

# System Integrators and their Partners: **A Digital Health Check**

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Evaluating the effectiveness of the digital footprint of the world's top system integrators and their online partner presence

coterie.



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**We analysed the “digital footprint” of 25 of the world’s top system integrators and their online partners’ digital footprints — from a prospective customer’s point of view.**

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# What is a digital footprint?

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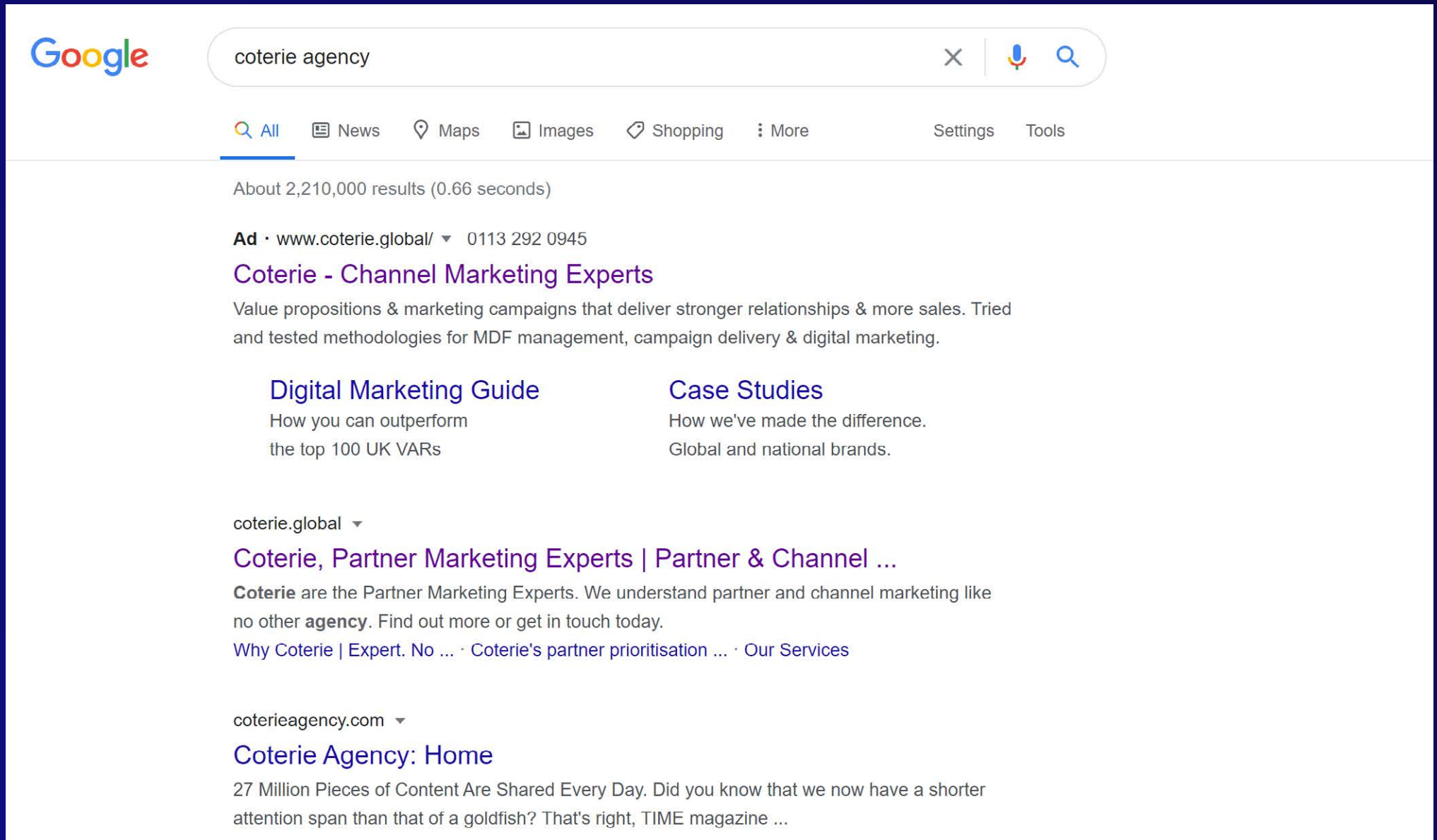
**It's the imprint you make on the online world for everyone to find.**

Google your own company name, for example, and you'll get an idea of what other people, including prospective customers, will see when they look for you online.

