



# The Kayo Digital Review.

Reviewing the South East's fastest  
growing companies online

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# Who is Kayo Digital?

Kayo Digital is a Digital Partner to companies looking to grow and innovate. We're a team of specialists that complement each other and find solutions to clients' problems. Making real world change through technology.

We call our process, the '**KAYO Way**' way:



**Knowledge and connectivity**  
we understand the digital landscape and the latest technologies



**Strategic insights**  
We analyse your customers, your competitors, and your market to identify opportunities



**Apply clarity to the complex**  
We meet your objectives with an optimum technological solution



## “Our considered approach sets us apart”

We deliver bespoke digital marketing campaigns, build and maintain cutting edge websites and, software and mobile applications for clients, including:



Veolia



NHS



Three



Swale Heating



Berry Gardens



Parson's Nose

We can help your organisation develop a competitive advantage in the age of technological disruption.



# About the report.

The Sunday Times PwC Top Track 250 is a yearly leader board classifying the 250 fastest growing privately-owned companies in the UK. Our team reviewed the south-east's top companies to find out what they're doing online to increase their sales and reach. And highlight what they could be doing better.

We looked at the Top Track 250 results and compared them to the results from the last two years. We analysed 17 different touchpoints and have summarised our findings in this report.

The companies we reviewed are below:

Company	Sector	B2b/b2c
HSNF	Beauty and food products retailer	b2c
Burhill Group	Golf club and leisure venue operator	b2c
G2V Recruitment Group	Recruitment	b2b
Croud	Digital Agency	b2b
Technoworld	Online Computer retailer	b2c
Ardent Hire Solutions	Plant hire and sale	b2b
Panorama Antennas	Antenna Manufacture	b2b
CH&Co Group	Catering group	b2b
Europe Worldwide Group	Logistics provider	b2b
One Retail Group	Online retailer	b2c
Prime Group	IT and engineer consultancy	b2b
Revolution Beauty	Beauty products retailer	b2c
Xceptor	Automation software	b2b
Disguise	Live event technology provider	b2b
Goodstuff	Media agency	b2b
GPS Marine	Marine services provider	b2b
Ticketeer	Bus ticketing and software	b2b
ustwo	Digital product and games studio	b2b
Sabio	Contact centre technology provider	b2b
Sebeti Wain Aerospace	Aircraft furnishings manufacturer	b2b
Editec	Gambling technology and consultancy	b2b
Kebbell Homes	Property Developer	b2b

Lyle & Scott	Fashion	b2c
Aspen Pumps	Pump manufacturing	b2b
Nexus Underwriting	Underwriting agency	b2b
Pelbon Rose	Office design and construction	b2b
Smart Garden Products	Garden products supplier	b2c
Excel Redstone	IT infrastructure provider	b2b
Peter Harrington	Rare book seller	b2c
Pets Corner	Pet food and accessories retailer	b2c
Atlas FM	Cleaning & security services	b2b
ACC Aviation	Aviation services provider	b2b
The&Partnership	Marketing communications group	b2b
Ground Control	Outdoor services provider	b2b
Canagan	Pet food supplier	b2c
Global Merchandising	Merchandise supplier	b2b
Real Digital International	Communication and packaging services	b2b
Simarco	Logistics services provider	b2b

*\*We should mention that Ed Sheeran is one of the top companies in the Top Track 250. However, since he doesn't fit into the typical type of business we work with, we decided not to include his company in our review. (Sorry, Ed!)\**

## Making sure analysis was consistent

To ensure the data was objectively reviewed, the review team did not collect it themselves. To avoid any bias the reviewing and scoring, companies' names were anonymised.

“The buyer journey is nothing more than a series of questions that must be answered.”

