

Search Engine Marketing Case Study #1: Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Where do your website visitors come from? If you don't analyze this information in detail, you're missing out on a lot that the Internet has to offer your business. In order to take full advantage of Internet marketing, you first need to know exactly where your traffic comes from so that you can focus your attention in the right spots. Blue Corona measures and tracks all aspects of our clients' websites. In this case study we examine and pull data from Drinkmore Water's (DMW) website. Figure 19, shows the breakdown of traffic sources from July 1, 2006 to September 30, 2008.

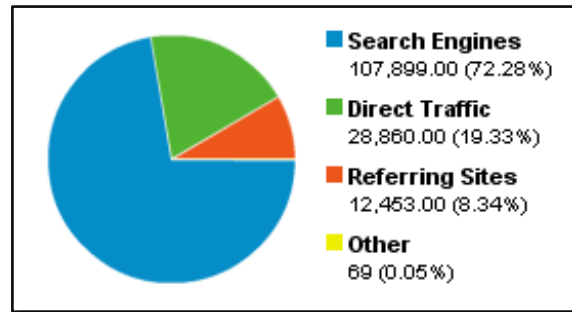
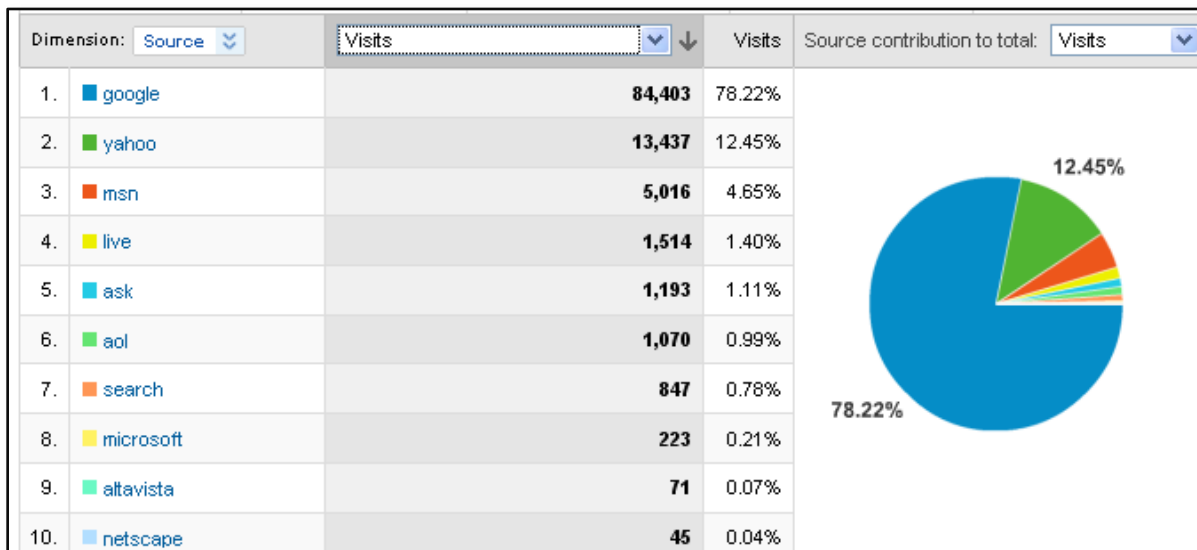


