

Accountants' Websites in Essex 2019

A report based on the analysis of 100 accountancy practice websites across twelve towns in Essex



Prosper

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Ben Stanbury
Director of Prosper

Welcome to our first annual report into accountancy practice websites across Essex in 2019. We undertook this research as an inquiry into the way accountants present themselves online.

We have spent time looking at 100 different accountants' websites across twelve towns in Essex, recorded our findings and present them here as easily digestible, jargon-free statistics.

How did we conduct our searches?

We based our research and analysis on the results returned from Google Maps when searching for the term 'Accountants in Town Name' for example.

We wanted to search for accountants in a way we felt that anyone might do themselves if they turned to Google, and felt that location-based results were a fair and democratic way to approach this.

We didn't use any special software to look at site metrics, other than free tools provided by Google and Mozilla, and of course, using our own trusty eyes. We looked at some technical metrics (which would affect the quality of the viewer's experience) and we looked at some elements of the site design itself such as brand colour and hierarchy of information.

We also looked at factors such as whether the site contained a blog, calls to action or links to social media profiles to see which practices were really demonstrating their expertise and engagement, and if they were encouraging viewers to get in touch.

Over the next few pages we'll present our findings and statistics covering website performance, security, and mobile compatibility, as well as looking at social links, blogs and brand colours.

Where did we get our results from?

The top results returned on Google Maps



What was the search term?

Accountants in town name

Where areas did we search?

Chelmsford

Colchester

Southend

Basildon

Harlow

Witham

Maldon

Brentwood

Braintree

Clacton

Saffron Waldon

Chigwell

What did we ignore?

Paid-for Google Ads

Duplicate listings

Results returned in Google Maps that do not list a website

Websites that do not load due to errors

Websites that cannot be analysed by Google Lighthouse

Which accountants' websites did we look at?

Colchester

Whittles Chartered Accountants
RPD Accountants
Pro Tax Accounting
Tax Assist Accountants
LB Group Colchester
JTF Chartered Accountants
Baker, Chapman and Bussey
Wood and Disney
SAS Accounting Services
Beaumont Seymour

Southend

Goldwyns
Devonports
MWS Chartered Accountants
SME Accountants Southend
A R Lee and Co
TBL Accountants
Wilkins Kennedy
Abraham and Associates
Chase Bureau
Barrons

Maldon

Barnes Clark of Maldon
Jheelan Associates
Tax Assist Accountants
Maynard Heady LLP
BJ Hammond and Co
Denmak Forrester
Accounting Plus Ltd
Laker Goodwin Jones
Knight and Co Accountants
Barber Accountancy

Brentwood

Plan A
F9 Consulting
Tiffin Green
Booth and Co
MJ Bushell
Hill Wooldridge and Co
Tax Assist Brentwood
Moulton Johnson Ltd
Berkley Townsend
Certax

Braintree

Lambert Chapman LLP
Abacus Accountancy
Baverstocks
Anthony Russel Ltd
Alison Hurrell Ltd
Asheden Accountants
Ronald W Chivers
Watson Associates
Lewis and Co
BJG Accountancy

Chelmsford

THP
Edumnd Carr
LB Group
Macintyre Hundson
Viewpoint Accountants
NSO Associates LLP
Mayor Cuttle and Co
Tax Assist Chelmsford
CBHC Ltd
RSM
Fisher Michael
Lucentum
R and R Accounting

Basildon

Robert Lewis Accountants
Mark Stephen Beckford and Co
Hawkins Foss LLP
Hunt Smee and Co
The Accountancy Practice Essex
Dormer Finance Ltd
FB Accountancy Services Ltd
Basildon Accountant
Brown and Co
The Low Tax Group

Harlow

Douglas Jones Accountants
AACSL Accountants
Geiss Wallis Crisp
TaxLocal Accountants
Parry and Co
Seniguk Consulting Ltd
A E Accountancy Services Ltd
Fraser Beecham Ltd

Witham

Neil Smith Accountancy
Wilson Devenish
BB Harrison
Paper Trail Accounting
Dale J West

Clacton

TLC Chartered Accountants
Clacton Business Services Ltd
Accounting Solutions Anglia
Ellacott Morris
L J Lynch

Saffron Walden

Taylor Bradshaw Accountants
Benten and Co
Williams and Co
Numbercloud

Chigwell

AM & Co
London Tax Accountants
Mayers and Co Accountants
All Things Accounting
Your Local Accountants

What did we look at?

