

Membership Forecast: July 2020

Insights, statistics and recommendations

Guiding membership organisations to business and digital opportunities in times of flux.

The future of membership

There has always been a need for people to join together, create communities and share ideas, challenges and stories. Membership fills a deep human need to connect and today it provides so much more as a space to grow skills, teams and businesses.

At Pixl8 we have been providing a range of tailored solutions and services to membership organisations since 2001. Our collective team knowledge means we are well placed to review and interpret trends in the sector.

As part of our growing consultancy and thought leadership initiatives, we have been compiling a range of insights from our clients and valued partners - AAE, MemberWise and memcom - over the last year.

The year has seen seismic changes to our social, economic and political landscape. We will explore what trends are emerging for our vibrant sector.

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Guide to our findings

This report collates a range of insights drawn from polls and surveys that the Pixl8 team undertook over the last year.

The majority of our respondents held positions within membership organisations in the central and greater London region.

We had good levels of participation to indicate trends with participant numbers between 35 and 72.

Our polls were facilitated through webinars that we ran with our valued partners; the Association of Association Executives, MemberWise and memcom.

We want to thank all of our partners for their support throughout the journey.



Pixl8 clients:

90 responses via online survey

Polls during a webinar:

Poll 1:

MemberWise, 50 respondents

Poll 2:

memcom, 35 respondents

Poll 3:

MemberWise, 53 respondents

Poll 4:

memcom, 37 respondents

Poll 5:

MemberWise, 66 respondents

Website registration responses:

Question 1:

MemberWise, 54 respondents

Question 2:

MemberWise, 72 respondents

Question 3:

MemberWise, 67 respondents

Question 4:

MemberWise, 71 respondents

Snapshot of the membership landscape



What people tell us

It is estimated that there are over 8k membership bodies (with membership bases of over 1k individuals/corporations) in the UK, the majority of which having head offices in Central and Greater London.

With the challenging economic environment, organisations are focusing even more heavily on retention to stabilise their membership bases.*

80% of the membership organisations participating in our survey were reporting that their mix of benefits included events, online resources and networking opportunities before the Covid-19 breakout.*

With the pandemic disrupting the market, the ability to offer digital services has become increasingly important in the delivery of membership programmes.

* Pixl8 survey

What we think

In-person experiences are and always will be very important. However, the demand for digital member benefits has increased and the pandemic has accelerated or kick-started this trend.

While a small cohort of organisations provide in-person only or digital only membership schemes, the majority offering a blended approach can capitalise on the positives of both environments.

Confidence to engage

At Pixl8, we have seen how digital is encouraging increased engagement with our clients' member bases. We have observed a range of interesting trends such as an uplift in online participation including higher levels of debating and an increase in questions during webinars and breakout sessions compared with in-person events.

What would you like to know about your members?

“Reasons for joining”

“What services they are particularly attracted to”

“How they found their first year as a member”

**Want to
benchmark your
success? Talk to
our consultancy
team**

Are your member benefits...

Mainly online:



Blended:



Mainly offline:



* Poll 1

Engagement, personalisation, conversion



What people tell us

We found that increased personalisation and automation is something that many membership organisations aspire to.

47% of the organisations that took part in a Pixl8 poll* were already personalising more than the basics - providing the potential for more tailored, sophisticated approaches.

Despite this appetite for change, optimising online conversion through better usability seems to be less important.

When we asked organisations about their priorities for ongoing web enhancements, optimising usability came in last. Most respondents were focusing on improving imagery and tone of voice on their websites.*

* Poll 5 ** Question 1

What we think

Personalisation can seem like a challenging task but with the right strategy and tools it doesn't have to be.

Membership organisations often hold a wealth of data but the challenge often comes in linking that to the communication output. Strong planning, testing and the ability to integrate across systems are the key to unlocking this.

Gradual steps

Whether you start with signposting 'newcomer content' or 'events you might like'; personalisation can be implemented step-by-step.

“We can now ask our members to pick their topic preferences so that they get the news, events and technical articles they want to see.

