MOXIEMEN INCORPORATED

PROJECT: TRANSMISSION AND AUTO REPAIR SHOP IN GRAND RAPIDS, MI

SEO, WEB DESIGN & DIGITAL MARKETING CASE STUDY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CLIENT* has been a staple of transmission repair and general auto repair in Grand Rapids, MI since the 1980's. While specializing in transmission repairs for virtually all types of vehicles ranging from light trucks to hot-rods, THE CLIENT also has a well-earned reputation for quality auto repair services that has been cultivated over the past three decades in business.

In early 2011, we were contacted by the ownership of the company. They were interested in using the web to generate more leads and foot traffic to their shop, since at the time they were getting none. At the time they first made contact, their site was receiving virtually no traffic whatsoever and only ranked in search engines for one keyword: the name of their company.

After a discovery period and subsequent tactical implementation of a content strategy designed to raise awareness and increase the site's overall authority in the eyes of search engines, the site went from virtually no traffic and no search engine visibility at all to:

- Over 5000 visitors per month from organic search!! That's FREE traffic!
- Organic traffic from over 10,000 different keyword phrases!
- Potentially millions of dollars in revenue over a period of time**!

*The detailed information contained within this document is being published with the consent of the owners of the shop, whom will be referred to throughout this document as 'THE CLIENT'. THE CLIENT, while granting permission to publish this information, requested that their name not be included to avoid competing shops from utilizing the same tactics.

**This is a generalization based on a formula explained on page 11 of this document.

The Diagnosis

The first step in any digital marketing campaign is to take an in-depth look at the current situation. This phase is commonly referred to as a 'discovery process', and is used to review digital assets such as the website itself, content elements, analyze any current or previous marketing tactics, etc. The purpose of this phase is to get an idea of what we have to work with and why the current website is underperforming. Once we've had a chance to analyze everything from a diagnostic perspective, we can then cultivate a plan for implementation in order for the company to achieve their goals.

In the case of THE CLIENT, the reason their website wasn't producing any leads or getting any traffic was relatively simple: **They didn't have any content!** Before we got involved, their entire website consisted of a flyer that had been scanned as a jpeg and uploaded to the web. While it was attractive in appearance and contained all the relevant contact and location information, all of address/phone number/hours of operation stuff was embedded into the graphic. The biggest problem with this approach is that search engine crawlers rely on this information to determine search engine placement – but Google can't read text that's part of an image.

In short, their website was nothing more than a single graphic that said: "This is where we are and here's how you can contact us". Not good.

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TACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

A Brand New Website

The obvious first step in THE CLIENT's Digital Marketing Campaign was to build a new website for the company. The new website was built on the Wordpress content management system. There are numerous reasons to choose Wordpress for your website needs.

Why should you Choose WordPress?

WordPress is among the most dynamic platforms on the Web today. Between the ease of use and the flexibility to host a variety of different types of sites, WordPress is the most popular content management system on the Web today (source) by a wide margin. There are many reasons for this:

- Best platform for search engine optimization;
- Extremely user friendly interface;
- Easy for clients to manage themselves;
- Can host unlimited amounts of content;
- Highly stable;
- Open source;
- Ability to have multiple users and contributors with varying levels of administrative access;
- 10's of thousands of themes to choose from for design and functionality;
- 10's of thousands of plugins for improved functionality (source);

Supports many different types of sites;

