



# WORKING TOGETHER

the TTI newsletter

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## TTI SHAREHOLDERS



## A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

“Hi everybody, well 4 July appeared to be the travel business’ first step back into the middle of some normality, with 2 metres now reduced to 1 where that is possible”. Tim Wright



*Tim Wright, Chairman*

At TTI we have really tried to keep members fully informed so that we can keep our members one step ahead. We have conducted 2 Zoom calls with our travel technology companies to discuss both government support, research funding initiatives and also reaching out to most of the other trade associations. Unless told otherwise we will take up the mantle of trade association for travel technology companies and continue to put points forward to government when appropriate.

We also replaced the summer forum, which was going to be held at our usual Holiday Inn venue, with an online Webinar. We decided to make this available to everybody who had an interest and actually got over twenty participants from overseas as well as many from the UK. The title was Strategies for Survival and Beyond.

We had five excellent speakers with some great questions from the participants. The 20 -minute virtual Coffee Break was also fun! With the overseas interest TTI has decided to offer special low-cost membership with a title of Basic Overseas Membership. A link to copies of the five presentations will be sent to TTI members only.

There were quite a few interesting points that were quoted in the conference. I highlight a few of them that caught my eye in case there is an interest.

- Expect financial bounce back in two years.
- If you train, staff might leave but if you don’t, they might stay!
- Have a financial contingency plan.
- Keep it simple.
- Plan ahead and be imaginative.

- Be brave and be ready.
- Play the long game.
- Take advantage of the new normal.
- Iterate, adapt and be flexible.

With the cancellation of the March Spring Conference we decided to combine it with the September Autumn Conference on 24 September. We are keeping the Let’s Get Emotional title for the September event. We have decided to make this another virtual online conference because of the understood reticence of people to meet physically at this stage.

I do hope your business is doing well in these difficult times please contact me if any help is needed.

### webinar

## SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING - 2020 AND BEYOND

Thursday 13 august - 11:00 to 12:00

With Google previewing new ways of ranking sites, based on how its algorithms perceive user experience and an ever-growing focus on content, where should brands be directing their efforts?

We will look at the current state of play and outline what the future may hold. And we'll provide some tips to help you prepare your digital experiences to compete and excel in 2020, and beyond!

speaker: Kier Humphreys, Head of Customer Experience, Sagittarius

[click this link to register on Eventbrite](#)



# LET'S GET EMOTIONAL

Autumn conference webinar 2020

Thursday 24 September 10:00 to 13:00

## Selling online is all about establishing an emotional connection with your customers.

Emotion is a powerful motivator. Positively appeal to a person's emotions and they will act as you need them to. This is the basis of just about all advertising from political campaigns to selling travel.

In advertising, traditionally the catchy slogan and the persuasive photograph were the prime emotional motivators. They are still in use. However, in our online era, a direct appeal to the individual based on their known characteristics has proven very successful. For example, in the recent UK Brexit referendum and subsequent elections, personal data was used extensively to tailor focused messages to the electorate based on a wide range of attributes.

Our personal data is readily available. We are constantly being tracked as we browse from website to website. Our social media profiles are available to be used to shape the messages put before us. Our online lives are under constant scrutiny. This is just a fact of modern life and, indeed, it is accepted by many as an aid to an easier way of living. It is very convenient if someone can offer you just the product you want based on what they know about you.

There are tools and techniques available that can help travel companies tap into the emotions of potential customers and raise the likelihood of catalysing a purchase. Some of these are based on data,

some are based on behavioural tracking, others seek to make focused use of social media. All can make the difference between a sale or a bounce as a potential customer goes elsewhere.

At this event, we will examine these tools and techniques. You will learn how they can be applied to your business. Attend TTI's Autumn conference webinar and Let's Get Emotional.

**Venue:**

At your home or office via Zoom

(Login details will be emailed to you prior to the event.)

## SPEAKERS

Richard Baker, Chief Commercial Officer  
**Inspiretec**

Katy Howell, Chief Executive Officer  
**Immediate Future**

Moshe Demri, Vice President Revenue  
**Optimove**

Cyril Puget, Sales and Marketing Director  
**myElefant a Sinch Company**

Eddy Swindell, CRO & Co-Founder  
**Fresh Relevance**

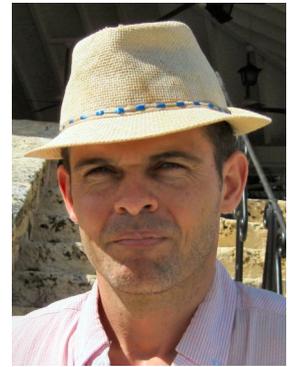
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# STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL AND BEYOND

## 2020 summer forum report



by Justyn Barnes

Covid-19 and its associated lockdown has had a devastating effect on the entire travel industry, with our customers unable to or simply not willing to travel. How soon the recovery will arrive and how early we will be able to get back to normality are unknowns. For now, companies have been putting business survival strategies in place but there is also a need to start planning for when we can move beyond the current crisis. To this end, TTI's Summer Forum, sponsored by 6point6, on 18 June brought together (virtually) a team of experts across a variety of different disciplines to offer guidance and inspiration for companies trying to navigate their way through the 'new normal'...

