



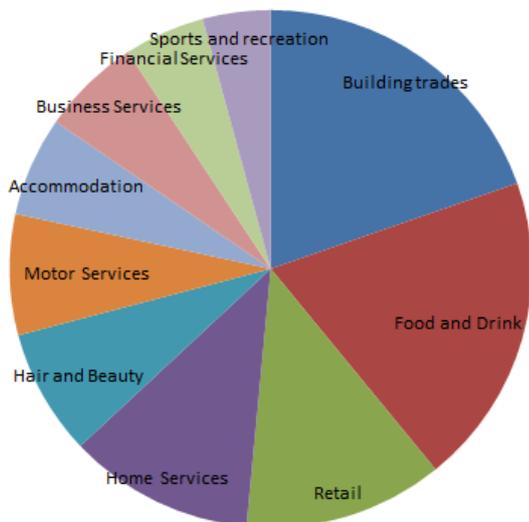
In this issue we talk about what people are searching for locally, and what they are finding online, plus we take look at what small businesses can learn from the latest crop of big name high street failures .

What's Popular?

As winter tightened its grip across the British Isles, it should probably come as no surprise that searches for Travel related businesses shot up by over 75% in January; harder to explain is the number of searches for Pet products and services which increased by over 20% in the same period.

Health and Sports/Recreation focussed searches also increased growing by over 25%, presumably as people looked to act on their New Year's resolutions. Retail businesses also showed their popularity with the public in January, probably as a result of sales and promotions and, as ever, Food and Drink related searches are near the top of the list.

The most searched for local businesses took on a different look in January with the **Top 10** searches generally looking for businesses related to:



What else do people search for?

Something we frequently see is people searching the internet for a business's opening times. Being one of the only directories to offer businesses the opportunity to show that in their FREE listing means more often than not those searchers end up on MiQuando.com.

Top Tip

Go to www.miquando.com, sign-in and from the **Setup** menu update your **Opening Hours** so customers are seeing the right information.

Whilst you're there, go to **Company Information** and make sure you have the right keywords as we highlighted last month.

What can we learn from High St failures?

Big name, high street Brands are failing at an alarming rate. The current difficult economic environment is affecting most business, but is there something local businesses can learn from these.

There appears to be a common thread in many of these failures and that is the massive change in people's buying and shopping habits. The days of spending a Saturday afternoon in town browsing and buying the latest fashions or gadgets is looking more and more like a quaint old habit.

Many predicted a high street melt down when out of town shopping became popular 20 odd years ago, but in just a few short years, Internet / online shopping has fundamentally changed the way we browse and buy things forever.

So what about small businesses?

One of the beautiful things about local businesses is how well they know and adapt to meet their customer's needs, but such a fundamental change in buying habits will no doubt present a challenge for many to keep up with.

The age of "I don't need a web site" or indeed having one that is nothing more than an out of date business card has passed. The problem is, creating a fancy new web site with E-Commerce, E-Payments, Shopping Carts and Online Booking looks like it requires skills, knowledge, time and money that many small local businesses either don't have or can't afford to waste.

It need not be such a daunting task. Getting your e-commerce web site up and running with a shopping cart and online payments can be a relatively quick and inexpensive process. You don't have to build it all from scratch. There are plenty of companies out there providing the building blocks for selling products online.

At MiQuando we provide you with all the 'building blocks' for **selling services online** i.e. your time and skills. We have created a low cost, easy to use online Diary and Booking service that allows you to offer your time and services for sale online. Customers can book appointments any time of day or night leaving you free to focus on what **you do best** instead of being the receptionist.

To see how we can help you compete and grow your business online give us a call on **0845 564 0000**.