

» Brand positioning in the digital age: from “Top of Mind” to “Top of Google”

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If we had to choose the terms most often used to describe the changes shaping the first half of the 21st century, digital transformation would be near the top of the list. One could go dizzy with all the bewildering solutions offered to the problems related to this concept.

After taking part in many conferences in recent years, I aim to show the real challenges companies must presently deal with when facing digitization.

Any organization failing to accept and understand consumers' minds have become fragmented is seriously at risk of falling behind. The minds of citizens, users, customers and consumers are split into two parts: the psycho-mental and the psycho-digital. Therefore, it is in companies' best interest to take part in and work with both parts of the stakeholders' minds.

Companies that fail to acknowledge Digital-Age communication focuses on the creation of value databases are dangerously out of step with the digital development of their customers. Let us take a closer look, then, at the first challenge regarding the changes companies must undertake in this digital transformation period.

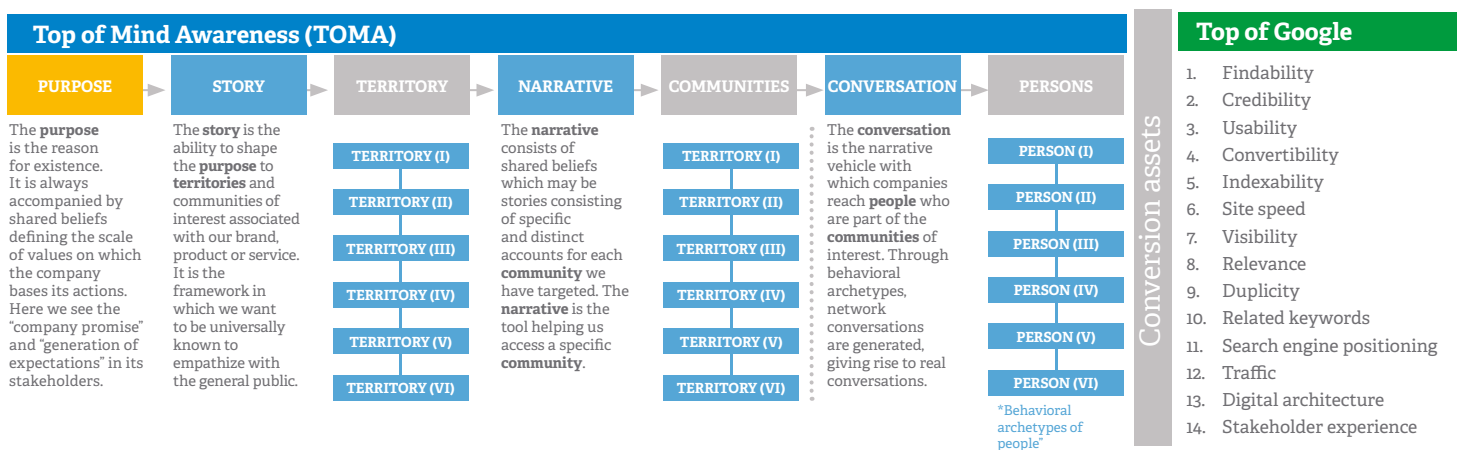
FROM “TOP OF MIND” TO “TOP OF GOOGLE”

Rigorous testing is the first step toward reaching the top. In this case, testing means being able to state in less than 21 words how something is unique, the first or the best. If you also introduce the ability to build reputation around this statement while communicating effectively to reach a target audience, you will be well on your way to top positioning. Problems arise when the known scenario starts to fade and new ones appear in which we must work and coexist.

Until recently, all universities and business schools contended the best course of action is accessing a select territory reserved for a privileged few—a short list or top-of-mind awareness (TOMA). However, things have changed, and companies must not only build reputation in the present but also conquer territory outside the stakeholder's mind, which will eventually absorb the world of reputation as we know it. This is the world of Google.

Faced with this challenge, companies must work with the same enthusiasm, effort and resources to build and consolidate their reputations both through TOMA (purpose, story, narrative and conversation) and top of Google in the digital environment.

