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Search Reimagined:  
**The New Organic Playbook**

**Search** is changing.

# A brief history of finding stuff online

Search behaviours are being redefined, but this isn't new, search has been changing for over a decade and it isn't slowing down. We need to adapt, otherwise your organic performance suffers.

## Pre 2010

### The foundations of search

Search began as the simple "10 blue links". Visibility depended on keyword density, metadata and backlinks.

## 2010 - 2016

### The understanding age

Search engines got smarter and intent became important. Semantic relevance became important when optimising websites.

## 2016 - 2023

### The scroll stopping era

The audience got lazy so brands needed to stand out on the visual SERPs. This was where we saw the rise of zero click searches and the introduction of various SERP features.

## 2023 - 2024

### The discovery shift

We started talking about "Social Search" and users began discovering brands in other places. Google tried to launch "Perspectives" highlighting that they noticed the audience were looking for real people opinions over search engines.

## 2024 - now

### The search shift

Search is more fragmented than ever. The audience are using social platforms, AI and search engines for all aspects of the search journey. There's so much noise on these platforms, so ranking is no longer the goal, earning your audience's attention is.

Google is **losing**  
**market share.**

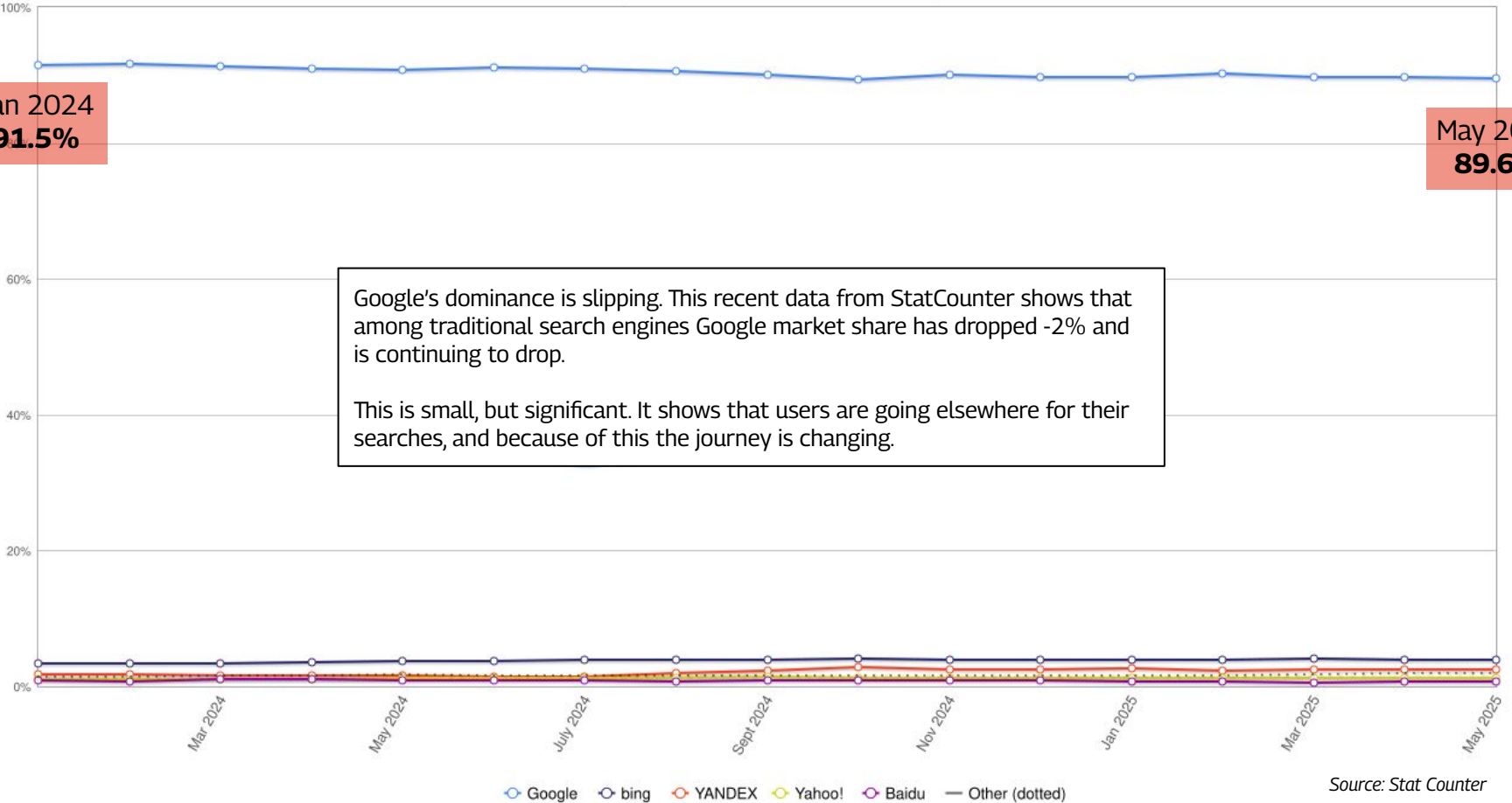
StatCounter Global Stats  
Search Engine Market Share Worldwide from Jan 2024 - May 2025

Jan 2024  
**91.5%**

May 2025  
**89.6%**

Google's dominance is slipping. This recent data from StatCounter shows that among traditional search engines Google market share has dropped -2% and is continuing to drop.

