



Web site Search & Customer Experience

Full Report
Webinar & Survey Insights
October 2021

Foreword

Anyone interested in marketing knows about Marketing Revolution by Robert Keith. A piece that laid the foundations of our discipline. Its introductory aphorism was “*The customer, not the company is in the middle.*”

Keith didn't invent marketing, he merely emphasised the fact that there was a new *modus operandi* for businesses in the making, one that was aimed at taking care of customers above everything else. Customer Experience (CX) isn't therefore a cherry on the marketing cake, it is the very essence of our practice.

Now that the 2020 health crisis is receding, at least in part, we have all realised how crucial online business had become.

As the former owner of several international websites for a large European Telco, I have been able to witness that when onsite search isn't functional, all our marketing efforts were subsequently annihilated. Visitors would lose their temper and look elsewhere. Often, marketers weren't even there to listen to them, though.

This is why this study was so important to us. In part two of this report, we have published the data that underpins the significance of website search both from a B2C and B2B perspective. Section one is dedicated to the thoughts developed by a panel of leading UK CX experts during our October 21 webinar.

We hope this work will be instrumental in bringing website search to the forefront so that marketers are well aware of its growing significance and of the fact that it is a driving force behind Customer Experience.



Yann Gourvennec
CEO of Visionary Marketing

Webinar insights

Website Search & Customer Experience

Website search fails to deliver

WHEN IT COMES TO WEBSITE SEARCH, MARKETING AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE LEADERS NEED TO GET THEIR ACT TOGETHER.

Visionary Marketing was recently collaborated with Yext, the AI Search company who are on a mission to transform the enterprise with AI Search, to conduct a piece of research amongst senior marketers in the UK and France that would explore the role and impact of website search on a customer's experience.

On the back of the research, an online roundtable was organised to explore and discuss the findings.

The panel assembled consisted of a series of influential voices in the UK CX and digital marketing space

- **Claire Boscq-Scott**, mystery shopping & customer service Global Guru (@cbusyqueenbee)
- **Clare Muscutt**, customer experience

thought leader and Founder and CEO of the Women in CX community (@claremuscutt)

- **Elise Quevedo**, author, advisor, speaker and one of the Top 50 most influential female voices in tech (@elisequevedo)
- **Naeem Arif**, a multi-award winning entrepreneur, business owner, author and business consultant (@NAConsultingLtd)
- **Tim Hughes**, author and one of the worlds leading pioneers and exponents of Social Selling (@Timothy_Hughes)
- **Adrian Swinscoe [Moderator]**, best-selling author, Forbes contributor, advisor and aspirant CX Punk (@adrianswinscoe)
- **Yann Gourvennec [Moderator]**, Founder and CEO of Visionary Marketing (@ygourven), and
- **Nico Beukes**, Senior Vice President at Yext @yext.

Before delving into the outcomes of the round-table discussion, it is vital to establish some context. Firstly, it is important to say that search does not exist in isolation, whether website or on a search engine. It is an integral part of the digital resources and technologies ecosystem that organisations use to help deliver effortless, convenient, seamless, and consistent experiences to their customers.

Or, rather, it should be.

The problem is that it's not often the case and is particularly true when we consider website search. Moreover, this is an issue that has existed for some time. In 2010 the Corporate Executive Board published a research in the Harvard Business Review¹ that stated their research had found 57% of all inbound calls to a customer centre could largely be attributed to a customer not finding what they were looking for on a company's website.

Research by Sabio and the Customer Contact Association² found in 2015 that between 25% and 40% of all calls to UK contact centres are

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We're in this kind of content paradox where we've got so much content now that navigation alone won't take you where you want to go.

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Clare Muscutt

CX Expert and Founder of Women in Customer Experience community

1. Source: [Sabio Research](#)

2. Source: [Sabio Research](#) or [Adrian Swinscoe's blogpost](#)

3. Source: [Adrian Swinscoe's blogpost](#)

4. Source: [Adrian Swinscoe's blogpost](#) and [Heap's Digital Experience Insights Report](#)

either unnecessary or avoidable.

Now, it would be normal to assume that the emergence of new technology in recent years, including the development of self-service tools like chatbots and AI-assisted knowledge bases, should have caused the number of avoidable calls into contact centres to have gone down.

But, in 2018, the Chief Innovation Officer for Capgemini Odigo CX UK, when presenting at the Customer Experience World 2018 conference, stated that their research³ showed that 57% of customers phoned contact centres because they can't find what they were unable to find information online.

In 2021, research⁴ conducted by Heap, a digital insights platform, found that 43% of

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Search is a really critical part of the buying process even for customers who are in-store. They're now not asking a salesperson for information, they're going straight to your website whilst in-store and are searching for products and information.

”

Naeem Arif

CX Expert in UK



consumers think most websites are not designed with the end-user in mind. This stands in sharp contrast to another finding from the same piece of research, which found that 95% of product teams surveyed said that it's "somewhat" or "very easy" for users to navigate and use their own websites.

Finally, research conducted by YouGov in May 2021 on behalf of Yext showed that:

- 57% of UK customers are using the search function on a company's website at least weekly if not multiple times a day;
- 88% of UK customers consider website search as a "fairly" or "very important" tool for accessing up to date information;
- 62% of UK customers express at least monthly if not weekly or daily frustration with the results they receive; and

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Search also has to account for the fact that many people are bad at spelling or may phrase things differently. I have a friend who sells jewellery to more people who can't spell jewellery than can spell jewellery because it's easier to bid for words that are misspellings.

