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Digital Media Insights

Q2 2020

Introduction

◇ Here at twentysix, we have a wide array of specialists delivering amazing results for our clients. Whether it's integrated media strategies or standalone campaigns, performance is always at the heart of what we do, none more so than in these current unprecedented times.

◇ At the very beginning of the year, few people could have predicted the events which would soon unfold. As with all industries, digital marketing has not been immune to the impact of coronavirus as its effects take an ever increasing toll on people's daily lives.

◇ For this edition of our Digital Media Insights, we've pulled together the current talking points within the industry. In addition to general insights, we've compiled channel specific analysis for how digital strategies should be adjusted and enhanced to best navigate the current climate.

PPC

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Adapting your ads to changing attitudes

What
- Consumer needs have changed notably since the start of the pandemic, meaning that making your ad copy relevant to these needs can keep you one step ahead of your competitors.

Why
- For example, searches for home delivery or click and collect have spiked – has your business adapted to this shift in search volume?

How
- Use Google's trend reports to help you stay on top of emerging trends.
- Employing Dynamic Search Ads (DSA) can also be a great way of staying on top of emerging trends relevant to your business. Google and Bing suggest there are 10-15% completely unique searches every single day, so without DSA you are likely to be behind on emerging trends.

Google Trend Data (UK)

■ Home Delivery ■ Click and Collect
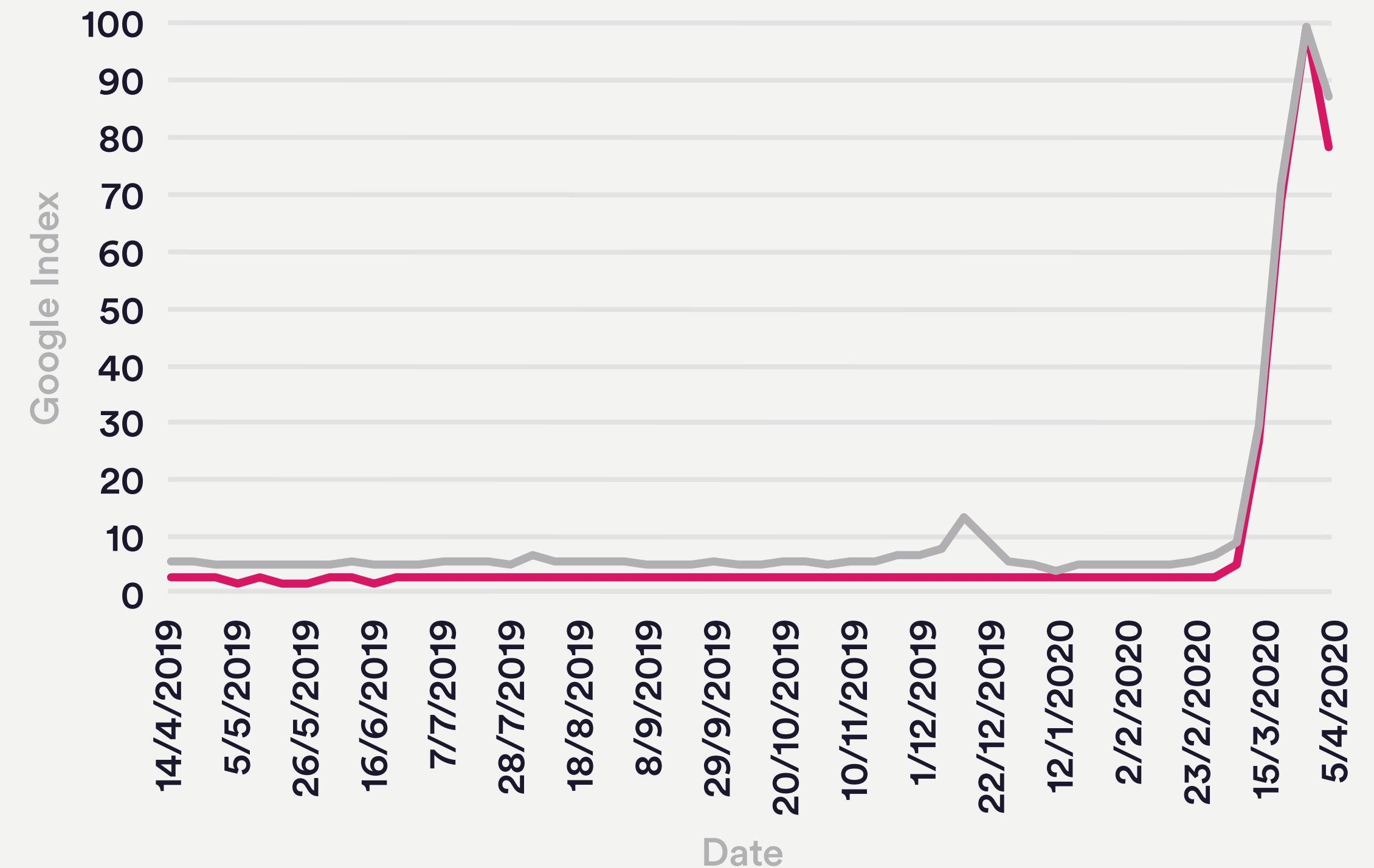
Non-essential goods are no more (for now)