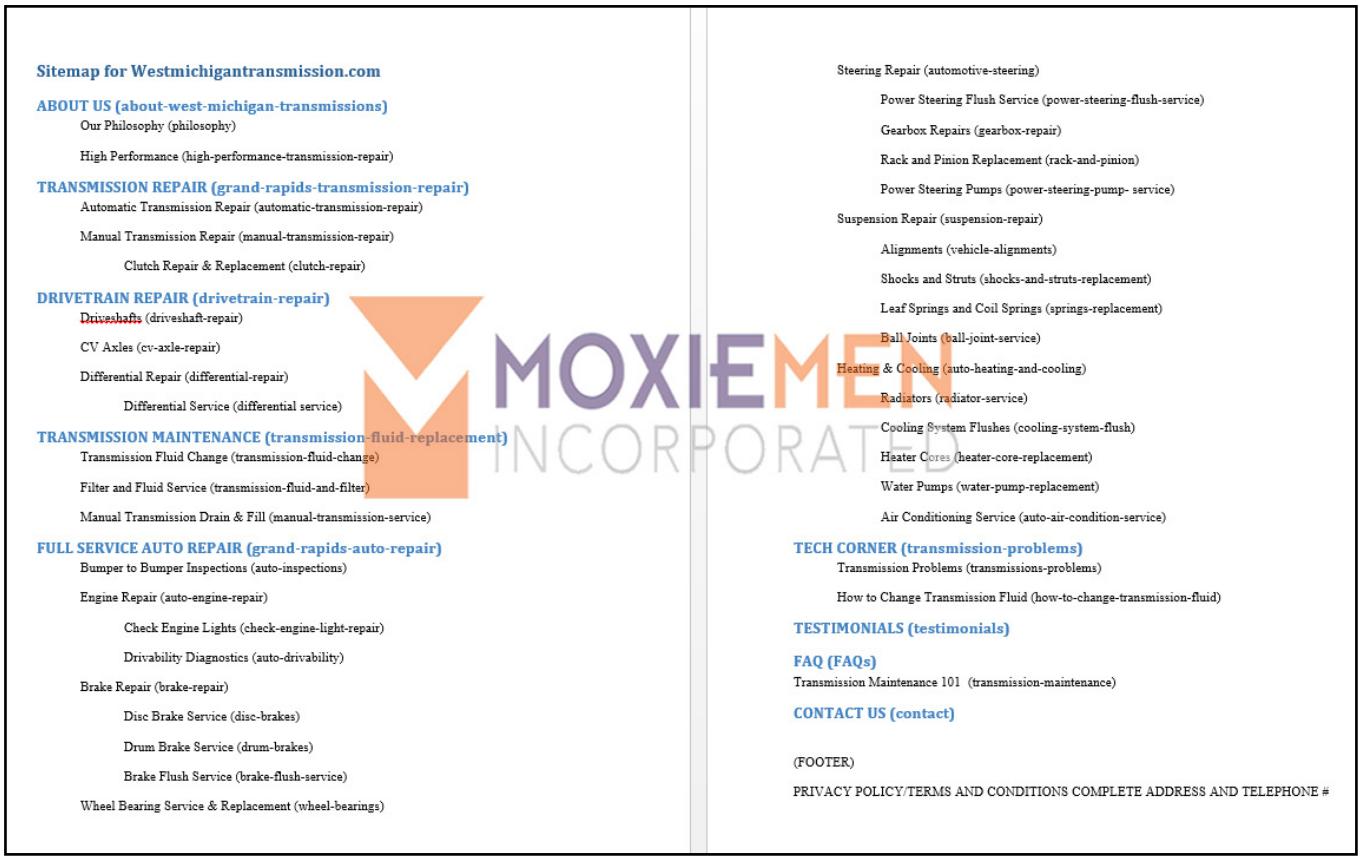
- Great for blogging;
- E-commerce sites;
- Forums;
- Corporate sites;
- Brochure sites;
- Sales/lead capture sites.

****All efforts have been made to ensure that use of the WordPress logo and the WordPress name on this website are in accordance to the WordPress Trademark Policy. MoxieMen Incorporated makes no claim implied or otherwise of any direct affiliation with or endorsement by the WordPress Foundation or the WordPress open source project.****

Content is the Key

Once we completed design work on the new website*, the next phase was to create and add content. Instead of a simple bulleted list of the various auto repair services that the company offers, we created a 'sitemap', which outlines all the pages that need to be created for the new site. In crafting the sitemap for THE CLIENT'S website, we implemented a strategy of creating a unique page of content for every service offered by the shop.

