

## Content that Converts is King

Many business people think that Internet Marketing is all about getting your pages listed near the top of the search engine results for target keywords. Today, there is an entire industry consisting of SEO (Search Engine Optimization) consultants offering insight and coaching on getting your pages to rank well in the search engines.

Should you hire a company that focuses exclusively on SEO? Absolutely not, and here are the reasons why.

Let's first qualify that statement. Yes, it is important to achieve high rankings for your target keywords in search engines. But getting visitors to your site is only half the challenge. The other half is figuring out how to convert them to sales or qualified leads.

Let's be honest. The actual technique for achieving high-ranking positions in search engines is quite simple and, in general, the rules of the game are straightforward, once you have completed thorough and accurate keyword research. This means your content is critical to your competitive strategy in the on-line world. You've heard the phrase "Content is king". When it pertains to search engine marketing, this is true. However, there is an important balance here in developing content for visitors that converts to sales, and not just content for search engine spiders to rank near the top of the listings. You need both!

The challenge in developing your web site content is to balance the information visitors need to make a buying decision along with designing a search engine friendly site with keyword-rich copy. To achieve these goals, you need technical marketing expertise that includes an understanding of search engines, a thorough familiarity with the words your prospects are using to describe their "pain," excellent copy-writing skills, and web site development skills. Search engine optimization is a skill; marketing is an expertise, copy-writing takes talent and familiarity with your customers and prospects takes time and caring. If you have had experience optimizing web site copy for both search engines and visitor conversion, then you know that it's all about content that sells - not just content that ranks.

Unless you sell advertising, who cares if you get a high volume of traffic if you don't get any conversion? How do you design and write for both? What if you invest your effort in optimizing for the wrong keywords that don't convert? What if you choose the right keywords, but the landing page content doesn't convert? How will you even know whether the problem is with the keywords or the landing page copy in terms of converting? These are the questions you need to ask the company you are engaging to optimize your Web site.

### **Content that Converts to Sales: A Market-Vantage Client Success Story**

One of our clients, a consumer software company selling five core products, has two Web sites that receive over 6,000 visitors and 25,000 page views each per day. This company gives away software that's two or three versions old on one site and up-sells to the products sold on the main site using a telephone sales force once they have the contact registration information. This process generates revenue, but telesales is expensive. In addition, national "no-call" lists are making it

more challenging for call centers to generate revenue than they once did. The goal is to get the web site to sell as well as the telesales department.

Previously, there was no CRM process in place to follow-up with free down-loaders. We surveyed the existing base to gather demographic data and develop a customer profile. Based on this data, we launched a plan to redesign and rewrite the web site content to increase sales as well as search engine positions. A CRM process was developed to encourage use of the product during the 30-day software trial period. Developing an effective CRM process is also part of the new strategy to increase sales growth from the existing base.

The call center does very well selling by phone, but the web pages don't convert nearly as well. Achieving high rankings for the new pages was not going to be a challenge to someone who understands the basics of SEO, but in writing the copy, our priority was selling the visitor first and optimizing for spiders second. Content was developed by focusing on what it would take to sell the visitor, not just please search engine spiders.

Playing the role of a target customer, we got familiar with the software to better understand the user experience. Our prior experience with this company's type of software provided us an advantage, so we were good test subjects. The most impressive feature of the easy-to-use desktop publishing software was how quickly you could create professional document output in minutes using the templates. The high-quality outputs from the templates are the most exciting feature about using the software. We felt showing these templates on the Web site would get visitors more excited about the product.

Visitors often spend only a few seconds on a web page. If they don't find what they're looking for quickly, they leave faster than you can say Google. You have to "wow" them as quickly as possible. Also, is your current content too text centric for an audience that needs to be visually stimulated? Don't forget content can also be in the form of a screenshot of the software, product tours, or even mini video or flash demonstrations. Of course these are items that will not be picked up by the search engine spiders today, but as both search engine sites and users get more search savvy, this will change in the future. Besides, if it converts to a sale, does it really matter whether the spiders see it or not?

An important aspect of search engine marketing is thinking about the complete selling process. The sales process may begin with search engines more than 50% of the time, with web site content in the middle, and CRM at the end. Developing compelling content is the one tool a marketing department has in helping close the sale. Does your web content help your company sell today?

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Market-Vantage specializes in Integrated Web Marketing. We help companies develop and implement effective Internet marketing strategies for a positive impact on their business. If you would like to improve your leverage of the Internet for marketing, please call us at 603-888-5600 or use our web inquiry form at <http://www.market-vantage.com/about/inquiry.htm> to request an initial confidential consultation about your specific situation.