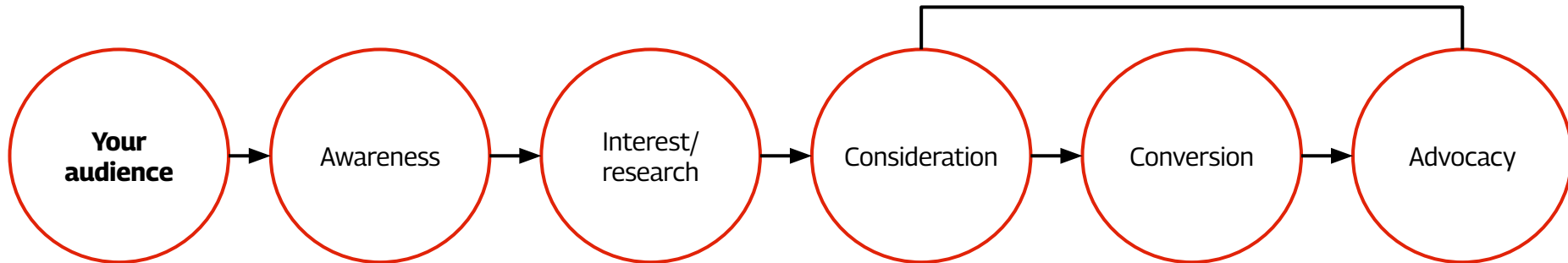
This is small, but significant. It shows that users are going elsewhere for their searches, and because of this the journey is changing.



## The assumed journey...

This is the traditional funnel, it's logical and still used in most marketing plans, however we'd argue that it is outdated.

In reality, people don't move in this linear path, they skip stages, revisit them and switch platforms as they go.



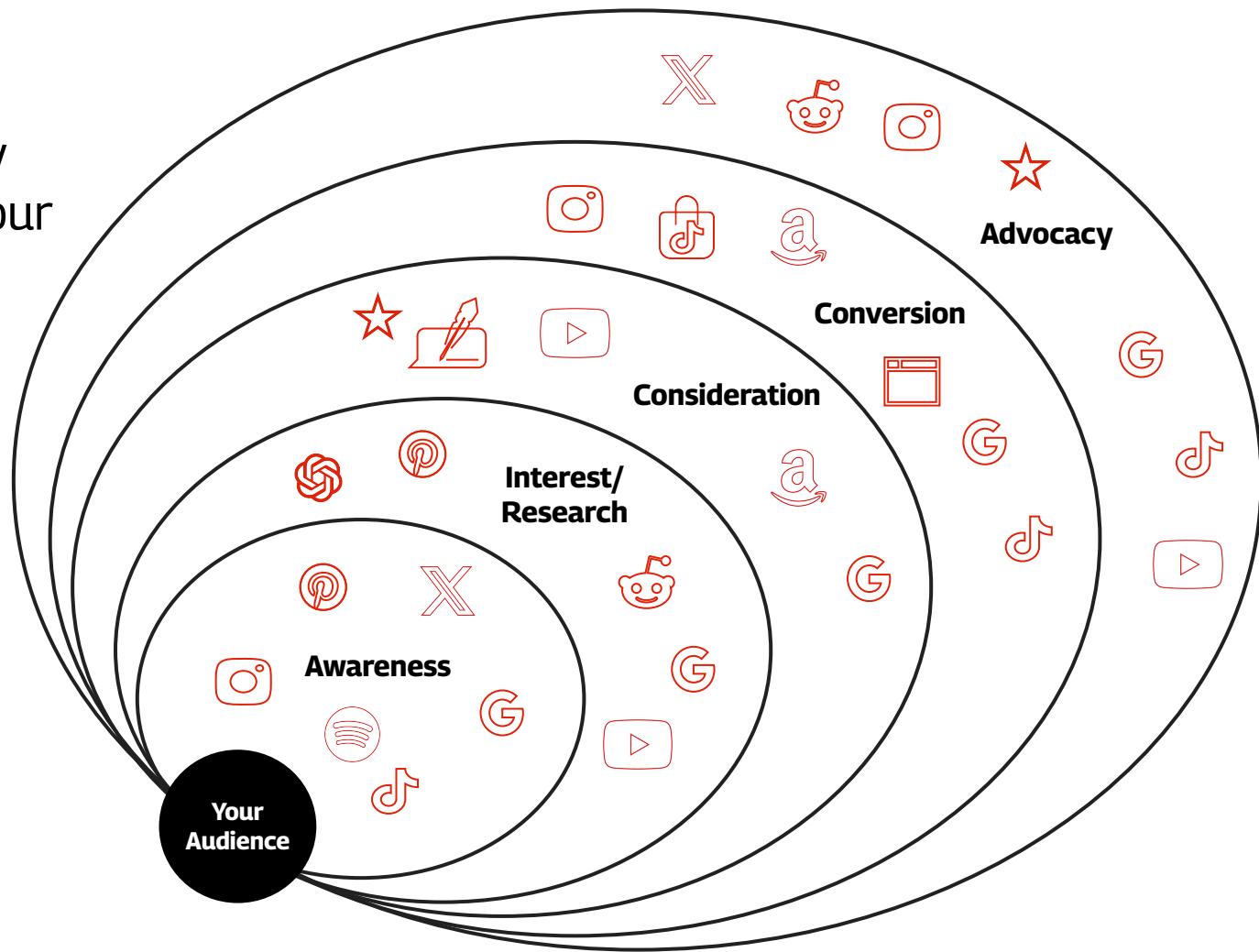
# The search journey now orbits behaviour

This is a much more realistic view of how people search today.

