

COMPETITIVE DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION SEEKS ONLINE VISIBILITY AND AUDIENCE TARGETING

CLIENT: VISIT BALTIMORE

AN ONLINE BALTIMORE FOCUS

Visit Baltimore is the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for Baltimore. Every year, more than 11 million tourists – spending over \$2.8 billion annually – visit Baltimore, a city not commonly considered a top-tier tourism destination. Visit Baltimore attracts and informs potential visitors through its main website www.baltimore.org.

LITTLE TO NO ONLINE VISIBILITY

The Visit Baltimore website had been recently launched and it had little to no online visibility and rankings in major search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN.

A CHALLENGER IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE TOURISM REGION

Visit Baltimore also needed to target a large and diverse audience, but wanted to limit advertising to only the surrounding states. With a more modest marketing budget than major competing top-tier cities such as Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York City, Visit Baltimore faced limitations on how well it could compete for available ad placements and pay-per-click (PPC) search engine ads, both essential components in an effort to increase online visibility and rankings.

AN INTEGRATED SOLUTION

Web Ad.vantage adopted a “Challenger Brand” approach for Visit Baltimore, that is to say that Visit Baltimore would be positioned as the innovative aggressor in the market. We recommended a tightly integrated online marketing plan for the city’s main and event websites, which seamlessly combined search marketing and online media advertising tactics including:



Baltimore
Get in on it.



KEY FACTS

- **Client:** Baltimore Area Convention & Visitors Association (Visit Baltimore)
- **Case Study Services:** PPC, SEO, Online Media Planning & Buying, SMO
- **Project Goal:** Increased online visibility and target audience reach

“Web Ad.vantage’s approach has fortified Baltimore’s position across the entire search landscape. They continue to make enhancements to all of our programs. Beyond search, they have become an invaluable partner in realizing success in both paid media placements and social media outreach.”

Tom Rowe,
Online Marketing Manager
Visit Baltimore

- Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising
- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Online media planning and buying
- Social media optimization (SMO)

First, PPC text ads provided Visit Baltimore with immediate search engine visibility. Next, using overlapping targeted keywords, Web Ad.vantage optimized pages of the www.baltimore.org website to build organic search engine rankings. To target specific niche audiences within search, Web Ad.vantage recommended its Content Advantage service in which it worked closely with Visit Baltimore to develop original articles that included targeted keywords and content that would appeal to specific readers. The articles were distributed to select publishers who posted the content on their sites and provided links back to the Visit Baltimore website, helping to raise search engine rankings.

In addition, as opposed to standard ad network media buys that had been mostly unsuccessful, Web Ad.vantage proposed handpicking websites for Visit Baltimore's online media plan allowing Visit Baltimore to precisely target desired audiences.

SUCCESS IN NUMBERS!

Visit Baltimore's integrated online marketing program achieved:

- A 68% increase in search engine referrals from 2006 – 2007
- 31 #1 position rankings, 60 Top 5 rankings, and 76 Top 10 (Page One) rankings of Visit Baltimore keywords on the first pages of all major search engines
- When the average is six – nine months for ranking improvements to appear, within two months Visit Baltimore received a #1 ranking in Google for a brand new targeted keyword and website page.
- PPC click-thru rates of 6.0% against an industry average of 1 – 3% and lower than average costs-per-click with no compromise of campaign performance
- More than 23,000 visits to the Baltimore.org site, up 570% over 2005, directly attributable to niche online media buys

