

BENCHMARK REPORT

We Asked 50 Coaches About Their Brand & Marketing Activities Here Is What We Found



Trends and data from 50 business coaches in London
April 2020

Introduction

Somer Design has worked with several business coaches over the years both as clients and partners, benefiting personally from the wealth of experience and insight they bring to running a successful business. An incredibly important job - they help so many CEOs and business owners, yet often struggle to stand out from the crowd themselves, which is why we decided to do this research and help.

Somer Design is a brand and digital marketing agency based in London. With the **increased demand for business coaches**, we decided to carry out a study into the pain-points business coaches face when building brand authority and marketing their business, to help them find opportunities to differentiate and grow. We conducted our research using telephone interviews and an online questionnaire, surveying a total of 50 coaches in London. The resulting benchmark study is an in-depth look at the current state of branding and marketing within this niche.

Each respondent was asked:

- Background questions about their business
- How they are currently building brand authority and standing out from the crowd
- What current marketing activities they have invested in

It's an uncertain and very different place out there from when we started our research only 6 weeks ago. As you are planning for the future you will have many questions.

This report aims to help you take stock and plan for recovery.



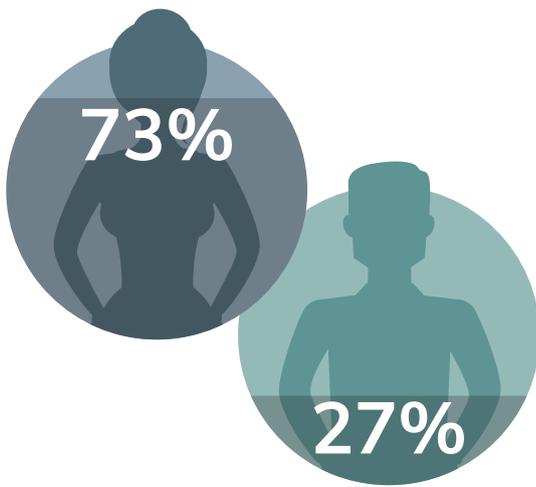
CAROLINE SOMER

Brand Strategist



Overview

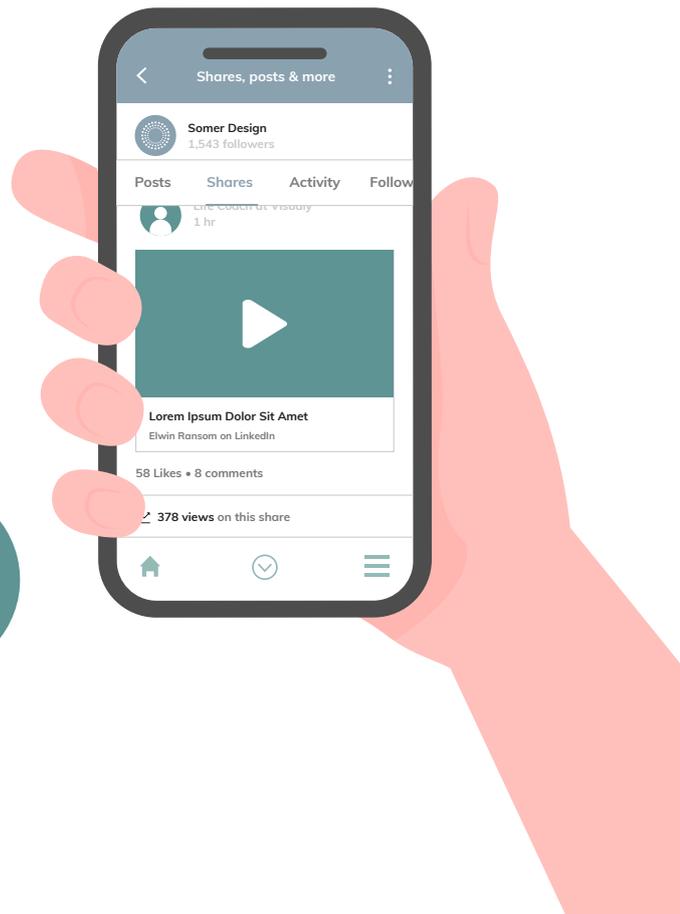
Most coaches are in the 40-50 age group, female and over half have attained an industry qualification. Most coaches worked in the business world before changing careers, many getting a specific Coaching Qualification at this time. This investment into their own careers suggests they want to add value to the profession.



