

Nottingham (UK) 28 April 2010 -

Small Businesses are Still Invisible to Search Engines

A research report released today by Hallam Communications reveals 86% of small businesses in Greater Nottingham cannot be found easily online in the search engines.

The research project was conducted by Susan Hallam of Hallam Communications (<http://www.hallam.biz>) an Internet marketing consultancy based in Nottingham, UK.

The research report spelled bad news for businesses – 86% of the businesses sampled cannot be found easily by search engines. This means that the vast majority of businesses do not have websites that are designed (or “optimised”) for Google or the other search engines.

In this climate small businesses cannot afford to have a low findability rating, which could see them miss out on potential customers through lack of visibility. 76% of the UK adult population are active web users using the internet for an increasing range of activities from searching for information to buying products and services. The value of Internet retail sales rises every year – in November 2009 alone the average weekly value of Internet retail sales was £291.7million – a 33% increase on the same figures for November 2008.

Only 14% of the 100 businesses surveyed achieved a findability score of more than 70%. Susan Hallam, lead consultant on the project comments “It is shocking that businesses still don’t understand the need to maintain a strong identity online – 27.3 million adults use the Internet everyday and if a company is not found in search engine results then they are effectively invisible to a huge number of potential clients.”

“While it is encouraging that more businesses are achieving higher findability scores than in 2006, too many are still failing in the basics of internet marketing. Marketing online is relatively inexpensive, quicker and more dynamic when compared to traditional marketing techniques and in a few simple steps all companies could improve their rankings in search engines.”

The project set out to measure the Internet findability for search engines of 100 small and medium sized businesses in Greater Nottingham. This project has been repeated every year since 2006 – three years on from the original research companies are still falling behind in Internet marketing.

Summary Findings of the Greater Nottingham Small Business Findability Index

1. 84% of the businesses surveyed attained a Findability Score of 70% or less. This means these company websites are unlikely to rank well in the search engine results, and it will be very difficult for a potential client to find the business by searching the Internet.
2. The top ten scoring sites in the Findability Index, achieving a Findability Index score of 76% or higher were:
 - Nottingham Arena
 - Morse Watchmans (U K) Ltd.
 - Purple Circle Design Ltd.
 - Potter Clarkson LLP
 - Garners Catering Equipment Ltd.
 - Nzime Ltd.
 - J McIntyre (Machinery) Ltd.
 - Frank Key (Nottingham) Ltd.
 - Newson Gale Ltd.
 - William E Selkin Ltd. (in joint 10th place)
 - Gauntleys of Nottingham Ltd. (in joint 10th place)
3. Of the top ten scoring sites in 2009, only three were in the top ten in the 2006 rankings. These were:
 - Nottingham Arena
 - Newson Gale Ltd
 - Gauntleys of Nottingham Ltd.
4. Only three of the top scoring companies achieved scores above 90% - this is the gold standard that all companies that have a presence online should aspire to.
5. Two of the companies originally rated in 2006 have since ceased trading, accounting for their findability score of just 0 – but a further 10 websites also received a score of 0.
6. The former top scoring site now has a findability score of just 56%, which shows that websites do need to be updated regularly to remain current and easy to find in the search engines.
7. One company has been taken over by another company since the 2006 research but the original web address does not automatically redirect to the new website, meaning customers could lose contact with the company and potentially contributing to a low findability score.

8. All statistics on Internet usage and Internet Retail Sales figures from Office of National Statistics online – www.statistics.gov.uk
Internet Access Households and Individuals, August 2009
Retail Sales, November 2009
Internet Retail Sales, November 2008

Findability Methodology

The companies were all assessed using HubSpot's Website Grader (<http://websitegrader.com/>). This assesses website against a variety of factors within six different categories. These factors were selected from more than 100 variables that influence search engines like Google and Bing.

The companies selected for the Internet Marketing Index were Greater Nottingham businesses employing fewer than 250 staff. They were all previously assessed in the 2006 index. In 2006 they were randomly selected from eligible businesses having an email address listed in Dun & Bradstreet's *Marketplace of UK Businesses*.