”



Tim Hugues

World leading pioneer and exponents of Social Selling

• 56% of UK customers report that site search provides unrelated search results; and

• 46% of UK customers complain that site search does not understand their question.

These findings show that while we have seen the development and implementation of new digital resources and self-service channels, customers are frustrated about websites and how helpful they are.

They also show that the little issues are often overlooked and can significantly impact a customer's experience with a brand.

One these issues which is key to helping customers find the information they are looking for and making a site easy to navigate is its search function.

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Anytime that your customer can't get what they want from you, they'll go to the competition. So, any time you're losing revenue, you're losing customers, and you're losing loyalty. It's just a very, very simple business mindset.

”

Claire Boscq-Scott

CX Expert in UK



DISCUSSION

To kick off the discussion, Yann Gourvennec shared the headline findings from the UK research. Specifically, he shared that the research had found that:

- 70+% of UK marketers are convinced that Website search is “fairly” or “very strategic”;
- 63+% of UK marketers think that visitors are using the “Website search” function of their company’s website(s) to find information;
- 45+% of UK marketers think their visitors are “fairly” or “very frequently” frustrated with “Website search” results;

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We live in an age where e-commerce websites have evolved from one page websites to sites with hundreds and thousands of page, products and services within the one domain. So, if it’s not done right, you will lose customers. Remember, customers want help now. And, if they cannot find what they are looking for within seconds, they will go somewhere else.

”



Elise Quevedo

Top 50 Women in Tech Influencers 2021

- 94+% of UK marketers think that their visitors are resorting to other means when the quality of the results that they get from the Website search feature of their website is deemed poor or unsatisfactory;

- 79+% of UK marketers think a better search experience will improve visitors’ level of trust in their company;

- 70+% of UK marketers think a better search experience will have a positive impact on a visitor’s inclination to buy from their company; and

- Paradoxically, the research also found that over 81% of UK marketers find their own website search functionality to be fairly or very satisfactory.

The panel wasn’t surprised that UK marketers reported that they understood the importance and significance of website search in a customer’s experience. They believed this result makes complete sense as most brands now acknowledge the importance of delivering a consistent, effective, omnichannel

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Website search is just another touch-point within the customer journey, and therefore it needs to be as efficient as everything else.

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Claire Boscq-Scott

CX Expert in UK



customer experience. Moreover, for many of them, the customer experience they provide is now one of the most important dimensions on which they compete, differentiate themselves and stand out in their respective markets.

However, some critical points and themes emerged from this section of the discussion that are worth highlighting:

- **Website search is a touch-point on the customer's journey** - Claire Boscq-Scott summed this up well when she said, *"Website search is just another touch-point within the customer journey, and therefore it needs to be as efficient as everything else."*
- **Navigation menus aren't sufficient** - Clare Muscutt described this by saying, *"We're in*

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One of our customers, Central England Co-operative, doesn't sell online but has used the insight they have gained from their website search to learn more about their customers. That has allowed them to offer their customers different payment plans, new product lines and even open locations in new places.

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Nico Beukes
Senior Vice President - Yext

this kind of content paradox where we've got so much content now that navigation alone won't take you where you want to go."

- **Website search is not just for when you are at home, the office or on the move** - Naeem Arif added an interesting dimension from his own experience when he said, *"Search is a really critical part of the buying process even for customers who are in-store. They're now not asking a salesperson for information, they're going straight to your website whilst in-store and are searching for products and information."*
- **Website search has to account for our human failings, too** - Tim Hughes *"Search also has to account for the fact that many people are bad at spelling or may phrase things differently. I have a friend who sells jewellery to more people who can't spell jewellery than can spell jewellery because it's easier to bid for words that are misspellings."*
- **Not getting it right will cost you** - Elise

“

This isn't about AI and chatbots and really expensive innovation. It's about a really simple change that can increase sales and reduce cost to serve.

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Clare Muscutt
CX Expert and Founder of Women in Customer Experience community

Quevedo added the business imperative behind getting website search right when she said that “*Website search is important, and if you don’t get it right, you will lose customers.*”

However, the panellist’s initial enthusiasm was short-lived as they were surprised and confounded by the finding that the most significant majority of UK marketers reported that they were satisfied with the performance of the website search function on their websites. This was despite evidence to the contrary and the fact that most brands these days purport to be customer-centric and want to deliver a great experience to their customers.

As a result, we spent some time exploring why if marketers recognise the importance of web-

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B2B research from Gartner found that 76% of customers do nothing after a digital experience with you. Brands are trying to get customers to take some sort of action by getting them to an asset of theirs, whether it’s a piece of content or a website. But, if 76% of people don’t take any action. That’s pretty damning.

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Tim Hugues

World leading pioneer and exponents of Social Selling

site search and customers complain about it, then why are they doing little about it and what’s holding them back. That discussion raised some interesting themes, including:

• **No one single team the customer experience of website search** - Based on her experience working with and within large brands, Clare Muscutt believes that “*the challenge in big organisations is that website search and customer experience doesn’t really belong to anybody.*”

• **There is a lack of investment in website search** - Tim Hughes lamented that “*Companies do not invest in improving what they don’t measure.*” This backs up Muscutt’s claim about ownership, given that ownership would lead to management and management would lead to measurement.

• **There is too much talk and too little action** - Elise Quevedo questioned the appetite and pace of change in organisations when she said, “*If COVID has accelerated the pace of this digital transformation in all industries, why isn’t everyone taking action? Based on my personal experience, I think we spend too much time in meetings talking too much and*

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Website search is important, and if you don’t get it right, you will lose customers.

