

## Digital Strategy – Case Study 2 – Heating Oil Industry

### Background

Our client, a successful and well-managed company offering heating oil; propane; and diesel products, had clear goals and objectives. Their marketing strategy for home sales revolved around high quality of service, growth through word of mouth, and visibility in search engines. Although this strategy was working very well, the client felt that they were behind on what the Internet had to offer. They also were interested in ways that marketing could be automated for some of their business lines.

### Scope

Although the client was eager to start with social media marketing, the client agreed that the initial scope of the work would be limited to elaborating and documenting a social media marketing strategy. The agreed scope of the work included:

- a snapshot of the existing situation
- a scan of what the competition is doing
- social media marketing goals and objectives
- an analysis of various social media platforms
- a roadmap with a timeline
- a section on risks.
- some recommendations on how to proceed.
- an estimate of costs for getting set up for social media marketing.
- a document titled *Social Media Strategy/Roadmap*.
- appendices containing ideas or materials used to develop the strategy.

### Actions

Goals and objectives related to social media marketing and search engine optimization were established. The existing situation was documented, and early recommendations were made in view of addressing some existing weaknesses.

An extensive analysis of how competitors were using social media provided insight as to what was working and what hadn't worked for the competition. We were also able to determine who was investing in social media and who wasn't. Understanding what the competition is

doing is a very important part of social media strategy development. Social media marketing initially involves a lot of trial and error. It is advantageous to let the competitors make the errors and learn from their mistakes. The competitive analysis revealed significant strategic advantages in favor of our client.

Each social media platform was analyzed to determine its suitability and to find marketing opportunities. We were able to determine the best approach to reach our targeted audience at the lowest cost.

In addition to the above-mentioned items, the social media strategy documentation contains cost estimates, a road map, a list of risks, a risk mitigation plan, detailed targeting strategies, targeting tips, and a list of concrete actions that are required.

## End Result

The end result was a clear path forward with the client having a good understanding of costs, benefits, risks, required resources, a list of what platforms to use, valuable tips on how to reach the targeted audience, and concrete steps required to make things happen.

Our structured approach and previous experience with social media marketing made it possible to produce the strategy and documentation in less than 25 consulting hours. Note that most of the activities would have been required even if a strategy exercise had not been undertaken. Therefore, the effective cost of having a Social Media Strategy document was very low.