The original sitemap looked something like this:



Sitemap for Westmichigantransmission.com

ABOUT US (about-west-michigan-transmissions)
- Our Philosophy (philosophy)
- High Performance (high-performance-transmission-repair)

TRANSMISSION REPAIR (grand-rapids-transmission-repair)
- Automatic Transmission Repair (automatic-transmission-repair)
- Manual Transmission Repair (manual-transmission-repair)
  - Clutch Repair & Replacement (clutch-repair)

DRIVETRAIN REPAIR (drivetrain-repair)
- Driveshafts (driveshaft-repair)
- CV Axles (cv-axle-repair)
- Differential Repair (differential-repair)
  - Differential Service (differential service)

TRANSMISSION MAINTENANCE (transmission-fluid-replacement)
- Transmission Fluid Change (transmission-fluid-change)
- Filter and Fluid Service (transmission-fluid-and-filter)
- Manual Transmission Drain & Fill (manual-transmission-service)

FULL SERVICE AUTO REPAIR (grand-rapids-auto-repair)
- Bumper to Bumper Inspections (auto-inspections)
- Engine Repair (auto-engine-repair)
  - Check Engine Lights (check-engine-light-repair)
  - Drivability Diagnostics (auto-drivability)
- Brake Repair (brake-repair)
  - Disc Brake Service (disc-brakes)
  - Drum Brake Service (drum-brakes)
  - Brake Flush Service (brake-flush-service)
- Wheel Bearing Service & Replacement (wheel-bearings)
- Steering Repair (automotive-steering)
  - Power Steering Flush Service (power-steering-flush-service)
  - Gearbox Repairs (gearbox-repair)
  - Rack and Pinion Replacement (rack-and-pinion)
  - Power Steering Pumps (power-steering-pump- service)
- Suspension Repair (suspension-repair)
  - Alignments (vehicle-alignments)
  - Shocks and Struts (shocks-and-struts-replacement)
  - Leaf Springs and Coil Springs (springs-replacement)
  - Ball Joints (ball-joint-service)
- Heating & Cooling (auto-heating-and-cooling)
  - Radiators (radiator-service)
  - Cooling System Flushes (cooling-system-flush)
  - Heater Cores (heater-core-replacement)
  - Water Pumps (water-pump-replacement)
  - Air Conditioning Service (auto-air-condition-service)

TECH CORNER (transmission-problems)
- Transmission Problems (transmissions-problems)
- How to Change Transmission Fluid (how-to-change-transmission-fluid)

TESTIMONIALS (testimonials)

FAQ (FAQs)

Transmission Maintenance 101 (transmission-maintenance)

CONTACT US (contact)

(FOOTER)

PRIVACY POLICY/TERMS AND CONDITIONS COMPLETE ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE #

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As you can see, this is a lot better than a single page website! This is quite a bit of content, and it took some time to complete and optimize it all. But once it was done, the results were absolutely outstanding! The new website launched around April of 2011.

*After completing our discovery phase, another vendor was initially contracted by THE CLIENT to build their new website, and completed the majority of the design. However, we ended up taking over and finishing the project after the previous vendor missed the completion deadline and subsequently became unresponsive to calls and emails.

ONGOING CONTENT INITIATIVE: BLOGGING

Once the new website was live on an SEO friendly platform with fresh content that was properly optimized for organic search, THE CLIENT's website began to acquire some traffic. In fact, within a month of launching, traffic volume to the new site doubled! Although at first it started to trickle in to the tune of about 2-300 visitors per month, most of the traffic was coming in from organic search. A couple hundred visitors per month doesn't sound very impressive, but this was a huge improvement over what was basically no traffic at all outside of branded keyword searches. Fortunately for THE CLIENT, we were just getting started.

Once the new website and content were completed, our contractual obligations were met and we were not immediately retained for future marketing initiatives.

Their traffic patterns held steady for the rest of the year and into 2012, as one would expect. They attempted to engage some traffic driving initiatives with some other vendors, however none of those individuals worked out.

Around the 2nd quarter of 2012 we were once again contracted after the company owners became frustrated with the ineptitude of one freelancer after another. We signed a contract to improve the optimization of the content on the site and begin blogging consistently on a monthly basis.