”



Elise Quevedo

Top 50 Women in Tech Influencers 2021

then don't act. I also think there is resistance to change at the top, in the C-suite, and they are relying too much on what has worked in the past."

• **Decision making has to speed up** - Naeem Arif suggested that our speed of decision-making has to speed up if we are to build those great customer experiences that we all want to deliver. Specifically, he said that *"This research backs up the fact that businesses need to use the data to evolve quickly. We're no longer talking about a six or nine-month project. I'm talking about a six to nine-day transition. You've got to be able to make decisions quickly because if it takes you six to nine weeks or six to*

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This research backs up the fact that businesses need to use the data to evolve quickly. We're no longer talking about a six or nine-month project. I'm talking about a six to nine-day transition. You've got to be able to make decisions quickly because if it takes you six to nine weeks or six to nine months, you've lost. This research is providing real evidence to drive that business case and that mindset.

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Naeem Arif
CX Expert in UK

nine months, you've lost. This research is providing real evidence to drive that business case and that mindset."

• **To deliver a great customer experience requires a mindset shift** - It is not sufficient to look at channels and touch-points in isolation. Leaders and brands have to see the whole picture and the parts that all of the different elements in their ecosystem play. As Claire Boscq-Scott emphasises, *"Anytime that your customer can't get what they want from you, they'll go to the competition. So, any time you're losing revenue, you're losing customers, and you're losing loyalty. It's just a very, very simple business mindset."*

CONCLUSION

Brands know that the most important go-to source that customers use to help them find information and locate products and services is an online search engine. Therefore, it is no surprise that they spend a lot of time and resources working with the major search engines to ensure that they can be found and that customers can find what they are looking for. However, searching for information and products using a search engine like Google, Bing, or DuckDuckGo is only part of a customer's journey. And, while search engine optimisation is a priority, that is a big mistake not to follow through and also not to optimise the search experience on their own website.

To make sure that happens, leaders need to see the whole picture, including website search, and ensure that every element is owned, invested in and managed. Only then will they give themselves the chance to deliver the consistent, effective and omnichannel customer experience that their customers are waiting for.

So, marketing and customer experience leaders, get your act together.

Study insights

Website Search & Customer Experience

Under the microscope

IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2021, ON BEHALF OF YEXT ([YEXT.CO.UK](https://yext.co.uk)), VISIONARY MARKETING CARRIED OUT A SURVEY OF 300 MARKETING PROFESSIONALS IN UK AND FRANCE THAT INVESTIGATED THE IMPACT OF WEBSITE SEARCH ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE.

Earlier this year, Yext and YouGov conducted a survey¹ about the impact of Website search on consumers in Europe. We have based our survey on a similar list of questions to the YouGov survey to enable the comparison between the views of consumers and that of marketers on the same topic.

As this survey was conducted on both sides of the channel, this has allowed for a comparison between the two countries and other criteria such as company size, B2B or B2C orientation, and, whenever relevant, our respondents' position in the hierarchy.

An online roundtable discussion was con-

vened with a group of leading UK customer experience and marketing influencers to bring these results to life and explore their implications. That discussion took place on 21 October 2021, and was facilitated by customer experience expert Adrian Swinscoe.

The headlines from the research, quotes and further insights taken from the exchange of views between these influencers were then compiled to produce a supplementary report (part one of this document).

1. References to this survey can be found on the Yext website at vismktg.info/yextyougovsurvey



Website search
aka Onsite search
(and more recently in-
sight search) is when the
visitors of a website resort
to the search function
to find what they are
looking for on a com-
pany's website.

ABOUT WEBSITE SEARCH

In this report, we primarily focus on Website search and its impact on the quality of the overall customer experience from the point of view of a marketing person.

However, given the similarity of the survey to previous consumer research conducted this has made it possible to compare marketers' perceptions with that of consumers in both the UK and France.

This survey is also adding a new dimension since it doesn't just focus on B2C marketing professionals but delivers insight for business-to-business as well.

ABOUT OUR SAMPLE

This survey was conducted online during the last two weeks of August, in France and the UK, with a total of 300 responses (167 from the UK and 133 from France and a total of 258 complete responses). Respondents were all marketing professionals working in businesses with more than 200 employees with a balanced sample of smaller (fewer than 1,000 employees) and larger businesses (over 1,000).

To make it more convenient for readers, all methodological notes have been kept at the end of this report. References to the methodology will be marked with the † symbol wherever necessary.

Part One.

The Yext Website Search 2021 B2B Survey Results in a Nutshell

First and foremost, our survey results are very consistent between the UK and France. The issues highlighted by this report are not tied to a particular geographical location. Similarly, many of the issues uncovered by the YouGov consumer research are also found in our survey of marketing professionals. In this report, we have pulled the results for each question and analysed them thoroughly while adding further granularity with the help of cross-tabulation wherever we deemed it necessary.

The following are the headline findings from the research:

- Over 70% of UK and French marketers[†] are convinced that Website search is fairly or very strategic.
- Over 63% of UK and French marketers think that visitors are using the “Website search” function of their company’s website(s) to find information.

70%

of UK and French marketers[†] are convinced that Website search is fairly or very strategic.

94%

of UK and French marketers think that their visitors are resorting to other means when the quality of the results that they get from the Website search feature of their website is deemed poor or unsatisfactory.