Figure 1. From “top of mind” to “top of Google” (1).



What is my story? In which territories do I participate? What is my community of interest? Which topics are of interest? How do I “impersonate” myself? **Credibility / Notoriety / Conversion**

To achieve TOMA, build your corporate value proposition, which will guide you in articulating your brand story. It will help you connect and penetrate targeted areas of communications to identify the narratives that take us closer to their component parts—known as communities of interest—and to begin the conversation. It is necessary to clearly understand these communication techniques and know how to apply them to simultaneously build your “top of Google” positioning.

GETTING TO TOP OF GOOGLE

“Top of Google” is an analogy in relation to the digital world around us. We are well into the Digital Age, and it must be understood the spectrum where TOMA is found is no longer in the minds of stakeholders, and 99 percent of brand awareness and brand relationship comes from recommendations when sharing Internet content, a tweet, a YouTube video or an Instagram like. This network, running parallel to the traditional concept of reputation, is precisely what Google focuses on, creating its own rules on what reputation is and is not.

Google, along with mentions and the imminent Blockchain-based model, will be the one that decides, with minimal room for error, which companies deserve our trust, which ones have a great reputation and with whom users might be recommended to deepen their relationships (engagement). On the basis of these criteria, which some may like more than others, companies will have greater visibility, penetration and commercial success.

To understand the relationship between TOMA and top-of-Google positioning, one must realize everything starts with content. This undertaking, to be credible, must be ruled by the principles seen above in the TOMA model. However, once this structure has been completed on the basis of purpose, story, narrative and conversation, the model must follow two main concepts:

“Companies must work with the same enthusiasm, effort and resources to build and consolidate their reputations both through TOMA and top of Google in the digital environment”

- **External factors (offsite):** Google analyzes the quality and level of three aspects: a) level of platforms redirecting to your content, b) profile of your audience, and c) level of social media redirecting to your content.

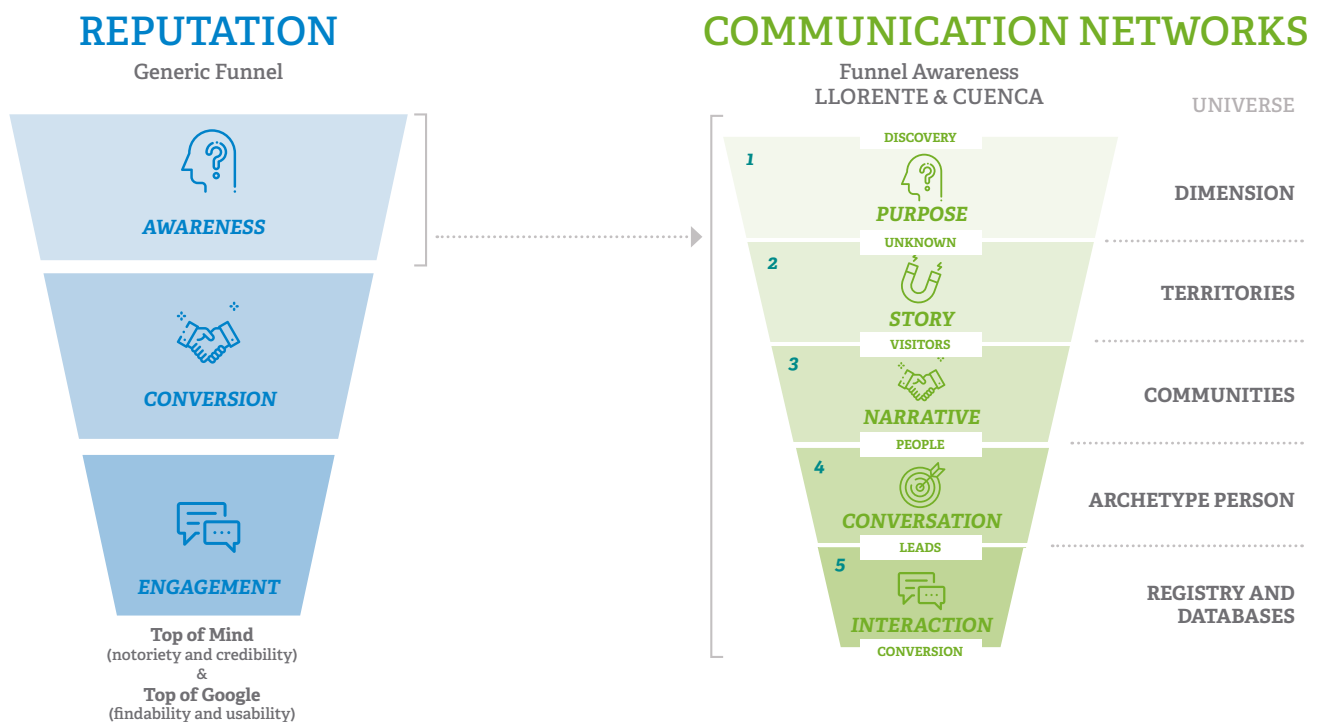
Only the visits Google considers to be of value for the content are valid. In other words, if 1,000 users visit a post but they hardly have any followers in their LinkedIn profiles, Google values the post less than if the content were downloaded once a month by an expert on the subject mentioned in the content. Similarly, it knows what your readers have visited beforehand and why they insist on following you. This is important to Google, as it associates reputation with your