Is the website secure?

Does the website contain a secure SSL certification denoted by https at the start? Without an SSL certificate your website will display as 'Not Secure' and may drive away visitors.

Google Lighthouse Performance score

How does Google rate the website for performance metrics such as loading speed time? Fast loading speed is vital, especially if people visit your site on mobile devices.

Google Lighthouse Accessibility score

This checks for common issues that might prevent users viewing your content, for example poor contrast between the font and background colours.

Google Lighthouse Best Practice score

How well is the site built? Are images named correctly, and is the site secure and mobile compatible?

Google SEO score

Have good Search Engine Optimisation practices been applied to the site such as a Google description, appropriate page names and H1 heading tags.

Calls to action

In what ways do the websites encourage viewers to take the next step? We looked for calls to action that went beyond 'Call us' or 'Get in touch' buttons, and offered consultation bookings or downloading of useful resources.

Is the site 'mobile friendly'?

Does the website work and display properly on mobile devices such as a smartphones or tablets? 60% of people who visit a website for the first time will do so on a mobile device.

Does the site feature a blog?

Does the accountancy practice demonstrate their expertise with a blog? Are they communicating with their audience via engaging and useful content?

Social media links

How many social media links does the website contain, and what platforms are accountants predominantly using?

Website colours

What are the primary and secondary colours featured on the site and company branding?

How many Google Reviews?

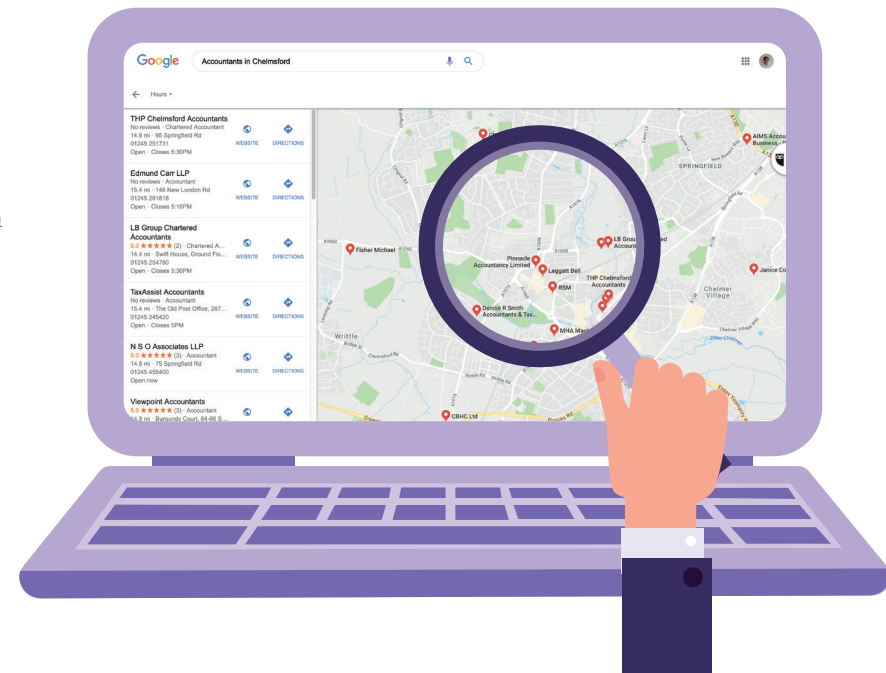
A Google Map listing will allow you to gather Google Reviews, which are a vital part of any company's reputation and demonstrate social proof.

Moz Page Authority

Page Authority (PA) is a score developed by Moz that predicts how well a specific page will rank on search engine result pages (SERPs). Page Authority scores range from one to 100, with higher scores corresponding to a greater ability to rank. (Source: Moz)

Moz Domain Authority

Domain Authority (DA) is a search engine ranking score developed by Moz that predicts how well a website will rank on search engine result pages (SERPs). A Domain Authority score ranges from one to 100, with higher scores corresponding to a greater ability to rank. (Source: Moz)



Site Security and Mobile Compatibility

What did we look at?

