Case Study Pipperloodge.com

Fledgling Blog, Growing pains and the need for

Search Engine Marketing

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Table of Contents

Current State of Affairs

The current state of affairs for the website www.pipperloodge.com is not so positive. After reviewing the website analytics on pipperloodge.com, the findings are that there are some serious issues with the success of the site. The site has very limited traffic with 350 visits total, 336 of those being new visitors. These visitors are bouncing off the site like it is a trampoline at an incredibly high rate of 97%.
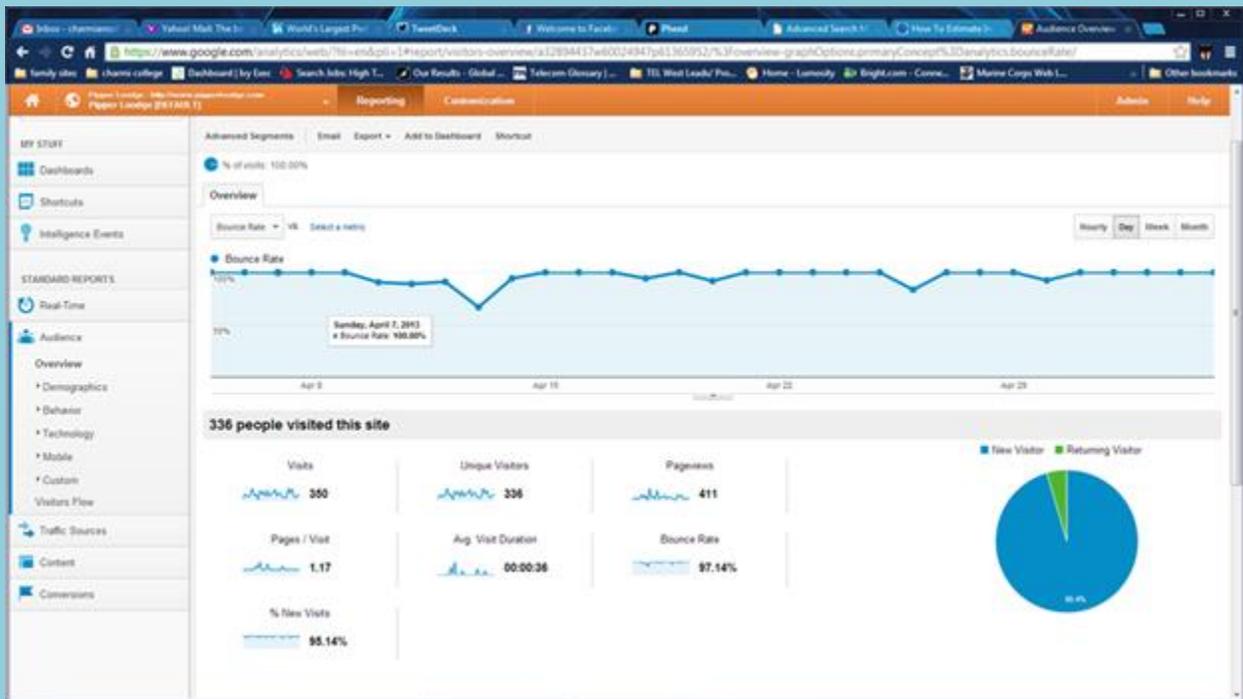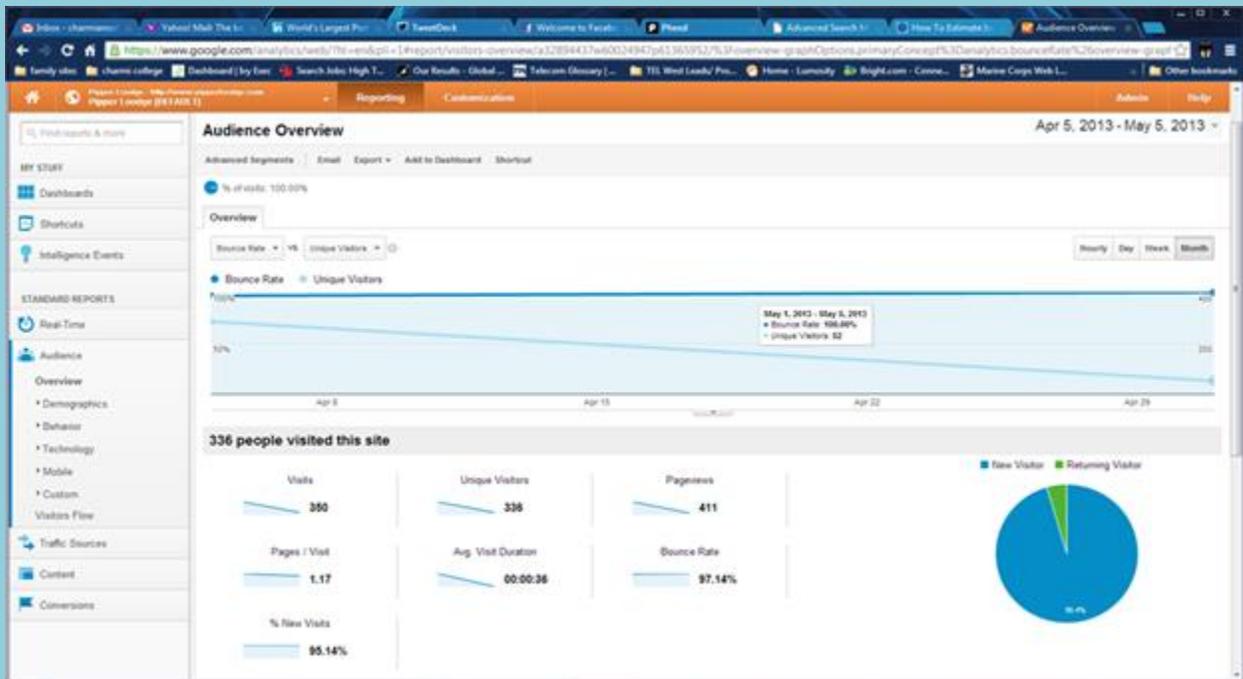
The average duration of the visits is 36 seconds and the visitors are looking at only one page. Venturing a guess that the percent of returning visitors is primarily made up of staff.
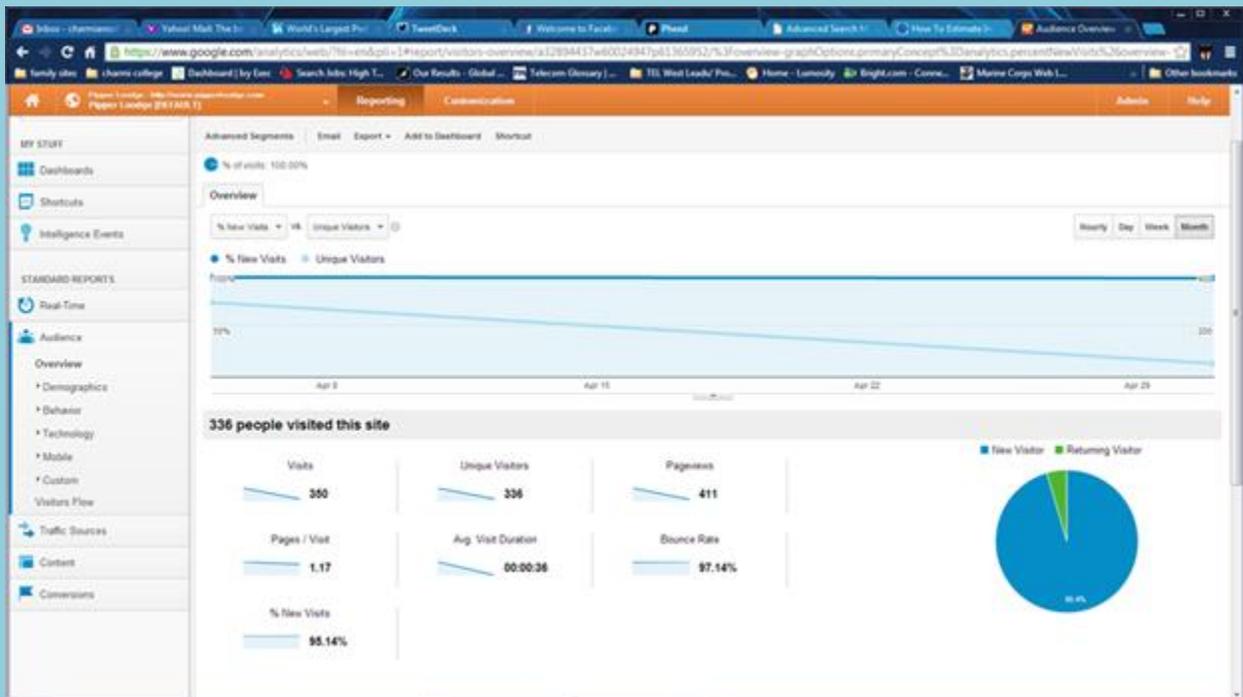
These finding are not at all favorable and signify an overall issue for the future of the website.

