

vodafone

CASE STUDY

EMPATHY.CO

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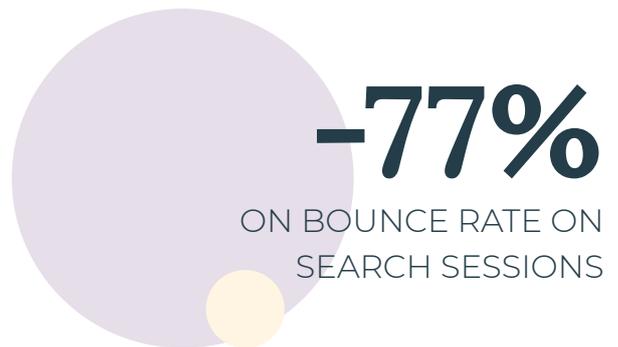
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FROM GSA TO EMPATHY.CO

In the highly competitive world of eCommerce the challenge is not just to stand out and attract consumers to your site but to then keep them engaged and inspired through to the point of sale, earning their loyalty through a

smooth and enjoyable experience that encourages them to return.

More and more retailers are realising that the search function has a big role to play in transforming the user experience.

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It's a critical element of the online store and a core component of creating a positive and memorable customer journey.

Search not only connects the users to the brand by forming a conversation that guides visitors through the product catalogue, finding the items they were looking for and discovering others along the way, but it's a key point of engagement and emotion.

The search box helps people to explore the product catalogue and site content in a new and more human way, offering search trends, suggestions, popular items and so on, right from the start. It's a mechanism to spark surprise, satisfaction and joy.

Perhaps then, it's not surprising that visitors who use site search not only spend longer on a site but they're over 200% more likely to make a purchase than regular users.

That's why getting search right is so important and retailers are increasingly recognising the link between their site search, their customer satisfaction and

brand loyalty metrics, not to mention their bottom-line.

Vodafone.es had been using Google Search Appliance (GSA) since 2008. Their challenge was combining and balancing a complex product catalogue with a broad selection of information resources for different types of users, each generating an array of diverse queries and requests.

What's more, their analysis showed that search traffic had six times the transactional value than those who only browsed with a higher engagement rate; the average session duration of visitors using search was twice that of those who didn't.

Yet, while the use of the search engine increased by 30% on desktop and 50% on mobile in 2018, the ratio of search exits had not decreased. This led to concerns that people were not finding what they were looking for and were leaving the site disappointed or frustrated.

The team at Vodafone Spain, therefore, took the decision to review and completely overhaul their search experience. They wanted to fully align the search function to their own unique environment, combining products and information. They also sought to enhance and humanise the interface, improve indexing, relevancy and findability, while adding features and creating a discovery element on the site.

SEARCH FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES

After an extensive selection process, Vodafone Spain chose empathy.co to help them on their search journey, kicking off with a search experience workshop at their offices in Madrid.



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“Empathy’s Search Workshop opened our minds to new ideas through a deeper understanding and analysis of our own site as well as a greater awareness of industry trends and innovations. It was both informative and energetic, and we came away with renewed enthusiasm and ideas. An excellent and very worthwhile session.”

Vincenzo Musumeci,
Digital Transformation Manager
VODAFONE

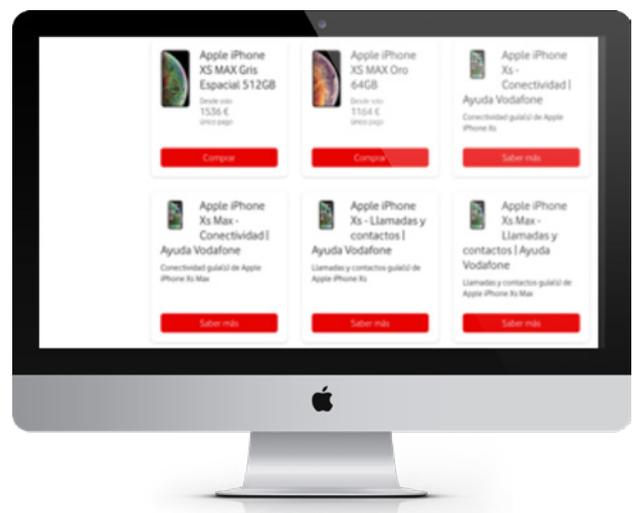
The session and analysis of the current site metrics, navigation, searches and customer journeys quickly identified one key challenge; the need to design and construct a search experience that had a dual functionality and purpose.

