

A person wearing a denim jacket, a dark cap, and sneakers is running down a city street, seen from behind. The street has white crosswalk lines, and there are buildings and parked cars in the background. The image has a purple tint and a torn-paper effect at the top right and bottom left corners.

The student marketers guide to:

NET NATIVES

Apprenticeships

September 2018
Revised edition



The student marketers guide to:

NET NATIVES

Understanding your prospective apprentices and how to tailor your digital strategy to attract, engage, and recruit them.

CONTENTS

- **Introduction** **page04**

- **Search Analysis** **page06**

When are learners searching for apprenticeships?
What are they searching for?
Which devices are they using?

- **Social Listening** **page10**

When are learners talking about apprenticeships?
Where are they talking about apprenticeships?
What is the general sentiments around apprenticeships?

- **Digital Strategies** **page16**

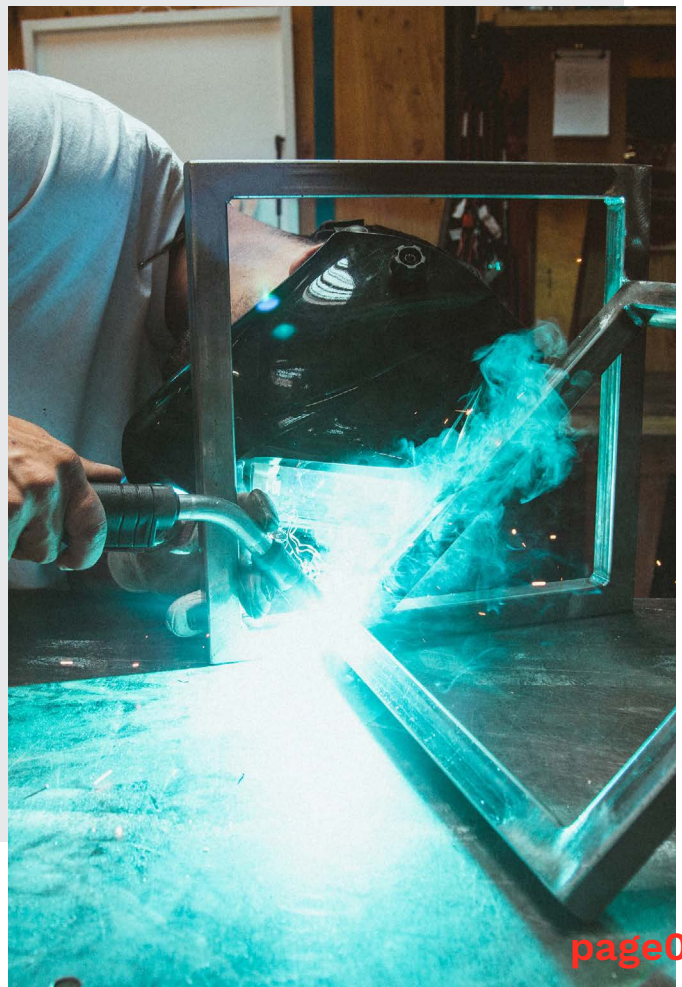
Create a digital planner
Understand the customer user journey
Employ data capture
Expand your existing database
Up your social media game

INTRODUCTION

The Apprenticeship Levy

The facts:

- The Apprenticeship Levy is being introduced on 6th April 2017.
- Employers that have an annual pay bill of over £3million will have to pay 0.5% of his towards the levy.
- This cotribution to be spent solely on apprenticeship training and end poing assessments (things like wages, travel and setting up the programme are not covered by the levy).
- The contribution from those who don't end up taking on an apprentice will be used to assist smaller companies that can't afford to invest in training. These smaller companies will still have to make their own contribution, but the rest of the cost will be handled by the government.
- This has been labelled as a 'co-investment'.
- The aim is to raise £3billion per year and fund three million apprenticeships by Summer 2020.



