

CORE
OPTIMISATION
THE RESULTS AGENCY

THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

RETAIL EDITION

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS
MAY 2025

The Digital Landscape

Retail Edition

Navigating the digital marketing landscape can be overwhelming, with constant changes making it a daunting space. With this in mind, we introduce the Digital Landscape, your bi-monthly guide crafted by Core Optimisation's digital experts.

Our goal is to simplify the complexities of digital marketing and provide you with the insights needed to enhance your online presence, engage prospective customers, and stay ahead of the competition.

This report covers actionable insights on current trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the retail industry. Key topics include detailed analysis and trends around GA4, PPC, Paid Social and SEO.

Google Analytics

Since switching to GA4, many businesses are unknowingly **missing critical data** because their setup wasn't done correctly. If your GA4 isn't tracking purchases, ad performance, or website interactions accurately, you could be **wasting thousands on ads with no return** and making decisions based on faulty data.

Here is a tip from our GA4 Expert, Tony Newlands: ***"Before investing in ads, ensure GA4 properly tracks every step of the customer journey from first click to checkout. If you're unsure whether GA4 setup is correct, get an expert audit before investing more in online ads. A flawed setup can lead to misleading reports, lost sales, and wasted ad spend."***



GA4 Health Check: Is Your Tracking Accurate?

- ✓ Tracks key actions (purchases, signups, clicks)
- ✓ Covers website, booking system & payment provider
- ✓ Accurately attributes revenue & ad performance
- ✓ Filters out internal traffic
- ✗ Flawed setup = Wasted Ad Spend
- ⚠ Missing data? Get an expert audit before running ads.

Pay Per Click/Paid Search

With the **cost of living** still front of mind, shoppers are more **price conscious** than ever, but they're not just looking for discounts. They want **value**. That's why PPC campaigns that focus on specific product categories like "**own brand essentials**" or "**bestsellers under €25**" are outperforming broad, generic ads. Many retailers still spread budget too thin across everything, instead of **doubling down** on what people are **actually buying**.

Here's a tip from our PPC Expert, Simon Geoghegan: "Focus on the **20%** of products that drive **80%** of your sales. Build campaigns around your **bestsellers**, top search terms, and high margin categories. Use **Shopping** and **Performance Max** to showcase value led products, and tailor your ad copy for cost conscious customers. **Small changes** here often deliver **big returns**."



**Would You Use
Your Shelves Like
This?**

**Then Don't Use
Your Ads Like
That.**



Paid Social

More and more consumers now turn to **TikTok** when **researching** products, using it like they would Google or YouTube. But instead of reading articles or watching 10 minute reviews, they want **fast, visual content** that shows what the product **looks** like, how it **works**, and what real people **think** of it. For retailers, TikTok has become a powerful **new search engine**, one that few are using **well**.

Here's a tip from our Paid Social Expert, Colm Daly: *"Optimise your TikTok content for how people **search**. Use short videos to show products in **action**, compare **alternatives**, and highlight **real life reactions**. Include **searchable terms** like **brand names** or **'back in stock'** in captions. **Pair this with retargeting ads** to stay in front of **high intent** viewers. It's not just about going viral, it's about being **discoverable** when people are **actively looking to buy**."*



Turning TikTok Searches Into Sales

- ✓ Use real search terms in captions (e.g. brand, style, 'in stock now')
- ✓ Create short, mobile first videos showing the product in use
- ✓ Share comparisons and reviews to help customers choose
- ✓ Retarget people who watched or engaged with your content
- ✓ Drive to mobile optimised product pages with fast load times

Search Engine Optimisation

Your **category pages** are likely some of the **highest traffic** pages on your retail site, yet for many brands, they're costing sales. **Why?** Because Google sees them as thin, duplicated, or irrelevant. Without proper **content, structure, and schema**, they're buried in search results while competitors dominate the space and take your customers.


Here is a tip from our SEO Expert, Colm Bonus: *"Retailers often invest heavily in **product pages**, but it's **category pages** that influence **buying decisions** at scale. Add unique content, answer common buyer questions, and use schema markup to get noticed in Google's **AI-enhanced** results. If your category pages aren't optimised, you're not just losing **visibility**, you're losing **revenue**."*




Where Your SEO Is Falling Flat

❌ Missed Opportunity

Category | Shop Now










- Ranking low
- No enhanced features
- Gets buried by competitors results
- Feels empty, generic, forgettable


✅ High Performing SEO Asset

Shop Men's Waterproof Hiking Boots – Lightweight, Durable & Rated 5 ★

Lightweight materials meet rugged durability for all seasons.



\$99 \$99 \$99 \$99 \$99



- Rich snippets
- Visible in AI Overviews
- Increased clicks and conversions
- Clear, trustworthy, helpful

What is happening in the world of Digital Marketing?

AI Overviews

Google's new AI Overviews are pushing traditional blue links further down the page. To stay visible, retailers need to focus on structured data, product-rich content, and FAQs that help AI pull their brand into the spotlight.



Product Discovery

Shoppers are discovering products through content not just ads. TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Reels are now search tools, review platforms, and sales drivers rolled into one. Retail brands that create engaging, searchable content are winning attention and conversions.



First-Party Data

With tracking limitations growing and cookie-based targeting on the decline, building your own database via email sign-ups, loyalty programs, and SMS opt-ins is more important than ever for future proofing your marketing.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Fix GA4 First:** If your tracking isn't accurate, you could be wasting thousands on ads without real results.
- ✓ **Focus PPC Where It Pays Off:** Don't spread your budget thin, double down on your bestsellers and high-margin categories to drive stronger ROI.
- ✓ **SEO Starts with What People Actually Search:** Your category pages hold massive potential; optimise them with useful content and structured data to win traffic and conversions.
- ✓ **TikTok Is the New Search Engine:** Shoppers want fast, visual proof before they buy, optimise short form content for discovery, not just views.

Discover How We Can Help

Get in touch with our Business Development Manager, Mike Flynn, to discover how we can help you thrive in today's digital landscape.



mike@coreoptimisation.com
+353 87 354 2308



www.coreoptimisation.com