

Leveraging the rise of voice search

By [Tich Savanhu](#)

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There is a [large amount](#) of current data and predictions on how voice search is on the rise. Now, 40% of US adults are searching by voice at least once a day and that number will be much higher for the more tech-comfortable Generation Z. In May last year, one in five searches on an Android app was done via speech.



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So, how should CMOs be adjusting their marketing focus (and budget) to accommodate for this shift? A large part of the problem in predicting how to address this issue is the lack of clarity from Google.

Using SEO to deal with natural language searches

The obvious way to ensure your brand is found by your customers using voice search is to better understand and accommodate for how people search on various devices.

All the main players have been working hard to make sure their products can handle the more nuanced communication we use in voice searches. They also check for context including what app you are in, previous search history, your current GPS, as well as personal details.

Many companies are focusing on this aspect of voice search preparation right now, ensuring their SEO is tweaked to

optimise for voice. Using long tail keywords, optimising micro data and XML sitemaps on your site so people can find you, as well as ensuring your FAQ pages are searchable to answer the 'who, what, where, how' questions people ask will help.

Finally, do not forget that people pronounce things differently. This is especially important for non-English brands. Spend some time researching misspellings and mispronunciations of your brand and product names.

We are telling clients that the one thing we know, even in the short-term, is that voice search is about locality. You would ask Siri, for instance, to direct you to the nearest pharmacy or pizza place. Search engines will scrape sites for expanded listings and it is important for you to address issues, as outlined above, to allow your customers to find you.

Retailers should get onto as many platforms as possible

Analysts are understandably curious as to how Google will make up for the lost ad revenues when search picks up. The company will almost certainly lose out to other mega platforms, such as Amazon, which has many hundreds of millions of products listed in one place.

Consumers who embrace voice search may wake up one morning and ask Alexa to order a new pair of running shoes. Alexa may ask if you want the same product and size as last time, you say yes, and the purchase is done.

Making sure your products are available on as many platforms as possible can also assist in ensuring you do not miss out on voice search.

Shopping wars of the future

As with all shopping, comparison will be the key. Here, Google has a definite advantage over Amazon. The trillions of search queries have allowed Google to refine its ability to serve up what you are looking for quickly and (mostly) accurately. The two companies' smart speakers, joined with their smart assistants will be the battleground for the real shopping wars of the future.

Reviews of Google Home and Amazon Echo, along with Google Assistant and Alexa, respectively showed a far higher rating of the Google experience. Taking it into the comparative landscape will prove each solution's mettle.

Add to this, the work already done by Google on its mobile comparison voice search features, shows that the company is fighting back on the voice front.

What this means for retailers is that they will need to pay careful attention to the amount of localised data they make available to be searched. Including prices, store locations and more will allow consumers to find "a black dress at a store near me" very easily indeed.

CMOs looking to solve the voice search conundrum may need to wait before the industry is certain on where things are going. That said, we are clear on two things: do not underestimate Google finding a way to monetize voice search, and, there are tactics that can be implemented right now, which best can place your brand to take advantage of the growing trend.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tich Savanhu, search specialist at Clicks2Customers