

# The Recruitment Industry's Complete Guide to Digital in 2018/19



**the source**  
Digital Marketing Evolved



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## **Introduction**

We are The Source, a full-service integrated digital marketing agency with a difference. Our primary aim is to deliver more sales, faster and more efficiently than other digital agencies.

Working with a methodology called AGILE and delivering our work using Scrum, we work in very quick iterations, where we measure our results on a regular basis. Our activity is moulded according to results which means ROI on a larger scale quicker and more efficiency, with minimal wasted time. This is our unique approach to marketing.

We've worked with numerous companies across a whole range of sectors, however we are experts in the recruitment sector having worked with a number of companies in the industry achieve better results from their digital marketing efforts, spanning web development projects, SEO campaigns, Paid Media and Content Marketing campaigns.

In this ebook, we are going to be providing our insight and expertise from working in the recruitment sector and analysing the different digital marketing channels, explaining their benefits and our experience in using that channel to drive return on investment.

We are aiming to help solve the problems many recruitment companies face, such as their perceived reputation, finding the right candidates, how to engage with your target audiences, both businesses and candidates, and how to use digital marketing to help you stand out from the crowd, in what is a competitive and over-crowded market.

Firstly though, we will be looking at what the objectives of a digital marketing campaign should be, including the end goal and the problems faced by recruitment companies in trying to reach them.



## Objectives of a Digital Marketing campaign:

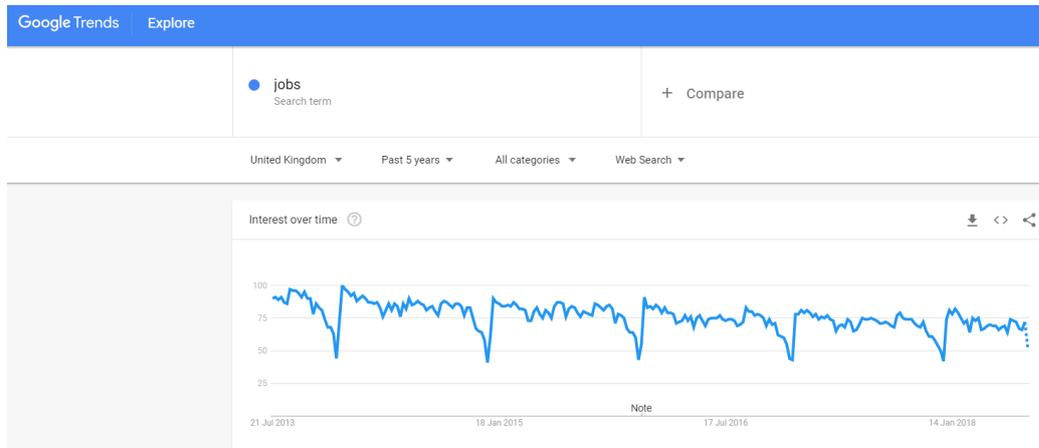
Before undertaking any sort of digital marketing project, it's important to focus on your business goals and how your campaign relates to them. Most commonly, the ultimate business goal is to see an increase in revenue. However, sometimes you will embark on a campaign for another reason. For example:

Sometimes campaigns are also implemented for another specific purpose. For example:

- **To attract new candidates:** This is arguably what the recruitment industry is all about; finding the right candidates for the roles. The best way to attract candidates is likely to vary depending on their industry and skillset.
- **To attract new roles:** The other half of recruitment; finding the right roles! This involves appealing to the right businesses, and demonstrating the benefits of working with a recruitment agency to them.
- **Brand Awareness & Reputation Building:** Brand awareness is key for every business, but it's particularly important in the recruitment industry, with so much competition in the market. It's important you stand out from the crowd, and you do everything possible to enhance your reputation.

Of course, in trying to meet these objectives, you are likely to encounter problems which hinder the performance of your campaigns, some of which are beyond your control, others which you may be able to counteract. Potential problems include:

- **Reputation:** Reputation and perception is a big problem in the recruitment industry. It seems as if the recruitment industry on a whole has suffered a poor reputation in terms of service quality, morality and reliability since the beginning of time, with many businesses refusing to work with recruitment agencies, and now an increasing number of candidates who dislike using them. With this in mind, you may want consider undertaking a campaign to try and change the perception of your industry, and what sets your firm out from the crowd.
- **Seasonality:** The time of year it is can have significant impact on the performance of your campaigns and of the business as a whole. From October, the search demand for 'jobs' starts to decline, and in December, it drops significantly, with people preoccupied with the Christmas period. January is always the time where demand increases again, meaning a busy period for recruitment firms.



- **A shortage of candidates:** There may only be one suitable candidate for every five to ten job openings, possibly even more than this in highly-skilled or niche roles, which means there could be a shortage of talent. Add this into the fact that recruiters are already in a war against their competition and it's a recipe for disaster!

Problems such as these can sometimes be counteracted, however, it takes a great deal of planning and understanding of the potential impact any action will have. For example, in leaner times, you may think it is better to switch your focus from a PR-based 'reputation' campaign to one which is solely fixed on generating leads, with content assets being promoted through Paid Media. However, it's important to think about the implications of doing so, for example how much it will cost.

## The Market Disruptor

Recruitment is vulnerable to the market disruptor, just like taxis were to Uber, hotels were to AirBnB and like Blockbuster were to Netflix.

However, despite the rise of job sites such as Indeed, the recruitment industry is yet to see a real challenger to its ways and methods. This means there is plenty of opportunity for existing companies to shake up the way the industry works, but this will likely only happen if the company do not brand themselves as a recruiter, such is the stigma associated with the industry.



## The Audience

The next step in developing a successful marketing campaign is identifying your target audience and understanding them, their behaviours and ultimately what their end goals are. This is the key to being able to deliver a truly successful marketing campaign.

### Personas

As part of our planning process, we work by developing an understanding of our clients' audience, by creating a 'persona' document. This is essentially a breakdown of our clients' audience, and includes details of their age range, gender, hobbies and interests, their estimated household income, their occupation and their location. We also include details of any challenges they face and the channels in which they are most receptive to information, which allows us to build relevant campaigns and deliver them in ways in which they are more likely to engage with.

These personas are built by gaining insight from the client as to what they think their audience is, using their data to see what the audience really is, and undertaking our own additional research in order to get the best possible picture for each persona.

In the recruitment sector, we could have a number of different personas. For example:

**Candidate A:** This persona are those candidates who are actively looking for work. They may be unemployed, and therefore struggling financially, or they may be unhappy in their current role. Statistically, those aged 18-24 are the most likely to be looking for work, followed by those in the 24-35 age bracket. With the former, it is more likely to be a male audience, but with the latter it is more likely to be female, according to the latest figures around employment.