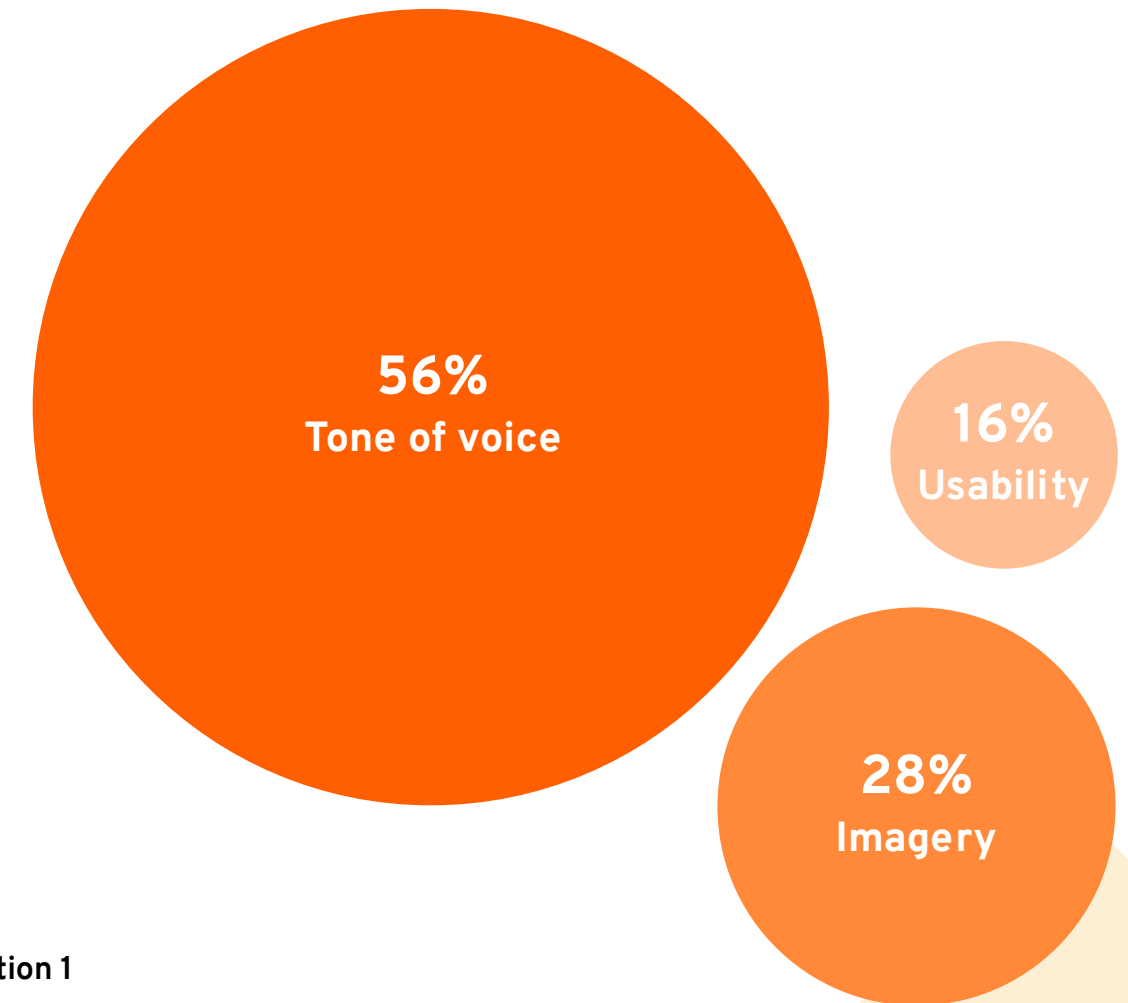
We are also beginning to use tailored email messaging and segmentation based on CRM/CMS status changes.

This all helps us to provide our members with personalised information and benefits that they value.”

- Sarah Prest, Society of Operations Engineers

**Want to boost
online conversion?
Talk to our
consultants**

Of those who told us they were actively trying to increase their online conversion, which areas did they focus on?



* Question 1

Monitoring and optimising



What people tell us

Membership organisations are uniquely placed to engage with their audience - members have chosen to have a relationship with them after all.