INTRODUCTION

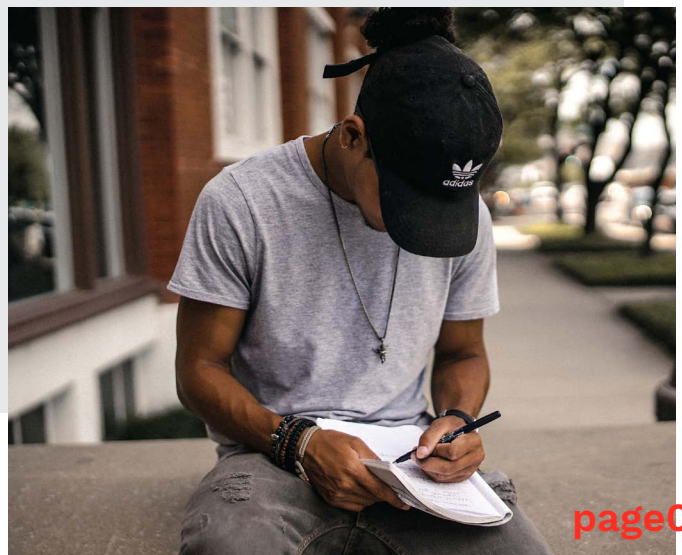
How will the apprenticeship levy effect the FE sector?

Benefits:

- Businesses will be paying a significant contribution towards training your apprentices.
- With cost of training subsidised by the levy, employers are likely to be more proactive and approachable regarding placements.
- Small business (under 50 employees) will be able to train 16-18 year old apprentices at no cost.
- The government are offering to pay for apprentices to complete Level 1 and 2 qualifications in Maths and English.
- There are financial incentives for both employers and providers.

Challenges:

- The apprenticeship market will become more competitive.
- Providers may not be the first port of call; businesses may use the Levy to upskill their own employees to management level.
- Employers can pause payment at any time if the apprentice takes a break from training or the provider is not offering the service agreed on. Therefore most parties must be committed to completing the training for the levy to benefit both learner and provider.



SEARCH ANALYSIS

When are learners searching for apprenticeships?

Net Natives Analytics, insights, and research team performed Google Search Analysis to gain insight into the search behaviours of prospective apprentices; when are they searching for information on apprenticeships, what kind of information are they searching for, and what devices are they using?

By understanding these behaviours, you'll be better equipped to be visible at the optimum time, with the right message and on the right device.

The introduction of the levy is likely to make the apprenticeship market increasingly competitive, with Government targets incentivising colleges and employers to recruit three million apprentices by 2020. Despite the recent national agenda focusing on apprenticeships, searches made in relation to apprenticeships have actually decreased between 2014/15 and 2015/16.



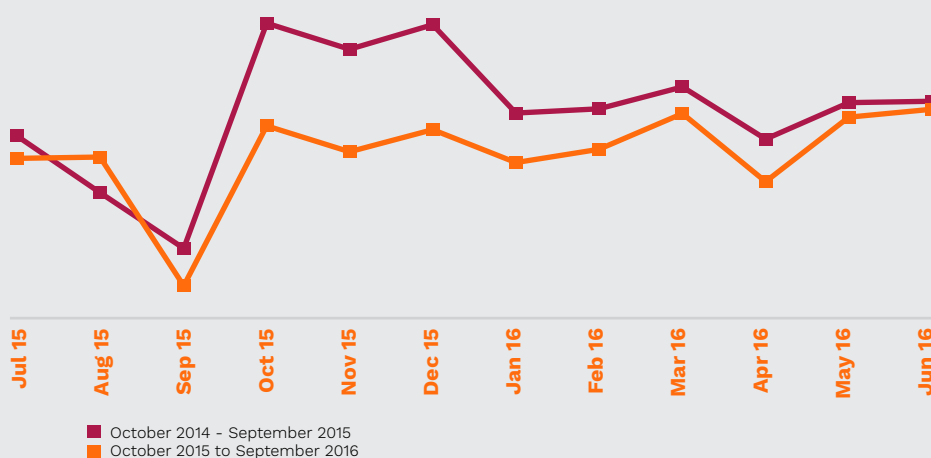
SEARCH ANALYSIS

When are learners searching for apprenticeships?

This graph illustrates how overall searches around apprenticeships are falling, with only November of the last academic year showing a higher number of searches than the previous year.

Overall, trends show a surge in searches in January, and a second rise in August/September. Marketers need to be smart on how they react to this, and ensure their campaigns are visible during these popular search periods.