What
- From March 18th, Amazon stopped stocking certain items in its warehouses to help cope with overwhelming demand for household essentials in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.
- This has also meant that Amazon have moved out of ad auctions on the SERPs, presenting a huge opportunity for ecommerce advertisers.

Why
- With Amazon out of the auctions (and also lots of SMEs), advertisers have a unique opportunity to gain large market share at a cut price.

How
- Consumers who strictly buy off Amazon will now be forced into forming new habits by buying direct from other websites. Ensuring their new habit is going to your website, instead of your competitors, could be pivotal for years to come.

Automated ad auctions

What

- In May 2019, Search Ads 360 released an automated bidding tool called auction-time bidding.
- Auction-time bidding combines SA360's real-time data and Google Ads search query bidding model, partnered with a number of contextual signals such as device, browser, location, time of day and more.
- This creates a powerful real-time bidding tool – instead of conventionally adjusting bid strategies every 6 hours, this will allow you to change the bid at each auction.

Why

- We have implemented this approach for our clients across their accounts and have continued to see consistent performance, even in the current market.
- Given the current climate and how unpredictable a number of industries are at the moment, auction-time bidding will be a great addition to accounts that can improve efficiencies and performance.

How

- To enable auction-time bidding, you are required to use a data driven attribution (DDA) model along with floodlight tags. Once this is set up, you click on the bid strategy and enable auction time bidding.
- Once the above actions are complete, there is a 5 – 12 day learning period.

"If you're using a DDA model, we'd recommended testing Google's auction-time bidding tool to improve efficiencies and performance"

Matthew Robson - PPC Manager

Flip the scripts

What
- Scripts are snippets of JavaScript code that you can use to automate tasks using your Google Ads or Microsoft Ads data.
- Apart from using internal data, you can also interact with external data to apply respective adjustments to an account.

Why
- As an agency, we write and utilise scripts to automate tedious procedures in order to help improve the efficiency of campaign management.
- In addition, we use scripts to interact with internal and external data to optimise bids and improve campaign performance.

How
- Our Non-Brand Shopping Negatives script lets us add as negatives all the Generic Search Terms that might come through our Brand Shopping Campaigns on an hourly basis, efficiently optimising our filtering for ecommerce clients in order to maximise performance.
- Our Ad Relevance Check script allows us to conduct an automated weekly check that ensures each keyword is being contained in the headlines and descriptions of the respective Ad Group, meaning we can closely monitor Ad Relevance and act instantly to boost Quality Score and decrease CPCs.

Display

Changing display landscape

What

- Global display inventory has increased by 17% compared to pre-COVID-19 levels based on recent Google DV360 inventory reports.
- Streaming and social platforms such as Netflix and Facebook have seen huge increases in video content consumption.
- People are consuming more media on mobile devices than usual and mobile ad inventory has increased to reflect this.
- Programmatic prices are down over 10% according to Teads.