**You might just be surprised...**



# This is what happens when you Google Coterie.



The image shows a screenshot of a Google search results page for the query "coterie agency". The search bar at the top contains the text "coterie agency" and has a search icon on the right. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for "All", "News", "Maps", "Images", "Shopping", and "More", along with "Settings" and "Tools". The search results indicate "About 2,210,000 results (0.66 seconds)".

The first result is an advertisement for Coterie, with the URL "www.coterie.global/" and the phone number "0113 292 0945". The title is "Coterie - Channel Marketing Experts". The description reads: "Value propositions & marketing campaigns that deliver stronger relationships & more sales. Tried and tested methodologies for MDF management, campaign delivery & digital marketing." Below the description are two sub-sections: "Digital Marketing Guide" with the text "How you can outperform the top 100 UK VARs" and "Case Studies" with the text "How we've made the difference. Global and national brands."

The second result is from "coterie.global" with the title "Coterie, Partner Marketing Experts | Partner & Channel ...". The description states: "Coterie are the Partner Marketing Experts. We understand partner and channel marketing like no other agency. Find out more or get in touch today." Below the description are three links: "Why Coterie | Expert. No ...", "Coterie's partner prioritisation ...", and "Our Services".

The third result is from "coterieagency.com" with the title "Coterie Agency: Home". The description reads: "27 Million Pieces of Content Are Shared Every Day. Did you know that we now have a shorter attention span than that of a goldfish? That's right, TIME magazine ...".

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# 90%

**of B2B buyers will search online  
before making a decision.**

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If they can't find you, they won't buy from you.

That's what good looks like, prospects &  
customers find you and engage with you online.

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**There are over**  
**1,810,000,000**  
**live websites today.\***

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And thousands of vendors, system integrators, VARs, and IT consultants across the world with similar names, offering similar products or services.

All are competing for your prospect's attention.

\* There are actually about 1.5 billion live URLs, but many of these are not in use.

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# If you and your partners' joint digital presence is **poor**:

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- ✔ New prospects will struggle to find you online
- ✔ Existing customers will lose confidence in you, or worse, get distracted by better performing competitors
- ✔ Your sales efforts will be hampered by outdated content, difficult to find resources, and poor lead conversion practices



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# Remember: Google is your homepage

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You'll often hear people say that your website home page is your shop window.

But the Google search engine result page (SERP), offers users so much information, there's a chance that prospects will make their mind up about you before they even reach your website.





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# Methodology

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We looked at 4 significant areas of the digital footprint for every one of the top 25 system integrators and their partner ecosystem.

**1**

Search user  
experience

**2**

Website best  
practice

**3**

Content  
marketing

**4**

Marketing  
technology

Then we scored them based on digital marketing best practice.

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# Let's start with search user experience.

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After all, that's where prospects and customers usually start.

