Hay in a Needle Stack.
By Steve Plunkett

If you Google “advertising,” how come M/C/C isn’t #1? That sounds like a reasonable question, doesn’t it? We *are* a full-service advertising agency. And how about the phrase “public relations firm?” Shouldn’t we come up on the first page for that? We *are* a PR firm, after all. *And* we do have industry-leading expertise in search engine optimization. So why isn’t M/C/C #1 across the board for all advertising-related searches? Because that would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. It’s just not worth the effort.

For starters, the M/C/C website does come up first in searches for “dallas texas advertising agencies and PR firms,” “creative print advertising” and “Dallas ad agency creative magazine layouts” … I could go on and on and on and on. This phenomenon has been called the “long tail of search,” meaning that a website owner has chosen not to spend its resources coming up in overly broad searches for terms like “advertising” or even for a phrase such as “advertising agency.” Instead, relying on the long tail of search, an organization generates more traffic to its website by optimizing its website based on variations of certain relevant keywords, potentially creating thousands of search-friendly phrases. In other words, the haystack is replaced by a needle stack. Let me explain.

Lesson #1: Optimize for your specialty.

On the Internet, if users don’t know who you are, they will look up what you do. At M/C/C, we specialize in marketing for a number of business sectors, technology products being one of them. We can and do provide advertising services to high-tech clients in Ireland, Scotland, Canada, California, etc., so when prospects around the world search for the best “technology advertising agency,” we make sure we rank high in Google, Yahoo! and MSN for that keyword phrase. The thinking here is simple. When we promise to be effective marketers in the technology industry, we’d better well know how to reach people in the technology business, right?

So when prospects see M/C/C ranked first (out of millions of search returns) we’ve already made a positive impression. And that’s before visitors have even clicked on our website.

Google “Technology Advertising.” The first return is a blog on new technologies in advertising. For a select group of users, it’s a valid result for those search terms. However, if someone is looking for an advertising agency specializing in the technology field, the second return is exactly what they need, ***our website***.

You may ask how we get our website ranked in the top five or even on the front page of 267,000,000 results for those terms. The nitty-gritty is complicated, but the strategy is simple. We target our website optimization according to our specialties. You should, too. And you should use the terminology that your prospects use for those specialties.

Lesson #2: Speak your prospects’ language.

Do you have statistics on your website visitors? If not, please go to http://mcc.hitslink.com and start gathering invaluable information on your website traffic.

Odds are, many of your visitors reach your website by searching for your company's name. But what about prospective clients that have never heard of you or don't know your name? Using http://mcc.hitslink.com, you can find out how they found you, then optimize your website according to the search terms that they're using. Again using the M/C/C site as an example, the second-most frequently searched term for visitors is "advertising layout." Now, there's no telling for sure, but logic and experience suggest to us that most visitors who search "advertising layout" are looking for samples of good advertising work, which they can find in the portfolio section of our website. Logic also dictates that many of these visitors are prospective clients looking for a new ad agency. If so, we've beaten our competition to the punch simply by learning the language of our prospects and optimizing our website accordingly. Logical enough, right?

Lesson #3: Get local.

Real estate agents say that it's all about location, location, location. For the most part, that's true for search engines, too. Oftentimes, when searchers have difficulty getting the right information from broad search terms, they get local. They add their state or city name to their previous search terms. That makes localization, or "GeoTargeting," as Google calls it, one of the best variables to improve your optimization strategy. In the case of the M/C/C website, we rank second in the results for "technology advertising." By simply adding "Dallas" to their phrase, searchers will find us in the #1 spot. That's a big deal considering how much "real estate" goes for on Google's first page.

And again being #1 for your prospects' searches enhances your branding and makes a great impression BEFORE visitors even start reading your marketing copy. It's tough to beat credibility like that.

Lesson #4: Explore all viable options.

So far in 2007, visitors have used 5,060 different search terms to reach our website from search engine results. To illustrate the variety of their searches and the value of optimizing your site to match these searches, the following is a small selection of those terms and how we rank within those searches. Remember, rankings in search results may vary from week to week. The rankings below were accurate as of July 13, 2007.

Dallas Advertising Agency and PR Firm
#1 out of 2,190,000 results

Dallas Technology Advertising Agency
#1 out of 2,210,000 results

Dallas Technology Public Relations Firm
#1 out of 2,400,000 results

Technology Industry Public Relations
#5 out of 124,000,000 results

Public Relations for Technology Companies
#4 out of 156,000,000 results

Public Relations Firm in Dallas Texas

#4 out of 2,080,000 results

Public Relations Companies Dallas Texas
#1 out of 2,030,000 results

Media Relations for Technology Companies
#4 out of 58,000,00 results

I could go on and on, and on, but I think you get the point. Website visitors could be reaching your site 5,000 different ways. If they're not, perhaps you should talk to someone who can make that happen.

You can start by Googling "Dallas Advertising Agency and PR Firm." We're pretty sure the top dog in your search results can do a bang-up job.