positioning on its platform. For this reason, Google increasingly demands quality over quantity.

- **Internal factors (onsite):** Internal factors facilitate Google's work to find us when we are demanded. They are easier to build than external factors but harder to maintain if one tries to cover all of them or, better said, if one tries to be in all places. This often happens in organizations that have not understood being digital does not mean “appearing to be digital.” LLORENTE & CUENCA has identified the following 14 key internal factors to proper on-site management.

1. **Findability:** Bots accessing a webpage mainly read HTML code, which is why it is essential to keep them well-structured and related to your subject matter. It is the same case with meta tags, information associated with HTML and serving to provide search engines with further data on the website.
2. **Credibility:** The veracity of the content has to do with many factors, including the website, author, platform and user complaints. It is also important no fake news has been detected, as Google identifies it immediately.

Figure 2. From “top of mind” to “top of Google” (2).



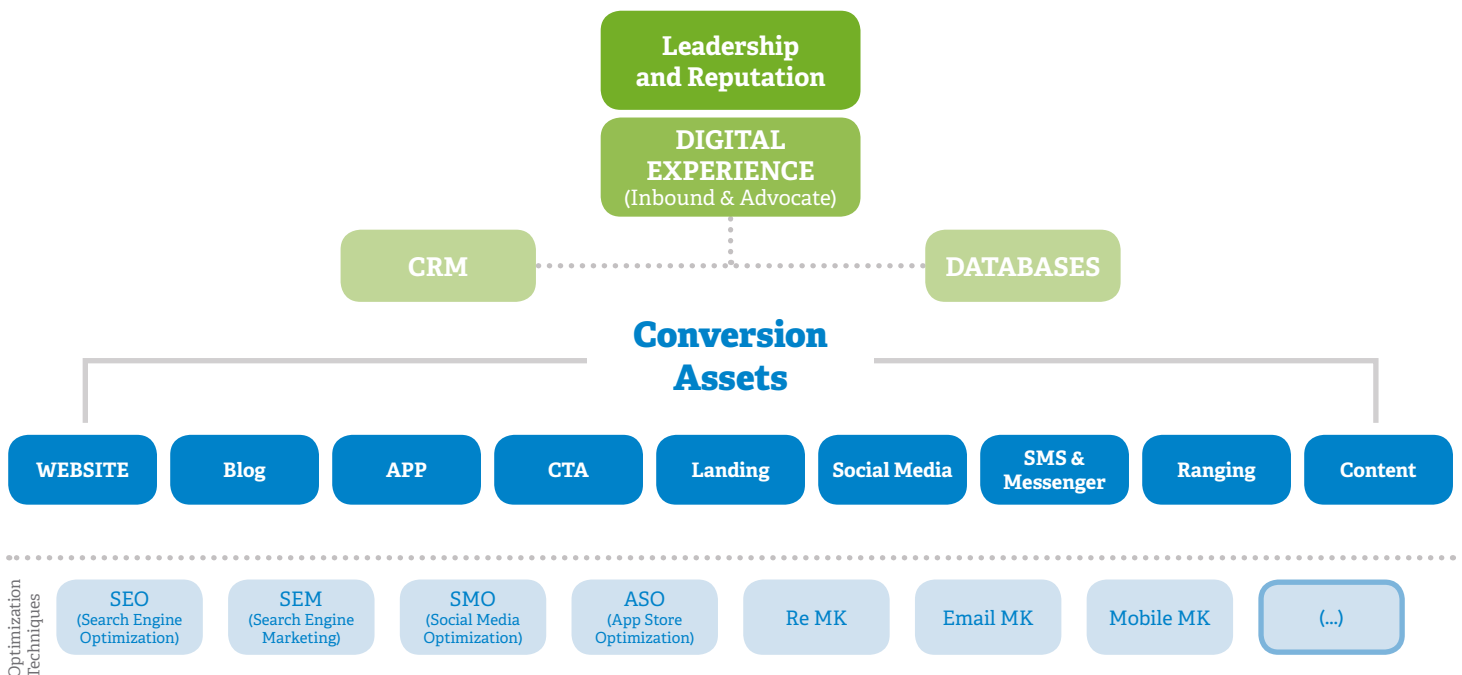
3. **Usability:** Usability is defined as the extent to which a product may be used by specific users to achieve certain goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specific context. It analyzes the degree of responsiveness of its platform.
4. **Convertibility:** Convertibility is the content's capacity to take the user or interested party toward a more advanced stage than they arrived. In other words, a website visitor not only reads a post but fills in a form or downloads an e-book. Convertibility is what gives meaning to each and every one of a company's digital assets, as it is the factor showing real acceptance of the displayed content.
5. **Indexability:** The indexability of a website is how easily the website may be found and tracked by search-engine robots. Therefore, a website is considered to have good indexability when all the pages we want to see in search engines are accessible to these robots.
6. **Site speed:** Website velocity is fundamental for search-engine robots, because, the faster the site, the more pages can be searched and indexed, leading to better search-engine results. Ultimately, this factor contributes decisively to site ranking.