The journey orbits around the audience, who jump between orbits as they search.

They might discover a product on Instagram, research it on Reddit and then convert on Google. Or they might discover and buy in a few minutes direct on TikTok.

Modern search strategies should not focus on optimising for one platform, you need to show up everywhere your audience searches.



SEO isn't dead, it became  
**Organic Strategy**



So, where and how are we  
**“Googling”** now?

# Search is shaped by platforms

We also need to consider how platforms are reshaping the way audience search.

They are setting new expectations on how the results should look and the audience is learning behaviours on one platform but using them across all others. To build effective organic strategies we need to understand these behaviours and apply the leanings cross-platform.



**GOOGLE**

Provides users with answers before we click.

Making visibility more important.



**TIKTOK**

Makes searching visual, emotional and human.

Making cultural relevance essential.



**REDDIT**

Delivers unfiltered, trusted opinions.

Making authenticity a key search signal.



**CHAT GPT**

Gives instant, conversational answers.

Making clarity more powerful than clicks.



**AMAZON**

Wraps search in reviews and proof.

Making trust the conversion driver.

**Organic** is about showing up where  
it matters, **earning attention** and  
being the brand they **choose**.

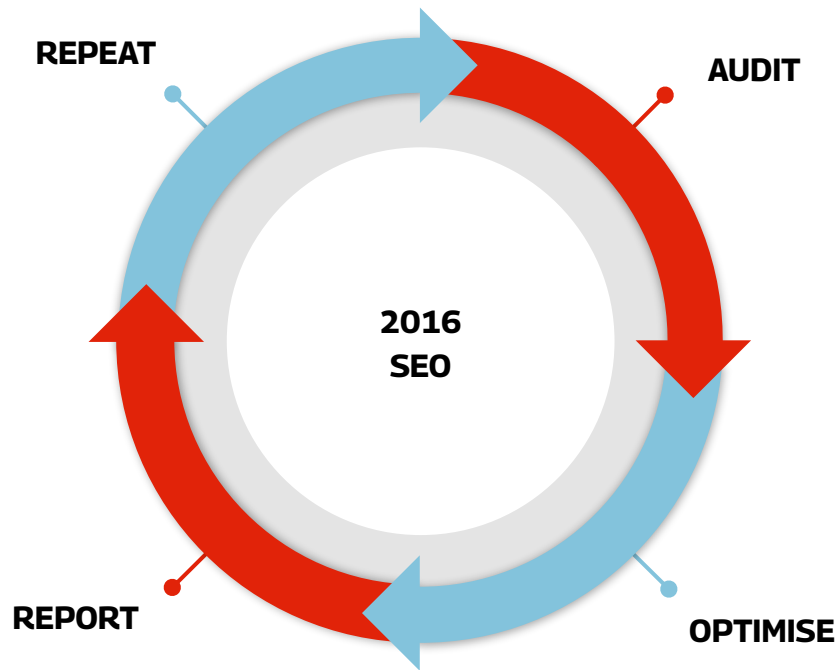
## This makes our jobs more exciting

Old "SEO" followed a predictable cycle, that was often about fixing opportunities rather than unlocking opportunities.

