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MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

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creating web influence: seo & sem

On weighing the benefits of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), commonly known as “organic search” versus Paid Search also known on a broader level as Search Engine Marketing (SEM) it is worth analyzing the two concepts on a fundamental level.

Without doubt SEO is and should be an important aspect of any website. To increase the organic ratings of your site is a significant long-term goal. The confusion arises in the concept of which one should I invest – SEO or SEM?

SEO without some level of SEM to provide research can be severely diminished. SEM provides the much needed feedback that is required to make SEO relevant on an on going basis. Without a sophisticated SEM program, your SEO program is a “best-guess”. In other words, to optimize your site without current and on-going research as to what keywords and phrases are the most popular and what are the emerging preferences to reaching your site and or products (which SEM provides) you are guessing on the keywords and optimizing your site around these guesses. A well executed SEM program constantly test 100's of keywords and keyword phrases, this then is woven into your site content to improve you organic performance, not for just one keyword but for many keywords and phrases that might be rising in popularity.

Secondly, SEM is much more than a Pay-Per-Click (PPC) campaign. A comprehensive SEM campaign, includes, keyword optimization, banner marketing, remarketing, targeting by geography, age, sex and interest. *The potential of a SEM campaign for sales and promotions far exceed the benefits of a stand-alone optimized site.* SEO can be compared to having a store that is well built, easy to find, and has all the right products inside, which is great and people will love it - when they get there.

“But if you want to drive people to your location, increase sales today and market a promotion, then you need SEM - it is no different than your traditional marketing fundamentals.”

So the decision remains, as in any classic marketing scenario, how do I get people to “respond”? The answer requires marketing, incentives and promotions - this is well within the domain of a well-targeted SEM campaign.

In addition, a well-executed well-timed SEM campaign can be used strategically to increase sales and traffic during off-seasons. For example, a well optimized site is much more dependant upon seasonally interest, when people are interested they will deliberately search you out. However, during off-seasons interest is low and few

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are searching for your services, this is where SEM can dramatically increase traffic. By using a contextual based campaign, one targeted to specific groups that have an interest in you services, you can drive people to you site and with the use of tracking numbers and unique landing pages you can create a conversation with an entirely new customer base. By seeking the target out with a well-formulated campaign that utilizes both SEO and SEM you will greatly increase your (as we say at John Manlove Marketing & Communications) - “Web Influence”.

The bottom line:

It is important not to think in terms of SEO versus SEM but rather SEO and SEM. If you are wanting to “increase sales now” with promotions and incentives, then increase your SEM budget. Then use this research accumulated from the SEM program to improve your goodwill and seasonal business over the longer term with a well-executed optimized site that rates well organically.

If you would like to learn more about web marketing campaigns and what they will do to increase your Web Influence, contact us johnmanlove.com or call 281-487-6767.

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