

How to drive in-store footfall with digital precision

Discover how to maximise your website
and digital advertising to boost visits to
your shops.

Quickfire
Digital

LAUNCH
ONLINE 

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The landscape has changed

Since the pandemic first broke, human behaviour has altered dramatically. With limited social contact and lockdown, our shopping habits have been forced online.

Now with the UK starting to tentatively open back up, there's an appetite among customers for visiting stores in 'real life' again – but according to the BBC, high street footfall is still down 25% against April 2019. It's likely we'll be in flux with restrictions easing and tightening for some time, as COVID-19 isn't going away just yet.

That's why it's especially important that you provide plenty of information to give customers confidence to visit you in store when they're able to. That's especially true if your customers have been shielding and taking greater precautions as a result of being more at risk of contracting covid.

Your audience will want to be sure that visiting your store will be a worthwhile, safe experience. They're more likely than ever to check details ahead of time online, so it's important you provide a joined up, seamless experience that makes it easy and stress-free. And we're going to tell you how to do just that.



**High street footfall
is still down**

25%

against April 2019



How to set up your digital channels for in-store success

Remember that customers shop across multiple channels, so whatever your methods, you need to nail your approach so that your business and messaging is consistent to your audience.

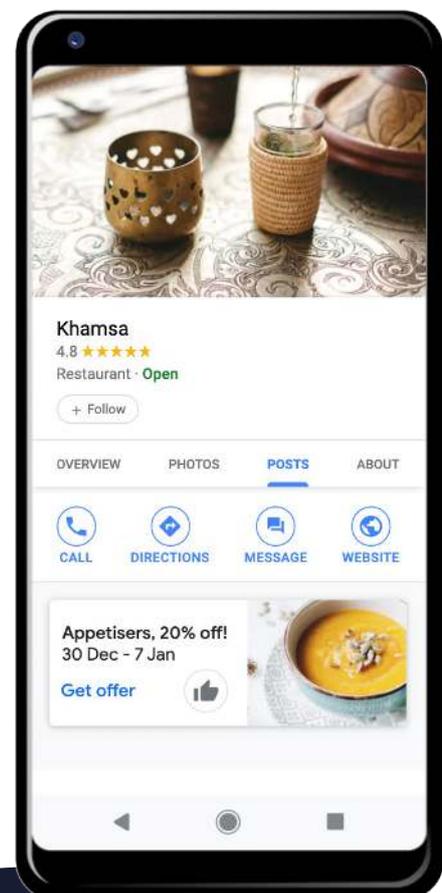
When it comes to online, it's vital you get the basics right. Your opening times, address, and contact details all need to match exactly if you're going to give visitors confidence to visit you in store.

Audit your presence across your social channels, Google My Business, Bing Places for Business and your website to check for complete consistency.

It's really important you make the user experience as seamless as possible. Double-check your map pin is in the exact right location. If people can't find you, you'll not only lose their business, but by causing them frustration, you'll lose their trust.

While you're there, take a look at other content associated with your business, like photos, video and reviews. Are there images that no longer represent your business, or reviews that need responding to?

Finally, keep accessibility front of mind. Simple always wins the day, so make your calls to action clear, your content succinct, and key information easy to find.



Setting up your ads

On most major online advertising platforms, across search engines and social media, you can set your ads to zero in on driving people to your bricks-and-mortar store.

For example, you can create a Google Ads local campaign to specifically focus on getting store visits, call clicks, or driving directions, so more people can find and shop with you. You plug in your assets and campaign data, then Google will use powerful machine learning, optimising your campaign to show your ads to people most likely to visit you in-person.

On top of that, you can also use Local Inventory ad formats. These are rich ads that display your product and shop information to local shoppers. They'll tell potential buyers if your item is in stock in store, as well as other useful data like opening times, directions and more. They can quickly deduce if it's worth them visiting you.

For example, searching 'Winter jacket near me' returns different items fitting that description, their stock level and even whether the store offers click and collect. It surfaces all the information someone browsing needs to make a decision to visit your store.

The screenshot displays two store listings for a search query. The first listing is for 'New Look' at 'Unit N, Castlepoint Shopping Centre, Bournemouth'. It shows five product cards for women's jackets, each with a price and 'Limited stock' indicator. The second listing is for 'Loni's Angling Centre' at '119 Old Milton Rd, New Milton'. It shows five product cards for waterproof jackets, also with prices and 'Limited stock' indicators. Both listings include 'Click & collect' and 'Directions' options.