### TAMING THE BLACK SWAN

John Forgan, Director Business Strategy at Ward Williams Chartered Accountants and TTI's Company Secretary and Financial Controller, was the first to be called upon by forum moderator Paul Richer from his Zoom control desk. Forgan expounded on how best to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and to future-proof against similar 'Black Swan' events. (Black Swan theory was developed by Nassim Nicholas Taleb to explain the disproportionate role of rare events that are beyond the realm of normal expectations and how they are often inappropriately rationalised after the fact.)

Forgan admitted that the 'outlook is a bit bleak' and that 'travel will be slower to recover than other sectors'.

He highlighted Norwegian Cruise Line pushing their sailing restart date to October, Germany banning large events until October, Australia saying their borders are likely to stay closed until 2021 and IATA research showing that people are less willing to fly now than at the lockdown peak (there were 60% willing flyers in April, 45% now). One bright spot is that the UK domestic holiday industry is expecting a busy summer.

Businesses fail for a variety of reasons such as poor planning, leadership failure, lack of recognition that things have changed, inability to learn from failure and ignoring customers needs. Black Swan events magnify such weaknesses, and Forgan argued that you need to develop a future-proofing toolkit to mitigate the effects of such shocks. This toolkit should focus on six areas: customers, workforce, IT, cash and capital, tax and yourself –

Providing a high-quality experience for customers and a commitment to continuous improvement ('kaizan' as the Japanese call it) is 'imperative', he said. Also developing customer loyalty by responding to bad experiences (such as cancellations due to the pandemic) and making them positive.

Future-proofing the workforce requires strategic planning, matching resources with business objectives and training. Forgan also recommended forging links with universities and their students ('it can give you a different perspective'), and he echoed the

advice of business marketing guru Chris Brogan to 'surround yourself with brilliant people; you can't help but grow when that happens.'

Improving IT involves better training for people, tightening up processes (documented procedures, security, GDPR and developing contingency plans) and keeping technology up to date.

Forgan had a long list of ways of future-proofing cash and capital, and in these uncertain times, the general message was that 'a parsimonious approach' is key. He talked about seeking alternative (temporary) income streams, citing the example of a driving instructor he knows who is currently doing deliveries for Amazon instead. Making sure you take advantage of any government schemes available to you can also be a vital lifeline.

Forgan recommended regular meetings with your accountant to make sure they are aware of your plans so you can build tax implications into all your budgets and forecasts, and know and use all relevant tax incentives and reliefs.

Finally, lockdown is a good opportunity to future-proof yourself, whether it's executive development, using the time to think and research new opportunities, connecting with people virtually and expanding your network, getting a mentor or working on personal health and fitness.

For Forgan, the new normal business will require companies to be lean and flexible, able and willing to change, with more home-working, education and development. As business management expert Charles Handy put it, 'Your business might seem okay, but it might be the time to try something new'.

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EVENT SPONSOR  
**6POINT6**

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Richard Hayward, Founding Partner of Ward Williams, joined Forgan for the ensuing Q&A. Asked by moderator Paul Richer how long it will take the travel industry to recover from the pandemic and his most important bit of advice, Hayward admitted it was hard to say, but his best guess was 'two years'. He said that 'businesses need to do a rolling six-week cashflow forecast, but equally set alongside something more long term ... It does come down to scenario planning. There is still huge uncertainty, but that doesn't stop you sitting down and looking at possible scenarios and see how you might respond to them.'

**“There is still huge uncertainty, but that doesn't stop you sitting down and looking at possible scenarios and see how you might respond to them”**

'Be flexible and imaginative in your planning, not limited to things you've done in the past,' added Forgan.

### GREEN SHOOTS

The next speaker John Terry, Global Managing Director of TMS Talent was quick to admit that 'being a recruiter in travel is not the best place to be at the moment'. There was a 90% reduction in global recruitment activity in April and May. 'We actually started feeling the pinch in February and saw an almost 100% drop-off,' he said. Hope springs eternal though and he sees the first green shoots of a recovery appearing as companies look at a 1 July restart date – 'Because of the furlough scheme, a lot of companies went into hibernation so we may see some hiring in July.'

From his conversations with TMS's offices in Australia, New Zealand and the UK, he sees some good and bad signs. 'There has been an uptick in domestic travel in the UK, so we may see upstaffing in those areas ... and also dealing with ultra-high-net-worth customers where money is no object and they have their own private jet.'

Terry outlined what he expected to be the new normal in travel recruitment post Covid-19. 'First and foremost,

focus on flexibility,' he said. 'Be adaptable to the current conditions and open to change.'

Embracing technology is also key, and looking at how we can replicate the office environment with people working more from home. "In remote onboarding, making someone feel part of your team is so important," he said, but noting that 'work from the office is the new work from home, with people excited about the one day they can in the office!'

While recruitment may not be top of most company's list of priorities right now, Terry does see opportunities, for

instance, in senior talent acquisition: 'I've seen this in various recessions: there are job losses, but it means there are some very talented people available'. And while the prospect of taking on full-time staff in such uncertain times may be unattractive, if you have a specific project that needs specialist workers, again, you might be able to get a much higher standard of person on a contact/temporary basis than at other times.

Terry pointed out that while business is quiet, it's the perfect time to

**“There has been an uptick in domestic travel in the UK, so we may see upstaffing in those areas”**

implement system upgrades that can be so disruptive at busier times, and to restructure and upskill the workforce. 'Do you have the right people in the right positions? It's a rare chance to step back and look at your business.'

