



ASSISTED.



**WHY SEARCH
IS IMPORTANT
TO FINANCIAL
SERVICE
BUSINESSES**

WWW.ASSISTED.CO.UK

01 THE BACKGROUND

Page 2

- A. Introduction to Search (SEO & PPC)
 - B. Introduction to owned channels
 - C. The importance of page one
-

02 THE CHALLENGES

Page 4

- A. Protecting your own brand
 - B. Competing with the comparison websites
 - C. Brand and domain authority
-

03 THE OPPORTUNITY

Page 6

- A. Identifying keywords
 - B. Maximising existing authority
 - C. Investing in search
-

04 INVESTMENTS VS RETURN

Page 8

- A. Identifying keywords
 - B. Maximising existing authority
 - C. Investing in search
-

05 WHO CAN IT WORK FOR?

Page 10

- A. Types of financial service businesses
 - B. Case studies
-

08 ABOUT A.

Page 13

- A. Assisted

The Background


A. Introduction to Search (SEO & PPC)

Search is a digital marketing strategy used to improve your business's website visibility and drive traffic via paid and organic channels using search engines such as Google & Bing.

Traditionally, search marketing fits into two key categories.

PPC (Pay per click) is when you pay each time a user clicks on your advert within a search result. Using platforms like Google Ads and Bing Ads you bid in an auction to rank on the search pages, and you can set a daily budget for your ads.

SEO (Search engine optimisation) is about improving the rank of your site over time in the organic search results. Although the process takes longer in order to see results, once you are positioned well, you don't have to pay per click and therefore usually SEO provides a better return on investment long term.



B. Introduction to owned channels

Driving traffic to your website via SEO and PPC is often referred to as owned channels. This is because you own the customer and data generated from search engines and you are not reliant on third-party lead generation companies, affiliates or comparison websites.

Owned channels therefore usually often provide some of the best commercials when comparing against other lead channels. This is because there is no commission paid to affiliate businesses, only the click costs and associated agency management fees.

C. The importance of page one

Businesses within the financial services often rely on affiliates, comparison websites and referrals. The nature of financial service products such as insurance, loans and credit cards lend themselves very well to this method of lead generation. Relying on these alone isn't effective in such a competitive digital market, however.

With the ease and accessibility of search engines, a lot of people are doing their own research when it comes to choosing who to trust with their money. In fact, research from Deloitte found that millennials especially prefer to do their own research rather than simply rely on established channels. And where do they go to do this? Google and Bing. Therefore, the higher a company ranks on page one of the search engine, the more likely they are to capture that web traffic.

The Challenges


A. Protecting your own brand

One of the most common tactics undertaken by affiliate lead providers is to generate leads from PPC by bidding on your business's name. This essentially means you are paying for leads from customers who are already looking for your business.

These leads are usually of high quality as the customers are already familiar with your brand, but it's important not to pay commission on these leads. Google and Bing Ads provide a simple way of combating this challenge.

Although bidding on your own brand within Google Ads may seem a waste of click spend if you rank in the organic results, it could be saving you money in the long term by ensuring your customers always find your website first.

Bidding on your own business's brand almost always results in an extremely high-quality-score from Google Ads. This will drive down the CPC (cost per click), but also ensure that you'll dominate the number one position. The result of this is cheap clicks, and your brand in a top position of both paid and organic search results.



CHALLENGES

B. Competing with the comparison websites

If your business operates in the financial sector providing loans, credit cards and insurance products, you're going to be fairly familiar seeing the big four* comparison websites dominating the search results both from a paid and organic perspective.

Often this leaves you in a position of reliance on these companies to provide leads to your business on either an acquisition-based commission or cost per click basis. This then means your margin is reduced, your business has increased risk, and your affiliate marketing costs are extremely high.

There's no denying that you need to have a commercial relationship with these types of comparison websites however, but you need to have a long-term focus on your own brand's longevity. If you stopped your commercial relationship with the comparison websites would your business cease to exist?

**The big four; Money Super Market, Compare The Market, Go Compare and Confused.com*

C. Brand and domain authority

Domain Authority (DA) is a search engine ranking score developed within the search industry that predicts how well a website will rank on search engine result pages (SERPs). A Domain Authority score ranges from one to 100, with a higher score indicating a greater ability to rank well.

The DA of a business's website has a direct correlation to how well the site performs within the organic search results. It is the job of a search agency to help improve this authority in order to increase visibility from the SEO channel.

Often businesses who traditionally have been reliant on third-party lead providers have lower domain authority than the comparison websites. This means organically they rank further down in the search results.

The Opportunity

Identifying keywords

Identifying the correct keywords to target in both SEO and PPC channels is vital for the success of your business. The key is to be realistic with your keyword choice, this sometimes means avoiding the keywords with the highest search volume as they will also be the most competitive.

If your business has a particular speciality or USP there may be search volume surrounding related phrases where the competition is less and this in turn means you have more chance of meeting an acceptable cost per acquisition (CPA) with paid search and ranking organically with lower domain authority. A good example could be the expansion of a search terms. For example, instead of competing for 'car insurance' instead look to target 'Best sports car insurance'.

With slightly more niche terms you can expect search volume to be less, however you would expect the conversion to be higher due to the nature of a more refined search. The principle would be competing for a range of 'less competitive' phrases avoiding the costly PPC auctions and expensive SEO routes, acquiring customers searching at a slightly more cultivated level.



B. Maximising existing authority

Once you have agreed on a set of search terms which make commercial sense when applied to your business, you can then identify which keywords are most likely to perform best in the organic search. This then leads to a prioritisation of the SEO investment into a particular set of landing pages or services.