Volume of Google searches in relation to apprenticeships in the UK



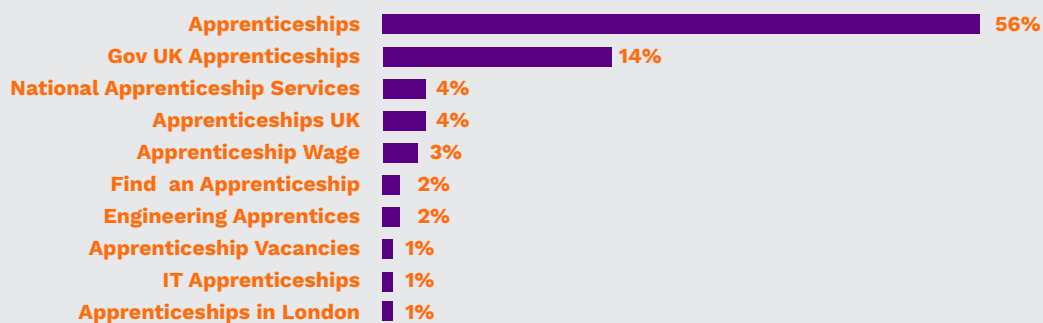
SEARCH ANALYSIS

What are they searching for?

By keeping up to date with the latest insights into what prospective apprentices are searching for, you'll be able to ensure your content is tailored to your audience's interests. In this chart, you can see the top ten most popular search terms in relation to apprenticeships in the UK, over the past twelve months.

Combined with the insight from the previous graph, which showed the most popular times that users are searching for these topics, this insight will allow you to reach your audience at the optimum time with a message that resonates.

Top 10 course subjects in relation to courses for adults



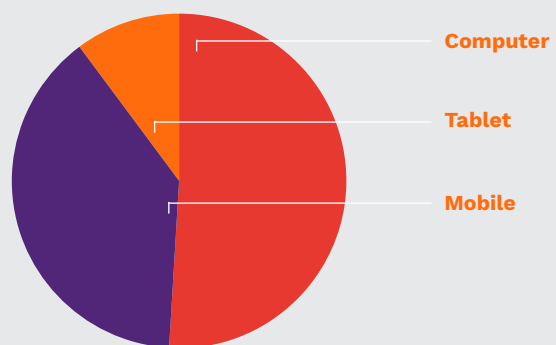
SEARCH ANALYSIS

What devices are they using?

16-18 year olds are highly active mobile users, and our research has shown that 39% of searches relating to apprenticeships have been made on a mobile device. This is a 9% increase on the previous year, while the use of desktop has decreased by 7%.

Therefore, it's vital that your all your online communications and marketing campaigns are mobile optimised. It can sometimes seem more challenging to advertise on mobile. Click through rates tend to be lower and cost per clicks have risen over the last twelve months. At Net Natives we combat this by using mobile preferred ad formats, call extensions and bid adjustments for our digital search campaigns. Internally, you should be making sure your website and landing pages are mobile optimised, in order to reduce abandonment.