**Candidate B:** This persona is slightly more difficult to determine than the previous one, simply because they are not actively job searching, and so it could apply to anybody! However, it will often depend on the industry which the candidate works, as well as the role, as some are dominated by a particular demographic, for example the fashion and beauty industries, at executive or mid-manager level, are predominantly female, between the ages of 22 and 35.

**The Employer, Small Business, no HR department:** On the other side of recruitment, you are likely to target businesses. One of the options is to target SME owners, who do not have a HR department, or have little to no time to hire staff for their business. Business owners are likely to be aged 30+, in a good financial position,



but be exceptionally busy, as in addition to their business, they may also have families.

**The Employer, Large Business:** Large businesses typically have HR departments, which means recruitment companies will typically be targeting 'Head of HR', 'Talent Acquisition' or other similar job role. HR roles of this nature are dominated by females, who have 3 or more years of experience and are usually aged 35+.

These are just four brief examples of various personas which could be relevant to the recruitment industry, and are not absolute. There will be other personas, but these are likely to be shaped by other variables such as whether you have a specialism within a certain sector, such as finance or technology, location and whether you specialise in hiring a certain level of experience, for example you may exclusively hire C-Suite staff or graduates.

Businesses who understand their audience will find themselves developing a competitive advantage over their rivals. It's also worth noting that the longer you are able to engage with your audience for, the greater the opportunity will be for you to deliver a positive experience and build a strong relationship with them.

As the vast majority of recruiters will recognise, relationship building with your audience is essential in this industry. Build a good relationship with a candidate or business and they are more likely to trust you, which means that they are more inclined to work with you in the future. This in turn leads to longevity, and the increased likelihood that you will gain additional business from word of mouth referrals.

Every aspect of your marketing campaigns should always relate back to at least one of your predetermined personas, and there should always be a justifiable reason behind any action taken.

## **SEO**

Often forming the backbone of digital marketing campaigns, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a vital part of ensuring success on the internet.

*“SEO helps to generate traffic to your website from search engines such as Google and Bing, by helping your site appear for search terms your audience is searching for. As a result, you are likely to see more job applications, CV uploads, calls to the business or even meetings.”*



Ensuring that your website is **technically sound** is a standard practice for any site, but for a business in the recruitment sector it's even more important, with a high level of competition for search terms. Failing to ensure that **best practice** is adhered to will mean your website will make the task of **competing with well-established recruiters and job sites** an even harder task. So what is best practice when it comes to technical SEO?

There are many different aspects to technical SEO, all of which play an important part in how well your website ranks in the SERPs:

**Page Titles:** Starting with one of the most basic aspects of Technical SEO, Page Titles are absolutely vital. Not only do they tell the search engine algorithms what the page is about, but they also tell the end user. Page Titles should be **between 50 and 60 characters long**, and provide **clear top-level information** about what the page contains. Using Hays as an example:

[Hays: UK Jobs and Recruitment](#)  
www.hays.co.uk/index.htm ▼  
Find a new job in the UK with Hays Recruitment. Browse a range of permanent or temporary roles including jobs in IT, Finance, Construction, HR & Marketing.

<a href="#">Job search</a> Search Jobs. Clear all filters. Sort by Relevance. Sort by ...	<a href="#">Jobs in Birmingham</a> From our local office in Birmingham we have an ...
<a href="#">Hays Connect</a> Hays Connect is an efficient, easy to use online timesheet, payroll ...	<a href="#">Office Locator</a> Find your nearest office. Sector: Accountancy and Finance ...
<a href="#">Recruiting now</a> Recruiting now. EmployersLP_compressed.jpg ...	<a href="#">Jobs in Leeds</a> Find your next job in Leeds. We're currently recruiting for ...

[More results from hays.co.uk »](#)

The Page Title for Hays' homepage provides a clear message as to who they are and what they do. By comparison, Michael Page just have their brand name as their page title, which is not best practice.

[Michael Page](#)  
<https://www.michaelpage.co.uk/> ▼  
Search for jobs in Accounting, Finance, Digital, HR and more across the UK including London, Manchester, Birmingham with leading recruitment agency ...

Results from [michaelpage.co.uk](#)

<a href="#">Recruitment services</a> Find out about the recruitment services Michael Page offers ...	<a href="#">Recruitment jobs</a> As a recruitment consultant you can choose the path your career ...
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**Meta Descriptions:** Similarly to Page Titles, Meta Descriptions are easy to deal with, but are essential to get right. Situated below the Page Title in the SERPs, the meta description provides more information on what a particular page is about.

The length of meta descriptions is something which has been debated recently, with Google often running tests to see whether longer meta descriptions enhance the user experience. There are many free tools

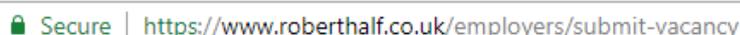


online which will help you preview your metadata, but current guidelines suggest that **320 characters** is the optimum length for meta descriptions.

**Header Tags:** Stylized as <H1> or <H2> in web code, Header Tags tell search engines about headers and how important they are. Header tags should be different to Page Titles, but it is advisable to put **target keywords** in them. You can have as many Header Tags as you like, but ensure that you only have one of each (1 x <h1>, 1 x <h2>, 1 x <h3> etc.) and that they are in the correct order.

**Image Alt Tags:** An ALT Tag, or '**ALT attribute**' as it is sometimes known, adds a **short text description** to an image on a web page. It should be used on every image, and inform the search engine crawlers and the end user what the contents of the image is and what its purpose is. A maximum number of characters has not been published, however it is standard practice in the industry to restrict the length of the ALT tag to **125 characters**.

**URL Structure:** When it comes to the structure of your website's URLs, each one should be concise and descriptive, without space words and prepositions, and only use hyphens rather than underscores. They should also contain target keywords, but avoid stuffing them, and should be in lowercase font.

