

liberty

Opening Balance

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Innovation

The strategy

The Liberty Marketing Group saw success launching a niche-specific agency in 2020 with the birth of beauty-focussed [Foundation](#).

Foundation quickly cut through the ridiculously competitive and cluttered marketing agency space to win work with some big beauty brands (Tropic Skincare, SpaceNK and Spectrum Collections) thanks to a combination of high-quality content and top Google rankings.

For our next launch, we chose financial services (FS) because we already had case studies, awards, and credibility within that sector. We also saw a need within FS for an agency that could balance the necessity for compliance and creativity. No digital marketing agency catered exclusively to FS brands, so we decided to launch one.

Whilst most marketing groups are buying up agencies and amalgamating the brands, we're doing the opposite. We're carefully picking niche sectors that we can dominate and then, by using a central pool of digital talent, we can offer both industry expertise and scale.

BALANCE

Innovation

Finding Balance

Our initial job was to find a figurehead. Someone who could lead this offering and had the connections, capability, and passion to make something truly special. In Alex Murphy (ex-Marketing Director of Admiral, and Performance Lead at Go Compare) we found the perfect person. After a fair bit of wooing, we convinced him to join us and bring this vision to life.

Rather than just assume we'd hit the nail on the head with "creative yet compliant" as our strapline, we thought we'd be a bit smarter. We tested it and started to build a sales pipeline at the same time.

We set up meetings between Alex and all the senior marketers we knew within finance, from traditional banks to FinTech brands, so he could interview them. By asking them what they wanted in an agency and where they felt let down by non-FS specialists, he was able to get great insights into how a new agency should operate and what really mattered to them.

At the same time, they bought into the idea so much that most of them started asking how we could help with their SEO, PPC, social media, and more.



Our goal: “create the best content that FS marketers will read this year”

Recognising that without a big, attention-grabbing and meaningful angle the launch would just be another new agency story that journalists would likely ignore, we came up with an outstanding content idea.

Asking ourselves what research we could do that would really make a difference, not just to our brand awareness and our sales pipeline, but to the marketers we are setting out to help, gave us a story that we believe is one of the smartest ways any agency has ever announced themselves to the world.

The FCA was in the middle of releasing Consumer Duty, a new set of rules that FS brands need to comply with in order to prove greater authenticity and accessibility online.

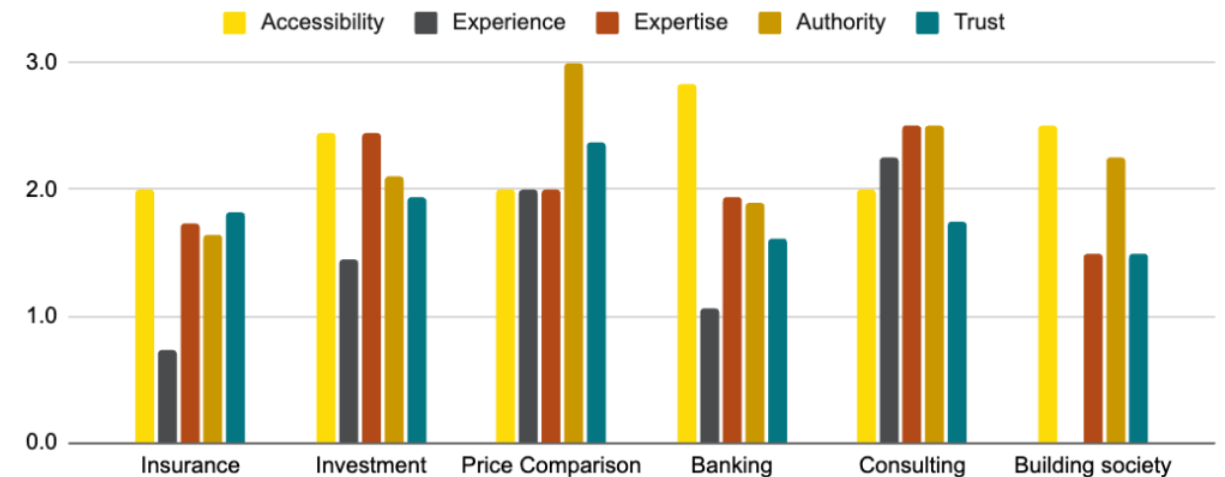
At the same time, Google was updating its EEAT rules, which covered many of the same things. So, we decided to audit the top 50 UK FS brands to see how they stacked up.