On the one hand, Vodafone.es is an eCommerce site with a diverse and complex product catalogue but it also provides valuable content to visitors who may have no purchase intent but who are looking for information or answers to questions. It was imperative, therefore, that the search function catered to both these needs in equal measure.

In fact, the analysis showed that 40% of queries were content, rather than product related, such as help and FAQs.

This required a special approach to ensure that the different types of queries were dealt with distinctly and the results displayed and arranged, from a design perspective, depending on the different types of content.

To achieve this, a combination of product cards and content cards were assigned, depending on whether the request was for information or related to products from the catalogue.



Grid of results combining Content Cards with Products Cards

CREATING THE RIGHT FRAMEWORK

After the initial analysis and a good understanding had been established of not only the site users and their different requirements, the diverse types of content but also of the aspirations for the site, a new set of designs and additional functionality and enhancements were identified.

First of all, Vodafone migrated across from GSA APIs onto Empathy Search APIs, then added Interface as a plug-and-play component onto their site. Interface is a customisable and intuitive search interface that sits on top of the search

platform. It not only separates the search logic to give the search technology a body, creating more expressive, joyful and engaging interactions that also deliver real business results, but it enables new features and functionality to be added.

Having established the framework, identified and prioritised the enhancements, additional components were added to help guide and inspire shoppers by understanding and anticipating their needs to ensure that results would be not only more accurate but also tailored to the users.



Search Suggestions

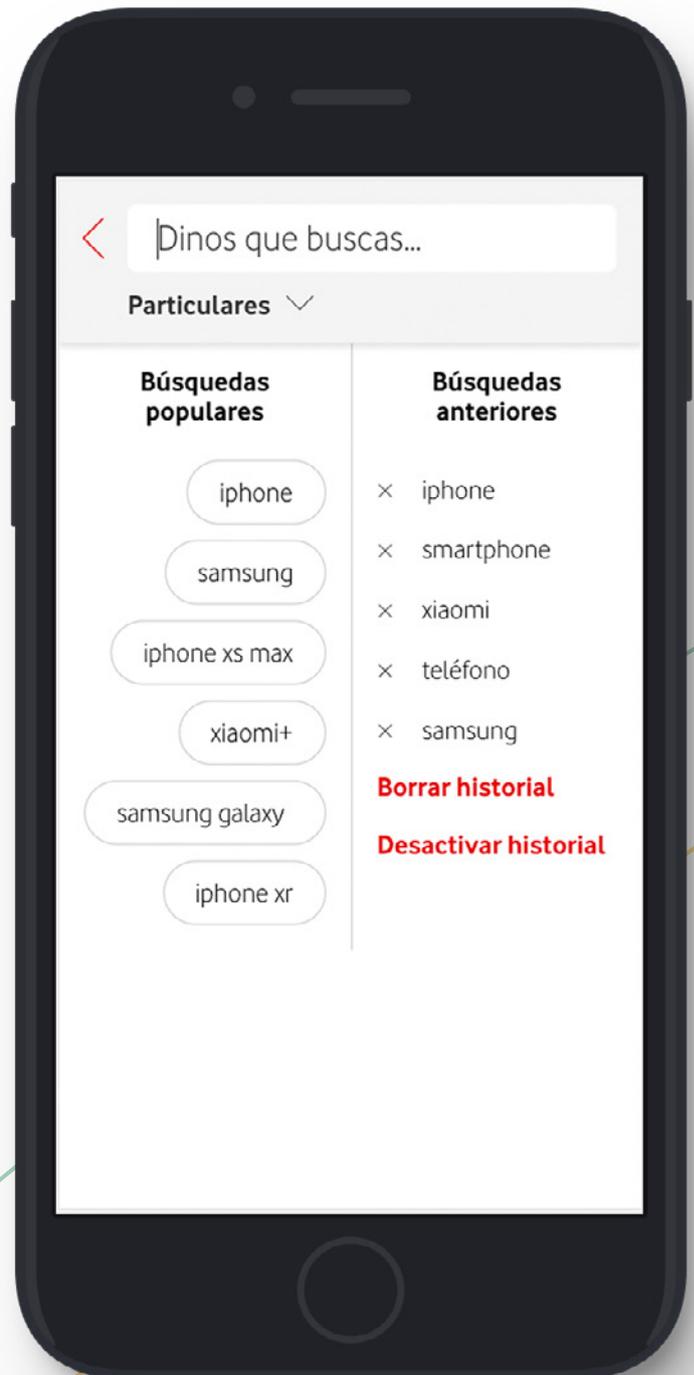
Vodafone's new suggestions layer now starts offering suggestions from the first click on the search box, even before the user has started to type. The suggestions provide two dimensions to assist users to find what they're looking for.

