

Broken

80% of B2B Digital Marketing is Hurting Sales

Brand new 2016 Thames Valley & Solent B2B Digital Benchmarking Report shows what's wrong – and how you can fix it fast



SHARP AHEAD

B2B DIGITAL MARKETING & TRANSFORMATION



For a long time, business leaders and sales professionals have succeeded without needing a good understanding of how to get noticed online. And that was fine then. But things have changed.

- Users got more demanding.
- Your competitors got more technically savvy.
- And technology has changed. A lot.

The days of leaving your “digital footprint” in the hands of your website developer or a marketing intern are long gone.



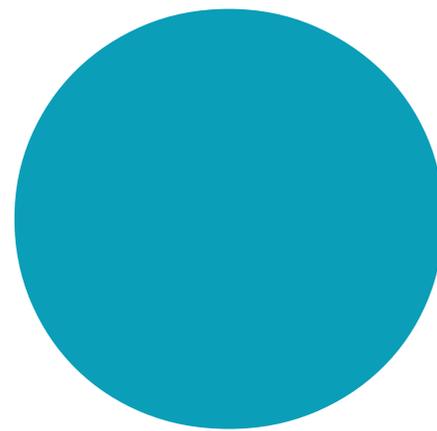
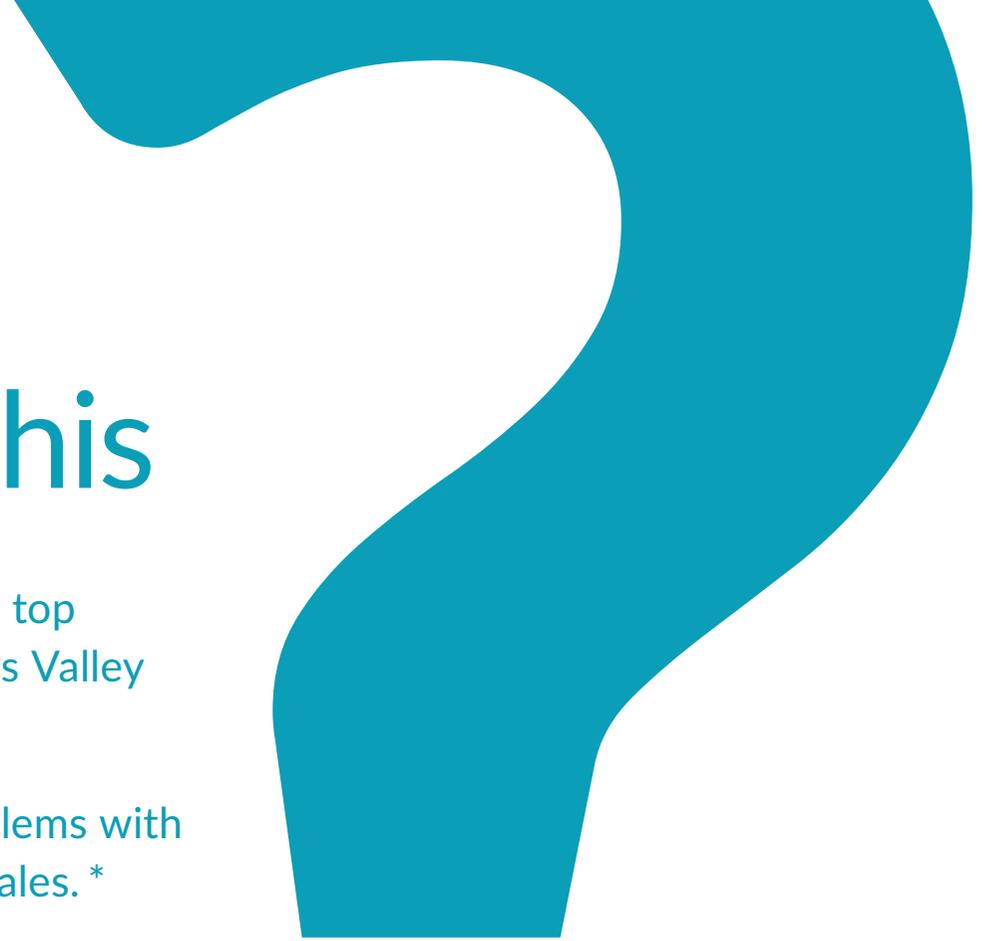
How we know this

