



CPA Case Study: Internet-Driven Marketing Saves Time and Boosts Conversion Rates

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In 1990, when Sharon Vik first opened her public accounting practice, no one knew the meaning of the word "Internet." All marketing was performed in person, over the telephone or via direct mail. It was time consuming, expensive and difficult to keep up with. My, how times have changed!

In her earliest marketing experiences, Sharon was attending networking events, Chamber of Commerce meetings, seminars and the like. While effective, in-person marketing had its drawbacks, especially for a then one-person firm. Even after adding her daughter to the staff, marketing was a struggle.

"We were spread too thin. We were attending too many meetings and answering random questions from people who may or may not purchase our services," Sharon remembers. It was time for a change.

An Eye Toward the Future

Because the initial website Sharon used was not professionally written or optimized, it didn't bear much fruit. Sharon decided to develop a website that would take over the majority of her marketing duties. If all went well, the new site would free her up to engage in other business pursuits.

In addition, Sharon was hoping to gain in search engine rankings which would ultimately drive qualified traffic to the new site.

Search Engine Optimization

To prime the site's pages for the search engines and Sharon's visitors, we began with strategic keyword research. Because we were working with a geographically tight locale, we took measures to ensure the search terms were the most popular for Sharon's location.

Once keyphrases had been decided upon, copywriting came next. The text not only highlighted Sharon's services, but also allowed the visitors to see the end results of working with Sharon's firm. In addition, the copy was optimized for the engines in order to help boost the rank of each page.

Lastly, title, META, image tags and other coding were written for two purposes. The title and description immediately enticed prospective clients to click through to Sharon's site. The image and other tags helped enlighten the engines about the topic of each page.

A Wish List Fulfilled

What previously took numerous hours now takes half that amount of time as Sharon shares in a story that took place several months ago. "A small business client called on Wednesday requesting multiple-year audits to be completed under a tight deadline. After speaking for just 10

minutes, the client asked if we could arrange to meet him in one hour for an in-person meeting. At the end of the meeting, this client agreed to our services/fee proposal and requested an engagement letter. Time to close was a mere 1.5 hours. Expectation of ongoing work is high."

A one-time instance? No. Sharon reports that most clients that have been to her site seem to know what services they want when inquiring. Before the website launch, prospects would phone and have to ask how Sharon could help them. Sharon was comfortable about discussing processes and numbers, but not necessarily the benefits clients would gain. The website gives concrete examples of what prospects can get from working with Sharon's firm.

The Results

Just because a process is smooth and timely, doesn't always make it profitable. In this case, however, the numbers clearly support Sharon's excitement. Sharon has recouped three times the amount of her initial outlay for the site. That's a success by anybody's standards.

Conclusion

Has Sharon ever gone back to another meeting? Yes, she and her daughter (who has worked with her since 2005) still attend meetings and participate in networking events from time to time. But these days they reserve those occasions for times when they are featured speakers or the topic is of particular interest. The heavy-duty marketing is left to their website which has proven its worth time and time again.