MOST POPULAR SEARCHES

This provides an overview of what's currently being searched as a high number of queries are repeated. From a design perspective, they're presented as tags to make them easily visible and clickable.

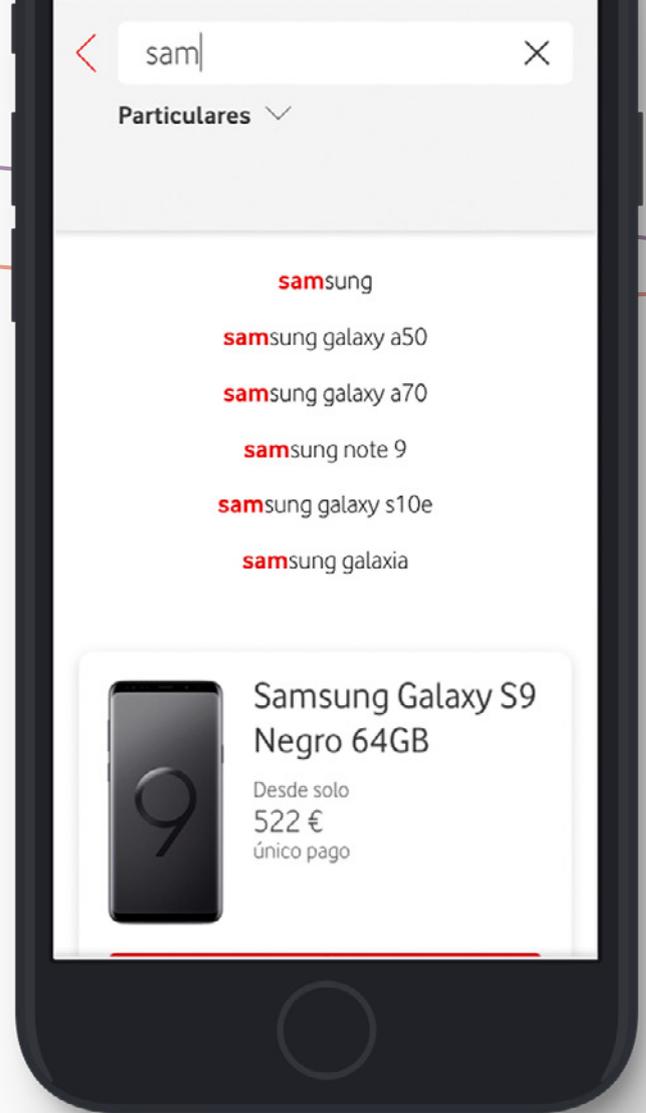
PREVIOUS SEARCHES

This is designed from a user perspective to help facilitate recurring queries. The last five queries are displayed so that the user can easily revisit content they've viewed before. There is also the option to clear previous searches or to even deactivate this function if a user desires, offering them full control.



Search Suggestions and Categories

Search suggestions are displayed as the user starts to type, helping to reduce the effort of typing while inspiring consumers with new related search ideas.