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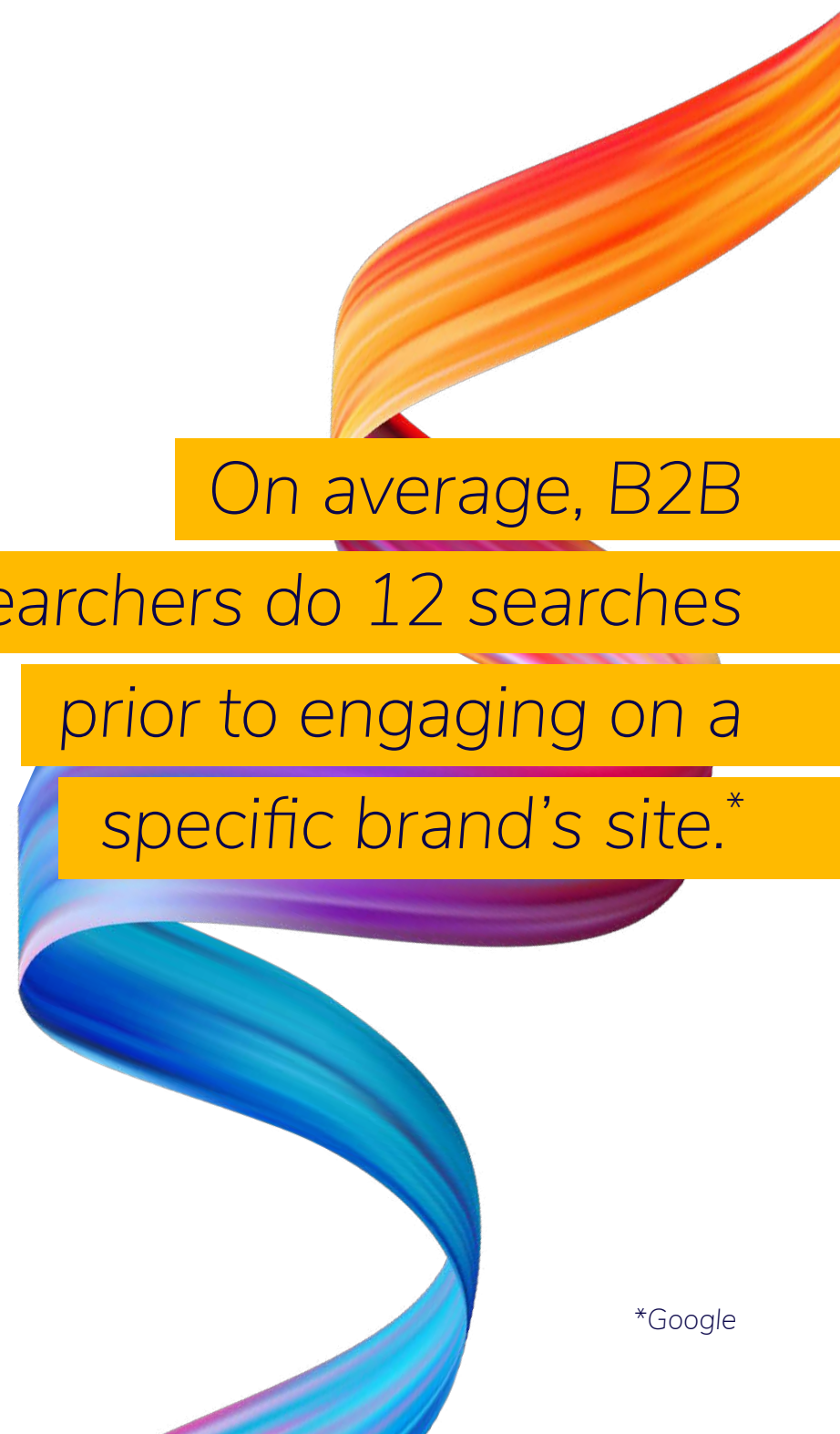
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# Search for brand term and partners

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This is where a company appears on the search engine result page for its own brand name and “partners”.

This is strong intent-based signal that a prospect is looking for a system integrator’s partner ecosystem.



On average, B2B  
researchers do 12 searches  
prior to engaging on a  
specific brand’s site.\*

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# And an opportunity for SIs to show off their, and their partners', credentials.

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However:

20% of SIs were not in P1 for a search on their brand name and the term "partners"

Of the SIs that were in P1, only 40% were taking advantage of brand search ads

Over half of the SIs had a poor Google My Business/Knowledge Panel listing

This matters because even if a prospective customer is actively looking for you, they might not find you, or like what they find!

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# Why is this happening?

## It could be because:

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**1**

Your brand name is generic or easily confused with something, or someone, else

**2**

A competitor is bidding on your brand name

**3**

You're not using Google Ads to bid on your brand name (take advantage of ad groups to show different ads for different search terms, including "partners")

**4**

You haven't claimed, cultivated, or recently updated your GMB or Knowledge Panel listing



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# 46% of brand searches for an SI and a partner name together returned a poor quality SERP



[SI] and [partner]

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## What does good look like?

A perfect search engine results page takes advantage of every tool Google has to offer businesses, including:

- ✓ Ads, fully utilising ad extensions
- ✓ Featured snippets
- ✓ Organic listing
- ✓ Knowledge Panel/GMB listing



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# Website user experience.

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So what happens when prospects find the SIs and their partner pages?

To evaluate website user experience, we looked at four key signals:

**Responsiveness:**

is a site responsive or  
has a mobile version

**HTTPS:**

is a site secure,  
using https

**Overall UX:**

how easily can a prospect  
find information such as  
services, contact details,  
and accreditations or  
other social proof

**Page speed:**

how quickly the  
content on your  
site loads


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# Every SI had both a responsive and secure (https) website but...

