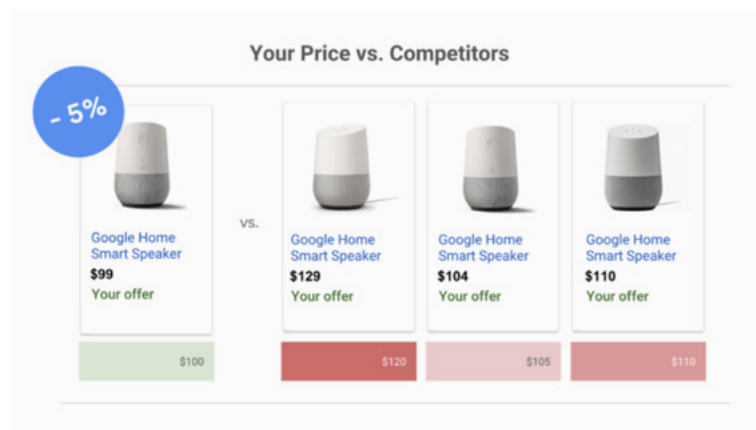


Image source: Google



Online business pressure

The years to come will certainly bring more data horror stories to the limelight as well as adding pressure to businesses that aren't top of the latest digital marketing trends:

GDPR

Personal data is now protected by the European General Data Protection Regulation act and [record fines](#) have been handed out recently with many more on the horizon. Companies which haven't secured data are getting exposed almost weekly now, making GDPR a big topic in upcoming years whilst businesses are still transitioning.

Tech giants

Most businesses online are under the shadow of tech giants such as Amazon and Apple and thousands will go under in 2019, including some well-known brands. Without offering something unique or a certain level of service online, companies are facing a situation to quickly evolve or go extinct which can create internal conflicts if directors of companies do not invest towards digital or quality staff.

Staff transitions

Brexit will be one of the biggest topics of 2019 which will likely remove a lot of skilled and talented foreign workers from the UK. This skill reduction combined with the fact that a lot of digital agencies need data/insight specialists will increase business-to-business competition to attract and keep the right talent.



Machines running the show

Computers are excellent at completing one task very efficiently and very accurately.

Fortunately, machines still can't think for themselves so they require data and computer scientists to work their magic.

Fully automated analysis

Data will be fed into machine learning tools which can identify patterns within the data such as changing trends or hidden opportunities with certain targeting methods. Google and Bing are already utilising machine learning to improve their organic and paid search algorithms as well as automatically reporting on insights from analytical data from the web. More advanced systems such as [IBM Watson](#) are technically free and can handle big data sets.

Dynamic pricing

Currently implemented on websites offering ticket services such as hotels, flights, cruises, events, etc. dynamic pricing could finally hit mainstream online-only products in 2019. To hit the sweet spot between volume, profit-per-sale, supply and demand, dynamic pricing can tweak product prices to squeeze every penny of potential profit out of a product listing online.

Connecting offline with online

whether you like it or not, TV ads will soon be personalised towards your browsing history and demographics. Netflix, Sky and other paid TV networks may one day go free and run highly targeted ads utilising data from online sources for profitability. Google recently introduced the TV screen device category for YouTube viewers watching through televisions and this is likely to be expanded into other areas of our lives including dynamic high street banner ads and personalised TV advertising such as [Channel 4's Alien ads](#) with usernames incorporated into the ad.



If you need any help understanding how these trends will impact your business or how you can make them work for you, [get in touch now.](#)



5.

Digital PR trends to watch out for

In the last two years, PR has shifted hugely to digital. Traditional still has its place in PR, but visibility on the world wide web is crucial, not optional, to success.

Digital PR has changed the landscape of public relations and isn't done yet. A link to your site from a publication with a high domain ranking can send your own domain authority sky high. The higher your domain, the better your search ranking strength, leading to a gold tick of authority from Google. Regular health checks on your strategy in any profession is crucial, but is just as important in Digital PR. We work across so many different sectors and industries, and in the era of fake news and influencer controversies, how do you stay on top of the market and know the best tactics to take?



