



# THE FUTURE OF SEARCH MARKETING

ESSENTIAL INSIGHTS FOR RETAILERS



**NetElixir**<sup>™</sup>  
search marketing solved

# INTRODUCTION

Search marketing is a mature digital tactic to drive customer acquisition. Even after 17 years, paid search commands the largest share of investment in the digital marketing budget. However, as search marketing continues to evolve at a rapid pace, marketers need to be keenly aware of industry-wide changes and shifts in customer behavior.

Since 2004, NetElixir has been at the forefront of search marketing for the online retail industry. We have helped over 400 leading retailers successfully navigate the ever-changing search landscape by identifying new trends ahead of the competition, and executing a plan to capture the opportunities that these create.

The next few pages contain insights and recommendations to help you run successful search marketing campaigns, now and in the future.

Happy selling!

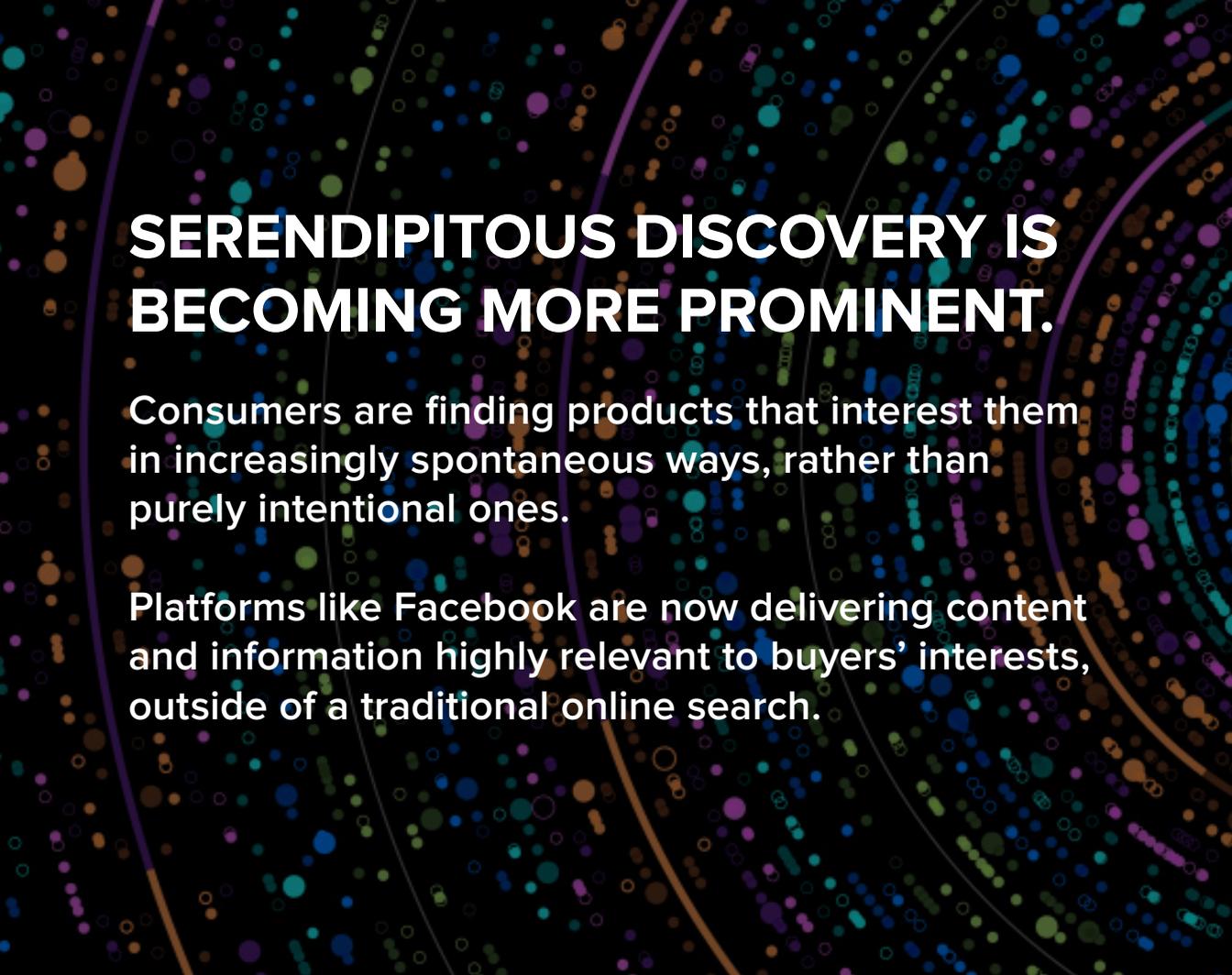
**Udayan Bose**

Founder & CEO  
NetElixir



# TRENDS & INSIGHTS WE'LL COVER:

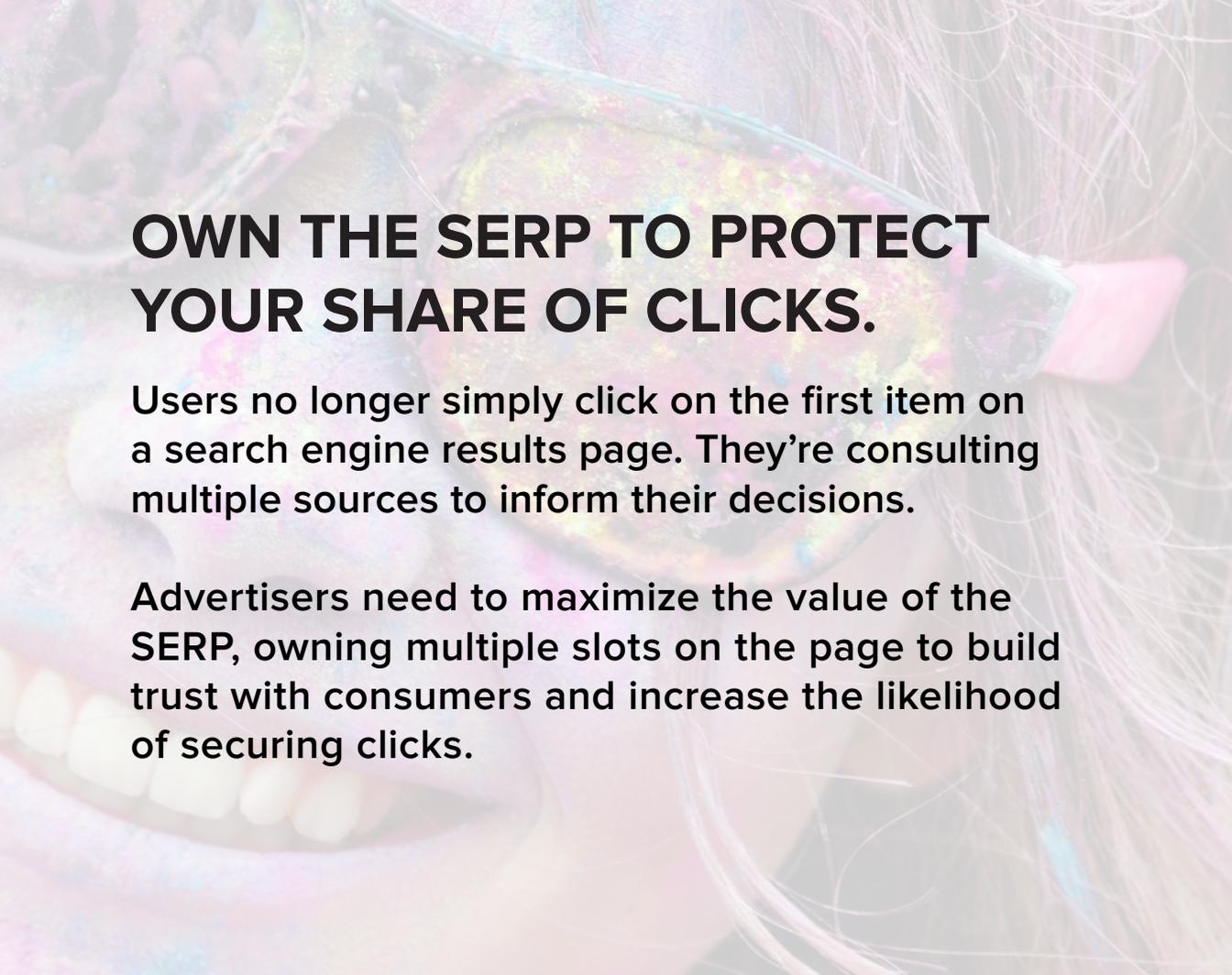
- Serendipitous discovery is becoming more prominent
- Own the SERP to protect your share of clicks
- It's an ad-eat-ad world
- The diminishing value of the organic SERP
- Amazon has evolved into the "Shopper's Search Engine"
- Understand customer behavior by tracking the buyer's journey
- Different devices, different habits
- Location, location, location
- The future is voice-activated
- Managing complex buying cycles