Female to Male Ratio

There is a trend that shows coaches who worked for more than 5 years are happier with their lifestyle and the impact they have on their clients. The more experienced coach also seems to have more clearly defined target clients and is slightly less worried about finding more of them. However, despite being more comfortable with their number of clients, they utilise more marketing platforms on average than their less experienced counterparts. Throughout all demographics, LinkedIn is the most popular platform for marketing.

We would like to add that many participants gave such thorough answers that with their additions this has been more enlightening. The results show that a diverse range of people in the coaching profession are all striving for very similar goals. Even with varied experience, qualifications and motivations, they are impacting the business world enormously every day.



Key Takeaways



- Most business coaches are attempting some form of digital marketing which is fantastic but there is a lack of any documented strategy or planning
- The very low use of analytics by business coaches shows that training would be an asset. Understanding and utilising data insights would help them focus and improve their marketing efforts as well as give them the edge over the competition
- The low take-up of investment in pay-per-click media suggests business coaches don't have the time to do it properly or don't think it will bring in a return. They would benefit from working with an expert to guide them on getting ROI
- Social media and content marketing were voted top tactics to stand out among the competition, despite most coaches not having a strategy in place
- Business coaches are doing a lot of marketing elements themselves without any formal training, and there is a consensus that they aren't sure if it is working or even worth it, re-enforcing the need to put a robust measurement system in place

Who took part?

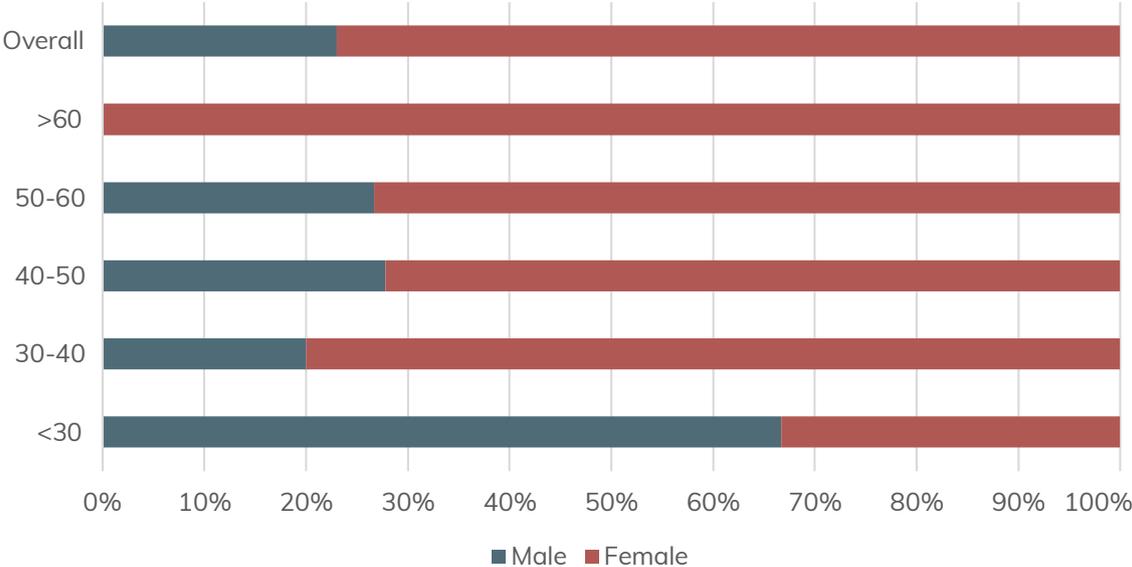
Below is a brief break down of the business coaches that took part in the study:



The Age & Gender of Coaches

The study data reveals that nearly three quarters (73%) of respondents are female and 27% are male. 57% of the business coaches are between 40-50 years old, followed by 42% of professionals aged between 50 and 60.

Age & Gender Percentage



Qualifications

Over two-thirds of coaches had academically studied for a related qualification before beginning work, with many studying for additional qualifications as well.

The study showed that coaches tend to see qualifications as a tool to increase their own self-confidence. As Sharon Strickland-Clark said,

“I sometimes have concerns that I don’t have enough qualifications and that this would impact on people’s confidence in me, that’s something I’m working on at the moment.”