However, in one of our Pixl8 polls we found that 69% of respondents didn't feel that they had enough information about their Year 1 members.* What's more, only 32% were running a dedicated email welcome programme.**

A powerful metric to justify marketing spend is the average cost of acquiring a new member vs the average cost to retain a member.

However, we found that 69% of our survey respondents weren't currently reporting on this.***

* Poll 2, ** Poll 4, *** Pixl8 survey

What we think

The more you know about your members and prospects, the easier it is to make sure your communications resonate.

We all appreciate that it's important to assess what works and what doesn't in order to improve. However, we have found that sometimes due to time pressure or resourcing challenges, digital projects are based on assumptions that have yet to be verified.

As a first step, we recommend that good quality data is channeled into one platform including website user actions. This enables you to gain a rounded customer view so that you give members not only what they seek but also added value opportunities they may not have considered.

'Why' trumps 'What'

Linking your metrics to your organisational, team and even member segment objectives will drive strategic insight and progress.

Recent research by the CDP Institute highlighted some of the top benefits that CDP (Customer Data Platform) can help organisations to achieve with their data. They include: Personalisation (70%), Customer Insights (65%), and Measure Across Channels (51%).

**Want all your
data in one
place? Talk to
us about CDP**

* www.smartinsights.com

How would you rate the information you hold about your Year 1 Members?

I feel I have more than enough information



I feel I have about the right amount of information



I feel I don't have enough information



I don't know



* Poll 2

The impact of Covid-19



What people tell us

Covid-19 has tested the resilience of membership organisations and their ability to thrive within a changing environment.

We have seen membership professionals observing a wide range of impacts; from driving innovation to stagnating activity.

In a Pixl8 poll, 66% of respondents found that their members were more engaged online since remote working began. Only 2% reported a reduction in online engagement.*

Amidst increased digital engagement, members are more likely to have higher expectations from more digital offers.** With an increase in webinars, online networking and remote training we've seen many organisations inspired to think outside the box to meet new member needs.

* Poll 3, ** Question 3

What we think

Organisations have had to swiftly adapt to the “new normal”. Whilst this has posed many challenges, individuals, teams and organisations are also recognising some positives including resilience, team building and innovation.

Many of the innovative approaches that are emerging are in fact an acceleration of activity that was already underway.

Member organisations who were digitally competent, confident or sophisticated have fared better in minimising risk or in some cases have seen growth as their services have become more relevant.

Cross-sector learning

In the professional sector, the ability to inspire and guide individuals and teams has been invaluable. In the cultural sector, translating what people love in real life to the digital space has seen strong participation (such as behind-the-scenes tours).

What changes in member behaviour are you experiencing due to Covid-19?

“More engagement in advice and guidance related tool.”

