Overcoming Challenge of Digital Marketing, Online Advertising, and Web-based Customer Service

A CASE STUDY

Plumline Nursery Grows Online with Chroma Studios

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Located at the highest point in Murrysville, Pennsylvania, Plumline Garden Center occupies more than 30 acres in a carefully cultivated, tranquil setting. A family owned and operated business for over 40 years, Plumline has become known as the market leader in ornamental trees and shrubs throughout the Pittsburgh region. They also offer plants and gardening supplies, landscape & design, wholesale nursery services, one-of-a-kind stone garden décor, and bulk materials delivery.

In today's sales environment, the challenge is not only to raise healthy trees, shrubs, and plants, but to grow the nursery's website and to engage with an ever-more online consumer market. To meet this challenge, Plumline Nursery turned to digital marketing and software solutions provider Chroma Studios.

Measuring Growth with Digital Marketing

Just as placing a ruler next to a potted plant helps you measure its growth rate, modern web diagnostics provide a wide array of measurements to monitor the health of Plumline's website.

By utilizing tools like Google Analytics, Chroma Studios monitors the behavior of visitors interacting with the Plumline site, allowing us to see far more detail than old-fashioned "hits."

So far in 2018, for example, we know that visitors to the site during the spring season (March 1 through May 30th) **have increased over 12.2% from the previous year, while looking at almost 20% more pages.**

We know **visitors stayed on the site over 2 minutes** on average and that **females accounted for 53 to 55%** of all visitors. The biggest age demographic using the website is **between 55 and 64 years of age;** however, those who stay on the site the longest and look at more pages than any other group are between 18 and 24.

Perhaps more importantly, geographic information shows that over 70% of the top 25 cities from which web traffic arrives on the site are snugly within Plumline's service area.
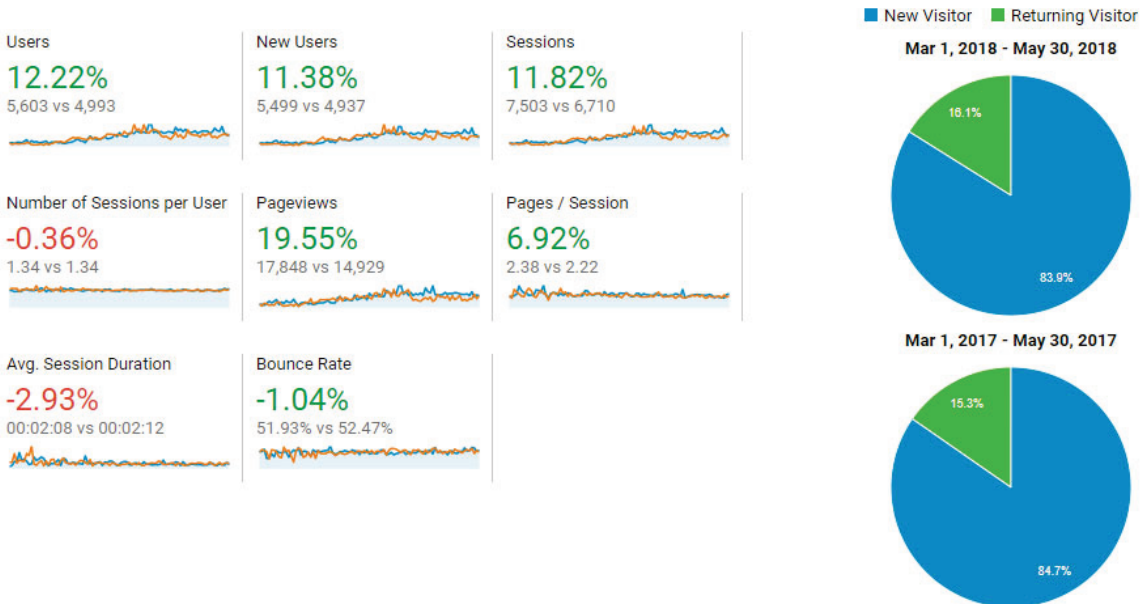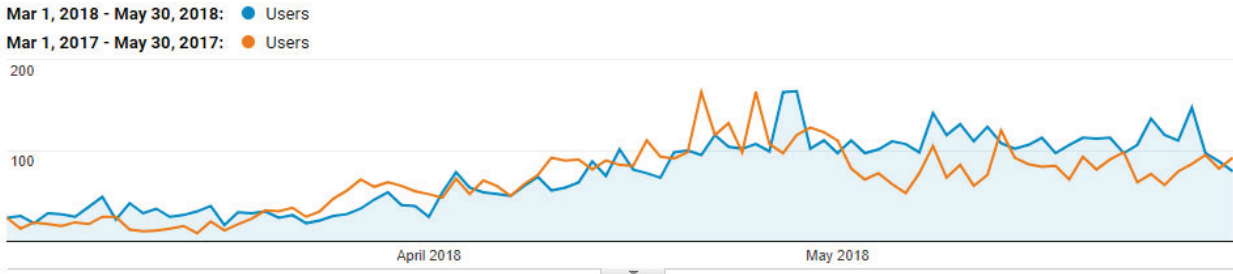

Plumline Nursery and Garden Center offers thousands of plants, wholesale tree, shrubs, and grasses, as well as experienced landscaping services. Plumline's 40-year-old display garden boasts over 50 varieties of Japanese maples, rare and unusual conifers, broadleaf evergreens, perennials, and more.

www.PlumlineNursery.com

Google Analytics Comparison 2017 to 2018

Mar 1, 2018 - May 30, 2018: ● Users
Mar 1, 2017 - May 30, 2017: ● Users

200

100

April 2018   May 2018

Users	New Users	Sessions
12.22%	**11.38%**	**11.82%**
5,603 vs 4,993	5,499 vs 4,937	7,503 vs 6,710

Number of Sessions per User	Pageviews	Pages / Session
-0.36%	**19.55%**	**6.92%**
1.34 vs 1.34	17,848 vs 14,929	2.38 vs 2.22

Avg. Session Duration	Bounce Rate
-2.93%	**-1.04%**
00:02:08 vs 00:02:12	51.93% vs 52.47%

■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor
Mar 1, 2018 - May 30, 2018

16.1%

83.9%

Mar 1, 2017 - May 30, 2017

15.3%

84.7%

How Does Knowing This Information Help Plumline Grow Its Business?