The goal was to drive organic traffic to the site through organic search. And boy did we ever!

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Why Blogging Had Such a Profound Effect on Organic Search Rankings

The clinical definition of search engine optimization (SEO) is the act of modifying the elements of a site's presence on the Web in order to achieve favorable search engine placement for keyword phrases relevant to the content of the site.

Search engines are designed to serve a specific purpose: to deliver the most relevant links to content with respect to the keyword(s) being queried – and more important – the perceived intent of the person searching.

When done correctly, having a blog on your website is a very effective way to build an authoritative Web presence, increase engagement with your audience, and increase your site's visibility in search engines which will in time lead to an increase in traffic. The consistent creation and publication of unique, valuable content that demonstrates your business's ability to understand and solve the problems your potential clients may be seeking solutions to is a sure path to increasing traffic and conversions.

What is a Blog?

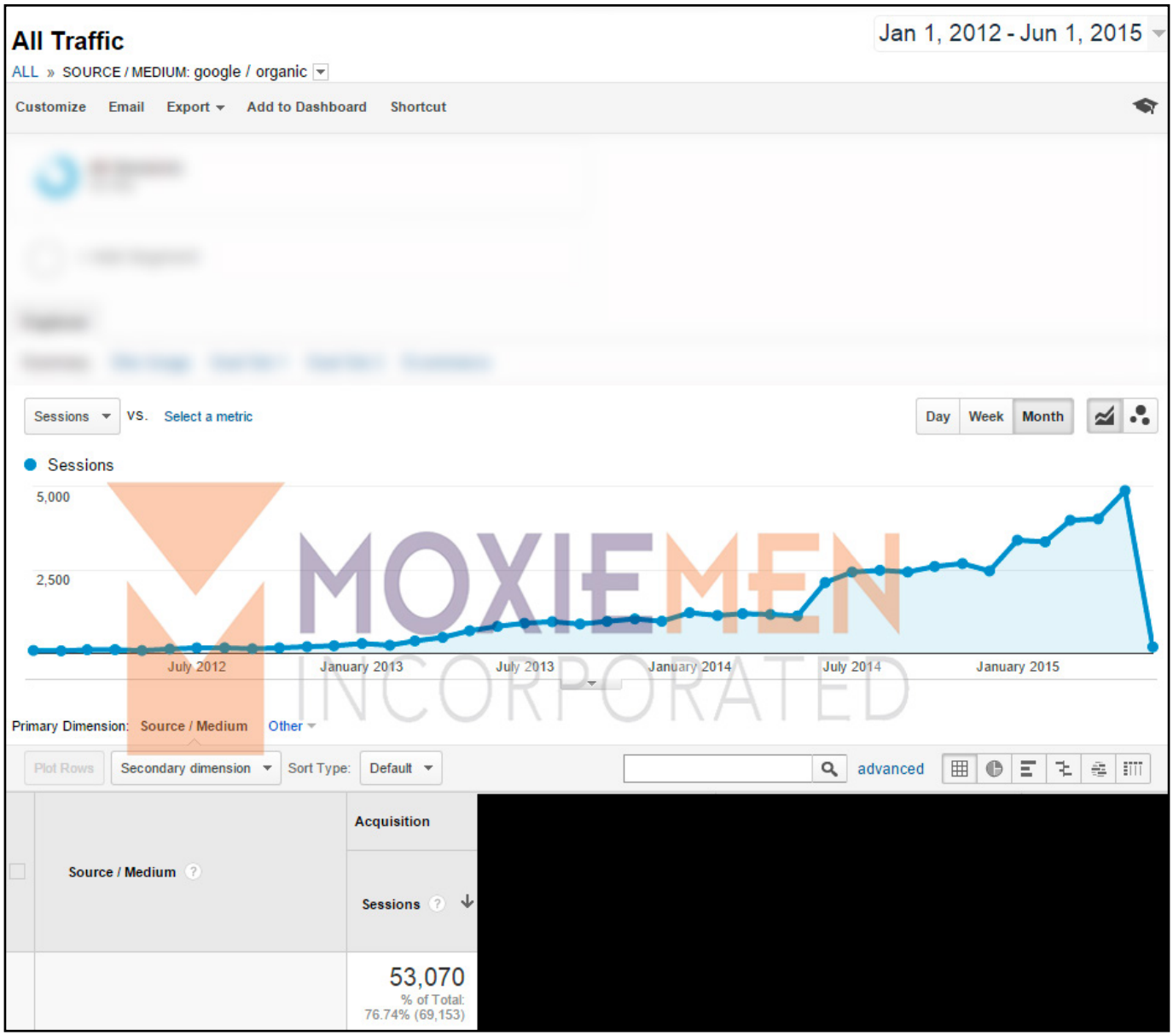
This might seem like a silly question, but ask 10 different people to define a blog and you're likely to get 10 different answers. A blog is a collection of content created with the purpose of engaging an audience. So therefore 'blogging' is the art of creating content for consumption.