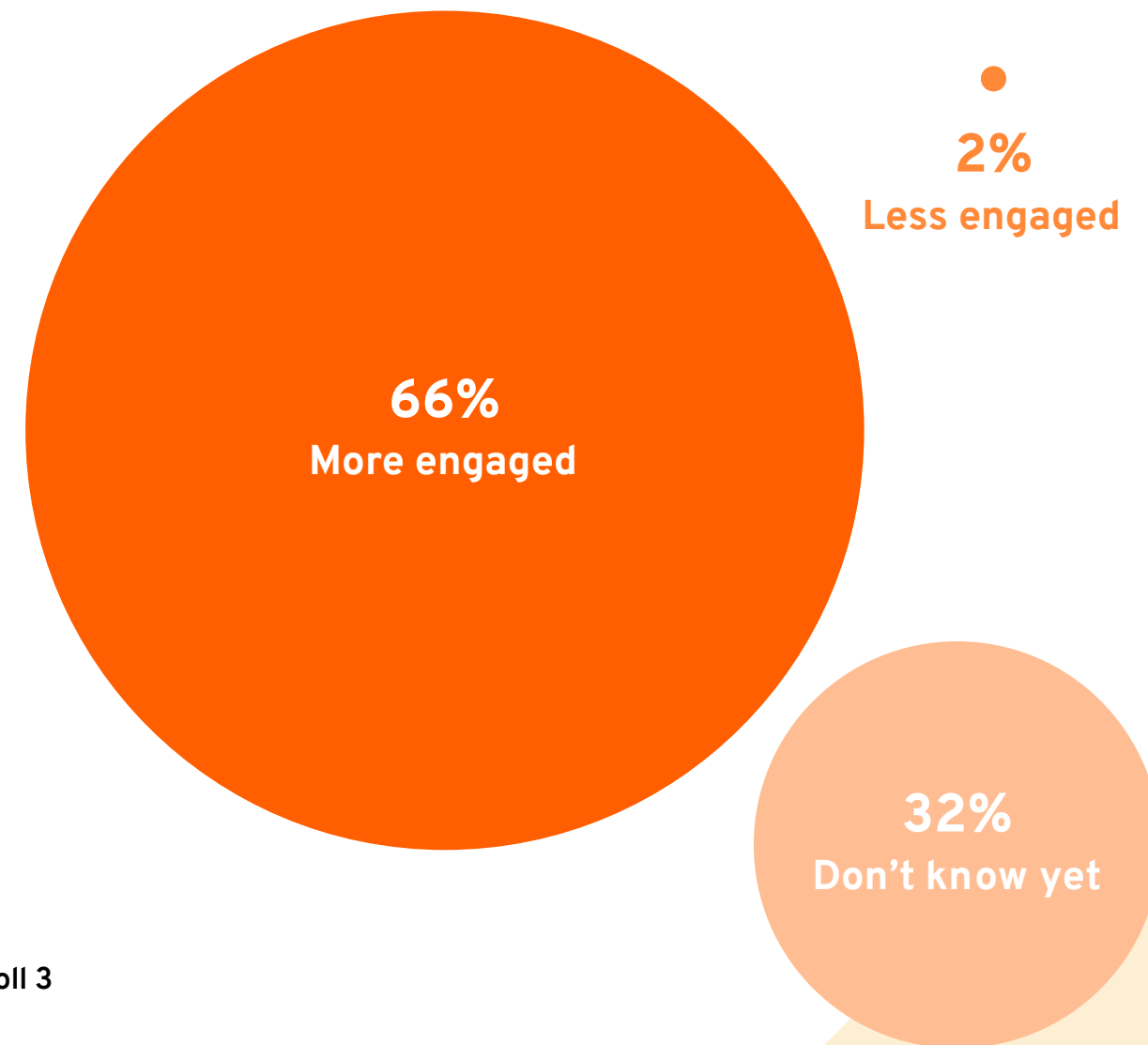
“More price sensitive however more supportive and grateful for what the charity is doing.”

“Membership base continues to be very supportive.”

“Members are looking for more practical guidance, delivered digitally.”

**Want to take
your events
online?**

Since remote working began, how would you rate your members' digital engagement?



* Poll 3

How to make it happen



What people tell us

88% of respondents in one of our Pixl8 polls said that they want to increase their confidence in understanding digital clues from their members.*

77% were also looking to increase their use of personalisation and automation.**

We find membership professionals tend to be keen to share experiences. This is the advice they gave to people looking to embark on a digital project: ***

- Early buy-in
- Scoping in early stages and aligning goals to strategy
- Integration between website and CRM

* Question 2, ** Question 4, *** Pixl8 survey

What we think

Clearly there is an appetite to do more digitally, but there is also a need for organisations to explore and develop their opportunities.

Digital transformation is more about culture, ambition and skillset than systems and data. While the infrastructure is an enabler, getting most or enough of the organisation on board to make change happen is key to success.

Digital project or idea?

Many clients ask us to build integrated websites, CRMs or bespoke software. Others talk through a goal or a problem and challenge us to find a solution.

If you have a plan, a challenge or the beginning of an idea, we'd love to hear from you.

If you could go back in time, what would you do differently in your digital transformation journey?

“Bring in a consultant to develop a roadmap at the very beginning aligned to our strategic objectives.”

