

## YouTube Works For Brands 2017

### REPRISE MEDIA - SARSON'S

## GETTING BRITAIN PICKLING WITH SARSON'S

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sarson's is the UK's favourite vinegar, but we're using it less often and one bottle lasts forever. To boost falling sales, Sarson's wanted to get people pouring vinegar, not sprinkling it, so they'd buy more of it, more often.

We saw an opportunity for Sarson's to tap into the latest food trend: pickling. Traditionally, 75% of Sarson's customers are over 45, but we discovered a new, younger target audience of millennials aged 20 to 45.

We needed perfect timing, so we chose an autumn campaign to hit peak pickling season. We made 15 short videos for the Sarson's website and YouTube channel about how to pickle the most searched-for, seasonal ingredients.

We used tech tools like YouTube's interactive end cards to help drive viewers to the campaign hub, Sarsons.co.uk, and optimised the videos for search and discovery.

The results were phenomenal:


- Sarson's videos were watched nearly 2.8 million times
- Traffic to Sarsons.co.uk shot up by 374% year-on-year in November 2015
- Sarson's owned pickling, ranking on the first page of Google for most pickling keywords
- Sarson's overall pickling category sales increased by 11% year-on-year.

### ENTRY

Mizkan came us in 2015 looking for a new way to boost sales of the UK's leading vinegar brand, Sarson's. It accounts for 66% of UK malt vinegar sales, but the market was in decline. Overall category sales were down by 8% year-on-year in 2015.

Our strategy was to reposition Sarson's as a cooking ingredient to use regularly in larger amounts, rather than a condiment that's used sparingly. We identified 'pickling' as the best opportunity and discovered a new, younger audience waiting to be targeted.

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With strategy, content and timing led by our data insight, the Sarson's pickling campaign ran in October and November 2015. We worked closely with our in-house creative team, who produced 15 high-quality, funky 'how to pickle' videos targeting 20 to 45 year olds, with content based on the most search-for ingredients.

We fully optimised the videos, YouTube channel and Sarson's website, using all our tech tools to maximise search and discovery potential and to drive as much traffic as possible to the campaign hub, Sarsons.co.uk.

Malt vinegar is traditionally about sprinkling on chips, but eating habits have changed and fewer people are using vinegar regularly. When they do, it's only in small amounts. To boost sales, Sarson's wanted us to get people pouring vinegar, not sprinkling it, so they'd buy more of it, more often.

Our role in the campaign was SEO. We set out these objectives to deliver the brief:

1. Use search data to identify the most ownable opportunity for Sarson's to secure a new market.
2. Use search data to choose the optimum campaign window, ideally chiming with traditional seasonality.
3. Make sure that Sarson's owned pickling.
4. Put search data at the heart of the campaign, so that our keyword analysis would not only identify the demand for content, but lead the content strategy to deliver the most effective results for our client.
5. Optimise the Sarson's UK website, YouTube channel and video content to maximise search and discovery results and drive traffic.

Our only specific target was to secure 1,000 visits per month to the new content. In November 2015 we achieved 4,100 visits per month - over four times the target.

Our strategy was to integrate SEO and content marketing, so that our solid search analysis and insight could both identify the opportunity and inform the content strategy from the beginning.


## **Our data insight found the opportunity**

We analysed the search data and discovered high search volumes for both 'pickling' and 'glazing & marinating', but we judged that only pickling had the potential to be owned, because it's a focused space - vinegar is the key ingredient in pickling, while it's only one of many possible ingredients in a marinade.

Mizkan initially felt pickling may only attract a niche, mature audience - 75% of Sarson's traditional consumers are over 45 - but our analysis persuaded them otherwise. We found interest in pickling across all age groups and it was a trend on the rise. In the first quarter of 2015, YouTube searches for recipes had clocked up 125,000 views in three months, while Google searches in the preserved food category were up by 27% year-on-year.

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Our insights had uncovered a way for Sarson's to tap into a larger, younger and potentially more profitable target market of millennials, aged 20 to 45.

Crucially, we found that while more people were pickling, no brand owned the space. Our qualitative competitor analysis revealed that YouTube and Google search results for 'pickled onions' were dominated by amateurish, user-generated content. There were no celebrity chef endorsements or articles from high-profile food bloggers.

We knew that timing and seasonality would be critical. Traditional peak pickling time is at the end of summer, when vegetables are preserved before they go off. Google Trends confirmed the anecdotal evidence: pickling spikes dramatically in October and November, so we identified this as the optimal time to run the campaign.

Our real-world data told us that a large audience was interested, we knew the campaign timing was perfect and we knew it was an ownable space because it wasn't a saturated market. There was a high demand for content but a low supply of quality material. It presented a perfect storm of an opportunity for us to position Sarson's as the trusted voice of pickling for a new, millennial audience looking for cooking advice.

## **Our SEO insight led the content strategy**

Our keyword research revealed that interest in pickling went far beyond onions. People like to pickle eggs, beetroot, cabbage, beetroot and garlic too, so we proposed a broad content strategy to meet demand: short, punchy snippets of content aimed across the piece would give Sarson's an opportunity to really own pickling.

We created a new Sarson's UK YouTube channel and worked closely with UM Studios, who produced 15 high-quality, funky YouTube recipe videos targeting our audience of young foodies, explaining how easy it is to pickle using Sarson's vinegars. We based content on the most searched-for ingredients, including traditional vegetables and trending or seasonal produce. Each video highlighted one of Sarson's vinegars, such as traditional Malt Vinegar, Distilled Malt Vinegar or Pickling Vinegar.

All videos encouraged viewers to visit the campaign hub, Sarsons.co.uk, where they could learn more, watch more videos, and download recipes.

We shared the same content across Sarson's other owned channels in appropriate formats, including long-form videos for YouTube, which were embedded on the Sarson's website, 30-second Facebook/pre-roll ads, 15-second Instagram videos and still images for social.


## **Our optimisation maximised delivery**

We optimised the Sarson's YouTube channel and the videos to maximise search and discovery results, so when people were watching any similar content, there was the highest chance a Sarson's pickling video would appear as a related video.

We optimised content on the Sarson's website too, and boosted our SEO impact by creating rich snippets that delivered more compelling search results, with images or videos, recipe instructions and calorie

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counts, to appeal to more consumers. We used YouTube calls to action to drive viewers back to the Sarson's website, as well as interactive end cards featuring links to other Sarson's videos in the series to encourage click-through and retention.

## Results

- Our target was 1,000 visits per month to the new video content. At the campaign's peak we achieved 4,100 - over four times the target.
- As a result of our SEO work, in November 2015 the Sarson's website had 6,270 organic visits - a 374% uplift from 1,322 organic visits in November 2014.
- Sarson's owned pickling, ranking on the first page of Google for most pickling keywords in November 2015 – up from as low as 41st place before the campaign.
- Sales of Sarson's Distilled Malt Vinegar increased by 20% year-on-year.
- Sales of Sarson's Brown Pickling Vinegar increased by 7% year-on-year.
- Overall pickling category sales increased by 11% year-on-year.
- Over the campaign, 2,976 new users watched the YouTube videos from organic sources.
- SEO continued to have an impact after all other activity ended, with organic website traffic reaching almost 3,000 visits in the first week of December 2015.
- Mizkan were so impressed that they've chosen us to be their 'always on' SEO partner for Sarson's and their other leading brands, Branston and Haywards. As a trusted partner, Mizkan now involve us closely in key decisions about their strategic plans.

## SUPPORTING INFO

Case study video

<https://vimeo.com/158168359>

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