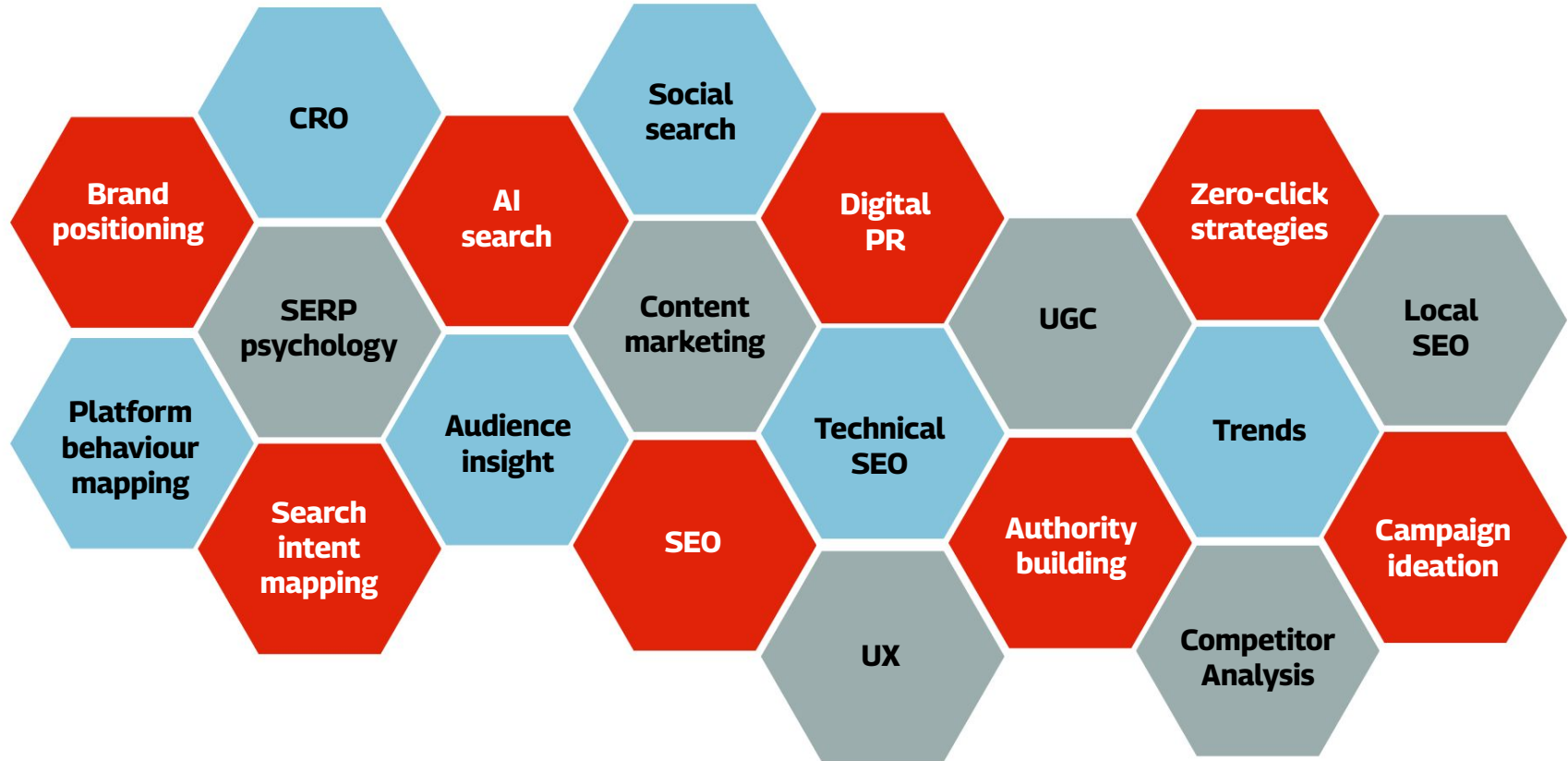
Now, Organic Marketing is a network and spans everything from SEO, brand building, social search and more.

This isn't about abandoning the fundamentals of SEO, it means we can upgrade them and make them work better as part of the wider marketing mix.

We get to be more strategic and make a bigger impact for brands by building visibility and trust across every touchpoint.



## The Organic network



# Organic Marketing (*noun*)

**A growth strategy that earns attention, fuelling brand demand, building trust, and driving revenue without relying on ad spend.**

Often misunderstood, organic marketing is one of the most undervalued revenue drivers, lowering customer acquisition costs, increasing retention, and even accelerating sales through content that informs, inspires, and converts.

## The new organic pillars

### **On-site Presence**

Content and user experience.  
Ensuring we're hitting search intent  
and engaging users.

*Content strategy*  
*UX*  
*On-page SEO*  
*Social search*

### **Technical Infrastructure**

The technical foundation. Ensuring  
users and platforms can find your  
content successfully.

*Technical SEO*  
*Mobile optimisation*  
*Content architecture*

### **Off-site Authority**

Building brand and trust signals.  
Focusing on community building and  
reputation.

*DPR*  
*Social/Brand Signals*  
*Community Engagement*

### **Connectivity**

Integrates all platforms into a comprehensive strategy.  
Data sharing to enhance audience engagement throughout the journey