Analyst Firm IDC



# Contents.

THE KAYO DIGITAL REVIEW	1
WHO IS KAYO DIGITAL?	2
ABOUT THE REPORT	3
MAKING SURE ANALYSIS WAS CONSISTENT	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
METHODOLOGY	6
BREAKDOWN OF THE DATA REVIEWED	7
KEY OPPORTUNITIES HIGHLIGHTED	8
THREE YEARS ON AND EVERYTHING IS CHANGING!	9
TECH AND SOFTWARE INVESTED IN	10
AWARENESS	11
ENGAGEMENT	12
“BUSINESS LEADER QUOTE	13
SALES	13
KEY THING TO CHECK WITH YOUR OWN COMPANY	14
CONCLUSION	16



# Executive summary.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on how we live our lives and run our businesses. It's had a devastating effect on the world, but it has been a perfect storm for accelerating technological innovation. The rate of change throughout the business world has been unprecedented, estimated to have accelerated change by seven years (source: McKinsey).

Uncertainty is at an all-time high for many companies, but digital adoption continues rapidly. Businesses need to adjust accordingly, or risk being left behind by competitors who are already adapting their strategies faster than ever before.

The top growing companies have embraced the digital revolution. We observed that 18% of the companies we reviewed now include marketing automation on their website. Three years ago, none of the companies we reviewed were using such tools.

Marketing automation isn't the only change we've seen. We're starting to see trends emerge:

- ▶ 14% increase in companies producing videos;
- ▶ 45% more content creation; and
- ▶ 22% growth in companies using search engine optimisation to grow.

## Content creation

People work with people they know, like and trust. But, how do you get to know someone if you can't meet them in person? You get to know them online by seeing their content. The pandemic has accelerated the trend for companies to invest in their websites and content generation.

## Digital technology

The Top Track 250 companies are a glimpse into the future of small businesses. As technology becomes more accessible and affordable, the same tools once reserved for larger organisations, will also become commonplace for SMEs.

We predicted last year that Livechat, marketing automation, Click and Collect and data collection would grow in popularity. Our predictions for Livechat were wrong. Nevertheless, marketing automation and other technologies have continued to grow.

## Automation and personalisation

Automation and personalisation of the customer experience are essential to meeting customer expectations. We've seen 18% more than over the previous years of the Top Track 250 companies use software platforms to reach customers on multiple online channels. It's safe to say people will expect more relevant, helpful online experiences in the future.

## Paid advertising

Marketing automation technologies are increasing in use, and we predict that this trend will continue with some interesting twists. We expect to see a drop-off in online sales as people turn to the web less for commercial transactions. The online market will be more competitive and brands must shift focus towards other channels. With more competition and less organic sales, companies will need to turn to paid advertising to maintain their market share.

