

A GUIDE TO
**Communicating
Brexit**

for Government and Public Sector



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This guide is aimed at giving you a framework to build out your Brexit Communications Plan.

Interested in learning more about how to develop this plan in conjunction with the author?

Email Joanne directly to info@publicsectormarketingpros.com

Find out more at publicsectormarketingpros.com/communicatingbrexit

About the Author

Joanne Sweeney is a career-communications professional in journalism and PR. For the past 11 years she has specialised in digital communications and is a trainer for Google in Europe. A two-time author, Joanne is also a digital marketing practitioner with hundreds of podcasts, vlogs and blogs in her content portfolio.



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Contents

Why you need a Communicating Brexit plan	4
Your Brexit portfolio	5
Sizing up the audience	6
The Google effect	7
Taking action on Brexit (pre and post)	8
The pillars of your Brexit story	9
Pinning your story to the social web	10
Brexit social snacks for bite-size information	11
UX and the Brexit journey for citizens	12
The trusted voice for public conversation	12
Measuring true citizen engagement	13
Concluding thoughts	14

Why you need a Communicating Brexit plan

Brexit has become widely known as a 'political crisis' and with this narrative dominating the media, it serves little comfort to citizens of Ireland (at home and abroad) or Britain.

More broadly citizens of the other 26 EU member states look on as they consider the impact of Brexit on their day-to-day lives.

We know that markets respond to uncertainty with a fall in currency value and decreased consumer spending, but how do we measure public uncertainty and confidence? Well, there are many ways to do this from a digital communications perspective, from keyword research to sentiment and topic analysis.

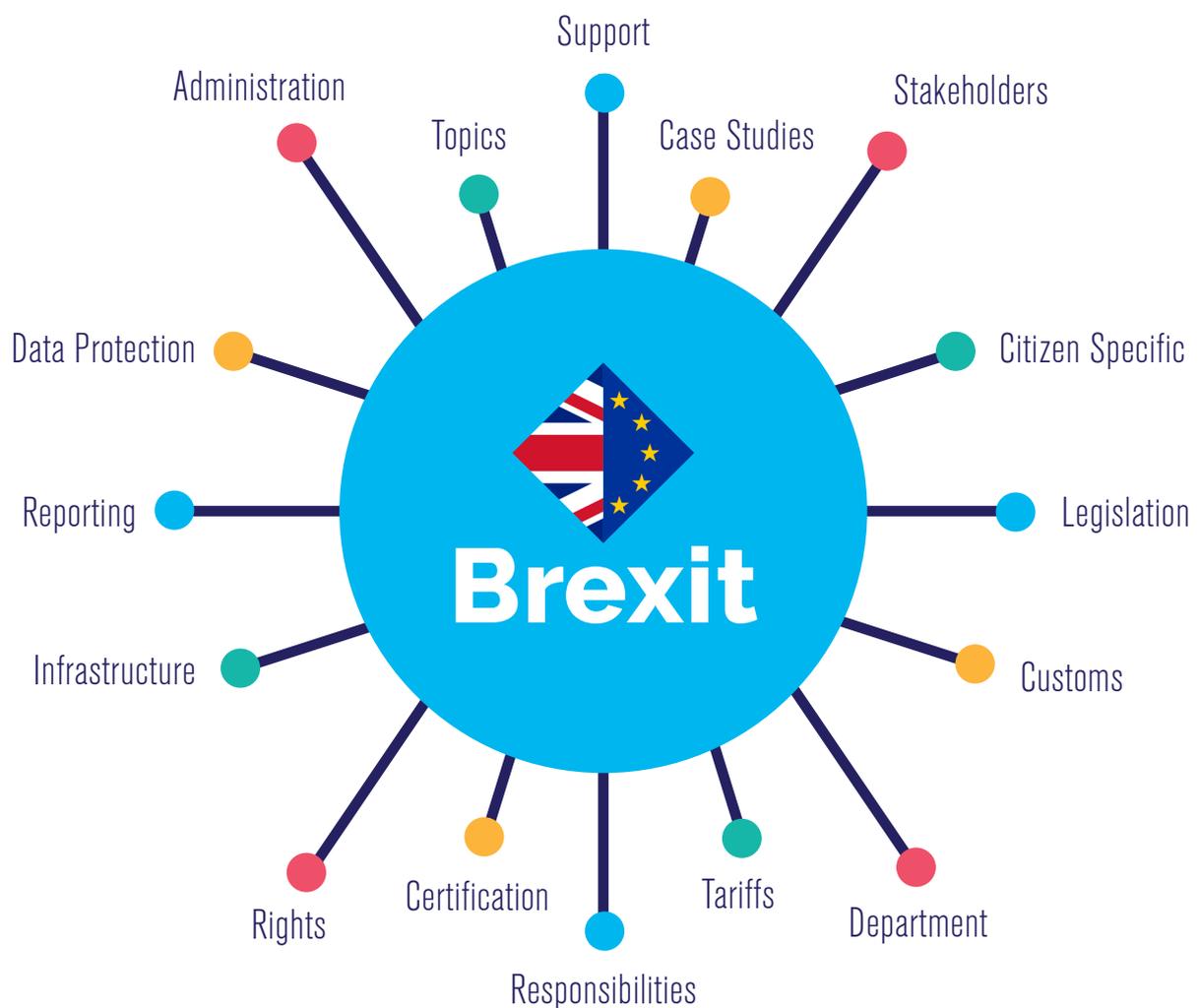
If you are still on the Brexit fence around your communications plan, then consider these questions:

- **If you are thinking about how Brexit will affect your stakeholders, then you can be sure your stakeholders are asking themselves what you are doing about it?**
- **Is there a communications vacuum?**
- **Who owns the truth around Brexit and your organisation – is it you or is it social media commentators or bad actors on the Internet?**
- **What timeframe are you working off to deliver an effective plan?**
- **What is the impact of doing nothing in the immediate term, short term or long-term?**
- **Who is communicating, what you should be communicating and why, what is their agenda?**
- **What are the political implications?**
- **Do you have the capacity to deliver an effective communication plan in-house?**

Your Brexit portfolio

The starting point to developing your Brexit portfolio is to create what I call a *Brexitgram*.

No this isn't an Instagram update about Brexit, it's a visual representation that will help you understand what you need from a content perspective in your Brexit portfolio. Here's an example of one.



This *Brexitgram* is missing detail, but this is where your efforts are required to dig deep on all the elements affecting the work of your agency and the impact on your audiences.

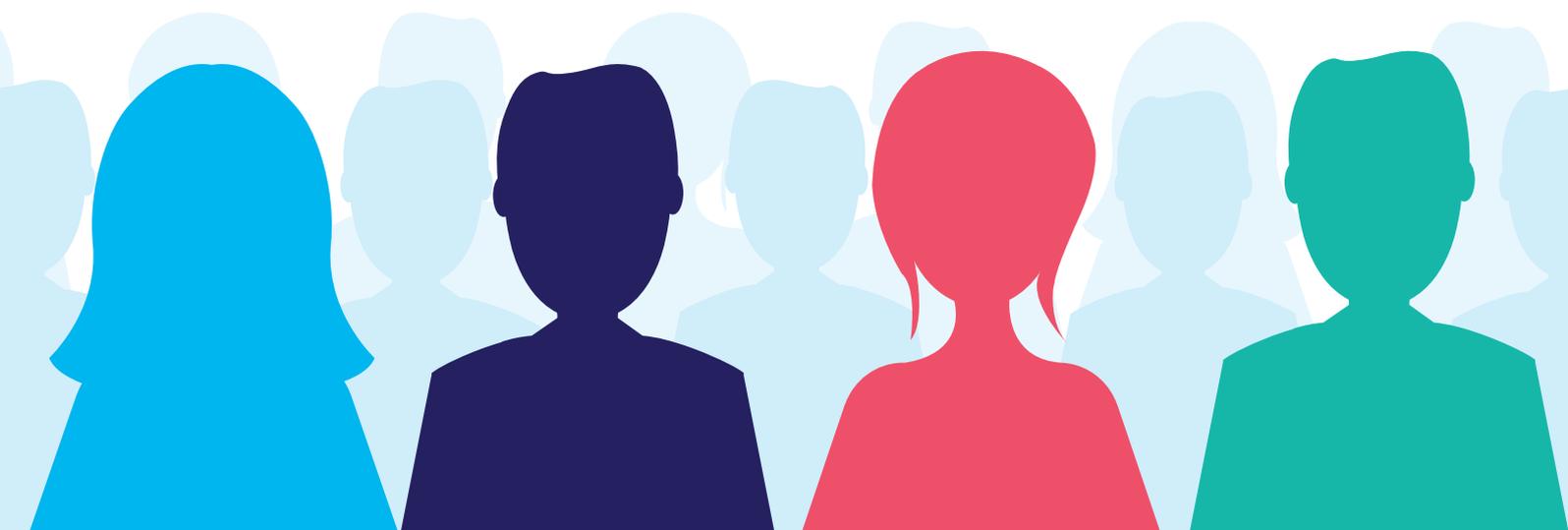
Sizing up the audience

Now we turn our attention to the audience and the extent of reach needed to communicate the implications of Brexit.

Sizing up your audience is an important task as you must be aware of who and how many citizens will be affected by this specific set of Brexit changes. Developing an audience profile is your next task, which should include:

- ✓ **Who** (demographic data)
- ✓ **Where** (geographic and digital data)
- ✓ **Why** (sectoral data)
- ✓ **How** (behavioural data)
- ✓ **When** (legislative data)
- ✓ **What** (legislative data)

Understanding who you need to speak to is critical to the success of your Brexit communications plan.

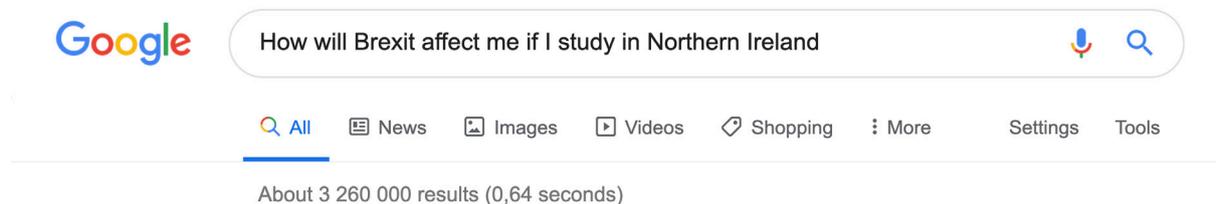


The Google effect

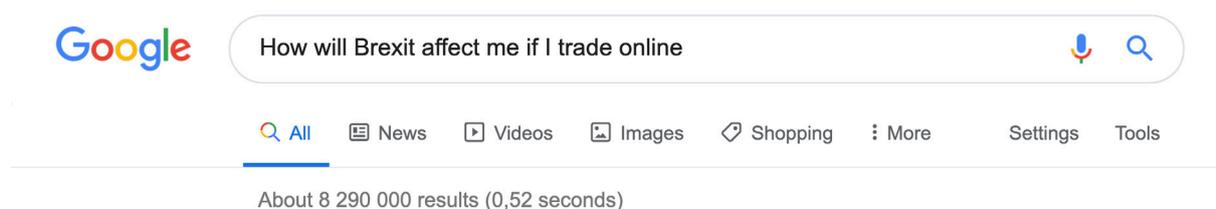
Right now there are hundreds of thousands of monthly searches around the Brexit topic. Leveraging this data held by Google will ensure you prepare content and answer questions the public and your key stakeholders want and need.



