+955% leads for health insurance provider

Share of generic search increases +774%

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Client
Vitality

Industry
Financial Services

Services
SEO/Content Strategy

Vitality is one of the UK's leading insurance and investments providers. Everything they do is driven by their Shared Value model, a unique approach based on the scientifically proven principles of behavioural economics.

Through this model, Vitality helps members take a more active role in managing their own wellness, encouraging them to develop healthy long term habits that are good for them, good for the company and good for society.

The challenge

Vitality is a well known brand in the health insurance space, but they were aiming to improve their organic rankings for highly competitive generic terms. Google interprets customer search intent as both seeking information and to buy health insurance, leaving limited space to rank within the results pages; organic competitors included aggregators and publications restricting the search landscape for brands.

In January 2020 their organic visibility was hit by the Google broad core algorithm update; high value product-related keywords dropped below page one plus they experienced some cannibalization across their wider keyword set. In a highly competitive space, this meant they utilised paid channels to drive their marketing forward.

Vitality tasked Builtvisible with improving the organic visibility, traffic and, ultimately, lead volumes for their health insurance product, opening up further avenues for online growth.

The solution

Strategic thinking is at the heart of our consulting approach. We began by establishing the size of the achievable market plus the effort required to maximise potential visibility in the health insurance space via our proprietary Opportunity Sizing process.

Core findings included a large amount of opportunity in unranked informational keywords, and the need for a two-pronged approach via Technical and Content consulting to improve product keyword rankings.


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VitalityHealth case study

Technical

Technical hygiene and implementation

Our technical stream of work started with a platform level audit of their Sitecore website. This revealed several areas of improvement to the website:

- Sitecore CMS recommendations, including updating fields to reduce user error on canonicals and no-index fields
- Backlink audit, including disavow recommendations
- Subdomain recommendations, including better integrating Vitality's B2B sub-domains such as Britain's Healthiest Workplace with their consumer products
- Wider architecture and internal linking recommendations including:
    - Universal navigation updates
    - Secondary navigation updates
    - Horizontal and vertical internal linking recommendations, such as better integrating their Rewards USP by creating content blocks for their rewards content
    - Contextual anchor text to reduce cannibalisation
- XML sitemap and robots.txt updates
- Structured data, breadcrumb and schema recommendations
- Site speed
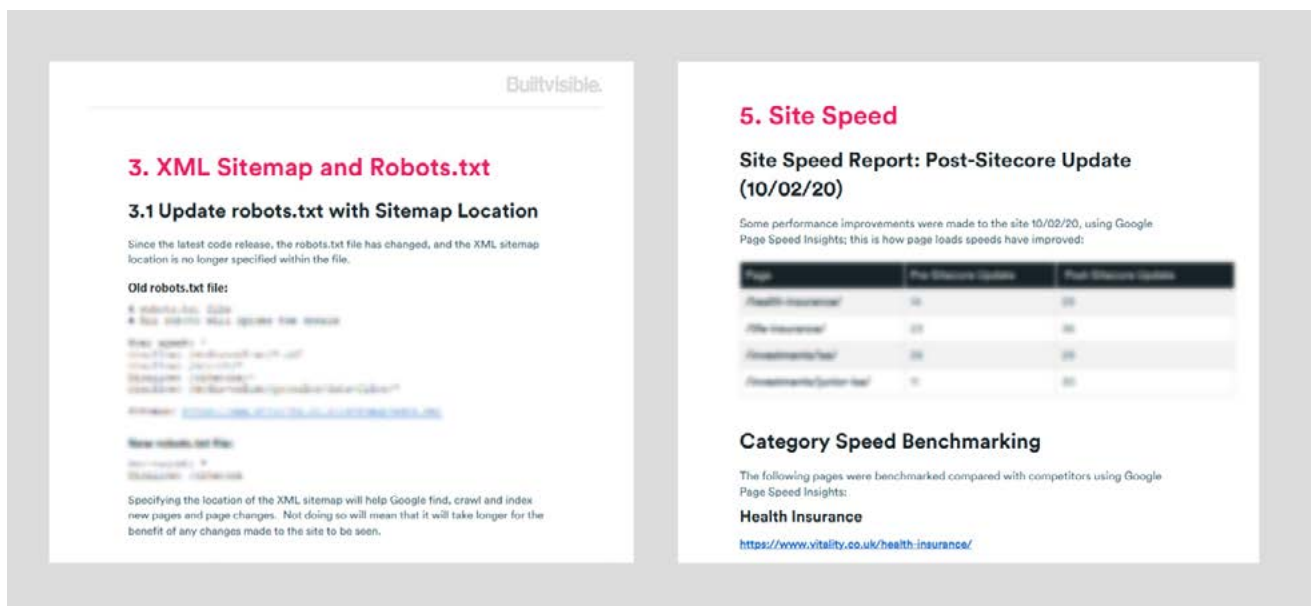
One of our core values is "Strategy is important but execution is everything"; we understand the importance of implementation when it comes to driving organic performance. Recommendations alone are not enough to drive results.