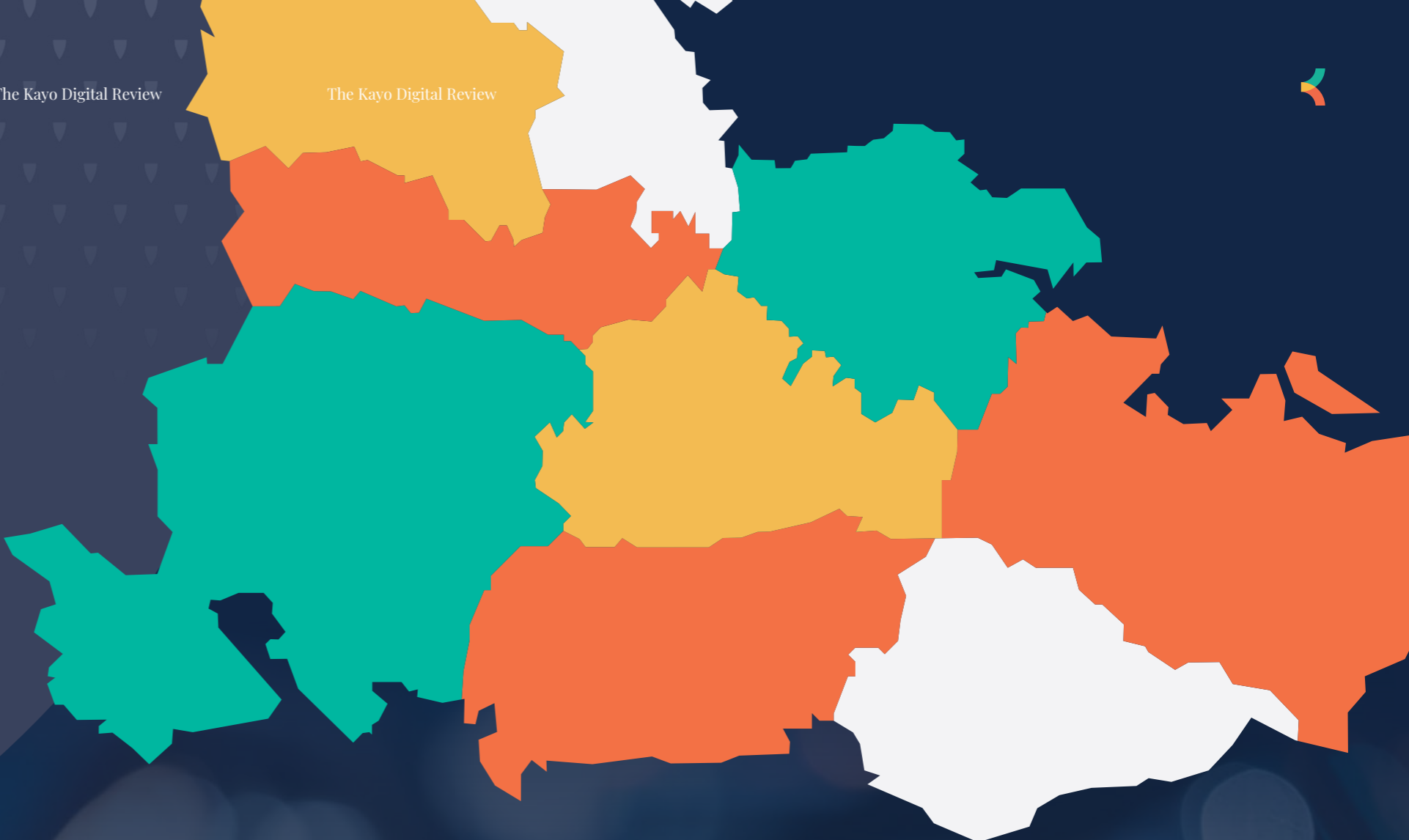
The complete set of changes we observed are detailed later in this document, but it's fair to say that three years of monitoring successful companies have shown us one thing: there's no slowing down!

# Methodology.


The criteria in this report reflect the path-to-purchase journey of a potential customer:

It also considers how the latest technologies and movements affect the market, reflecting changing trends and customer behaviours. The path-to-purchase model below is a helpful tool that helps us understand how the fastest-growing companies focus their digital activity. It emphasises customer impact.


*NB: tools used to collect data consisted of SEMrush, Google Lighthouse, Builtwith and Wappalyzer. All data was collected in January 2022.*




**Awareness**  
Awareness refers to the activity produced by a company that can influence a customer to think of the company once they need a product or service.



**Engagement**  
Engagement refers to how you communicate with your prospects and clients, nurturing them towards the point of sale.



**Sales**  
Sales describes the 'final straw' that enlists a sale.

## Breakdown of the data reviewed.

The fastest-growing companies were a good mix of company types, with 74% being Business to Business (B2B) and 26% Business to Consumer (B2C).

The companies are based in the south-east of England, defined as:

- ▶ London
- ▶ Berkshire
- ▶ Surrey
- ▶ Buckinghamshire
- ▶ Hampshire
- ▶ East and West Sussex
- ▶ Kent
- ▶ Oxfordshire

But the majority of companies we reviewed are based in London.



# Key opportunities highlighted.

The information gathered from our research was insightful and revealed three key opportunities:



## 18%

**Marketing automation has increased by 18% when compared with the previous year**

The top companies are increasingly using marketing automation software to help attract and engage with customers, using tools such as Hubspot and Marketo for marketing automation.