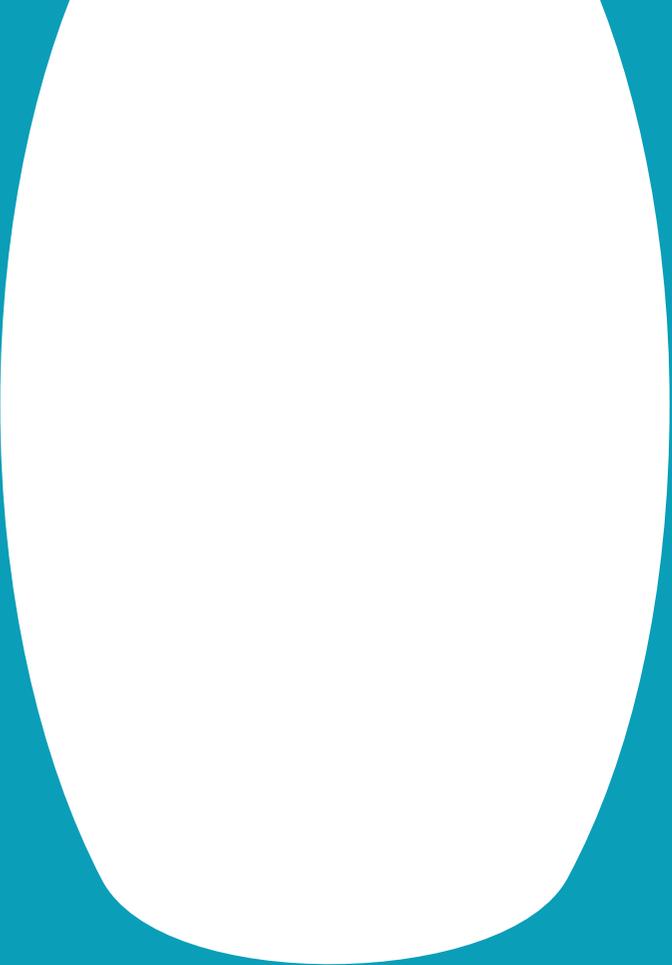
We analysed the “digital footprint” of 509 of the top business-to-business organisations in the Thames Valley and Solent and discovered:

80% of these companies have fundamental problems with their online presence that directly impact their sales. *

* We're planning to repeat the research every year to see what changes

[Hire our team](#)