Breakdown by device



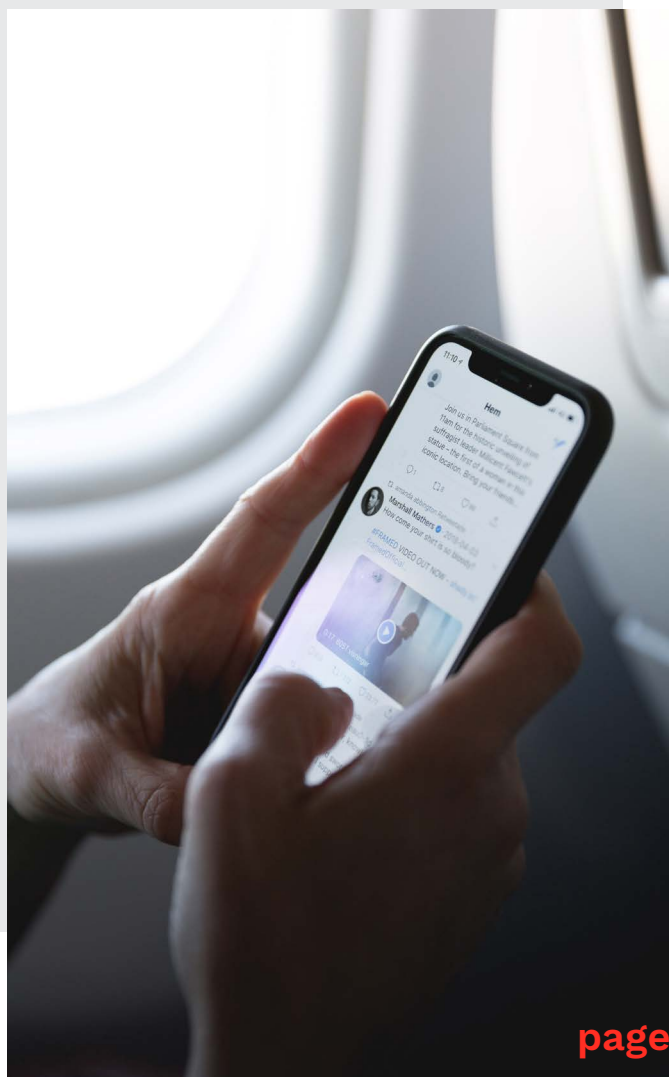
Mobile +10%
Tablet -3%
Desktop -7%

SOCIAL LISTENING

When are learners talking about apprenticeships?

Using top of the range social listening tools, we've tapped into the digital conversations taking place around apprenticeships to find out when people are talking about them, what platforms they are using, and what the common themes are.

With this insight, we can better understand the perceptions and digital behaviours of prospective apprentices.



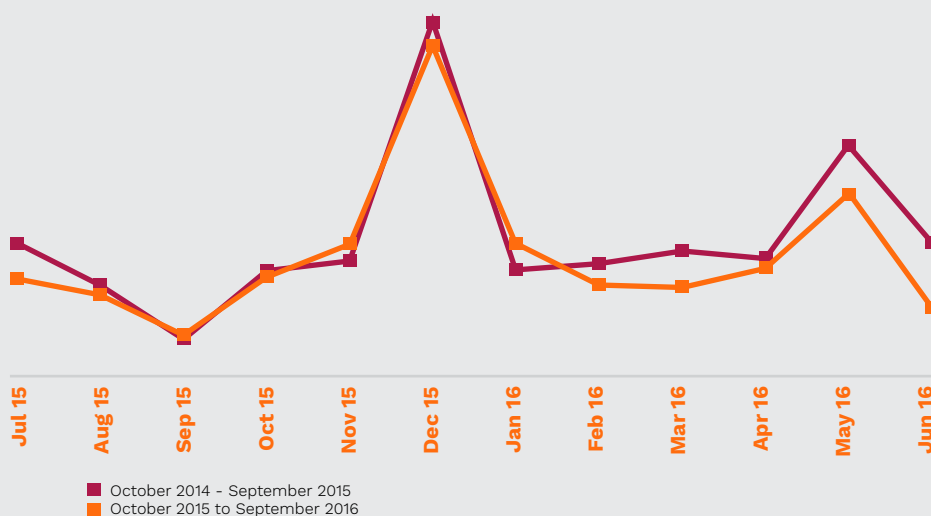
SOCIAL LISTENING

When are learners talking about apprenticeships?

In this graph, we can see a large spike in mentions of apprenticeships in March, which is likely to be in relation to National Apprenticeship Week. By understanding the patterns of when these digital conversations are happening, you can plan your content strategy to coincide with this timeline.

In contrast to a falling number of searches on Google, we found that conversations around apprenticeships on social platforms have increased, compared to the previous year. This suggests that social engagement is altering the online behaviours of this market, and therefore your marketing strategy should adapt to these changing behaviours.

Timeline of mentions for apprenticeships in the UK

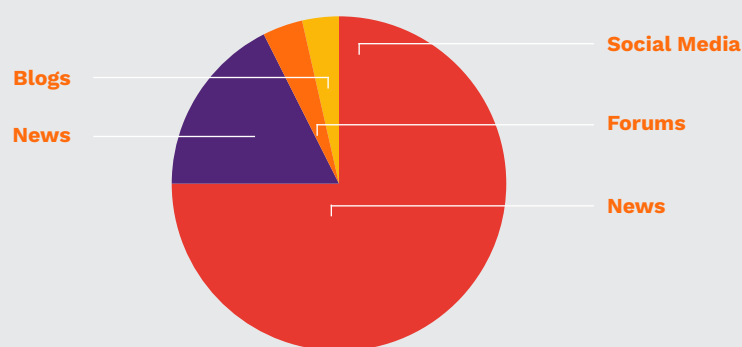


SOCIAL LISTENING

Where are they talking about apprenticeships?

