

The digital-first shift

Purplex MD Andrew Scott discusses why companies should rethink their website and digital presence

Within hours of opening a new Instagram account, 94-year-old Sir David Attenborough had 4.5 million followers, while the new NHS Covid-19 mobile phone app with QR code reader had over 10 million downloads in the first week.

The digital shift over the last 6 months has been meteoric. Continued uncertainty around Covid-19 and a second wave means that millions of slow adopters have rapidly migrated to digital-first in their daily lives. And when the pandemic eventually subsides and normality returns, we will be living in a new era of digital and the smartphone will rule supreme.

Overnight, your website has become your most important business asset. Yet many companies in the glass and glazing industry have been caught off-guard. Trade suppliers have been unable to meet their customers face-to-face, while homeowners have been forced to switch from in-store to entirely online for everything from groceries to furniture.

Ignoring this digital-first shift in behaviour is a recipe for disaster. Companies that fail to realise that the current upturn in business will eventually subside will be left completely exposed when orders slow down, and find themselves unable to compete with rivals who have already invested in their digital strategy.

Now, more than ever, companies need to rethink their website and online presence.

This shift is already happening. At Purplex, we are building increasingly sophisticated websites that include e-commerce, booking systems, product visualisers and integration to CRM, while UX (user experience) and CRO (conversion rate optimisation) have become paramount in turning website traffic into qualified sales leads.

Your website is no longer just an online brochure – it is the epicentre of your digital presence and needs to deliver significant return-on-investment.

Our team is currently working with over 170 businesses to help them maximise their website and smartphone strategy to attract new customers and engage with existing ones. This has ranged from advanced e-commerce solutions for global suppliers, complex digitised product catalogues, and lead generation websites that have generated 400% more leads than the previous website.

Not a one-off investment

With internet browsers, search engines, online media and mobile devices continuously changing, your website becomes out-of-date very quickly. But now, as customers embrace digital technology more than ever before, and others invest in their web and digital strategy, failing to invest in your website as part of an ongoing strategy will cost your business dearly.

You can run your old donkey around the racecourse as

much as you want, but you're going to come in last every time compared to a thoroughbred racehorse.

Of course, your website is only part of your digital presence. Reviewing your entire digital strategy is essential – social media, online news, mobile apps, customer portals, digital signatures, CRM platforms, payment gateways, online reviews and much more all need rigorous assessment.

And as even the most technophobic people migrate to a digital-first world, companies are already deploying more sophisticated activities around search engine optimisation (SEO), biddable media (paid search), content marketing and social media to drive customer behaviours and convert interest into qualified sales leads, while rival firms are oblivious to the business they are losing.

Is real-world dead?

The shift to digital-first doesn't mean digital-only. People still love flicking through a print magazine, visiting a showroom or reading a brochure. But applying a digital mindset can amplify results. Adding a QR code in a magazine advert or next to a showroom product for example, which when scanned opens a product video or captures contact details on a mobile phone, would enhance the user's experience.

The pandemic hasn't just impacted health or the economy. It has been a catalyst for change and accelerated digital transformation by perhaps 10 or more years over a six-month period.

Those who embrace a digital-first approach will not only gain a competitive advantage, but will rapidly leave others behind. □



Andrew Scott

Andrew Scott is a leading industry consultant who has acquired, built and sold several companies. He is the founder and MD of Purplex Marketing and Insight Data.
www.purplexmarketing.com