Here at Gatherwell, we do everything we can to give you a great quality website. You can take it to the next level by using the News feature effectively. Most people know how to write a news story, blog or article that gets their point across, but when it comes to the performance of your lottery, you could be making your news feed work a little harder. It's a great opportunity to add fresh new content to your website that will get people engaged, and also get you ranking higher on Google.

NEWS STORY IDEAS

So you know it's a good idea to create some News stories but you're not sure what to write about? Don't worry, here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- Celebrating a big winner, the cause they supported, and how they will use their winnings
- Details of the impact made by the lottery on a specific cause, e.g. purchase of equipment
- Information about your central pot such as how the funds have been distributed
- Marking important events such as the anniversary of the lottery

RANKING ON GOOGLE:

It may be that you've looked on Google at who is appearing top of the search rankings and wondered if your website could be higher up. If you are a local lottery it shouldn't take long before you appear on the first page of the search results for your place name and the word 'lottery'. Here we see that Middlesbrough Lottery ranks top of page 1 for the search term "lottery Middlesbrough":
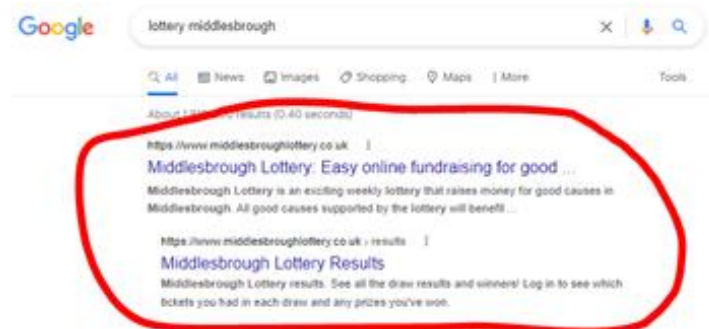
But to get more causes onto your lottery you might want to rank higher on Google for searches related to fundraising. Here we see that Middlesbrough lottery is on page 4 of the search results for the search term "Middlesbrough fundraising":
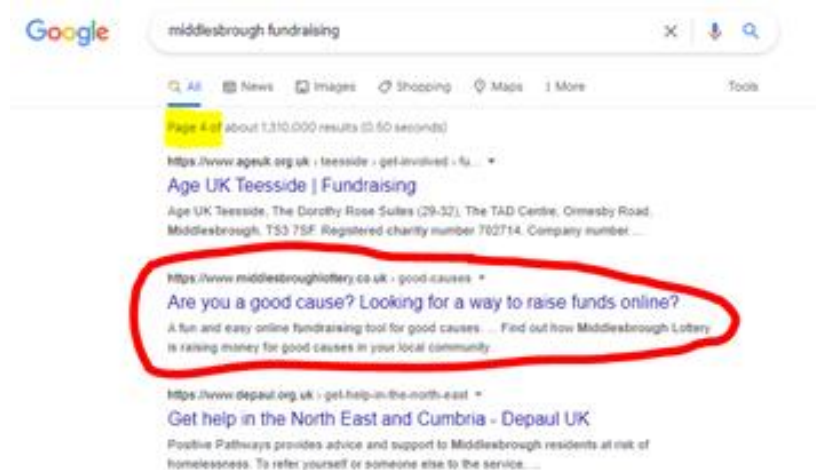
Writing a news story with all the right ingredients could be your key to climbing up the rankings, whilst also giving your website visitors something fresh to read about. It may seem mystifying to know what Google would put at the higher end of the search rankings (indeed the full algorithm is a closely guarded secret), but we can give you some of the key factors that Google might reward.

GOOGLE RANKING FACTORS:

- Strong headline
- Engaging content
- Readability
- Informative content
- Lists

- Good image
- Alt Tag
- Internal and external links
- Metadata
- Traffic

STEP-BY-STEP:

1. Create a strong headline

Create a simple, direct headline that conveys the key point of your News article. Example:

"Boost Your Music Group Fundraising With Music Lotto"

2. Write engaging content that's easy to read

Be engaging – try to keep the content interesting and fun. Address the reader directly by using words like 'you' and 'your', use rhetorical questions (but don't go overboard), and even include a touch of humour. Example:

"We've got a fundraising solution that will be music to your ears! Want to hear more?"

Aim for a low reading age, people will leave the page if they don't understand it the first time. Avoid the use of long complicated sentences. Check for spelling and grammar errors. Here's how NOT to do it:

"A long sentence in which the writer delays the core to the middle of the sentence or in which the core is broken up so readers have to remember how the sentence started, is more difficult to read so should, in most cases be avoided, although there are a limited number of exceptions to this rule which we won't go into here!".

3.   Be informative

Demonstrate that you are an authority on your subject. Include information that shows Google you know what you are talking about. "How to" type information is also highly regarded by Google. You could also include a testimonial from a trusted source if you have one. Example:

4.   Use lists

Present some of your information in the form of bullet points or a numbered list. This will break up the content, and make it easier to scan. Google likes lists so this should give you a better chance or ranking. Example below:

> *How To Give Your Fundraising A Boost:*
> * *Join Music Lotto*
> * *Set a launch date*
> * *Start selling tickets*
> * *Watch the money start rolling in!*

5. Call To Action

Make sure you tell the reader what to do next by including a strong call to action. The nature of the call to action will depend on the target audience of the article. If your article is aimed at individuals who may buy tickets then your call to action could be **"Play Now"**. If your article is aimed at good causes then your call to action could be **"Register Now"** or **"Request A Leaflet"**.

6.   Use A Good Image (with permission!)

Use a good quality, landscape image that doesn't contain too much (if any) text. Ensure you have permission to use the image. Don't copy and paste from Google or another website without consent.

7.   Add An Alt tag

An Alt Tag is a description of the image. It is used to assist the visually impaired, but it is also read by Google. Use this to briefly describe the image and how it relates to your story.

8.   Include Internal And External Links

It's important that Google can find its way around the site so include one or more links to other relevant pages. If you mention external organisations include a link to their website, but make sure that this opens in a new window in their browser, rather than

taking them away from your website. If you are lucky they will return the favour, and link back from their website. Google likes to see links coming into your website from other relevant websites.

9.   Create Metadata

If you are confident using metadata, try using the Higher Visibility tool to create a title tag and description of the optimal length for Google.

10. Create A Traffic Jam!

Once your news article is published, it's time to spread the word. Post a link to your article on social media, and send it out by email. If you have access to any other relevant websites, link from them to your article. Make sure you ask people to **share your article**. The more traffic you can drive to your page, the more likely Google is to notice it.

GET STARTED!