It can be hard to stomach, but the glaring truth is that is that www.pipperloodge.com is not doing a good job at bringing people relevant topics, keeping their interest and welcoming the right people to the site. Meaning, the search landing page is not yielding what visitors are looking for when they are brought to the site, so they bounce or exit the site with lightning speed. Www.pipperloodge.com has been severely neglected lately, with no new content; which doesn't help matters. This is partially due to the lack of results causing waning motivation to keep producing and the ever present time constraints of producing constant fresh content.

How do we remedy the situation you ask?

The next section addresses strategies to try and turn things around for poor pipperloodge, or scrap it all together, moving in a different direction.

Strategy Implications the Short and the Long of It

Here are suggestions to remedy this situation:

1)   Rethink the content and make it relevant. People have limited time, revamp the overall message and subject categories of the site.

2)   Tag work appropriately, so that people find what they are looking for and decide to stay and come back to visit again.

3)   Input targeted and appropriate keywords throughout the content of the site, especially post titles, Meta content and URL.

4)   Create link backs to the site, so that when visitors see the work or title on Facebook, Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogher, Stumble Upon etc. They know what they are linking back to, and are interested in the content and the subjects of the site.

5)   The most popular posts are recipes and Internet Marketing. I suggest that we diverge and concentrate efforts in a more productive and professional focused area such as Sales and Marketing.

6)   Considering moving the site to a free or practically free blogger server, to lower the overhead and make the blog more personal for friends and family. This would also allow for the ability to have full administrative power over the site, updating and experimenting with plugins, without being charged if this causes the site to crash.

There are several next steps that are now in the beginning brainstorming stages after discussion and further research. Revamping elements on the site and creating more than

one landing page on the website would be a beneficial focus for now. Defining a clearer call to action. Currently, the only one is to enter your email if you would like to subscribe to the website and social follow and share buttons. Shortening the rolling blog page to contain only the last four posts will clean up the look of the site. The addition of bolded headers and bullet points calling out pertinent information on posts will make it more appealing. Eventually, revamping the website layout for easier navigation will be a priority. Next, the format of posts could be more appealing and readable on mobile devices.

In terms of starting a new website, the following list was created by Clayton Dean, who seems to be right on target. Following these steps will get anyone interested in starting a website and blog endeavor on the right track.

Conduct business analysis

Identify target audience

Clearly define goals of website

Keyword research

Keyword mapping

On-page SEO

Write website copy

Implement conversion elements

Tweak design elements

Search Marketing Opportunities

At this time, the greatest needs include optimization of both organic and potentially paid search efforts, in order to drive more traffic to the site, and to maintain the site activity in terms of duration on site, site visit frequency and page views. Organically, we, alone cannot stop the bleeding and may need to formulate a budget for paid advertising on social sites.

Resources: Lacking a huge budget, but enough to begin paid ads on social for at least 9 months, should produce significant ROI. Utilizing any profit that accumulated thus far along a portion of our operating capital will go toward business expenses and marketing. Our administrative member will act as the liaison between the board of pipperloodge and any outside contractors or vendor services utilized. The remainder of staff will continue to work as usual producing content, curating, searching, learning and handling all social media accounts.

Expectations: A significant jump in organic search rankings and top 5 in SERP as a result of paid search is the goal. A 50% conversion rate increase in the form of visitors to subscribers, followers, shares and engagement on social. A significant increase in traffic to the site, with high recency, longer duration on site and overall more page views is an expected outcome as well.

Scope of Work:

SEO:

Investigate, create, test keywords, link backs, and more prominent organic search rankings.