“Get better Director buy-in at an earlier stage to drive Manager engagement”

“Considered the key integrations we needed”

**Want to take
your events
online?**

* Pixl8 Survey

Do you want to grow your confidence in understanding digital clues from your members?

Yes:



No:



Other:



* Question 2

What's possible

Pixl8 are seasoned players in the membership sector. Over the last 20 years we have delivered a range of projects to over 200 membership organisations from websites and intranets to consultancy.

We have linked all our digital products into one winning all-in-one solution - ReadyMembership. Over the last 6 months it has been successfully launched to over 20 clients.

We are primed to blend our experience and knowledge with yours to deliver and enhance your digital output and ambition.

“Pixl8 have managed to go above and beyond our expectations with the ReadyMembership platform. Our team are looking forward to utilising all the functionality and can already see the potential benefit from the CRM and the Event management system. Pixl8 have created a truly outstanding product.”

- Adam Clay, Finance Director at the Royal Microscopical Society

Pixl8 consultancy - Enhance, evaluate, evolve

Our consultancy team has guided and inspired clients for many years. We follow a strategic and practical approach so that your digital aims can be delivered with impact. Together, we can assess where you are now and work with you to identify what needs to be developed, tested and rolled out.

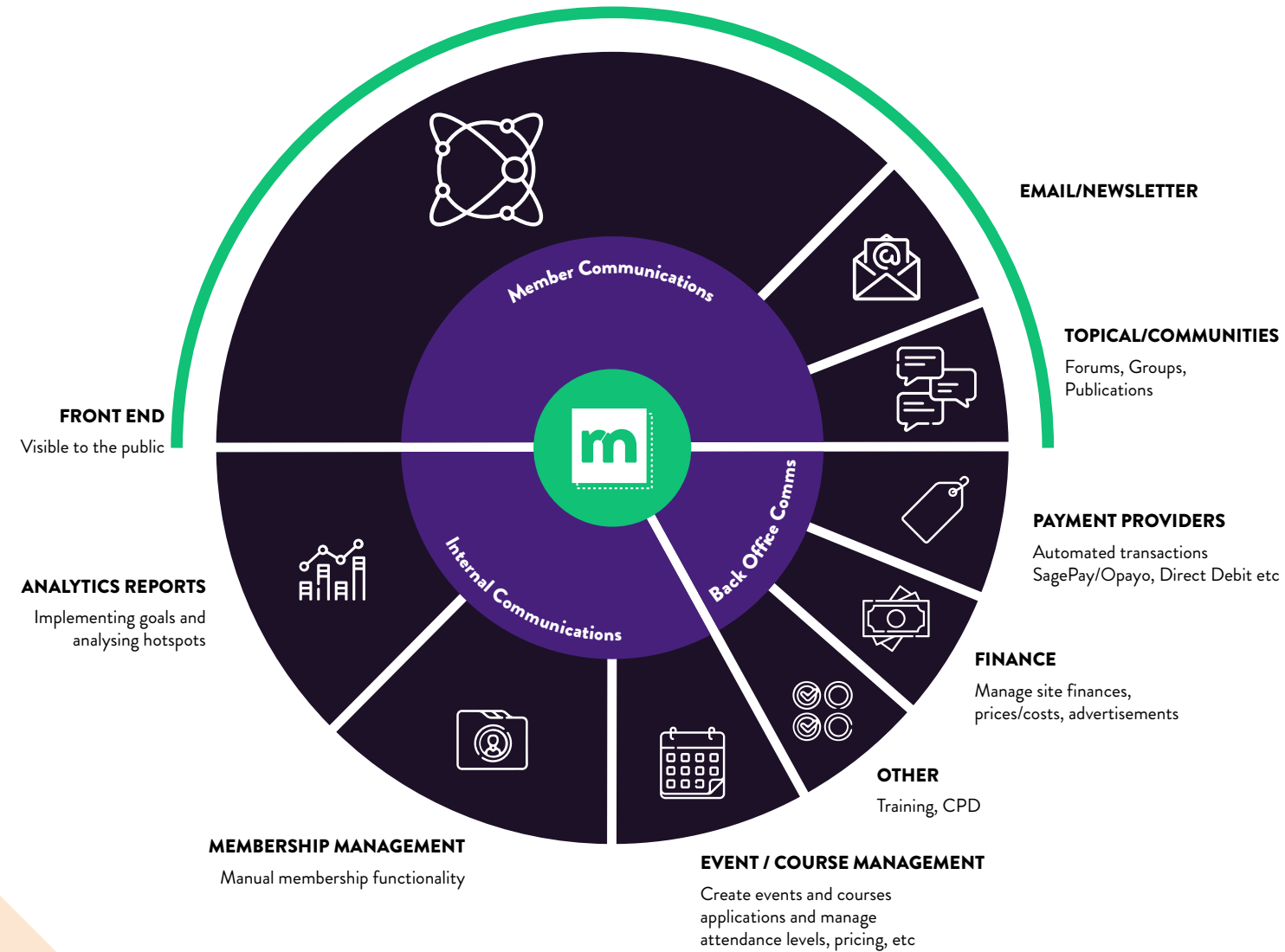
**Find out
more about
ReadyMembership**

m READYMEMBERSHIP

INTEGRATED SOCIAL MEDIA
HTML5 technology to provide enhanced functionality, such as mobile compatability



PERSONALISATION FOR MEMBERS
Members will have personalised site content filtered to member homepage



Who we are

We're the go-to agency for membership organisations, associations and charities that are seeking digital solutions that go the extra mile. Since 2001, we've worked with over 200 organisations to build integrated websites, CRMs, bespoke software and more.

Beyond cutting-edge technology solutions, our team provides strategic and creative consultancy services to support your digital ambitions.

Got a project in mind or just the glimmer of an idea? We'd love to chat.

www.pixl8.co.uk

10 reasons to choose Pixl8

1. **Experienced**
2. **Innovatory**
3. **Multi-national**
4. **Creative**
5. **Strong company culture**
6. **High-performing platform**
7. **Established**
8. **Diversified skill set**
9. **Strategic**
