

PREPARE
YOUR WEBSITE
AND YOUR STAFF

FOR THE HOLIDAYS



By Matthew A Perosi

As you prepare for the upcoming holiday season, I'd like to share an interesting lesson learned by one of the larger jewelers I worked with after the last holiday season. I was asked to review the Google Analytics account for the jeweler with 5 store locations. Specifically, I needed to identify the most valuable traffic sources for their newly launched website for the first six months, which included the holiday 2011 season.

The website didn't have e-commerce, so measuring the value of traffic was very difficult, and relied heavily on the sales personnel asking customers how they heard about the store. As it turned out, the first six months went by and none of the sales people were trained to ask customers that question.

Google Analytics showed that more than half of the website traffic came from organic Google. New websites usually need more than six months to gain that much organic traffic. In that respect, it was easy to assume that their Search Engine Optimization consultant was getting plenty of people to their website. But without asking customers at the point of purchase, there was no way of knowing if any of it turned into actual sales.

Over those six months nearly 13% of their traffic was from people typing their domain name directly. Consumers don't normally type domain names into their browser and this high number was credited to the success of their direct mail marketing campaign. Unfortunately, we do not have sales figures to measure against the actual website traffic.

The third most popular source of traffic – and this is where it gets interesting – is from the zip code search of one of their designers. A bit over 7% of visitors during their first 6 months came from one of their large, well branded designers. The number is quite impressive considering most jewelry websites only have a few monthly referrals from vendor websites.

This particular vendor is very well known, and I assumed each store had a few sales, but it turned out they hadn't sold a single style from this vendor in the last 6 months. Like leading a horse to water, the customers were coming to the website, but no one was buying in the stores.

Customers referred from that vendor's website looked through more than 2 pages on the jeweler's site. These really were quality referrals, but somehow the sales, at least from that designer, were not being made.



Matthew A Perosi

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is freely available at www.jwag.biz. Matthew invites your feedback at matt@jwag.biz.

So, as you prepare for the holiday season 2012, I hope you will follow the following lessons my client learned from this experience:

- 1 All sales associates need to be trained and periodically reminded to ask each customer how they found the store. If they are an existing customer, then they need to be asked if they saw any of the current promotions.
- 2 Make sure your jewelry store is listed in every one of your vendor's zip code searches. During the holidays this can generate a lot of traffic.
- 3 Just because you have quality vendor referral traffic, someone is still responsible for making the final sale. Unless you have e-commerce on your website to measure sales directly, your site is just another marketing tool. If your sales associates cannot close the sale then you need to reevaluate their training.

Before the rush of the holidays arrives, take a look at the referral traffic on your website. If designer referral traffic is up, but in-store sales are low, then you need to figure out why. It could be a myriad of situations. Perhaps it's the inventory, or the price point assortment, or the location in the store, or it could be the attitude of the sales team. But above all, make sure your staff is properly trained to handle a sale for every designer line that's sending customers to you and that you are personally monitoring the website traffic and results.