No matter how great your content is, it is meaningless if no one can find it! I think Bill Slawski's comment to the Smashing Magazine post is very insightful:

"An SEO adds value to what you create by making sure that it is presented within the framework of the web in a way which makes it more likely that it will reach the people that you want it seen by, when they are looking for it."

Web Analytics:

Collect and analyze web traffic reports. This data will then be compared against key performance indicators in order to help improve our website's effectiveness or a marketing campaign's audience response and which marketing channels are the most effective and inform content creation and distribution.

Design / Landing Page Design:

Being that the most effective online conversion campaigns start with a well-designed website, testing various aspects to improve the site flow and design are essential. Identify and analyze the most effective keywords and design several strategically, crafted landing pages.

Paid Search:

Monitor the changes that affect search marketing campaigns and modify tactics accordingly. Manage across paid search platforms such as Google AdWords and MSN AdCenter to optimize our return on investment (ROI).

In-house:

Continue to produce the content of blog posts in a variety of formats. In charge of all Online Reputation Management-all social media interactions, Facebook posts, tweets, instagram photos, videos, comments, and all creative resources.

Case Studies

The case studies I chose to highlight here are fledgling experimenters with Search Engine Marketing, each experienced amazing results. I found these studies beneficial for various reasons as they show you the power of effective, well-thought out and executed Search Engine Marketing.

MarinSoftware

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.sempo.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/case_centurynovelty.pdf

The scenario in this case study deals with Century Novelty, one of the first companies to utilize search engine marketing. The summation is as follows:

> *"Growing its paid search spend 50% a year on average since it began its SEM program, the company has grown overall revenues by 20% a year, every year. But Century Novelty soon realized its paid search program, which today encompasses more than 45,000 keywords, was becoming too large and complex to manage, measure, and optimize with the tools it had been using for the past few years. Century Novelty needed a sophisticated paid search management application that would enable it to accelerate the growth of search-driven revenues, while at the same time continuing to optimize its current SEM program."*

The solution for Century Novelty was to use the software Marin Search Marketer. Key software programs and an effective team to manage it or just answer your in house team's questions is paramount to the success of these programs.

"Marin Search Marketer has delivered impressive results to Century Novelty. Due to streamlined bidding across all three publishers, optimized bidding based on granular and true-cost ROI goals, automated reporting and analytics, and increased visibility into campaign effectiveness."

Using this software program, Century Novelty was able to:

• Decreased spending on paid search by 62%

• Increased company-wide revenues by 20%

• Increased overall conversions from paid search by 11%

• Decreased CPA by 38%

• Spends 25% less time on managing its paid search program

This case study illustrates the effectiveness of software programs in Search Engine Marketing. This can be an essential component of SEM, especially with very large companies dependent on website sales.

Reseo

http://www.reseo.com/Online-Marketing/SEM-Case-Studies.html

This is the second case study I chose to review because it dealt with the ability to use SEM to optimize Google AdWords accounts. We are all familiar with Google AdWords and I

found the results very interesting. Reseo claims: *"We've been able to cap or cut costs, and increase click-throughs using our 5 years experience managing Google AdWords SEM accounts."*

Reseo took over a Google AdWords SEM campaign from one of our clients and set about improving its ROI. The principle aim was to cap click spend to a level of $1000 per month, increase the Click Through Rate (CTR) and reduce the average Cost Per Click (CPC).

The first chart shows how we more than quadrupled Click Through Rates (CTR) from 1% to nearly 5%.

We have halved the campaign Cost Per Click (CPC) from $0.60c per click to $0.30c per click. In the same period we have almost doubled the amount of clicks the customer receives to the Web site from around 1,700 clicks in April to nearly 3,000 clicks in September 2007.
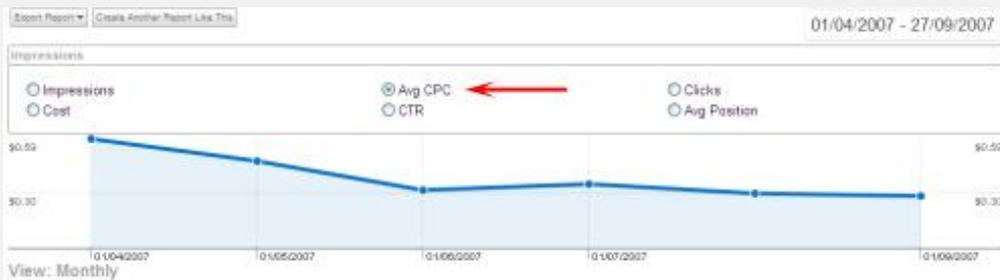
Conversion rate has also improved over time.