In conclusion, Terry urged the delegates to 'Be ready! The brave out there could take this as an opportunity to coordinate the workforce both internally and externally so you are the company of choice when things kickstart again. While it's difficult, hopefully there are some green shoots

out there for us all.'

After his presentation, Terry was asked whether homeworking would become much more prevalent, now so many companies have seen the possibilities during lockdown. He noted that TMS have offices in Sydney and London, expensive cities, so employees often live in small apartments not that suitable for work. 'People's personal housing situations affect it. There are lot of people we work with who want to get back into the office; they miss that team interaction,' he said. 'I expect a more of a flexible working environment with hotdesking and mixture of work from home and office.'

### WEATHERING THE STORM

After the first virtual coffee break in the history of TTI conferences – which still involved the drinking of actual coffee, just in our own homes and minus the networking – it was time for a lively presentation by Paul Stephen, CEO of the Sagittarius Agency, on the subject of 'Online Marketing in Tough Times'. To remind us of pre-coronavirus days, Stephen used a photo of the conference room at the Holiday Inn, Kensington, where TTI forums are usually held, as his backdrop.

Stephen dug into the very latest statistics in search of hopeful signs for the travel industry, noting that while

flight traffic was down 93% at worst, that figure is now 73%. Year-on-year, traffic to websites is down 60%, 'but in the past two weeks, people are looking at websites again and they are spending money,' he said. 'The tide is turning.'

A cause for concern, though, has been the increasing number of angry social media posts, up 39% between mid-November and late February, due to cancellations and customers being given credit notes rather than refunds.

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Stephen highlighted Booking.com which reduced its total marketing spend by 28.6% to \$851m in the first quarter of this year and the company said in its latest earnings report that marketing outlay 'will remain significantly below 2019 levels for the remainder of 2020'. Meanwhile, Expedia's chairman Barry Diller recently said that his online travel agency would spend less than a \$1bn on advertising this year, down from \$5bn, while Airbnb last month suspended marketing completely.

Stephen identified five main things marketers should be doing in such straitened circumstances. First, 'data is the answer' to accurately meeting consumer demand, he said, citing examples such as the Amazon 4-star shop which only stocks items that are four-star rated or above in the locality. Google Trends can help you understand what people are looking for so you can tailor your offering accordingly. Stephen offered a sample from just a couple of days before the forum showing that searches such as 'are travel agents open' (up 300%), 'can we travel to Spain' (up 130%), 'national rail journey planner' (up 100%) are on the rise.

Second, you need to ask 'what is your proposition?' Stephen felt that Small Luxury Hotels (SLH) and Red Carnation hotels are doing a good job of staying relevant. SLH are offering 20% savings for members for a limited time period, while Red Carnation have kept people engaged with 'at-home escapism' highlighting cultural experiences to enjoy at home, from virtual museum tours to online courses. 'Create stories that still resonate with your audience, even though you can't sell them anything yet,' said Stephen.

Also, look at which marketing channels deliver the best return on investment and focus your resources on those.

It may be time for a pivot, such as that

undertaken by Sagittarius client Trafalgar Holidays who are currently focused on tailored domestic trips.

'Support local and experience your own backyard like you have never before' and 'Reconnect to the joy of travel with confidence' are the messages on its website.



**Paul Stephen, Sagittarius**

This segued neatly into Stephen's third main recommendation, about building trust. A Trustpilot survey indicates that 33.6% of consumers are checking reviews of businesses

and services more frequently than they did before lockdown, and 23% of consumers report decreased trust in companies since the outbreak, so there is a real need to proactively allay fears. Stephen has been impressed with the way Marriot CEO Arne Sorenson has communicated honestly about the COVID-19 situation and gave Qatar Airways props for explaining clearly the safety measures they are implementing and what people can

**"A cause for concern has been the increasing number of angry social media posts, up 39% between mid-Nov and late Feb, due to cancellations and customers being given credit notes rather than refunds"**

expect when they fly. The 'Book with Confidence' page on the Trafalgar website is also a good model to emulate, with lots of information to give customers reassurance, such as a free three-day booking hold, no-risk deposit protection and flexible change options.

Fourth, Stephen advised that it's important to play the long game, because 'marketing isn't an overnight process. 'SEO is more important than ever, and there are lots of thing you can do that are not very costly,' he said, such optimising for voice search embracing video with YouTube SEO and targeting local searchers with local landing pages and listings. He also noted that's it's vital to keep abreast of the changes Google are making in how they rank pages. For instance, pay attention to 'E-A-T' (standing for

Expertise, Authoritativeness and Trustworthiness), Google's official recommendations for delivering a quality experience online and an attempt to deal with the dreaded 'fake news'. This means Improving your online reputation and reviews, not overwhelming users with ads or trying to deceive them, only citing links from credible sources and making sure 'Your Money or Your Life' content is supported by scientific evidence (Your Money or Your Life content is the type of information that, if presented inaccurately, untruthfully or deceptively, could directly impact the reader's happiness, health, safety or financial stability).

The final pointer was to take advantage of the new normal (that phrase again...). For instance, with millions of people stuck at home, desktop is back – in 2020, the level of desktop traffic will be comparable to mobile again. Recent data for Trafalgar Holidays shows that mobile website visits from social are up a massive 288% year on year, and up 46% from email. 'The traffic distribution is in keeping with our marketing efforts,'

said Stephen, 'but this has led to us having to be much more focused on content/asset creation that is specifically optimized for mobile users'.