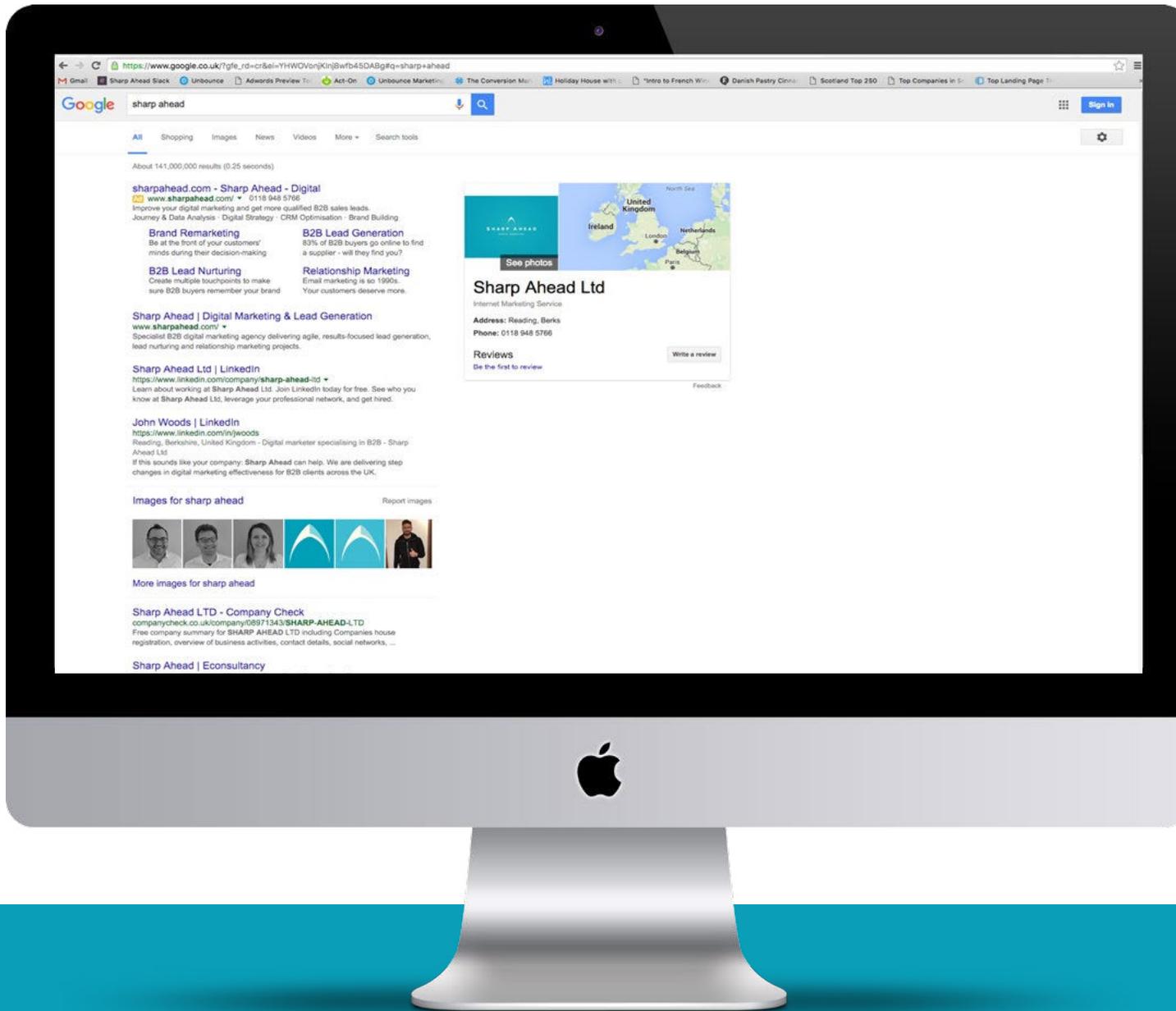
Starting at the start

Your digital footprint is the imprint you make on the online world.

Google your own name, for example, and you'll get an idea of what other people might see. [Or try ours.](#)

Try it now. You may be surprised.





This is what happens when you Google Sharp Ahead.



‘True wisdom is knowing
what you don’t know.’

Confucius, about 570BC



So, are you one of the **80%**?
Before you fix something, you have
to understand what's broken.

89% of business to business (B2B) customers search online before making a decision. If they can't find you, they won't buy from you.

That's what we mean by "broken". To fix it, people have to be able to find you.



There are an estimated **177,000,000** live websites today.*

Thames Valley and the Solent are home to more than **10,000** businesses.

Many are based in the same cities, with similar names, or offering similar products or services. You don't have to be a mathematical genius to work out that lots of businesses want to be found online, just like you.

* There are actually about a billion live URLs, but many of these are not in use



Things have changed

If your digital presence is poor, then:

1 No new prospects will find you online.

2 People that already know you still won't be able to find you online – or if they do find you, this won't make them more inclined to buy from you.

So businesses need to change too



Google is your homepage*

You'll often hear people say that your website home page is your shop window.

But in 2015, with Google Search, Google My Business and Google Plus all heavily used, there's a chance that prospects will make their mind up about you before they even reach your website.

*Google actually is our homepage



Five weeks of research

We have looked at three things for every one of the **509** companies in our survey.

It took us rather a long time. Rob has a rather sore neck and tired eyes. But we think it was worth it.





8 signals of success (or failure)

We identified 8 “key digital marketing signals”.

Then we gave each a weighting based on how important they are.

Then we scored each business to find out how likely it is would be that a customer or prospect could find them and then find the information they needed.

What's your score?



A quick technical point

We've grouped these signals into two broad categories:

- 1 The Search User Experience**
 - what happens to people before they hit your website.

- 2 The Onsite User Experience**
 - what happens when a person arrives on the site.

There are **4** things to look out for in each category.



Let's start with search user experience.

After all, that's where prospects and customers usually start.