Content created for consumption. Think about that for a minute. It's not content for content's sake. That won't get you anywhere. Not only will it bore your audience, but it won't do your site any favors with respect to search engine placement, either. The content published, whether it's written, audio or video based, needs to be valuable and relevant to your target audience.

THE RESULTS

This is really what you came here for, right?

The SEO campaign for THE CLIENT over the past three years has been an unqualified success. The blogging tactics we implemented over time allowed THE CLIENT'S website to become visible in search engines for thousands of keyword phrases and drove in excess of 50,000 visitors to the site from Google organic search alone. And this doesn't even include other search engines such as Yahoo and Bing, which accounted for another 5,000 visitors!



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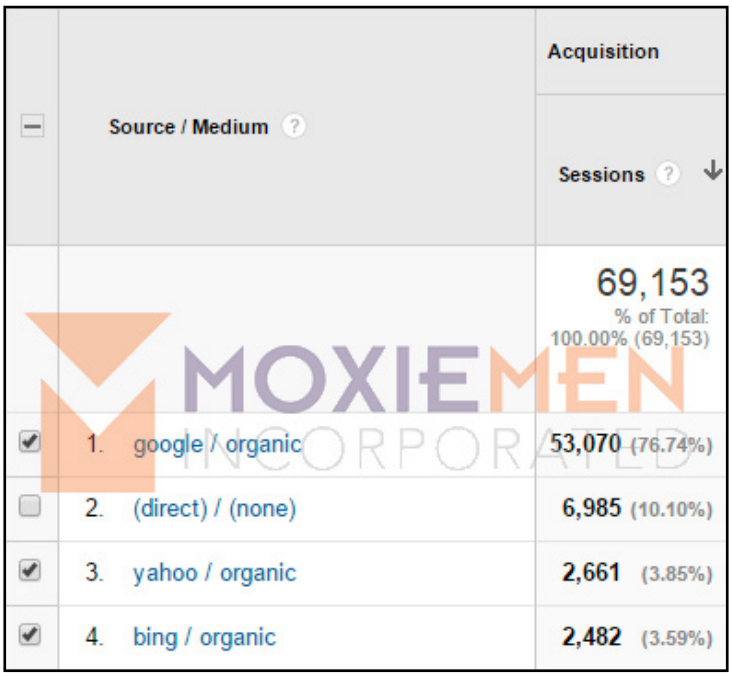
Over the past 41 months, organic search was responsible for 3 out of 4 of the site's top traffic sources!



Source / Medium	Acquisition: Sessions
	69,153 % of Total: 100.00% (69,153)
1. google / organic	53,070 (76.74%)
2. (direct) / (none)	6,985 (10.10%)
3. yahoo / organic	2,661 (3.85%)
4. bing / organic	2,482 (3.59%)

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Why is this so Important?