Alexa, play “Rise of voice content”

We’re no longer limited to getting our online content through a screen.

With more than [6.6 million people in the UK](#) alone having a smart speaker such as the Amazon Alexa or Google Home, voice search technology is taking over. While a lot of the advertising shows its ability to play your favourite song or control your TV, getting the latest news and information from your smart device is also a popular function.

As a result, companies like [Procter and Gamble](#) are now trialing tests on how consumer behaviour can differ depending on voice, online or in-person communications. Do people search differently when speaking as opposed to typing? Guesting on podcasts has already proven a popular PR tactic, so the usage of voice has already been demonstrated as successful. Smart speakers could be a new way in for PR pros, with Alexa’s daily flash briefing one opportunity, among others.



The influencer power shift

Changing the face of PR and marketing forever, influencers have completely transformed the game with user-generated content.

In fact, influencers who are your “average Joe’s” are more likely to turn an audience into a customer as opposed to a celebrity, according to research by [Variety](#).

But there will be less of a focus on timeline content, with story features taking over. The [Battenhall Instagram Brands 100](#) researched some of the biggest brands on the social network, and found that stories have overtaken the main feed, with more of us opting to “tap” as opposed to “scroll.” Brands need to think about how their content can be adjusted to beyond the news feed.

But let’s not forget the elephant in the room: buying followers. What used to be an industry where you could buy a couple of fake thousand followers and start selling for brands has been widely exposed with the launch of solutions like the Social Chain Groups’ [Like-Wise](#), a tool that can determine if and how much of influencer engagement is fake. Brands are going to crack down in 2019, and, as some influencers become as famous as celebrities, the spotlight will shine on them. Brands will be going through follower counts with a fine-tooth comb, looking for shady influencers to prevent fraud.

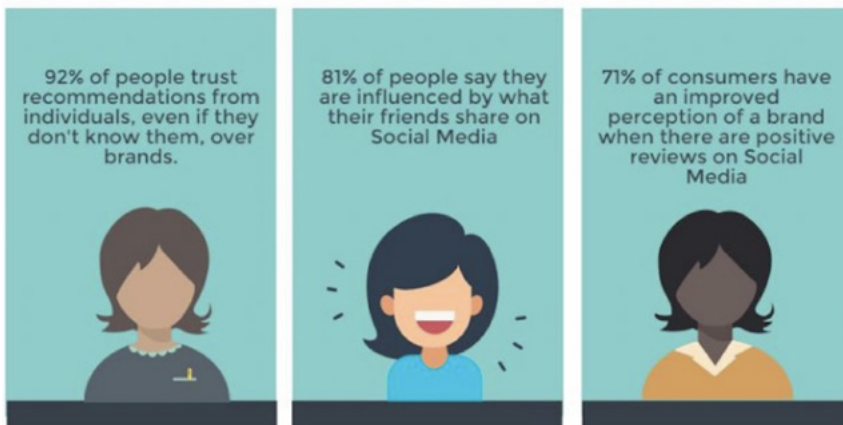


Image source: Google



AI vs the “human factor”

In PR, we can work with AI to get the best of both worlds, freeing up our time by completing admin tasks for us.

[AI tools](#) can scour the net for us, highlighting the top positive and negative sentiments, talking points, circulation and overall reactions. By doing the research and admin for us, we can spend more time building the important relationships, crafting tailored content and outreaching, spending longer on our “human factor.”