Why

- With the changes in market prices and online content consumption, optimising key areas of your account will help maximise performance including device, recency, brand safety, bidding and creative.

How

- Manage your recency settings.
- Optimise your output with effective retargeting, organise budgets by device, and make sure you're using highly relevant creative.
- Consider your contextual strategy/brand safety strategy.
- Make sure you're managing your bidding strategy efficiently.
- Utilise video to maintain brand awareness and increase market share.
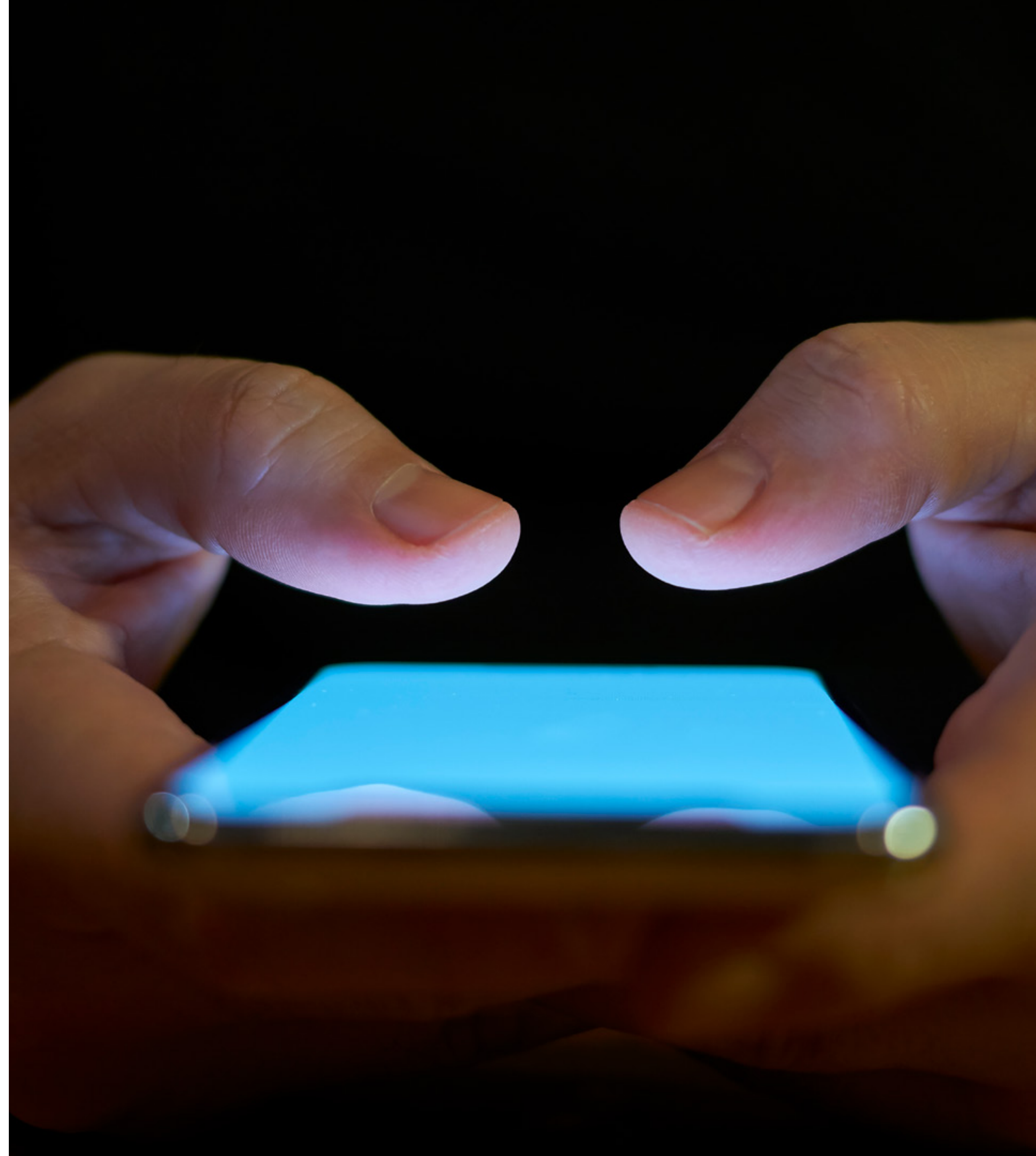
The future is looking cookieless

What
- Google has announced that Chrome will end support for third-party cookies.
- Safari and Firefox have already made a move towards such blocking, incorporating general data protection regulations.
- Targeted and tailored digital advertising isn't going away, but the way we deliver it will change. This includes more privacy and choice for consumers.