 Secure | <https://www.roberthalf.co.uk/employers/submit-vacancy>

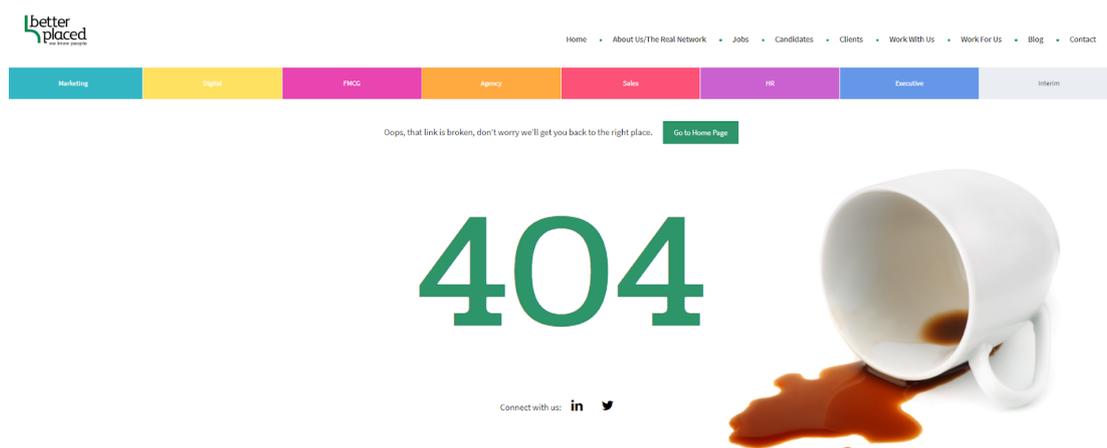
**Robots.txt:** The Robots.txt file of a website is a text file which sits in the backend of your website and tells search engines about specific URLs which you do not want appearing in the SERPs (indexing). It is really important that your Robots.txt file is checked on a regular basis to ensure that there are no URLs in there which shouldn't be! Robots.txt files are important in the recruitment sector as websites in this discipline tend to be 'data heavy' with a lot of information and images present, which when crawled can seriously impact the speed of your site. By optimising your Robots.txt to stop certain URLs being crawled and indexed, you reduce the risk of a slow page speed.

**Canonicals:** A **rel=canonical** tag tells a search engine's crawlers which version of a page to index to include in the SERPs. It is commonly used on websites where some pages have similar content, to avoid being penalised for duplicate content.

**404 Pages:** A 404 error page is displayed to users when the URL they typed in or were directed to doesn't



exist on your website. This could be as a result of a job listing no longer being listed on your website. Best practice when it comes to 404 pages is to ensure that they follow the **same structure and navigation** as your whole website, inform users that the page they were looking for doesn't exist, and provide them with **links to alternative pages**.



**XML Sitemap:** Along with the Robots.txt file, the XML Sitemap of your domain is one of the most important elements of technical SEO optimisation.

Your XML Sitemap is an XML file which contains a list of all the URLs available on your website, and includes information such as their title, their publishing date and when they were last updated. Search engine crawlers use the XML Sitemap to guide them as to which pages to index, and you can submit your XML Sitemap to them through **Google's Search Console** and **Bing's Webmaster Tools**.

**SSL:** Website security is always a hot topic, in IT departments and marketing agencies all over the world. Installing an SSL certificate on a website will give your website a '**HTTPS**' domain, which in addition to demonstrating to users that your site is encrypted, is also a ranking factor. If you don't have SSL installed on your website, then we would advise that you do so as a matter of urgency.

These are just a few aspects of Technical SEO to consider, however there are many more which you may also want to include on your website to ensure it is fully optimised. For example, **Schema mark-up**, which adds semantic vocabulary to your website to help search engines show more informative results to their users, or **conversion tracking code** to help you identify the pages which generate the most leads.

**Off-site** is also an important part of overall SEO strategy. Off-site optimisation essentially entails **building the presence of your website online**, which is done by building **links and citations** from **relevant and authoritative domains**. One of the best ways of doing this is by targeting industry press through press



releases, interviews or through wider content marketing campaigns. The reason why this is likely to benefit your site more than getting citations or links from other sources such as directories is because the search engine will already know that industry press, for example Recruiter magazine, are an authority and are relevant to the recruitment sector. By linking back to your website or citing your brand name, this sends a ranking signal to the algorithms of the search engines that your website is also relevant to that sector or topic. High-authority publications also include national newspapers and sources such as the BBC.

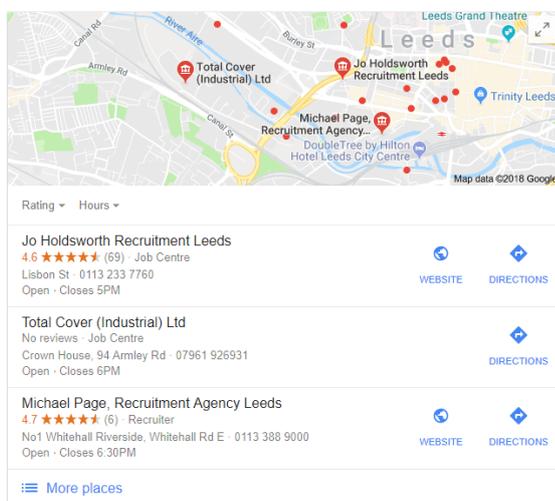
Many brands have also previously worked with bloggers which are relevant to their industry. Naturally, recruitment bloggers are few and far between, and so if this is an approach you have chosen, then you may need to think outside the box. For example, you may want to target bloggers who specialise in job seeking or general lifestyle. Collaborations or guest posting with other brands which bear some sort of relevance are also a great way of building links back to your site.

As part of off-site optimisation, you will want to monitor the links which are pointing back to your website, and instruct web crawlers not to count some of them when taking ranking factors into account during indexing. For example, as a business in the recruitment sector, you will want links from websites such as [recruitingtimes.org](http://recruitingtimes.org), newspapers such as [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) and the domains of any relevant bloggers or influencers you have worked with. However, you will not want links from [davesdaytrips.co.uk](http://davesdaytrips.co.uk) for example, as the site is likely to have little authority and is not relevant to your brand. You can also ensure that any malicious sites which have links pointing towards your domain are discounted. The way in which you do this is by listing these domains in a .txt file and submitting them to the **Disavow tool** in Google Search Console. This will instruct Google's crawlers not to take these links into account when assessing the quality of your website.

Off-site optimisation also plays a part in Local SEO, with links and citations from local sources, such as local newspapers, building the profile of your website in a particular area, as they send signals to a search engines algorithm, which tell it that your website is an authority on that topic in that locality, and is therefore relevant to a user's search. Getting your website featured in Google's '3-pack', which includes Google My Business, Google Maps and Google+ is an essential part to ensuring that your local search presence is optimised.



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With Google My Business, make sure that you check that all of the required information is correct when you set up the account. This includes your physical address, to which Google will send a postcard to with an authorization code on it, which you will need to confirm that the business is yours. Also, ensure that you have a complete profile. This means specifying your opening times, having correct contact information and having visually appealing photos associated with the listing.

If you have multiple office locations, for example, Leeds, London & Manchester, it is vital that every office is listed in Google My Business.