There is still room for disruption, too, as start-up Fly Now Pay Later has shown by raising £35m for expansion in the midst of the pandemic.

'A wait and see approach is not going to weather the storm,' he advised, then quoting Haixa Wang, VP of Skift Research who has said: 'To win in this crisis, leading CMOs need an agile strategy that allows their team to detect, adapt to, and respond to changes'.

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## MOVING TO SECURE REMOTE WORKING

Peter Barnsley, Director of Cyber Security at technology consultancy 6point6 (sponsors of the Summer Forum), discussed the short- and long-term security challenges triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the exponential increase in remote working. 'The haste with which this change needed to occur created a raft of security concerns for organisations of all sizes and from all industries,' he said. 'Security was often neglected or ignored altogether as organisations went into survival mode.'

A good place to start to address these challenges is making sure that all users have secure credentials, using Multi Factor Authentication (MFA). 'Google reported that when they turned on MFA, their account breaches went down to zero,' said Barnsley, adding: 'Try to avoid complicated passwords because users will write them down.'

Securing your network by creating a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and educating staff is also important. And don't forget about securing video calls – 'I was pleased to see Paul [Richer] had put a password on this call,' he said with a smile.

Barnsley outlined what we can expect post pandemic: 'COVID-19 has prompted a sharper shift in attitude regarding remote or flexible working. It has demonstrated that the benefits to the organisation, its supply chain, employees and, most importantly, its customers can be significant if implemented correctly. It has also facilitated a change in our consumer habits too. He noted how overwhelming demand, insufficient server capacity and failure of cloud-based infrastructure to autoscale led to temporary shutdown of retail and hospitality websites (for example, Ocado, B&Q and Wickes) during the pandemic. Pages failing to load, long waiting times on holding pages and poor stock availability are damaging for a company's reputation.

'Organisations must acknowledge and

embrace the impact COVID-19 will have on their customers' behaviour (as well as their own) once the pandemic is over, and move in different directions if necessary to survive and thrive,' he said. 'In most cases, facilitating these new behaviours and trends will mean leveraging technology in new and exciting ways.'

To securely support a distributed workforce fully post COVID-19, there are other things to consider beyond account and network security. These include endpoint security ('ensure laptops are patched and anti-virus scans are run regularly'), phishing protection ('now is the time to refresh awareness on internal procedures for reporting suspicious emails, and on general phishing training') and IT support ('help the IT team to prioritise maintaining business as usual, but do not pressure them to undermine security')

Barnsley also talked about the challenges created by the rise of 'Shadow IT' that has accelerated during the pandemic as more and more people work remotely. Shadow IT refers to the technology solutions deployed by departments other than the official IT service teams. 'Operations and security teams are rushing to ensure teams remain connected, whilst business areas are

## "COVID-19 has prompted a sharper shift in attitude regarding remote or flexible working"

attempting to maintain productivity,' he explained. 'Any disconnect between requirements and solutions increases the risk that departments are going to solve IT bottlenecks themselves, bypassing the usual governance checks.' To mitigate the risks, he advised close monitoring of cloud and network resources, highlighting IT project governance guidelines, while allowing limited Shadow IT where it is safe to do so.

Asked to expand on this in the Q&A, Barnsley said you can 'allow users to have a bit of sandbox to play around in, but you should create that sandbox for them with controls around it to

prevent them installing random things or downloading corporate data and, for example, emailing it.'

He also warned that companies need to be careful about their choice of commercial VPN providers: 'A lot of VPNs that you can quickly download apps for online, because you have to trust that the VPN provider isn't selling your data to somebody else. A lot of the VPN providers have recently been bought by Chinese organisations who are mining that data. Within the travel industry, the level of cyber risk will vary depending on what sort of business you're in. Hotel providers who host a lot of governmental travellers are often under threat of the WiFi infrastructure being compromised.'

## SURVIVAL AND BEYOND

The final presentation by Oli White, Head of Commercial at Sesui Cloud Communications, offered a case study of his company's work with leading travel management company, CTM, to help them through the pandemic.

'We have worked together for years, so had a great understanding of how things worked pre-COVID,' he said. On the tech side, the initial focus when lockdown began was adapting to the complete shift to remote working and continuing to support the immediate

needs of clients. CTM had adopted a one-day home working policy 12 months earlier, so a tried and tested system the staff were comfortable with was already in place.

'We were able to transfer a lot of services that staff were using in the office into a home environment, either using a Softphone, which securely turns any PC/laptop into the staff member's work phone, or Any phone licenses which allows them to use a home phone or mobile as their work device.'

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'With that shift to homeworking was a need for insight,' he continued. 'We were able to provide dashboards for real-time stats on operator/agent activity against KPIs, like at a regular contact centre. Also MIS [Management Information System] reporting that helped them to standardise their performance.'

Third, flexibility was important: 'People stopped travelling so there were workforce changes because of that, so we were able to flex licences to meet CTM's needs and ultimately, their clients' as well.'

That was the survival phase. Beyond survival, it is an ever-evolving situation and, White said, 'we interpret that as we need to adapt and iterate'. This was applied to a contract CTM won for the UK Government's Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) to facilitate the repatriation of British nationals wishing to return to the UK as a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions.