Signal #1

Natural Search for Brand Term.

This is where you appear “naturally” when people search for your company name.
98% of companies surveyed ranked in **#1 position** for their own name.

Sound good? Not so good for the **23** companies surveyed that have no digital footprint at all; or for the **19** companies who are not top for their own name; or for the **2** companies that are in **#10 position** for their own company name.



Why this is this happening. And what you can do about it.

If you are in the 2% that don't appear in a natural search against your brand name, here are three things you can do easily:

1 If you haven't got one already – build a website (or ask [Sharp Ahead](#) to build you a landing page – a quick and easy way to get online fast)

2 Ask the person that looks after your website to make sure that your site has been submitted to Google and is visible to search engines

3 Ask the person that looks after your website to check that the “headings” and “metadata” correctly represent your business.



This should at least make
sure that you appear.

So what's next?





Signal #2

Google my Business.

Google my Business is free.

It combines what used to be Google+ local with Google Places.

It offers people lots of information about your business – so much so that some buyers will bypass your website entirely.*

*read more in the blog post "[Google is now your Homepage](#)"

Search User Experience





79% of companies not using Google my Business.

For most businesses, this means a missed sales opportunity.

The words “is this your business?” at the bottom of an unclaimed Google my Business listing will make you look unprofessional and may put buyers off.

79%

[Need help?](#)

Search User Experience





A Google my Business Disaster.

For example, if other businesses have similar names to yours, not claiming your Google my Business page will do one of two things:

BAD

Confuse potential buyers.

WORST

Send your prospects running into your competitors' arms.



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Are you the business owner? Feedback

Which business is this?

(don't make it hard for prospects to find you).

Unclaimed listing





Signal #3

Use of Google AdWords.

AdWords is brilliant.

It's a tool created by the giant of all search engines that allows you to improve your visibility not just against your company name, but against a whole host of relevant keywords.

If search user experience is important to you (and it should be) then you ignore AdWords at your peril.

Search User Experience





71% of business-to-business buyers start with a generic search.*

AdWords can help you generate business by making sure these buyers see you before they see your competitors.

Fact.

*Research by Snyder and Hilal 2015

71%

Search User Experience





Just 21% of companies in our audit have ever used Google AdWords.

Here's why.

- 1 It can be complicated to set up correctly. You really need an expert to manage it for you, or you could end up spending money on the wrong things.
- 2 Many individuals have tried using AdWords and "failed".
- 3 It costs money – specifically "cost per click" or "cost per '000 impressions".

Search User Experience





AdWords “failure”

- 1 No one clicks on the ad – at least this hasn’t cost you anything, but you’ve done something wrong in the way you’ve tried to reach your target customers.
- 2 The wrong people click on the ad – you may know this specifically because you’ve spoken to them. It’s more likely that they’ve simply failed to convert, and you’ve assumed that this is because they are the wrong people.
- 3 The wrong destination – usually this happens when people are sent from an ad to your home page, and this doesn’t reflect either what the person typed into Google search, or the promise in your ad.

None of these means that AdWords is wrong for your business. It just means it hasn’t been managed properly.



Signal #4 Re-Marketing.

(Remarketing is what it says on the tin. It's a way of advertising directly to people that have already visited your website or landing page, or searched for companies like yours).



Search User Experience



Today's business buyers do not contact suppliers directly until 57% of the purchase process is complete.

Remarketing is the most targeted way to ensure you are front of mind and redirect prospects back to your site. It's most usual (and cost-effective) to remarket to prospects on Google or on Facebook (yes, even for business-to-business companies).

Source: New research from [CEB's Marketing Leadership Council](#)

Need help?

57%

Search User Experience





Facebook? You have to be kidding!

We don't advocate a lot of Facebook activity for many business-to-business companies unless you have a lot of time and resources to do this effectively.*

BUT remarketing works on Facebook even if you don't have a company presence there, because you are only targeting people that you already know are interested in you because they've visited your website or landing page already.

*SimplyBusiness is a brilliant example – look them up on Facebook later if you have time.

Search User Experience





On average, Facebook remarketing is available at a lower cost-per-click than search engine marketing.

It also generates a higher click-through-rate.

For our clients, we estimate it reduces the cost-per-lead by about 50% compared to other channels.

