How a localized SEO campaign delivered global market share, lifted revenue



Wolfgang Digital's SEO team. Image: Wolfgang Digital.

For businesses looking to expand and grow internationally, SEO can play an important role in scaling growth. Last year, the London-based Digital Marketing Institute (DMI) was looking to gain market diversity to protect against macro-environmental factors such as the Brexit referendum.

Looking at search volume for high-volume keywords relevant to

the digital marketing training provider's offerings, its digital agency Wolfgang Digital suggested focusing on the U.S. market to scale the business. "With responsibility for global expansion resting on search channels, the tactics had to focus on scaling quickly, regionalising the messaging, and driving efficiency," said Wolfgang Digital, which won the 2019 Search Engine Land Awards for SEO agency of the year.

The objective was to increase leads and revenue from the U.S. market quickly within a limited budget.

SEO localization tactics to spur growth

Wolfgang Digital used a mixed of technical SEO efforts, including creating internationalized subdirectories, hreflang tag implementation and Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools localizations.

The team also developed a content calendar process that focused on interests, geography and calendar event data. To meet DMI's international search goals, the agency knew DMI's online content would have to have a hyper-localized approach and take cultural nuances into consideration, even across English-speaking markets. Automated reporting pulls search volume, Google Search Console and Google Ads data together, "displaying insights to fully internationalise a website based on user intent and conversion-likelihood," said Wolfgang Digital.

The campaign encompassed "international SEO implementation, and how to spot opportunities within global markets," said Luke Fitzgerald, Head of SEO for Wolfgang Digital about DMI's SEO campaign, "It had content optimization and localization, and how to differentiate offerings to different geographic user bases. And, it had off-page SEO strategy, and how to outreach different, relevant and authoritative publications

within different regions.”

New market becomes top performer

In seven months, the campaign generated a 75% increase in total organic traffic across DMI’s international markets, including the U.S., Australia and Canada, resulting in a 15% year-over-year increase in overall business revenue. The U.S. has overtaken the U.K., which had been the top performing market in terms of sales-qualified leads.

Conversion rates increased significantly, even as traffic rose. The team incorporated conversion rate optimization and UX testing as part of the campaign efforts.

Fitzgerald credits much of the campaign’s success to his agency’s internal cross-functional communication paired with external client communication. “Through innovative conceptualization and close integration with the paid search team and constant communication and collaboration with our client’s own great in-house team; the performance element was only a matter of time,” said Fitzgerald.

“With this balanced blend of technical, on-page and off-page SEO, we felt it represented the best of our work as a full-service international SEO agency, and it helped demonstrate that it’s important to get each of these elements right for a sustainable, prolonged growth and expansion within a competitive market and help grow the client’s organic visibility and, ultimately, their bottom line,” said Fitzgerald.

The team identified a set of top priority keywords and split them into tiers based on feasibility as well as where ranking improvements would drive the most value. DMI’s search visibility across the keyword set increased from 31% to 42% during the campaign.

A backlinking strategy included building links to the localized /us/ subdirectory throughout the campaign period.

Tools of the trade

In addition to Google and Bing's native tools, Wolfgang Digital used SEOmonitor for reporting, Screaming Frog to identify technical site issues and pages lacking localised metadata and hreflang reporting. Sitebulb further helped validate hreflang across multiple domains and sitemaps.

The team also used SEMRush for keyword research and tracking and BuzzSumo for better understanding what's working in DMI's vertical in the U.S.

"Often times, as we get caught up in the day-to-day of running a team or client campaigns, we don't take time to reflect and take a holistic overview of how we're performing and what the growth trajectory looks like," said Fitzgerald in considering the team's Search Engine Land Award win.

"The hard work starts now in knuckling down and maintaining this high standard and ensuring the lessons learnt from this success are effectively disseminated and applied to other clients as part of a virtuous circle of learning and continuous improvement," said Fitzgerald.

About The Author



Amy Gesenhues is a senior editor for Third Door Media, covering the latest news and updates for Search Engine Land, Marketing Land and MarTech Today. From 2009 to 2012, she was an award-winning syndicated columnist for a number of daily newspapers from New York to Texas. With more than ten years of marketing management experience, she has contributed to a variety of traditional and online publications, including MarketingProfs, SoftwareCEO, and Sales and Marketing Management Magazine. Read more of Amy’s articles.

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