

# 5 steps to getting noticed online

**Did you know?** 70-80% of people research a company online before visiting the business or making a purchase with them. <sup>1</sup>



## What is a digital presence?

**When people search for your business or company on the Internet, the way you appear online is your digital presence.**

There are elements of your digital presence that you can control, for example:

- Your website
- Your social media accounts
- Your listings in business directories
- Any paid media or pay-per-click (PPC) advertising

Also content that you don't control – although can still influence to an extent such as:

- Searches your website shows up for
- Interactions on your social media accounts
- Mentions on third party sites
- Reviews

**If you don't know what your digital presence is saying about you, then please have a look! Type your brand/ company name into a search engine e.g. Google. What comes up in the search results? It's worth asking someone you trust for an impartial opinion too, as to how they would view your business as a potential customer.**



## Value your content

**Did you know?** 70% of internet users want to learn about products through content versus traditional advertising.<sup>2</sup>

Making sure you create a wealth of content that your audience values and connects with will not only build your authority and trust, but also fuel your other marketing activities such as email, social, SEO and paid advertising. There are five key areas you need to concentrate on to create compelling content:

**Who:** Know your audiences: what are their wants/ needs/ ambitions? What are their frustrations and pain-points?

**Why:** Focus on your audiences needs first and foremost. Why do they want to consume your content? What problems can you solve for them?

**What:** Develop content pillars – substantive and informative pieces of content on a specific topic that you can turn into many smaller pieces of content to fuel all of your individual channels and audiences.

**Where:** To squeeze the most use out of every piece of pillar content you need to think about the format for each distribution channel e.g. website/ blog, social media, email, industry-related blog. You need to consider a mix of formats, including blogs, images, videos, articles, factsheets, infographics, reports and guides.

**When:** The right information, delivered at the right time, is powerful. Timing is all about when and how often your audience wants to hear from you, but unfortunately they won't tell you directly – it's up to you to find out. Start with a hypothesis and then test it, observe the response, and record the results. Based on what you learn, make adjustments and iterate.

**Think about evergreen content that you can produce - timeless content that will remain relevant to your audience for a long period of time**



## It's time to embrace social media

**Did you know?** 84.3% of the entire UK population is on social media.<sup>3</sup>

Using your social media accounts the right way allows you free access to a huge and diverse range of customers and prospects, as well as fellow professionals. In financial services building relationships founded on trust and reliability is paramount and nowhere is this more achievable than on platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, which provide a real-time method of communication, allowing you to be constantly in touch with your audiences needs in a fast-paced and evolving market. Getting social media right isn't complicated as long as you:

**Choose the right platforms:** don't waste time and energy setting up profiles on every social media platform

- Go where your audience are: use the demographics of each platform to understand which best suit the audiences you're trying to reach
- Pick two platforms and do them well, rather than trying to create content for 5+ different platforms and failing your audiences on all of them
- Look at which platforms your peers and competitors use to get an idea of what content belongs where

**Don't over complicate it:** make sure it's clear who you are, what you do and who/ how you can help. If you want people to take a certain action e.g. read a new blog post, then insert a clear call to action.

**Post regularly:** it can sometimes be hard to think of fresh ideas, but there is usually something going on in your industry, or your company that is of interest to your audience. Create Google alerts for relevant topics, which will monitor the web for interesting new content. In between you can rely on your evergreen content, share relevant third party content, conduct surveys, give opinion on research, and let them know about events you are attending and so on.

**Interact with people:** when people connect with you be sure to engage with them – a simple hello will suffice if you have nothing else to say. Be proactive and reach out via direct message (DM) with a piece of content that you think would be valuable to them, including a personal message explaining why.

**Be human:** real connections happen when people are relatable, approachable and most of all human. So it's important to bring your accounts to life with a bit of personality.

**Mix up the format:** there's lots of different ways to get your messages out via social media, so don't rely on text heavy content: instead utilise videos, animations, images and audio too.