# Rewriting the **Organic Playbook**



**HOW DO WE RANK?**



**HOW DO WE BECOME FINDABLE, DESIRABLE AND TRUSTED?**

From SEO to  
Organic

Organic  
connects  
everything

Organic fuels  
brand strategy

TikTok is a  
search engine

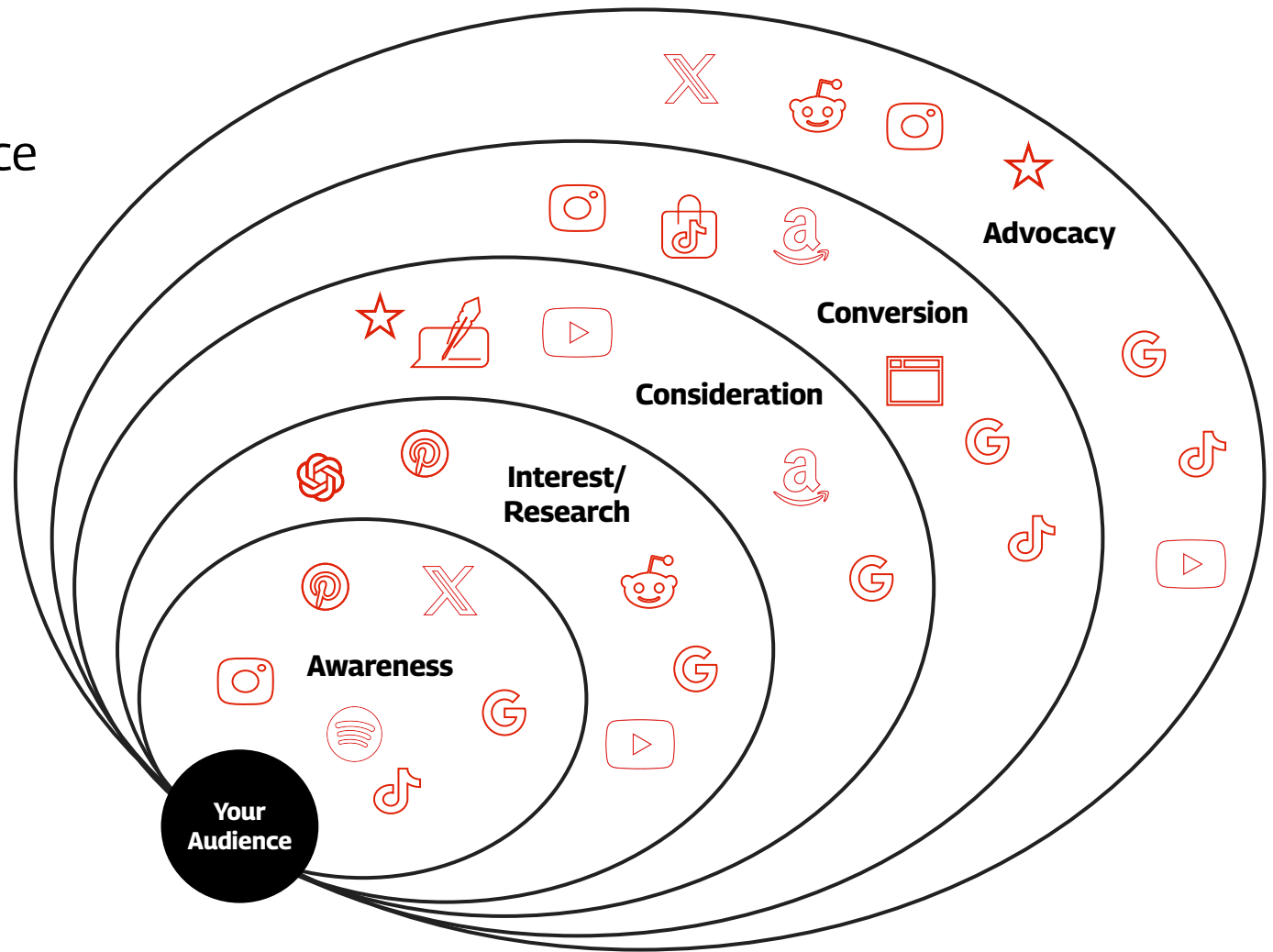
# Audience alignment

# This is why audience alignment matters

Earlier, we touched on how the search journey is no longer linear and your audience is jumping between these orbits.

In order to effectively market to your audience, you have to understand them.

Audience alignment is the foundation for everything that comes next in your organic strategy.



Consider your audience and  
**ask these questions...**

Where is your audience searching and at which stage in the funnel?

What language do they use in their searches?

What kind of content do they trust?

What triggers their needs in the first place?

Are we showing up in the moments we've mentioned above?

How you can *actually* do this?