[Hire our team](#)

50%

Search User Experience



We've talked a bit
about search

Now it's time to look
at your website.



Signal #5

On-Site User Experience – Responsiveness.

Responsiveness

re·spon·sive (rĭ-spŏn'sĭv)

adj.

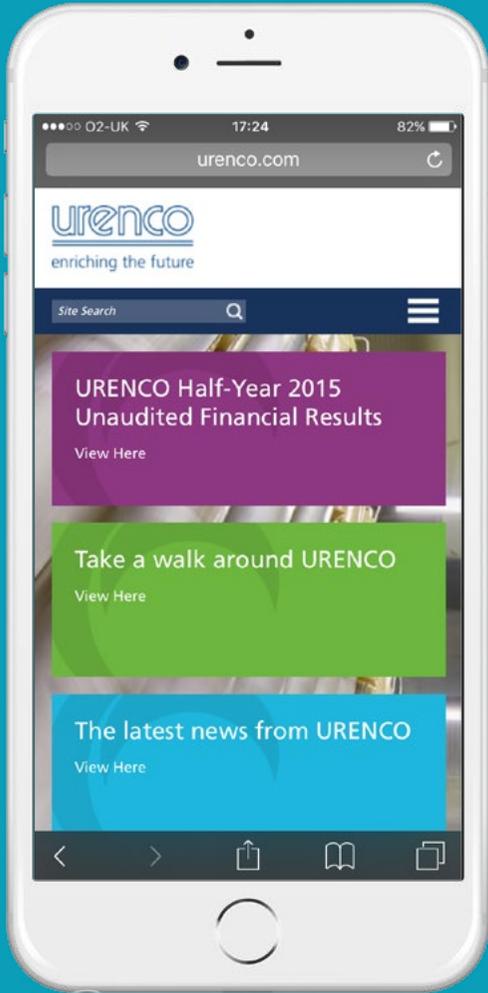
1. Answering or replying; responding.

re·spon'sive·ly *adv.*

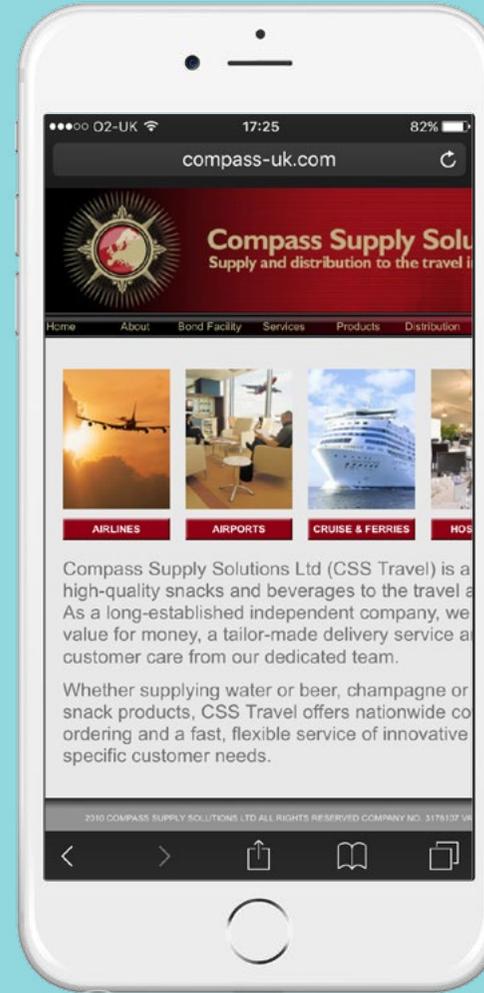
re·spon'sive·ness *n.*

In digital terms, responsiveness means simply that your website and other digital assets (landing pages or emails for example) work equally well on different devices and screen sizes.





Good



Bad

On-site User Experience



See what we mean?

On-site User Experience



Why responsiveness matters.

1

For users.

If you make it difficult for people to engage with what you want to say, they will go somewhere else.





Why responsiveness matters.

2 For Google.

We're predicting that by 2020 Google will stop showing non-responsive sites (gulp).