Why
- The move has been prompted to help protect a person's right to privacy and to choose how their data will be used. Ultimately, the aim is to create greater transparency within the advertising industry.

How
- It's an opportunity for a new era of cookieless channels, such as digital out of home (DOOH), connected tv, mobile and audio, and to be creative around how you reach your audiences.
- Utilise other targeting options which don't require first party data, such as contextual targeting and category targeting.
- Prepare to garner the first party data from consumers on your site and explore new initiatives, such as clean room opportunities in Google Ads Data Hub.

Opportunities with digital out of home

What
- ◆ Digital billboards known as digital out of home (DOOH) are becoming increasingly popular and may be the ultimate location-based (digital) marketing medium.

Why
- ◆ DOOH is the only traditional media channel that is growing and is a great way to combine high-impact creative, often associated with TV, with the advanced audience targeting and attribution capabilities of digital marketing.
- ◆ Offering brands a safe environment to advertise with unparalleled viewability, DOOH is highly effective when used in combination with mobile locational marketing. For example, you can re-target an individual on their mobile who has previously walked past a digital billboard.

How
- ◆ There are a number of different ways to buy inventory for DOOH, but the most popular is programmatically; the automation of buying and selling of ad space using computer programs. It is real-time, open to all bidders and the highest bid is selected and shown on the billboards.

Affiliates

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Adapting your affiliate campaign

What
- Affiliate marketing is proving to be a key channel for clients currently. With increased online demand and a larger pool of savvy savers, if your strategy is positioned in a smart, organised way, the channel can drive significant value to your digital mix.

Why
- The channel is a risk-averse way of targeting millions of customers and only paying for a converted sale.

How
- **Smarten your strategy** - Adapt your strategy in line with your capabilities, factoring in ongoing challenges your business may be facing. Capitalise upon increased demand, but not at the expense of your protected ROI. Sometimes less is more!
- **Maximise relationships** - Look after and nurture your relationships. Now, more than ever, communication is key. Be transparent, open and honest with affiliates.
- **Broaden your horizons** - Due to its risk averse CPA-based nature, now is the time to recruit, on-board and test. Have as many meaningful conversations about new opportunities as is possible. This could lead to some real wins further down the line!

Closed platform affiliates

What
- Closed platform affiliates offer a unique proposition within the affiliate channel, allowing brands to run exclusive, targeted promotions to a closed portal of users.
- Often these affiliates are set up to reward personnel working in a specific industry such as the armed forces, emergency services and the NHS.

Why
- These types of affiliates allow brands to tap into private engaged audiences across a wide range of sectors.
- Working with affiliates who reward key workers helps to portray a positive brand message.
- Brands can trial how effective promotions and discounts can be prior to launching more publicly available offers.
- Typically, we see closed platform affiliates return a higher AOV than other campaign averages.

How
- Utilising our existing affiliate relationships, integration is straightforward and campaigns are maintained on a fixed cost-per-action (CPA) model, limiting the financial risk to brands and the impact to margins when running activity alongside competitive promotions.

Tailored competitions

What
- The number of competition opportunities via the affiliate channel is on the increase, allowing brands to secure exposure with key voucher code affiliates and highly targeted online publications at minimal cost.

Why
- Opportunity to drive increased engagement and create positive brand association.
- No upfront costs other than the competition prize, enabling brands to gain brand exposure with targeted audiences at a low risk.
- Option for data sharing to grow email database (opted-in data which is fully GDPR compliant) and for re-targeted solus email to all competition entrants to incentivise sales.

