

## 24 Case Studies in SEO and PPC

Although SEO and PPC are billion-dollar industries, there is practically no information about or examples of their successful implementation. To remedy this, we present 25 case studies about real companies that have successfully utilized one or both of these technologies. Either our trusted partners or we implemented these solutions. In many cases, we include results, costs, and ROI.

To protect our clients, we made our case studies anonymous. If we write that the company sells violins, then the company actually sells harpsichords, a similar product. We've also changed names of cities and states.

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## Case Study: Changing the Title Tag for a Global Toy Maker

The company is a global manufacturer of children's products whose brand is the most widely recognized in its industry.

### *Situation*

The site is dynamically generated with a large product database serving thousands of product pages as well as a large content-based section with articles and activities for site visitors. We were contracted to increase search engine placements and search engine traffic with a focus on Google.

### *Recommendations*

Our recommendations focused on site -wide architectural changes as well as SEO of key pages throughout the site.

One important site-wide recommendation had a strong effect on search engine placements as well as the way that pages were displayed in the search results pages at Google. The database used by the site's dynamic architecture implemented a template page title that was used on thousands of site pages. It used the following standard title on all pages: <title>Welcome to Company Name!</title>.

We developed a system for customizing page titles so that they included important keyword phrases. The page titles went from a standard welcome message to actually describing what the page was about – exactly what a page title should do. These changes were made on thousands of product and content pages.

### *Results*

Once the new page titles were in place, we made sure the pages were implemented correctly and the revised pages were indexed by major engines such as Google.

The manner in which pages were displayed at Google improved significantly, which made them much more inviting to click. For example, upon searching for a specific company product, the search results now included the product name in the link text.

The title changes along with other best practices SEO on this large site yielded amazing results. The number of visitors to the site coming from Google increased from 76,000 in June 2003 to 227,478 in December, just six months later. After an additional year of ongoing SEO efforts, visits from Google in December 2004 were nearly 400,000.

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## Case Study: Law Office

The client is a single-practitioner law firm with 17 years of practice in a large city. The attorney practices federal law and his clients can therefore be anywhere in the USA.

### *Situation*

The attorney needed to reposition his law firm and to get more clients on the national and international market. He also wanted to concentrate on wealthier clients. Furthermore, he also wanted to improve service by moving to a digital office with online processing and filing of legal documents.

His existing website was based on outdated web standards from the 1990s. In fact, his website was essentially a web-based brochure. We threw it all out and started from scratch.

### *Recommendations*

We worked with the attorney to develop his UVP, TA, and pricing model. With the UVP and TA in place, we wrote the specs for the graphics designer to build the look of the website.

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## Case Study: Law Office (cont.)

We create a landing page in both English and Spanish to qualify the leads. This was tied to a CRM solution that fed the leads into a database, where paralegals could process them. 50% of his clientele is Spanish-speaking professionals from South America, so we created a parallel website in Spanish. We also used Google AdWords to advertise into the South American market with keywords and ads in Spanish.

The new website also emphasized his years of experience, his advanced certification and credentials, and featured testimonials from leading clients. The overall look and feel assured clients that they were hiring a professional and an expert.

### *Results*

His leads climbed from two per month to 69 per month (483 leads for the last seven months) at \$21.13 cost per lead. Because he trained as a lawyer, not a salesman, we also worked with him to improve his lead closing. In one year, he doubled his revenues. He is currently #1 in Google for his area of specialization in the law.

Previously, his client base was walk-ins and local referrals. Now, his clients are doctors, engineers, and other highly-educated professionals in every part of the USA, South America, Europe, and Asia. By targeting the type of clients he wanted, he was able to upgrade his client base.

In Spring 2005, the attorney read about blogs and wanted one. We installed and configured a professional blog tool, which he now uses daily. He uses his Blackberry to add to the blog. After meetings with Washington officials, he'll blog about the meeting in the taxi on the way to the airport. The blog entry appears within minutes. A few hours later, the item has been indexed and is available on Google. Recently he was the first attorney in the USA to win a new type of legal proceeding; he posted that to the blog and within an hour, had new clients.

He uses the web, PPC, CRM, and an entirely wireless office. In his legal field, there are 9,000 attorneys and he is considered the leading expert on the use of technology for a legal practice.