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None of the sites met Google's new Core Web Vitals criteria and:

- ✓ all but 1 had poor scores on mobile
- ✓ none had good scores on desktop with 40% scoring "poor" and 60% "needing improvement"



70% of B2B searches expected to be on mobile in 2020.\*

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# Why is page speed important?

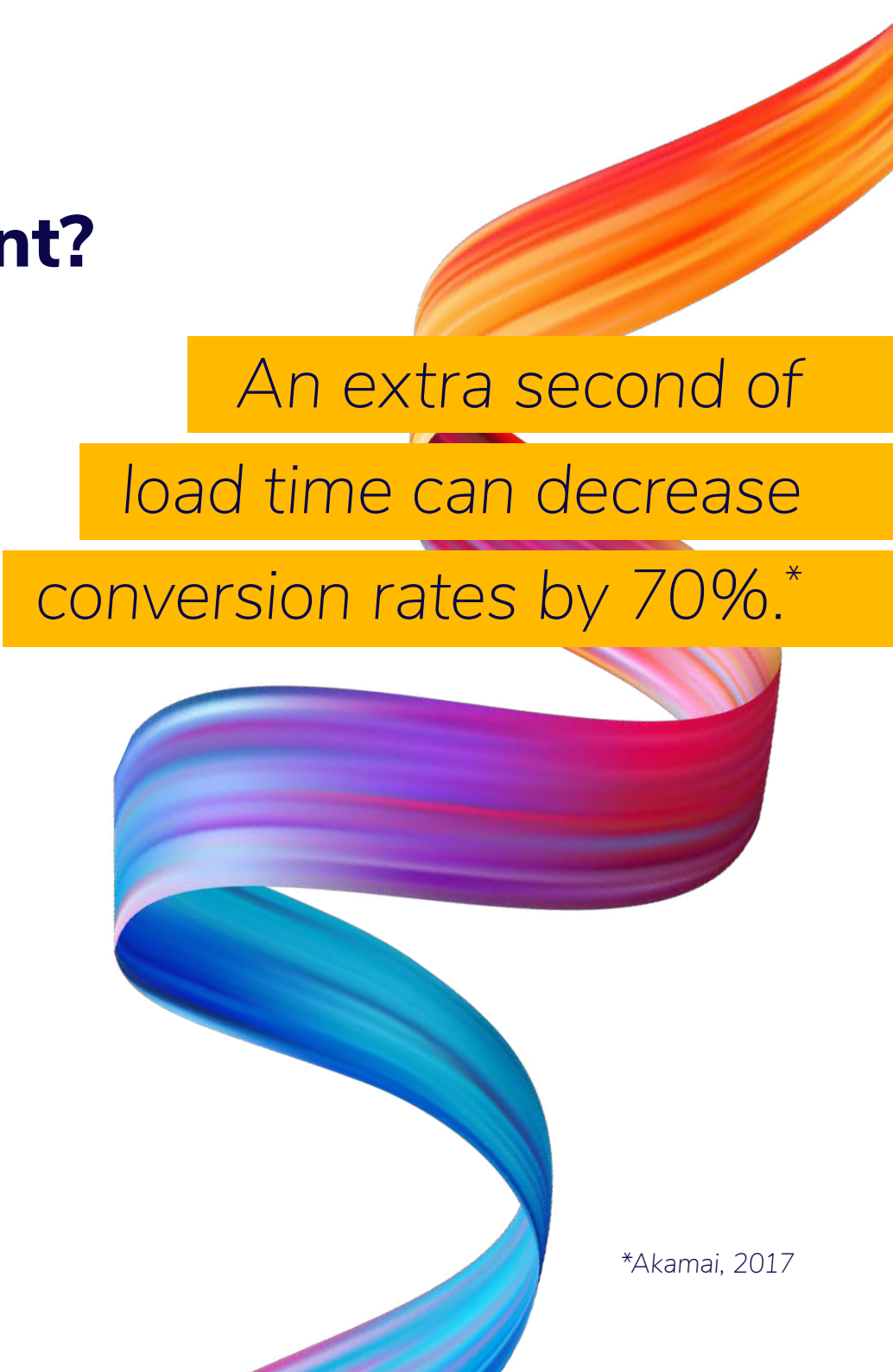
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## User experience

users expect websites to be fast, on both desktop and mobile, and disappointing them can have a significant on both satisfaction and conversion rates

## SEO

Google knows page speed is important to users, so it factors in page speed in its ranking algorithm. The advent of Core Web Vitals makes Google's intention to reward fast websites, and punish slow ones, all the more explicit



An extra second of  
load time can decrease  
conversion rates by 70%.\*

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# User experience.