How
- Competitions tailored to each brand according to demographic, reach and key stats.
- Once a competition prize and campaign date have been agreed, set-up is quick and straightforward.
- Competitions monitored and managed online with sales data tracked via affiliate network.

"Partnering with huge online competition platforms has allowed us to offer innovative solutions to build email databases in a controlled, GDPR-friendly way"

Hollie Raper - Affiliate Group Head

SEO

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Planning for post-pandemic recovery

What

- It's important to understand that organic revenue and traffic are not decreasing due to keyword positions falling. In reality, this will largely be due to shift in customer interest that's likely. These uncertain times can lead to anxiety and rushed decisions, but SEO is not a marketing channel that can be switched on and off without any implications.

Why

- If left to depreciate, it may take a substantial amount of time (and money) to recover a website's previous position. It is essential that a website maintains its organic position to ensure a swift return to previous levels of traffic.

How

- There is still a lot of activity that can be carried out whilst we navigate our way through these challenging and difficult times:
  - Write more content
  - Optimise for People Also Ask (PAAs) and Featured Answer boxes
  - Keep up-to-date with technical SEO housekeeping
  - Take the time to fix known issues
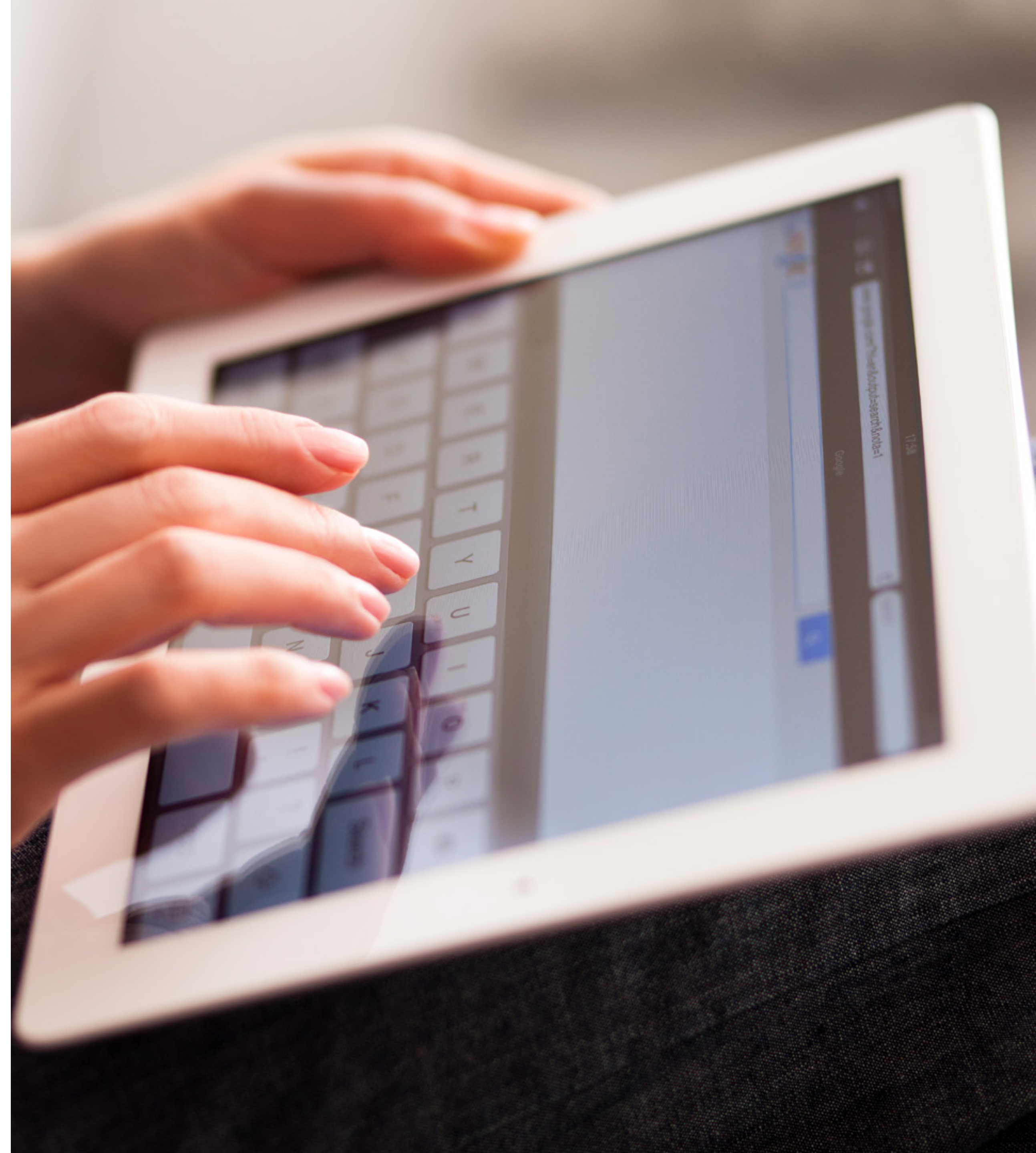
Making the most of SERPS