'The top-level requirement was to have a number for people to call,' said White, 'Peter mentioned in his presentation about cloud services and their need to be able to scale. Because of Sesui's very recent experience at the start of COVID in providing services for NHS 111, where we were instantly managing thousands and thousands more calls, we were very confident and well prepared to support this project.'

For the FCO, one number quickly became 28 UK direct dial numbers, as countries were given dedicated numbers to call in to. The massive volume of incoming calls generated long queue times which created issues such as calls dropping out and people losing their place in the queue, and calls costing a fortune for people calling from their mobiles.

'Our first iteration was to introduce call-backs. Rather than waiting in a queue the Sesui platform captured the

number and placed the caller in a virtual queue,' said White.

This was very effective, cutting the abandonment rate (i.e. people dropping out of the queue) from 28% to 10%, but it created another



**Oli White, Sesui**

problem. People were calling in multiple times – up to 20 times into the same queue – so there were duplicates. To deal with this, Sesui altered the platform so every call number was checked against those already in the queue, allowing only one entry. In May, 4,143 duplicate calls were suppressed, meaning people got to the front of the queue faster.

Continually looking for ways to improve the service, CTM then pitched the idea to the FCO of using an SMS engagement method. 'We'd identified that most people were calling from mobile,' explained White, 'and the thing about mobile is that when you send a text, you don't expect an immediate response, unlike a phone call. So we adapted the service so a traveller could send an SMS and join the virtual queue. And when they reached the front, the information in their text would be presented to the CTM agent to immediately give them some context.'

### **“For programmes like this to work in the future, there has to be an openness to adapt, iterate and flex”**

The FCO went for the idea and it was introduced in 24 countries. The global spread of callers led to the need for a further iteration: matching queue position with the time of day of the caller. The average call-back time after receiving the SMS was three-four hours so as callers got to the front of the virtual queue, the system needed to factor in the local time of day of the traveller so they didn't receive their call-back in the middle of the night.

Sesui also supplied CTM with a real-time dashboard to track inbound calls with statistics around calls answered, queue time, average hold time, daily

totals etc.

'Now that the program is winding down, Sesui and CTM are both highly satisfied in the way the service has been delivered,' said White. 'One stat stands out: we identified that we saved the equivalent of seven-and-a-half years of queuing time because of the iterative process we went through and the fixes we implemented.'

So what's next? 'We're probably all bored with the phrase "This is an ever-evolving situation,"' he said, 'But for programmes like this to work in the future, there has to be an openness to adapt, iterate and flex. The great thing about cloud-based communication services is that they are ideally suited to doing that.'

In the Q&A session that followed to conclude the forum, White was joined by Karen Janssen, Chief Information Officer at CTM and Sesui Managing Director Lee Bryant. Janssen was asked whether the pandemic experience will change the way corporate travel management is going to work day-to-day in future. 'It has solidified within the business at large that you don't all have to be sitting in our office to be a team,' she replied. 'We will still have people coming to offices, but it won't be as much as before where you couldn't do your job without coming in. That will help change the shape of how we service

our clients, which means we will be able to adapt to their needs and be confident about it.'

Asked whether the lessons learnt from the FCO and NHS projects could be translated into a mobile app, Bryant replied that 'we couldn't have developed that in such a short period of time.' White added that an app might not be appropriate anyway: 'An important insight from healthcare sector is that you really need to keep it as simple as possible for the patients to connect. Choose a service people know how to use like SMS and you remove a barrier.'

# TIPS FOR A CYBER SAVVY WORKFORCE

## From **6POINT6**

Your business' data is under more threat now than ever before. It's no longer a question of if you get hacked, but when. Your employees are your most vulnerable asset and IT teams are under increasing pressure to get business functionality working as close to usual as possible. Our handy how-to guide means employees can take simple steps to protect themselves and your business.

What can you do to defend, detect and respond to attacks against your network and your data?

Despite setting up VPNs, and limiting access to only those who need it, your network is still full of weaknesses caused by human error. The key to reducing this is to keep everyone in the organisation informed about their role in protecting the network and how that in turn supports you in protecting them and the business as a whole.

Clear communication will help get everyone on board with the importance of basic security, as well as the need to streamline IT requests, and reduce frustration if their request isn't a top priority. Maintain this dialogue to make sure employees don't try to find work-around solutions that may compromise security.

To open up this communication, we've created a practical how-to guide!

Pass it on to your marketing team and they can apply your company branding and distribute it across your

company to ensure you secure your data and critical assets without delay.

### **A HOW-TO GUIDE: TIPS FOR A CYBER SAVVY WORKFORCE**

#### **LAYER UP YOUR PROTECTION**

With the majority of us now working from home, our network contains significantly more weak points. Here are some steps you can take to protect our network and the protocols you should follow if something goes wrong.

##### **What you need to do:**

##### **1. Enable MFA for your services**

We'd suggest Google Authenticator or Authy.

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) is when you need an extra piece of information to login to an application or service.

MFA apps are particularly secure because the code can only be used once and expires after 30 seconds.

While you're working from home, MFA is especially useful if you're working on your personal phone, tablet or computer which might be shared with other family members.

##### **2. Use a password manager**

We'd suggest BitWarden or KeePass as good free options.

A password manager is a website or

app that produces a strong and unique password for everything you need to log into.

It then stores them safely and encrypted, which adds an extra layer of security.

##### **3. Secure video calls with passwords**

Keep the details of any meetings confidential and secure the meeting with a password.