10. **Collaborative**

Our services

Talk to us about

- ReadyMembership
- Digital strategy
- UI & UX design
- Bespoke web development
- Systems integration
- CRM
- Email marketing
- Event and awards management

Find out more

+44 (0) 20 7720 4545
info@pixl8.co.uk

Keep in touch

Hungry for more?

The Pixl8 team is continuously working on new and insightful content to inspire our clients. Beyond reports like this one, we regularly publish blog articles and speak at webinars and events.

Make sure you're signed up to our monthly newsletter, The Forward, to receive our latest updates straight into your inbox:

pixl8.co.uk/forward.html

Pixl8 are proud partners of memcom, MemberWise and the Association of Association Executives.

Sign up now!

With us, you can deliver your digital ambitions

Pixl8 consultancy services blend the in-depth experience from specialists who have guided and inspired clients for many years. Our team follows a strategic and practical approach so that your digital aims can be delivered with impact.

Together, we can assess where you are now and work with you to identify what needs to be developed, tested and rolled out.

With Pixl8, you'll have a partner that fully understands the needs of membership organisations, businesses and charities. What's more, our team combines strategists, UX and design experts and analysts who can provide you and your organisation with evidence and insights, creative and structures.



Making digital work for your organisation is about so much more than technology. If you have a strategic, analytical, creative or target-driven request, we'd love to hear from you,

Neil Roseworn • Head of Consulting and
Pixl8 Group Co-Founder

With our bespoke services

Let us inspire and support you and your teams to deliver your business, marketing and digital objectives:

Strategic guidance

Audits • Objective setting • Consultancy

Let us show you what's possible to achieve now and for the future to drive successful marketing.

Powerful insights

Website analytics • Reporting • Competitor analysis

Curious minds always want to know more. Let us inspire your team with evidence-based insights to inform your digital output.

UX research and optimisation

Usability • Search Engine Optimisation • Design • Personas

Let us enhance your understanding of user needs and behaviour to deliver your potential.

The consultancy team



Evaluate. Enhance. Evolve.

Let us make your digital ambitions a reality.

Get in touch

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