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My1Stop.com zeroes out its paid search budget and still increases sales

My1Stop.com, which sells printing services online, did away with paid search and instead focused on optimizing its site so that it would rank high in natural search results. The move helped the e-retailer grow sales 40% last year, says president Michael Del Chiaro.

My1Stop began working with vendor MoreVisibility two years ago to optimize its site for search engines. Del Chiaro says his company had been spending at least \$30,000 per month on pay-per-click advertising when it noticed late in 2007 that it was getting more traffic from natural search results than from paid search ads.

As that trend continued into the new year and the economy took a turn for the worse, Del Chiaro decided in July 2008 to end its paid search advertising. "We felt comfortable cutting it to zero. I wanted to see what would happen, and it obviously was a substantial cost reduction as well," he says.

Instead, My1Stop focused on working with MoreVisibility on optimizing its site so that it would appear higher in natural search results. That included altering how pages are coded to make it easier for search engine crawlers to find content, building the number of inbound links to the site by blogging and publishing press releases online, and doing keyword research to identify the best terms for boosting rankings for each web page and product.

Additionally, the retailer is posting videos and audio on the site to help boost its ranking in blended search results, Del Chiaro adds. Blended search, also called universal search, serves up videos, news, blogs and other web content on a search engine results page. My1Stop also began participating in Yahoo Inc.'s Paid Inclusion program that, for a fee, moves new web pages into search results faster, added an e-mail newsletter and began a program of calling top customers to generate sales.

The results: revenue grew 40% from 2007 to 2008, and was up another 25% in the first half of this year over last year's first half, Del Chiaro says.

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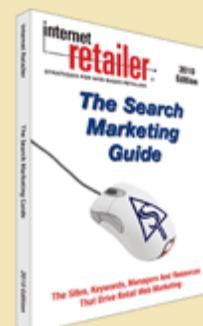
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