## 43%

**Content generation has increased by 43% in three years**

To stay on top of their game, the top companies produce and promote a lot of content. This can be anything from news articles, videos, and social media posts.

- One in three companies used a newsletter to engage with their audience and clients/customers.
- 100% of the Top 250 companies had an active social media presence

## 11%

**Paid advertising across the south-east companies decreased by 11%, when compared with the previous year**

We believe this decrease isn't a trend and that paid advertising will grow significantly in 2022.

A recent advertising report found that more advertisers lowered their budgets for audio, print and online outlets in the last quarter of 2021 than raised them. However, more were planning to increase budgets for video advertising (source: IPA).

# Three years on and everything is changing!

With three years' worth of data, it's clear that marketing changes are happening on the websites featured in the top 250 fastest-growing companies in the UK.

The table below highlights the differences between the groups of companies:

		2019 (MegaGrowth companies)	2020 (South East fastest growing companies)	2021 (South East fastest growing companies)	Difference
<b>Awareness</b>	% who have a social media presence	66%	96%	100%	44%
	% who regularly create & publish content	30%	66%	73%	43%
	% who use video marketing	36%	63%	50%	14%
	% who use basic SEO	28%	30%	50%	22%
	Average number of social media accounts	1.6	3.66	3.68	130%
<b>Engagement</b>	% who have an email newsletter	20%	22%	34%	14%
	% who use paid advertising	14%	32%	21%	7%
	% who have an external app	8%	28%	13%	5%
	% who use social proof	27%	46%	26%	-1%
<b>Sales</b>	% who have a CTA (call to action) on their website	42%	80%	97%	55%
	Have livechat on their site	6%	4%	5%	-1%
	% who have ecommerce functionality	14%	10%	16%	2%
<b>Tech</b>	% who are mobile optimised	79%	100%	100%	21%
	Average Google performance score (how fast web pages load)	33	28	27	-5%
	Average Google accessibility score	74	81	79	5
	Percentage that have the capability of more than one language	0%	34%	14%	14%
	% that use automation	0%	10%	18%	18%



# Investment in tech and software.

Technology continues to advance more quickly than ever before, but many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are slow to adopt new technology. The larger companies of the SME market are hesitant to change, even if it would benefit them. With the help of technology, companies can level the playing field and gain a competitive advantage.

## 5 key highlights to note for your business:

1. Marketing automation is becoming more popular as companies find ways to streamline, automate and measure marketing tasks so they can increase operational efficiency. The use of this technology has grown 18% just in two years.
2. The growth in apps has been minimal.
3. In 2021, Google announced that a website's accessibility is a key element when appearing in search results. However, the average website's accessibility hasn't changed in the last three years.
4. 16% of the companies use an enterprise content management system (CMS), such as Umbraco. WordPress continues to be the most popular CMS.
5. Website speed remains ignored. Site speed refers to how quickly a browser can load webpages. Most of the websites reviewed over the last three years load slowly. If your website's pages take a long time to load, you're more likely to lose your audience.

Considering accessibility could give your organisation an advantage over your competitors online.

“Longevity in this business is about being able to reinvent yourself or invent the future.”

Satya Nadella – Microsoft CEO



“It is not necessary to do extraordinary things to get extraordinary results.”