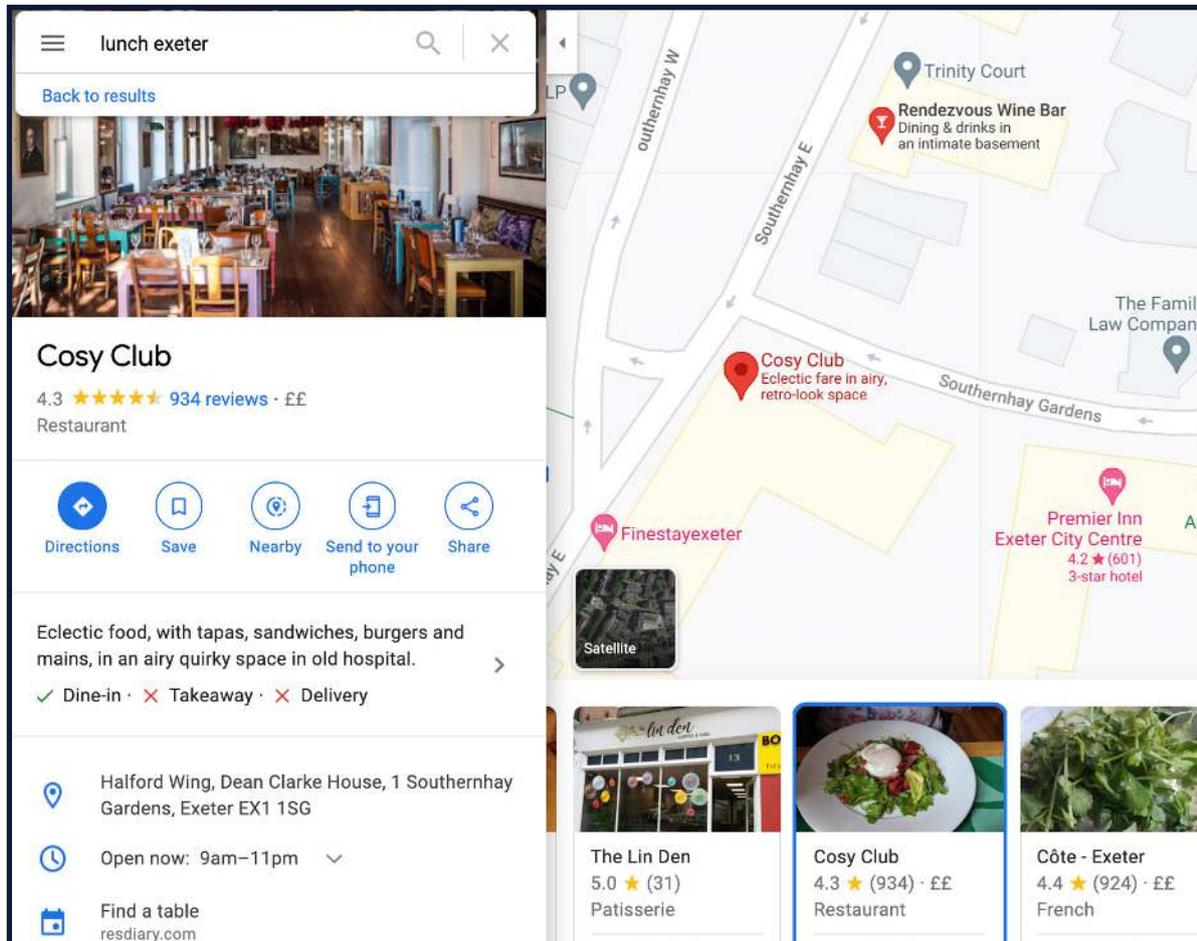
Store	Product Name	Price	Stock Status
New Look	New Look Women's Black...	£15.00	Limited stock
	New Look Women's Black...	£15.59	Limited stock
	New Look Women's Black...	£15.59	Limited stock
	New Look Women's Black...	£15.59	Limited stock
	New Look Faux Fur Coat in Grey	£15.00	Limited stock
Loni's Angling Centre	ESP 5K Waterproof Gre...	£49.00	Limited stock
	ESP 5K Waterproof Gre...	£49.00	Limited stock
	ESP 5K Waterproof Gre...	£49.00	Limited stock
	Savage Gear Heatlite Thermo...	£89.99	Limited stock
	Savage Gear Heatlite Thermo...	£89.99	Limited stock



Alongside ads, one of our top tips is to use Google My Business and Bing Places for Business to their maximum potential.

Add covid-specific updates, like whether you're open or if your hours have changed, as well as using announcement features to talk about Click-and-Collect services, or promoting offers you can only redeem in-store.

And remember that Google Maps isn't just for people getting directions, it's also a discovery feature that gives users local recommendations. This is why it's important you keep your business profiles up to date, keep getting reviews and use the right keywords and features to bring people to your business.