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## Case Study: Medical Devices

The company was a second-tier player in the medical devices industry. For two years, the company paid a PPC company to manage their Adwords and Overture. That produced 500 clicks per month. They felt that they could do better.

### *Recommendations*

Their existing campaign had 47 keywords -- yet the company sold 40,000 different items. We suggested that they expand their keywords to include all of those items.

80% of the company's clients were in Asia, yet the PPC was entirely in English. We recommended that they initiate campaigns in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. Since they also had clients in Europe, we recommended German, French, and Spanish campaigns as well.

### *Results*

We took over the account in late September and added 70,000 keywords. Within a week, the clicks went from 500 to 3,000 clicks. In the next month, the company had 12,947 clicks. The entire previous two years had brought 12,000 clicks.

We worked with technical translators to set up campaigns in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese and targeted these to those countries, with keywords and ads in those languages. After sixty days, when we saw this worked, we added campaigns in the major European languages.

The devices are sold in shipments of 50,000-200,000 from a warehouse with over 20 million parts. Customers call the 800-number, speak with a highly-trained sales team to specify the items and the shipping process, and then place orders for hundreds of thousands of dollars per order.

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## Case Study: Link Building for a Chemotherapy Site

The website offers chemotherapy information for patients and families. The site features expert medical information and patient/survivor interaction.

### *Situation*

The site already had a recognizable online presence and a steady flow of traffic. However, the site had never appeared in the top 30 results of major search engines for those main keywords. They needed to improve search engine results and to increase the search engine traffic.

### *Recommendations*

We recommended link-building based on the anchor text. We surmised that many sites would be willing to link to the client, so we focused on achieving keyword-focused links from targeted sites. The text would vary, but always would contain the word "chemo."

### *Results*

The link building campaign added many keyword-focused links on the site (internal links), in directories, and on other sites (external links). By adding links containing the word "chemo" in a relevant manner across the web, we were able to accurately demonstrate to the search engines that our client's site is, in fact, about chemo. The search engines responded by recognizing our client for searches containing this keyword.

About two months later, the site began appearing in results containing the keyword. The results have progressed steadily since its initial appearance. Today, the site appears atop the results page for "chemo" and most other relevant searches containing this keyword.

Link building is a slow process, and attaining results from it is an even slower process. This campaign saw results much quicker than most, largely due to willingness from other sites to link to an informational (as opposed to a commercial) site. We very often see similar results through link building campaigns, but it is generally three to four months before we see impact.

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## Case Study: Directory Submission in DMOZ

This is a comparison of results with submitting two sites to DMOZ.org, the Open Directory Project. One site was a medical site; the other was a local search portal.

### *Situation*

Neither client had a strong directory presence. Directory links are valuable to a larger web marketing campaign both in terms of traffic and of search engine relevance. On the one hand, larger directories will drive traffic to a site. On the other, smaller directories do that not have much traffic associated with them will also help in strengthening the online presence. The search engines will recognize and reward high-quality, relevant directory links.

### *Recommendations*

We submitted all link-building clients to the major paid and non-paid directories, as well as various industry-specific directories. We placed each client in the highest-level category in which each was relevant. The higher the level, the more likely the search engines were to see the link.

### *Results*

Both sites were accepted by DMOZ. Although both were submitted to high-level categories, one was moved to a much lower level by the category editor. The site that was accepted into a higher-level category was 3 clicks away from the main page. The moved site was 10 clicks from the main page.

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## Case Study: Directory Submission in DMOZ (cont.)

An incredibly large number of directories pull information from DMOZ because of its open-source format, so the links in DMOZ led to many other links for the client, typically through vertical sites who pull DMOZ content to build their own content.

The search engines had a much easier time finding the client with the higher-level link than they did for the client with the lower-level link. To date, Google has found 72 links spawned from DMOZ for the higher-level link, compared to 27 for the other. The lower-level link is in these other directories, but they have no value to search relevance if they cannot be found.

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## Case Study: SEO for a Specialty Search Engine

The search engine offers local search for restaurants and hotels. This site has unique content aggregation technology which allows users to search for restaurants by type and city.

### *Situation*

The brand-new site first launched with restaurant data for three major US markets. Shortly after launch, the site owners came to us to see how to improve search traffic. Yes, even search engines need SEO work.