- Over 45% of UK and French marketers think their visitors are fairly or very frequently frustrated with “Website search” results. Meanwhile, according to the previous YouGov research, 62% of consumers report that they feel rather or very frustrated with onsite search results.
- Over 94% of UK and French marketers think that their visitors are resorting to other means when the quality of the results that they get from the Website search feature of their website is deemed poor or unsatisfactory.
- Moreover, over 79% of UK and French marketers think a better search experience will improve visitors’ level of trust in their company; and
- Over 70% of UK and French marketers think a better search experience will have a positive impact on a visitor’s inclination to buy from their company.

45%

of UK and French marketers think their visitors are fairly or very frequently frustrated with “Website search” results. Meanwhile, according to the previous YouGov research, 62% of consumers report that feel rather or very frustrated with onsite search results.

- Paradoxically, however, our research also found that over 81% of UK and French marketers find their website search engines fairly or very satisfactory.

Website search is deemed strategic by marketers, and they agree that the quality and accuracy of its results have an impact on revenue and customer experience and that a poor Website search engine means most customers will try to find similar products and services from other means.

Despite all of that, a huge proportion of our marketing respondents state they are happy with the results that their Website search function provides to their customers.

One may wonder why so many marketers aren’t working harder to keep their customers and visitors satisfied. Covid-19 has accelerated the pace of digital transformation across all industries and websites are now considered pivotal to the development of business.

Website search, in that respect, is no longer a feature made to merely keep visitors happy but a real and effective means of retaining existing customers and gaining new ones.



Marketers,
where are you?

Thus, the question here has to be:

What is going on with marketers when it comes to website search and customer experience?

And, in the face of these results:

What is stopping marketers from taking action?

Part Two.

In Depth Analysis

This survey was mirrored from the original YouGov survey, and the questions were adapted to this B2B audience while retaining most, if not all, of the wording used by the original study. This method has enabled us to compare the results for both populations. Please note that a raw file containing all the numbers from this survey results is available online at vismktg.info/yex-tnumbers21.

We have set three major objectives when building this survey:

1. Understand Marketers' perception of how visitors are using Website search,
2. Marketers' opinion of the impact of search quality on customer experience (CX),
3. Marketers' view of best or worst practices regarding Website search.

1. Marketers' perception of how visitors are using Website search

Our primary objective was to understand marketers' perception of how often and how their customers resort to the Website search function on their website or websites.

To this end we prepared a set of questions, most of them being based on the initial YouGov survey.

Whenever necessary we have compared those numbers with the consumer survey results to

2. Throughout this document*, our statements and analyses must be understood as based on the sample of this survey. The said sample is described in more detail in part four* of this report.

70%

of UK and French marketers[†] are convinced that Website search is fairly or very strategic

highlight the similarities and differences with marketers' opinions.

WEBSITE SEARCH IS DEEMED STRATEGIC OR VERY STRATEGIC BY MOST OF OUR RESPONDENTS

Marketers², both in the UK (73%) and France (70%), seem convinced that the onsite search feature of their website(s) is fairly or very strategic. Only a minority seem to think this feature not strategic is or not very strategic.

IMPACT OF FACTORS SUCH AS COMPANY SIZE OR SECTOR ON HOW STRATEGIC WEBSITE SEARCH IS

How are these results impacted by the fact that the respondents are working in B2B and B2C[†]? In this instance, the results are very different depending on the nature of the business. Whereas there is a majority of B2B respondents (58% i.e. 45 respondents out of 78) who think that this feature is strategic or very strategic, the numbers are far higher for B2C only respondents (81% i.e. 99 answers out of 121).

78%

of B2C Marketers think Website search usage by visitors to their company's website(s) is frequent or very frequent

This is understandable given the significance of search engines when it comes to ordering products online when product ranges are very broad, and consumers have a hard time choosing the right model among never-ending listings of similar offers.

Our pivot tables have also delivered insights regarding the impact of the size of the business of our respondents on the strategic nature of Website search. Our initial assumption was that larger businesses[†] would be the only ones to mention how strategic Website search was to their business and that smaller[†] businesses would be far less concerned by this feature. We have been proven wrong in that respect since the proportion of marketers regarding Website search as strategic on both

segments is almost identical (70% for smaller businesses out of 124 responses, and 74% of larger enterprises i.e. 99 out of a total of 134 respondents belonging to that portion of our sample).

WEBSITE SEARCH: A VERY USEFUL FEATURE IN THE EYES OF MARKETERS AS WELL AS CONSUMERS

As a result, there aren't any doubts that marketers, be they from smaller or larger businesses, or dedicated to B2B or B2C, are fully aware that the onsite search feature of their websites is used rather or very frequently by their customers, even though they are a little less so in the UK (62%) than in France (73%).

These results are very consistent with those taken from the YouGov consumer survey where we found out that 62% of UK users declared resorting to Website search at least once a week (58% of respondents in France for the same question).

The interpretation of Website search usage frequency is, however, very different from sector to sector. Whereas for B2B, only 56% (44) respondents have deemed such usage fre-

HOW STRATEGIC IS THE WEBSITE SEARCH FEATURE ON YOUR COMPANY'S WEBSITE(S) WITH REGARD TO YOUR OVERALL DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY?				
ANSWER CHOICES	FRANCE		UK	
Very strategic	27%	28	33%	54
Fairly strategic	43%	44	40%	65
Not very strategic	14%	14	19%	30
Not strategic at all	11%	11	6%	9
Don't know	6%	6	2%	4
	Answered	103	Answered	162
	Skipped	18	Skipped	17

VISITORS ARE USING THE “WEBSITE SEARCH” FUNCTION OF YOUR COMPANY’S WEBSITE(S) TO FIND INFORMATION VERY FREQUENTLY & FAIRLY FREQUENTLY :	
B2B	56%
B2C	79%
B2B & B2C	64%
Decision makers	66%
Employees or experts	71%
Don’t know	5%

62%

of UK users declare resorting to Website search at least once a week (Yext / YouGov survey).

quent or very frequent, this proportion goes up to 78% for those who work for companies dealing in business-to-consumers products or services.