The important thing to realize is that **organic traffic is free traffic.** They didn't have to pay search engines for any of this. To put that in perspective, consider what it would cost to get traffic from these keywords via paid search (source: Google Adwords Keyword Planner Tool):

Keyword	Competition	Suggested Bid
auto repair*	High	$8.15
transmission repair*	High	$8.37
car repair*	High	$5.47
auto repair grand rapids*	High	$11.83
car repair grand rapids*	High	$8.86
transmission repair grand rapids*	High	$8.37

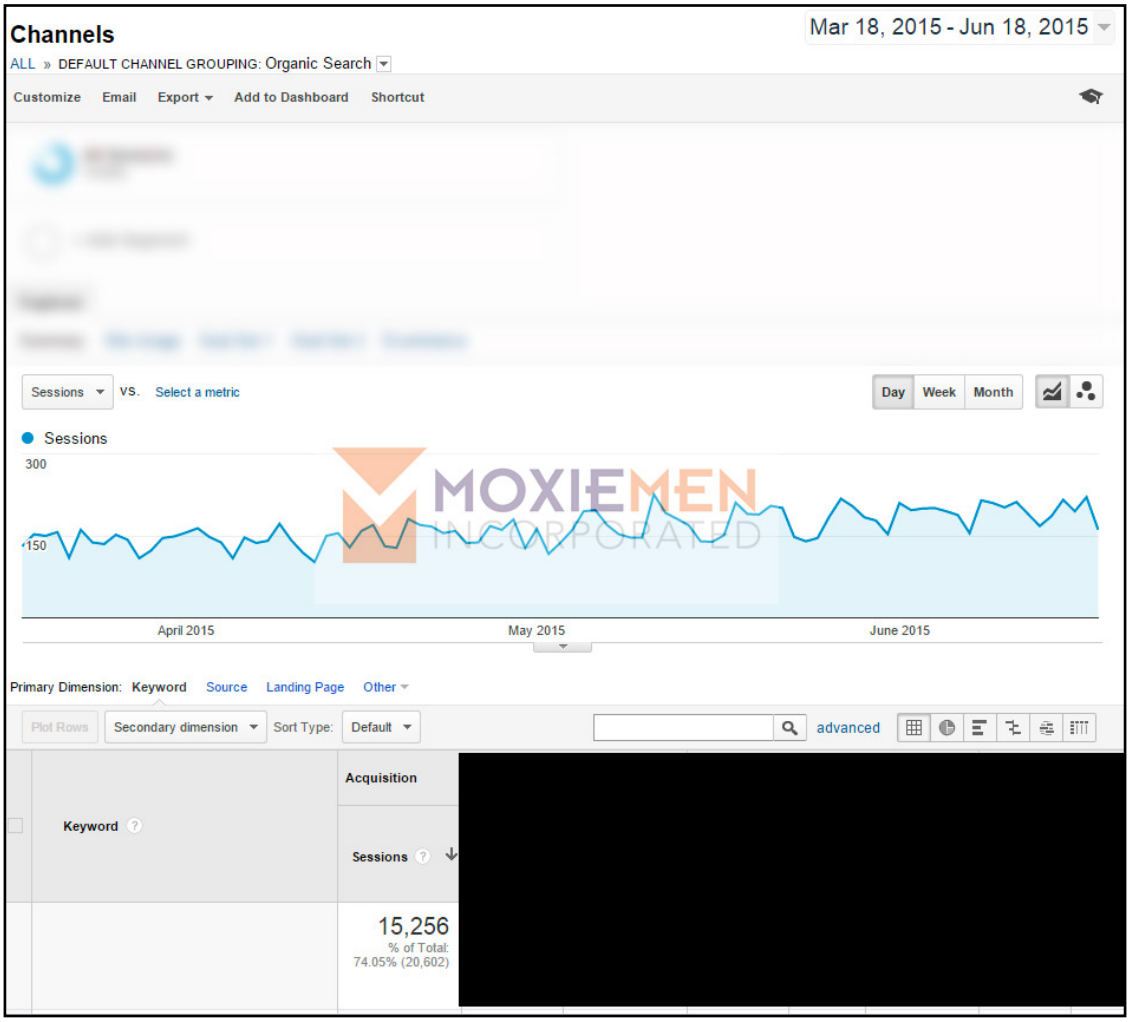
*This is not to imply that all of the site's organic visitors came from these keywords, or that the site ranks organically for all of these terms. This is just to illustrate the high costs of pay-per-click advertising for some keyword phrases.