We have managed costs (monthly budget) to average less than $1,000 per month as per the client Brief.

Now, they didn't give away any of their secrets in this study, but I surmise this is a result of effective keywords and negative keywords. They also must have set their bid rate to position them in to be the second, third or fourth choice to cut the PPC costs.

Webmarketing123.com

http://www.slideshare.net/onlinemarketingsummit/case-study-how-sem-increased-direct-sales-and-web-traffic-in-a-crowded-market-paul-taylor

I really liked this case study done by Webmarketing123.com. They boosted Clarisonic's organic search results by almost 50 %. By following their 5 pillars of success, they increased the conversion rate over 200% resulting in 155% increase in sales! These are truly exceptional results. Please see the slides below which highlight the 5 pillars of a successful SEO campaign. I think these can be followed by almost any type of web-based business.

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The 5 Pillars
#3B Meta Content – Description

Place keywords in description of page.
Maximum number of characters is 150.

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The 5 Pillars - #4 Keywords in URL

Where we placed keyword in Clarisonic's URLs

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The 5 Pillars - #5 Inbound Links

Other related websites pointing to Clarisonic's pages.

Blog/Target Demographic Link -
http://www.tothemotherhood.com/
Non-Profit Sponsorship Campaign -
http://www.totalbeauty.com/blogger_bca_campaign_page
Geospecific Internet Directory-
http://www.seattle24x7.com/dir.htm
Company who endorses our product -
http://www.laser-skincare.com/
National Shopping Directory Listing -
http://www.ambradirectory.com/Shopping/
A Fashion Blogger -
http://www.thefashionablehousewife.com/12/2009/clarisonic-mia-sonic-skin-cleansing-system/

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Pay Per Click Campaign

High Level Summary

- Managed 10,000 paid keywords
- Increased conversion volume by 268%
- Decreased cost per sale by 65%

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SEO Results after 6 months

Organic Traffic
Branded – Q4 2009 vs Q1 2010
- Up 42.67%
Non-branded – Q4 2009 vs Q1 2010
- Up 42.46%

Sales from Organic Search
Q4 2008 vs Q4 2009 - Increase
- 157% sales increase
- 13% average value per sale increase

Q1 2009 vs Q1 2010 - Increase
- 268% sales increase
- 11% average value per sale increase

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PPC Results after 6 months

- Q4 2008 vs 2009
  80% increase in $ sales
  7% increase in average value per sale
- Q1 2009 vs 2010
  155% increase in $ sales
  9% increase in average value per sale

Conversions & Cost per conversion
Q4 2008 & Q4 2009
202% increase in conversions. Reduced cost per conversion by 23%

Q1 2009 & Q1 2010
365% increase in conversion. Reduced cost per conversion by 25%

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They had absolutely amazing results by making only a few significant changes. This case study beautifully illustrates the power of search engine marketing for a product based business.

Conclusion

Implementing SEM, in particular SEO and analytics can make all the difference in a website, blog and business success. This optimization can be so powerful and yield such vivid results! In concert with relevant, optimized content and community engagement can make or break a business and website based business.

The more connected we all become on the web, the greater opportunity we have to share our thoughts, on this platform. When sharing our "voice," we must be certain of the persona we want to show the world.

For a business to be successful on the web, they need to show a human side, be transparent and authentic to gain trust and loyal followers. Business owners and personnel can be kind and generous, thoughtful and humorous within the confines of a professional, business –oriented framework. A clear, concise message is needed. A targeted customer segment, direction, goals and keywords in place before you even start. And of course, test, test and then test some more!

Experimenting with content format can be very rewarding. Try creating a video or two, or even the ever popular infographic. Perhaps an e-book will develop as time goes on? Findings show us that no one needs to be an expert, rather have a great ability to compile information into an easily digestible format.

It does make you wonder about the quality of the information being offered out there on the web. However, bearing in mind the five R's, of content, unless you are Relevant, Reachable, Reputable, Readable and Remarkable, you will not be successful and your voice may fade before the fat lady ever sings!