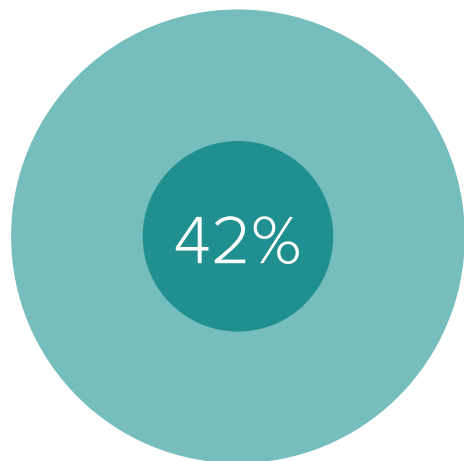
We looked at which accountants' websites were mobile compatible, meaning the sites were 'responsive' and displayed properly on mobile devices.

We also looked to see which sites were 'secure', meaning they displayed https at the beginning of the url, (rather than http) denoting the site had a SSL certificate.

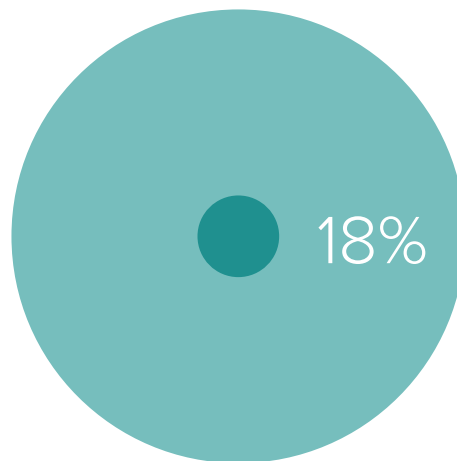
Why is it important?

Some 60% of visitors who visit a website for the first time will do so on a mobile device, so it is important that your site is optimised for these devices. A non-secure or non-optimised website will suffer in terms of performance and will not rank as highly in SERPs (Search Engine Result Pages). On some browsers a non-secure website will also display a warning informing visitors that the site is not secure, before giving them the option to proceed or go back.

For more information on this topic, download our free ebook, 'A Guide to Designing Lead Generation Websites for Financial Consultants and Accountants' from our website at www.prosper-agency.com/resources



42% of websites were not displaying as secure, lacking [https](#) at the beginning of their url.



18% of websites were not mobile friendly, meaning they do not display correctly on [mobile devices](#).



Calls to Action and Blogs

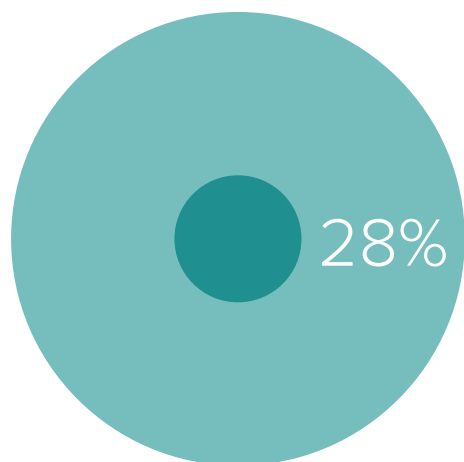
What did we look at?

Did the websites feature any original blog articles that demonstrated the practices' views on their areas of expertise or offer content that would be helpful to their audience? How did the practices demonstrate their points of difference through their content?

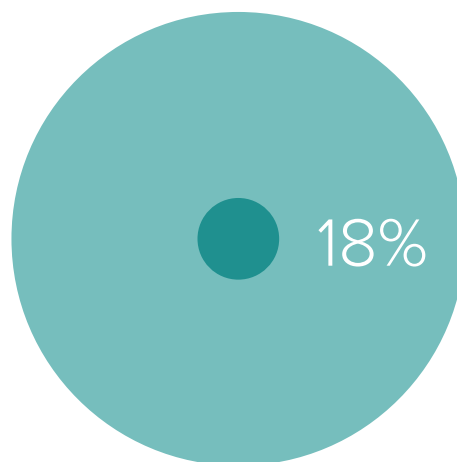
Did the sites feature prominent calls to action (CTAs) that encouraged visitors to take a further action? Examples could be 'Book a consultation' or 'Download our resource / guide' or 'Sign up to our monthly newsletter'. We disregarded the simple 'Call Us!' or 'Get in touch now' CTA as we feel there are better ways to utilise them than simply asking someone to send you an email.

Why is it important?