The majority of online mentions around apprenticeships take place on social media, with the next most popular media types being news sites, forums and blogs.

Breakdown by media type for between October 2015 and September 2016



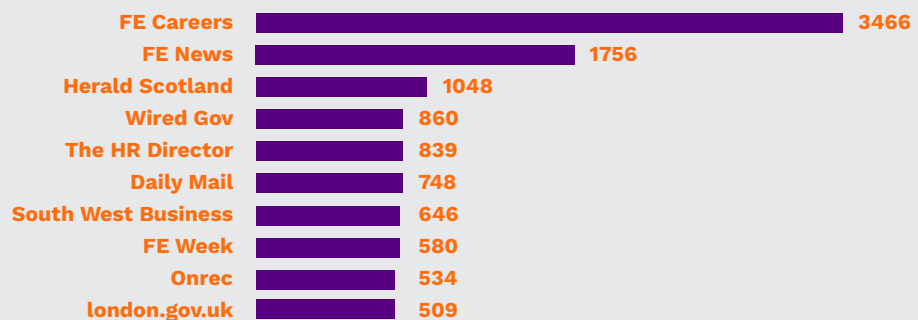
SOCIAL LISTENING

Where are they talking about apprenticeships?

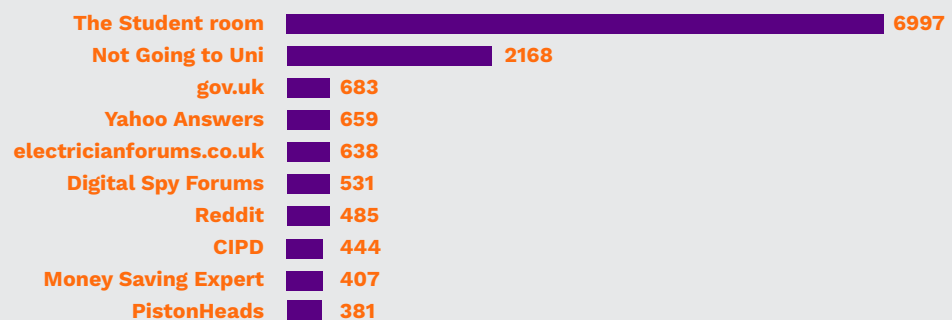
The charts below show the top ten news sites and blogs/forums that apprenticeships are being discussed on. By monitoring these sites, you'll gain an understanding of public

perceptions of apprenticeships, and perhaps even your own brand. This greater insight into your audience will enable you to shape your media plan and be reactive to their motivations and concerns.

Top 10 news sites



Top 10 forum and blog sites



SOCIAL LISTENING

What are learners saying about apprenticeships?

As you can see, there is a slight negative sentiment around the Apprenticeship Levy, with words like concerned, warn and confuse being used in discussions.

However, apprenticeships in general appear to have far more positive connotations.

Use this insight to inform your content and communications strategy; tap into your audience's positive attitude towards apprenticeships, whilst addressing their fears around the Levy.

Sentiment wordcloud for apprenticeships in general

#opportunity not consider concerned criticize
delight **best** #apprenticeship
terrible congratulation
happy
confuse INTEREST
hate
alarm
warm
not like
disgusting
ready GREAT
love FANTASTIC
problem
joke
please
shitty
fed up
exciting
look forward to
enjoy
shit poor quality
successful
detrimental
thank
vital shame
brilliant excite
good
poor
great opportunity
fantastic
success

DIGITAL STRATEGY

#1 Create a digital planner

You can now use this insight to inform a successful digital marketing strategy that will engage with prospective apprentices at the right time and on the platforms that they're most active. With less search activity but more social growth in the apprenticeships market, it's important to consider integrating social media advertising into your digital strategy, targeting learners where they are already expressing interest in apprenticeships.

In this section we'll share our best practice recommendations for building a successful digital campaign strategy, as well as some tips for creating great social media content that will engage with this unique audience.