Search Filters

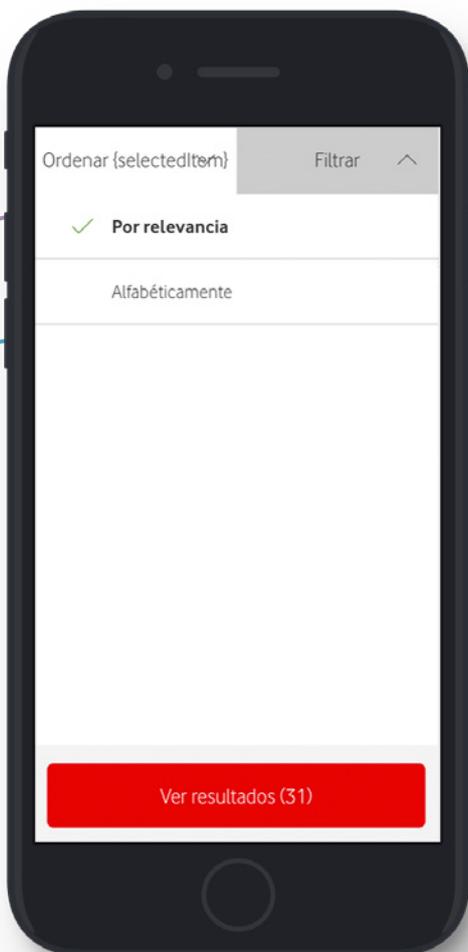
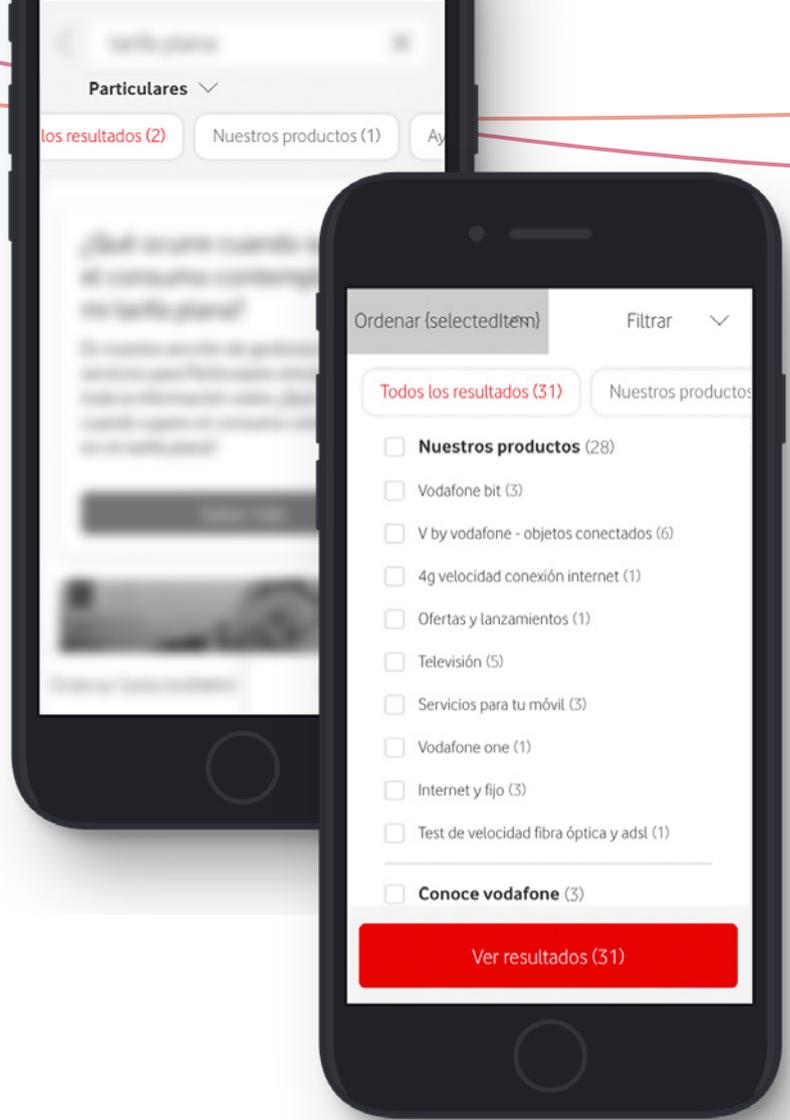
Since the initial design phase, and due to the broad diversity of content, it was clear that a first level filter of user type and site section was required as a means to provide a ubiquitous sense and understanding of the user and their needs. Therefore, user type (ie. 'Particulares, Autónomos, Grandes Clientes and Empresas') are now displayed through a drop down menu below the search box.