Company size had, as in the previous instance, little impact on our results: the same proportion, 69%, of marketing specialists from smaller and larger businesses consider the usage of this feature frequent or very frequent. Decision makers[†] as well as employees/experts[†] agree on the fact the feature is often or very often used by visitors too.

Marketing professionals on both sides of the Channel are also quite conscious that providing visitors with accurate and up-to-date information is fairly or very important (85% in France and 72% in the UK compared with 87% of French and 88% of UK consumers).

2. Marketers’ perception of the impact of search quality on CX

Now that we have uncovered that Website search is a significant feature that its use is frequent for most users and that marketers

ON AVERAGE, HOW FREQUENTLY, IF EVER, DO YOU THINK VISITORS ARE USING THE “WEBSITE SEARCH” FUNCTION OF YOUR COMPANY’S WEBSITE(S) TO FIND INFORMATION?				
ANSWER CHOICES	FRANCE		UK	
Very frequently	15%	15	21%	33
Fairly frequently	33%	34	24%	38
Fairly infrequently	21%	22	23%	36
Very infrequently	20%	21	19%	30
Never	6%	6	6%	9
Don’t know	5%	5	8%	13
	Answered	103	Answered	159
	Skipped	18	Skipped	20

are truly aware of that fact, we will now analyse the impact of Website search on customer experience in the eyes of the marketing specialists whom we have surveyed.

A rather high degree of the UK (48%) and French (45%) marketers are aware that visitors to their websites become frequently or very frequently frustrated with the Website search feature on their websites. These numbers are, once again, consistent with those of the French consumers (45% experience frustration at least monthly) whom YouGov had surveyed earlier this year. However, UK consumers show a far higher level of frustration (62%).

One of our assumptions in this regard was that B2B businesses would have been immune to that problem since, as we have demonstrated above, Website search isn't as critical to their business as their B2C counterparts. We have been proven wrong once again since 44% (34 respondents) have also shown that their concern over the fact that their visitors are frustrated by the results delivered by the Website search feature of their websites.

MARKETERS ARE LARGELY AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES VISITORS HAVE WITH WEBSITE SEARCH

French and UK marketers are overwhelmingly aware that customers are encountering numerous issues with Website search. Among the most significant items are lack of call to action (38% UK and 36% in France), lack of suggestions or autofill of search queries (27% and 30%) and the fact that Website search provides unconnected results or doesn't even understand visitors' questions (48% UK and 67% in France).

The main reason for dissatisfaction among consumers is a little different, however. In the UK, 66% complain that Website search is either unrelated or doesn't understand the question, and the numbers in France are even higher with 102%³.

Our marketing respondents are largely aware (94% for the UK and even 98% in France) that their visitors are resorting to other means when the quality of the results that they get from the Website search feature of their website is deemed poor or unsatisfactory.

HOW OFTEN DO VISITORS TO YOUR WEBSITE(S) BECOME FRUSTRATED WITH "WEBSITE SEARCH"?				
ANSWER CHOICES	FRANCE		UK	
Very strategic	15%	15	21%	33
Fairly strategic	33%	34	24%	38
Not very strategic	21%	22	23%	36
Not strategic at all	20%	21	19%	30
Never	6%	6	6%	9
Don't know	5%	5	8%	13
	Answered	103	Answered	159
	Skipped	18	Skipped	20

3. Please note that multiple answers were allowed for this question, hence this result of 102% we gathered when adding the top three choices.

WHEN VISITORS CAN'T FIND THE INFORMATION, THEY'RE LOOKING FOR WHEN USING "WEBSITE SEARCH", WHICH ONE, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK THEY DO NEXT?				
ANSWER CHOICES	FRANCE		UK	
	Search via a search engine (e.g. Google, Bing, etc.)	39%	40	42%
Get in touch with customer service	23%	24	23%	36
Try to find it on the website by themselves (going through the whole menu)	22%	23	22%	35
Contact the business via social media channels	7%	7	7%	11
Search for an alternative option from another business	3%	3	4%	7
Don't know	4%	4	1%	2
Not applicable – visitors always find the information they're looking for when using Website search	2%	2	1%	1
	Answered	103	Answered	159
	Skipped	18	Skipped	20

3. Marketers' perception of best and worst practices

When asked about the best practices in terms of Website search, both UK and French marketers place eCommerce pure players and travel & hospitality at the top of their list by a narrow margin. French and UK marketers also agree that Energy, Utilities and Telecoms is one of the worst practices in that area.

DESPITE THEIR VISITORS' FRUSTRATION, MARKETERS DEEM THEIR WEBSITE SEARCH FEATURE SATISFACTORY

This is somewhat inconsistently with preceding answers, our panel declares (UK 82% and 80% in France) that the Website search feature on their websites is rather or very satisfactory. Among these 80+% nonetheless, nearly 60% of UK marketers (55% in France) believe their Website search engine could be improved.

Similarly, most marketers (68% i.e. 110 of British and 56%, 58 of French respondents) are fairly confident that their Website search engines are providing visitors with the results they are looking for the first time (70% of B2C respondents and 47% of B2B respondents as well as 61% of larger businesses and 66% of smaller businesses for both countries combined).