### *Recommendations*

We recommended both natural SEO and link-building. Building incoming links was critical, as no major engine had yet indexed a single page of the site. We recommended a strategy of soliciting high-quality inbound links, with a combination of deep interior links from niche sites and top-level links from directories.

Our SEO strategy was comprehensive, ranging from consultation on URL and filename writing, page title and meta data formulas, site map generation, on-page content, and internal site linking. We also recommended full compliance with Google's then-new Sitemaps program, which expedites the crawling process by showing Google a direct path to a site's deep pages.

### *Results*

Throughout the fall of 2004, we waited, frustrated at the lack of progress with Google. At this point the Google "sandbox" effect, where all new sites were issued a probationary period, had been somewhat documented, and we surmised that this was our problem. During Google's Allegra update in February, we left the "sandbox" temporarily and enjoyed phenomenal traffic for a three week period, but again sank to almost nothing by March. No significant SEO changes were made during this time - only the ongoing tweaking of on-page content, page titles, and meta data, along with the slow but steady increase in both deep and top-level incoming links. In July 2005, the site began a regular, steep increase in Google traffic, which continues today.

It is impossible to beg, borrow, or steal your way out of the Google "sandbox." Experienced SEO consultants agree that the best tactic is to continue natural, high-quality link-building, to optimize your site, and to simply let time take its course.

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## Case Study: Site Map for a Telecommunications Company

This nationwide telecommunications company sells high-speed internet access solutions. Their target audience is composed of individuals and businesses looking for services such as DSL, T1, satellite, cable, and many other broadband solutions.

### *Situation*

The client's site had thousands of pages, but only five of these were indexed at Google. The client was also spending thousands of dollars per month on PPC. They came to us for an SEO solution, looking for better indexing in Google and other search engines. The client had virtually no natural search engine traffic.

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## Case Study: Site Map for a Telecommunications Company (cont.)

### *Recommendations*

We started the campaign by optimizing a handful of pages for a number of keyword combinations that included terms such as "DSL," the telecommunications provider's name, and geographic terms (city, state). We also recommended the client create a search engine friendly crawling environment by building a keyword-rich site map that would allow the major search engines to quickly find and crawl pages, thus increasing the index counts at Google and other search engines.

### *Results*

In the first few months, Google indexed over 1,500 pages. After twelve months, Google had indexed over 10,000 optimized pages. The amount of indexing also grew at all other search engines. The keyword-rich site map opened up the site to search engine spiders to increase the number of indexed pages without substantial navigation work on the rest of the site.

The client went from 5-10 conversions per week to more than 3,000 conversions per week.

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## Case Study: Developing Theme Pages for a Health Portal

An informational portal for health issues was launched in 2002. This was jointly sponsored by a major drug manufacturer, a health services provider, and a non-profit organization.

### *Situation*

The site's pages were much too long. For example, one printed out as twenty-two sheets of paper. Such length, we surmised, reflected a lack of focus on one particular subject. To optimize for one main keyword phrase under this system would have been impossible since the keyword phrase would have been greatly diluted by the content on other subjects.

### *Recommendations*

We helped the client to convert the long pages into a series of shorter pages that focused on one subject with one keyword phrase. This not only raised the client's SEM profile, it had the added advantage of improving their site's usability by making each page easier to read.

### *Results*

The new pages got #1 position at Google, Yahoo!, and MSN. One page produces 1,800 monthly visits from Google.

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## Case Study: SEO for a Global Hotel Chain

Already possessing respectable search engine traffic, a global hotel chain wanted to increase the quantity and quality of visitors from search engines.

### *Situation*

We discovered that the majority of the traffic was coming entirely from a few top-level pages because search engine spiders were unable to crawl and index beyond those. Deeper, internal pages had been created and uploaded without thought to their navigational structure. Many pages were orphans with links to other parts of the site but no incoming links.

### *Recommendations*

We decided to think of every page at the site as "spider food" and make sure the search engine spiders had clear paths from one page to the next so that they could crawl and index the entire site. Our theory was that the more pages the search engine can see, the more opportunities they have to judge them as the most relevant for a query. We turned out to be right.

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## Case Study: SEO for a Global Hotel Chain (cont.)

### *Results*

Here is a table of the number of visitors:

Month	Year	Traffic
October	2001	81,255
June	2002	123,069
January	2003	204,340
January	2004	315,127
January	2005	405,009

Due to the changes, the web traffic increased 498%. The website accounts for hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenues.

