digital marketing ltd

The Online High Street

Imagine you own a real shop on a real High Street.

Next door there is a bank, an estate agent, a grocer, a flower shop, and so on. All these are indirect competitors of yours trying to attract passing trade. People coming into your shop do so because you're the only one in the street offering that particular product or service.

Now go online.

Your website is your virtual shop. On it you display what you think visitors want to see in a way they want to see it. Your website shop is displayed on the online High Street i.e. a Google results page.

However, on the on-line high street **all the shops are the same**!

There are no butchers or bakers. If you're a marketing company, **every "shop" on the online high street** is a marketing company. Your High Street is made up only of marketing companies. All direct competitors.

That is why **advertising online works differently** from offline.

Think about what the visitor sees. Just a list of companies. So the higher your website ranks on the page, the greater your visibility and the more visits you will get. And the best location of the online, virtual High Street is a No 1 ranking for the most important keywords that define you.

Every one of the competing websites displayed is fighting to get above yours and claim those precious clicks. Remember, **Google is only interested in making the visitor's** choice quicker, easier and more relevant. It is not interested in you. Make sure your website is written 100% for the visitors benefit.

How well do you stand out? Like any High Street shop anywhere. Get the best location then hang out some banner or heading that draws visitors' attention to you.

The ways of getting noticed are well documented e.g. pay per click, SEO, email, video, viral, etc but some SMEs are still reticent in employing them. They also misunderstand how conversion of interest into sales actually occurs online because they continue **to think in offline marketing terms. This is fatal!**

Pay per click gives instant exposure for as long as you maintain payments. It is however, under your control, is fast, effective, affordable and measurable by the hour. Smaller companies can get high visibility at certain times of the year (say around some important event) then not appear at other times.

SEO is still seen as a dark art. Unlike pay per click, your page ranking is under the search engines control and they assess your website in terms of accessibility, relevance and authority. If your website is new and you want a page 1 ranking, you going to have to muscle in ahead of more established competition.

This takes time because you have to build quality connections with other relevant sites and directories by placing articles in online publishing sites, directories, blogs, forums, social networks, etc, anything that makes you **more worthy IN GOOGLE'S EYES** than your competitors.

This is why you may see no movement for three or six months while you build up this "worth". So while it seems like nothing is happening in fact Google is gradually getting to appreciate just how worthy you are to visitors searching on line.

Once ranking is achieved then it can be sustained, 24/7, and this is the long term benefit of using SEO. But always do it properly and link ethically. Companies adopting non-ethical, black hat techniques to build links often find themselves delisted by Google and for a company and brand, that is a disaster!

To cover the awareness growth period while SEO kicks in, try running pay per click during the first few months to generate some interest, then use video, email, articles, online PR, etc, as support before investing in social networking (blogs, forums). Keep the momentum going all day, every day.

The online High Street runs for hundreds of results pages on Google so coming from the back of the field to the front requires patience, confidence and knowledge. But it is worth the wait.

If you'd like to explore how you can be the best shop on your online High Street call: **0800 86 202 86** or email **gerryw@flyingveemgt.co.uk**