

# Santander

## The Client

Santander is one of the world's top ten banks with over 13,000 branches serving 90 million customers in more than 40 countries.

In October 2008 Santander completed their purchase of the financial group, Alliance & Leicester (A&L). We started working with A&L in December 2006 before they became part of the Santander Group.

As one of the UK's leading retail banks, it appointed us to ensure its range of personal finance products appeared preferentially in natural search engine results. The agency was engaged at a critical time for the bank, when competition was becoming increasingly aggressive, particularly online.

## The Objectives

Following the merger of Alliance & Leicester with Santander, we were appointed to handle SEO for Santander following years of working with Alliance & Leicester. We aimed to replicate the same impressive page one rankings for the Santander.co.uk site by mirroring the strategy that we employed for Alliance & Leicester.

Santander.co.uk was a relatively new domain without a strong base of relevant and powerful back links. Content Management Systems (CMSs) are notorious for creating challenges for SEO. They are prone to duplicate page issues and changing URLs which can make achieving high natural rankings for competitive keywords extremely difficult.

Santander's enterprise-level CMS was no exception.

## The Strategy

- We created a layer of additional search engine optimised pages outside the restrictions of the CMS. These pages perfectly replicated the content of the site and were refreshed automatically on a daily basis.
- We made extensive use of the 'canonical tag' to persuade search engines to recognise in our new pages the authority of the originals. The 'canonical tag' is a new HTML tag specifically designed to compensate for duplicate content.
- We devised an SEO campaign focussing on the ten most competitive terms in the finance industry with relevance to A&L products, including 'loans', 'current accounts' and 'mortgages'. A&L wanted to see a rapid improvement in its search rankings in Google, but had significant restrictions on the degree of on-page changes that could be made to its site to help improve those rankings. To overcome these issues, we devised an accelerated online PR programme.

## THE RESULTS



Keyword	Number of competitive sites	Pre-Greenlight rank	At month three	Highest rank
Loans	169,000,000	34	5	2
Personal loans	36,400,000	21	3	1
Unsecured loans	2,480,000	26	4	2
Car loans	17,800,000	69	1	1
Bank accounts	44,600,000	43	3	3
Current accounts	87,300,000	9	3	2
Mortgages	78,600,000	24	4	2
Mortgage calculator	8,170,000	31	4	4

### TESTIMONIAL:

"Greenlight's distinct innovation and solid number crunching stood out in our quest to appoint an agency to take us to the top of natural search. We target the 10 most competitive terms in online finance including current accounts, loans and savings. Through Greenlight's expert solutions we became the number one high street bank in the UK on Google natural search results. Greenlight has helped us overcome the challenges of working with a new domain with no relevancy or quality back links, and continues to help grow Santander's online presence in the UK. I would highly recommend Greenlight to any company wishing to boost their online presence."

AMANDA MAYES - Senior E-commerce Manager, Santander