Lastly, imagining that a company's website was able to provide direct answers to its visitors' questions via the "Website search function", marketers thought it highly or fairly probable (83% in France and 78% in the UK) that this would possibly enhance the level of trust of customers towards the brand. They even agreed by a vast majority (70% in France and 79% in the UK) that this would have a positive impact on their customers' future purchases on their websites.

HOW DO YOU RATE THE "WEBSITE SEARCH" FEATURE ON YOUR COMPANY'S WEBSITE(S) FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW?				
ANSWER CHOICES	FRANCE		UK	
Very satisfactory and cannot be improved	21%	21	27%	43
Fairly satisfactory but could be improved	60%	61	55%	87
Fairly unsatisfactory and could be improved	15%	15	15%	23
Very unsatisfactory and could be improved	1%	1	3%	4
Don't know	4%	4	1%	1
	Answered	102	Answered	158
	Skipped	19	Skipped	21

HOW LIKELY WILL THAT IMPROVE YOUR VISITORS' LEVEL OF TRUST IN YOUR COMPANY?				
ANSWER CHOICES	FRANCE		UK	
Much more likely	34%	34	38%	60
A little more likely	45%	45	45%	70
No difference	13%	13	10%	15
A little less likely	5%	5	6%	9
Much less likely	1%	1	2%	3
Don't know	3%	3	0%	0
	Answered	101	Answered	157
	Skipped	20	Skipped	22

HOW LIKELY WILL THAT IMPROVE YOUR VISITORS' PROPENSITY TO BUY FROM YOUR COMPANY?				
ANSWER CHOICES	FRANCE		UK	
Much more likely	28%	28	28%	44
A little more likely	51%	52	42%	66
No difference	13%	13	21%	33
A little less likely	3%	3	8%	13
Much less likely	2%	2	0%	0
Don't know	3%	3	1%	1
	Answered	101	Answered	157
	Skipped	20	Skipped	22

Part Three.

The Website Search Paradox: even if it's broke, don't fix it!

This is the main takeaway from this survey. Whereas most of our marketing respondents on both sides of the Channel believe that Website search is strategic, extensively used by visitors who tend to find them rather or very frustrating and even though they seem to know a large proportion of visitors tend to go elsewhere to find what they need, they declare that they are rather happy with the status quo.

In other words, letting users go elsewhere, and especially to Google who tend to send users to their own promoted shopping links, is a recipe for losing customers to competitors and the revenue that goes with it.

Beyond the mere significance of Website search in terms of Customer Experience, one wonders why marketers don't have any vested interest in solving this issue, which is costing money to their business. The high profile of our respondents⁴ shows that this issue is well known by decision makers, from managers up to all levels of the hierarchy.

84%

Nearly 84% of companies don't actively optimize or measure their website search

Moz

One could even infer that Customer Experience, despite the prominence of this topic amongst the marketing profession, isn't taken seriously by most marketers who seem to be ill-formed about the level of the frustration felt by their customers.

As Forrester's Harley Manning⁴ has it, the right CX metric isn't NPS nor even Forrester's CX index, it's dollars and cents. And Website search is undoubtedly part of that equation.

The impact of onsite (or Website) search on CX has also been described by Frank Reed⁵, a senior account executive at BigTime software, a software vendor dedicated to time

How is CX improvement considered across various regions? In its 2021 report entitled "Analytics Business Technographics® Priorities and Journey Survey, 2021"⁶, Forrester found out that Europe is clearly lagging behind APAC and the US. Whereas 44% of the APAC and 38% of US survey respondents declared that improving CX is a priority, Europe's number for this question was a disappointing 29%. We may have part of the answer to our question.

4. Check "There's Just One CX Metric That Matters To Your C-Suite — But You're Not Reporting It" on Forrester's blog at [vismktg.info/hmanning](https://www.vismktg.info/hmanning)

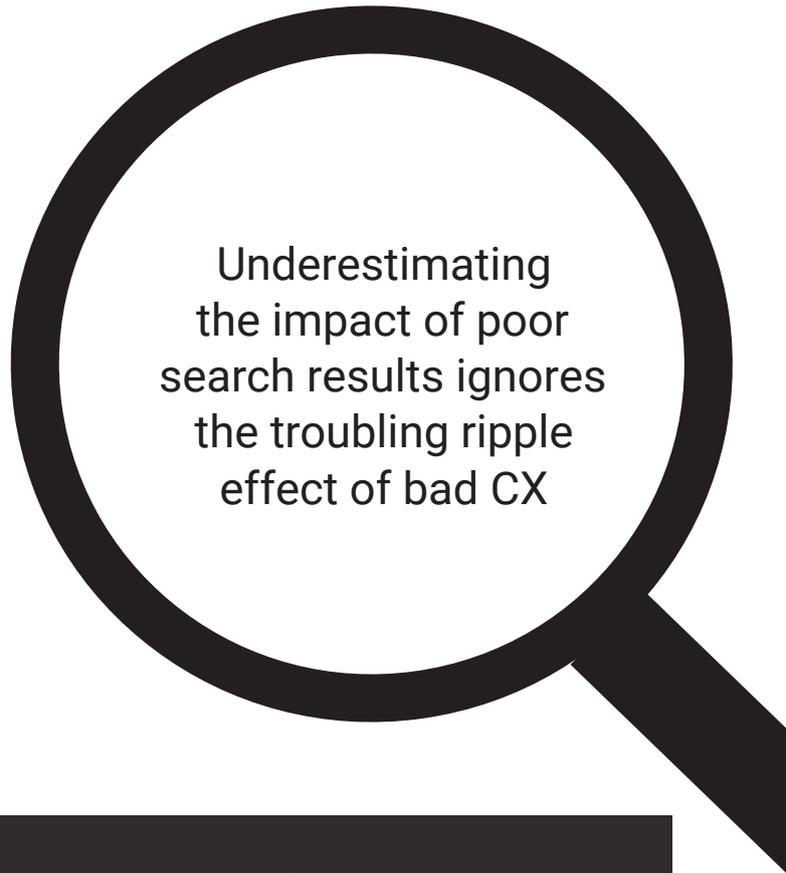
5. Frank's piece on LinkedIn "What's the Business Impact of Marketers Ignoring Onsite Search?" can be found at [vismktg.info/FronsiteSearch](https://www.vismktg.info/FronsiteSearch)