To achieve successful implementation, buy in was required not only from our main SEO points of contact, but also Vitality's internal development and product teams. With development resource at a premium, prioritisation of our technical tickets was key. Working in collaboration with a dedicated Vitality product lead, we integrated our organic requirements into Vitality's biweekly development sprint cycles via a dedicated ticketing system managed through Jira and Trello.

Each ticket was allocated into sprints and prioritised through the creation of business cases; using our Opportunity Sizing data we forecast impact on KPIs like leads rather than proxy metrics such as visibility, which allowed the Vitality product team to compare "like for like" against other business requirements.

Getting ready for Core Web Vitals

By 2021, the focus turned more heavily to site speed in the wake of Google's Core Web Vitals update. Following a Page Experience audit, Builtvisible identified Vitality were likely to fail Google's benchmark on important metrics such as Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS) and Largest Contentful Paint (LCP), which would potentially cause significant issues for Vitality's organic performance in the wake of any Google update.

The main issues were related to CLS due to the way the sticky footer and cookie consent banners were deployed. The Builtvisible technical team were able to test solutions to eradicate CLS, prove the concept within the browser and know the outcome of the recommended fix before the Vitality development team even received a ticket or any requests for their time.
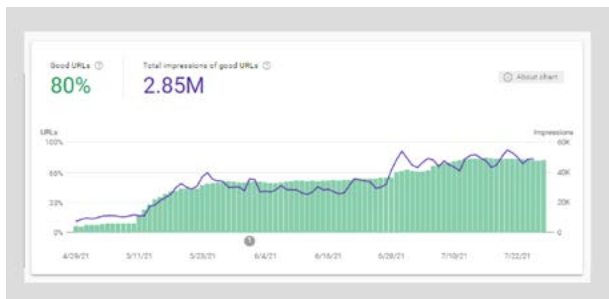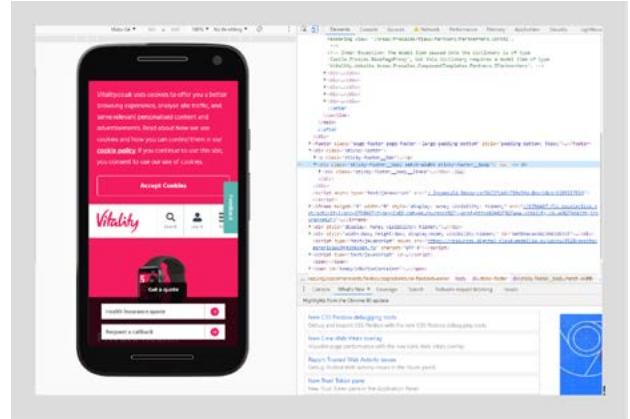

Forecasting the impact on leads in conjunction with these detailed recommendations, we successfully pushed through 13 tickets, resolved the footer and cookie consent banner issues and improved the volume of URLs which would pass the Core Web Vitals update to over 80% of Vitality's URLs.

Content

As with our technical work, we began with a full content audit of the Vitality website. Through our user journey analysis, it became clear a complex product like health insurance requires a combination of content types to nurture a customer through the marketing acquisition funnel.

Vitality had a sizeable amount of "transactional" content, with 75% of all health insurance content relating to purchasing the product. The Vitality Magazine also has a wealth of more brand led "awareness" content, related to general wellness or Vitality rewards.

However, there was a lack of "informational" content to engage with and educate the customer on the health insurance product further up the acquisition funnel. This was important from a conversion perspective, but also because Google was weighting informational content as important within the SERPs. We also knew from our Opportunity Sizing that existing transactional content would benefit from optimization to improve organic visibility further.
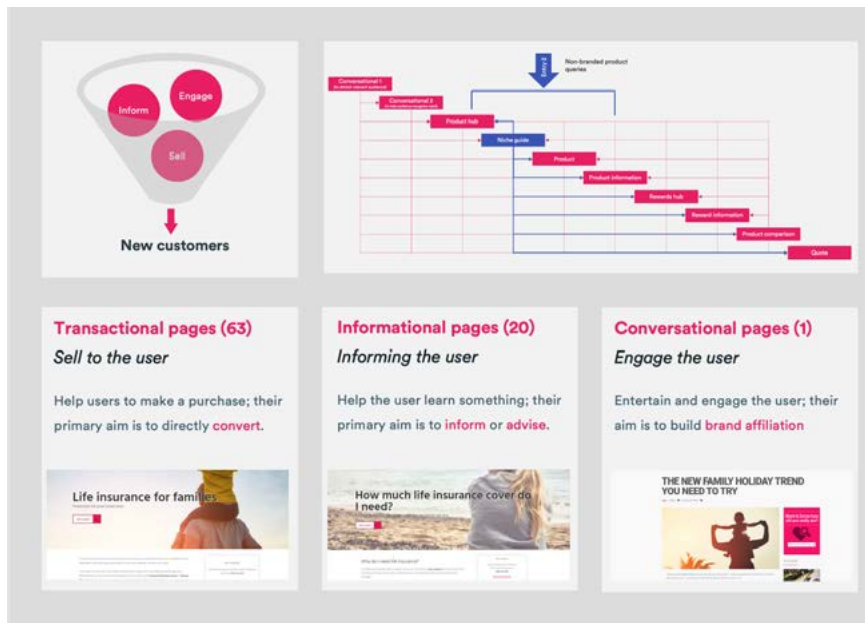
We divided our approach into two streams of work. First, we created informative product guides. Topics included:

- Dental insurance
- Mental health insurance
- Health insurance for the self employed

Creating medical content required the involvement of multiple teams at Vitality including the Content, Product, Clinical and Compliance teams. Working alongside a Vitality project manager and utilizing Vitality's ways of working and style guide, we created detailed page briefs to inform content creation while remaining on brand with Vitality's tone of voice. These were also used to educate Vitality's internal stakeholders on the importance of specific phrases and keywords facilitating smoother content amends and brand sign off.

Second, we improved existing product pages through detailed competitor gap analysis and page template optimization. These included pages related to private GP and private hospitals as well as the main health insurance landing page and associated FAQs.
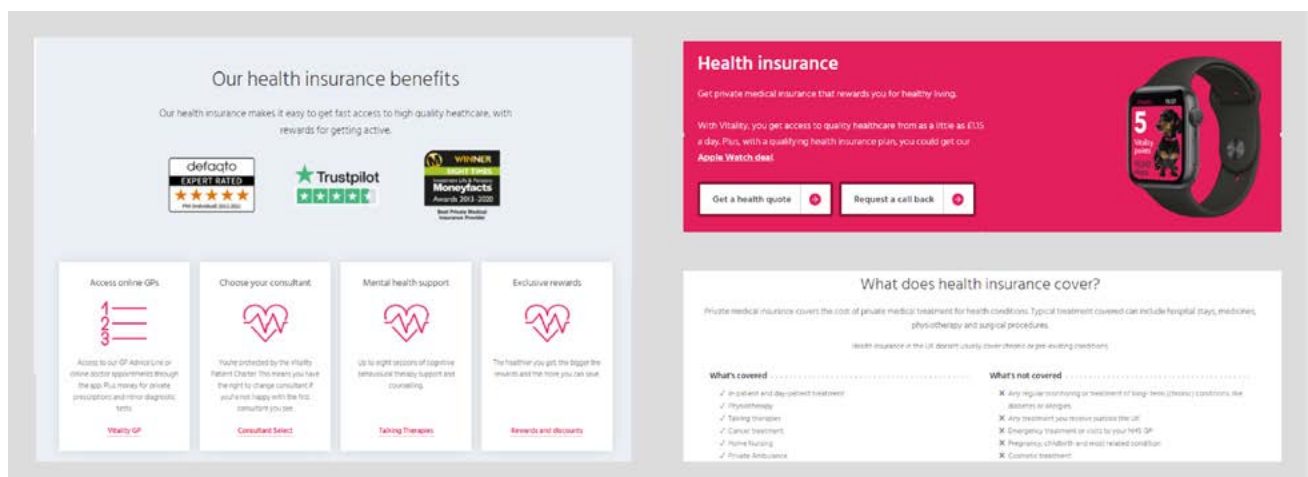
Again, collaboration with the Vitality stakeholders was key. Working within their Sitecore CMS, the Vitality team always prioritised resource against impact so estimating the potential returns from any implementation of our recommendations was important. The importance of the main health insurance URL to other channels was also a complicating factor; we needed to consider conversion rate KPIs alongside more traditional SEO metrics.

We followed a similar approach to our technical recommendations, forecasting impact and collaborating closely with the Vitality team. We also used Google Optimise to test recommendations in a controlled environment before these went live on the main website, to ensure there was no negative conversion rate impact on the main page which would detrimentally affect other channels' lead generation.

88% of our page template recommendations were ultimately implemented, improving the main product page's E-A-T, keyword relevance, internal linking, plus depth and breadth of content.

The results

Comparing October '21 with March '20 health insurance organic performance has gone from strength to strength, with all our organic KPIs improving dramatically:

- +955% health insurance leads generated, a 10-fold increase!
- Vitality's share of search has increased by 774%, delivering 5.3k extra monthly visits to health insurance landing pages from non-brand organic queries.
- Vitality now holds 10% of the available market share, up from just 1%!
- 149% increase in the overall volume of health insurance rankings
- 544% increase in page 1 rankings
- 279% increase in top 3 rankings
- Average rank has increased from 22.5 to 17.1 across all ranking health insurance related keywords
- The hero keyword health insurance is the third brand listed in the SERPs, ranking page one on desktop and mobile.

Don't just take our word for it

> Builtvisible provided actionable recommendations to help us improve our SEO and hit our business KPIs, working collaboratively with several teams across the Vitality business to push these through.
>
> Their team is knowledgeable and results-driven, and we've seen dramatic improvements in our health insurance organic performance since working with them.

Poonam Bansal, Head of Digital Acquisition, Vitality

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