**Keyword  
research**



**Social  
listening**



**Review  
analysis**



**Trend  
monitoring**



**Focus  
groups**



**Audience insight  
tools**



**Analytics  
behaviour analysis**



**Internal team  
insights**

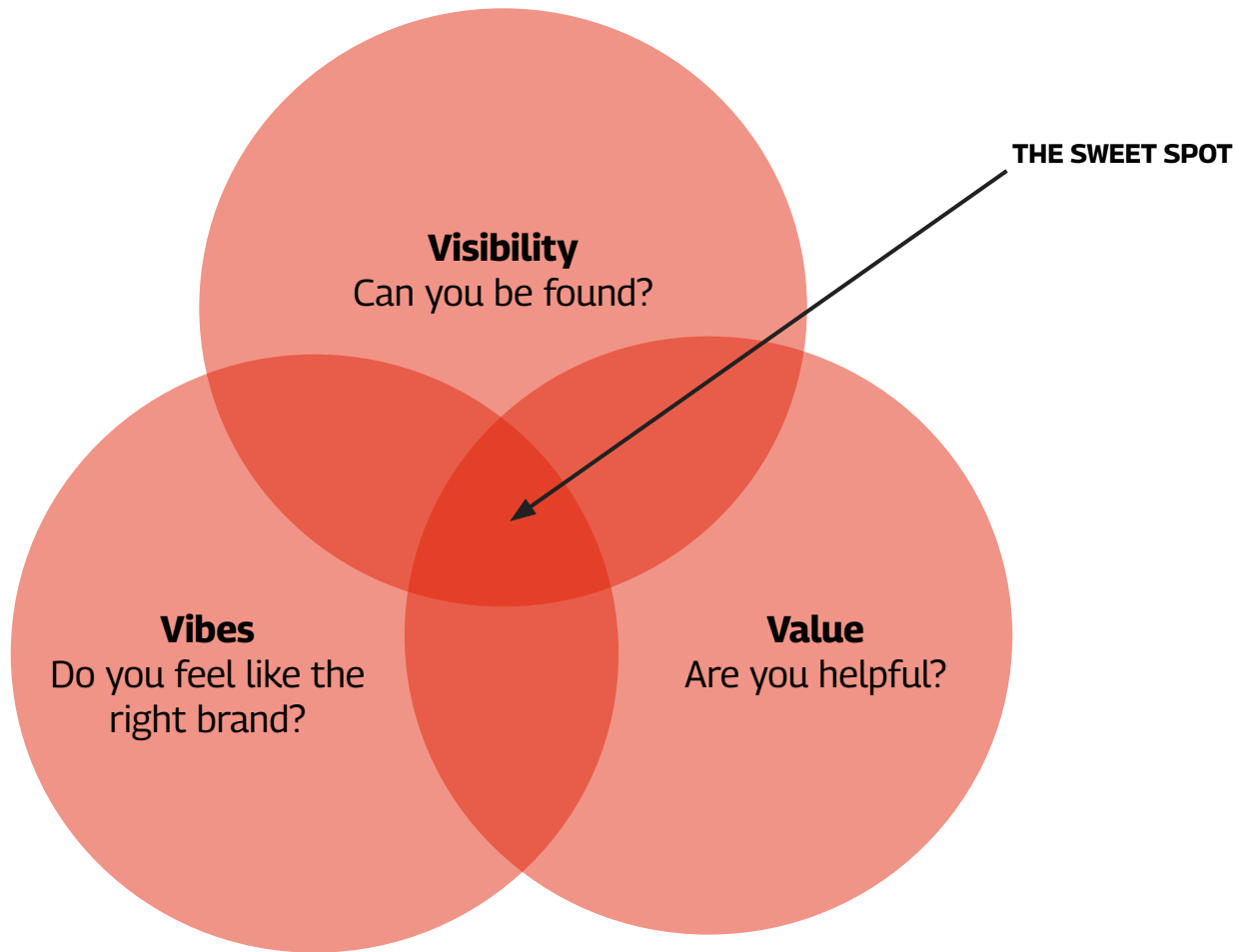
## Finding the audience sweet spot

The first step in auditing your audience alignment is to ensure you're hitting the "three V's".

- Where are they searching and can you be found?
- Is the content you surface on these platforms solving a real problem your audience has?
- Do you feel like the right brand for them - are they going to choose you?

If any one of these three areas is off, the whole experience breaks down.

Get all three aligned and you've hit the audience sweet spot.



# Cultural curiosity

# Organic visibility improves when you **show up** in culture

Cultural curiosity is the practice of staying tuned in to what your audience actually cares about before it hits the mainstream.

To do this well, we need to spot the rising trends happening in their world and showing up in a way that feels relevant.

The cultural signals we've listed here are search signals in disguise, and are an opportunity for us to create content that aligns with how our audience is searching.

For example:

- Frustrations indicate a problem your audience needs solving
- Identity shifts highlight how we can resonate with the audience's emotional triggers
- Community language will show how people are actually searching

If you can identify these trends before they peak, you can start to lead that conversation.

## CULTURAL SIGNALS

### Unresolved frustrations:

"I can't find an SPF that works under makeup"

### Emerging identity shifts:

"Quiet luxury" or "Hot Girl Summer"

### Community generated phrases:

"Beige flag" or "girl math"

### High intent micro moments:

"ADHD desk set up"

### Cultural contradictions:

"wellness vs productivity" or "sustainable but affordable"

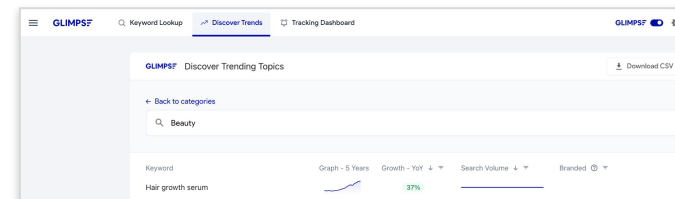
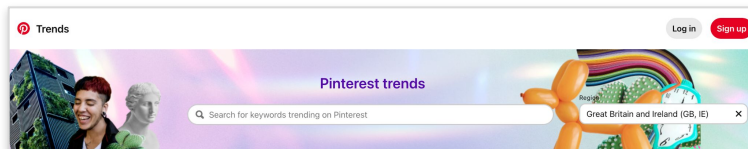
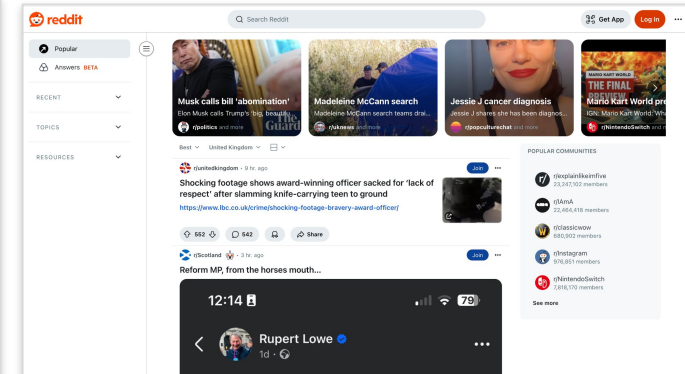
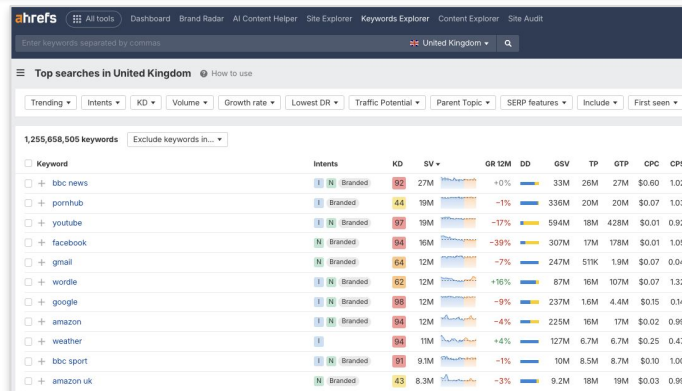
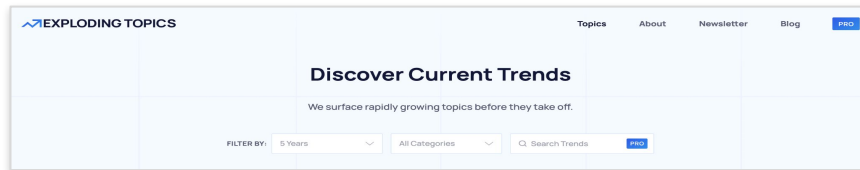
### Nostalgia:

"Indie sleaze" or "Y2K"



# Where to spot trends before they trend

- Glimpse
- Exploding Topics
- Tiktok creator insights
- Reddit insight
- Platform search functions
- Pinterest trends
- Ahrefs keyword explorer



## Trending signals to look for



**Unresolved  
questions**



**Repeated  
comments**



**New  
language**



**Emotional  
sentiment**



**Format  
shifts**

# SERP psychology

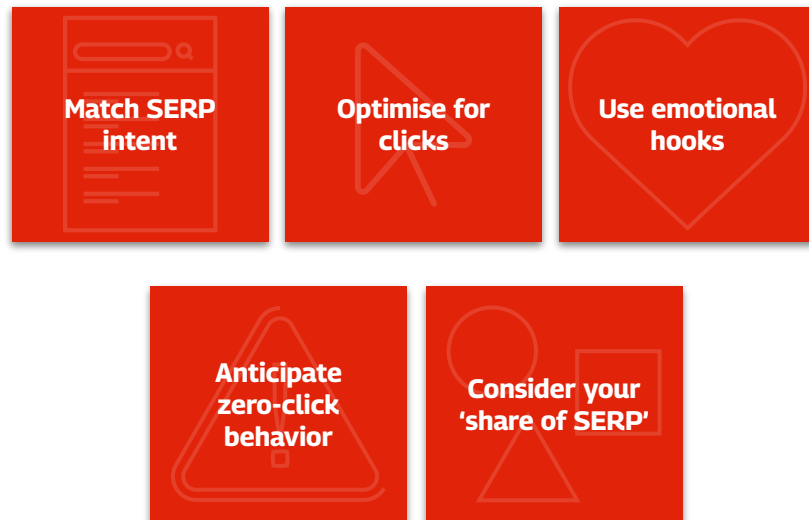
# SERP psychology

SERP Psychology is the art of understanding how users interact with search results, regardless of platform. We need to consider this when building our strategies.

Ranking is no longer the goal, earning attention is.

## How we do this:

- **Match SERP intent** - understand what the user actually wants to see in the SERP.
- **Optimise for clicks** - your meta titles, video captions and headlines should generate curiosity and not just check a keyword box
- **Use emotional hooks** - to do the above we need to stand out in crowded SERPs, emotion is how we can do this.
- **Anticipate zero-click behaviour** - less searches end in a click, so make sure your content delivers value in the SERP to build brand awareness
- **Consider your share of SERP** - this is the new key metric (it's no longer ranking position 1) it's about how many times your brand appears cross the SERP, this could be your website or it could be news articles, etc.



# SERP psychology done well







This example from MP Activewear shows how simple yet effective this can be.

- It is **trend led** and capitalises on the culturally relevant trend "hot girl walk"
- It uses **TikTok native language** that the audience will be familiar with, making it feel natural.
- The title matches the **mental model** "what to wear on a hot girl walk" mirrors the exact way the audience are likely thinking when they search this query.
- The meta description uses **emotional framing** with the phrase "make sure you feel and look your very best" lean into confidence, not just fitness.
- It blends **commercial and informational intent**, highlighting that searches are more nuanced than just one intent bucket.

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MP Activewear

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Hot girl walks are the new fitness craze! What to wear on a hot girl walk is crucial, to make sure you feel and look your very best every step you take.

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# Brand x Organic Alignment

## Your “SEO” is saying things the brand team wouldn’t dream of

Organic visibility is often the first impression an audience will get of your brand. When Organic and Brand work closely together you can build relevance and resonance with your audience.

This example from Elizabeth Arden shows how this disconnect can show up. Their brand messaging celebrates natural beauty however on the SERP they’re focusing on “anti aging” and reducing the signs of aging.