### Individual Office Pages

In addition to the above, you may also want to consider having separate pages on your website for each office. It's crucial to keep them separate from each other on your business website, as it will ensure that you create optimum search result visibility for all of your office locations. As with the main site, each office page should include information which is relevant to the location, such as the postcode and telephone number.

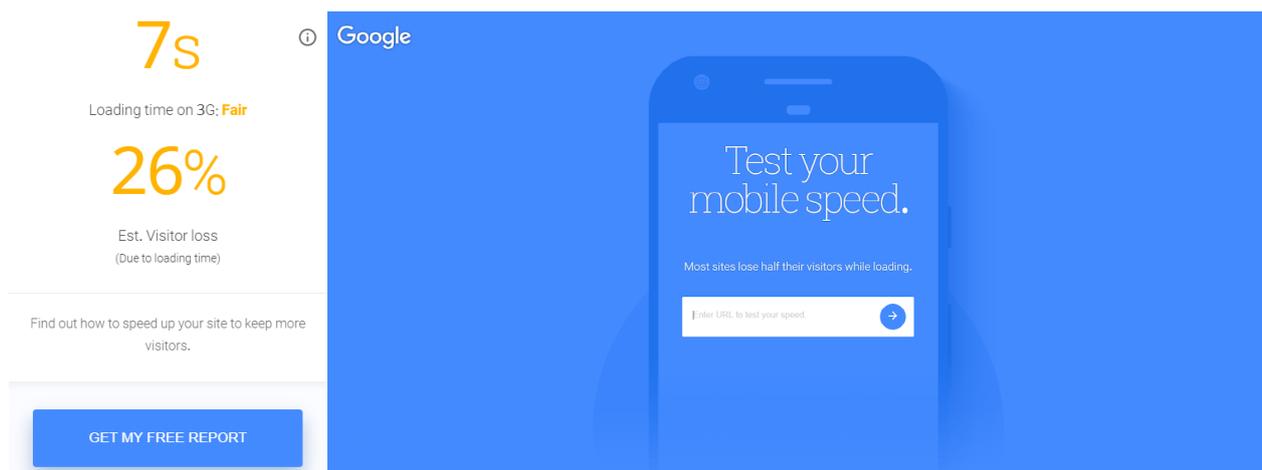
It seems basic, but simply having your address on your website also helps with Local SEO. Ideally, the best place for this is in the footer of every page, as it reinforces to search engine algorithms that each page is relevant to that location.

**Mobile optimisation** is also incredibly important for websites to get right. We now live in a mobile-first world, where the majority of searches are made on a mobile device. Therefore, it's absolutely essential that



your website to be optimised for peak performance in mobile SERPs.

Fortunately there are multiple tools to help with this. For example, Google has a **Mobile Friendly Test**, where you can insert your domain and it will give you a score, as well as make recommendations as to how you can make your website more 'mobile friendly'.



In addition to this, Google have developed a **Page Speed Insights** tool. This tool gives a score for both mobile and desktop page speed, but doesn't generate a report which is as in detail as the Mobile Friendly Test.

In order to improve page load speed, Google have also released the **PageSpeed Module**, which is an open-source server module which optimises your site automatically. This makes the process of ensuring that the load speed of your website, both on desktop and mobile, as low as it possibly can be, without the need for hours of manual optimisation work.

**Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP)** is another way of ensuring that your content is suitable for mobile devices. This open source code, which can be added to areas of your website where there is regular news type content, ensures the best presentation of your content and in the quickest possible time. However, the downside of AMP is that rather than the content sitting on your own websites domain, it sits on a Google domain, for example [Google.com/amp/yourcontent](https://www.google.com/amp/yourcontent). This means that you will see little **overall SEO benefit to creating content using AMP**.

Finally, we look at **voice search**. It's unquestionable that voice search is rising, with recent figures showing that there are over 500 million assistant-enabled devices worldwide, with one billion voice searches being made every month. Voice has already proven to be a successful addition to businesses in sectors such as eCommerce, however we are yet to see it make any sort of impact in other areas such as recruitment. With



that said, Google assistant in particular is becoming more human, with a demonstration at the I/O conference in 2018 showing how the Assistant can book appointments at business such as restaurants, hairdressers or dentists. The Assistant interacted seamlessly with humans, having multi-step conversations over the phone, and this raises the question of whether Google Assistant could potentially book activities such as phone interviews, face-to-face interviews, or even negotiate job offers in the future. At present, it is difficult to optimise for voice search, as there is still very little information within the industry on how to do so. However, we would recommend that content is written in a way in which it would be spoken and using semantic search in order to stand the best chance of your content being picked up by the voice search algorithms.

## **Top Tips for SEO:**

### **Focus on Local**

Local search is an important part of the mix for recruitment companies, mainly as larger ones are likely to have multiple office locations, and smaller, independent ones trying to compete with well-established companies in the sector. Even if you are a smaller independent business, you stand a good chance of ranking for more localised terms if you focus your efforts on building your profile in the area you're situated in, as many larger groups and job portals will focus solely on the keywords which drive the most traffic.

### **Write unique content**

It sounds like an obvious point, but writing unique content can really benefit your business' website. Recruitment agencies often get a bad reputation, so why not produce some content which demonstrates your commitment to doing things differently? Also, at job listing level, refrain from using cliches and describing a job in the same way every other recruiter would. "An exciting opportunity within a growing business" is just one example of this.

Alternatively, using a social listening tool and writing content based on the results is a great way of ensuring that you are producing content which your audience is almost guaranteed to engage with.

### **Look at long-tail keywords**

Long tail keywords are still neglected by a lot of businesses, and not just in the recruitment sector. However, if someone searches "marketing jobs in Halifax", as an independent recruiter specialising in the sector and within the location, you are more likely to have a chance of ranking against the likes of Michael Page and Hays, as the search term is much more specific than 'jobs in West Yorkshire' for example. These longer-tail key phrases often have fewer people searching for them, but they have a high level of intent, as they know exactly what they are looking for.