Spending four gruelling days, grading hundreds of factors, we asked key questions such as “How trustworthy are their websites?”, “How authoritative are their authors?” and “How accessible are their websites?”

The results blew us away.

The research showed that 49 were failing in some areas, with most lacking across the board.

At the same time that the FCA and Google were actively trying to increase trust in financial companies, we uncovered that over a third of the biggest names in FS were rated as “poor” or even worse!



Craft

Gaining authority in the FS sector quickly

This research was obviously newsworthy, so we used it to make a name for ourselves and to then educate FS marketers on what they could do about it, aiming to help them improve their standing not only with their regulator but also search engines.

The first part of that mission was a roaring success. If you want links and mentions from high-authority, relevant websites in the finance and marketing world, then where better than to have your research featured in both the FT and Marketing Week (plus dozens of other business, marketing, agency, and finance publications)?

We knew right then that we'd tapped into something rich.

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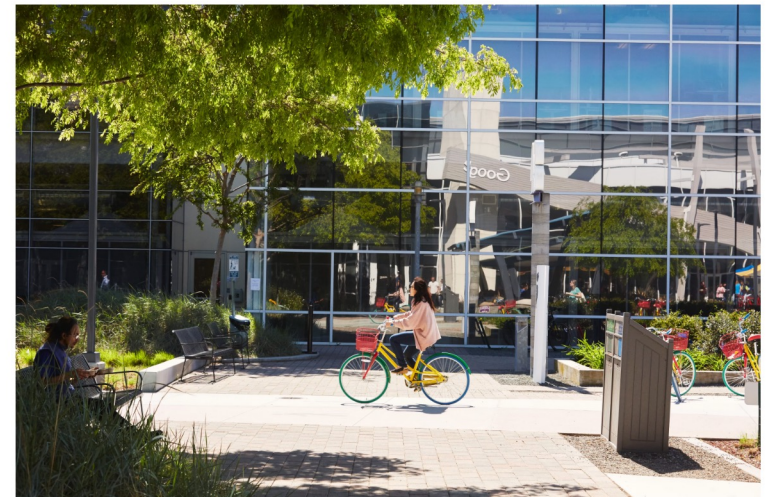
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Consumer duty May 18 2023

Majority of financial services brands fail Google's trust guidelines

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Putting on a show

The second part became “How financial services can please customers, compliance & Google with EEAT”, our launch event.

On top of the press exposure, we messaged people we knew within the finance world asking them to join up and invite their friends, put snippets of research out on LinkedIn, and asked other agencies to tell their FS clients. Anything we could do to get attendees, we did, as we knew that packing out this webinar would give us a pipeline that we’d live off for a long time to come.

Over 100 finance brands signed up to watch it, including senior marketers from the likes of:

- AXA
- Royal London
- Funding Circle
- L&G
- Coutts

For a business that was just days old, it was incredible to see such large and well-respected finance brands (the kind that most agencies spend years trying to get in front of) coming along to learn from us.

Impact

Huge results in a short time

Since then, in an agency just two months old, [Balance](#) has had the kind of success that most marketing agencies spend years trying to achieve:

- 11 briefs, against a target of four. Two of which exceed our entire year one new business target.
- A new client, paying £126k for paid media management (representing the first 6 months of our initial sales target).
- Requests for us to deliver this talk at other events, including FinTechWales and CIM.
- Six new inbound website enquiries, ranging from a national Wealth Management brand to a Swiss Private Equity firm.

Planet

We helped the planet at the same time by doing all of this online. Our brand interviews, the launch event, even our pitches have all been conducted remotely. When people have asked us to meet in person, we've declined, and we're yet to even print off a single sheet of A4!

Doing business ethically and being environmentally friendly matters to us.



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