

BALTIMORE AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS ASSOCIATION (BACVA)

CASE STUDY: INTEGRATED ONLINE MARKETING PLAN TO INCREASE WEBSITE VISIBILITY & TRAFFIC

SITUATION

The Baltimore Area Convention & Visitors Association (BACVA) is the official destination development and marketing leader for the greater Baltimore area. Every year, more than 11 million tourists – spending over \$2.8 billion annually – visit Baltimore. BACVA attracts and informs potential visitors through its main website www.baltimore.org.

CHALLENGES

The BACVA 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. BACVA 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 cities such as Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York City, BACVA faced limitations on how well it could compete for available ad placements and pay-per-click (PPC) keyword sponsored links, both essential components in an effort to increase online visibility and rankings.



"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
BACVA



SOLUTIONS

Web Ad.vantage recommended an integrated online marketing plan for BACVA's main and event websites, which seamlessly combined search marketing and online media advertising tactics including:

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

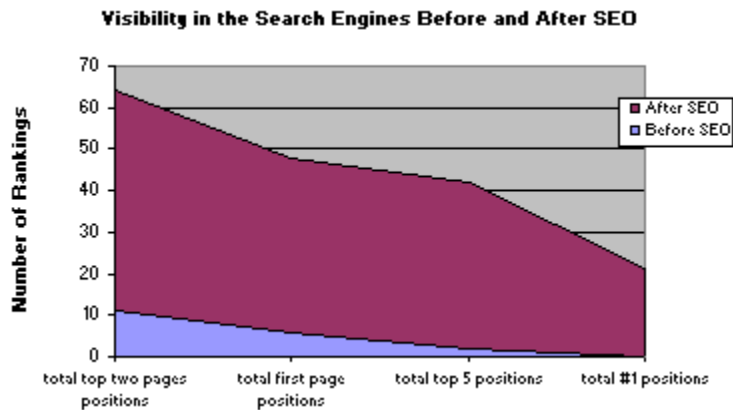
First, PPC text ads provided BACVA with immediate search engine visibility. Next, using overlapping targeted keywords, Web Ad.vantage optimized pages of the www.baltimore.org website to build organic search engine rankings. To target specific niche audiences within search, Web Ad.vantage recommended its Content Advantage service in which it worked closely with BACVA 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 BACVA 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 BACVA's online media plan allowing BACVA to precisely target desired audiences.

RESULTS

BACVA'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 BACVA 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 BACVA 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