## **SERENDIPITOUS DISCOVERY IS BECOMING MORE PROMINENT.**

Consumers are finding products that interest them in increasingly spontaneous ways, rather than purely intentional ones.

Platforms like Facebook are now delivering content and information highly relevant to buyers' interests, outside of a traditional online search.



## **OWN THE SERP TO PROTECT YOUR SHARE OF CLICKS.**

Users no longer simply click on the first item on a search engine results page. They're consulting multiple sources to inform their decisions.

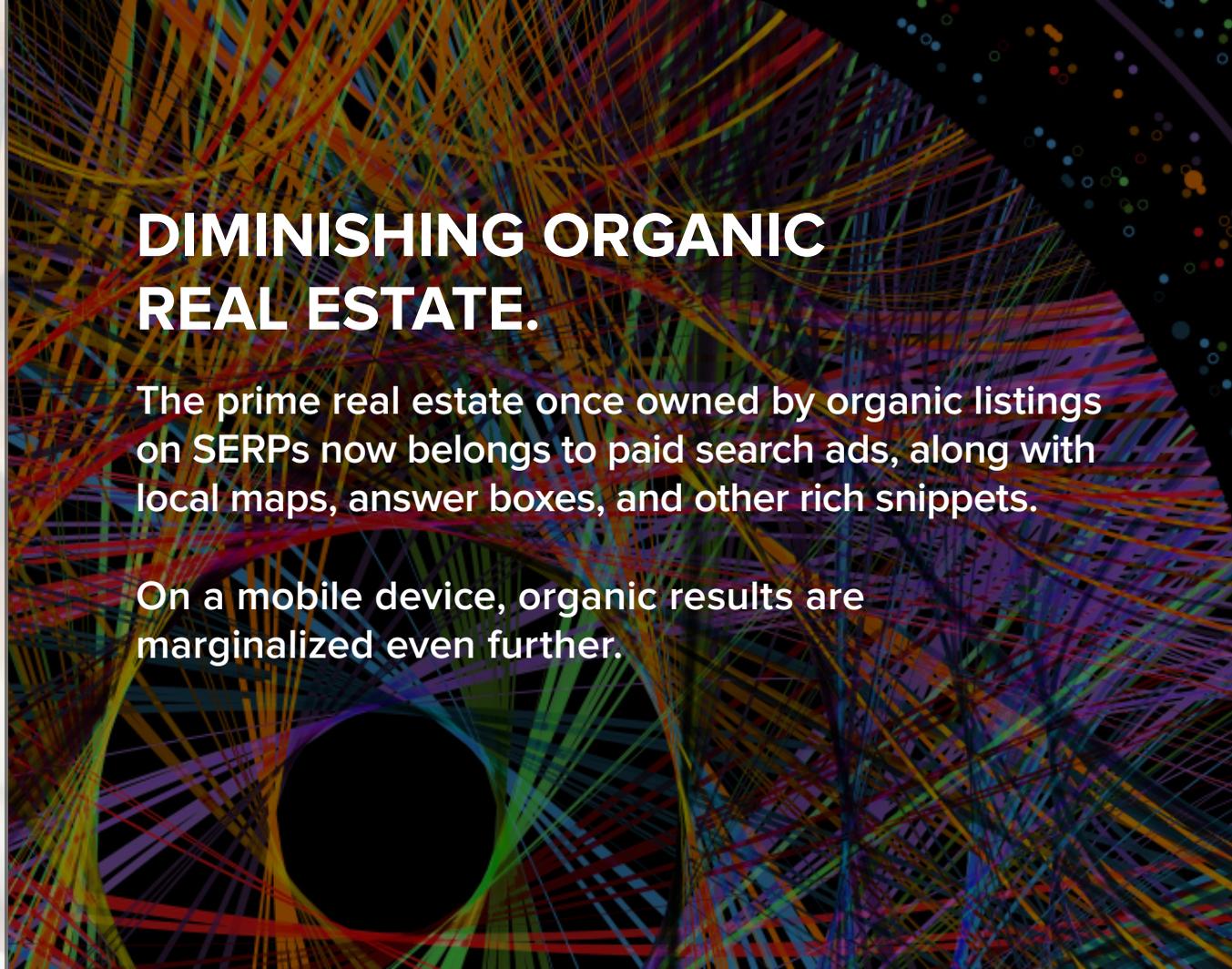
Advertisers need to maximize the value of the SERP, owning multiple slots on the page to build trust with consumers and increase the likelihood of securing clicks.

