

Search Engine Marketing Case Study: Danner & LaCrosse Footwear

Overview

Danner, Inc and sister company LaCrosse Footwear, Inc. make high quality, rugged, durable footwear used in several industrial and recreational applications including hiking boots and walking shoes to work boots and police & military uniform boots. Both brands had launched web sites with e-commerce functionality. However, neither brand had prioritized online selling when launching the new sites, nor had either brand engaged in online marketing to support the web sites. The web sites' original goals were to position and support their respective brands, provide detailed product information, and drive more sales to their dealer channel. In early 2004, both brands had updated their corporate strategies to increase efforts in marketing/selling their products directly to consumers online, and search engine marketing was identified as a cost-effective strategy and a key element to the online marketing mix.

Objective

New sales goals had heightened the focus with a proposed 35% increase in online sales for Danner, and an 80% increase in online sales for LaCrosse. The goals for the search engine marketing effort were:

- Improve search engine rankings & targeted traffic to the site
- Generate sales and positive search engine marketing ROI
- Increase awareness with target audiences

Challenges

The original sites were not designed with an online-selling focus, nor were they designed with search engine optimization in mind, and they both posed a number of technical challenges to optimization. Also, keyword research revealed that optimization would be complex and detailed because both sites feature a diverse array of product lines which each calling for their own specific keyword optimization strategy. For instance, construction workers search for *steel toe boots with a non-slip sole* whereas hunters look for *specific types of camouflage* and military look for *specific Danner brand names*. Additionally, the online footwear market is extremely competitive, especially in search engines, and improved rankings would require detailed execution across the Web team.

Strategy

Amplify Interactive recommended several key technical & programming changes, which would 'open up' each site's content & make it visible to search engines. Furthermore, a disciplined content optimization strategy was employed across each site's product categories that catered to each unique market's search preferences. In addition, resource content (bootmaker's workshop) was developed and optimized to reach potential customers at different stages in the product cycle, and community content (dispatches from soldiers, your adventures) was developed to differentiate Danner and LaCrosse from each other and the competition. Once the site was optimized, it was promoted to search engines and a link campaign was developed to generate qualified traffic to the site and improve search engine rankings.

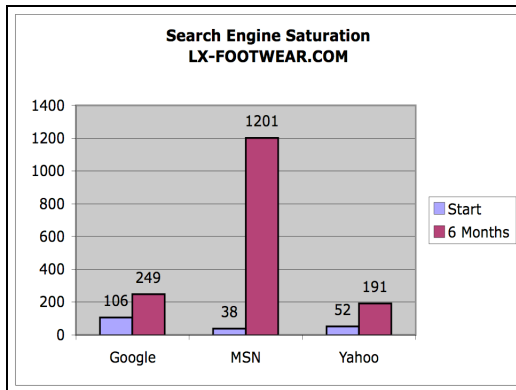
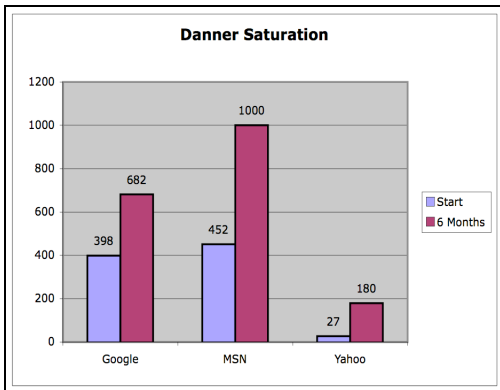
Danner & Lacrosse Footwear - Results

Outcome

Danner and LaCrosse were pleased with the results of their search marketing campaign, and have been able to meet their sales goals. Future search engine marketing efforts are planned.

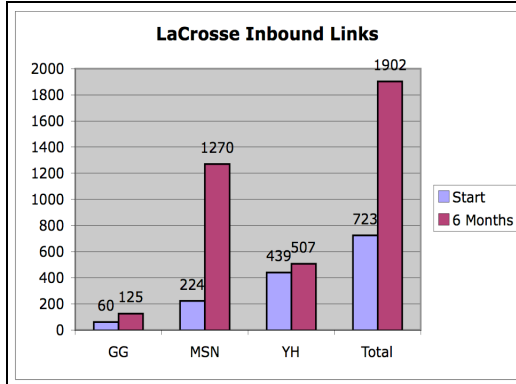
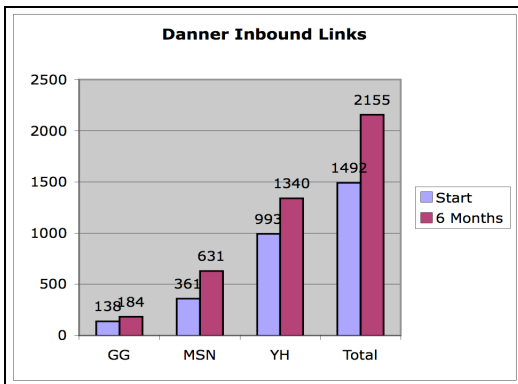
Search Engine Saturation

A measure of how many pages from a Web site that a search engine can 'see'. Improving saturation means that a search engine has more of your content to use in search results.



Inbound Links

Links are one of the best methods for measuring online awareness and overall visibility. Links from relevant sites are seen as "votes" for a site by search engines, and factor into rankings.



Search Engine Rankings & Search Engine Traffic

Danner and LaCrosse achieved a significant increase in search engine rankings and traffic from search engines. The graphs below represent a cross-section of keywords from each site.

- Danner: Traffic from search engines increased by nearly 175%, overall visitor sessions increased by 158%
- LaCrosse: Traffic from search engines increased by nearly 130%, overall visitor sessions increased by about 184%
- Both sites exceeded their online sales goals for fiscal year 2004/2005, sales growth continues at a measured pace as new products and content are added.

