



The Online Shop

Imagine you have a shop in the 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 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. Google's results pages.

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

If you're a marketing company, **every "shop" on the online street** is a marketing website. All the visitor sees are marketing companies so the higher your marketing website ranks on the page, the greater your visibility and the more visits you will get.

The point I'm making is that online **advertising is different** because the competition is direct and more intense. Every one of the twenty or so websites is trying to get above you and claim those precious clicks but it gives the visitor plenty of choice.

How to you stand out on line? Just like the High Street shop you **get the best location** then hang out some banner or heading that draws visitors' attention to your site.

The ways to get noticed are well documented, such as pay per click, SEO, email, video, viral, etc but there is still some reticence by some SMEs in employing them. There is also still misunderstanding over how conversion of interest into sales actually occurs, often driven by **continuing to think in offline marketing terms.**

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 four months while you build up this “worth”. 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 ethically.

Companies who try to use non-ethical, black hat techniques to build links often find themselves delisted by Google and that, for a company and brand, is disaster. 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.

To cover this fallow period, try running pay per click during the first few months to generate some interest, then use video and email to support these before investing in social networking. Keep the momentum going.

The online High Street runs for hundreds of pages so coming from the back of the field to the front requires patience. But it is worth the wait.

If you'd like to explore how you can be the best shop on your online High Street give me a call: **01925 262800** or email gerryw@flyingvemgt.co.uk