A dog wearing glasses, looking at a laptop screen.

## **IT'S AN AD-EAT-AD WORLD.**

The competition among ads has intensified as fewer ads now fit on each page, thanks to expanded text ads, more elaborate extensions, additional white space, and other factors.

With ad space more precious than before, individual ads need to take advantage of the full suite of ad extensions and modifiers to provide a greater return on investment.

A colorful, abstract background with many overlapping lines and a central black circle.

## **DIMINISHING ORGANIC REAL ESTATE.**

The prime real estate once owned by organic listings on SERPs now belongs to paid search ads, along with local maps, answer boxes, and other rich snippets.

On a mobile device, organic results are marginalized even further.



## **AMAZON HAS EVOLVED INTO THE “SHOPPER’S SEARCH ENGINE.”**

More consumers are researching products on Amazon before making a purchase, trending away from Google.

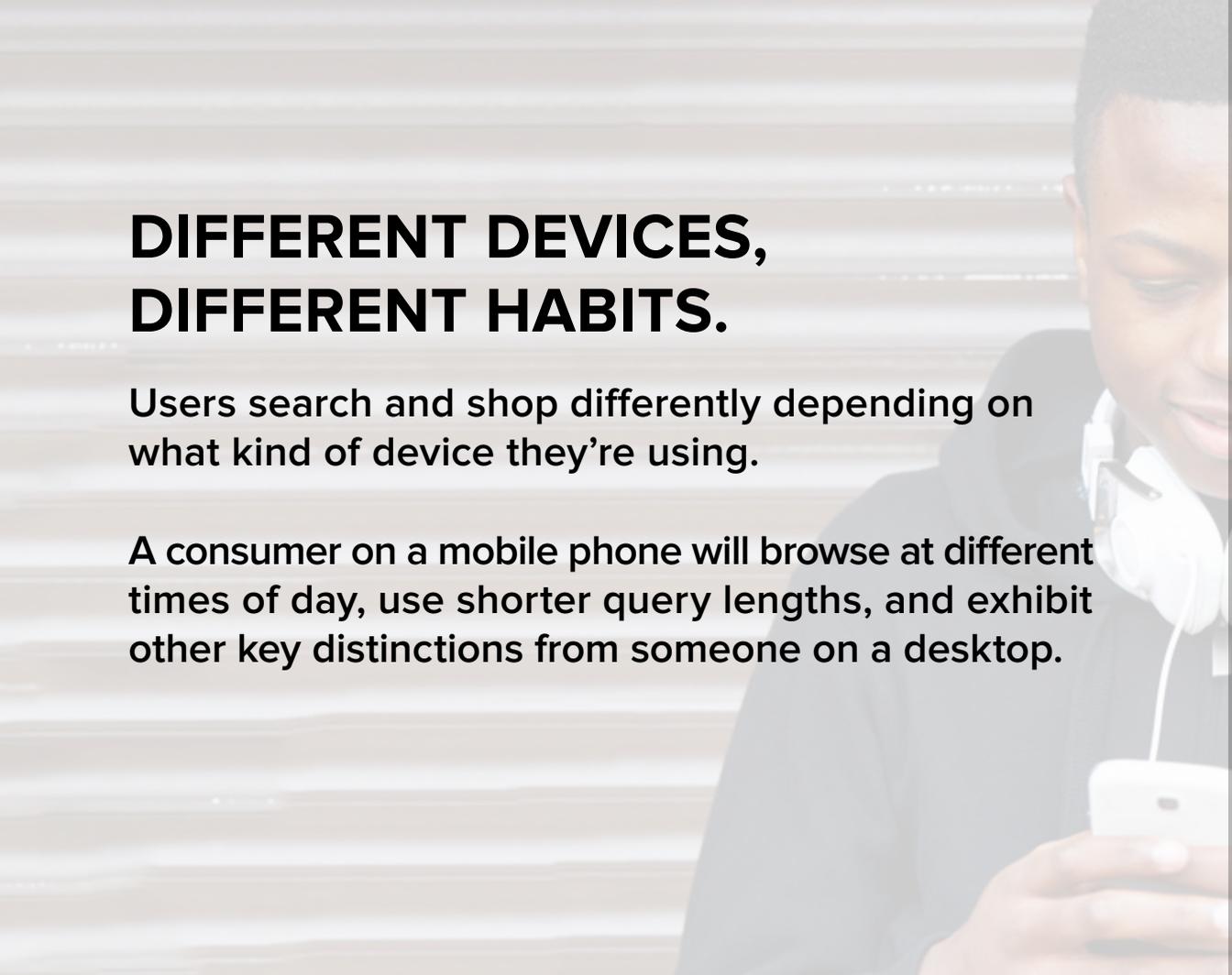
Their share of the search market will only continue to grow. A December 2016 survey by Raymond James reported 52% of respondents started with Amazon, besting the 26% that used a search engine.



## **UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR BY TRACKING THE BUYER’S JOURNEY.**

Marketers need to use Journey Analytics to better understand customer motivations and behaviors.