The meeting host should also take a register of who attends.

Consider a weekly random check of employees to see that they have followed guidelines.

##### **4. Change your home Wi-Fi password**

Don't leave it as the factory default if it's short or obvious.

Many of the cheaper Wi-Fi routers, including those supplied by some ISPs, come with default passwords that are the same for all users. This applies to the management interface as well as the Wi-Fi network.

### **A REMINDER OF THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

These steps might seem like common sense but keeping them front of mind will help protect your personal data, and the network.

##### **What you need to do:**

##### **1. Only access work documents, networks and services on a work**

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**device**

Remember to only access work content on work devices or your own device that you're now authorised to use for work.

If you're using a home device, make sure that access to the company network is off and work programs are closed before other family members use the device.

**2. Keep your devices updated**

This might seem obvious, but it ensures devices and apps have the latest bug-fixes and makes them harder to hack.

**3. Regularly run a company-trusted virus scanner**

This will check whether your device has any viruses on it and will delete them if found. The default Windows

Defender application is as good as commercial options.

Make sure you're up to date with any online safety training that's available.

**BE WARY OF PHISHING ATTACKS**

Over 90% of cyber-attacks on businesses include phishing, and no amount of technical defences or processes will make us entirely impenetrable. Here's what to look out for and how to respond.

**1. Report any phishing attempts you encounter**

If you think you've been a victim, you need to tell us, so we can check if there is a breach in the network.

If you haven't been a victim, reporting attempts you come across

helps us build up a profile of the sorts of phishing that is out there.

**2. Familiarise yourself with what to look out for**

Although suspicious emails traditionally pose as banks, suppliers or company leadership, cyber criminals are taking advantage of the current crisis.

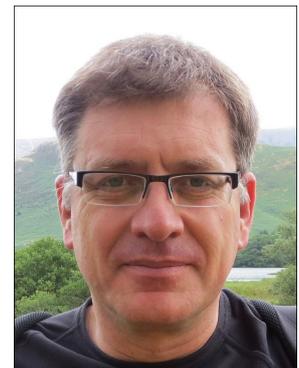
We've seen a rise in fake World Health Organisation and UK Government webpages which contain malicious links.

**GET IN TOUCH**

If you're interested in how we could help your business with cybersecurity, drop us an email at [enquiries@6point6.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@6point6.co.uk)

# OPTIMIZING THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR TEXT FOR SEO

“When it comes to optimizing written material for search engines, you don't only need to enrich them with well-integrated key phrases - you also need to think about structuring your content in an SEO friendly way”



*by Frank Orman  
Managing Director  
leadgeneratorsdigital*

Over the years that I've been working with clients to optimize their websites, it's become clear to me that optimization is not just about key phrase integration but also about the way you structure your copy on your landing pages.

At the end of the day, when you design, write and market your website there are two main things you're aiming for:

1. Search engine bots to boost your content in the SERPs and drive more users to your site for answers.

2. User engagement which is all about how readers engage with your content and understand your message.

A good structure will certainly help deliver these goals. It will increase the readability of your text, and help Google to rank it properly.

**HOW PEOPLE SCAN TEXTS**

When people click through to a website, the first thing they tend to do is scan the page they land on. They'll scroll down and skim read to get a sense of what information the text contains. Then, if they decide

they are interested and want to continue reading, they'll scroll back up and read it through, jumping between the sections which appear to be most important to them.

Headings and subheadings are crucial. These are the main elements people will pick up on as they glance over your web page, and so they are pretty much the most important thing when it comes to breaking up the information you're communicating and to catching your reader's eye.

You want to keep site visitors engaged and interested, and discourage them from clicking away.

Well-structured posts have far lower bounce rates, and are more likely to be shared on social media. This heightened interaction will also lead to higher rankings in the SERPs.

### HOW GOOGLE SCANS TEXTS

People aren't the only ones who scan in a particular way - Google does too.

**Headings:** if your headings contain particular keywords that are important for the topic of that page, then Google will give your page more weight.

**Semantic closeness:** the proximity of related words within a post is a key ranking signal for Google. In order for the search engine to properly understand the semantic closeness of your content, the formatting and structure of your text has to be made as clear as possible.

**The BERT update:** Google recently announced a new Natural Language Processing model which is set to affect every 1 in 10 searches. Now, the algorithm is better at understanding natural language than ever before - so results can be made more relevant without having to resort to the density of awkwardly integrated key phrases.

### HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR STRUCTURE

There are several elements you need to pay close attention to when structuring your text. In my experience, three of the most important are:

- The first paragraph
- The first sentence of each subsequent paragraph
- The headings and subheadings

If you get these three aspects right, your writing will be more readable and easier to scan.

### THE FIRST PARAGRAPH

Your first paragraph should act as a kind of thesis statement. It should clearly express what exactly your post is about so that your reader immediately knows that your text will answer their questions. This is called the "inverted pyramid writing style", and it's a technique that journalists

have tried and tested and have been using for years.

When you're writing for the internet, you don't have the time to tease a reader and draw them in slowly. You need to get straight to the point, straight from the start.

So, before you begin writing, make sure you know what the main message of your article is. Including your keyword in the first section is also a must: the searcher will recognise the word they entered to get to your post, and feel reassured that they've come to the right place. It's simple psychology.

And don't forget: a clear first paragraph will also help Google classify your text.