With the apprenticeships market becoming more competitive, it's important to ensure you have an annual digital strategy in place, to attract and engage apprentices all year round. A digital planner takes

into account the findings from our social listening and search analysis, and will allow you to reach both employers and learners at the right times of the recruitment cycle, on the right platforms.

With increased social media activity around apprenticeships, you should consider putting a higher focus on digital campaigns as opposed to brand campaigns in traditional media. This will allow you to reach prospective apprentices at the optimum time, and on the platforms, which they are expressing an interest in apprenticeships.

Despite a decreased volume of searches year-on-year, there is a surge in searches for apprenticeships in January. Begin your annual planner by reaching out to employers in November/December, so that you'll be able to ensure there are employers to match the prospective apprentices who are searching in the new year. Using LinkedIn campaigns here would enable you to target specific industries.

January to March is when prospective apprentices are most actively searching for information, so during this period you should be targeting initial awareness campaigns and focussing on generating

DIGITAL STRATEGY

#1 Create a digital planner

enquiries (and capturing that valuable data!). Google Search campaigns will reach those learners who are actively searching for information, whilst Facebook & Twitter campaigns during this period can be used to generate awareness amongst passive audiences.

Following this initial awareness stage, use your captured data to keep prospects engaged, as well as creating lookalike audiences that are similar to your existing prospects, to generate further awareness. Towards the end of the recruitment cycle, you can be remarketing to those leads and prospects on Google and Facebook, to convert them into applications.

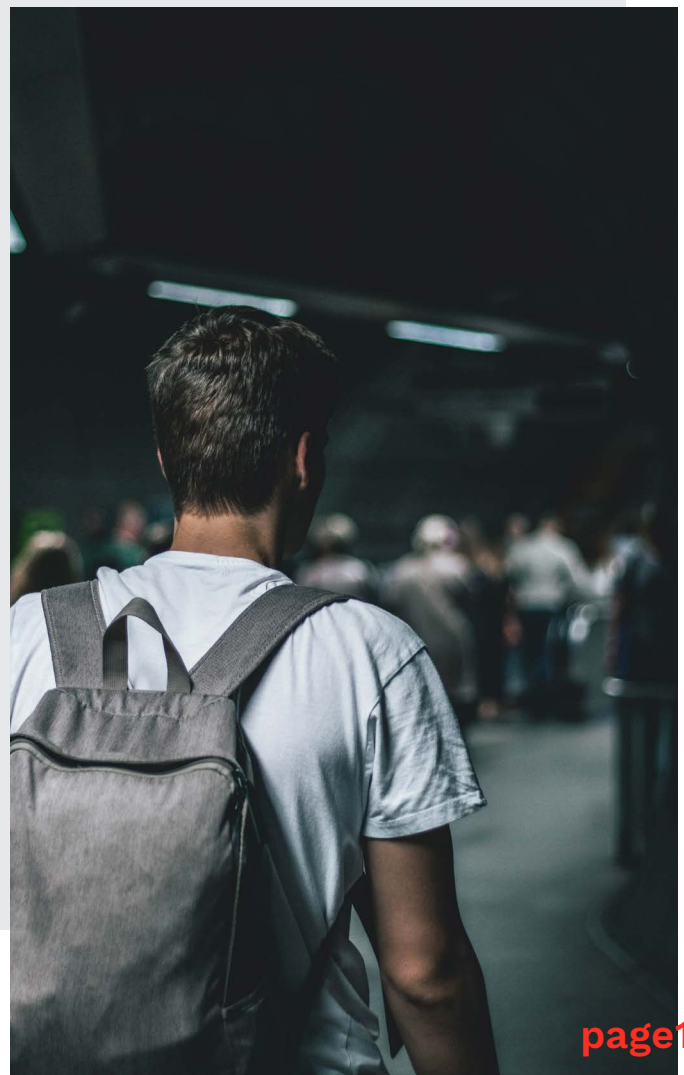


DIGITAL STRATEGY

#2 Understand the customer user journey

January to March is when prospective apprentices are most actively searching for information, so during this period you should be targeting initial awareness campaigns and focussing on generating enquiries (and capturing that valuable data!). Google Search campaigns will reach those learners who are actively searching for information, whilst Facebook & Twitter campaigns during this period can be used to generate awareness amongst passive audiences.

