

SEM Helps Blue Coat Rise Above the Noise on the Internet

The Challenge:

Today, B2B technology companies are challenged with creating a strong presence on the Internet, attracting prospects in their target market and finding the time and resources to market their solutions online. With billions of searches happening on the Internet everyday, it's hard for companies to differentiate themselves, to rise above the noise, and be found by technology buyers.

According to Benjamin Rice, general manager of the WinProxy Security Division at Blue Coat Systems®, which licenses WinProxy®, Blue Coat is always looking for innovative marketing opportunities that will ultimately help them reach customers in their target market — business owners with small- to mid-sized computer networks (anywhere from 10 to 500 employee users).

WinProxy® is single piece of software that protects PC networks from spyware, phishing scams, hackers, viruses, spam and inappropriate Web content, while allowing all PCs on a LAN to access the Internet through a single connection. WinProxy® WinProxy Security is a division of Blue Coat Systems, Inc.

Of all the marketing tactics that companies are using to be found online, one that is gaining a lot of popularity is search engine marketing, or SEM. Also known as pay-per-click or cost-per-click advertising, SEM has emerged as a good way for technology companies to drive traffic and, ultimately, sales.

With a relatively short sales cycle, less than 30 days, and a global marketplace, Rice is challenged with having marketing programs in place that continually drive opportunities into the company's sales pipeline. Rice already runs many of his online marketing campaigns in-house, but he was willing to look at outsourcing some of his SEM activities to a trusted partner in order to free up his time to focus on other marketing opportunities.

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**— Benjamin Rice,
General Manager,
WinProxy Security Division, Blue Coat Systems**

The Results:

In the more than five months that Rice has engaged KnowledgeStorm's Search Accelerator service, Blue Coat's pay-per-click advertisements have produced over 11,600 clicks, averaging almost 2,400 clicks a month.

“Running an SEM campaign on search engines today is like advertising on television in the 70s,” says Rice. “There are only three or four main places your company has to be advertising. By partnering with KnowledgeStorm, they manage my keywords on Google, Yahoo! and Miva, which is where we need to be.

“Having a presence on these search engines helps technology buyers find my company when they are searching for Internet sharing solutions.”

Since their sales cycle is so short, Rice was able to directly attribute sales to their pay-per-click campaigns. “We had a sale in the first week of our contract with KnowledgeStorm that was big enough to cover the cost of our entire marketing program for a year,” says Rice.

Reporting ROI is crucial. Success in SEM goes far beyond managing front-end keywords and bids. Measuring site activity and the traffic that is drawn to various landing pages, offers and incentives is equally important. KnowledgeStorm offers Search Accelerator clients easy-to-use tools and techniques to monitor their SEM campaigns.

The Solution:

Blue Coat began working with KnowledgeStorm, the Internet's top-ranked search resource for technology solutions and information, in 2004 on a marketing program promoting a whitepaper on the KnowledgeStorm Network, a premier network that distributes technology vendors' content through the largest number of prominent Websites and most popular search engines.

Since that time, Rice has continued to increase Blue Coat's campaigns on KnowledgeStorm as a way to supplement other marketing programs they have going on their own through e-mail campaigns and promotions on their Website.

In 2005, KnowledgeStorm approached Rice with a new opportunity — to outsource some of his SEM campaigns to KnowledgeStorm, utilizing the company's new keyword management service, Search Accelerator. Search Accelerator, by managing keyword buys and tracking, simplifies the complex process of keyword management, giving technology vendors the time they need to focus on other marketing activities.

Rice decided to try KnowledgeStorm's Search Accelerator service. "Search is a hard science to master," says Rice. "KnowledgeStorm successfully manages thousands of keywords so they really understand it. They've done a great job getting targeted traffic to our whitepaper, and we knew that they could utilize this same expertise with our SEM campaigns."

Before Rice's Search Accelerator campaign went live, KnowledgeStorm analyzed search behavior and keyword performance in Blue Coat's specific business and application arena as well as their competitors. Leveraging KnowledgeStorm's years of search experience and in-depth knowledge of the technology market, Blue Coat and KnowledgeStorm created a keyword management program to meet their specific needs.

The Results:

Blue Coat's Search Accelerator campaign sends clicks directly to a customized landing page on KnowledgeStorm so that Rice and his KnowledgeStorm account team are able to easily track and measure the success of the campaign.

Each week, Rice includes the reports he gets from KnowledgeStorm on his Search Accelerator program in his status report to Blue Coat's upper management.

"These reports are great for tracking our campaign, and they also work nicely for weekly status reports and for board meeting updates. Because I can prove a strong ROI on this campaign, no one questions the value of running programs like this."