6. The report can be found at [vismktg.info/Forr21](https://www.vismktg.info/Forr21)

management. Here is what he says about this:

[Poor onsite search implementation] can impact a customer's or prospect's overall image of your company and your ability to deliver the results they need. [...] Underestimating the impact of poor search results ignores the troubling ripple effect of bad CX."

At a time when, as Frank has it, "Marketers are becoming more accountable for their actions", getting Website search fixed is a major item on marketers' agenda, one that cannot just be subcontracted to a CDO and requires serious consideration.



J.P. Sherman has detailed the issue in a 2017 bog post on the Moz Blog. This issue isn't new. eConsultancy issued a report on onsite search as early as 2014 to demonstrate that merely 15% "of companies dedicate resources to optimising the onsite search experience, 42% fold onsite search into other online measurement responsibilities, and 42% of companies ignore onsite search."

Sherman goes on to show that, as was uncovered in our 2021 survey, Website search usage is fairly significant to users with a large proportion (30%) of visitors who perform an onsite search. What the Yext YouGov survey has shown is an even bigger number (62% of UK consumers who were interviewed declared resorting to Website search at least once a week). The connection between revenue and Website search isn't a figment of our imagination either: Sherman states that "when comparing revenue gained from people who performed an onsite search vs. people who did not perform an onsite search, the people who performed an onsite search generated more revenue than those who did not" and also that "people who perform a site search are twice as likely to convert" as well as they are more prone to "return to the site with an intent to purchase."

Lastly, the Moz columnist announces that "in the [eConsultancy] research, companies had an average overall eCommerce conversion rate of 2.77%. However, the conversion rate nearly doubled to 4.63% from people who used onsite search and found what they were looking for." Our 2021 survey confirms that the issue isn't just one of Customer Experience, but one of revenue and profitability.

Source: Moz.com with data sources from eConsultancy and ConversionXL

Part Four.

Profiles and methodology

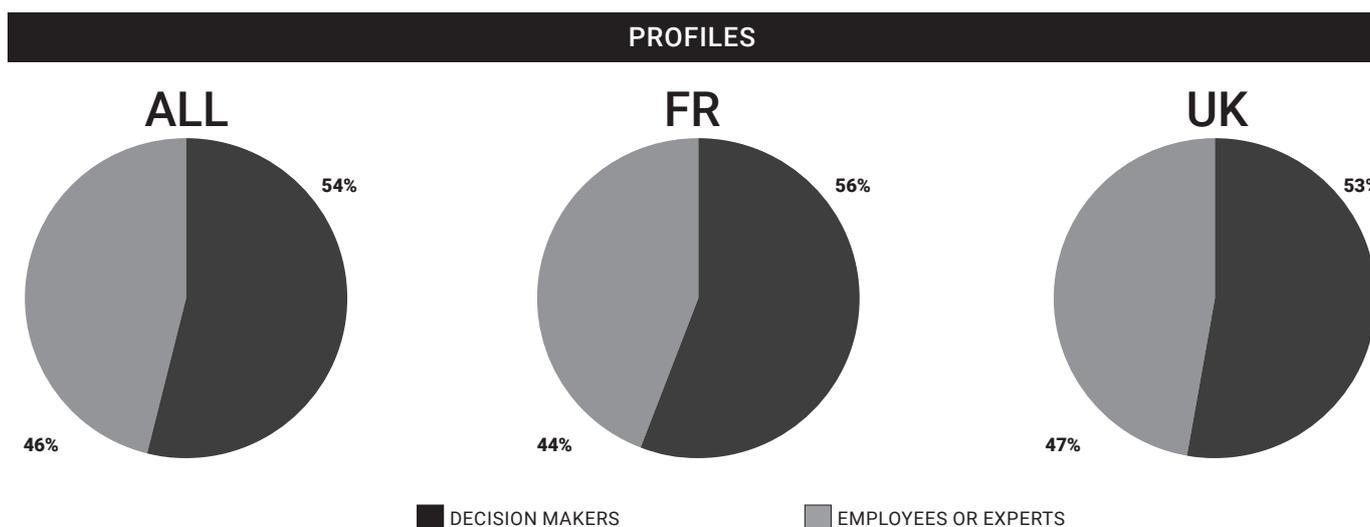
In this part of the report, we describe the profiles of the respondents to our survey. An online questionnaire for this Yext Website search B2B survey was launched at the end of August and the beginning of September 2021, which allowed us to collect a total of 300 responses. Respondents are all marketing specialists and are located in the UK and France.

We have retained 258 of them (i.e. 85%, 101 in France and 157 in the UK) of all respondents who completed the survey). The majority of our respondents (53%) are in a management position (56% in France and 57% of our UK respondents), the remainder being employees or experts all working in marketing departments.