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## Case Study: SEO for a Large Beverage Company

A global beverage brand wanted their products to be a standard ingredient for a large number of recipes.

### *Situation*

The company had a beautiful, state-of-the-art Flash site with a massive dynamic database of recipes, which made it invisible to search engines. The website's technical and graphics design was responsible for their failure in SEO.

### *Recommendations*

We carried out keyword research to find the phrases that were being used in recipes. This was then matched with corresponding recipes from the website's database and converted to static HTML pages - easily crawled and indexed by the search engine spiders. Optimization of the code and content of the recipe pages resulted in dramatically increased search engine visibility, which increased the number of visitors.

### *Results*

Site traffic jumped from 1 user per month to 7,695 users to 13,405 users.

Visitors	Month	Year
1	April	2002
7,695	December	2002
13,405	April	2003

The metric for tracking SEO success and calculating ROI was the number of site visitors and cost-per-visitor. The cost per visitor dropped over 99% and currently averages less than 5 cents per visitor.

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## Case Study: International Bank

The client is a major international bank that provides a wide variety of personal banking and finance products including credit cards, checking and savings accounts, loans, mortgages, insurance and credit education. The client has numerous brands with multiple websites.

### *Situation*

This bank was acquired by another, larger bank and needed to change all brand names and website domain names without giving up many of their high placements in search engines.

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## Case Study: International Bank (cont.)

### *Recommendations*

We recommended the client create a list of external and internal links pointing to their sites. We worked with the client to change all of the sites' HTML title tags, description tags, navigation, site -maps, and optimized text to reflect the new brand. We instructed the client to implement a server-side redirect system to transfer visitors and search engines from the old pages to the new pages on ten domains.

### *Results*

Once we had everything in place, we analyzed existing placements for the old domains. After a few weeks, the major search engines started to index the new sites. At the same time, the old sites started to drop out of the indexes. After six weeks, 90% of the old pages were dropped from the major search engine indexes and the same amount of new pages were added.

The link changing efforts that the client did early on, following the guidelines we provided them, also had a positive impact on their overall rankings. By tracking placements for the existing keyword phrases, we saw a 30% increase in rankings from the pre -transition period.

The client had a minimal decrease (15%) in traffic during the transition period. Once the process was complete, the client had higher traffic and conversions. The transition took about two and a half months.

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## Case Study: Business Consulting

This 12-person company offers business strategy consulting services to mid-sized and large corporations.

### *Situation*

Their PPC campaign had been running for a year, but it had low traffic and low results. They had several Adgroups which weren't focused; each Adgroup had only a few keywords and these had very low CTR. The cumulative CTR was extremely low. Not only this, but there was only one ad for each Adgroup and the ads had never been tested against other ads.

### *Recommendations*

The company has three core services, so we created an Adgroup for each service, with hundreds of keywords and six ads in each Adgroup.

We also created landing pages with UVP, a form, and a strong call-to-action to get visitors to fill out the form. The PPC ads were pointed to the landing pages.

### *Results*

In the first week, the account got more clicks than the entire preceding year. After a month, we deleted keywords with low CTRs and based on the successful keywords, we added new keywords. The weak ads were deleted and new ads were written, based on the successful ads and top keywords. After sixty days, we repeated the process.

The PPC campaigns now bring ten leads per month.

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## Case Study: Entertainment & Media

This company is a niche competitor in the video rental business, competing with Netflix and similar services. They offer 15,000 movies, a database of 28,000 actors, and video by mail as well as video-on-demand (VOD).

### *Situation*

The company has been using Adwords for several years. The staff, however, was busy with managing the ecommerce tools and other online marketing campaigns (email newsletter and similar). They didn't have the resources to dedicate full time to working with Adwords. They felt the campaigns could be run better.

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## Case Study: Entertainment & Media (cont.)

The company maintained ten different campaigns for various movie genres. Within each campaign, there were five to 20 or 30 Adgroups and within the Adgroups for actresses, there were 900+ names. The vast majority of actors had zero impressions or clicks.

This meant the Adgroups had nearly zero CTR. Many Adgroups containing the names of the obscure movies had high impressions but only a few clicks, which dragged down the CTR for the group. There was only one ad for every Adgroup. The ads were also poorly written and a number of the account settings were incorrect.