81% of people that contact you will visit your website first, and 30% will dismiss a company because their website is poorly designed, hard to navigate, or simply does not state clearly how the company can help the prospect. Having suitable CTAs help guide your visitor through your sales funnel. In the majority of cases your site visitors will not be ready to buy from you, so it is important to guide them to blogs, case studies or service pages that explain clearly how you can help them when the time comes.



28% of websites contained a blog publishing original content aimed specifically at their audience



Only 18% of websites contained calls to action that offered valuable content such as useful resources, newsletter sign-ups or the ability to book a consultation

For more information on this topic, download our free ebook, 'A Guide to Content Strategy and Social Media for Financial Consultants and Accountants' from our website at www.prosper-agency.com/resources



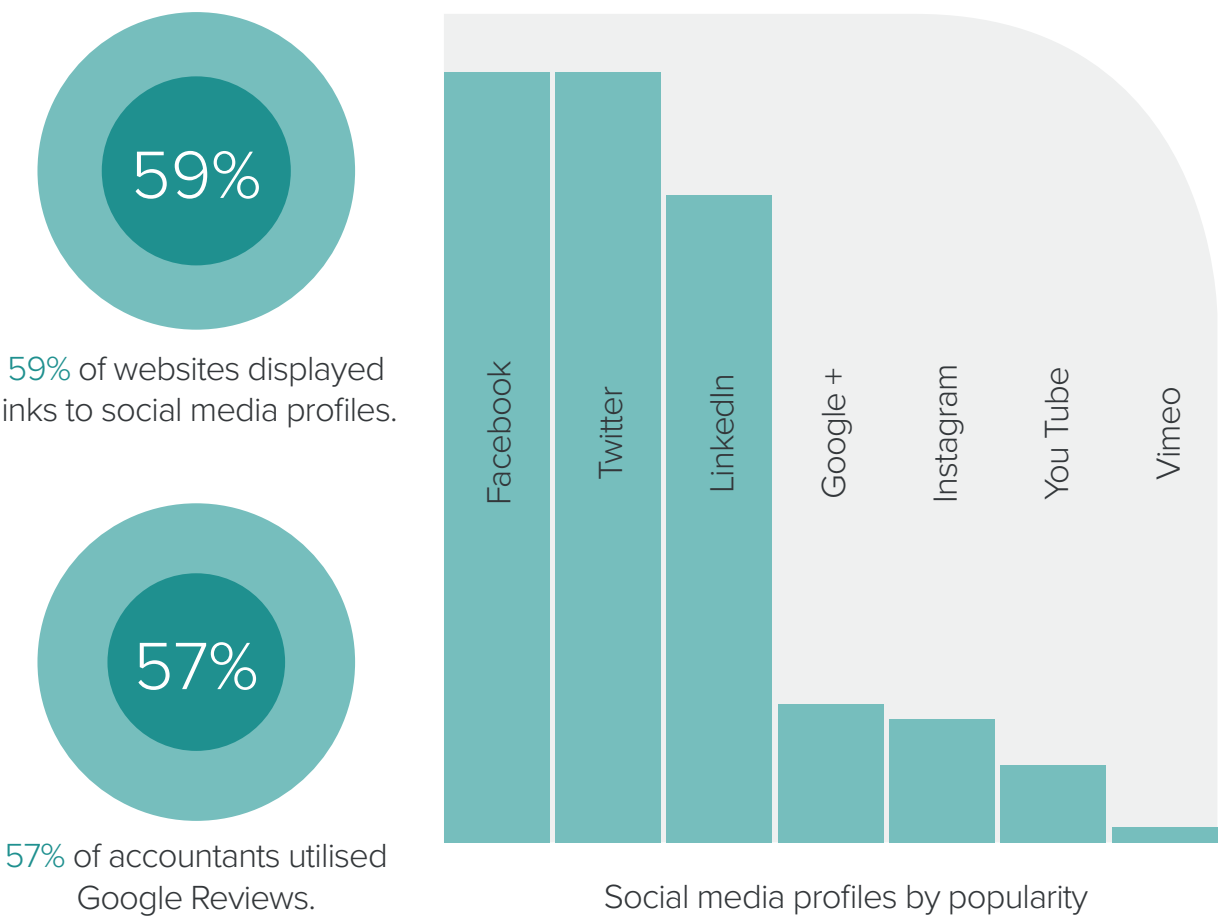
Social Media Links and Google Reviews

What did we look at?