Figure 19: DrinkMore's sources of traffic, July 1, 2006 – Sept. 30, 2008

Figure 20: DrinkMore's sources of traffic, July 1, 2006 – Sept. 30, 2008

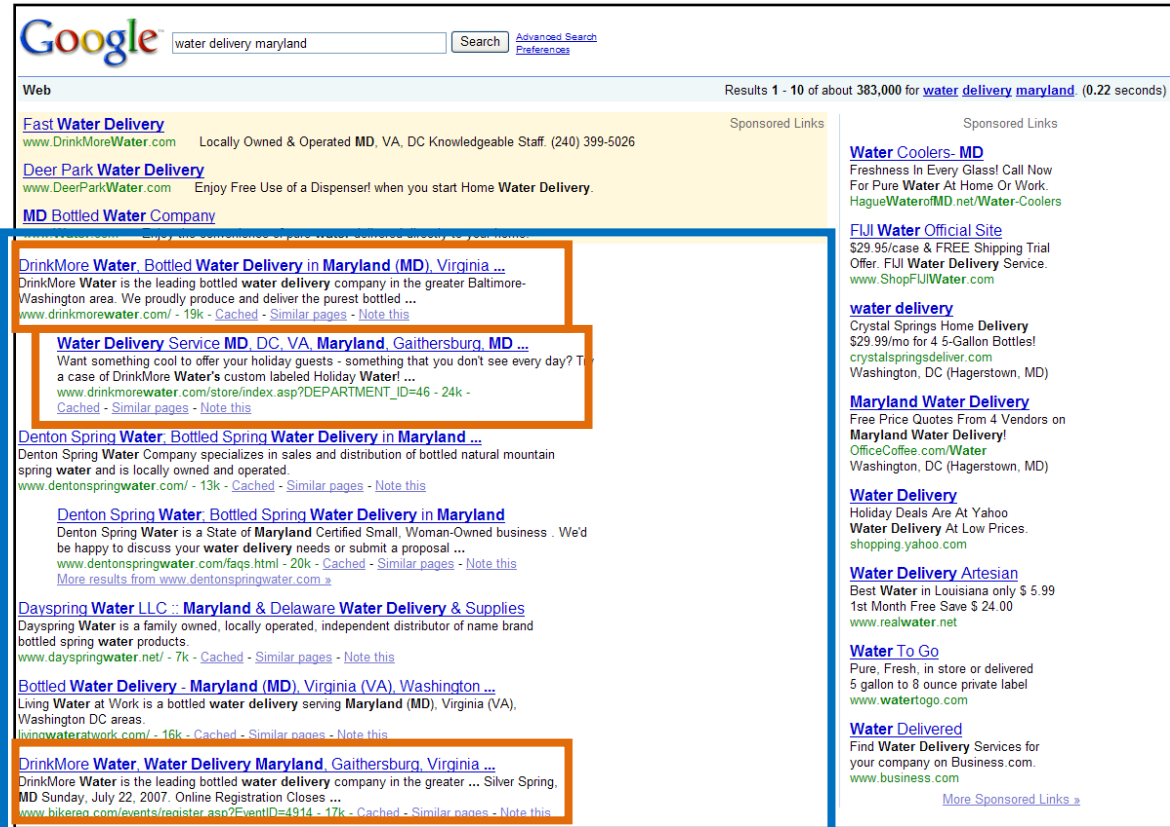


As you can see, 72% of DMW's web traffic comes from search engines (like Google, Yahoo and MSN, and 78% of that search engine traffic is from Google (see Figure 20).

Seeing that search engines drive web traffic raises the obvious question – how can I improve my website's visibility on them? There are two ways to do it: Paid Search Marketing and Search Engine Optimization or SEO. When people refer to SEO, they are talking about the free or organic listings on the results page of a search engine, which are not the listings that DMW has to pay for each time someone clicks the link. While you don't actually pay for these clicks, they can't really be considered "free." Somebody – whether you, your staff or an SEO firm like Blue Corona – has to spend a considerable

amount of time performing sometimes complex processes in order to influence your company’s organic listings in a positive direction. There are too many strategies to detail here, but basic actions include: optimizing website code to be more easily read by the search engines, optimizing content around specific keywords or phrases, building cross links and in-bound pointing links that increase page rank, adding your company to local directory sites and submitting your site map to various engines, and so on.

Figure 21: Organic listings on Google’s search engine results page



In theory, a high organic rank means that you’ve established your company or website as the most relevant and popular for given keyword(s) – or as an authority. The listings in the blue box in Figure 21 are these organic listings, and DMW’s organic listings are found in the orange boxes (for the searched term “water delivery maryland” – one of DMW’s most profitable keywords).

You’ll notice that DMW has top of the page visibility in the organic search results and multiple other listings (2). We didn’t get three listings and the top spots by accident. Blue Corona took a strategic approach which, over time, moved DMW onto the first page of the Google search results, then high up on the page and then finally we added multiple listings. Overall, it took years to establish the results seen in Figure 21, but the impact on business has been nothing short of spectacular!

Figure 22:

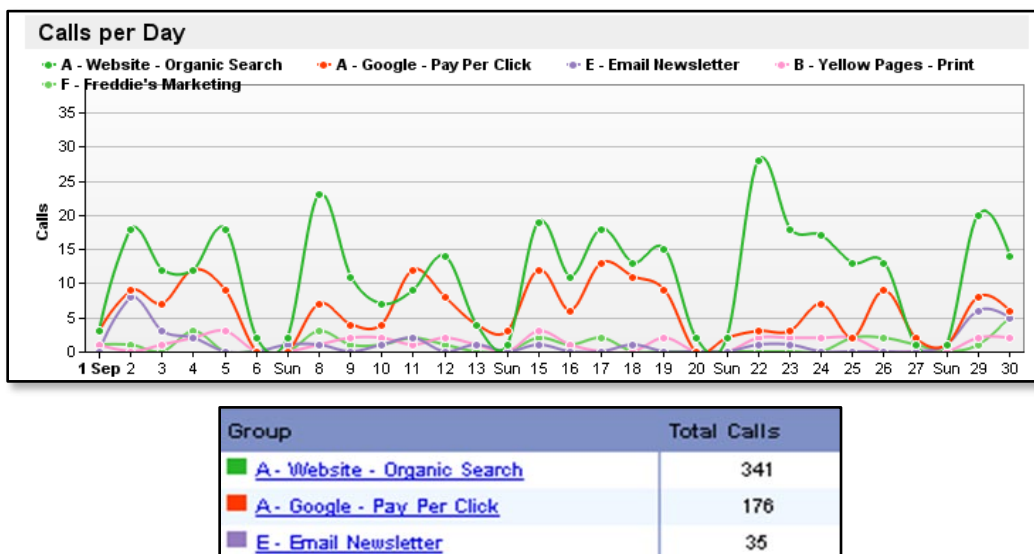
DrinkMore website's visits from organic search engine results, July 1, 2006 – Sept. 30, 2008



The beauty of all of this hard work is that it will be very difficult for DMW to lose its high ranking listings. SEO has been DMW's #1 source of leads and new business for years. Since engagement with DMW, Blue Corona increased DMW's organic traffic from 700 visits per month in 2006 to almost 4,000 visits in 2008 (see Figure 22).

Not only has SEO driven visits to the website, but it is also the top source of DMW's phone calls (see Figure 23 for September 2008 data). Just think how many less phone calls DMW would be getting per day if it didn't have such a strong Internet presence.

Figure 23: Top sources of DrinkMore's phone calls, Sept. 1 – 30, 2008



But, there is more to Search Engine Marketing than SEO. Instead of thinking about the Google results page as organic listings and paid ads, think of it as a virtual Monopoly board – where the more properties (listings) you have, the more visitors (and leads and sales) you will receive. SEO is great because you are not limited to the number of properties you can have, but it takes time – a lot of time – and if you are local company, you may never out rank some of your national competitors for coveted phrases. You could make it a goal to out-rank them for something more specific phrases that include a location, though. Fully maximizing search engine performance requires Paid Search Marketing such as Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising (see the next case study in this series on Paid Search Marketing).