### *Recommendations*

Within the actors campaign, we pulled out the names of the top actors (those with high clicks and CTR) and placed these into a new Adgroup for "Stars." This Adgroup has a high cumulative CTR: an actor must earn at least 100 clicks and 3% CTR to get into the "Stars" group.

Three ads were written for every Adgroup. These used customer-centric text and other copy writing techniques derived from experts such as Zig Ziglar and John Caples. Due to the website's high traffic, it only took a week to get sufficient data to evaluate the ads. Weak ads were deleted and new ads were written. The ad CTR leaped up. Many improved by five times or more.

Using movie industry magazines, film catalogs, and other resources, we created new Adgroups for dozens of genres. These genres were populated with genre keywords, actors, and film titles.

The account had been using the same bid for every keyword. We changed this and each keyword had its own bid. This brought tens of thousands of keywords up from very low positions and they started to get clicks.

Adgroups that had zero sales were shut down. Thousands of keywords with zero clicks or sales were deleted. New Adgroups for various movie genres were added.

### *Results*

We are still in the first few months of this project. The goal is to tighten up the Adgroups by focusing on keywords and ads with high CTR. This will improve the quality of impressions and clicks.

The next goal is to identify the products that have positive ROI and improve the PPC for those by developing campaigns around those. Many of the titles are losing money and these will be deleted.

The company is in a commodity market (you can rent the same video from dozens of suppliers). We will work with them to decommodify by setting up value-added services and information to develop customer loyalty. Once they've acquired a customer, they should try to extend the value of that customer with follow-up sales. A possible project will be an movie industry blog, written by a high-visibility industry insider, with reviews, articles, updates, and personal experiences.

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## Case Study: Dentist Office

The company was a Texas office specializing in cosmetic dentistry. The family-run practice, which has been in business for over 40 years, promotes attention to detail as well as overall customer experience.

### *Situation*

The dentists used a marketing company to develop a website. The traffic was low and they wanted more.

### *Recommendations*

We created a UVP to define the client's offer and helped to delineate their target audience so that we could build an effective landing page. That landing page was designed to collect client names, email addresses, and telephone numbers so that the office staff could contact leads.

The landing page also had an exact match between the keyword, the Adword ad, and the landing page title. It was illustrated with photos of attractive, smiling people with healthy teeth. The page elements led the visitor's eye around the page, and a \$600 coupon offered additional value. The form presented a strong call-to-action: fill out this form to get your \$600 coupon.

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## Case Study: Dentist Office (cont.)

### *Results*

The PPC campaign outperformed the other marketing strategies. The landing page had a 28% conversion rate and delivered an average of 20 leads per month. At \$900 per month in PPC costs, the cost per lead was \$45. In a three-month period, they closed four leads for a total of \$125,000 in revenues with 4,529% ROI.

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## Case Study: Using AdSense

To better understand how AdSense works, we set it up on four pages on our website in November 2004. 60 days later, we had earned \$260 in clicks. Based on this test, we added AdSense to the rest of the 500 pages at the website. It now earns an average of \$700 per month.

For many AdSense users, this is a modest amount of money. However, some AdSense users create webpages on high-value topics, add AdSense, and earn substantial amounts of money. For example, you can write a webpage that reviews computer laptops and then offer ads for laptops. Visitors will read the reviews and click the ads. There are AdSense users who earn \$50,000 per month or more.

Many corporate websites won't put advertising on their websites. But informational websites (such as newspapers and magazines), associations, organizations, blogs, and similar can use AdSense to bring in extra revenue.

It's free to sign up and use AdSense. To sign up, visit [Google.com/Adsense](http://Google.com/Adsense).

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## Case Study: Web-Based Enterprise Software

The company sells a web-based tool for managing data in enterprise-level corporations. The software is focused on multi-national pharmaceutical companies with extensive information preparation and sharing.

### *Situation*

The client spent \$30,000 on print ads in industry trade journals and received zero leads. They had read about PPC and thought that it would be a better way to reach their clients directly. The company knew its UVP and had a clear conception of its target audience.

### *Recommendations*

We first recommended that the company restructure its website in order to make it appealing to their target audience.

Our redesign then provided a clear navigation path with prominent calls-to-action. The product demonstration was emphasized and visitors were encouraged to sign up.