Google and all the other search engines constantly rewrite the code that decides which websites will rank highest and so be more visible. Early in 2015 Google threatened big penalties for non-responsive content. And although the impact hasn't been as significant as anticipated, this will only increase over time.



Why responsiveness matters.

3

For You.

70% of business to business executives use smartphones and tablets to research product and service information* but only 40% of the sites we surveyed in 2015 were responsive.

* Source: Forbes

On-site User Experience



Still not convinced?

Look at the impact* changing to a responsive website had for O'Neill in 2013:
O'Neill Clothing Responsive Redesign.

65.7% conversion
rate increase on
iPhone/iPod.

101.2% revenue
growth on
iPhone/iPod.

407.3% conversion
rate increase on
Android devices.

591.4% revenue
growth on Android
devices.

20.3% conversion
rate increase on non-
mobile devices.

41.1% revenue
growth on non-mobile
devices.

* Source: <http://electricpulp.com/notes/you-like-apples/>

On-site User Experience



Signal #6

Overall On-Site User Experience.

We created a scoring system for the websites in our survey based on the ease of use of the site, its layout and design.

In our survey, only 11.1% of businesses offered a “good” user experience.*

* We worked this out using a combination of Nielsen’s usability criteria with our own analysis of the primary audience for the site

11.1%

On-site User Experience



What's a good user experience?

An average of 7 different people are involved in any business-to-business buying decision in the UK today.*

A good user experience will allow any one of these people (from CEO to procurement manager to junior administrator) to get from the page where they arrive at the site to the information they need, in the quickest and easiest way possible.

* Source: Gartner

On-site User Experience



Fixing your UX.

First: Understand what's wrong – pick a “persona” and map their user experience.

Next: Update your current site if you can. Or if your site is very dated, then consider building landing pages that optimise conversion.

Long term: If the user journey is long, complex or difficult, you may need a new website eventually.

We can help

On-site User Experience



Still with us?

Good. You're obviously serious about improving sales.

On-site User Experience





Signal #7 Google Analytics.

This is a free tool that can help you convert more leads.*

It allows anyone you nominate to monitor who's visiting your website and how they are behaving, and to make changes to improve the performance of your site.

84% of companies in our audit were using Google Analytics.

But less than 1 in 3 have set it up correctly and know how to read the data.**

* If you're not sure whether you have this set up, ask your website admin, or [contact us](#) and we can check for you.

** Based on our experience working with clients in the Thames Valley and Solent areas

On-site User Experience





Signal #7 and a half Google Tag Manager.

Google Tag Manager is also free, but a bit more geeky.

It allows website administrators to add and change tags to allow you to manage your digital footprint without editing the website code.

This can help you improve the user experience both in search mode and on-site.

Only 7% of companies in the audit were using it.

On-site User Experience



Signal #8 HTTPS.



On-site User Experience



Why HTTPS matters.

On-site

With cyber crime on the increase, people can be nervous about giving away information. Not good for lead generation.

For search

Google has added HTTPS to the rules they use to decide where you show up in a search. This is a low priority right now, but will definitely increase in importance over the next few years.

On-site User Experience



Good News.

- 1 Only 2% of your competitors are using HTTPS right now.

So if you are already planning on building a new website, include this now for an immediate competitive advantage.

- 2 Unlike responsive design, HTTPS is still in its infancy.

So there's no immediate need to make a massive change unless you work in a sector where your prospects are more sensitive to security issues.



Let's not kid ourselves.

Sorting out your onsite and search user experience needn't be hard.

BUT even though you've made it through this deck to page 47 (bravo), UX is still not at the top of your "to do" list.

If you'd like to attract more customers online, however, it's more important than ever before.

In fact it's critical.

On-site User Experience



Bottom Line.

You'd like your business to be more successful online.

It's time to raise your game. Invest a little time now to get things right.

Or prepare to sit back and wave at your competitors' behinds as they pass you by.



Thank you

You can read more at www.sharpahead.com/

You can also request the research data by [clicking here](#).

Or you can just [hire us](#). We'd really like that.

0118 9485 766 | info@sharpahead.com

Source information for all the data is listed on our website at sharpahead.com

This report was prepared on behalf of SharpAhead by our creative partners in crime, [BH&P](#). They are based in the same offices as us and can help you with creative marketing and strategy if that's your bag.

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