Following this initial awareness stage, use your captured data to keep prospects engaged, as well as creating lookalike audiences that are similar to your existing prospects, to generate further awareness. Towards the end of the recruitment cycle, you can be remarketing to those leads and prospects on Google and Facebook, to convert them into applications.

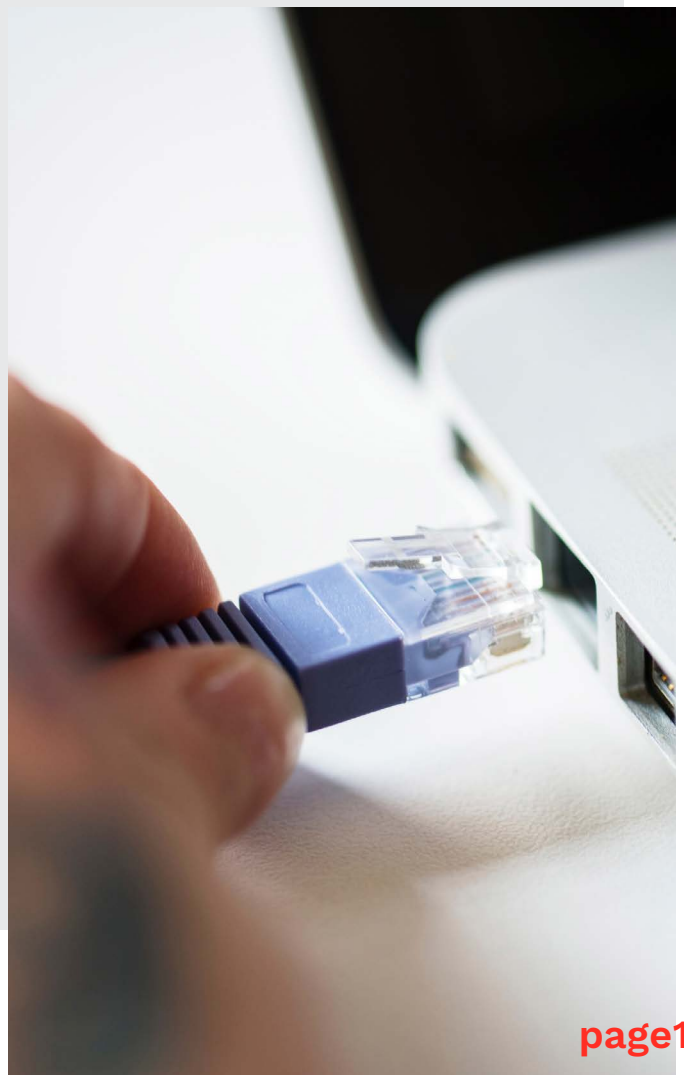


DIGITAL STRATEGY

#3 Employ data capture

Data is your most valuable asset. By collecting your audience data, you're able to gain a greater understanding of who your audience is, nurture your leads throughout the conversion funnel and generate new leads through data expansion.

Our own software, Akero, has been created to quickly capture data, and allow the marketing and admissions teams to easily qualify the leads and decide whose enquiries should be prioritised. Depending on what content they engaged with and what information they filled out in an enquiry form, you can send highly personalised email communications and nurture the leads through each stage of the learner journey.



DIGITAL STRATEGY

#4 Expand your existing database

Another benefit of capturing data to build a database is having the ability to expand your audience, using Facebook Lookalike Audiences or Google's Customer Match.

While you are running these initial awareness campaigns to new audiences, you should also be running keep warm campaigns to those who have already enquired about your apprenticeship programmes. By using Google's Custom Audiences, you can easily target those who have already engaged with your brand, hopefully resulting in higher conversions.

To do this, you must first ensure your database is segmented into relevant groups, such as apprentices, adult learners, and so on.

You can then upload this list of apprenticeship enquirers to Facebook and Google, where they will be matched to existing users by demographics, interests and behaviours - allowing you to reach

new people with your apprenticeships campaigns across Facebook, Google Display Network, YouTube and Gmail.