We also developed a Google AdWords campaign to better attract highly qualified leads. This campaign was targeted to the United States, Australia, Europe and Asia.

### *Results*

In 16 months, the company received 115 leads, including a number of Fortune 500 companies. The cost per lead was low: \$28.27.

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## Case Study: AdWords User Group

In 2004, we set up a user group for Google Adwords users ([Adwords-User-Group.com](http://Adwords-User-Group.com)) so we could notify people about changes in Adwords, share ideas, and so on. It occurred to us that we could use Adwords itself to advertise an Adwords user group.

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## Case Study: AdWords User Group (cont.)

We tested 296 keywords for computers, marketing, and sales that included permutations with user group, AdWords, and PPC. After several months, there were nine keywords with high CTR. All of the other keywords were deleted. We tested ads in groups of three and we ended up with two ads with high CTR.

### *Results*

Because the CTR is high (3.0-8.8%) and the campaigns are focused, the CPC is low. The cost for the last year (643 clicks) was \$227.91. The user group has some 350 hundred members to whom we send a monthly newsletter.

PPC has been overlooked as a membership recruitment tool for associations, clubs, churches, and member-based organizations. There are some 600,000 non-profits and 300,000 clubs in the USA, but most of these tend to be low-tech. They also have small budgets. Nearly all of these associations, almost by definition, are based on the member's interests. By using campaigns on those interests, the organizations could find members. For organizations that are local (such as churches) or have a local interest (such an environmental group for the Klamath River), they can use local targeting to focus the campaign on their potential audience.

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## Case Study: New Age Services

The client offers New Age client counseling, workshops, and courses in North Carolina. She wanted to attract more clients for her services.

### *Recommendations*

She has three main classes, so we set up campaigns for each of the workshops. There are a seemingly endless number of keywords for new age topics, so we tested thousands of keywords. We used magazines, books, and websites to find keywords. We also used a large number of negative keywords to filter out wrong clicks. Many new age words are also the names of books or music CDs, so we filtered those out. There are also many computer games and wizard games that use new age terms and those were also blocked

She announces a class up to six months in advance, so the budgeting is allocated to upcoming classes. When the class is full, we pause the campaign and reallocate the budget to the next upcoming class. This keeps the budget focused on bringing students.

The PPC was initially targeted to a 45 mile radius around her city. Later, we expanded this to 125 miles. The targeting was adjusted to find the right mix of advertising spend for students.

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## Case Study: Bookkeeper

The client runs a one-person bookkeeping service for small and medium businesses in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

### *Situation*

The client spends \$500/year on Yellow Pages ads. In ten years, she hasn't gotten a single client from these ads. She wanted more clients.

### *Recommendations*

We recommended a website. Since the service is a basic concept, it would be a one-page website: bookkeeping services, with an attractive banner logo, a statement of services (the UVP), and contact information with just her name, address, and telephone number. We hired a graphics designer for the logo and overall look. This cost \$100.

So she would be found in Google, we registered her with Google Local.

We also set up a PPC campaign with local targeting. The furthest client she had ever had was 30 miles away, and since she often drove to the client's office and she didn't want to drive further, we set the radius to 30 miles around her office.

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## Case Study: Bookkeeper (cont.)

### *Results*

We started with 250 keywords for bookkeeping. We added the city name, neighborhoods, and so on to create a list of some 1,500 keywords. After four weeks, this was reduced to 14 keywords with 15% CTR. We wrote six ads, deleted the weak ads, and ended up with three ads with high CTR. We noticed that for her market, there were only two other bookkeepers. Her website was far more attractive and professional. We looked at rates for bookkeepers in her city and surrounding cities and we recommended that she raise her rates.

Since the PPC service is for a niche service in a small town, she needed to spend only \$20 per month. In two months, she picked up two clients. At \$42 ad spend for two months; the cost per lead was \$21. A client is a minimum of \$10,000 per year in billing and clients generally last about five years, so a client's lifetime value is \$50,000. With costs at \$42 for PPC and \$100 for graphics to acquire two clients with an annual value at \$10,000 each, her ROI is 13,984%.

The client cancelled her Yellow Pages ads.

