

Case Study

January 2008

Community Group Benefits from SEM

Organization Profile

This organization is a community group in a small California town tracking local politics, government finance and general issues of interest to all residents. It's members are very active in a variety of issues like education funding, development and public transit. As a grassroots group, they have a very small budget for online marketing and pay-per-click programs.



Situation

The group has a website presence and had been running ad campaigns on Google. The web site was built from a template, and had the customary Home, About Us, FAQ, Contact Us landing pages. Several of the landing pages had very little text or information on them. The web copy had never been search-engine optimized, and the web site was not appearing in the first page of organic search results on Google as the organization believed it should. Their Google pay-per-click campaign had one ad group with a mix of ads for the different issues of interest that the group follows—education, transit, etc. The web site hosting service provides only minimal information about visitors and content, and no long-term tracking of traffic.

Solution

The first thing we did was re-structure the web site around the different local issues, creating themes. We changed the "About Us" landing page to "Education" and so on. We re-wrote and added new web copy that included keywords and phrases that visitors were using to find their site, as revealed by past PPC campaigns, and we also added new keywords. Several members of the group had written letters or articles that fit to the different themes of the new website but had not been added to the website, so we gathered up those contributions from the different files and e-mails of the members, and converted them to links on the website that could be indexed by the search engines. We then split their Google ad groups into separate groups, each one matching one of the themes on the website for each issue. We re-used some of their existing Text Ads and wrote some new ads with new phrasing, and linked each ad group to the individual landing page on the website. For example, all ads in the 'education' ad group link to the 'education' landing page on the web site. In some instances, we linked ads to specific locations within individual web pages, to allow for highly targeted ads leading to very specific content. We also created theme-based keyword clusters and assigned them to each ad group. To improve tracking of website visitors, we implemented Google Analytics to the website, and submitted a sitemap to Google via Google Webmaster Tools. Under Google Analytics, we set up individual goals to track visitor downloads of key position papers and documents, to give the group visibility into the hottest issues.

Benefits

This community group realized a decrease in their monthly PPC spending, and a lower cost-per-click due to optimization of the web copy, and tying the ad groups, text ads and keyword clusters directly to theme-based landing pages. Individual landing pages on the group's website have started appearing on the first page in the organic search results, and visitor time spent on the website has increased. The group is now able to monitor which articles and position papers hold the greatest interest for their visitors and they have started developing more content in the same style and with the same themes.

Products and Services Used

Google Ad Words

Google Webmaster Tools

Google Analytics

Highlights

- Search engine optimization improved the website's placement in organic search results.
- Improvements to the client's pay-per-click campaign resulted in lower advertising costs and lower cost-per-click.