Community Corner: Spotlight on Search Engine Land Award Winners iCrossing, Merkle Inc. & Todd Silverstein

In this week’s edition of our Search Engine Land Award winners spotlight series, we are featuring the agencies who won the 2017 awards for Best B2B Search Marketing Initiative for SEO, Best Retail Search Marketing Initiative for SEO and Best Enterprise SEM Initiative.

We also are interviewing Todd Silverstein, who won the award for Best Overall SEM Initiative for Small Business. While Silverstein serves as the US head of performance marketing at Edelman Digital, it was his work as an independent contractor for a small business that earned him a 2017 Search Engine Land Award.

“It’s important for me to always practice what I preach, and I’ve been pushing my Performance Marketing team at Edelman Digital to always deliver incredible client results,” says Silverstein. “Because of this, I jumped at the opportunity to perform advanced SEM implementation.”

This year’s Search Engine Land Awards event is being hosted in Seattle, Washington, on June 12, 2018, during the SMX Advanced Conference. If you’re considering submitting an entry for the 2018 awards program, there is still time. The early-entry deadline for Search Engine Land Award submissions is March 31, 2018, but the applications will be accepted through April 13.

Last year, the team at iCrossing took home two trophies: the Best B2B Search Marketing Initiative for SEO and the Best Retail Search Marketing Initiative for SEO.

“Deciding what campaigns to submit was one of the toughest decisions!” says Jon Maxson, the senior director of SEO for the digital marketing agency. “We felt like these retail and B2B stories represented excellent examples of the difficult challenges our clients faced last year in very different circumstances.”

For its Best Retail Search Marketing Initiative for SEO award, iCrossing’s winning entry demonstrated how it was able to turn a project that often leads to a negative outcome – moving a site from one platform to another – into a best-case scenario.

“Our retail client faced the frequently difficult task of migrating to a new site platform,” says Maxson. Instead of losing web traffic, iCrossing was able to lift the site’s traffic 100 percent and increased revenue by 205 percent.

Maxson says submitting awards applications is a focus for his team.

“One of the great values we bring to clients is our experience solving similar challenges for other clients, and the SEL Award wins are an important reinforcement of the quality and types of search programs we execute on a daily basis.”

According to the SEO director, most of the work they submitted for this year’s entry was completed in the final weeks leading up to the submission deadline.

“We wanted to submit entries for two reasons: one, to recognize the iCrossing teams who delivered what we believed were award-worthy results for those clients; and two, for the industry barometer that these search awards represent,” says Maxson.

He says his teams are naturally a bit humble when it comes to sharing the results of their work, but being recognized by industry peers is important because it helps build momentum for iCrossing’s search business and the agency as a whole.

When asked what he thought helped iCrossing win two Search Engine Land Awards, Maxson says his team didn’t only focus on traffic volumes but also showed how the search campaigns aligned with the client’s overarching business problems.

“We reached the audiences they wanted to target and demonstrated how those audiences converted at increasing rates.”

Maxson says winning a Search Engine Land Award is a natural source of pride for his team and that they’re already looking

forward to submitting award entries for this year’s event.

The 2017 Search Engine Land Award for Best Enterprise SEM Initiative went to Merkle Inc. for the agency’s work with MetLife Financial Services.

“We had a lot of really outstanding candidates, which made it difficult to select just one campaign,” says Merkle’s associate marketing director, Mallory McClenathen. “In the end, we felt the work we did for MetLife best exemplified Merkle’s people-based approach to marketing.”

McClenathen says the team’s ability to work with the financial services firm, and the client-agency relationship that was forged, was key to creating a winning audience-first SEM

strategy that delivered strong growth.

“Our approach to search and media focuses on people before channels. I think our entry stood out because it focused on how creating meaningful brand interactions drove results for our client.”

According to the associate marketing director, the most difficult part of building out its award entry was deciding which campaign to submit. But once Merkle decided on the work it wanted to present, McClenathen says the submission process was relatively easy.

“The team developed the entry fairly quickly, using data and reporting that had already been put together for the client.”

McClenathen says submitting Search Engine Land Awards entries gives Merkle the opportunity to highlight the work it is doing for clients and to showcase how the agency is creating innovative campaigns within the search industry.

“We’re honored to be recognized by Search Engine Land,” says the associate marketing director. “It gives our search strategists and practitioners further recognition of the incredible results that they drive for their clients.”

Todd Silverstein is a veteran Search Engine Land Award winner. Two years ago, his team at Edelman won a Best Overall Search Marketing Initiative award.

In 2017, Silverstein was back in the awards circle, but instead of representing Edelman Digital, the agency's head of US performance marketing won an award as an independent contractor.

"Being a team of one, working on WipeRecord as a private contractor, the submission process was highly streamlined," says Silverstein, who added the application was extremely easy since the backbone of the campaign was real-time utilization of data coupled with a deep understanding of the business.

“The proverbial story had already written itself before I even put pen to paper.”

The ultimate goal of the search marketing campaign Silverstein designed for WipeRecord, a legal tech startup, was to gain market share in an extremely crowded space.

“The crux of this campaign was to take what another agency had been doing and revolutionize – both in terms of delivery and results,” says Silverstein. “The campaign was holistic in that it entailed the entire program, benchmarked by the first six months of me being at the helm (from January to June) versus the prior year.”

The award-winning campaign resulted in a 490 percent lift in qualified leads for WipeRecord, coupled with a 70 percent reduction in cost per lead.

“The true impact, of course, being a transformational increase in revenue and sales (including a ROAS of nearly 3,000 percent once we implemented Salesforce revenue realization through GA).”

According to Silverstein, his systemic approach to the WipeRecord’s search marketing campaign included unique campaigns broken out by query, sub-DMA, device preference, demographic and conversion type, along with in-depth keyword targeting and audience personalization.

“The win means a lot to me personally, since the vast majority of people in my position severely atrophy in terms of being able to execute world-class search engine marketing,” says Silverstein, “This win also validates the incredible work my performance marketing team at Edelman Digital has been doing – which I learn from as well – and serves to enhance the type of friendly competition we engage in, to ensure everyone continues operating at their peak.”

If you want to join the esteemed list of Search Engine Land

Award winners, please submit your entry before the early entry deadline of March 31, 2018. Submissions will be accepted through the final deadline of April 13. The Search Engine Land Awards team has added several new categories this year, including Best Search & Social Media Marketing Initiative, Best Research Initiative by an Agency or Individual and Best Boutique Agency for SEO and SEM.

You can learn more about the upcoming awards event and how to submit your entry at 2018 Search Engine Land Awards.

Stay tuned to this column, as next week we'll feature Search Engine Land Award winners in the "In-House Team of the Year for SEM" and "Best Enterprise SEM Initiative for Travel and Lifestyle Campaigns!"

About The Author

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