Even if the cost per click were as low as $.50 for the average keyword phrase that sent traffic to THE CLIENT's website, the cost to the company to advertise for those keywords would have been almost $30,000! Instead they got it for free.

KEYWORD DIVERSIFICATION

Over time, a blogging strategy is a very good tactic for increasing the amount of keywords that drives traffic to your website. The number of keywords is an important metric for a variety of reasons – most notably that it's not always immediately feasible to predict which keyword phrases your site is going to rank for, especially right away. For this reason, we focused on creating relevant, valuable content that covers a wide variety of industry topics.

In the case of THE CLIENT, the results gradually grew more and more diverse over time, as illustrated in the 90 day period prior to this case study. The site made organic impressions for 1,911 different phrases (source: Google Webmaster Tools), 509 of which were on the first page of Google's organic search results. This ultimately led to 15,256 visitors to the site from organic search over the three month period.



THE LIFETIME VALUE OF A CUSTOMER

Every intelligent business owner knows the lifetime value of his or her customers and clients. This obviously varies by industry, geographic location and market, but as Marcus Lemonis of "The Profit" fame is fond of pointing out, it's important to know your numbers. As far as the auto industry is concerned:

- The average American family spends $817 annually on auto maintenance and repairs (source).
- The average length of a customer's patronage of an auto repair facility is five years (source).

So the way the math works out, the average lifetime value of an automotive repair customer in the United States is:

$817 x 5 years = $4085

And this figure doesn't even take into account the potential for referrals, which is very important to any service based business.

Going back to the traffic numbers, if just 1%* of those 58,000 visitors became a customer, that would be 580 new customers over the course of 41 months, or about 14 new customers per month.

$4085 x 580 customers = $2,369,300 in new business over the next five years**.

*Conversion rates vary by industry and market. 1% is generally accepted as a solid conversion rate in many instances.

**This is a generalization and is not intended to state as a matter of fact or imply that this figure is representative of revenues earned by THE CLIENT as a result of this SEO campaign. The purpose of this case study is an examination of the effects of blogging on search engine optimization, not conversion optimization.