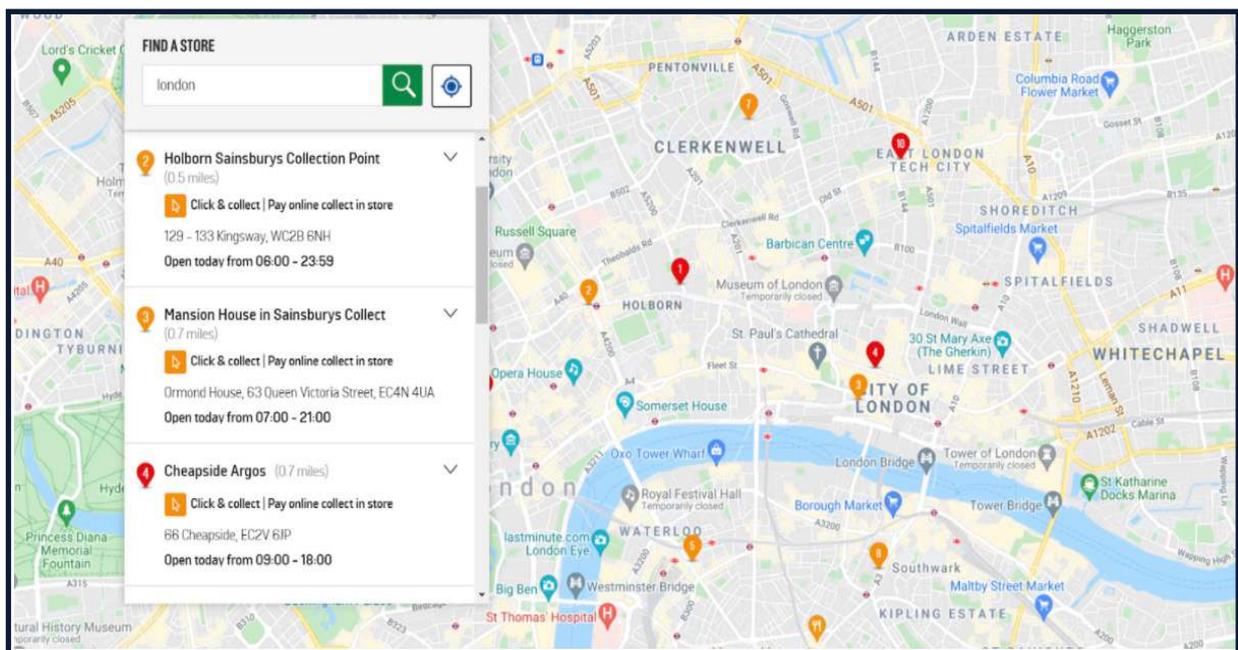
What to do on your website

One of the most important aspects to get right when sending traffic to your website from ads is ensuring consistency.

There is nothing more frustrating for customers than when the landing page your ad sends customers to doesn't reflect what they've searched for. Those clicks are costing you money – so you must ensure that it is being well spent.

This means that if a customer searches for 'store name near me' – and you're running ads for this and similar store location terms – you'll want to send them to a page which delivers a strong experience and provides them with the information they need.

Argos' store map does this very nicely, providing options to enter a town/city or postcode and presenting the information back with a set of stores and map locations. Very neat and very useful.



In addition, on their stores page they have a message, boxed in red so that it stands out, which makes it easy for customers to read updates on stores. It's simple but very effective and shows an understanding of the situation we're all in right now.

 [Click here for our latest updates on our stores, website and contact centre. Thank you for your continued patience and support.](#)

Many customers will, understandably, be nervous about heading back into city and town centres so they'll want to know what you're doing to keep them safe.

Some brands are purely focusing on their e-commerce offering and are providing very little information about the in-store experience, but with restrictions likely to remain for some time, they're missing a trick - and could be losing sales.

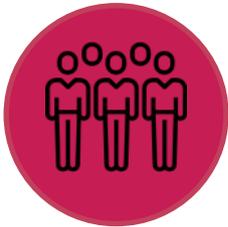


There's no need to go overboard but a little reassurance can go a long way.

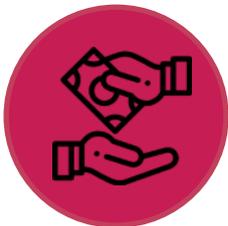
Think about being clear on:



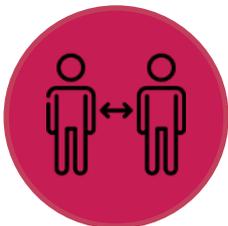
The number of hand sanitiser stations you have in-store and how they are operated i.e are they foot-pump ones?