What
- Google announced in January that sites ranking for featured snippets will no longer appear in the first page of organic SERPs.
- Featured snippets have been seen as 'position 0' and therefore the best result in the SERP.
- This is not the right approach – you should analyse each SERP and identify the best listing for that particular SERP.

Why
- While featured snippets give you great visibility on page one, the answer to your query can often be found without clicking so this can impact your traffic.

How
- With this in mind, it is key that for transactional pages you either optimise for traditional positions or ensure the user needs to click through.
- This can be done by splitting keywords into intent – informative or transactional – and optimising accordingly to ultimately have a positive impact on CTR.

Speak up

What
- ◇ Google has announced a new schema mark-up called Speakable to work alongside Google Assistant. Currently, this feature is in beta and only open to news publishers within the U.S. on Google Home devices and Google Assistant.

Why
- ◇ This new schema enables news publishers to mark-up sections of news on their site that they would like to be read aloud by Google Assistant. "What's the latest news about (topic)?". Speakable could have a huge impact on how people search.

How
- ◇ The support for this new mark-up is currently limited to news content, but it is likely that support for the Speakable mark-up will expand beyond news content. Companies must start adapting to create more voice-friendly content and structuring content to be spoken by voice search devices.
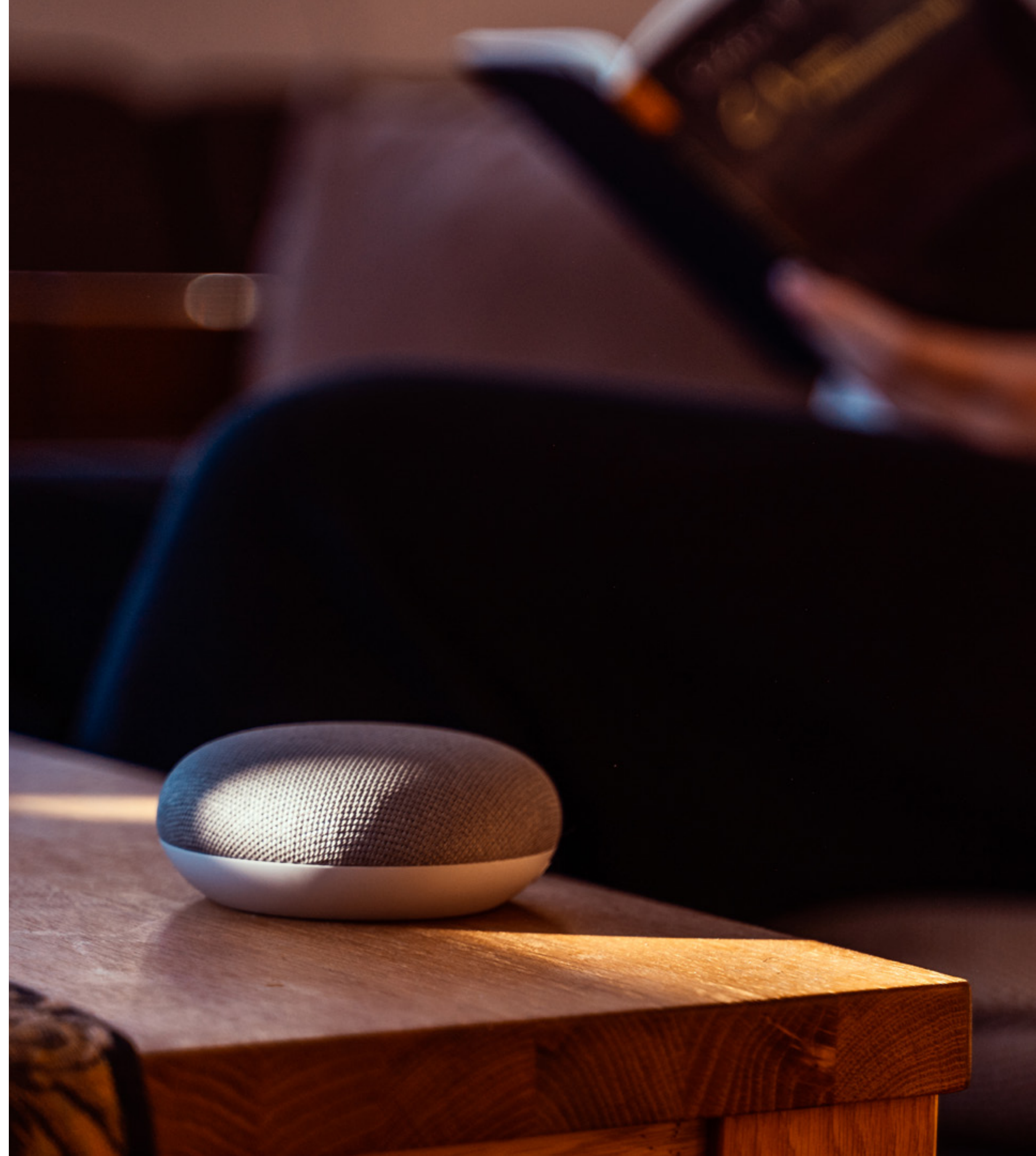
Content and Communications

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Sending a clear message

What

- Weeks of isolation have meant that digital communication is more important to customers than ever before.
- People want information, entertainment, and escapism above all else so they can understand how the situation is developing as well as distractions.
- Brands need to find ways to keep communicating with their audience in relevant ways during these particularly tough times.

Why

- Customers want to know what companies are doing to safeguard their staff, as well as increasing safety for the consumer and let people know about any changes to business as usual.