## SEO Checklist:

Issue	Description	Checked?
Page Titles	Has every page got a unique title? Is the title the correct length?	
Meta Descriptions	Has every page got a unique meta description? Is it the correct length?	
Header Tags	Have you made use of header tags?	
Images	Are all of your images correctly optimised? Do they have ALT tags?	
URL Structure	Are your URLs structured correctly? Does it contain keywords you want to be found for? Are there any elements of punctuation which shouldn't be in there?	
Robots.txt	Ensure that your robots.txt contains all of the correct information regarding pages you don't want indexing, and submit it to Google Search Console.	
Canonicals	Do you have rel=canonical tags in place? Failure to do so may result in a penalty for duplicate content.	
404 Pages	Are your 404 error pages constructed properly? Do they follow the same structure as your main pages? Do they contain links back to other pages such as the Home page?	
SSL Certificate	Have you got an SSL certificate in place? Without one, your website may not be supported in certain browsers, e.g. Chrome.	
Redirects	Ensure that any 302 redirects are changed to 301 redirects, as these will pass the vast majority of SEO authority on to the new page.	
Backlink profile checked?	Have you checked your backlink profile? Use a tool such as Majestic or Ahrefs to download a list of all the domains with links back to your website.	
Disavow File	Once you have checked your backlink profile, put the domains of the websites you don't want linking back to your site in to a .txt file, and upload it to Google Search Console's Disavow tool.	



<b>Issue</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Checked?</b>
<b>Google Analytics</b>	A free tool from Google, Analytics allows you to track the number of visitors your site is receiving, where it is coming from, the pages which are most popular and bounce rate, along with many other important metrics.	
<b>Google Search Console</b>	Search Console is a free tool provided by Google to webmasters. With Search Console, you can get data and feedback on how your site is performing. Similarly to Analytics, every website should be making use of Search Console.	
<b>Bing Webmaster Tools</b>	Bing's Webmaster Tools is very similar to Google's Search Console, except it is specifically for Bing, the Microsoft-powered search engine.	
<b>Google My Business</b>	Ensure you have verified your Google My Business page, and that all of the information on it is up to date. Your business name, address, phone number, main email, hours and website should be standard across the web.	
<b>Sitemap</b>	An XML sitemap helps search engines understand the structure of your site and find all the pages on your site that you want to be indexed. Ensure you submit one to Google by using Search Console.	
<b>Speed Test</b>	Ensure your site has a fast page speed. Search engines look favourably on sites which provide a good user experience, and a slow load speed will increase your bounce rate, which in turn has an effect on search rankings.	
<b>Mobile Friendly Test</b>	Have you carried out a mobile-friendly test? Use Google's free tool to test how responsive your site is on mobile devices.	



## Paid Media

### Focus on Local

Misunderstood by many, **Paid Media** is a great way to drive traffic and increase the number of leads your business is receiving. Of course, there are many different aspects of Paid Media for you to consider, including **paid search, retargeting, display advertising** and **paid social media**.

*“Paid Media is a great way to generate leads, without having to rely on your ranking within the SERPs. Unlike organic search, Paid Media means that you pay a fee to appear higher for certain search terms. The vast majority of Paid Media is based on a cost-per-click basis, meaning you only pay when someone clicks on your advert.”*

Firstly, let us explore the two primary platforms for Paid Media, those being **Google AdWords** and **Bing Ads**. Google AdWords is by far the most popular platform with millions of active accounts worldwide. This is unsurprising, with Google providing the most popular search engine, meaning a far **greater potential audience** than its main rival Bing. Where Bing perhaps the advantage though is as a result of the lower number of users, the **cost per click (CPC) of a keyword in Bing is typically lower** than it would be on the AdWords platform. Many businesses choose to use both platforms to ensure maximum exposure for their Paid Media campaigns, however, if identical **Ad Groups** and **Keywords** are used, it would be worth analysing these on a regular basis to ensure that you are achieving the maximum number of conversions for as low a cost as possible.

One aspect of both AdWords and Bing Ads which is beneficial to advertisers in the recruitment sector is the ability to **create custom audiences** depending on your target demographic. For example, you may have multiple offices, meaning you may want to deliver adverts to people looking for jobs in the area nearest to a particular location in order to drive traffic to it, either in the form of web traffic, leads generated or even physical footfall. Using **geo-targeting**, an advertiser is able to serve ads to their audience **based on their location**, and exclude people who are searching for the same terms but who aren't within the chosen radius. For example, an office in Leeds may choose to serve an advert to Leeds and within a 10 mile radius, to people searching for 'finance jobs'. That advert would only be shown to people looking for that or a similar term, depending on whether the keywords were exact match or broad match, within that radius. A user who searched 'finance jobs' located in York or Harrogate, would not be shown the advert.

In addition to geo-targeting, it is also possible to serve ads to users based on the **device** they are using to conduct the search. This allows you to ensure that you are showing your ads to your audience on



the device on which they are most likely to be using at the time. For example, you may want to **target Candidate (not actively looking)**, and you know through your persona research that they are **active on their mobile devices** on their commute, typically between 7am and 9am, and again between 5pm and 7pm.

Another avenue to consider is **Display Advertising**. Although this method tends not to deliver as high a conversion rate as paid search, it can deliver **high volumes of traffic**. Display is also a great way of generating brand awareness; with a traditional PPC advert appearing in the **SERPs**, users have to read the text and then click through to learn more about the business, whereas with a display advert, they are branded and often combined with an offer so a user can gather information on your brand with a quick glance. As with paid search, it is also possible to **create specific parameters** for them, so that you can control the types of website on which they appear, where the user is geographically and which demographic the user sits in (e.g. male, 25 - 34).

In our experience, we have found that Display Advertising is not commonly used in the recruitment sector, which may be as a result of its reasonably **low return on investment**, however it could form an important part of a brand awareness campaign or even as part of a retargeting effort.

Finally, we take a look at **paid social media advertising**. Paid or 'Sponsored' posts on social media are a great way of reaching your audience, particularly if your persona spends a lot of time on social platforms.

**LinkedIn Advertising** is by far the superior method for recruiters when it comes to paid social advertisements. By allowing users to serve adverts to individuals based on location, job title and the industry they work in, LinkedIn is a great platform, particularly for targeting Candidates.

Facebook Advertising is one platform for recruitment companies to reach their target audience. With the ever-changing algorithm, organic content on Facebook, although still important, is not as influential as it once was, and so many businesses are turning to Facebook Advertising to help them reach their target audience. With the ability to efficiently target ads, which are tailored to specific target audiences, you ensure that only people you want to see your adverts do so.

By using Facebook's Pixel, which is a small piece of code which can be embedded onto your website, you can also retarget website visitors on the social media channel by serving ads specifically based on what they have viewed on your website. For example, if Fred Smith visits your website as he is looking at a Marketing Manager job in Sheffield, he will see an advert for exactly that role on his news feed, if you are



running a retargeting campaign.

The same could be said if a business user visited a 'work with us' page and then bounced without filling in the contact form, you could then keep it fresh in their minds by serving them adverts reminding them about your service offering, while they browse Facebook.