While you are running these initial awareness campaigns to new audiences, you should also be running keep warm campaigns to those who have already enquired about your apprenticeship programmes. By using Google's Custom Audiences, you can easily target those who have already engaged with your brand, hopefully resulting in higher conversions.



DIGITAL STRATEGY

#5 Up your social media game

With online conversations around apprenticeships on the rise, it's vital to be active across a variety of social platforms to be able to tap into this highly-engaged audience. Here are just a few ways you can ensure you're making the most of the buzz on social media.



Mix up your content

Not every piece of social media content needs to be directly promotional, in fact, you're more likely to get a reaction from your audience by engaging with them on an emotional level. Think about creating types of content that are useful (such as linking to a blog post or news piece), inspiring (sharing success stories of your existing students) or entertaining (a fun gif or meme relating to a trending topic) in order to really engage with your social media followers.

Not only will these types of content be more valuable to your audience, they're also more likely to be seen. Facebook's algorithm

tends to give less reach to posts that are considered highly promotional.



Listen to your Facebook insights

Take a look at your Facebook Insights to see which pieces of content have been particularly well received by your audience. Use this information to inform your content output, and produce more of the posts that you know engage with your audience.



Experiment with Facebook's formats

Facebook alone has a huge range of different advertising and post types; Facebook Live to stream your apprenticeship fairs in real time, image carousels to feature multiple apprenticeship options in one post, Lead Gen ads to allow prospects to autofill enquiry forms without even leaving the platform, are just a few examples of different formats you can use to engage with prospective apprentices and stand out from the crowd.



Tap into Snapchat

Snapchat is the most popular social media platform amongst your target demographic, and now institutions are able to create their

DIGITAL STRATEGY

#5 Up your social media game

own geo-filters; graphic overlays that users can put over their snaps to show off where they are/what they're doing. Create a specific geo-filter for apprentices, and get your current learners to act as ambassadors to prospective new learners.



Build your community on Instagram

Instagram is a fantastic platform for fostering a better relationship with your prospects. As well as being able to visually showcase your facilities and different types of placements on offer, you can use hashtags to bring apprentices together. Try using the government's #getingofar hashtag to connect nationally, and set up your own hashtag to bring together your own community of learners. Instagram is also a great platform for posting user generated content. Re-post your learners' snaps (crediting them, of course) to authentically tell your brand's story and through the eyes of your community.



ABOUT NATIVES GROUP

Who are we?

We are a collection of specialist brands who can either solve individual problems or work collectively as partners to our clients.



NATIVES GLOBAL
CONSULTING

Akero



edurank

CEREBRO™

THE
NATIVE



your objectives. Then we add knowledge, expertise and superlative execution. And we make something amazing.

We deliver a range of creative solutions that will make your college stand out from the crowd, including; digital and print advertising, email template and microsite design, video production, photography, experiential and animation. We pioneer the use of the latest innovative creative formats for the education sector.

What is the secret to a successful advertising campaign? Combining your data with inspiring creative and copy. We believe in the importance of collecting and using your audience data to inform our targeting and messaging.

Who are Net Natives?

We are **creatives, thinkers, makers, planners and doers** - tenacious, talented and together, more than the sum of our parts. We know great campaigns all start with one thing: understanding. So that's where we begin - with you, your audience, your ambitions and

Contact Us

www.netnatives.com
+44(0) 1273 922358
hello@netnatives.com



@netnatives



/netnatives

SERVICES:

Here are just some of the services our team of experts can work with your institution on:

Advertising

- Direct media planning and buying
- Biddable media (search, social & programmatic)
- Attribution tracking
- End to end reporting

Creative

- Video and photography
- Creative concepts
- Graphic design
- HTML5 displays ads
- Copywriting

Analytics and Insight

- Desk and field-based market research
- Analytics
- Business intelligence
- SEO Training
- Conversion strategies
- Strategic content development
- Lead generation and nurturing
- Competitive analysis
- Performance analysis

Student Engagement

- Student audience panel
- Brand advertising
- Lead generation campaigns
- Community management

International Expertise

- Chinese social platform management
- China digital advertising
- Local website and microsite development

Social Media

- Social media and social content strategy
- Social media training

Strategic Marketing

- Reputation and SEO management
- Consulting and project management.

Marketing Software

- Marketing performance software
- Data visualisation software
- Social media content performance software