## First impressions count

**Did you know?** It takes about 0.05 seconds for users to form an opinion about your website that determines whether they'll stay or leave.<sup>4</sup>

Having a responsive and visually-appealing website, where you can help your customers solve their problems, is as crucial as having an office or telephone number. A well-maintained website can help you gain a competitive advantage by providing a platform for all that valuable content you've been creating, building your brand and reputation, reaching out to a wider audience, and saving you money by improving your advertising effectiveness and reducing printing and distribution costs. So, what does your website say about you?

Your website needs to:

- **Answer your customers' questions:** Who are you? What do you do? How can you help me? Why should I choose you over your competitors? Can I trust you? How much will it cost me?
- **Be easy to navigate:** create a clear journey so clients can easily find the information they are looking for.
- **Look and feel professional:** 38%\* of people stop engaging with a website if the content/ layout is unattractive. It must also be quick to load.
- **Instill trust:** include your accreditations, qualifications and customer case studies, testimonials and reviews.
- **Be mobile friendly:** 40%\* chose a different search result if the first is not mobile friendly.



## Customer reviews go a long way

**Did you know?** 90% of buyers who read positive customer success content claimed that it influenced their purchasing decision.<sup>5</sup>

**Social proof:** the concept that people will follow the actions of the masses – isn't a new idea. But the way that you can use this psychology online to boost your reputation and in turn generate new traffic and ultimately customers, still isn't adopted as often as it should be. In a digital world social proof via user generated content (UGC) can take many forms including:

- **Customer case studies** written and video
- **Testimonials**
- **Reviews on sites** such as Facebook, Trustpilot and Google

Getting positive UGC isn't always easy though, as people are busy and unless they have had a particularly bad experience or exceptionally good one, are unlikely to be compelled to take the time to share their experience. However, by making it as easy as possible for them to feedback, you can maximize your chances:

- Create the right space to leave reviews – for example if you get a lot of business through Google then asking for a Google review would be logical.
- Create incentives, such as prize draws or vouchers. Or offer them something in return such as access to unique content, a free guide or an exclusive offer.
- Ask at the right time – when they are engaged, emotionally involved and still have you front of mind.
- Ask them directly, either face-to-face, over the phone or in person when possible and via email when not.
- Make the survey, questionnaire or feedback form as short as possible.
- Utilise social media – ask them to share their experience and tag you in and/ or use a certain hashtag you can easily share with your audience.

In addition you should:

- Respond to every review... even negative ones.
- Share positive customer reviews you've already received.



**Check on Google to see if anyone has left you a review.**



## Maximise your visibility on Google

**Did you know?** 93% of online experiences begin with a search engine and Google owns over 65-70% of the search engine market share.<sup>6</sup>

The first step to maximising your visibility is understanding the search engine results page (SERP) and the different areas that you could be occupying. The three main ones we'll concentrate on are:

**1. The knowledge panel** the infobox on the right of the SERP, which usually appears when you search for a brand or company. It takes its information from the Google Knowledge Graph, which collates data from a number of sources and can include your business address, opening hours, contact details, pictures, posts/news, reviews, links to your website and social profiles, as well as company information.

**2. Local listings** when you search for a service in a specific area e.g. financial adviser in London, you will often see a map of local listings at the top of the page with red pins where the services are located and the corresponding listings underneath.

**3. Organic listings** these are the search results that appear under the ones that say 'Ad' next to them i.e. under the paid listings.

Luckily Google wants you to be visible and although there's no guarantees how and where you'll appear, there are steps that you can take to improve your visibility by doing search engine optimisation (SEO) which you can learn about in more detail in our handy guide to improving your website visibility

There are two simple steps that you can do straight away which are:

**1. Claim and verify your Google My Business account** then update all of the information required. To get started go to <https://www.google.com/business>

**2. Set up and verify Google search console** in the words of Google 'Search Console tools and reports help you measure your site's search traffic and performance, fix issues, and make your site shine in Google Search results.'

# Find out more

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