A better approach here would have been to target “mature skin” to keep the relevancy but reframe the language to align with the brand ethos.

*“To be beautiful and natural  
is the birthright of every women”*

Elizabeth Arden



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# Organic visibility should reflect your positioning

Your organic presence is part of the brand experience. If you own the organic strategy for a brand, ask yourself these four questions and if you can't answer them, get a meeting booked in with the brand team to align.



**What do we want to be known for?**



**What category do we want to lead?**



**What problems do we solve best?**



**How do we speak?**



## How you can align your brand goals with your organic strategy

### Your brand goals

**Sustainability**

**Premium**

**Playful**

**Experts**



### Your organic strategy

**Content on ethical sourcing, etc.**

**Sleek UX, long-form editorial, no spammy CTAs**

**Cultural references, humour, etc.**

**Author pages, detailed guides, etc.**

# McDonalds prove that brand and organic go hand in hand

McDonalds recent radio advert doesn't mention the brand name, just the tag line "Breakfast Done Properly"

If you search this tag line, McDonalds own 100% share of SERP, however their website doesn't appear at all. It's full of brand mentions, media coverage and videos.

This shows that strong brand signals create visibility before your website even ranks, and these signals will be an indicator to Google it's likely McDonalds will own the top spot due to the search signals that are being demonstrated.

The screenshot shows a Google search interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a menu icon, a search bar containing the text "breakfast done properly", and a microphone icon. Below this is the Google logo, a notification bell with a red "5", and a user profile picture. The search bar is repeated below the logo, also containing "breakfast done properly". Below the search bar are tabs for "All", "Images", "Videos", "Short videos", "Forums", and "News". The "Videos" tab is selected. The main content area shows a video result titled "McDonald's Breakfast | Breakfast Wrap" from "YouTube · McDonald's UK", posted "2 days ago". The video thumbnail shows a breakfast wrap with a play button and a duration of "0:11". Below the video result, there's a text snippet: "You might expect a delicious sounding description here".

# Audience-led authority

# Your credible when your audience says you are

Modern authority signals are built by your audience, it's how often they search for you, how much they save and how much they talk about you.

These signals reflect what people actually value and what the platforms are paying attention to.



Brand + keyword  
search demand



Saves, stitches,  
UGC



Brand mentions,  
brand upvotes



Product mentions in  
reviews



UGC, story mentions,  
saves

# How to build authority

This model shows how authority is built, starting with a spark of relevant content which builds momentum through amplification and then credibility through social validation.

The final step is where most brands fall short.

We often think that the work is completed once we've earned the recognition, however we can reuse this to reinforce our authority.

These signals such as references on media publications, UGC, reviews, can help to remind the audience and the algorithms why your brand matters.



## SPARK

**Publish relevant content that's unique, helpful and emotionally resonant**

## AMPLIFY

**Share via PR hooks, social-first formats and creators**

## EARN

**Citations, shares, mentions, community validation**

## REINFORCE

**Reuse audience-led proof across your own content ecosystem**

# AI visibility

# GEO, SEO for LLMs, DEO?!

It doesn't really matter what we call it, it's just another form of visibility that falls under Organic marketing. We're still optimising for humans.

# Ranking on AI is the new “word of mouth”

Ranking on AI is the new "Word of Mouth". Where we used to ask friends for recommendations, we now type prompts into Chat-GPT. People (myself included) are now going to Chat-GPT to ask what skincare to buy, where to go on holiday and what flowers to plant in your garden. AI will answer like a friend, but provide a response based on the weight of shared online opinion.

If you want to show up on AI you need to do the following:

## Build digital WoM

You need to be mentioned everywhere. Build brand mentions on forums, podcast, product round ups, videos, reviews etc. The more you are talked about, the more likely LLMs are going to find you and mention you.

## Stop only thinking in keywords

This isn't best practice for SEO anymore and it certainly won't help with visibility on LLMs. You need to enrich your content with semantically rich, relevant terms that'll send signals to indicate how relevant your product is to the searches.

## Blend personal insight with trusted proof

The sweet spot is to combine real people's stories and opinions with verified credibility. Think testimonials paired with awards, research or expert validation.

## Create once, distribute everywhere

That blog post shouldn't just live on your site. Turn it into a Reddit comment, a TikTok, a carousel on Instagram. The more places it shows up, the more signals you're sending.



# Sound familiar?! **It should.**

Everything we've covered today as part of the organic playbook applies to AI as well. This isn't some brand new thing we need to consider it's just the next evolution of how we search, it's what good organic has always been - useful, human first and trustworthy.

# Why brands are choosing Embryo as their organic partner.

## **Behaviour led strategy**

It's no longer enough to think in "keywords". We design our strategies based on user behaviour, understanding how people skim, interpret and choose from search results.

## **Visibility that drives action**

Ranking in position 1 isn't the main aim any more, we now optimise for how visible and clickable a brand is within the SERP.

## **Tailored to businesses**

Our organic strategies aren't tick box exercises. Each brands strategy is built around their commercial model and customer lifecycle.

## **Strategically integrated**

Organic doesn't live in a vacuum, and our strategies incorporate SEO, content and PR to build a unified organic presence that goes beyond Google.

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