There is a huge amount of potential for recruitment firms to capitalise on LinkedIn and Facebook Advertising, with both being generally cheaper than traditional Paid Media in the form of AdWords campaigns, and if you get it right, it has the ability to generate some impressive results.

## **Top Tips for Paid Media:**

### **Know where your audience are:**

As we've previously alluded to, knowing your audience and where they spend their time online is not only absolutely vital to the success of your overall marketing activity, but specifically to your Paid Media campaigns. For example, are you targeting candidates who are proactively looking for a new role, and are regularly active on social media, or are you targeting another persona such as 'The Small Business', who are looking for help with their recruitment issues and using search engines such as Google and Bing.

### **Select niche keywords:**

Keywords play a key part in the success of a paid search campaign. The competition level for keywords in the recruitment sector is extremely high, with multiple agencies bidding on the same keywords, which in turn inflates the cost per click. By turning your attentions to more niche keywords and keeping on top of your negative keywords you will likely have greater success for less cost than bidding on generic job and recruitment terms.

### **Get your landing page right:**

Your landing pages can make or break a campaign. Not only does it have to bear overall relevance to your ads, but the text and imagery on it also have to demonstrate benefits and a clear USP to the user, particularly in such a competitive sector.



## Paid Media Checklist:

Issue	Description	Checked?
Conversion Tracking	Are your conversions being tracked correctly?	
Targeting	Are your campaigns targeting the right audience? Are your ads focused on the right location? Are you targeting the correct devices?	
Ad Groups	Your Ad Groups should be structured in a logical fashion, which means grouping relevant keywords together.	
Ad Extensions	Ad extensions mean that advertisers can complement their PPC ads with additional text. Sitelinks, Location, Call, and Review are all examples of Extensions which you can use to enhance your ad.	
Keyword Match Types	There are four types of keyword matches; broad keyword match, modified broad match, phrase match type, exact match type. Ensure that your ads are using the correct one, depending on your campaign goals.	
Negative Keywords	“Negative keywords let you exclude search terms from your campaigns and help you focus on only the keywords that matter to your customers.” Ensure that you have included negative keywords in your campaigns, otherwise you may end up paying to appear in searches which aren't relevant to you!	
Budget	Budget is absolutely key to the success of your paid media campaigns. You need to ensure that your budget is correctly allocated, that funds are available from your chosen payment method, and that you're not spending money bidding on terms which aren't relevant.	
Ad Copy	Is your ad copy relevant to the search term/keyword for which you want to appear?	
Landing Page	Your landing page must be relevant to your advert. Ensure you have linked the correct landing page for each advert or ad group.	



## Social Media

Similarly to Paid Media, **Social Media** is often misunderstood and even misused by businesses, particularly within the recruitment industry. Everyone agrees that you **should** be on social media platforms such as **Facebook** and **Twitter**, but it's rare to find a business who knows **why** they should be on them, other than the classic 'everyone else is on there' reason.

*“Social Media can be used in a number of ways, from building an audience of potential customers and engaging in conversation with them, to retargeting visitors to your website who haven't completed a predetermined goal. Unlike SEO, you are not reliant on search rankings, and unlike Paid Media, you don't always have to pay to get your content seen, but it can still be used to generate leads.”*

Having a strong social presence can help you attract and engage with your target audience, through the sharing of blogs, promotional material, professional imagery and influencer marketing. Any activity should strongly reinforce your brand message and have a clear purpose.

One aspect to remember when it comes to social media is that a 'one size fits all' approach simply doesn't work, as each platform has its different audiences, and their algorithms work differently in terms of how content is shown to the user base. For example, content you post on Twitter, which has an informal audience, may not be relevant to your audience on LinkedIn, which is a business to business platform designed for professional networking. Alternatively, one platform may not be relevant to your target audience.

### Facebook

Facebook is seen as a 'staple' platform for most brands. However, from an organic point of view - the posting of statuses, photos and videos - it tends to generate very little in the way of return on investment, and is better used for showing a human side to your business, and providing knowledge to your audience. This is because the audience you are talking to have already heard of the brand, hence why they have already liked your page. They may have already had previous contact with you, either as a candidate or a hiring manager, and then subsequently liked the page. However, as we have previously mentioned, Facebook Advertising provides you with an opportunity to engage with people in your target audience who haven't yet liked your page. We would definitely recommend using Facebook ads as part of your overall strategy.



## Twitter

Twitter is seen as the 'voice' of a brand, with businesses becoming increasingly active on the platform to try and engage with their audience on a more personal level. Although it is unlikely to generate leads, it is a good platform to post content such as reviews, blog posts and to talk to customers directly, dealing with any quick queries.

Twitter is about being '**of the moment**' and with this in mind, it's important to think about the time users are online using the platform. Typically, during the week, users are on first thing in the morning, during a commute, and at home in the evening, which makes these the prime times for posting content.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a platform which should undoubtedly be used by companies in the recruitment sector. It's essentially is a huge database for recruiters, with users having the ability to change a setting on their account to send out signals to recruiters which indicate that they are open to new opportunities. It's also a convenient way in which for recruiters to acquire the names of hiring managers at various companies, which makes contacting them significantly easier.

## Instagram

Again, Instagram is unlikely to have a direct effect on the number of leads you receive, however with **over a billion users**, it could still be a great place to appeal to one or more of your personas. It's still relatively **underused by recruitment companies**, but with this in mind, this presents an opportunity for recruiters to demonstrate that they have a personality. One slight drawback however, is that Instagram does not yet allow links to be posted with an image, which means users can't visit a job listing straight from the platform for example.

## Top tips for Social Media:

### Post unique content:

With social media, it's very easy to churn the same content over and over. This is likely to bore your audience, result in little to no engagement, and possibly even lead to them unfollowing you. **Do your research** into what is being talked about; keeping your posts **topical** will ensure that they are current and that they are **of interest** to your target audience.



### Choose the right hashtag:

Ensuring that you **research hashtags** is also essential for your success on social media. Why are you 'hashtagging' that particular word? Is it searched for on a regular basis? Is there a lot of content already out there using this hashtag? Are you hijacking it? Also, consider the relevant hashtags to the post; for example, if it is a competition, use '#win', '#competition', and '#giveaway'. There are a lot of tools out there to help you analyse this, with ['Hashtagify'](#) being one of the best known.

### Get your timing right:

We've already alluded to it in the Twitter section, but consider the **time** at which you are posting your content. The vast majority of your audience will find themselves **at work between 9am and 5pm**, so target them when they are most active such as when they **wake up, when they're commuting, or in the evenings** when they are scrolling through their social media channels while watching TV. This may vary slightly however, depending on the platform.

