



**Connecting small businesses with  
the substantial search engine  
consumer audience.**

So, you have a great website.  
How will customers find it?



# Connecting small businesses with the substantial search engine consumer audience

## It's a dynamic, online local business marketplace

Beginning in 2000, keyword-based online advertising reinvented the fledgling Internet advertising industry by introducing a significant promotional opportunity to businesses large and small around the world. Leading search engines Yahoo! and Google developed advertising programs where businesses could create short, text-based ads and bid on keywords relevant to their business in an auction-style environment. It launched a billion dollar revolution that has driven millions of new customers to small businesses worldwide.

Now, imagine this scenario: a fallen traffic signal leads to a three car collision in a heavily trafficked area of Chicago's west side. The victims in this accident have minor injuries; their cars get the majority of the damage. Insurance companies will need to be notified. The cars will require repair. One driver will need a chiropractor to dissolve soreness in her neck. Some will need attorneys to address the hazard of the fallen traffic light with the city.

The victims of this accident will need assistance from a variety of small businesses to resolve this accident. They will ask for auto repair referrals from their insurance company, consult with friends for attorney suggestions, and may even find the yellow pages helpful to find a good chiropractor.

Today, a search for a chiropractor in Chicago is as easy as typing "chiropractor Chicago" into Google, Yahoo!, or any of a network of search engines that make up a virtual local business marketplace online.

A 2006 survey by Nielsen//NetRatings and WebVisible found that consumers often turn to popular search engines to find local professionals for hire. The landmark survey demonstrated that:

- 36% of those that had used search engines to find a local business had searched for a medical specialist like a chiropractor.
- 32% had searched for automotive services or repair.
- 11% had searched for legal services in the past three months alone.

If you have ever used search engines to search for something

similar, you are in the majority of today's Internet users.

## Advertising everywhere, all at once

The modern small business marketer has an enormous challenge to produce advertising that is where consumers are looking at the time they are looking for it. There is an endless variety of advertising options available, but each requires a significant effort to make it effective with a reasonable return on investment.

If you manage advertising for a small business - a retail store, professional office, or e-commerce website, you have probably grown comfortable with your yellow pages ad or Sunday newspaper insert. It is automatic at this point. You probably know that a coupon in the Sunday paper means a 2:1 return on its cost to your business (or some clear metric from your experiences).

In recent years, you may have noticed a small decline in the response you get from your traditional advertising efforts. It is likely because the audience for your local advertising is moving online.

Online media measurement group comScore recorded an astounding 849 million searches for local businesses in July 2006. That means consumers are searching their local towns and cities for places to shop or services to hire. If they do not find you there, they will probably find one of your competitors.

Advertising on search engines is a necessary component to a well-rounded advertising strategy. It is not meant to replace or compete with other popular forms of advertising; however, advertising on search engines - with the ability to serve users with exactly the information they are actively seeking - is an opportunity to connect to a rapidly growing consumer audience that is ready to transact with your business.

From the American Advertising Federation:

- 84% of online advertising professionals say online ads better target localized audiences.
- 75% of online advertising professionals say online ads better demonstrate ROI.

## How online advertising works

There are many forms of online advertising, but they typically

involve delivering a specific, targeted advertisement to a user (or consumer) based on where they are on the Web, what they're doing, reading, or actively seeking. For example, someone checking sports scores online may see ads for Nike running shoes, new golf clubs, or a subscription to *Sports Illustrated*. On the Web, there is a virtual connection between consumer and advertiser.

The most popular form of online advertising is pay-per-click, though it goes by other names as well, including search engine marketing or SEM. Pay-per-click advertising is sold by search engines – Google being the most popular – where a consumer searches for a “chiropractor in Chicago” (for example) on Google and gets back many pages of search results. Among these results are paid ads that run on top of and to the right of the organic (or natural) search results.

