

Search Engine Optimization

Infopia and HiFiSoundconnection



With an estimated 30 *billion* web pages over 110 million websites in cyberspace, online retailers must invest in internet marketing to help browsers find them from the mass of pages. Search engines such as Google and Yahoo! have long been essential guides for helping visitors find new sites and information, but how these engines work continues to be shrouded in mystery to the average, and even above-average, online business. Online marketplaces, such as eBay, attract merchants because they don't need to worry about search engine marketing (SEM) or search engine optimization (SEO)—or do they?

HiFiSoundconnection discovered that connecting with customers—whether directly through its own website or through larger marketplaces—requires sophistication and expertise. Founded in 2001, the company started by selling home theater and car audio equipment and accessories exclusively on eBay. Within two years, its rapid success made it one of the largest online car audio dealers and an eBay Titanium PowerSeller. But as competition on eBay increases, optimizing product listings and descriptions becomes even more important.

In 2003, HiFiSoundconnection launched a branded website to expand its online presence and continue its rapid growth. Successful selling on eBay requires attention to such things as keywords in product listings and descriptions, but selling on a personal website requires attention to the overall content and structure of your site, in addition to SEO.

With both a branded website and thriving eBay business, the company realized that it needed not only help in ramping up its operations, but also in enabling customers to find its own site—a top concern for the countless new sites that pop up everyday worldwide. Fortunately, HiFiSoundconnection founder Chris Rush was technologically savvy. He understood the basics of SEO, and the company enjoyed above-average search engine results—with strong rankings across the board for many keywords. However, these rankings and the company's progress soon hit a plateau, slowing the high-speed growth accustomed to the company.

Finding Success with Infopia

In 2006, HiFiSoundconnection began looking for an eCommerce solution partner to deliver a leading technology platform for growth as well as best practices for search engine optimization. The company evaluated several options and concluded that Infopia had all the right capabilities to meet its needs.

To optimize HiFiSoundconnection's search engine results, Infopia did a couple immediate things that had a big impact. First, Infopia suggested creating a sitemap to help search engine spiders, also known as web crawlers, to find and index all of the pages within the HiFiSoundconnection site. Without a sitemap, search engine spiders might find only a fraction of the content on a particular site; but after Rush created a sitemap, search engines were able to view all of HiFiSoundconnection's content and designate its website as a more authoritative source in search engine results. This addition continues to improve the company's ranking significantly among search results.

Infopia also worked with HiFiSoundconnection to structurally change key areas within the website, such as how to redirect traffic from older URLs or web addresses already indexed by search engines to new pages. Specifically, distinguishing between "301 redirects" and "302 redirects," a World Wide Web technique used to make a web page available under many URLs, is critically important for HiFiSoundconnection's SEO.

Both 301 and 302 redirects essentially work the same way but have some differences. A 302 redirect sends the traffic over to the new URL but not any of the value of its original content, traffic, links and Google Page Rank. Using a 302 redirect basically sends over the traffic, but not any of the benefit from the SEO work. By replacing HiFiSoundconnection's 302 redirects with 301 redirects, all of Rush's SEO work and enhancements are now recognized and passed through the 301 redirect, and the appropriate rankings on search engines followed.

These recommendations from Infopia immediately raised HiFiSoundconnection's search rankings tremendously. During the next phase, Infopia suggested updating webpage titles and descriptions to better map to keywords that customers commonly search. They also worked together to create new text links within the site that contained more keywords. New text links pointed to other pages within the site as a way to tell search engines which pages are the most important.

Page titles are another important factor of search engine optimization. A page title by itself cannot launch you to the top of the search engine rankings, but a good page title helps the search engines know what you are about. In addition to unique and quality page titles, unique and quality product descriptions are also important. Search engines do not like to find duplicate content across different websites. Many eCommerce sites tend to use manufacturer's descriptions for their products because it's easy and fast, yet most of their competitors may be using the same descriptions. Therefore, rewriting product descriptions with original content can receive greater credibility with the search engines.

Results

In just four months since engaging Infopia, HiFiSoundconnection saw its referrals from organic (unpaid) search results from Google, Yahoo! and MSN increase by 243% (501 referrals to 1,218 daily), 220% (305 referrals to 672 daily), and 822% (18 referrals to 148 daily) respectively. On Google, for instance, HiFiSoundconnection could not break into the top 100 results. But after working with Infopia, they ranked #4 for key phrases such as “Diamond Audio” and others—some of the most competitive in their industry.



“Infopia not only helped us scale up our business operationally, but its SEO work with us was invaluable to our brand and growth,” said Rush. “Now, in addition to business from eBay, we can attract new visitors directly to our online storefront—giving them several ways to find us and giving ourselves several opportunities to convert them into loyal customers.”