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NATURAL SEARCH CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

B2C Client, Retail

Apogee Search's team of experts increased online sales revenue driven by SEO and improved top rankings on highly competitive keywords for a leading nationwide apparel retailer.

Apogee Search
6207 Sheridan Avenue
Suite 200
Austin, Texas 78723
p. 800.984.3041
f. 512.583.4205
www.apogee-search.com

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY



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This is a broad overview of an actual SEO client of Apogee Search. While results for this client are typical, as with any search effort, due to the many variables involved, similar results can be expected although are not guaranteed.

THE SITUATION: A large scale family-owned and operated retail chain, with over 65 national locations, requested Apogee's expertise in paid and natural search advertising to confront significant challenges to their online visibility. Our client hoped to expand their presence in the online market but was faced with challenges across both paid and natural search. The client trusted Apogee Search with their PPC campaign during the busy holiday season in December, 2007. After Apogee improved the success of their event driven PPC campaign, they requested Apogee's knowledge and expertise to improve their natural search engine optimization (SEO) rankings.

CAMPAIGN GOALS:

- Increase online revenue by \$10 million over a two to three year period
- Achieve top natural listings on Google and other major search engines for target keywords
- Improve branding and become the dominant outlet in fashion-specific apparel

THE CHALLENGE: Before August of 2007 our client appeared on the first page of Google for several keywords. Following a website redesign, the site ceased to rank in Google for most of its targeted keywords. As the Apogee team examined the website to determine the source of the problem, we uncovered several other issues, including ineffective keyword optimization and inefficient SEO strategies implemented by a previous SEO firm.

Our client's former SEO firm had placed approximately 400 doorway pages on the client's website in hopes of improving rankings for industry keywords. Doorway pages, also known as gateway pages, are low-quality pages that have been over-optimized for specific keywords. In many cases these pages automatically redirect human visitors to pages that are more likely to result in a website conversion. Search engines frequently penalize sites that use doorway pages to boost their rankings.

PLAN OF ACTION: In order to avoid possible penalties in the future, Apogee recommended that the client remove many of the site's gateway pages and make other adjustments to bring the site in-line with current SEO best practices. After extensive testing, it was revealed that the low rankings were due to Google difficulties in processing the client's website code and not due to a search engine penalty.

Working with the client's team, Apogee recommended several beneficial coding changes that were more compatible with Google's method of reading websites. Apogee also advised the client to replace a lengthy drop-down menu with a hierarchical internal linking system. The new linking system distributed more value to important pages and improved Google's ability to read the content of the site. When the client made these changes, the site's rankings on Google improved dramatically. Apogee also worked with the client's team in creating optimized listings in both Google Local and Google Product Search that subsequently have now materially increased our client's visibility in and traffic from Google's Universal Search.

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Due to Apogee Search's complete SEM campaign management success the client's goals of achieving top natural listings, improving branding, and increasing online sales revenue were achieved.

Industry

- ▶ Apparel Retailer

Challenges

- ▶ A website redesign resulted in a drastic drop in search rankings
- ▶ Past SEO firm placed 400 doorway pages on the client's site which can result in search engine penalties

Solution

- ▶ Replaced drop-down menu with a hierarchical navigation
- ▶ Diagnosed and implemented resolution to the client's website coding issues
- ▶ Created optimized Google Local Search and Google Product Search listings
- ▶ Removed doorway pages

Results

- ▶ Increased online sales revenue driven by SEO by 25%
- ▶ Improved top rankings on highly competitive keywords
- ▶ First page rankings for over half of the targeted keywords

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END RESULT: At the beginning of the campaign our client did not appear within the top 500 Google results for most of their keywords. However, within just a month of Apogee diagnosing the site's coding issue, removing the gateway pages, replacing their drop-down menu, and creating optimized listings in local search, the client's site began to appear on the first two pages of Google search results for many competitive keywords.

After two months the site appeared on the first page of Google results for seventeen of their thirty-five targeted keywords and on the top two pages of Google results for all but six keywords. An analysis of year-to-date net sales for our client's website showed that the site's improved search engine marketing presence corresponded with a 25% increase in SEO keyword-driven revenue from March 2008 to March 2009.

CONTINUED RESULTS: Our client's natural search rankings for targeted keywords continue to rise. Apogee continues to enhance and improve their search engine marketing success by recommending new tactics to increase their web presence through Google's Universal Search, social media networks, and other cutting edge natural and paid search strategies. Our client's successes have been made possible through Apogee's continued support and comprehensive campaign management as well as the cooperation of the client's in-house team.

RESULT STATISTICS:

GOOGLE RANKINGS		
	Start of Campaign Ranking	Sample Month Ranking
Tier 1 Keywords	Jan 2008	Mar 2009
Apparel Item 1	>500	9.3
Apparel Item 2	>500	9.3
Apparel Item 3	>500	1.0
Apparel Item 4	>500	13.7

VISITORS		
	Start of Campaign # of Visitors	Sample Month # of Visitors
Referrers	Jan 2008	Mar 2009
Google	27,991	81,431
Yahoo	17,101	21,629
MSN	8,271	9,643
Total	53,363	112,703

YAHOO! RANKINGS		
	Start of Campaign Ranking	Sample Month Ranking
Tier 1 Keywords	Jan 2008	Mar 2009
Apparel Item 1	>500	3.0
Apparel Item 2	>500	6.6
Apparel Item 3	13.8	4.1
Apparel Item 4	>500	5.8

SALES		
	Start of Campaign # of Sales	Sample Month # of Sales
Referrers	Jan 2008	Mar 2009
Google	524	1,262
Yahoo	247	362
MSN	219	166
Total	990	1,790

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