By understanding the current domain authority and page authority it's possible to see where the site already ranks for your chosen terms within Google and Bing search results. This, in turn, indicates the 'low hanging fruit' for your campaign and highlights how the search engine already interprets your site's authority and content.

C. Investing in search

Most businesses may already be working with a search agency or be investing in internal resource to maximise these channels, and if not, there's a great opportunity for your business to add an incremental lead channel for your commercial team.

SEO can take longer to see a return of investment, however once you're up and running SEO traditionally offers a lower CPA than PPC as the costs of clicks are removed. It also provides excellent scalability as with increased domain authority comes the chance to rank for new and emerging terms in the future.


Comparably, PPC can give you additional visibility, traffic and leads instantly. Once your Google and Bing Ads campaigns are live, you will start to compete in the auctions for the search terms you have selected.

Investments vs Return

Search Volumes & Conversion

As mentioned in the section on identifying keywords there is a skill in identifying search terms that will convert effectively, have adequate search volume, and a cost per click that will generate a tangible return on investment.

This is true across both SEO and PPC, as the higher the click cost on Google and Bing Ads, the more competitive the search term will be in the organic search results. The key is to identify a range of product-specific terms, broad terms and long-tail terms which will yield good traffic at the lowest cost.



B. Commercials and CPA targets

Before committing to any search campaign it is possible to assume a return on investment. You can do this by using a simple calculation that takes into consideration the search volume of a term, it's typical click costs, the CTR (click-through-rate) and the site's conversion.

By going through this process you can in theory work through a CPA (cost per acquisition) cost or CPL (cost per lead) cost. You can then compare this with the existing lead channels to compare the commercial implications before investing.

Due to the data available with search marketing, companies can be transparent with recommendations and budgets prior to starting the campaigns. Of course, the numbers aren't always perfect, but a great indication of whether there's an opportunity for your business to effectively benefit from search engine marketing.

C. Reporting and KPI's

With any website or application form, you are able to track the customer's behaviour throughout their journey. This is vital when comparing search engine marketing to existing channels. By tracking conversion, quote form completions, email clicks and phone calls we can optimise the campaigns to enhance the bids on terms which generate the most leads.


Using Google and Bing to optimise for conversions, their internal algorithms will adjust the campaigns accordingly. This ultimately lowers the CPA or CPL over time, improving your return and allowing you to invest more.

With access to so much data, it is then possible to extract this into KPI (key performance indicator) reports and MI (management information). Most businesses can set-up live dashboards so you can see the metrics specific to your ambitions at any point.

Who Can It Work For?

Types of financial service businesses

Search engine marketing should be an integral part of any financial service business's strategy and will work if implemented correctly for a range of businesses. This includes loans, banking, advisors, insurance, credit cards, peer-to-peer lending and much more.



Case studies

We have included several links below that are examples of where search has become an important part of our client's strategy and successfully provided commercials that have led to increased investment year on year.



Working with their team we reviewed the data and worked out an acceptable and target CPL (Cost Per Lead) to easily compare channels and their return on investment.

We took their existing Google Ads campaign, improved the interaction rates (click through), reduced the overall CPC (Cost per click) and ensured we're optimising our budget for the phrases that lead to conversions.

"ASSISTED. have vastly improved our online advertising results at CIA Insurance. They provide a professional service but on a very personable basis. We would definitely recommend them."

Richard Wayman - Cia Insurance

www.assisted.co.uk/case-studies/cia-landlords/



LifeSearch invests each year in creating awesome content for its customers and the rest of the protection market place. The ASSISTED. team have leveraged this content to build links and gain coverage for infographics, reports, videos and much more.

This activity combined with an SEO focused content marketing strategy has seen the traffic from content dramatically increased over the last 12 months when comparing year on year results.

"We've used ASSISTED. at LifeSearch for SEO and consultancy services for some time now. Nick and the team have provided a great uplift in our organic reach since day one - and have 'assisted' us on a few projects along the way."

Chris Henderson - Lifesearch

PROTECT YOUR GADGET

The Protect Your Gadget campaign has really let our team flex their creative muscles, creating original content for the blog, social channels and creative marketing purposes.

Our unique content strategy has allowed us to use the Protect Your Gadget characters in storyboards, animated GIF's, infographics and ongoing social content.

"ASSISTED. added the professional service required for our two new brands. They provide good MI for us to make informed decisions. Social media content is first class and they engage well with our PR and Design teams. Very professional business. Would definitely recommend ASSISTED."

Steve Jones - Protect Your Gadget

www.assisted.co.uk/case-studies/protect-your-gadget/



Our focus for Choice has been to ensure that Google sees their website as an authoritative source of information based on the content produced that related to their key terms.

We have added new original content with a FinTech based infographic and a financial glossary that drives traffic for individual terms as well as improve the index depth and content relevance of the site.

"Assisted are a great firm to do business with. They have a thorough knowledge of digital marketing and overlay it with a commercial awareness that gives their campaigns an extra boost. In addition, they have a very collaborative approach to working with clients and a personal service that is far better than other agencies we have encountered."

Sean O'farrell - Choice Business Loans

ASSISTED.

ASSISTED. combine a multi-channel approach to give businesses the opportunity to target their customers at all stages during the process of making an online purchase.

We're a creative company and this needs to come across in our language. We don't hide behind buzzwords and jargon - we connect on a personal and human level.

Brand pillars.

Relationships

Our business model is built on trustworthy relationships, whether it be with our customers, team or peers.

Transparent

Clear objectives, strategies and execution means expectations are managed and results are measured accurately.

Doers

We don't just talk about what we'll do for your business - we dedicate our time to delivering on our promises and strategies.

A.

info@assisted.co.uk

01788 288020

www.assisted.co.uk