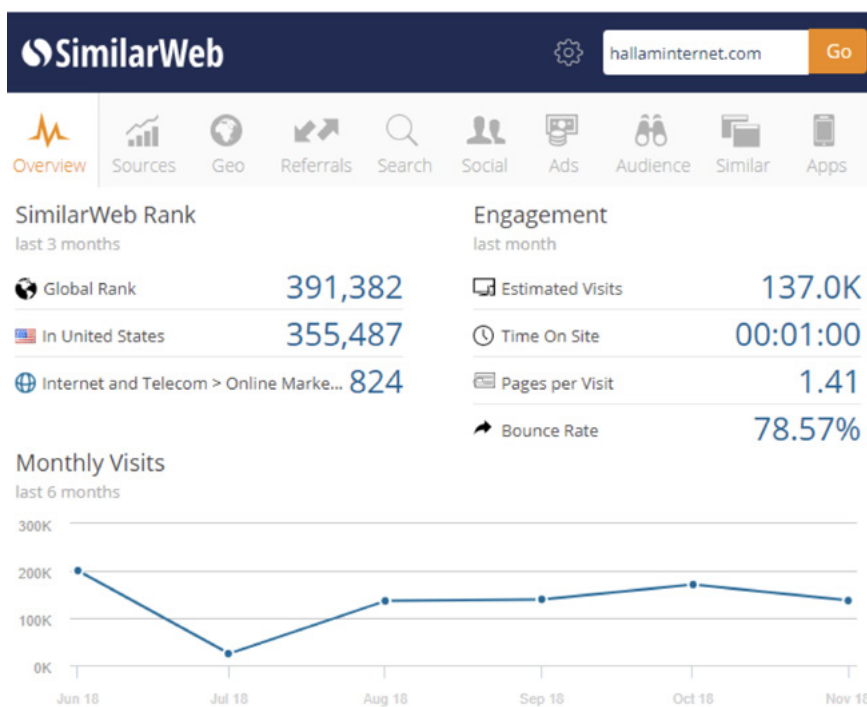


Image source: SimilarWeb screenshot



Storytelling will overwrite the press release machine

With more and more [journalists requesting payment for publishing branded press releases](#), PR will become more of a tailored content partner for the media.

PR will help them to identify editorial opportunities and join the conversation with shareable ideas. Content is being reshaped, with not just blog and editorial, but visuals, infographics, white papers and even ebooks conveying messages. Journalists, just like digital PR pros, want to publish content that achieves clicks. If marketers can help them out with content that they can automatically publish, which will be engaging and have actions for the reader, instead of being overly branded, we are onto a winner.



