

Desarae A. Veit Internet Marketing Case Studies

MyFreeEstimates.com Marketing, Strategy, Design Testing, E-Newsletters, Reputation Management, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Affiliate lead generation, Pay-Per-Click campaigns, Content Writing, Social Media, Micro-Sites, Radio Advertising.



"Desarae is a very creative, hard working individual and can work independently or part of a team. Desarae has fantastic design vision when working independently, or can bring your vision to life with the smallest amount of direction. I would highly recommend her to any business needing web/graphic design services. In addition to her skills as a designer she also is a delight to work with, bringing a positive attitude to any office setting." -- Former CMO Jason Treziok

About MyFreeEstimates.com

MyFreeEstimate collects evidence that contractors are licensed, bonded and insured, and then charges them for leads from homeowners who fill out an automated form on the Web site seeking bids on their projects. It's free for homeowners. Contractors pay. It's the flip model of Indianapolis-based Angie's List, where consumers pay for lists of consumer-recommended contractors.

Executing the matchup was Carstens' challenge. He was not an Internet whiz. He said he mostly used his PC to play Solitaire.

But he understood direct marketing. When just a senior at Eagan High School, Carstens started selling door to door a \$20 coupon book he'd made by recruiting local businesses. He donated \$1 of each sale to a battered women's shelter, he said, and bought himself a red Chevy S-10 pickup, among other things, with his profits. He did it all over again for a few years until he got tired of trudging through snow, he said. Until 2005 he painted houses and tended bar.

At the start, Eric Carstens (CEO) paid Google some \$1,500 a day to ensure MyFreeEstimates.com pops up on the right side or the top of a screen when users type the

right search terms or pull up relevant content. Carstens spent most of his days selling leads to contractors and racing to transfer payments through PayPal to his credit card. Google alerts that funds were low chimed to his telephone at all hours.

In an interview with Jennifer Bjorhus, Carstens said he was paying about \$100,000 a month for advertising on Google. He never missed payroll, but high advertising costs meant he was cutting it extremely close, he said. A turning point came when he decided to charge contractors a monthly fee due on the first of the month - \$1,000 for an unlimited number of leads. Problem solved.

MyFreeEstimates.com now claims to generate 15,000 consumer leads a month and have a base of 5,000 to 7,000 member contractors.

His account managers track contractors' sales and about 28 percent of the leads turn into actual jobs, Carstens said. That's very high by direct-mail marketing standards, where success rates are in the low single digits, and strong by Internet lead-generating campaigns too, according to one expert.

Challenge

Prior to working with MyFreeEstimates.com, the company had been slowly increasing their marketing efforts with pay-per-click campaigns, and some SEO efforts, but did not have the personal for design, copy writing, link building, online PR, e-newsletters, or proper tracking of their affiliate marketing campaigns

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) - Internet Marketing Objective:

The company was skeptical of web marketing companies, but aware of the new business generation potential offered by Google, Yahoo, AOL, and MSN, so Desarae reviewed all of MyFreeEstimates site materials, affiliate campaigns, tracked the ROI for present campaigns and contacted several existing accounts that confirmed the significant return on investment that MyFreeEstimates was looking for, with the end goal of lead generation always in mind.

Organizing the Information

Desarae Veit compiled all of the company's in-house documentation and organized the filing system for affiliate management so that MyFreeEstimates.com could restart their e-newsletter initiatives. This process included re-branding the company logo, e-mail signatures, and online/paper forms that clients would see to represent the company in a more professional manner.

Setting up ROI, Analytics, and Tracking

The second step would be to track over 100 affiliate companies would be posting MyFreeEstimates' banners, sending out their e-newsletters, and generating leads via text advertisements. This data would then be entered into a bi-weekly ROI report for the CMO and CEO of MyFreeEstimates.com.

The company's name, competitors and top keywords were tracked on a daily basis; this helped with both reputation management and determining when the campaigns needed to up the ante.

Design, Copy, and User Experience Testing

Each week the company expected a minimum of 5 new e-newsletter designs, text ads, and site layouts. These online promotional tools would be tracked using source codes, a/b testing, and design testing to determine which copy and layout generated the highest conversion rates to the site. The ones that were the most successful would be tweaked slightly and thrown back into the mix, while any of the layouts that performed less successfully would be discarded. Absolutely every text, color, or image change on the site was tested using Google site optimizer and cross referenced with the companies custom CMS.

Search Engine Marketing and Site Optimization

MyFreeEstimates.com continues to be one of the highest ranked sites for home improvement keywords and phrases. MyFreeEstimates and it's micro-sites have also secured multiple first page top 5 keyword rankings on most of their primary and secondary keyword targets on the four major search engines, this is thanks to their ongoing efforts to give the site fresh content, custom meta tags, alt tags, page content delivery and also implements an exclusive link popularity system. Desarae also helped implement three micro-sites, a contractor sign-up wizard, and helped promote the company via social media sites and business directories.

Additional Promotion and Advertising Efforts

To integrate MyFreeEstimates successful online campaigns with traditional media, Desarae set up radio advertising via Google. The company then bought new numbers for every major city in the country that would be used only for the radio ads. This way MyFreeEstimates could track where their offline efforts were succeeding.

In addition Desarae designed 3 sweaters and 5 different styles of men and womens shirts with the company logo on it. The shirts were to be worn at networking events or to be given away to customers.

The Results received in 8 months and still retained:

As of September 2008 this site is in the top 5 results for its main target keyword phrases and at least top ten for all of its secondary keywords and phrases. What's even more amazing is the site also shows up for searches for the super competitive phrase "window estimates" in the top 10 Google results.