

After Baines & Ernst moved from a separate mobile site to a responsive web design, mobile conversions leapt 51%



About Baines & Ernst

- Specialists in debt solutions
- Based in Manchester, UK
- www.bainesandernst.co.uk

Goals

- Deliver a consistent user experience across all devices
- Enable potential customers to find the right information on any screen size
- Drive conversions, measured as enquiries

Approach

- Initiated mobile marketing
- Conducted user research and derived insights from Google Analytics
- Replaced existing sites with new website built using responsive web design (RWD)

Results

- Following launch of RWD site, pages per mobile visit grew 11%
- Average visit duration on mobile increased 30%
- Mobile bounce rate decreased by 8%
- Mobile conversions increased 51%

Established in 1996, Baines & Ernst is a leading provider of debt solutions in the UK. As many consumers do not have deep familiarity with financial solutions, the company's online presence exists in large part to help users understand its products. Conversions are measured when a user contacts the company to make an enquiry.

Get up and get going

Baines & Ernst grasped that mobile usage was on the rise, both as a widespread trend and specifically within its own business. As Google Analytics reporting revealed that more and more users were accessing the company's website via smartphones, the decision was made to launch mobile-specific search advertising in late 2011. This incorporated both sitelinks and click-to-call functionality to help potential clients quickly obtain information they required. The positive results of this activity then led Baines & Ernst to invest in the development of a mobile-optimised site, which launched in the second half of 2012.

While the additional site helped provide a better experience to growing numbers of mobile users, Baines & Ernst believed the approach could be improved upon. "We like to keep our content as fresh, relevant and as balanced as possible, so we're constantly updating it," explains the company's Commercial Director, Shaz Sulaman. "Therefore, having two sites to update just wasn't efficient."

At this time, Baines & Ernst also conducted extensive customer research using both surveys and focus groups. The feedback from this gave the company an opportunity to refine its messaging in line with what users indicated they needed. Financial solutions do tend to be fairly complicated products, so the challenge was to deliver the optimum level of detail across all devices without initially overwhelming visitors with too much information.

"Our main focus was to deliver a consistent user experience across all the devices so our potential customers can find the right information on any screen."

— Imran Khan, Head of Online, Baines & Ernst

Embracing Responsive Web Design

After conducting further testing, Baines & Ernst revealed one solution that would satisfy its goals. "Our main focus was to deliver a consistent user experience across all the devices, so our potential customers can find the right information on any screen," explains Imran Khan, Baines & Ernst's Head of Online. Consequently, Imran and his team initiated the build of an entirely new site incorporating the best practices of responsive web design (RWD). According to Imran, the result was "one platform that serves all devices, and that includes computers, tablets and mobiles." Development took two months. "From a technical point of view, we didn't have any issues," he says.

About Responsive Web Design

Responsive web design (RWD) enables you to optimise your site experience across different screen sizes without creating multiple websites. A RWD site responds to the viewport size of a device, then adjusts images, template layout and content visibility accordingly. All of this can be layered onto a single file of HTML content, delivered to any device. Using a single URL for a piece of content makes it easier for users to interact with, share and link to content, and because redirection is not required in delivering a device-optimised view, load times may be reduced too.

Using RWD enabled Baines & Ernst to optimise its site experience across different screen sizes without creating multiple websites. By using flexible templates, CSS media queries and JavaScript events, the new RWD site responds to a user's screen size and orientation, and then adjusts images, layouts and content visibility in accordance. It also harnesses novel device capabilities such as dragging, swiping and other gestures recognised by touch devices. All of this can be layered onto a single repository of HTML content, so while there's only one content file to be maintained, it can be delivered across all devices.



Thanks to RWD, the Baines & Ernst site automatically caters to any device and size of screen.

Better and better

In terms of the numbers, comparing the old sites to the new RWD site demonstrates significant gains, both in terms of user experience and performance. On mobiles, pages per visit increased by 11%, while average mobile visit duration saw a 30% rise and mobile bounce rate registered an 8% decrease. Qualitative research since the launch has shown improvements in ease of use and customer experience too. Most impressively, however, mobile conversions have grown by 51% since Baines & Ernst debuted its debt RWD site.