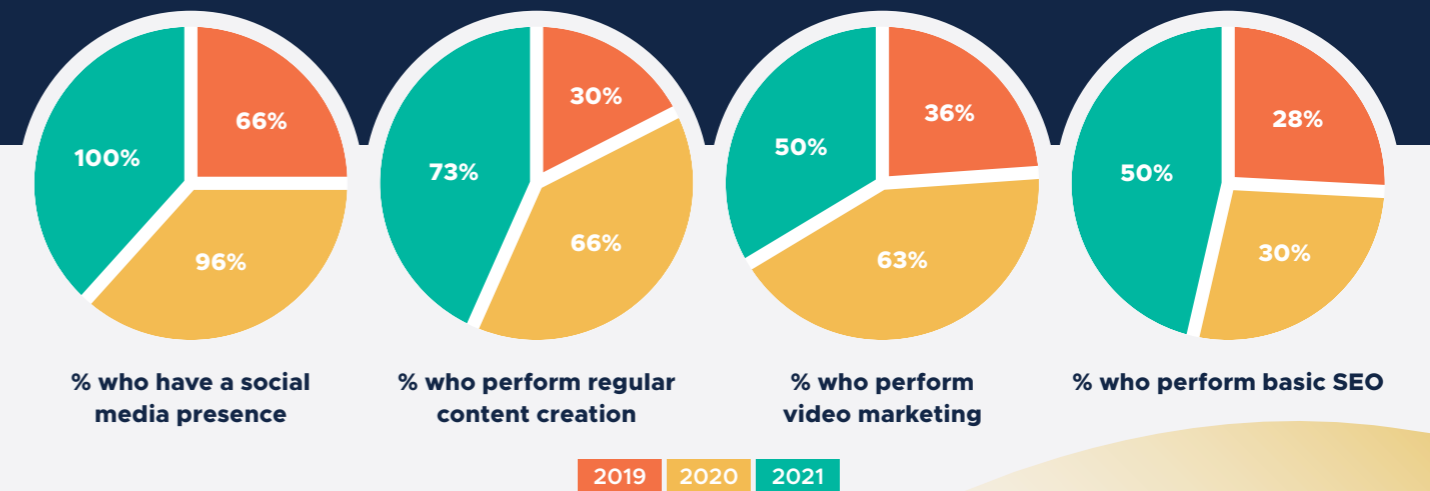
Warren Buffett

# Awareness.

Brand awareness measures of how well people know a brand and its products or services. In other words, it's a way to see how memorable and recognisable the brand is. Making sure that people recognise and remember your brand is vital in marketing. People are more likely to trust and engage with a brand they're familiar with.

## 5 key highlights to note for your business:

1. Companies listed in these awards have increased their content generation by 43% in three years. This could be in response to the fact that we rely more on digital content because of the pandemic.
2. Almost a quarter of the top companies' websites (22%) use SEO to help them appear in search engine results. Not just for their brand name but also for other keywords people might use to find them.
3. On average, each company had four social media profiles. LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were the most common. However, this might not represent all companies' results because 73% of our reviewed companies were B2B companies.
4. 100% of all companies had a social media presence.
5. 14% more companies are taking their content production to new heights with video. YouTube is one of the top social media outlets for these companies.