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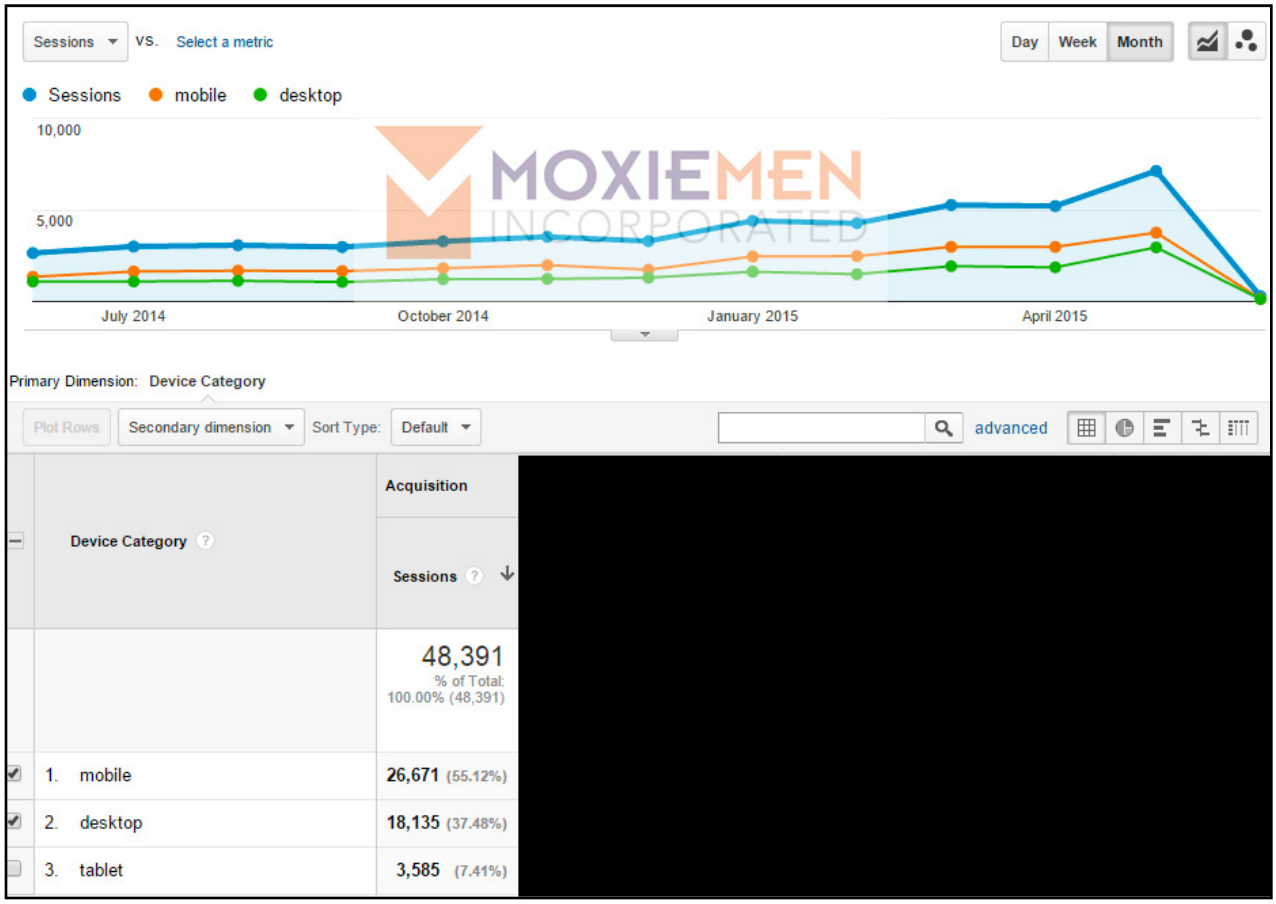
CONSIDERATIONS FOR MOBILE

As mobile devices become more and more commonplace in the world, the need has arisen to ensure that websites are built to be compatible with the smaller screen sizes. Google has gone so far as to publicly disclose that their search algorithm is being altered to reward sites they deem mobile friendly with better search placement. The even created a tool so that you could test your site's mobile compatibility.

In the beginning of 2014, we noticed that the site was being visited more and more by people using mobile devices. By June of 2014, mobile traffic had actually eclipsed traffic coming from desktops and as has continued to widen the gap in the 12 months since*.

*The amount of mobile traffic will vary by industry, but it's not uncommon to see mobile traffic to service based industries in the 40-50% range. In the case of THE CLIENT, traffic from mobile devices is will over 50% and will continue to trend upward. In May, 2015, Google publicly acknowledged that more searches took place on mobile devices than desktop.



KEY TAKEAWAYS/CONCLUSION

In conclusion, here are a few items that are especially noteworthy:

- Patience is a virtue with any SEO campaign. If you look at the charts on page 8, you will see that while the needle moved somewhat in the first calendar year, it wasn't until year two and beyond that the results really started to be worth getting excited about.
- As with many SEO campaigns, once things start moving in the right direction, they tend to grow more rapidly.
- Of the total SEO traffic numbers, most of it came in in the last 2 years.
- This was the result of blogging and the general publication of good content on a consistent basis.
- These results were achieved with exactly no link-building or link-earning efforts outside of a few directory submissions.
- The outstanding results that we were able to achieve were at least in part influenced by the geographic location of the business.
- Content topics initially were chosen based on common sense and questions asked by customers.
- Once some traffic started coming in, we began to create more content based on the keywords people were using to find the site. This served to bolster the authority of the site and solidify the site's position in the search results.

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MoxieMen Incorporated is a full service digital marketing agency located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and specializes in driving targeted traffic through search marketing initiatives. To schedule a consultation, call us at 866.412.2648 or send us an email.