HubSpot's Website Grader assessed each website against a variety of factors within six categories:

- 1. On-page SEO**

Factors regarding the copy on the website and how easy it is for search engines to read E.g. *Proper use of headings*

- 2. Off-page SEO**

Relating to how well the website is promoted on other websites E.g. *Google PageRank*, which is a rank of how popular a website is expressed on a scale of 1 to 10. The Page Rank is a function of the number of relevant and high quality sites that link to your site. A Page Rank of 0, 1 or 2 is an indicator of a poorly performing website.

- 3. Blogosphere**

Evaluates whether the website has a blog, which is a good way to connect more informally with customers. Also considers the effectiveness of the blog. E.g. *Blog Grade* is a measure of traffic to the blog and the number and quality of links pointing to it.

- 4. Social Mediasphere**

Evaluates whether the website is being linked to in the social mediasphere, which indicates people are talking online about your website E.g. *del.icio.us bookmarks* A web based social bookmarking tool. Subscribers can share links with their friends so a higher number of del.icio.us bookmarks should lead to an increase in traffic on your site.

- 5. Converting Qualified Visitors to Leads**

Measures whether there are any tools on the website to convert visitors into customers. E.g. *Conversion Form* offering visitors the chance to sign up to the newsletter so you can keep in touch with them.

6. Competitive Intelligence

How the website compares in any of the given factors against their competitors' websites E.g. *Google PageRank*

The highest ranking websites usually scored well in all of these categories.

About Hallam Communications

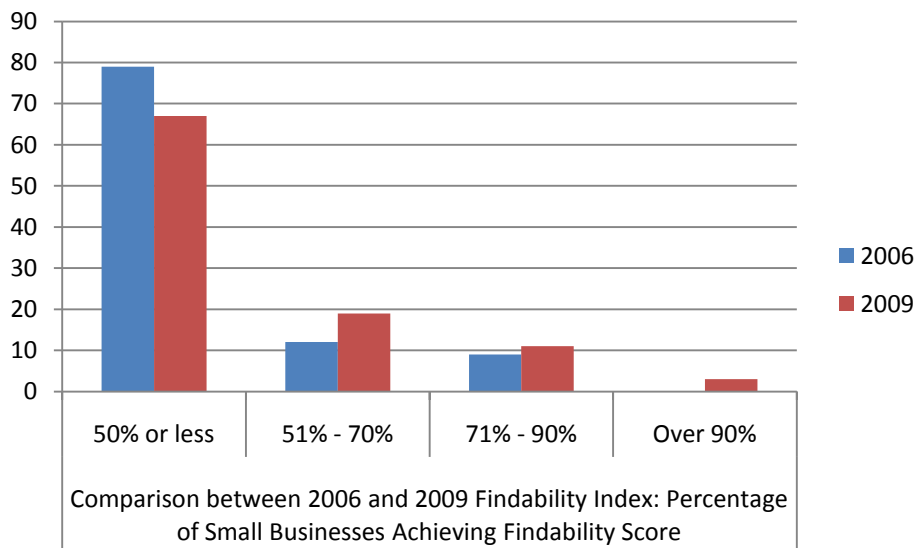
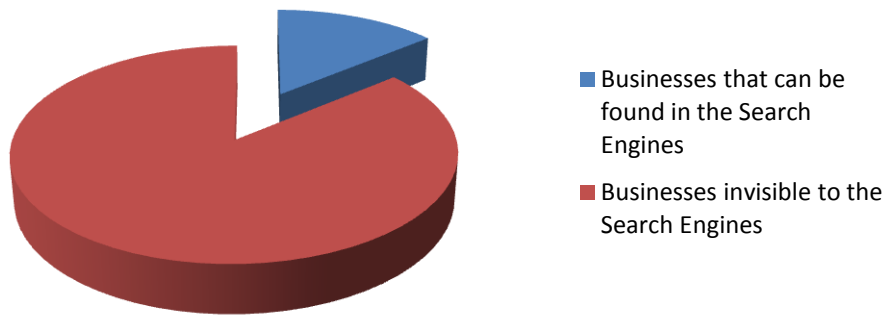
Hallam Communications is a leading provider of search engine marketing training and consultancy services. It is currently ranked in the top three of the Best Training Programmes Companies in the UK by independent observers Top SEOs (<http://uk.topseos.com>). It was established in 1999 by Susan Hallam to help businesses to get more out of the Internet.