### Social Media Checklist:

Issue	Description	Checked?
Profile & Header Images	Do your display images fit correctly? Using the wrong size image can reflect poorly on your business.	
Profile Information	Is your profile complete? Does it have all the necessary information such as website URL, email, address, phone number etc.	
Username	Ensure you are using a username which is relevant to your business, such as your brand/company name.	
Links	Are the links included in your post pointing to the correct page? Are the links too long? - Consider using a link shortener such as Bitly.	
Hashtags	Have you done research into relevant hashtags being used? Take a look at any competitors and see what they are doing?	
Content Calendar	Have you created a content calendar so you know what you are posting and when?	
Metrics	Have you decided on what metrics are most important for the activity you are undertaking?	



Issue	Description	Checked?
Content	Is the tone and style of your content right for the platform? Is the content you are posting relevant to your audience on that platform?	
Identify a primary platform	Identify which platform is most appropriate for your business. In the recruitment industry, this is likely to be Twitter and Facebook, as this is where a vast majority of your target audience is.	

## Content Marketing & PR

Content Marketing and PR is a great way to build your reputation within the industry and create familiarity with your target audience. But what is 'content marketing'?

Content Marketing, as defined by the **Content Marketing Institute** is:

*“Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”*

Having seen a surge in popularity over the last few years, 'content marketing' is now very much one of the industry 'buzzwords'. Content Marketing can take many different forms, including:

- **Blog Content**
- **Infographics**
- **Interactive Assets**
- **Newsletters**
- **eBooks**

By producing content marketing, your business becomes a **credible, authoritative source** for information on topics which are of interest to your audience. This means that you're more likely to turn members of that **audience into customers**, by **strengthening the relationships** with them and **growing your active customer base**. In the recruitment industry, as we've mentioned previously in this paper, the strength of



the relationships between your business and your audience is absolutely vital, as the whole recruitment process is **built on trust**.

The ultimate goal for your content marketing activity is to **move your audience along the journey to your end goal**, from increasing awareness about your business, to generating that initial contact, right through to the acceptance of a job offer. By creating content which is suitable for the persona you are targeting, you are more likely to be able to guide them through the sales cycle.

For example, a Candidate B persona may be browsing current opportunities with little intent to apply, and so they need to be persuaded to give their contact details to you, so that you can contact them about their situation. Or maybe a Small Business may be considering using a recruitment agency, but they need reassurances about the process and the benefits of using one, before going ahead and signing on with one. Content can be created to suit any scenario such as this.

Of course, the issue with content is that it may become **dated and less relevant over time**, particularly in the recruitment sector, with variables such as salaries, job roles, contacts at the business all potentially changing on a regular basis. With this in mind, it's good to create content which will be **'evergreen'**, which means it will be relevant and accurate almost indefinitely.

However, **seasonal** content is also important, particularly as the recruitment industry has a clearly defined 'selling season' at the start of every year. **Use content to your advantage**; if you know selling season is approaching, start producing content aimed at helping people to choose the right recruitment agency to fit their needs.

Once you've created a content marketing piece, whether it's a blog or interactive asset, you need to ensure that it is **amplified** in order to reach the target audience. This can happen in a variety of ways, from publishing on your **own social media channels**, to gaining coverage on third-party websites such as **newspapers** and **magazines**. This leads us nicely on to PR. But again, what is it?

PR, or Public Relations, is defined by the **Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)** as:

*"...the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics."*



Building associations with trusted sources is a key part of ensuring that your marketing campaigns are successful, both in terms of maximising your potential audience and getting SEO benefits. For example, not only would you benefit as business by having your content picked up by an online newspaper because of the number of people who read it, but it may also contain a link back to your site. As we looked at in the SEO section, links back from relevant and authoritative sources are essential to helping your website rank in the SERPs.

Journalists are always looking for content. They have to have it in order to keep the publication they're working for relevant and fresh. With this in mind, it's often beneficial to contact a journalist about your content marketing piece at an individual level, rather than go through an 'info@newspaper.com' type email address. Of course, you don't have to stick to content you've already created either; you could potentially pitch an idea to them based on a topic which you feel your business would be seen as an authority on.

Many people undervalue PR as an approach, and some even ignore it completely, especially within SEO agencies. Similarly, some PR agencies can have a more traditional approach and not understand the value of a link or brand citation within the pieces on which they are working. This is why it is often beneficial to work with an integrated agency who is able to combine multiple approaches in order to deliver the best possible results.

## **Email Marketing**

Email Marketing forms a vital part of the conversion process, as it helps keep your audience engaged even after they have left your website.

*“Email marketing provides an opportunity for brands to keep in contact with their target audience, by sending them relevant content, with the long-term aim of converting the end user into a customer.”*

The success of your email marketing campaigns can be measured in a number of ways, including how many people opened the email (open rate) and how many people clicked on content within the email (click-through rate).

Recent statistics suggest that you should expect to see an open rate of around 19% in the recruitment sector, with a click through rate (CTR) of around 1.8%. This is a considerably lower CTR than other industries such as restaurants or health & beauty, but with recruitment, the value of the click is much



higher later on in the cycle.

There are a number of email marketing platforms available to you, including MailChimp, Drip and ActiveCampaign, with each one bringing different benefits. However, they will all be able to track the engagement levels of the emails you send.

One of the key aspects to email marketing is to ensure that the campaign is designed for mobile. The vast majority of people now open their emails on a mobile device, with the iPhone the primary medium, followed by Gmail, then iPad. If your email takes too long to open or is formatted wrong for these devices, then you will likely find that recipients unsubscribe from the list or disengage from your brand altogether.

Also, similarly to considering when you are posting on social media, take into account the time you are sending out your email campaigns. This can make or break the success of the campaign, with studies suggesting that Tuesdays and Thursdays are the best days to be sending out emails to your database.

With this in mind, email marketing can also fall into the category of marketing automation and lead warming. Using email marketing in this way, as part of ongoing interaction with the end user, has been very successful for a number of major recruitment companies and job portals. Automation can be used to a brand's advantage by delivering content such as specific landing pages, surveys and webinars, to their target audience, which keeps leads 'warm', which makes them easier to convert further along the sales cycle.

## **Web Design, Development & User Experience (UX)**

The overall user experience is key to getting visitors to your site to complete your predetermined goals, whether that's to submit a CV, book a phone interview or arrange a face-to-face interview. If a user has a poor experience of your website, they are unlikely to return to it, meaning in a potential customer lost.