### INTRODUCING SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

Every paragraph needs to start strong with a sentence which clearly expresses the core idea of that section. Each sentence after that will build on this core premise.

People who are scanning your writing will start out by reading these first sentences to get a gist of what you're saying without having to go through your post or article with a fine comb. So, if you don't make sure that each introductory sentence contains your core message, they won't pick up on it.

The first sentence of each paragraph is also a great place to integrate your keyword naturally if possible. Of course, if you are writing a well-structured post and not straying too far off-topic, working your keyword into these core sentences shouldn't be too tricky.

### HEADINGS AND SUBHEADINGS

As I've already stressed, headings make your text easier to scan. Make them bigger and bolder than the rest of your writing so they can be seen as easily as possible.

You should also take care to give them appropriate names, because each heading needs to closely reflect the contents of the section underneath it. There's no point

coming up with a great sounding title if it doesn't reflect the message that follows. Along these lines, each long paragraph or group of thematically similar paragraphs requires its own heading. That way, they can be used to determine what the article is about.

Most experts of content-led SEO know that headings are extremely important for the overall structure of a text and strongly advocate their use. Headings containing the focus keyword can come into play as ranking factors - they should not be overlooked.

### CONCLUSION

If these recommendations for structuring your web copy resurrect distant memories of essay writing skills from your English teacher, then that's a good thing.

The overriding agenda of the Google algorithm is to simulate human search behaviour. Almost every update and alteration to the algorithm is designed to bring it closer to this ultimate goal.

Optimizing your website copy is most effective when you keep good writing practice and readability at the forefront of all your decisions. Not only is this what your customers want, it's also ultimately what Google is trying to teach its search bot to recognise and to serve to its readers in the search results.

### About the Author

*Frank Orman is a well respected authority on strategic online marketing and an expert in social media innovation in the UK and worldwide. In addition to founding specialist London agency [LeadGeneratorsDigital](#), he is a passionate educator and speaker on topics relating to the principles of online marketing, social media concepts, SEO tactics and site conversion strategies.*

## NEWS FROM OUR ASSOCIATIONS

TTI is associated with a number of trade organisations. Here is a round-up of their news



Our first Virtual ITMC 2020 focused on the independent TMC. WIN Global Travel Network has partnered with US based Hickory Global Partners to jointly host Virtual ITMC 2020 - A Virtual Global Symposium Series Celebrating Independent TMCs, sponsored by Hilton and Sabre Hospitality.

The ITMC Summit is the only conference that caters to Global Independent Travel Management Companies (TMCs), representing over US\$34 billion in global business travel sales in 2019. Unfortunately, we had to postpone the physical event until 2021 due to Covid-19. However, we could not let this year pass without providing valuable insights into how the industry may evolve and what independent TMCs may need to consider when travel resumes.

### Appoint app

Advantage has launched a new appointment system for its members.

A brand new appointment app designed to give members access to a simple to use online appointment booking platform for their customers to use. The tool has been created in response to the rise in virtual meetings and members operating a closed-door policy resulting from the Covid-19 situation. Whilst retail stores and offices have been able to re-open, booking an appointment to visit you face to face, or virtually, has now been made very simple using the Appoint.Travel platform.



Covid has had huge impacts on our sector and as a membership body all of our

resources were redirected into supporting our members, helping them to remain connected and engaged and with access to all of the latest information and guidance.

We have and continue to deliver daily website updates, weekly written updates, plus a series of webinars using our network of industry professionals across business, finance, law, wellbeing and more. We also published the findings of a consumer report WHAT REALLY MATTERS which presents the results from the first two phases of research into the impacts of covid 19 and the motivators for travel. We'll deliver the final piece at the end of the pandemic to compare the changes.

Our annual Youth Travel Workshop has now moved online and will be held on 10th September. The event will deliver face to face meetings with potential partners, but from wherever you are in the world, so no travel or accommodation costs and no expensive exhibition costs. We hope that this will provide an opportunity for businesses to revitalise our sector during this period of restriction.



The easing of blanket quarantine rules that the BTA had been campaigning for was a welcome step in the right direction towards the resumption of business travel. But the rapid reintroduction of restrictions for travellers returning from Spain demonstrated how quickly things can change in this new Covid-19 world, and the impact that can have on business travel.

Business travel is a vital enabler for the economy and, in a normal year, contributes over £220 billion to UK GDP. Business travel in many cases is not about flying Business Class, but

moving UK PLC to where it needs to be to generate economic growth. You cannot complete a hospital, build a new rail link or a power station without business travel, or by using Zoom.

It is integral to getting the UK economy back on its feet by enabling it to travel, work and trade. For that to happen, business travel must be stimulated and traveller confidence regained.

But business travel also needs to be possible in the new, dynamic and fluid Covid world and, until a vaccine is created, infection rates are likely to rise and fall in countries across the globe as lockdowns cannot continue unabated.

British business must have the confidence to travel safe in the knowledge that its employees won't

be subject to short notice quarantine restrictions. To make this possible, it is vital that the Government is more transparent about the process and criteria that leads to these decisions. These include what level of transmission is considered unacceptable, were other critical variables considered, and what will be the trigger for removing these restrictions?

By publishing this information, travel management companies will be able to better counsel their corporate customers on rapidly changing situations in different destinations, and warn when an increase in restrictions may be imminent. This level of information will better enable British business to plan travel with more confidence.