It's time to dig deep and undertake keyword research. This task illuminates and inspires you to think with the mind of the public. Not only should you care about ranking on Google, the world's largest search engine, but you should also care about ranking on YouTube, the world's second largest search engine, and owned by Google.



Using the right keywords, your content marketing will be seen and consumed. Keyword research is the blueprint for your online marketing efforts, driving every decision you make so missing this step represents a massive fail.



Taking action on Brexit (pre and post)

What do people need to do right now to understand and change gear because of Brexit?

You need to create an A-Z glossary of action points which practically sets out what you need to do pre and post Brexit. This can always be updated as the Brexit goal posts shift. But you can see already that this framework is setting you up for preparedness.

You must be their go-to single (or at least one) source of truth. By now we all know that not everything we read on the Internet is the truth, so you must provide the cornerstone content that is needed by your audiences.

Writing cornerstone content goes back to your keywords. You have to determine the essential keywords you want to rank for on Google and on YouTube.

Their actions should be based on the AEC model i.e. **awareness** that they are affected by Brexit (specifically), taking an interest and then **engaging** with your content, and finally trusting you and taking your advice and taking action by **converting**.



The pillars of your Brexit story

In the age of soundbites, link clicks and Tweets, it's very easy to become obsessed with short-form social content. However, the efforts on your part must start at long-form content.

The OOP model of telling your Brexit story requires **online content** that is **optimised** then **published** and you need to break your story into three parts: awareness, engagement and conversion.

So how do you map out the pillars of your Brexit story? Here's an example of what you might develop from keyword research, understanding your audience and ensuring their preparedness based on the implications of Brexit. This is by no means a complete picture, but it gives you a sense of your approach.

It's as easy as CCC...

CORNERSTONE CONTENT	CALL TO ACTION	CONTENT TYPE
Brexit and your online business	Subscribe	Video / Podcast
Brexit and tax implications	Download	Guide / Checklist
Brexit and notifying your customers	Register	Event / Newsletter

Long-form content is considered:

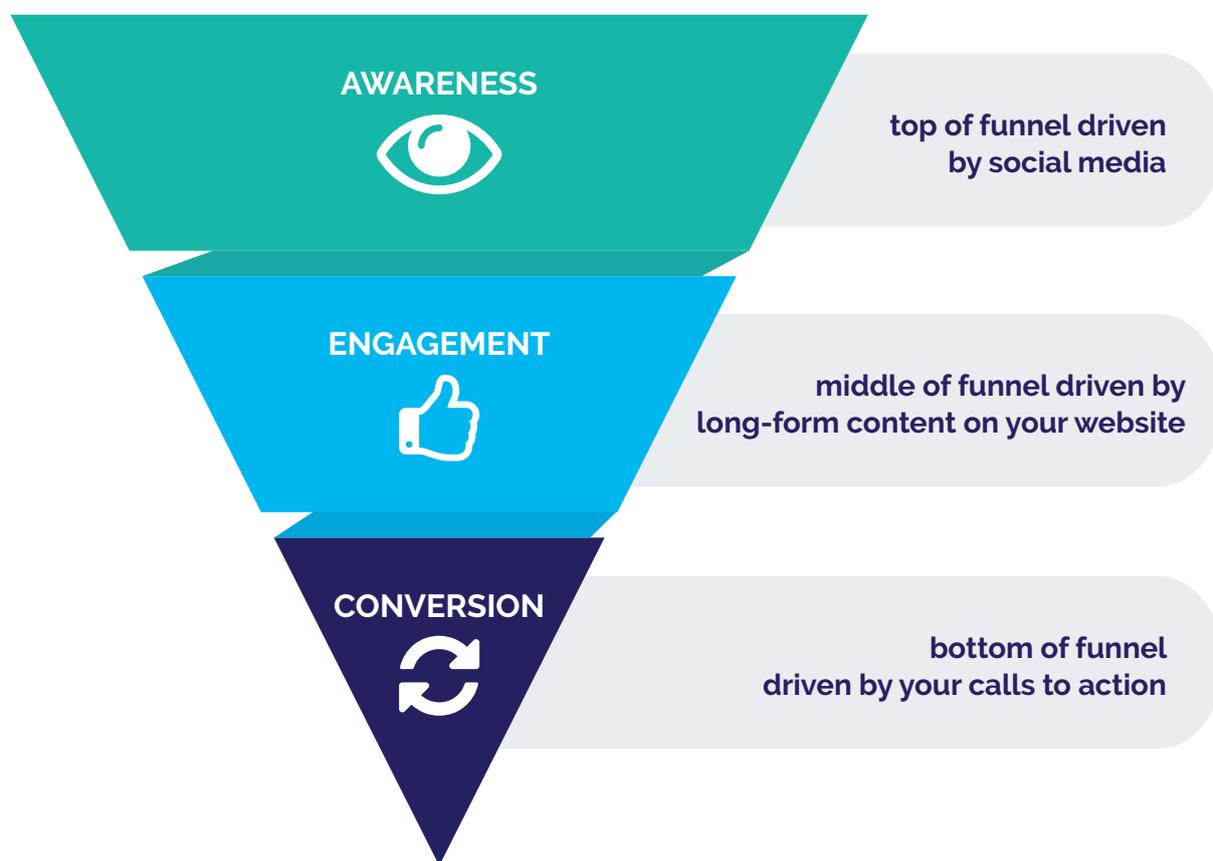
- **300+ words**
- **5+minutes of video**
- **12+ minutes of audio**