7. **Visibility:** This refers to the general state of the website in relation to search engines and the average position assigned by search engines to the set of keywords, determining the website's positioning.
8. **Relevance:** A website's relevance has to do with its headlines, meta descriptions and descriptions, which search engines interpret to determine whether the content is of sufficiently high relevance to be displayed.
9. **Duplicate content:** This occurs through poorly designed replicas due to filtering, pagination and other features of the website's architecture.
10. **Related keywords:** Keywords tell us the website's content is rigorously designed to achieve better SEO positioning.
11. **Traffic:** The volume of traffic defines interest in the displayed content, although Google not only focuses on this volume but also the quality of the traffic and, even more, the frequency of repeat visits. Google assigns high rankings to websites with loyal and highly valued followers.
12. **Automation:** Automation optimizes Google's scoring and makes the content effective in business terms. All content with soundly automated interaction gives rise to greater frequency of content consumption and, therefore, loyalty.
13. **Digital architecture:** This has to do with who evaluates and ensures each and every one of the digital assets is aligned and coexists via technical and operative coherence. This facilitates the user's navigation and experience focused on conversion (see factor 4).
14. **Stakeholder experience:** This is where coherence is identified between the points of contact and experience perceived by the customer in relation to moments of truth, pain and pleasure.

Remember, the power of a digital asset is its capacity to position in Google to therefore generate conversion.

The elements comprising the external (offsite) and internal (onsite) factors are called conversion assets. They are the contact points encountered by users allowing us to better design a memorable and recommendable experience while increasing the possibility of loyalty to a brand, a product or a service of interest.

To understand the process necessary to achieve this loyalty (fans of the brand, product or service), we must first know the necessary steps to go from "total quality" to "total experience." We will take a closer look at this challenge in the near future.

Figure 3. Conversion assets.





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