SCREENING QUESTIONS AND MARGIN OF ERROR

A filter was set up to eliminate agencies and consultants to avoid bias. Our online questioning tool used for the study showed a margin of error of +/- 7% for this 20-question survey, which took respondents an average of 3 minutes to complete.

The number of respondents provides a comfortable basis for our analysis even though we are not claiming that this sample is representative of the overall B2B marketing population in either country. There is a known positive bias towards higher positions in the hierarchy, which gives a clear view of what managers, directors and VPs of marketing are thinking in terms of the impact of Website search on customer experience.



Important notice: a raw file containing all the numbers from this study is available online at vismktg.info/yextnumbers21

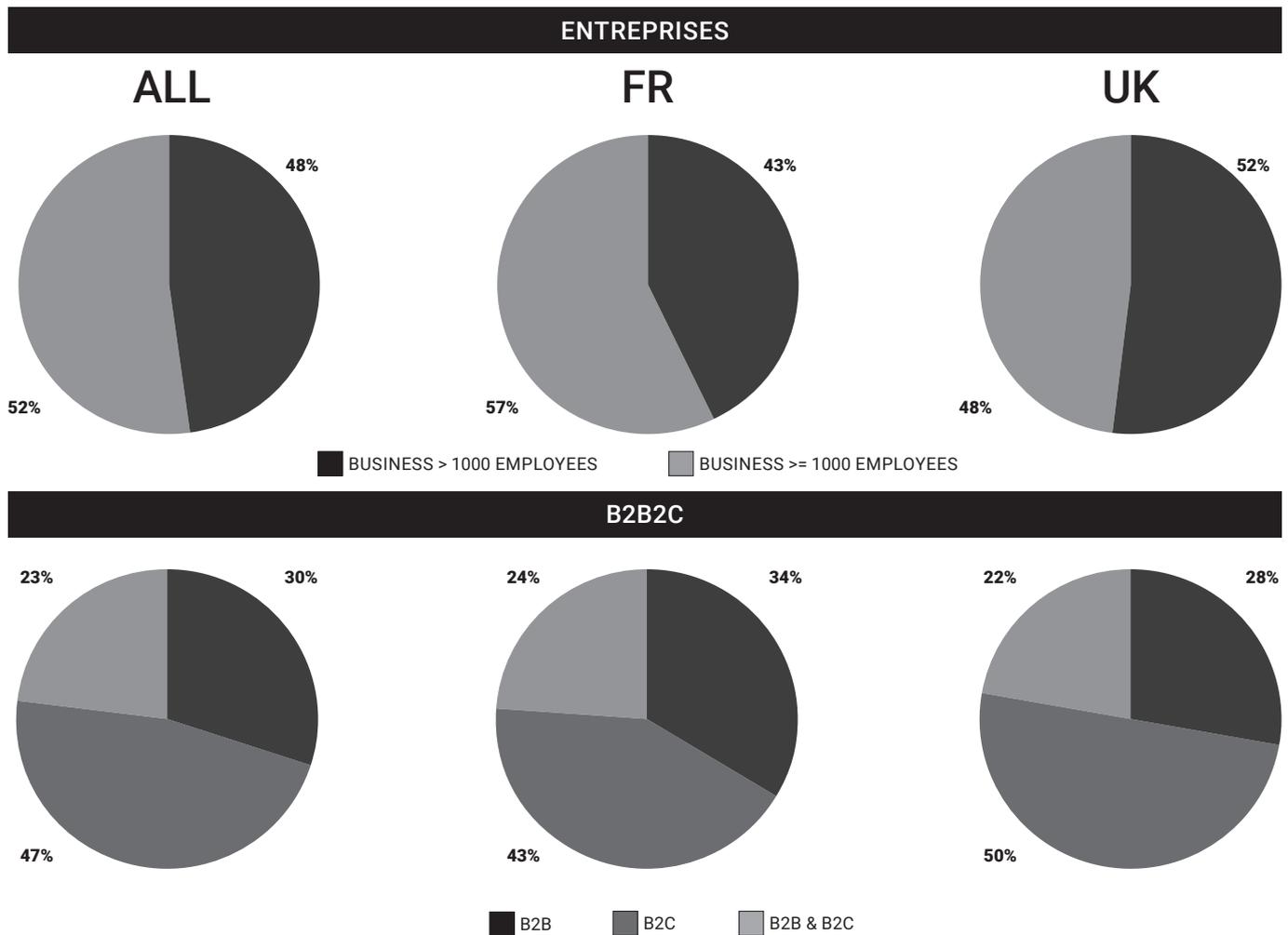
We have grouped those into a category unilaterally named 'decision makers' for practical purposes.

The sample is equally divided between larger (over 1,000 employees, i.e. 52% overall) and smaller businesses (below 1,000 employees 48% for both countries) therefore making it possible for crosstab results across these segments. For the sake of convenience, we'll name companies below 1,000 employees 'smaller businesses', and those over 1,000 'larger businesses' throughout this report.

Amongst our respondents, we also have a well-balanced proportion of B2C (47%, 121

respondents) and B2B (30% pure B2B, 78 respondents) with an additional 23% of businesses (59) with a mix of B2B and B2C. We have ruled out the latter from our analysis as they were neither B2B nor B2C and therefore, it was harder for us to draw any conclusions from this kind of crosstab results. In this instance, we have kept UK and French results together throughout the report so that the sample would be large enough to draw conclusions.

You are also reminded that a raw file containing all the numbers from this study is available online at vismktg.info/yextnumbers21





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