From your long-form content you can re-purpose it for social sharing. This is best practice.

Pinning your story to the social web

Remember you are not the only individual or organisation creating content for the social web and in fact, getting eyeballs on it is your next and perhaps biggest challenge. The fight for attention online is tough.

It's time to get creative and re-purpose the long-form content for social snacking. The approach here needs to be three-fold.



Brexit social snacks for bite-size information

Leveraging the unique features of each social network here is critical. Your understanding of your audience at the outset of this communications plan has stood you in good stead.

So now you choose your key social networks and the tactics to deploy on each for awareness, engagement and conversion. This may be Facebook advertising to hashtag amplification, social and live video as well as Instagram Stories.

Digital communications for Brexit can be delivered in an efficient and effective way by following my **360-degree framework**, which encompasses search and social media and delivered to citizens via their smartphone.



UX and the Brexit journey for citizens

When you want an engaged online audience you need to ensure three key elements:

- 1 Give them the answer to their question
- 2 At the right time
- 3 With the right speed

It's as simple as that. But not every organisation commits to this standard. User-experience or UX for short, is the discipline of taking a citizen on a seamless online journey of research to discovery. So if I see a Tweet from you, and click the web link included in that Tweet, I'm taken to a website landing page where I can consume more detailed information peppered with multi-media content.

You have to have all your digital ducks lined up in a row ready for execution at this stage of the plan.

The trusted voice for public conversation

Who from your organisation is going to be the communications mouthpiece and driver of the message?

While you have corporate accounts, you really need one or a number of people to be willing to go front of screen to discuss and disseminate the messages in a clear and concise way. I would ideally choose subject matters experts and they may not be within your organisation.

Measuring true citizen engagement

How will you know if your Brexit communications plan is effective?

This will become clear in the analysis of the data available to you from your website, social networks and any third party monitoring tools. You will really want to monitor:

- **Optimisation of your content**
- **Share of social voice**
- **Website traffic**
- **Social media reach and engagement**
- **Video views**
- **On-page conversions** (video views, time on page, downloads, sign-ups, registrations, event attendance)
- **Subscribers**
- **Sentiment**

Concluding thoughts

Brexit bombardment is going to continue so the public are going to remain apathetic and disinterested as long as it's political conversation.

When the detail of what they need to do becomes clear then the real engagement starts. Why not gently ease them into the new reality now and get your department or organisation Brexit prepared?

And you don't need to do it alone, I'll help you craft an effective plan, fit for purpose in the Digital Age.

Get in touch.

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