When the consumer - interested in finding a chiropractor near her home in Chicago – clicks on an ad citing, “Board Certified Chiropractor: specializing in accident recovery,” that individual chiropractor advertiser is charged a small fee for the lead and the searcher is connected to the chiropractor's website, where she will spend a few moments learning more information that will likely lead her to becoming the chiropractor's next phone call or appointment. Based on the advertiser's desire for many or a few targeted visitors (as described above), he can dedicate a monthly budget to pay-per-click that works for his business.

## The misconceptions of advertising online

The Internet is a wonderfully simple place where consumers are free to window shop the virtual local marketplace from their office or home, from a Blackberry or a laptop, in the middle of the day, or late at night. The Web is always open. Always available.

The chiropractor advertising online should understand that there are misconceptions about the way people use the Web. Consumers are often expected to react to online advertising as they would to a yellow pages ad, coupon mailer, or similar print advertising.

Misconception #1: Five hundred clicks to my ad means five hundred new customers.

An advertiser may believe that this statement is true since a click to their ad indicates a customer who is interested in what the ad is promoting. After all, the consumer went so far as to arrive at the advertiser's website. Window shopping on the Web is a more casual activity than some care to believe, and it makes for a less decisive consumer. Many purchases, especially expensive ones, are exhaustively researched online prior to making a transaction. Some experts say clicks to an ad may not end in a purchase until as many as 90 days later, if at all. Clearly, no form of advertising promises a 100% conversion rate. Additionally, this misconception illustrates how important it is to provide a strong first impression to your website's visitors.

Misconception #2: Consumers that search online buy online.

Another popular misconception is that online advertising is only

for businesses that sell products over the Web. About 50% of small businesses have a website, but not all websites are capable of the e-commerce transactions given Amazon.com or eBay. Or perhaps their business is not suited for online transactions, such as an attorney or consultant. Many small businesses have websites that simply act as sales brochures for their companies, offering business hours, contact info, products and services, etc. A website of this type should not shy away from online advertising, as studies show that the vast majority of purchases involve online window shopping, but offline purchasing occurs at a merchant's physical store or office.

Misconception #3: Having a website is good enough, so there is no need to advertise it.

Is having a website a form of online marketing? Technically, yes. But having a website without online advertising is like having a storefront without telling anyone about it. Fundamentally, you need to advertise to invest in getting customers to visit your store or office. The same rules apply to websites. There are millions of consumers searching online, but they may not be able to find you! You need to utilize the Internet as a very targeted advertising medium and let it bring local, interested shoppers to you.

Misconception #4: Search engine organic listings are free, so why pay to advertise?

When a woman searches for a “chiropractor in Chicago” she will get two types of search results: ads and organic results. Organic (also known as natural) results appear in the center of most search engine results pages. Search engines rank these results according to complex algorithms that attempt to give searchers the most mathematically relevant results to their query. Many businesses benefit greatly from this algorithmic placement, while others hire expensive Search Engine Optimization (SEO) professionals to help their websites gain the best placement in Google's top 10 through a myriad of legitimate and non-legitimate tactics. Ultimately, nothing is free. If you want your business to receive top placement in the organic rankings, prepare to pay a hefty toll in website modifications and professional assistance - and once you are happy with the results, know that Google may change its algorithm and unravel your hard work, sending your website from 3rd ranked to 199th. Organic traffic is a great way to drive consumers to your website, but it is not the only way, nor is it often the most manageable and predictable way to achieve online success.

It has also been said that many of the organic results are research oriented and not specific enough for online consumers looking for something to buy. You be the judge.

## The role of a website is to turn shoppers into buyers

Websites come in 3 different styles: the good, great, and ugly. It is important to know what a good website looks like and what it can do when determining the value of an online advertising campaign, as businesses with quality websites will gain the highest return on investment. Businesses with less effective websites are

still candidates for online advertising campaigns, but they should consider making enhancements to their site or consider a landing page to get more activity from their campaigns.