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The site section is displayed through tags that sit above the list of results. These filtering tags are divided into four main categories from a navigation perspective: “Nuestros productos”, “Ayuda” and “Conoce vodafone”.

Additionally, a vertical facets section is provided with these same categories but also offering further depth with subcategories to provide multiple selection possibilities.



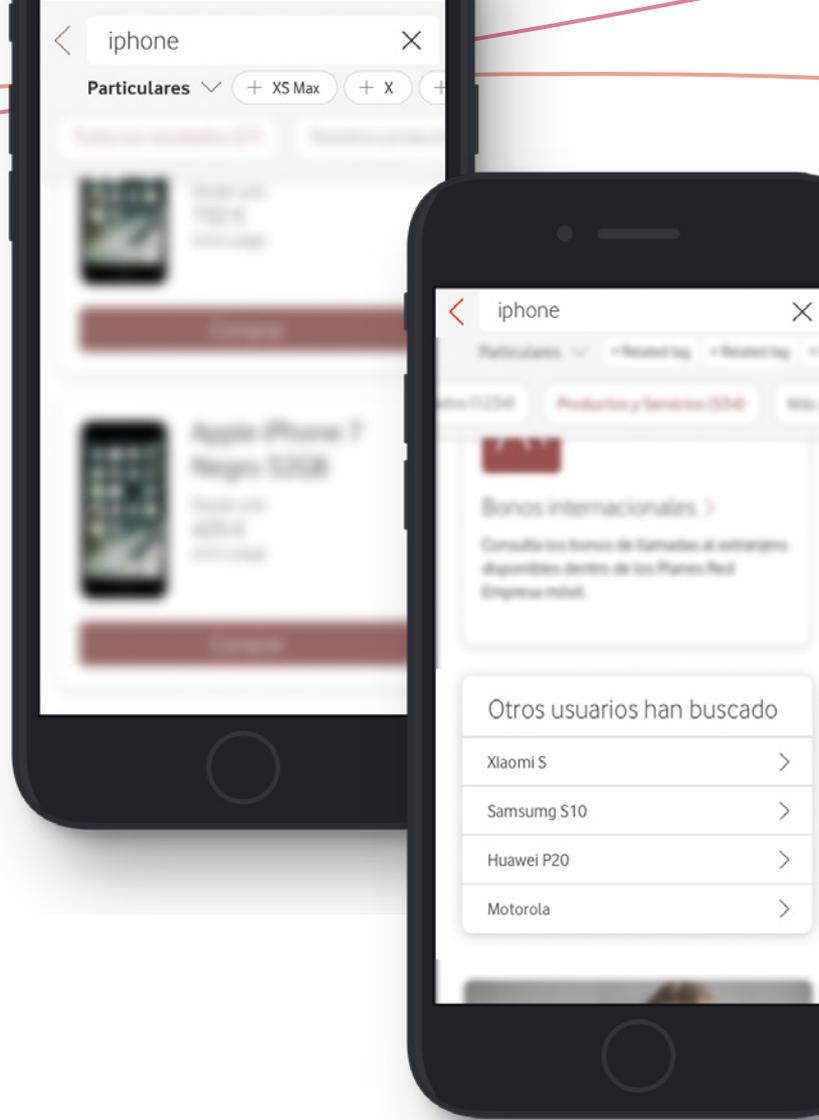
Results Sorting

Results can now be arranged by user preference so that while a large set of results will be displayed by product relevance there is also the option for users to select an alphabetical order.

