

CASE STUDY - GreekGear.com

Exclusive Concepts Delivers Happy Results for Greekgear.com

Joe Tantillo conceived his idea for an online store while sitting in the waiting room of his wife's doctor. They were expecting their first child. Leafing through one of the magazines from the table in front of him, he began reading an article about online retailing. "It was like the article was speaking to me," says Joe — who in college had belonged to a fraternity. So he decided to start an online store selling personalized Greek products to that market.

Today Greekgear.com is the largest online source for fraternity and sorority merchandise — selling everything from engraved poker chip boxes and lettered t-shirts to embroidered hats and scarves. The website contains over 15,000 pages with products that can be customized to individual tastes or a particular group's standards. The company also operates 14 other sites in the Greek space, including branded stores run on behalf of specific organizations, such as Sigma Chi, a fraternity, and Delta Gamma, a sorority.

But as Greekgear.com grew, it also had some birthing pains of its own, Joe says. That's when he called Exclusive Concepts.

"I started Greekgear.com back in 1999 and we had incredible success the first eight years of our business — growing to 20+ employees and dozens of sites. And then competition came, the Internet changed and things got harder."

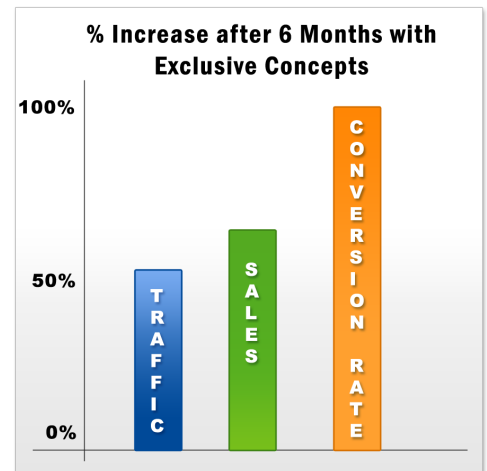
It happened in March 2007, says Robb Hass, the company's chief operating officer. "We started to see a tremendous slide in our traffic. We obviously got a little nervous. Our traffic was dropping and our sales were flat."

"That's when we decided to engage Exclusive Concepts as our Internet marketing partner," says Joe. "Then our sales went from a small decline to an immediate 40% jump — and within six months we began to see record profits again."

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Record profits, a fast 40% rise in sales, and doubled conversion rates are among the reasons the largest online retailer of fraternity and sorority merchandise shops Exclusive Concepts.



In the first 6 months traffic, sales, and conversion rates all major gains

"I appreciate how much the Exclusive Concepts team genuinely wants us to be successful," Joe says, almost like a proud father.

"They understand what a store means to a retailer. They genuinely want to be your marketing

Just More and More Business

Robb relates how the relationship with Exclusive Concepts started: “Joe is very active in the Yahoo! forums and chat rooms. He talked to some other Yahoo! store owners and a couple of guys recommended Exclusive Concepts as someone they had used and whom we might want to check out. Joe called Scott Smigler the next day — I think it was on a weekend in fact — and got into a big discussion about search engine optimization and the importance of traffic and some of the things that Exclusive Concepts offers. Really, the two of them just hit it off. And I think the first big assignment was around SEO — and basically getting our site in shape so we would have a big impact on Google and some of the other search engines.”

From there the partnership grew quickly, he says. “Once Exclusive Concepts proved themselves on SEO we started giving them pay-per-click assignments. Then we started talking about web design and how to update our shopping cart — then our masthead — and then some new applications we were considering. And just on and on and on. We just started giving Exclusive Concepts more and more business.”

Having Exclusive Concepts involved everywhere is now key to the site’s success, Robb says. “You’ve got to come to our website and you’ve got to be blown away. That first impression is so important. And the navigation is so important. And the shopping cart and the shipping options — everything is important.”

Better Marketers — And Smarter

Joe agrees. “Now we use Exclusive Concepts for search engine optimization, pay per click marketing, conversion enhancement, email marketing, and more. Conversion rates that had hovered around 1% jumped to the 2% range. Pay per click efficiency has also increased. Search engine rankings have sky-rocketed.”

Adds Robb, “When we compare the fall of ’08 with the fall of ’07 we’ve probably seen traffic increases of around 20% — which, in our business is a pretty good jump. Fourth quarter revenue increased last year probably in the 25-30% range.”

Exclusive Concepts not only helps Greekgear be better marketers, but also smarter marketers. It’s a major difference over other firms, Robb says. “They’ve got a sense of what makes people tick. You can just tell, especially Scott. Just by the comments he makes and the things he’ll drop in an email —

Other benefits include:

- Quarterly year-over-year revenue increases of 25-30%
- Search engine rankings have “sky rocketed”
- Fully-optimized 15,000 + product website
- Deep insight and strategic assessment of customer value, behavior, conversion rates and cost per conversion
- Full-service virtual partnership for search engine optimization, pay per click marketing, conversion enhancement, email marketing and more

you get a sense he really understands the web retail space. A lot of people in online retail today just don't get it."

Robb cites some examples: "We know exactly to the penny what people are worth when they come into our site — the conversion rates, the cost per conversion and our traffic numbers and how they trend in different times of the year. I can go into my email inbox right now and find emails from Scott Smigler and the other Exclusive Concepts folks we deal with. They're just always available — thinking about our business. It's that openness, that availability, that strategic thinking — it just really works. And the tangible numbers back it up."

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