Susan Hallam is an independent Internet marketing trainer and consultant specialising in working with SME (small and medium enterprise) businesses. She has been working in the UK information industry for more than 25 years, and was amongst the first to deliver commercial Internet workshops back in 1993.

Qualified in America, Susan has an MSc in Information Science, and is an accredited independent business advisor. She is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and has worked in the British information industry since 1985. She serves on the board of EMITA, the East Midlands International Trade Association.

Prior to setting up Hallam Communications, Susan held senior Internet marketing roles at BT and Capital One. Susan's initial interest in the Internet arose from her teaching and research role as Senior Lecturer in Information Technology at The Nottingham Trent University. More information about Hallam Communications and the training courses they can provide is available at <http://www.shcl.co.uk>

Greater Nottingham Search Engine Findability Index 2009



Greater Nottingham Small Business Findability Index: Detailed Results

Company	Web Address	Findability Score (%)
A & J Computers	www.aj-computers.co.uk	0
ALD Plastering Ltd	www.aldplastering.co.uk	0
Florentine Textiles	www.florentinetextiles.co.uk/	0
Frudd Construction Ltd.	www.frudd.co.uk	0
Harringtons (Nottingham) Ltd.	www.harringtons-uk.com	0
John P Waterhouse Co. Ltd.	www.jpwaterhouse.co.uk	0
J S Burnett Ltd.	www.jsburnett.co.uk	0
Thomas Fish & Sons Ltd.	www.thomasfish.co.uk	0
Toton Plant Hire Ltd.	www.totonplant.co.uk	0
Vintage Wines (Holdings) Ltd.	www.vintagewinesltd.co.uk	0
A R Wilson Packaging (Nottm) Ltd.	www.wilsonpackaging.co.uk	0
D H Fathers Ltd.	www.dhfathers.co.uk	2
Pms Electrical Services Ltd.	www.pmselectrical.co.uk	6
Metcalf (Leenside) Ltd.	www.metcalf.co.uk	8
Speed Alarm Ltd	www.speedalarm.com	8
Agathos Systems Ltd.	www.agathos.co.uk	10
D W Frost (Wholesale Nurseries) Ltd.	www.dwfrost.com	10
Simplex Knitting Co. Ltd.	www.simplexknitting.co.uk	11
Design to Build Personnel	www.designtobuild.co.uk	12
Polestar Interactive Ltd.	www.polestar.co.uk	12
Gangotra Enterprises Ltd.	www.gangotra.com	13
Jonray Engineering Co. Ltd.	www.jonrayeng.com	13
Harold Wilson (Insurances) Ltd.	www.wilorg.co.uk	15
Wright Engineers	www.wright-engineers.co.uk	17
J S M Engineering Ltd.	www.jsmeng.com	18
Sqp International Plc	www.sqp-international.co.uk	19
Industrial Self Adhesives Ltd.	www.isatape.co.uk	20
Tew Engineering Ltd.	www.tew.co.uk	20
Global Entertainment Agency	www.global-ents.co.uk	22
Eden Public Relations Ltd.	www.edenpr.co.uk	23
Rai Technical Ltd.	www.rai.co.uk	23
Workshop Design Group	www.workshopdesign.co.uk	24
F F Allsopp & Co. Ltd.	www.allsopps.co.uk	25
Stonehouse Tablet Manufacturing Co. Ltd.	www.stonehousetablet.co.uk	25
M G Rubber Co. Ltd.	www.mgrubber.co.uk	26
The Beck Co. Ltd.	www.thebeckco.com	27
Cadcam Technology Ltd.	www.ccc-uk.com	28
L & D Precision Engineers Ltd.	www.ldprecision.co.uk	29
Activeplan Solutions Ltd.	www.activestandards.com	31
Clarke Dove Insurance Brokers Ltd	www.clarkedove.co.uk	31
Pen It Graphics Ltd.	www.penit.co.uk	31
Timber Decay Remedial Services Ltd.	www.timber-decay.co.uk	31
Swisstulle Uk Ltd.	www.swisstulle.co.uk	33
Trentpack Machinery Ltd.	www.trentpack.co.uk	33
Yvonne Palmer Associates	www.yparecruitment.co.uk	33
Bodill & Sons Ltd.	www.bodill.co.uk	34
The Giltbrook Dyers & Cleaners Ltd.	www.giltbrookcleaners.co.uk	34

