

Plow & Hearth boosts traffic, conversion rate with PLAs on Google Shopping

Plow & Hearth

At a Glance

Goals

- Increase site traffic
- Raise conversion rates

Approach

- Launched a PLA campaign on Google Shopping

Results

- Improved performance in numerous categories:
 - Unique site visits – 129 percent
 - Average-visit duration – 14.7 percent
 - Conversion rate – 12 percent
 - Revenue – 8 percent
 - Pages per visit – 6.3 percent
 - Lowered bounce rate 9.8 percent
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Founded in 1980 as a small country store, Plow & Hearth today is a leading retailer of products for the home, hearth, yard, and garden, marketing through a catalog, website, and stores. The company's family of brands also includes HearthSong, Magic Cabin, Wind & Weather, and ProblemSolvers.

Doing right by the customer

Plow & Hearth has used Google Search Ads campaigns for many years. Early in 2012, the Plow & Hearth online marketing team expanded its ad strategy by adding Google Product Listing Ads (PLAs) on Google Shopping. "The timing of Google's announcement of Google Shopping could not have been better," says Jessica Baines, senior manager, online marketing.

"We honestly did not know what to expect," Baines says. "We certainly knew that the Google search engine results page (SERP) would be impacted, but we just did not know how the dust would settle. Like any previous Google change, our sites have benefited. As long as you are doing right by the customer, and delivering accurate and beneficial content, your site is destined to succeed on Google Shopping."

Continually optimizing

The PLAs brought dramatic results for Plow & Hearth. The company saw increases in unique site visits (129 percent), pages per visit (6.3 percent), and average visit duration (14.7 percent), while the bounce rate dropped 9.8 percent. "These metrics really speak to PLA's ability to deliver more unique, targeted, and engaged traffic on Google Shopping," Baines says.

With the PLAs, Plow & Hearth also saw an 8 percent increase over revenues from its Google Product Search campaign a year earlier. "We have worked closely with our digital marketing agency, PM Digital, to break out the PLA campaign to include ad groups that bucket our products by Google categories," explains Bobby Thompson, Plow & Hearth account manager. "This most recent optimization has garnered a 12 percent increase in conversion rate."

"These metrics really speak to PLA's ability to deliver more unique, targeted, and engaged traffic on Google Shopping."

—Jessica Baines, senior manager, online marketing, Plow & Hearth

The company now includes all of its products for all of its brands in PLAs on Google Shopping. "With the recent optimization of adding Google categories via Google's taxonomy, we plan to further optimize our PLA feeds by bidding up and bidding down the category performers, top products, and category

About Google Shopping

Google Shopping is a new experience for finding, researching, and discovering where to buy products online and nearby. Google Shopping includes new features designed to make shopping even more intuitive, beautiful, and useful on google.com and google.com/shopping.

For more information, visit
www.google.com/ads/shopping

About Google AdWords

Google AdWords is a performance-based advertising program that enables businesses large and small to advertise on Google and its network of partner websites. Hundreds of thousands of businesses worldwide use AdWords for text, image, and video ads priced on a cost-per-click (CPC) and cost-per-impression (CPM) basis. Built on an auction-based system, AdWords is a highly quantifiable and cost-effective way to reach potential customers.

For more information, visit
<http://adwords.google.com>

"The new Google Shopping experience with Product Listing Ads has given our family of brands the ability to promote each and every one of our products."

—Bobby Thompson, account manager, Plow & Hearth

focuses during Q4," Thompson adds. "We plan to further this optimization by creating unique ad groups for dedicated top-selling products, so that we can increase their exposure in particular."

Promoting a whole range of products

"The new Google Shopping experience with Product Listing Ads has given our family of brands the ability to promote each and every one of our products," Thompson says. "Promoting our complete product mix was a daunting task with standard text and display ads. PLAs on Google Shopping give us the opportunity to promote our full product lines and gauge what online consumers are truly searching for, and which products truly capture their attention and interest."

"Now," adds Baines, "we can benefit from Google PLA's traffic and qualified leads, coupled with the value of Google's participation discount, during the upcoming holiday season."

About Plow & Hearth

Headquartered in Madison, Virginia, Plow & Hearth serves customers who are nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts, offering them high-quality products that are practical and functional. In addition to online sales, it has retail stores in Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Virginia. For more information, visit www.plowhearth.com

About PM Digital

PM Digital, an award winning Digital Marketing Agency, specializes in Paid Search, SEO, Social Commerce, Display Advertising, and Shopping Feed Management. Through its customized, high-touch campaigns, PM Digital drives qualified traffic to its clients' websites to grow their business online. PM Digital's talent, expertise, technology and industry knowledge enables its clients to consistently achieve year-over-year growth. For more information, visit www.pmdigital.com