How do business coaches feel about their marketing?

Current Position

A surprising 71% struggle with increasing the number of their clients and 56% still want to have more of an impact. Unsurprisingly, those who are most happy with their number of clients, are also most happy with their current lifestyle. As Radka Bartuskova says,

“I help people manage their energy most effectively so they can create an authentic and fulfilling life for themselves.”



Expert View: Business coaches often don’t have the time to go after new clients as they are busy delivering their service in person, fortunately however in the digital world client leads can be easily generated even whilst busy somewhere else.

Strategy

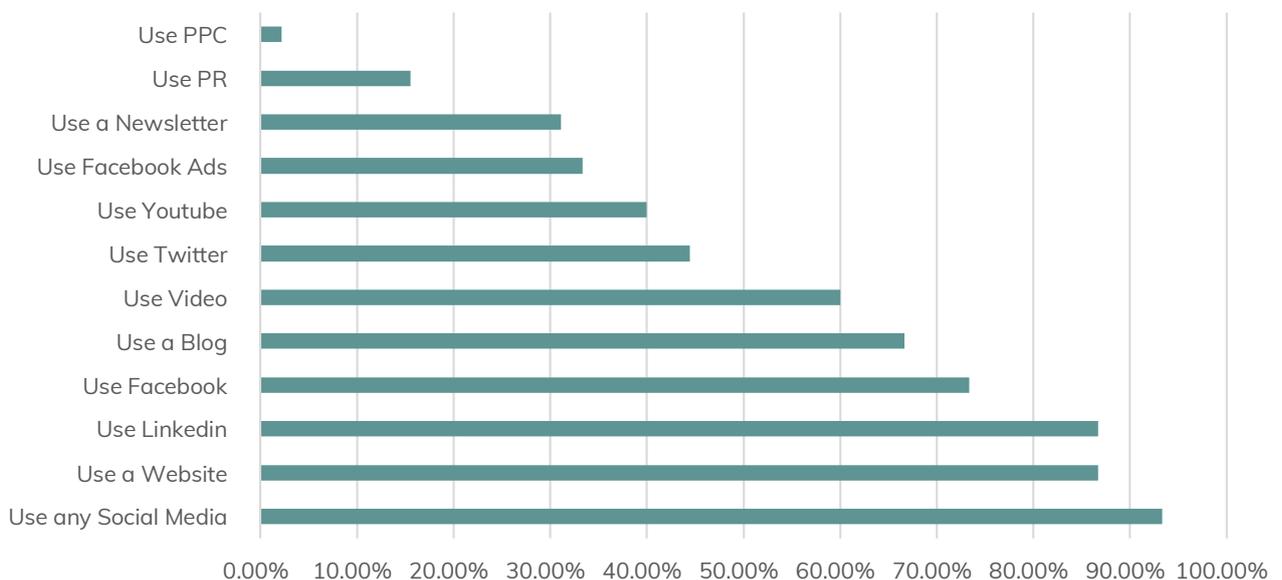
Everyone who responded confirmed they were marketing online in some form, but most lacked a specific marketing strategy. The most common platform involved was LinkedIn (87%), their business Website (87%) or Facebook (73%). The majority also

create video or blog content to help clients and promote themselves. Interestingly, less than 3% of the business coaches we spoke to use paid advertising and many had not heard of or implemented social media analytics in their planning before.



Expert View: By tracking your marketing activities, using free tools such as Google Analytics business coaches can focus on what really matters and what gives the greatest impact, rather than getting overwhelmed by trying to do everything. Money is being left on the table by not having clarity on results. And, think about the potential advantage you would have over competitors who apparently don't use it.

Marketing Choices



Challenges

When we asked coaches what the common reasons their potential clients give for not moving forward with them, 86% reported that the main reason for losing a sale was the conception that coaching wasn't affordable or that they couldn't afford it at the time. With this overwhelmingly common hurdle in the sales process, it's not surprising to learn that the reason most coaches gave for being approached is client desperation. People who fear for their business, livelihood or work-life balance.



Expert View: Content marketing is one of the best ways to educate your market, it shows the value of what you do and establishes expert status, so people see the benefit in coming to you.