We looked at how many accountants displayed social media links on their websites and what profiles were being shown. We also looked at the number of Google Reviews each practice had received.

Why is it important?

Content and social media strategies are effective ways for accountants to connect with potential customers and their existing audience. They are also excellent ways to show your audience you are a credible expert in your field by posting engaging, helpful and useful content. This will of course drive more traffic to your website and increase your number of potential leads.



Website Colours

What did we look at?

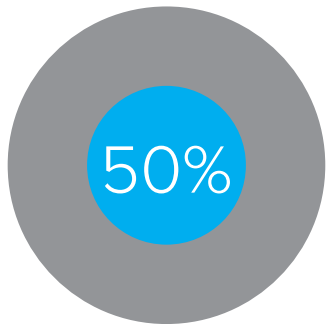
We looked at each website to see which brand colours were predominant, and to see which practices used colour as a way to differentiate themselves. We looked at the use of a main colour and a secondary colour.

Why is it important?

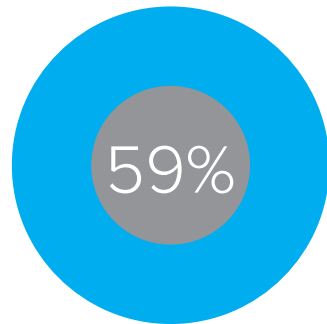
The colour that accountancy practices choose to represent themselves and their brands with will create an impression with the website visitor. There are of course the well-known tropes on colour theory, blue for trust, red for danger, green for nature, for example, but when companies use branding as a tool for deliberate differentiation we wanted to discover just how far accountants were using colour to stand out from their competition.



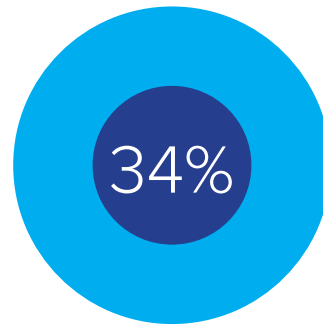
Grey and blue is the most popular colour combination for accountants branding



50% of accountants used blue as their main brand colour.



59% of accountants used blue within their branding as a whole.



34% of accountants used only blue in their branding, without a secondary colour.



Popular main brand colours (after blue)



Popular secondary brand colours (after blue)

Moz Page Authority and Domain Authority

What did we look at?

Moz is an American SaaS (Software as a Service) company that provides SEO tools and analytic data as well as inbound marketing tools. Moz provides a free service that allows you to enter you website url to see your Page Authority and Domain Authority, both of which can be interpreted as a measure of how well a website will rank in search engines..

Why is it important?

Page Authority (PA) is a score developed by Moz that predicts how well a specific page will rank on search engine result pages (SERP). Page Authority scores range from one to 100, with higher scores corresponding to a greater ability to rank and are based on data from Moz’s web index and takes into account dozens of factors. Page Authority uses a machine learning model to identify the algorithm that best correlates with rankings across the thousands of SERPs that Moz predict against, then produces Page Authority scores using that specific calculation.

Domain Authority (DA) is calculated by evaluating multiple factors, including linking root domains and number of total links, into a single DA score. This score can then be used when comparing websites or tracking the “ranking strength” of a website over time. *(Information taken from Moz)*



22 out of 100 is the average Moz Page Authority score



16.5 out of 100 is the average Moz Domain Authority score

How do the ‘Big Four’ rank for Moz PA and DA?

	Page Authority	Domain Authority
Ernst & Young	58	85
Deloitte	63	91
KPMG	43	83
PwC	59	76

Google Lighthouse — A tool for testing the quality of a website

What did we look at?

Google is the world's largest search engine, and when your website is submitted to Google, it will 'crawl' your site pages to understand and rank your website. Google provides a free tool called Lighthouse that allows you to see how well your website ranks on the metrics Performance, Accessibility, Best Practice and SEO.

Why is it important?

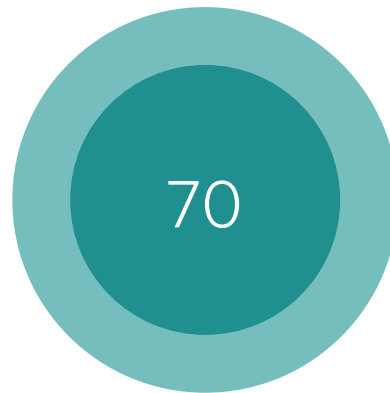
It's useful to understand if your website is scoring well in the four metrics as this will give you a broader understanding of your website's overall 'health'. It should be noted however that these metrics should not be taken too literally when looked at individually, but rather they should be used as a guide. For example, you may find that an extremely basic two or three page website may score 100 out of 100 in some of the metrics, where as a very large website for a large company may not score so well. It isn't *necessarily* a sign that the website is of poor quality, and it could be argued that the larger a website is, the harder it is to get a 'perfect' score.