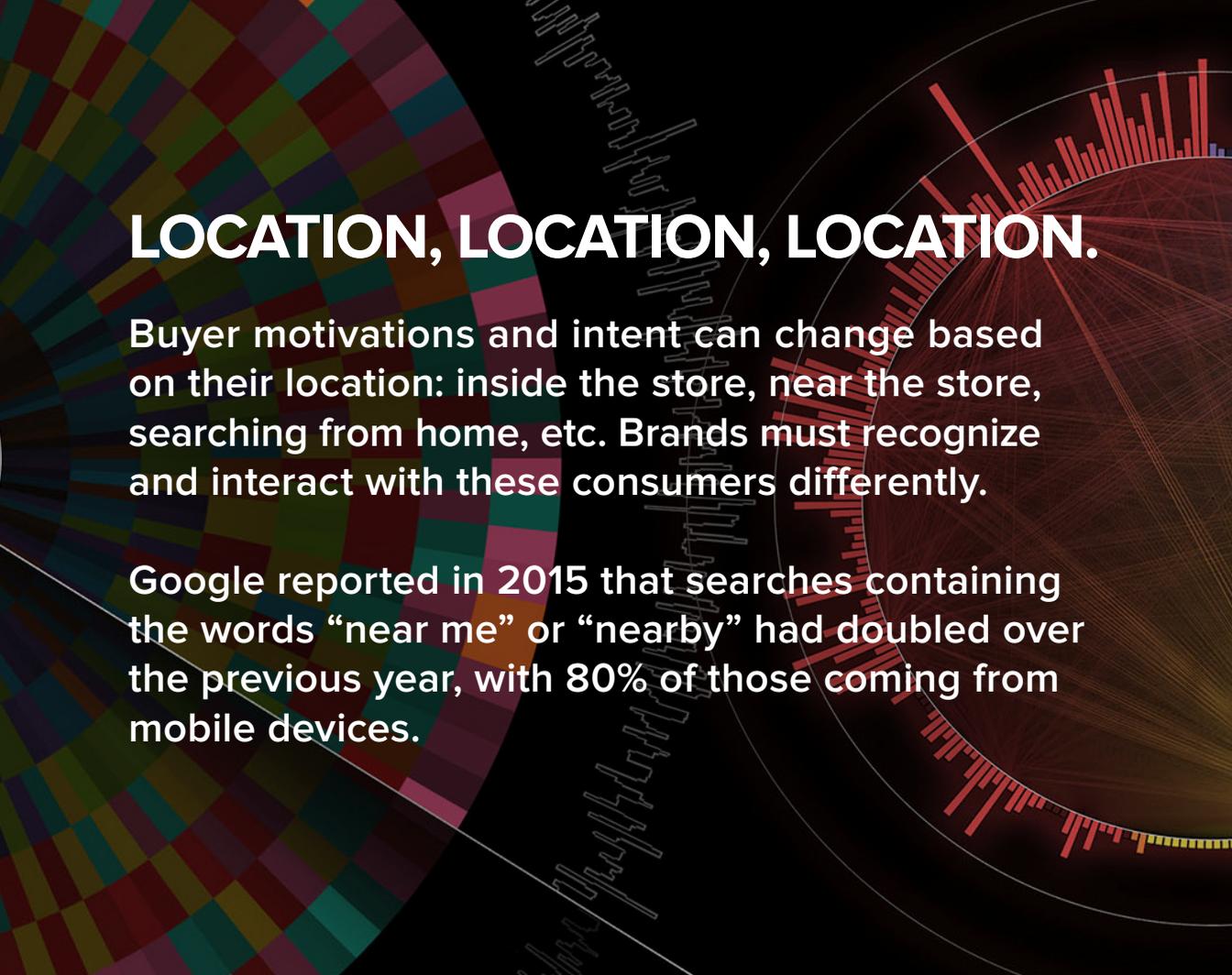
Tracking each step of the process from initial research to final purchase offers enhanced insight into the consumer’s mindset and how to most effectively engage with them at specific points.



## **DIFFERENT DEVICES, DIFFERENT HABITS.**

Users search and shop differently depending on what kind of device they're using.

A consumer on a mobile phone will browse at different times of day, use shorter query lengths, and exhibit other key distinctions from someone on a desktop.



## **LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.**

Buyer motivations and intent can change based on their location: inside the store, near the store, searching from home, etc. Brands must recognize and interact with these consumers differently.

Google reported in 2015 that searches containing the words “near me” or “nearby” had doubled over the previous year, with 80% of those coming from mobile devices.

## **THE FUTURE IS VOICE-ACTIVATED.**

Estimates project there will be more than 30 million voice assistants in U.S. homes by the end of 2017, such as Amazon Echo (Alexa) and Google Home.

As voice search becomes more prevalent, the search process will take on a more conversational tone. Marketers will need to determine how to adapt to this environment.

## **MANAGING COMPLEX BUYING CYCLES.**

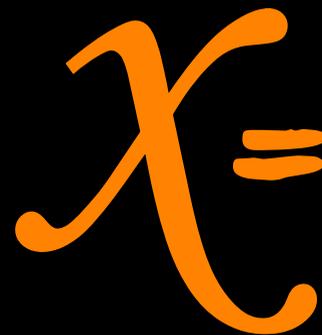
The number of touch points between the first and last click of a transaction is growing, and simple attribution models don't tell the whole story.

It's important for brands to identify the entire conversion path, and all the devices, channels, and consumer motivations along the way.



PPC • PLA • ANALYTICS  
SEO • SOCIAL • WEB

## DECODING WHAT MAKES PEOPLE CLICK.



NetElixir is a specialized search marketing agency that helps global retailers thrive online. We've been in the digital marketing space since a tweet was simply the sound a bird made. Every single day, we combine this unique experience with our never ending passion for creating smarter search marketing solutions to help our clients engage with their customers. And most importantly, drive results that surpass their wildest expectations.

See our success stories at [netelixir.com](http://netelixir.com)



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