An efficiently and effectively designed website is like an inviting storefront. It will determine whether or not a consumer wants to shop with you. But ultimately, website opinions can be subjective. The best tool for determining if your website is capable of turning shoppers into customers is your own trained eye and intuition. Use these tips to evaluate your website's ability to turn browsers into buyers:

- Does your website accurately reflect your business and your strengths?
- Can your customers find what they are looking for easily?
- Are your hours of operation easy to find? What about your phone number, address, or driving directions?
- How many clicks does it take to find a phone number? Every page of your site should prominently display contact information such as your email address and phone number.
- Are sales incentives or calls-to-action posted? Coupons? Online specials or pricing deals? Offer online incentives and sale prices as you would to your walk-in customers.
- Do you offer "online only" specials to track your web site-specific activities?

## Making sense of it all for the busy small business marketer

Make your move, but move cautiously.

Pay-per-click advertising is available to the small business marketer in the following forms:

**Do-It-Yourself (DIY):** Do-it-yourselfers are small business marketers who take the time to learn the complicated process of creating and managing their own pay-per-click campaigns. They directly log onto the major search engines, set up individual accounts, and bid on and buy keywords through an elaborate keyword bidding process. When a searching consumer enters keywords "chiropractor" and "Chicago," the highest bidders' ads appear favorably in the sponsored ads column of the search results pages.

**Agencies or Agents:** Agents work on behalf of the business owner

by manually managing the business's pay-per-click campaign for a monthly fee, plus advertising costs.

In each case, the DIY and agents create ads and buy keywords directly from search engines. Google's Adwords program is the most popular, second is Yahoo! Search Marketing, but there are nearly as many advertising programs as there are search engines. These programs require that the one managing the campaign have advanced knowledge of each search engine's unique rules and procedures, their type of consumer users, and a firm grasp on navigating the campaign's online management interface, not to mention a talent for ad copywriting and keyword selection.

If you are thinking that this is a time-consuming process, you are absolutely right. Most small business owners are busy managing the store and simply do not have the time.

According to the eMarketer report, "Pay-Per-Click Not-So-Easy," businesses choose to manage their online pay-per-click campaigns in the following ways:

- 100% use Google.
- 90% use Yahoo! and Google.
- 76% use MSN and Google.
- 27% use Ask.com and Google.
- 59% manage keyword bidding with internal resources.
- 18% outsource to agents or service vendors.
- 4% use a combination of internal and outsourced solutions.

eMarketer goes on to say, "somewhat amazingly, 99% of those that manage pay-per-click campaigns in-house have three or fewer people working on the job. A third of the executives spend 21 or more hours a week managing PPC campaigns, and a third spent five or less hours a week."

"If you have room in your head for one website usability rule, make it this one: I should be able to 'get it' - what it is and how to use it - without expending any energy thinking about it."

- Steve Krug, website design specialist and author of  
*Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Guide to Web Usability*

## About WebVisible, Inc.

Established in 2001, WebVisible is the fastest growing name in local interactive advertising and recipient of the 2007 Emerging Software Company of the Year award, by the Technology Council of Southern California.

Our business philosophy is that local business owners are too busy minding their stores to successfully navigate the complexities of buying and managing their own online advertising, whether pay-per-click, banner ads, call-based solutions or ROI measurement tools. WebVisible solves this problem by offering turn-key, fully managed software solutions that support interactive advertising with predictable pricing and guaranteed results.

WebVisible has captured the attention of the Internet's biggest companies (Google, Yahoo, MSN, Ask, etc) and brought them together with some of the largest media companies (International Yellow Pages, Newspapers and online service providers), enabling sales channels to package and sell local Internet advertising in a meaningful, scalable way. By providing this bridge we have established ourselves as a true expert in bringing the Internet as an advertising and customer acquisition medium to small businesses around the world.

All solutions are privately branded and sold by a growing list of resellers in the yellow pages, newspaper and online marketing industries, including Earthlink, British Telecom, MediaNews Group, McClatchy Company, Homestead.com, Yellow Pages Group of Canada and more.

For information on purchasing our advertising products or becoming a reseller partner, contact us:

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