

Search engine marketing: Targeted campaigns are more effective

The "adword" is the magic word

Hamburg (May 8, 2009). The times when customers had travel agencies or congress offices at their destination send them a hotel catalogue to find fitting accommodation beforehand are basically passé. The Internet has transformed the search for a hotel - conference hotels present themselves in the form of printed standard planners at best... Marketing based on search engines is therefore becoming increasingly important. But how does it work?

Thus it is crucial for hotels to be present where guests perform their search - but in a position right at the top. Being listed at position 334 will hardly bring any guests, as only the fewest surfers get past the first few pages when using a search engine...

For this reason, hoteliers need to maintain their online appearance with great care, and maybe even have it designed by experts. Every online user searching for a certain product, service or "simply" information via search engines from Google to web.de is a possible customer for them. It is all about attracting surfers to your own website turning them into paying guests.

The key word are the key

Families with limited budgets searching for a suitable hotel for their holiday trip or business men in need of adequate accommodation for their next business trips - their first step will always be an online search. Typical terms entered in search engines like Google, Lycos or Yahoo are "family hotels", "budget hotels" or "business hotels". Most important for hoteliers: even when machines find hundreds or thousands of web addresses, searchers only click on a limited number of links - they usually start at the beginning and lose interest in continuing their search after two or three pages at the latest.

There are means and tricks for optimising search engine results, i.e. positioning your website on one of the first three pages, which all marketing experts should know. Michael Kornfeld, Head of the Austrian Online-Marketing Forum consultancy in Vienna (www.online-marketing-forum.at) conducts seminars providing hints about how to design a website for ideal search engine results...

Only top-ranked addresses bring clicks, generate inquiries and increase sales. Achieving this, however, is getting ever more difficult and costly. While you could have success with interesting and informative content as well as meaningful keywords in the past, nowadays, optimisers need to keep websites a lot more user-friendly (clear and easily comprehensible navigation) in order to make users return...

Search engine campaigns provide a lot more success

However, good search-engine positioning alone is not a guarantee for success. Providers can address their target groups a lot better by implementing marketing campaigns based on search engines. These campaigns are considered a highly efficient instrument in the field of online marketing. After users enter a keyword like "family hotels" at Google, small ads with a maximum of 130 characters pop up next to the web addresses. These so-called "Google Ads" need to contain the keywords entered by users as a key term. Yahoo provides similar ads, but their relevance corresponds to that of the entire search engine...

Thus, the ad is the starting point within the campaign and is to attract users to the following page (landing page) containing the promised offer as well as a direct reservation possibility. On the landing page, users turn from potential customers to buyers and customers - this process is called "conversion" in marketing jargon.

"However, the success of this conversion process is everything but an automatism," knows Bernd Stieber, Chairman of Zieltraffic AG, a performance marketing agency in Munich (www.zieltraffic.de). It recently published the "Landingpage-Report 2008", which analyses some marketing campaigns based on search engines launched by well-known companies. On the basis of concrete case studies, the survey shows how such a campaign can be carried out and what mistakes should be avoided at all costs. The surveys, unfortunately only available in German, can be downloaded at www.zieltraffic.de/landingpage-report-2008. ...

The right "adword" guesses users' thoughts

According to Bernd Stieber, three factors are decisive for a successful marketing campaign based on search engines from a cost-benefit perspective:

- a well-written advertisement ("adword"),
- a professionally designed landing page,
- and close coordination of "adword" and landing page.

... A landing page is not the homepage of a company, but a separately designed website following the advertisement in terms of content and form serving one sole purpose: transforming users into customers. The most important rule when creating a landing page: it only refers to the promise given in the advertisement. It provides explanatory content leading customers straight towards the buy/order button. Stieber: "Advertising for other products or company services are out of place here." / Ralph Langrock

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