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## Case Study: Realtor

The client is a realtor with over 20 years experience in a large Boston. He is an architect and specializes in historical houses. He is a one-person shop in a very competitive market. There are thousands of realtors in that city. Houses in that market are generally \$1-1.5 million each. Condos are \$600-800,000.

### *Recommendations*

Home buying is an excellent example of the buying cycle. People spend months in researching, comparing, and evaluating homes on the basis of neighborhoods, schools, and transportation. They want to do this research on their own, without salesperson pressure. The web allows them to be anonymous and hidden. They contact the realtor only when they've completed their research and they are ready to buy.

The realtor is an expert in historically-significant houses, so the website is primarily a resource for information about those houses: the types of houses, the history, the architects, and the building of those houses. The articles were then illustrated by professional draftsmen and artists. We went on architectural tours, read books, and learned about these houses. The website's color palette reflects the colors of the city. We looked at the top real estate website for NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles, and several other cities, plus collections of realtor websites that had won awards.

We then set up several PPC campaigns. One of these promotes the architectural pages. The ads point the pages for each type of house. This campaign is purely for visitors who are researching houses, whether to buy or for personal interest. It can take as much as seven to ten years for someone to decide on buying such a house.

We also run a PPC campaign for each house. When the house comes on the market, a draftsman creates hand drawings of the house. The realtor writes an article about the house. The article is used to create the Adwords ads: keywords include the street, significant nearby streets, names of parks, schools, and so on. We use Yahoo Maps to find this information. We also add the type of architectural style, the neighborhood, and so on. In order to further qualify the buyers, the ads include the house price. The campaign uses local targeting for a 200 mile radius around the city.

### *Results*

Although real estate is extremely competitive and the properties are generally in the million-dollar range, he has very little competition in PPC. Because we use keywords beyond the usual "house for sale", most of his keywords don't need high bids since nobody bids on a street name or a city park. We're selling million-dollar houses with 5¢ ads. His costs are generally a few hundred dollars per house. When the house sells, we save the keywords and put the campaign on pause. He tripled his sales in the last two years and now sells a house every two months.

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## Case Study: Selling Shoes

After ten years of working in the Hollywood movie industry, the client moved in the late 1990s to Santa Barbara, a Southern California resort town, and started a specialty shoe store.

### *Situation*

He opened a shop just off the main shopping street. He advertised in local newspapers, the Los Angeles Times, and the Yellow Pages. He also started a website. A few months later, Google released Adwords and we opened a PPC account for the store.

### *Recommendations*

The Adwords account has been in operation literally from the beginning of Google Adwords. It has undergone many changes in strategies as we've learned more about Adwords.

Currently, there are campaigns for each of the shoe brands, with Adgroups for the various styles. Each ad points to the page for that shoe, where there are photos of the shoe and a description. To keep personal contact with customers, most of the ordering is by telephone. He also sends out a monthly newsletter.

### *Results*

Over 80% of his sales are via the web. He has grown to be one of the largest North American distributors for the type of shoes that he sells. To distinguish himself from competitors who have only websites, he emphasizes that he has a storefront in a resort town. The website has a map to his store and many tourists come into the store with a printout of the map.

The PPC has been more effective than newspaper advertising in both the local city paper and the Los Angeles Times (daily circulation 965,633). The client dropped his advertising in newspapers and the Yellow Pages altogether and allocated the money to PPC.

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## Case Study: Specialty Music Instruments Distributor

The company sells a particular musical instrument for classical musicians that is also purchased by people who play as a hobby. The company is owned by a classically-trained musician with expert knowledge of the instrument. The instruments range in price from several thousand dollars to more than \$95,000.

Until 2004, the company had no online presence. Because the reach was local and the market was so narrow, she had few sales. In late 2004, She hired a marketing company to develop her sales. To reach a nationwide audience, they built a website. The marketing company asked us to build the PPC campaign.

### *Recommendations*

We developed landing pages for various levels of interest: to take classes, to rent instruments, to buy entry-level instruments, and to buy professional instruments. The forms added for name, email, and telephone.

For those end users who are performing research, the website also allows visitors to ask questions, listen to sound clips, and learn about the instruments. They can also read about renting or buying and the advantages of each.

### *Results*

Because the market is tightly focused, many of the keywords have 15% to 30% CTRs. In the last seven months, she has 57 leads at \$34.94 per lead or a total cost of \$1,991. This led to 21 sales for a total of \$202,500.