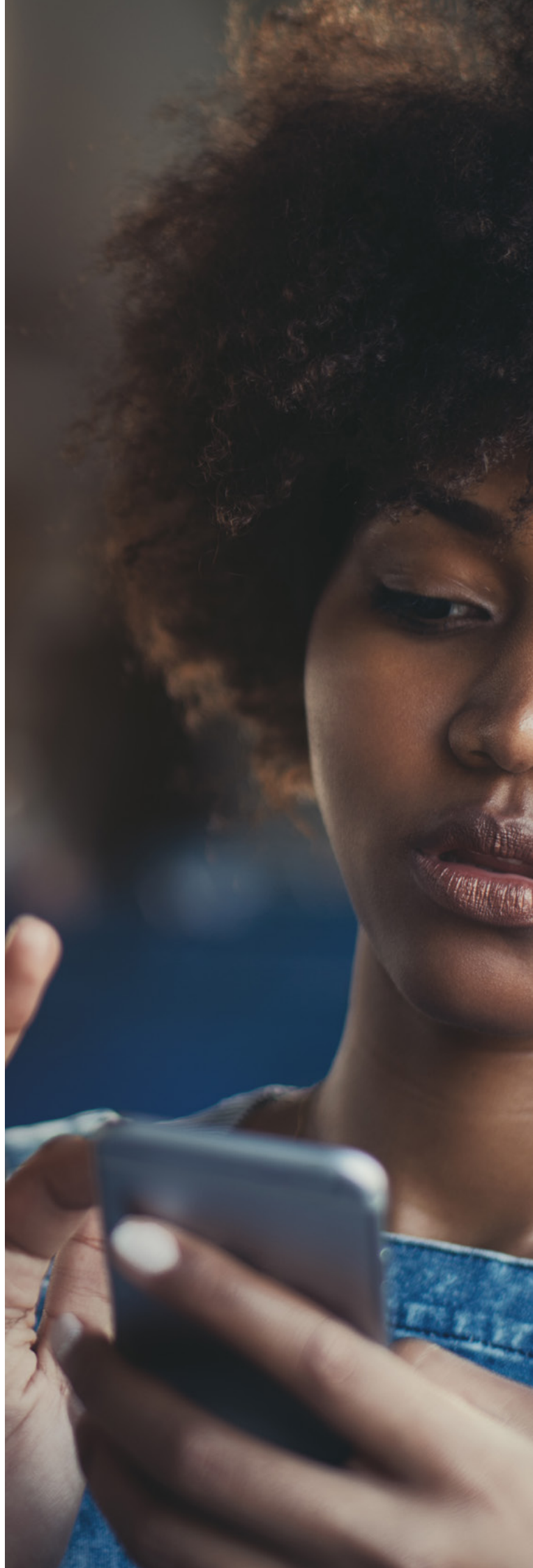
Find success in fake news

Some see it as the biggest threat to the PR agency, we see it as our time to shine.

We've all seen the headlines that say that the people's trust in media is at an all-time low, and social media can cause problems because it's so fast-paced. While it's important to use for content, people can very easily spread fake news. However, [a recent Quartz survey](#) of global executives found that 84% said that they would be most likely to share long-form articles, which require a lot of research and opinion – the type of articles that PR pros provide! Businesses should be seeking opportunities to showcase their research and brand awareness, to deliver journalists thoroughly researched, shareable content.

Nobody can predict exactly what will happen to the media world in the next 12 months, but PR agencies and in-house teams must adapt to change and not operate in the past, or they risk falling behind.

If you're looking to take your PR strategy to new heights this year [contact us today.](#)



6.

5 important PPC trends for 2019

Stay ahead of the crowd in 2019 by focusing your online advertising efforts on these emerging trends.



Amazon advertising

The largest online retailer, that just keeps getting bigger!

Since the emergence of eCommerce websites, Amazon has been the main platform for retailers to sell their products through. However, over recent years, Amazon has become a huge advertising network.

The majority of global PPC spend continues to be absorbed by Google products. Despite the likes of Bing, Facebook and other territory-specific search engines taking their share, it's the growth of Amazon Marketing Services (AMS) that Google will be most fearful of.

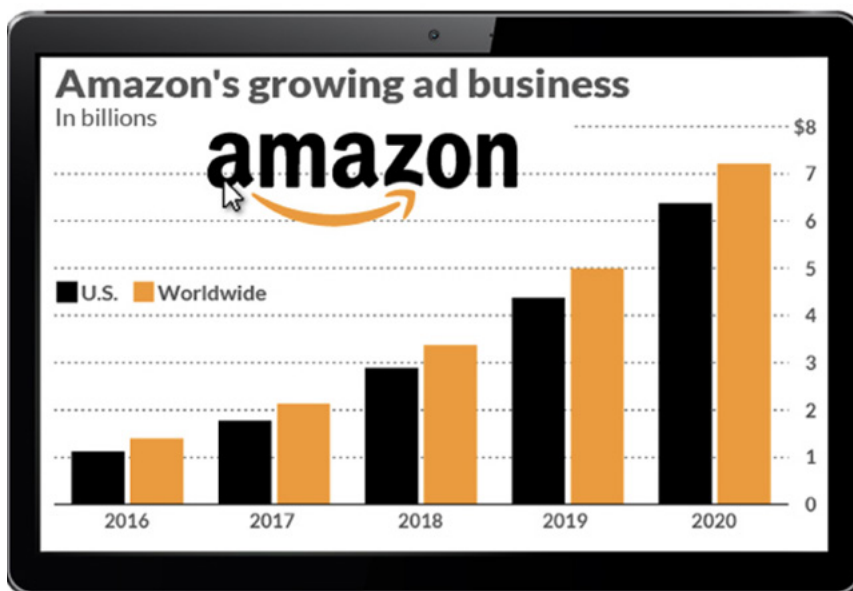


Image source: Market Watch

For product retailers, Amazon has a large appeal, especially if Google Shopping has not been providing the desired return. We have seen retailers try and become less dependent on one channel to market, and Amazon offers a very attractive alternative with its huge audience and specific targeting. We've seen this in 2018, and we fully expect further uptake of AMS in 2019.