Any customer number limitations you have in place i.e. are you allowing a maximum in at busier times?



What the payment options are - have you gone card only? Do you accept Apple Pay and similar?



Social distancing floor markings and one-way systems

Remember: you are attempting to remove any barriers that potential customers might have in visiting your store and spending money with you.



One other key piece of information is around click-and-collect

Once a customer purchases and chooses this option, you will more than likely send a purchase confirmation email which will contain information on collection times and what they will need to bring with them.

However, some customers might be nervous about coming to the store and would like information on those in-store safety measures and what they will need for their visit ahead of purchasing.

The B&Q website does a decent job of providing details on what customers need to do before collecting their orders, but this could be even better if it provided information on safety measures as well:

Home > Customer Support > Click + Collect

Click + Collect

Simply choose and pay for your items online, and pick up free of charge from your nearest B&Q store

Customer support ▾

Frequently asked questions

Contact us

Find a store

Sunflower Lanyard Scheme

Complaints procedure

Home delivery ▾

Delivery

Remote locations

Click + Collect ▾

Click + Collect

Once you've placed your order

We'll tell you what time your order will be available to collect from. It is a 1 hour Click + Collect service, so if you place an order within an hour of the store closing, your items will be available the next day.

What do I need to bring to collect my order?

Please head to the Click + Collect point at the front of the store and bring:

- A copy of your order confirmation on your phone or printed out as proof of purchase
- The payment card that you used to pay for this order or,
- A current photographic driver's licence, passport or a PASS accredited proof of age card.
- For PayPal, Google Pay or Apple Pay orders, please bring valid photo ID.
- If someone else is collecting on your behalf, they must bring the email confirmation and their own valid photo ID. Proof of age will also be required for age-restricted products.

We can't release your order without verifying your ID.

Challenge 25

Consumer laws control the quality and safety of goods and services. In some cases, goods (such as knives) cannot be supplied to anyone below a certain age. At B&Q, we operate a Challenge 25 policy for purchasing any age-restricted goods. Please make sure that you have valid photo I.D. when collecting your items, otherwise the sale may be declined.



Other pieces of information which should be easily accessible are:



A telephone number – Yes, some people do still want to speak to another human being so this shouldn't be buried to try to put off customers



Opening times – This can be done on the store locations page if stores are open at different times



Social media links – Customer service queries on social channels are frequent, make sure you're there to answer them

Also, use structured data on your website to markup your business location, and help search engines surface accurate information without your audience having to work hard to find it.

On the subject of business locations, be aware if you use Google Maps on your website. There are only so many API calls you're allowed before you need to have a paid subscription. Don't get caught out!