Building Brand Authority

Business coaches are fantastic at putting their clients first because they genuinely care about them. Unfortunately, this means the needs of the clients are often put in front of their own business marketing. Creating social media posts, writing blogs and commenting on LinkedIn are delegated as a “should do” task for the week rather than a “must do”. Coaches explained they often felt “overwhelmed” when considering their online touchpoints and that other coaches were “doing it better”. This is where Google Analytics is useful as well as a handheld process so you only focus on doing the things that matter and bring results.

Coaches also stated that not “knowing what to write about” when they finally had time to sit down and create some online content was also a stumbling block. Some felt that without a strategy in place first, any attempt at social media or online marketing was “not a priority”.



Expert View: Without doubt coaches have an impressive knowledge and wealth of experience, with a simple content calendar, some planning and content strategies to increase engagement they would easily overcome these hurdles.

How do they deal with competition?

The majority of Business coaches complained that they were finding it increasingly difficult to get their personal message and brand across to their target audience. An “over-saturated” and “under-regulated” market was widely viewed as the chief cause. Like in the case of Paul Shae who said,

“It’s a problem. In the last 3 years it feels as though it’s become very commoditised, it’s a crowded market and it’s harder and harder to differentiate. Marketing needs to have more personality coming through.”

Overall, most agreed that one solution was to work on a personalised, niche marketing strategy, that would let their “coaching personality shine through”. This “clear sales message” was generally agreed to be the best way to stand out in competition, although many admitted to “hiding behind projects” and procrastinating.



Expert View: It can be difficult to find this message yourself and attending a dedicated ‘Brand Strategy Workshop’* works wonders.

****Brand Strategy Workshop’** - a half-day workshop to determine the passion behind your ‘Why’ and what drives you to do what you do. Your USPs, reasons to believe those USPs and your unique position in the market.

Motivation

The big wins and rewarding stories we received made it clear why coaches do what they do. They all add a lot of value to the client' life, as this quote highlights

“This particular client was low on confidence, didn't appreciate the value they added to the business, didn't believe in their own ability or ability to deliver results to their customers. Through a series of sessions, I identified the root cause of their barriers. Their thought process for a long time had been suppressed I worked with them to build a new set of conditioning tools. Established a process to go forward, they started to be a lot more open about how they shared information and what they believed was achievable.”

A special thank you

We'd like to thank all those who took part in the survey, whose willingness to give their time, knowledge and participation has made this an interesting research project.

Adriaan Pretorius

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Janet Efere

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Jaymini Mistry

Jeff Gosling

Jules Hellens

Julie Greaves

Kristen Miller

Lesley Jones

Lisa Zevi

Lynn Blades

Marie Paula Assamoua

Melinda Coss

Patsy Waithe

Paul Hafalla

Paul McCartney

Paul Shaw

Radka Bartuskova

Rasheed Ogunlaru

Raymond Holt

Roe Couture DeSaro

Sandi Goddard

Shamlina Rajasingam

Sharon Strickland-Clark

Simon Hawtrey-Woore

Steve Bernard

Sunayana Clark

Suparna Malhotra

Talita Ferreira

Tara Piacentino Omwoha

Tony Shafar

Vinit Shah

Yola Bastos

Zulieka Ajimotokin

Conclusion

Somer Design has experienced first-hand the impact that good coaching can have on a business. Helping us break through barriers and focus on the actions necessary to achieve our goals, that's why we're giving back some personalised strategic feedback on how they can increase their online authority.

Digital Marketing can hold great potential for business coaches wanting to increase exposure, sales or leads. But with so many different channels, platforms, techniques, media formats and service providers in the industry, it can be overwhelming.

The aim of this benchmark report was to highlight the pain-points and challenges many business coaches face so they can use this information to differentiate and create their own unique brand voice. All of the coaches we surveyed had a unique offering that hugely benefitted their clients, the challenge is getting that message across to reach their target audience and measuring its effectiveness.

As a thank you to the coaches that gave up their time freely to help with our research we are making a personalised video with strategic feedback on how they can improve their online authority. **Please register below to get your free 'Online Brand and Digital Marketing Strategy'**, we will be doing 10 recordings per month, first come first served :-)



Register for your
'Online Brand & Marketing Strategy' video

REGISTER NOW

For more information about Somer Design and how we help business coaches get more clients visit www.somerdesign.co.uk

