

Embrace organic search to maximise sales this festive season

By  David Jenkins

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Businesses that currently rely solely on paid-for Google search to attract consumers to their offerings should also be incorporating organic search as part of their digital strategies if they want to capture an even bigger slice of sales this Black Friday, Cyber Monday and festive period.

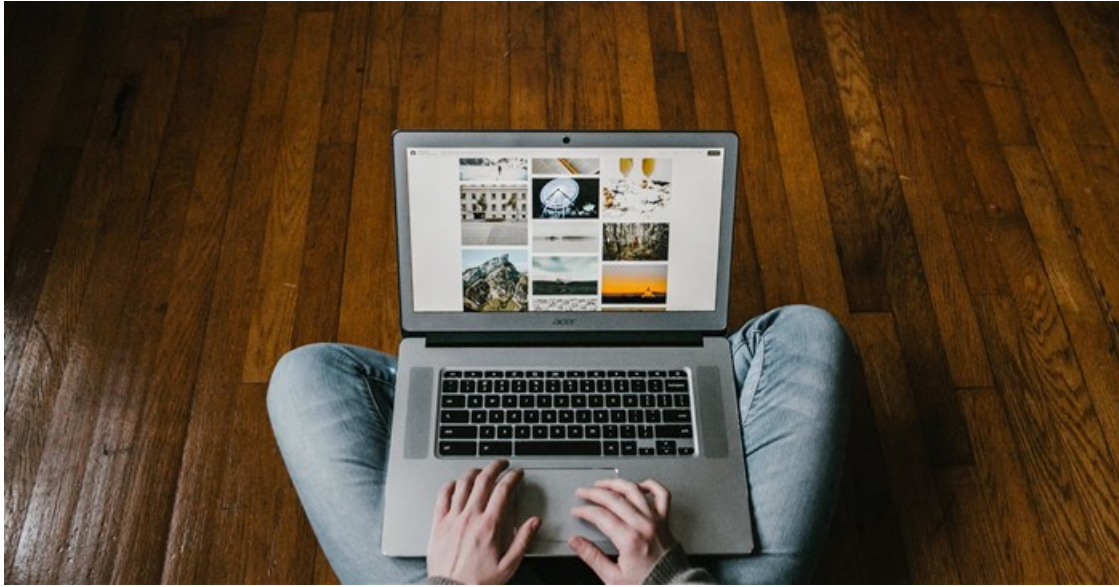


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A brand's organic search ranking, or search engine optimisation (SEO), determines where it appears when would-be customers search for the products or services a business offers.



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Trustworthy user-generated content

Consumers don't scroll through pages and pages of results, they place their trust in the results ranking at the top of the first page – and that's where a business needs to be. The hard truth is that if your brand is not in the top five search results, it probably won't be seen at all.

According to Google's '[Webmasters blog](#)' and as part of its ongoing updates to search algorithms, the search engine will no longer display review-rich snippets for local businesses and organisations.

In line with ensuring quality, transparent search results, these will be removed as they could be perceived as 'self-serving' and not in the best interest of consumers.



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Results will be driven by trustworthy user-generated content rather than potentially-biased reviews, which will have an impact on a business's ability to rank higher on the results page, highlighted recently by Mordy Oberstein from Rank Ranger.

Brands would be wise to focus on their company's Google My Business (GMB) review management strategy to increase their local search rankings, as the top three results appearing above organic web rankings make up as much as 15% of how Google ranks a local business.

Despite this, most brands still direct the bulk of their online media spend to paid media – which accounts for, on average, 15–30% of clicks. By insisting that media spend to be allocated solely to paid search results, they're ignoring the bulk of the available clicks and potential customers, and it's clear that no business can afford to disregard more than half its potential client base.



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Savvy online consumers

There are also brands who only use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram advertising to attract consumers. However, they're effectively ignoring the massive pool of savvy online consumers who appreciate (and actively look for) an honest review that ranks a brand highly in an organic Google search; more highly than a paid-for advert.

“ First time I see knowledge cards on Google linking directly to a "buy this product" page! It doesn't come with an "ad" sticker so this may be an organic search result? Not sure I believe that. pic.twitter.com/6hhv3E5cBU— Claudia Hauff (@CharlotteHase) [November 13, 2019](#) ”

Customers have wisened up to paid placements, realising that they carry little integrity, while top-ranking organic search results have earned their place at the top of the page by being deserving of a good review.

“ Simply put, it's 'in Google we trust' for most South Africans when searching for gifts to buy, places to go, and destinations to visit over the festive season. ”

Staying ahead (and high up in search rankings) relies on staying on top of changes to Google's algorithm in conjunction with tailored content strategies that build trust and 'link equity' within the Google My Business ecosystem. This is where

specialist performance marketing and SEO agencies come into play, working with clients on customised strategies that help them rank high on Google through paid and organic search optimisation.



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And with Google updating its algorithms as much as several times every day, it's simply impossible for a multitasking business owner to achieve the same level of results without a specialist team dedicated to tracking and decoding Google's tweaks, quirks and ever-evolving features.

Brands wanting to reap the rewards of the upcoming shopper-rush must rethink how they allocate their digital marketing budgets to make sure that they're capturing the biggest possible audience.

They need to find better ways of balancing between the 60% of clicks from conventional ad spend, and 40% of users who prefer trustworthy non-paid resources to inform their buying decisions.

ABOUT DAVID JENKINS

David Jenkins is the founding partner at Mckey Llew. He has worked with well-known brands and companies across several industries including financial services, FMCG and retail, mining, IT and more where organic and paid media strategies are crafted, created, launched and managed. In his role he is responsible for managing and driving Mckey Llew's client strategy with internal and external stakeholders.

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