How

- Clear and consistent messaging is needed in top-level official statements alongside more personalised and localised conversations on social media and other channels which can support a wider discourse.
- Chatbots can help to alleviate the stresses on reduced customer service teams by answering commonly asked questions and direct customers to specific areas of content where necessary, e.g. detailed FAQs and guides.

Following the nofollow link update

What
- Google has begun to view nofollow links as a hint for crawling and indexing.
- While Google has previously already treated all link attributes as hints for ranking, they will now specifically hint for crawling and indexing purposes.

Why
- Google's Gary Illyes and Danny Sullivan have said the new attributes serve to help Google understand the web better and allow site owners to classify the nature of their links.

How
- Changes or updates only need to be made to sites if you have been solely relying on nofollow links to prevent Google from finding pages on your site.
- This most recent change won't make a huge impact on outreach and PR activity as Google has been able to use nofollow links when ranking pages in search results and has done so for a while.

Fleets – a new type of social story

What
- Stories are now the core experience of social media usage – Twitter is harnessing this power.
- Fleets will be Twitter's version of the story – 24 hours of content available only through users' profiles.

Why
- Brands should be quick to take advantage while advertising is cheap and the space is uncrowded by competitors.
- It offers a new dimension of stats and reporting knowing exactly who is clicking through to the profile as opposed to the feed.
- Allowing a brand personality to develop outside of the usual content offering is incredibly valuable.

How
- Share creative and create eye-catching content to encourage a user to come back for more.
- Be different and be unpredictable.

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For more information on how we can help you with your digital marketing challenges, please drop us a line or give us a call.

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