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Nearly half of SI partner pages were scored “okay” on user experience, meaning there’s quite a lot of room for improvement!

**In addition to the page speed issues already mentioned, common mistakes include:**

- ✓ Poor navigation
- ✓ Hidden contact details
- ✓ Sending prospects off to partner sites (often the homepage) with no context or further information
- ✓ Bland content tailored neither for partners nor for prospects
- ✓ Lack of conversion features

37% of users  
will leave  
because of  
poor design  
or navigation.\*



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# User experience

## **Conversion features**

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Your website should make it enticing, and easy, for prospective customers to get in touch with you and offer you their contact details for future contact.

**Good conversion features include:**

- ✓ Clearly visible phone number
- ✓ Newsletter or blog subscription
- ✓ Valuable, gated content
- ✓ Live chat



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# User experience

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Over 70% of SIs failed to have good conversion features on their main partner pages.

## Why does this matter?

44% of B2B marketers say the main reason they abandon websites is that there's no contact info immediately visible.

(KoMarketing, 2015)

22% (11 out of 50) of the fastest-growing B2B companies have a live chat widget on their website.

(Drift)



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# User experience

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46% will leave a website  
because of a lack of message.

*(MarketingProfs, 2015)*

In partner terms, this means there is no clear joint value proposition to help prospects understand how the SI's partnership with key vendors can help them.

**Which leads us nicely on to...**



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# Content marketing.

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Creating valuable content for prospects and customers is a key activity for supporting the sales cycle and retaining existing customers.

**We looked at a key content features including:**

**Pulse:** did the site offer new or recent content

**Newsletter:** did the site have an easily discoverable newsletter (or blog) subscription

**Gated content:** was valuable content such as whitepapers easily discoverable from the homepage and was it gated in a sensible, ux-friendly way

More than half of all B2B buyers view at least eight pieces of content during the purchase process, and 82% of buyers viewed at least five pieces of content from the vendor prior to purchase.\*



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# Only 56% of SI/partner pages had good quality content

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Nearly one third had no dedicated page to articulate their joint value proposition, instead opting for a simple list of partners with links off to partner sites (usually just to the homepage).

This is a missed opportunity to work with partners and create unique, compelling content that illustrates the value of the relationship.






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# Content marketing

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All of the SI partner pages had reasonably up to date content but only 12% had evidence of newsletter/email marketing programmes in place to push that content out.

Of the 3 that did have email marketing programmes in place only one was using a GDPR compliant double opt in following sign up!



79% of B2B marketers credit email as the most effective distribution channel for demand gen efforts.\*

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# Marketing Technology

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There are several technology best practices that are fundamental to B2B digital marketing.

- ✓ Google Analytics
- ✓ Google Tag Manager (GTM)
- ✓ Marketing Automation
- ✓ LinkedIn Insight tag
- ✓ Remarketing



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# Nearly all of our SIs are using GTM, GA (or another analytics solution) and a marketing automation platform.

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After one year of MA use  
32% claim to see increased  
revenue. For those to have  
been using it for more than  
two years the figure is 40%.

*B2Bmarketing.net and Circle Research  
"Benchmarking Report Marketing automation" (2015)*



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# Over a third of SIs were not utilising the LinkedIn Insight Tag

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## What are they missing?

The Insight tag is a free tool from LinkedIn that enables better campaign reporting and provide valuable insights about your website visitors.

If you're doing any LinkedIn advertising, you can use the LinkedIn Insight Tag to track conversions, retarget website visitors, and unlock additional insights about members interacting with your ads.



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# Remarketing

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**Nearly a quarter showed no evidence of remarketing programmes in place**

Showing ads to prospects, customers and stakeholders (such as investors) who have visited your website, or landing pages, is a great way to stay front of mind during what can be a long, complicated consideration cycle.

There are number of platforms that offer low cost remarketing opportunities, including the Google display network, LinkedIn and even Facebook.





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# What next?

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If you need help improving your digital footprint, or working more effectively with your partners to make your joint digital presence work harder for you, the experts at Coterie can help with:

- ✓ **Joint value proposition development**
- ✓ **In-depth digital audits, including detailed conversion optimisation**
- ✓ **Digital GTM strategies and execution**
- ✓ **Customer journey mapping**

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