International Federation  
for IT and Travel & Tourism

its best practices with a range of innovations to support the development of new solutions.

#### **ENTER 2021@yourplace**

2020 will remain in history as a year of crisis, unprecedented challenges and new opportunities.

Traditionally, the International Federation for IT and Travel & Tourism (IFITT) runs annual ENTER conferences to explore ways technology can be used to maximize positive impacts on society, environment, and economy in travel and tourism.

With the theme "eTourism: Development Opportunities and Challenges in an Unpredictable World", the 28th ENTER will combine

ENTER2021 will bring back the conversation between industry representatives, entrepreneurs, destinations, policy-makers, researchers, and students. It will take place 19 – 22 January 2021 to share, discuss and challenge the latest developments in information technology in the fields of travel and tourism.

In addition to megatrends in travel, tourism & tech, ENTER2021 expands the range of its topics to the COVID-19 impacts and required solutions. Moreover, to address the challenge of COVID-19, ENTER will take place virtually @yourplace.

In addition to that, ENTER2021 will introduce some pleasant surprises to its participants. For the 1st time, all research, presented at the conference, will be published in the open-access online book. As a result, the generated knowledge will remain available for public for free in the eco-friendly form. Second, to provide an immersive conference experience, ENTER2021@yourplace will offer its participants a new, interactive and sustainable platform for conversation.

Interested to learn more about the event, about participating and becoming a speaker or a sponsor? Follow ENTER2021 updates <http://www.enter-conference.org/> to get the most important first-hand news and get in touch with IFITT team!

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



Holiday Extras is the UK's market leader for travel extras - turning trips into holidays by helping travellers find the best airport hotels, airport parking, airport lounges, airport

transfers, car hire and holiday insurance.

The company makes arrangements for eight million travellers every year, with over 90% of these bookings coming from the website.

Innovative technology, a wide choice of products, unbeatable prices and making travel better for its customers are the focus for Holiday Extras.

Group CEO, Matthew Pack, is committed to the vision of hassle-free

travel. Since taking on the role of chief executive in 2009 - then Group CEO in 2015, he has inspired the Holiday Extras team to explore increasingly creative and innovative directions across all areas of the business.

The Holiday Extras team has chosen the values to guide working lives. In brief:

- Be Pioneering in Spirit
- Be at the Helm
- Be Courageous
- Be One Team
- Be the Best Version of You.



Youtravel.com is a leading accommodation-only supplier, offering travel agents and tour operators exclusive access to quality hotels and resorts around the world. Part of the FTI Group, Youtravel.com offers some 8000 hotels across the globe with an ever-expanding portfolio. Current destinations include the popular Mediterranean holiday hot-spots of Spain, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and the Canaries,

further afield resorts available include Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, and long-haul, destinations such as USA, Mexico and the Caribbean and the UAE.

Accommodation ranges from riads and villas, to three and four-star resort properties and luxury five-star hotels. Board options are available from self-catering to all-inclusive. Prices are checked daily to ensure

competitiveness and all properties meet strict levels of quality and service.

Working with Meeting Point International in 20 countries worldwide, Youtravel.com customers can be assured of a warm welcome in resort and will receive any assistance required to make their stay go smoothly.

Launched in 2006, Youtravel.com operates UK, Germany, Greece, Italy, Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Russia and France. Youtravel.com acts as principal for its customers and trade partners.

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS

our last project meeting took place via Zoom on 10 June



by Phippa Barrett

## TECH SUPPLIERS MEETING

In an effort to support our Travel Tech Supplier members during these difficult times, we have been hosting regular Zoom meetings. The first meeting took place on the 21st April. During that meeting, the group took the decision to ask TTI to write to the Government on their behalf. The letter asked that Travel Tech Suppliers be given the same level of support and assistance that other parts of the travel industry receive. We will continue to support our members, including Travel Tech Supplier members, in whatever way we can so please feel free to contact TTI with any issues you feel we might be able to help you with.

## SUMMER FORUM

We held our first ever Webinar via Zoom on the 18th of June 2020. The event, was very well attended and

enjoyed. We are currently considering increasing the number of on-line events and would love to hear your thoughts and suggestions .

Don't forget, our TTI members have privileged access to an archive of all the presentations from past events so if you wish to access them, please contact me - [hippa.barrett@tti.org](mailto:hippa.barrett@tti.org) .

## MEMBERSHIP

We would like to welcome our new members, Holiday Extras and YouTravel.com.

YouTravel.com's technical operation is based in Dubai but we hope to welcome their Sales and Marketing representative, based in London, at our future events.

## AUTUMN CONFERENCE

The Autumn Conference is planned for the 24th of September 2020 and will be going ahead as a webinar because some speakers and delegates are still reticent about travelling into London.

## NEXT MEETING

The next combined Board and Project meeting will be via Zoom at 10am on Thursday 17th September 2020.

## DIFFICULT TIMES

How soon recovery will arrive and how early we will be able to get back to normality are unknowns but we are here to support you in any way that we can. if you have any issues that you would like to discuss or if you feel we can do more to support you, please contact me.

## TTI EVENTS 2020

### **Project Management Meetings**

Thursday 17 September 10:00 via Zoom  
Thursday 10 December 10:00 via Zoom

### **Conferences & Forums**

Thursday 13 August - special webinar  
Thursday 24 September - Autumn Conference webinar  
Wednesday 4 November - Winter Forum