However, if you find your website is scoring particularly low in any of the metrics then you should heed the advice and recommendations given by Google and take action to improve the score.

Google Performance and Accessibility Scores



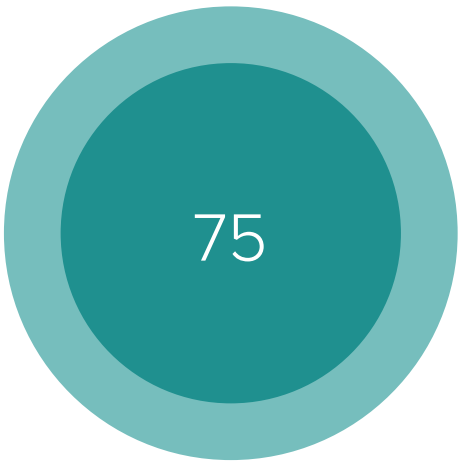
64 out of 100 is the average Google Lighthouse Performance score



70 out of 100 is the average Google Lighthouse Accessibility score



Google Best Practice and SEO Scores



75 out of 100 is the average Google Best Practice score



87 out of 100 is the average Google Lighthouse SEO score

How do the ‘Big Four’ rank in Google Lighthouse?

	Performance	Accessibility	Best Practice	SEO
Ernst & Young	48	61	69	97
Deloitte	16	89	77	100
KPMG	25	75	77	92
PwC	14	58	69	99



Who is standing out?

Notable websites included Numbercloud, CBHC, Lucentum and Ellacott Morris for a combination of stand-out design, attention-grabbing colour, use of illustration or catchy copy. These design factors helped these practices differentiate themselves from their peers and hence made for more memorable websites.

It was found that practices located in larger towns tended to perform better across the board than those in smaller towns (but we did tend to look at a greater number of practices in larger towns because Google was returning us fewer results in smaller towns).

Why is differentiation important?

Put simply, regardless of the sector you work in, it is important to differentiate yourself from the competition. This can be achieved via a combination of positioning, specialisation, being helpful, effective design and via customer service. For prospects who are at the consideration stage of their buying journey, a business can differentiate themselves using a combination of all the factors above, and of course through thought-leadership and branding.

Branding is more than just your logo and choice of colour, it is how you present as a business across all your touch-points, from your website to your social media presence and via your blogs and resources. To put it another way, branding is how you face your public, it is, in the words of Debbie Millman, the President Emeritus of AIGA, '*deliberate differentiation*'.

Where is there room for improvement?

At Prosper we think the areas for improvement (solely from looking at accountants' websites) lay in a combination of factors. There is a need to demonstrate clear positioning, making your positioning statement centre stage on your website home page. We felt that many of the websites we looked at were extremely text heavy, with little discernible hierarchy of information, meaning it was unclear what the practice wanted us to see or read first.

Our results show that a large majority of practices use the same colour combinations in their branding so deliberate differentiation for accountants is not a strong point, (yet something that can be easily achieved, see Numbercloud, CBHC and Lucentum for example). Embrace branding and good design and stand out!

More valuable calls to action and on-site blogs would help customers make their buying decisions. Case studies showing how practices have assisted clients and business, and general demonstration of expertise in ways that relate to the website viewer are also helpful. Providing useful and valuable articles, resources and case studies would be advantageous and again help you differentiate your practice by demonstrating expertise.



One hundred accountancy practice websites in Essex ranked

[How did we calculate your score?](#) We combined your four Google Lighthouse scores for your website, plus your MOZ Page Authority and Domain Authority scores and added them together. We then deducted one hundred points for each website that did not display a secure SSL certificate, and deducted a further one hundred points for websites what were not deemed 'mobile friendly' (i.e. they did not display properly on mobile phones and tablets). Below are the 100 websites that we analysed, ranked in terms of online performance.