E Sallis Ltd.	www.sallis.co.uk	35
Saviour Engineering Services Ltd.	www.saviourengineering.co.uk	37
Johns of Nottingham Ltd.	www.johnsofnottingham.co.uk	38
A W Lymn Ltd.	www.lymn.co.uk	38
Walker Catering Supplies Ltd.	www.walkercateringsupplies.com	38
Leec Ltd.	www.leec.co.uk	40
Michon Ltd.	www.michon.co.uk	40
Elizabeth Michael Associates Ltd.	www.elizabethmichael.co.uk	42
Goodman Metalworks Ltd.	www.goodmanmetalworks.co.uk	42
Major Projects Ltd.	www.major-projects.co.uk	42
Orbiter Food Machinery Ltd.	www.orbiterfoodmachinery.co.uk	42
Midland Industrial Designers Ltd.	www.mid.uk.com	45
The Albert Hall (Nottingham) Ltd.	www.albert-hall-nottingham.com	46
Goodmarriott and Hursthouse Ltd	www.gandh.co.uk	46
Harper Recruitment Ltd.	www.harper-recruitment.co.uk	46
K S M Ltd.	www.madaboutcable.com	47
Focuszenith Ltd.	www.focuszenith.com	48
Instaprint	www.instaprint.co.uk	48
Omega Red Group Ltd.	www.omegaredgroup.com	49
Esprit Automation Ltd.	www.espritautomation.com	50
Business Concepts (U K) Ltd.	www.officeinnovations.co.uk	51
C P M G Architects Ltd.	www.cpmg-architects.com	53
Ashworth & Thompson Ltd.	www.ashworthandthompson.co.uk	54
Questmark Ltd.	www.questmark.co.uk	54
Natgraph Ltd.	www.natgraph.co.uk	55
Simon Dryers	www.simon-dryers.co.uk	56
Speedograph Ltd.	www.speedograph-richfield.co.uk	56
H D Science Ltd.	www.hdscience.com	58
Myford (Holdings) Ltd.	www.myford.com	58
Andersons	www.andersonssolicitors.co.uk	61
B G U Manufacturing Co.	www.bgu-man.co.uk	61
Sofa & Chair Co	www.meadowmead.co.uk	62
Charnvel Ltd.	www.charnvel.co.uk	65
Maru Swimwear	www.maruswimwear.co.uk	66
L H Woodhouse & Co. Ltd.	www.lhwoodhouse.co.uk	67
Portable Floormakers Ltd.	www.portablefloormakers.co.uk	67
John Fish Exhibitions Ltd.	www.johnfishexhibitions.co.uk	68
De Facto Design	www.de-facto.com	69
M360 Ltd.	www.m360.co.uk	70
Allan Joyce Architects	www.allanjoycearchitects.co.uk	72
Arthur Johnson & Sons Ltd.	www.arthurjohnson.co.uk	72
John A Stephens Ltd.	www.johnastephens.co.uk	73
Gauntleys of Nottingham Ltd.	www.gauntleywine.com	76
William E Selkin Ltd.	www.selkin.co.uk	76
Newson Gale Ltd.	www.newson-gale.co.uk	77
Frank Key (Nottingham) Ltd.	www.frank-key.co.uk	78
J McIntyre (Machinery) Ltd.	www.jmcrecycling.com	80
Nzime Ltd.	www.nzime.com	80
Garners Catering Equipment Ltd.	www.garnerscateringequipment.co.uk	81
Eric Potter Clarkson (Ip Services) Ltd.	www.potterclarkson.com	81
Purple Circle Design Ltd.	www.purplecircle.co.uk	91
Morse Watchmans (U K) Ltd.	www.morsewatchman.com	92

Nottingham Ice Centre Ltd.	www.nottingham-arena.com	96.5
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