The one potential issue Amazon faces is the sustainability of small advertisers. With the platform taking a large percentage cut of product sales, coupled with ad spend, retailers need to make sure their margins are high enough to remain profitable. Smaller advertisers may find this challenging.



Video

There is an increased understanding from smaller businesses that brand awareness is a vital aspect of any successful online marketing.

As a result, more campaigns are now being designed with that being the primary objective, and in turn, a video format is the desired media choice.

Reach, aesthetic appeal and low costs are all reasons why video is commonly used. With more inventory options available to advertisers where video formats can be displayed, we anticipate further increased activity in the months to come.

One of the main inventories is, of course, YouTube, and there is a real focus of effort from Google to support smaller businesses to start video advertising. New product releases allow the advertiser to measure, and even pay, using conversion metrics rather than reach. This is seen as a massive change and one that's welcome. There will now be visibility on what end value your video campaigns provide. There is also the challenge of creating ad assets, an area where Google is offering support. With a number of shooting and editing tools, it's never been easier to create an ad. And for certain regions, Google now offers a YouTube Director onsite service where a professional will come and shoot the video for you.



Audiences targeting

With the GDPR kicking in, advertisers and businesses are picking through the bones of what valid data is available to them.

Just as sophisticated retargeting campaigns had become the 'bread and butter' of digital advertising, GDPR threw the ultimate curveball.

With time to digest the impact, we are now seeing businesses provide us with not only GDPR compliant customer data, but also more detailed data. The information that can now be aligned to a user is more specific than ever before, and this is allowing advertisers to design granular and efficient campaigns

The key word is efficiency. Reach has never been in question when it comes to online advertising, however the accuracy of targeting has been. By not only gathering data but understanding the information it provides, you are able to refine and more accurately target previous users/customers.

It's a given that this will be big, not only this year but for years to come as it's a fundamental practice in all marketing. However, we expect a real shift in focus in 2019 as more and more smaller businesses 'dip their toes' in online advertising, but with reduced budget and conversion led targets, efficiency is vital.



Attribution and lifetime value

For a while now, businesses have trundled along without having an absolute understanding of the full value of an online user.

However, advertising platform providers such as Google are trying to change that with the launch of different attribution models, DDAM.

With the above and more of an emphasis on the analytical side of advertising, businesses are now getting a more accurate picture of how effective their ad campaigns are. We are now seeing more educated decisions being made when judging the effects of any campaigns. More often than not, we're being told 'let's keep it running to see what value it brings in the future' rather than us advertisers having to explain why we recommend running activity for a period of time before dismissing it.



AI and automation

This certainly isn't ground-breaking, however the use of AI in automating processes is becoming more common.

The accuracy of machine learning is constantly improving, and its availability to advertisers is now better than ever. Hence, advertisers are now leveraging it, even for the smallest of businesses.

None of this is possible without data. This is why there's now a push to gather as much valuable data as possible, post-GDPR. Once gathered, there is less of a need to truly understand it, as we're allowing machines to do it for us. This then triggers many automated processes such as targeting, bidding and refinements.

It's cost-effective, more available than before, and more accurate in its application than any human, so expect AI in automated processes to become more popular in 2019 and the years after.

Need any help in developing your PPC strategy for 2019? [Get in touch now](#) and our specialists will help you.



7.

Thrive online with Hallam

We're the multi award-winning, strategic digital marketing agency for brands that want to thrive in the digital world.

SEO

Our high-impact technical SEO campaigns are guaranteed to improve your visibility in search engine results pages.

CRO

Get more out of the traffic you already have and turn website visitors into customers with effective CRO.

Web

We create award-winning websites – technically sound, visually stunning, with seamless user experiences.

Social media

Creative campaigns and expert management tools mean an award-winning social media presence is in your grasp.

PPC

Take your paid advertising to the next level with our data-driven insights and highly crafted, bespoke in-house tools.

Content marketing

Unlock the power of great content with unrivalled creativity and smart promotion.

PR

Raise your brand awareness and secure top coverage across the digital landscape, and watch your business thrive.



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