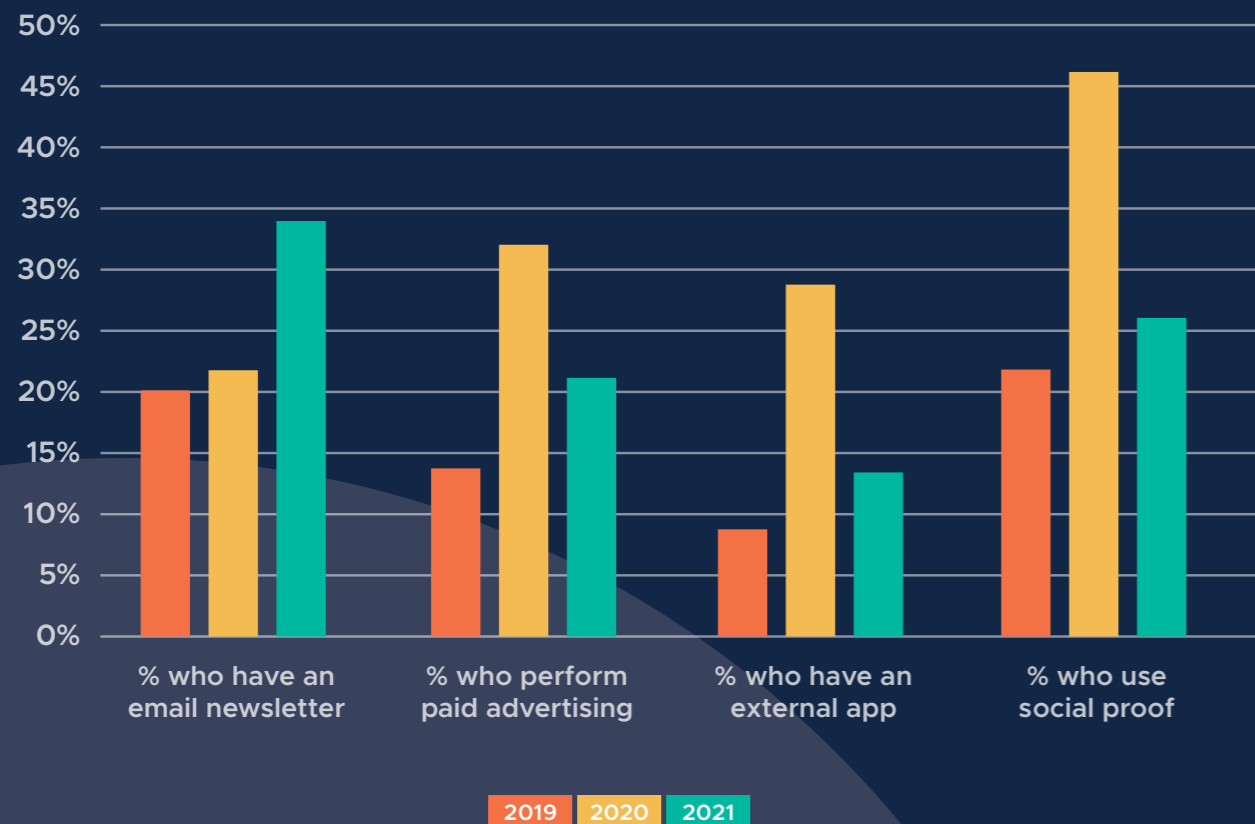
# Engagement.

Why should people care about your content? Why should they engage with your company?

To get people's attention, organisations need to show that they're experts in their sector. And have valuable content and services or products to offer. Companies need to promote themselves in an interesting and relevant way to their target audience.

## 5 key highlights to note for your business:

1. Our study found that the number of companies investing in paid advertising decreased by 11% from the previous year. We believe this isn't a trend. According to the IPA Bellwether Report for Q4 2021, UK companies revised their marketing budgets in the fourth quarter of 2021, marking a third successive quarter of expansion. The companies saw 7.3% growth in video and 4.5% growth in online advertising.
2. In 2019, the number of companies using newsletters to communicate with their customers increased by 20%. In 2021 this had grown to 34%.
3. At least 50% of the fastest-growing companies in the south-east had case studies and/or testimonials on their websites. The number of people reduced to 26% of the companies in 2021.
4. We thought more businesses would use apps last year, but this wasn't the case. Just 13% of companies had an app.
5. In 2021, there was a shift towards brand awareness more than the engagement element of marketing.



“What really decides consumers to buy or not to buy is the content of your advertising, not its form.”

David Ogilvy







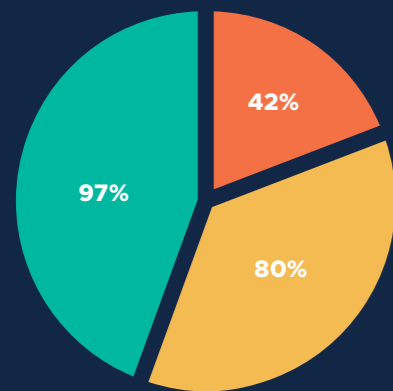
# Sales.

We encourage our clients to think of a website as a digital Business Development Manager (BDM). Suppose you compare the cost of hiring a human BDM, including salary, travel, holiday, and other expenses, to the cost of building a website. In that case, a website is a more cost-effective way to generate new business.

