

CASE STUDY FOR BOATS.COM

Client: Boats.com
URL: www.boats.com

Boats.com links boat buyers with boat sellers, with boat model listings from over 375 boat builders and used boat listings from boat dealers and yacht brokers worldwide, all available through one simple search. Once you've found the right boat Boats.com connects you with the best marine financing to help you find the best boat loan rates around, plus insurance and shipping, too.

Initial State

Boats.com Visibility Statistics September 30, 2003				
First Place Rankings: 26	Top 5: 49	Top 10: 68	Top 20: 99	Top 30: 108
Keywords: 19	Engines: 19	Same: 114	Total: 142	

Goals

Boats.com had some respectable rankings when they contacted SEO Inc. but were not ranked in the Top 10 on Google for several important keywords in a few of their important product categories. While the site ranked very well for keywords like boats, new boats, etc., they had little visibility for highly competitive phrases like “boat insurance”, “boat loans”, and “boat warranty”. Their goal was to get more traffic for these product categories.

- #9 on Google for “boat loans” which is by far the most search phrase in the boat financing category
- Not Ranked in the top 50 on Google for “boat insurance”, which is searched more than boat loans

Boats.com was very clear about their primary goals; to achieve top 5 or Top 10 rankings on Google for their primary keywords. All other rankings increases would be considered a bonus.

Challenges

Boats.com used java server pages (.jsp) and the site was completely dynamic as soon as the user leaves the home page. In addition, they used SSL for security as soon as the user leaves the home page. This site structure posed two unique problems that made the site’s interior pages inaccessible to search engine spiders. Instead of static URLs, the page address would look something like the following: https://www.boats.com/insurance/index.jsp?src=header_bi. In addition, these pages had very little text content on and even less keyword density in the text content that did exist.

Solution

Since none of the site's interior pages were getting indexed by search engine spiders, the chances of ranking for keywords targeted on those pages was very small. So the first part of the solution was to build out the front end of the site by using static URLs (like <http://www.boats.com/boat-loans/index.jsp>) so that pages would get indexed by search engine spiders. In addition, we added keyword-rich content at the proper density levels to each of the pages. Previously each of these pages had little to NO keyword-rich text content. Of course, SEO then completed a themed optimization of each of the pages.

Accomplishments

This client is extremely pleased with the results of the campaign. They have achieved TOP 10 rankings for the 4 most important keywords (boat loans, boat insurance, boat warranty, and boat shipping) without losing their #1 ranking for the keyword "boats". These new rankings have given the site previously unprecedented visibility for their financial product categories.

Boats.com is now moving forward with more optimization and a link popularity campaign so that they can move into Top 3 positions on all of their important keywords.

Boats.com Visibility Statistics January 30, 2004				
First Place Rankings: 32	Top 5: 95	Top 10: 126	Top 20: 173	Top 30: 191
Keywords: 19	Engines: 19	Same: 144	Total: 224	

Top keywords

Keyword	9/30/2003	1/30/2004
boats	1	1
boat insurance	Not in first 50	7
boat loans	9	3
boat transport	37	10
boat warranty	15	1
boat finance	39	16
boat shipping	19	2