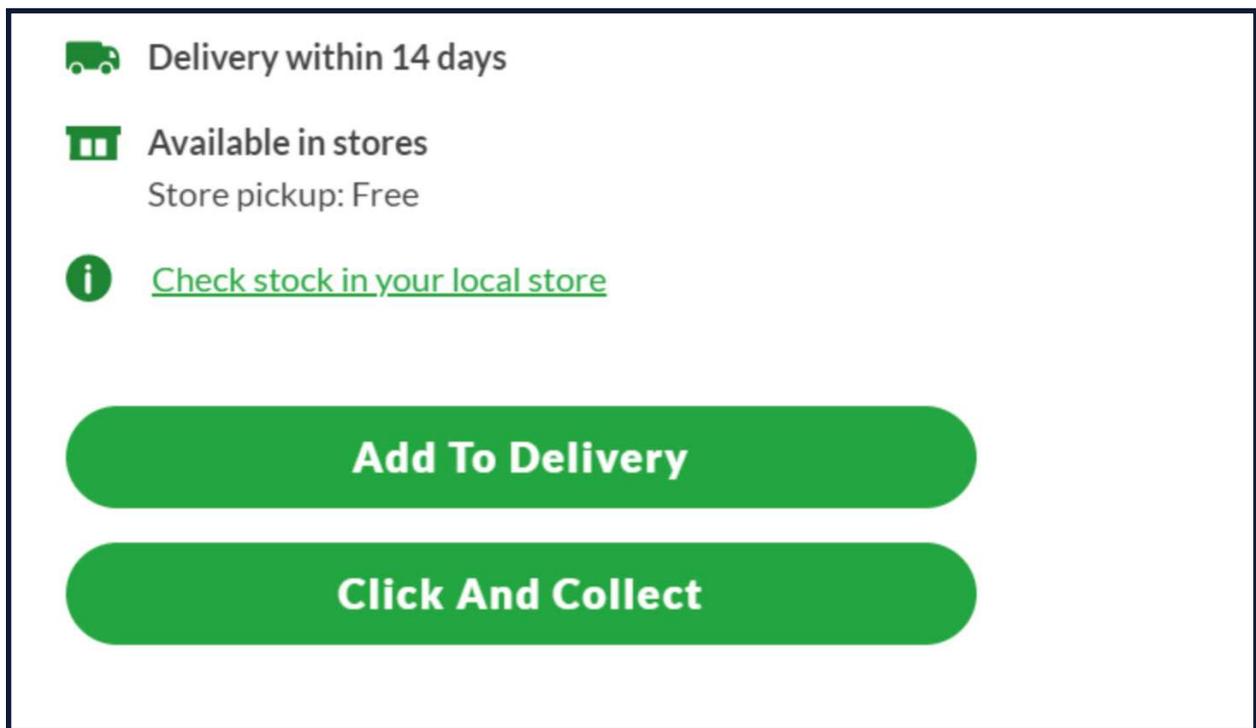
Display product volumes at stores

A nifty way of delivering a strong customer experience on your website is to display product volumes at different stores.

Not only does this avoid the disappointment of heading to a store only to discover that a chosen product is out of stock, it also assists those customers who are in the 'I need it now' camp. Sometimes you just can't, or don't want to, wait for a delivery.

Homebase does a nice job of allowing customers to check stock levels at their local store.

And what would most people prefer to do – wait 14 days for delivery, or head out today to a store which has what they want?



The screenshot shows a product page with the following information:

-  Delivery within 14 days
-  Available in stores
Store pickup: Free
-  [Check stock in your local store](#)

Below the information are two green buttons:

- Add To Delivery**
- Click And Collect**

If your e-commerce website is on Shopify, you can plug in a product inventory app to display this type of information, for example using the Product Inventory Information app.



Omnichannel – what it is and how do you apply it?

The word ‘omnichannel’ has a considerable amount of buzz around it right now, but what is it exactly and how does it affect your customers’ experience?

The need to be ‘multi-channel’ – across more than just one channel, both online and offline – is understood and practiced, but omnichannel basically means taking a customer view and attempting to unify their experience with you across all of your channels.

The first step in the world of omnichannel should be to map your customers’ journeys to understand how brands are becoming aware of you, right through to how they’re being re-engaged.

Doing this exercise will allow you to analyse the experience and messaging your customers are receiving at their various touchpoints.

For example, if you’re running a 15% off offer through your email communications but it isn’t redeemable in-store, are you providing a good customer experience? If product descriptions on your website, on social media and in-store aren’t consistent, how is that going to affect customers’ perception of you?



73%



of shoppers use multiple channels before buying, so consistency is key.

You need to ensure that once people arrive at your store, you provide a seamless experience. Your staff should know about online offers or activity, your stock levels should match what users have seen online, and there should be absolutely no nasty surprises.

And you can link the in-store experience to the digital one by encouraging customers to leave reviews, add their own photographs, tag themselves at your location or even leave their email addresses in exchange for offers or content from your business.

When it comes to getting better reach and building trust, there's no such thing as too much audience engagement.

Shopify has produced an excellent, in-depth guide to omnichannel commerce [here](#).



Summary

The desire to return to physical stores is strong in many people – and your online presence can play a significant role in attracting those shoppers.

The days of segmenting online and offline are coming to an end as the idea of omnichannel gathers momentum.

Customers see only brands and want to be provided with good experiences, whether it's physical or digital.

Ensuring that your online advertising and website information appeals to those shop-bound customers sends a positive signal that you are there for them, however they want to interact with you.

Jaye Cowle, Founder at Launch Online:

“There are lots of digital tools available to you to help drive customers to your store. Make sure you’ve mastered the basics – like ensuring consistency across your online presence – before making full use of the location-centric features on offer in your advertising campaigns. As always, keep your customers in mind. It’s all about making it an easy decision for customers to trust you and shop with you.”



Nathan Lomax, Co-Founder at Quickfire Digital:

“While selling online obviously has to be the primary focus for an e-commerce business, if you operate on the high street as well then your website has a secondary job to do. Taking a customer-centric view and considering how best to serve them is always the right approach so think how your website can be used to answer their questions and provide the detailed information they’re seeking.”



Need an extra hand
configuring your advertising
or website for in-store visits?

We can help!



Quickfire Digital is an award-winning website development agency for ambitious brands.

Get in touch today:

info@quickfiredigital.com



Launch Online is a paid media agency that delights ambitious advertisers by achieving challenging growth forecasts.

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hello@launchonline.co.uk