Related Tags and Next Queries

The search journey no longer finishes with the results page but allows for continuous expansion and discovery. “Related Tags” help users to refine their search with just one click, in a similar style to Pinterest.

Similarly, “Next Queries” show users the most common queries performed after their initial one. These further enhance and improve the site’s usability, findability and discoverability.



Promoted Links

These enable the creation of banners to push promotional products to the top of the results list in order to encourage cross-selling and give greater visibility to certain items over others.



No Results

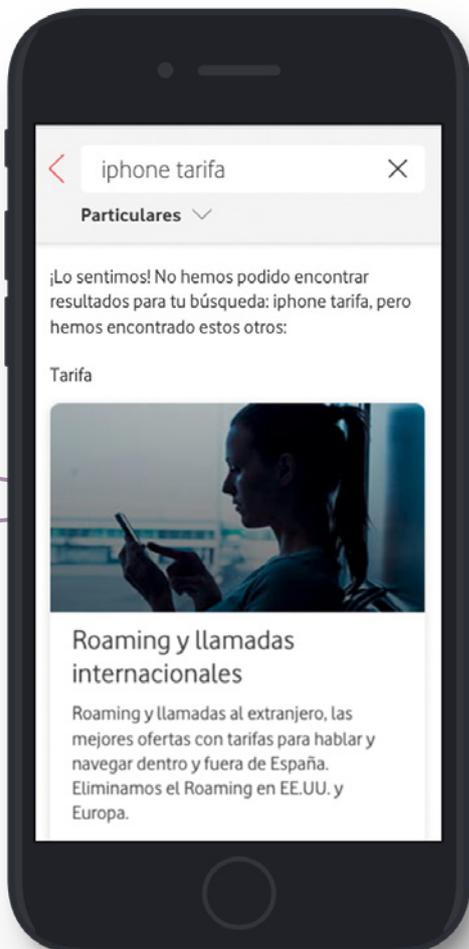
The new filtering feature was designed to also prevent No Results so that users can more easily find the right results for their desired category. Nevertheless, fall-back mechanisms, such as Spellcheck, Partial Results and Top Searched products, are also now incorporated to mitigate against No Results queries, avoid blank pages and lead to a discovery journey.

PARTIAL RESULTS

Products or information that are similar to, or contain part of the words, of the initial query are displayed when there is no exact match.

TOP SEARCHED PRODUCTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If there are no partial results matches available, then the top queries will be displayed to help inspire and continue the customer journey.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Through understanding user behaviour and re-designing the site search to cater for the different needs and requirements of their users, Vodafone has successfully enhanced the customer journey, improving findability and discoverability while minimizing frustration. They've been able to significantly increase key metrics within a very short timeframe:

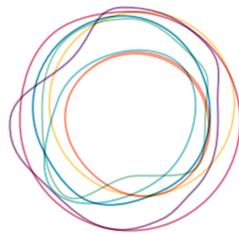
- 50% increase in the number of searches per visit
- Decrease of 77% on bounce rate on search sessions
- 200% uplift in the conversion rate from search sessions
- Increasing by 150% the transactions that come from search

What's more, Vodafone has not just created a better online experience for their customers they've shown themselves to be a brand that can relate to their users. The new site is much more intuitive and responsive, offering more options, filters and categories to help guide but also inspire shoppers and information seekers. This means a more enjoyable and fruitful search journey that meets the functional objectives but that also goes beyond reason and convenience to generate emotion, enjoyment and fulfilment.

And, this is just the start of the journey. In the next stage Vodafone will integrate search into their chatbot and also within the "Mi Vodafone" personal area so that, for example, visitors will be able to search for "factura" and, with one click, will be taken to their personal area page directly.

"Our new site search engine is awesome! We're now able to guide our visitors to the right products or information easily, effortlessly and elegantly, and this is just the beginning."

Victor Manuel Recio Valle
SEO & Search Specialist
VODAFONE



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