There are a number of reasons why a user may have a poor experience:

### **Slow Load Speed**

Slow load speed is one of the primary factors in why a user bounces from a website, and statistics show that 40% of people will abandon a page which takes three or more seconds to load. By making basic changes such as minimizing HTTP requests, using asynchronous loading for CSS and JavaScript files, reducing your server response time and reducing the size of image files on your site, you will make your website significantly faster.



### **Stock Imagery**

Believe it or not, having stock imagery taken from online image libraries is a massive turn-off to a user as it shows that the brand behind the website doesn't see them as an individual as the content isn't tailored towards them.

### **Overly Complex**

If you're on a journey in your car, you program the sat nav, and it takes you from point A to point B by the quickest possible route, with no additional detours. This is exactly how your website should work.

Unfortunately, some designers make websites overly complex in a bid to try and be creative. They pile on additional design elements at the expense of usability, having an adverse effect on the overall user experience. With this in mind, it's important that you make information easily accessible, with no 'detours'.

### **Boring or irrelevant content**

Nobody likes a boring website which is full of irrelevant or outdated content. Avoid using technical jargon wherever possible as this is likely to put users off, and try and avoid recruitment industry cliches such as 'exciting opportunity', 'growing company' and 'industry leading'.

### **Too 'Salesy'**

It is important that you clearly signpost your users throughout their journey, but avoid being overly salesy in your tone of voice and calls to action. Ensuring that you're not overwhelming users with a sales pitch throughout your site will mean that they will enjoy the experience of being on your website.

## **Top Tips for Web Design, Development & User Experience:**

### **Usability and function over design:**

The content around individual job listing is important and so it must have 'room to breathe'.

### **Focus on your user:**

The overall journey and functionality of your website must be intuitive and it must flow smoothly. This is



particularly important to help those users which aren't as tech savvy as others reach the end goal.

### **Calls to Action:**

Calls-to-action (CTA's) are very important as they encourage users to take action towards the goals which you want them to complete. However, recruitment websites differ from an eCommerce website, which have clear calls to action such as 'buy now' and 'add to wishlist'. With a recruitment website, CTA's must be clear to the user; people need to know what to do, how to contact you and how to apply for a job.

## **Which works best?**

In short, there's simply no singular correct answer as to which approach or technique works best, as each company within the sector is different, with their audience personas slightly different, and each will have their own individual goals and objectives.

However, we would strongly recommend that a 'full service' approach is the best one to take.

## **Case Study: Robert Half**

### **The Client:**

Robert Half are one of the world's leading recruitment agencies, specialising in the technical and financial sectors. They have 400 offices across the globe, with their UK operation being based in London's iconic 'The Shard'.

### **The Brief:**

We were initially approached by Robert Half with a view to improving their content marketing output across their social media channels. We were invited to their offices in The Shard for a full day of on-boarding to ensure that we had an in-depth understanding of all aspects of their branding, as it was vital that we followed their clearly defined and well established brand, and that we used it consistently across all communication platforms.

We were also approached with the aim of devising a strategy to drive downloads of their Salary Guide using social media channels. Published annually, the Robert Half Salary Guide is an essential asset for employers and employees, providing information to employees on the salary and packages they should expect based on their skills and experience, while also keeping employers informed of the job market and what they will need to offer to attract and retain best staff.

### **Our Strategy:**

Firstly, we developed a strategy which comprised of a mix of organic and paid posts across social



media channels to promote Robert Half's knowledge and expertise. The content we created included a number of rich assets such as animations, images, infographics and other downloadable assets which were developed in accordance with Robert Half's brand identity. This content was then planned into a content calendar, which was created while also taking Robert Half's marketing KPIs into account. The performance of the content, specifically the engagement it was delivering, was constantly measured, recorded and reported on, so that the content marketing strategy remained agile and responsive.

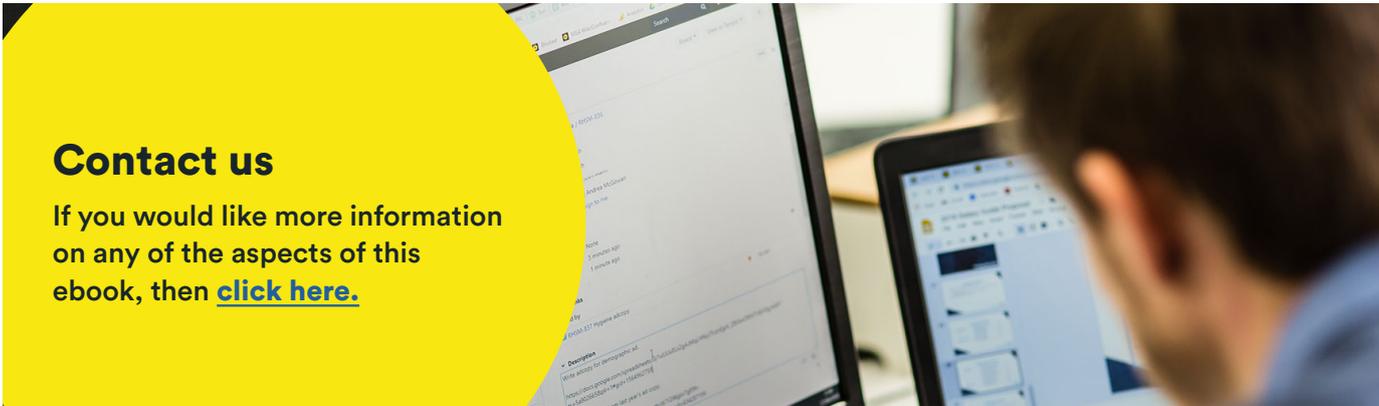
Meanwhile, with the Salary Guide, we created a campaign based on the hashtag #KnowYourValue. The idea behind this was simple; we wanted people to know both their financial value to the businesses they were working for, and whether they were valued by the business enough to be paid a salary which is suitable to their skills, knowledge and experience.

We produced imagery for the campaign which followed four primary themes. These were animated call-to-action posts aimed at encouraging downloads of the Salary Guide, infographics which highlighted the findings of the research and engagement posts targeted towards employees and employers. Using a combination of organic and sponsored posts on LinkedIn and Facebook, and carefully selecting the relevant audiences using the respective medium's advertising platform, we began publishing the content.

#### **The Results:**

As a result of our content marketing and social media strategy, engagement across Robert Half's social media channels increased by over 600% year-on-year, with conversions from social media increasing by more than 170%.

Similarly, the #KnowYourValue was also incredibly successful. Within the first three months, there were over 1000 high-value downloads of the Salary Guide, and as a result of this success, Robert Half decided to roll the campaign out across other offices globally.



## **Contact us**

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