Position	Name	Score
1	Dormer Finance Ltd	395
2	Wilkins Kennedy	394
3	Mark Stephen Beckford and Co	393
4	Tax Local Accountants	393
5	Barnes Clarke of Maldon	387
6	Mayor Cuttle and Co	384
7	Tax Assist Accountants	383
8	Macintyre Hudson	382
9	NSO Associates LLP	382
10	Tax Assist Accountants	380
11	Tax Assist Accountants	380
12	Numbercloud	380
13	Tax Assist Accountants	378
14	Goldwyns	372
15	JTF Chartered Accountants	369
16	Accounting Plus Ltd	366
17	Lee A R and Co	365
18	Denmark Forrester	363
19	Geiss Wallis Crisp	362
20	AM & Co	361
21	Hunt Smee and Co	359
22	Devonports	358
23	Benten and Co	358
24	Watson Associates	357
25	Moulton Johnson Ltd	356
26	Wood and Disney	354
27	Lambert Chapman LLP	351
28	RSM	349
29	Baker, Chapman and Bussey	346
30	TBL Accountants	344
31	FB Accountancy Services Ltd	344
32	Edmund Carr	343
33	MWS Chartered Accountants	340

Position	Name	Score
34	Pro Tax Accounting	326
35	F9 Consulting	322
36	Lucentum	321
37	Neil Smith Accountancy	315
38	CBHC Ltd	314
39	Plan A	308
40	Dale J West	308
41	L J Lynch	307
42	THP	307
43	Tiffin Green	298
44	Abacus Accountancy	298
45	Ronald W Chivers	297
46	TLC Chartered Accountants	295
47	MJ Bushell	291
48	Seniguk Consulting Ltd	284
49	BB Harrison	283
50	Barrons	281
51	Fisher Michael	280
52	Maynard Heady LLP	279
53	Basildon Accountant	274
54	Jheelan Associates	272
55	Beaumont Seymour	270
56	Booth and Co	267
57	RPD Accountants	266
58	Hawkins Foss LLP	266
59	BJ Hammond and Co	266
60	A E Accountancy Services Ltd	263
61	Robert Lewis Accountants	262
62	Williams and Co	260
63	Berkley Townsend	258
64	AACSL Accountants	256
65	Lewis and Co	256
66	Low Tax Group	255

Position	Name	Score
67	Brown and Co	254
68	Whittles Chartered Accountants	251
69	SAS Accounting Services	251
70	LB Group	250
71	Viewpoint Accountants	244
72	Barber Accountancy	237
73	Alison Hurrell Ltd	236
74	All Things Accounting	236
75	Certax	232
76	Laker Goodwin Jones	229
77	Anthony Russel Ltd	224
78	Ellacot Morris	223
79	LB Group Colchester	219
80	Asheden Accountants	214
81	BJG Accountancy	214
82	The Accountancy Practice Essex Ltd	200
83	Fraser Beecham Ltd	195
84	R and R Accounting	194
85	Abraham and Associates	189
86	Your Local Accountants	181
87	Douglas Jones Accountants	173
88	Mayers and Co Accountants	171
89	Baverstocks	162
90	Hill Wooldridge	151
91	Paper Trail Accounting	150
92	Knight and Co Accountants	142
93	Wilson Devenish	141
94	Accounting Solutions Anglia	137
95	SME Accountants Southend	130
96	Clacton Business Services Ltd	128
97	London Tax Accountants	122
98	Taylor Bradshaw Accountants	86
99	Chase Bureau	86
100	Parry and Co	50

Further reading

Download our free e-books and useful resources from our website at www.prosper-agency.com/resources

A Guide to Designing Lead Generation Websites for Financial Consultants and Accountants



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This guide will help you make informed decisions before, during and after your website development and help you understand best practices, calls to action and avoid common pitfalls when implementing your new lead generation website.

A Guide to Content Strategy and Social Media for Financial Consultants and Accountants



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www.prosper-agency.com
01787 866 003

This guide will introduce you to the concept of social media marketing, explore why it is an important investment for your business, and talk you through some of the things you'll need to consider when putting together your own content and social strategy.

This report was brought to you by **Prosper, the branding, design and marketing agency for Financial Consultants and Accountants.**

We help our clients differentiate themselves through deliberate brand development and design, improving their positioning and helping them achieve their marketing goals.

You can find more guides and resources, as well as our regular marketing blog at our website **www.prosper-agency.com**

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