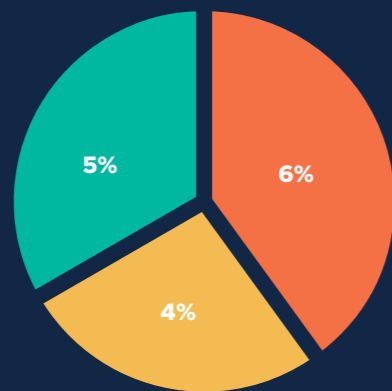
Sales on websites are changing fast with the addition of chatbots and personalisation. But a call to action (CTA) is still the main sales driver. A CTA is any device or feature designed to prompt an immediate response or encourage a purchase decision on a web page.

## 4 key highlights to note for your business:

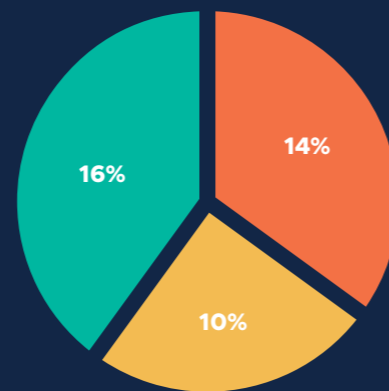
1. 97% of the fastest-growing companies' websites had CTAs. That's an increase of 55% compared with the previous two years.
2. The use of Livechat has remained low over the last three years. This could be because people negatively perceive talking to a "robot" online through live chat.
3. The eCommerce industry experienced a resurgence in 2021 because of the global pandemic. We've seen aggressive growth from companies that operate in this space.
4. In just one year, marketing automation has been gaining momentum, with use growing by 18% to help sales.



% who have a CTA on their website



Livechat



% who have ecommerce functionality

2019 2020 2021

# “It’s hard to find things that won’t sell online”

Jeff Bezos





# Use our checklist to audit your company's online presence.



The table below details the 16 points we reviewed for each FastTrack company. How would you rate your organisation's online activity on a scale of 1-5? 1 being low and 5 being high:

Item	1	2	3	4	5	What you do well	What you need to do/improve
Regularly active on relevant social media channels							
Regularly creates & publishes content							
Uses video marketing							
Has basic SEO							
Has an e-newsletter							
Uses paid advertising							
Has an app for the organisation's audience							
Uses social proof							
Has CTAs on company website							
Has live chat on the website							
Has ecommerce functionality							
Website is optimised for access via mobile devices							
Does the site load quickly?							
Is the website easily accessible to everyone?							
Does the website offer different language options (if relevant)?							
Use of marketing automation							



# Conclusion.

We hope you have found the report useful and can use it to help shape and grow your digital footprint.

Successful websites demonstrably produce more sales than even the most successful BDM and, traditionally, a BDM will cost a company considerably more in training, pensions, salary etc. than a successful website.

Is today the time you start to invest more into your online footprint to generate sales? We think yes. Especially with consumers' behaviour moving online because of COVID.

We also wanted to leave you with something to think about and a prediction.

Create content to answer consumer questions... not to target people. A little old hat to some I know but Mischa McInerney, Director of Marketing, at the Digital Marketing Institute believes that "consumers are choosing to interact with brands on their terms. What does that mean? Instead of brands going for the right message to the right audience, at the right time; it's probably going to be something like the right answer to the right question, at the right time."

We have seen a lot of success with this from our own clients and we believe this will continue.





# How we can help your business grow.

## Questions? Comments?

Kayo Digital is a Digital Partner to companies looking to grow and innovate, based in Sittingbourne Kent. We're a team of specialists that complement each other and find solutions to clients' problems. Making real world change through technology.

If you're looking to grow your business, let's have a chat about your challenges and initiatives. Give us a call today.

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## You're also welcome to contact one of the authors of this review directly:

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## Social Media.

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 [wearekayodigital](https://www.facebook.com/wearekayodigital)