Website owners often take for granted some very basic pieces of information that are important to successful enterprises like Plumline:

- Do the people who arrive at your website stay and use it, or do they just bounce away as if uninterested?
- Is your site engaging the right audience demographic? If you sell arthritis supplies or luxury touring sedans, and the bulk of your visitors are between 18-24, something is wrong.
- If your business serves a local or regional market, and your site is attracting a lot of attention in the UK, you will have difficulty taking advantage of the overseas attention.
- Data from Google Analytics helps Chroma Studios validate that the website our team designed for Plumline Garden Center & Landscaping continues to reach its audience and improve its interaction with that audience over time.

Deeper into the Numbers

Delving deep into the numbers, we can even see that "organic search," meaning natural search results without advertising, is the Number 1 source of web traffic for the site and has improved this year over last.

Default Channel Grouping	Acquisition			Behavior	
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session
	13.26% ▲ 6,234 vs 5,504	13.09% ▲ 6,186 vs 5,470	14.04% ▲ 8,385 vs 7,353	0.39% ▼ 52.62% vs 52.82%	6.69% ▲ 2.38 vs 2.23
1. Organic Search					
Jan 1, 2018 - May 30, 2018	4,407 (69.53%)	4,299 (69.50%)	5,939 (70.83%)	48.98%	2.50
Jan 1, 2017 - May 30, 2017	3,765 (67.39%)	3,683 (67.33%)	5,049 (68.67%)	48.43%	2.33
% Change	17.05%	16.73%	17.63%	1.15%	7.03%

Of even greater impact is the fact that 52% of visitors explore the website on their phones, tablets, or other mobile devices.

For Plumline, a Responsive and fast loading site, one that works on handhelds using a cellar network, is critical to over half their audience! At Chroma Studios, our designers took this into account, assuring not only that the site itself can adjust to display favorably across many devices, but also that the web hosting service for the site was fast enough for mobile service.

A common mistake business owners make with their websites is to assume that more web traffic is always better, or that a higher position in Google will solve all of their marketing problems. In fact, the first order of business is to assure that your website works as a welcoming and informative hub of your marketing wheel.

A Complex Pay-per-Click Challenge

As of 2018, there are 1.3 billion websites online. More than 140,000 new ones are launched every day. In such a vast sea of web pages, simply having a presence on the Internet is not enough. For a business to be visible, pay-per-click advertising, including Google's AdWords system, has a part to play.

Statistics published by Hochman Consultants in 2017 show that the average Cost per Click (CPC) across all industries has risen from $0.38 in 2005 to $2.14 in 2016, a 176% increase! (Cost per Click is the fee charged by systems like Google AdWords, every time a visitor reaches your website by clicking an online advertisement.)

A Google Partner Company, Chroma Studios not only has Google Certified AdWords specialists on staff, but also a team with imagination and a drive to provide effective advertising for our customers and save them money. For Plumline, they developed one of the most ingenious ad campaigns we've ever seen.

Here is Chroma's General Manager, Aaron Giagnocavo, explaining the approach:

"In 2016, we were approached by Plumline to design PPC advertising campaigns for their plant nursery. Our first task was to evaluate Plumline's resources and develop a strategy. The first thing to jump out at us was their "plant finder."

"The plant finder is a 3rd party program that provides web visitors with the ability to search for types of plants and shrubs either by category or in as much detail as height and color. We felt we could hook the plant finder up with Google, using Google's Keyword Insertion tool, an advanced feature that allows ads to be updated in real time, depending on what keywords are entered into Google by the user.

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"We set things up so that someone searching for a Japanese Maple could click through to a page with a link to that plant on it, along with a list of similar deciduous trees.

"Similarly, a search for Norway Spruce would take the user to a list of evergreen trees, or a Gem Boxwood search would end on a landing page for evergreen shrubs.

"By using this "phrase match" technique, we avoided costly head-to-head competition for terms like garden center and plant nursery, and instead gave Plumline the advantage of appearing in very specific searches within their service area. Anyone looking for a Fraser Fir in the Pittsburgh region may well have run across one of Plumline's ads on Google.

"We found immediately that click through rates were high, bounce rates were low, and time on page was very high. It appeared that people typing in the names of these plants were happy both with the results they saw and with the landing page they reached after clicking."

Broken Ad Campaigns and the Ingenuity Needed to Fix Them

Using what was basically an inventory database to enhance Plumline's Google advertising worked well for about a year, until the ads suddenly stopped working. Aaron Giagnocavo explains:

"The campaigns were doing great when the company that made the plant finder technology updated their software. It was no longer possible to make the connection to Google AdWords in the same way, but the results we had enjoyed during the previous nursery season were too good to give up.

"We had to start over and see if there was another way to achieve similar results.

"We abandoned the keyword insertion technique. Instead, we created 3,000 different ad groups, with each ad going to a different landing page. We took an XML file from the plant finder, giving us the URLs and the names of each plant in the system.

"Once this new system was in place, we watched the data and were pleased to see we not only recreated our previous success but improved upon it as well."

"Our team soon realized there was no way to get these extensive plant lists into Google AdWords normally. We ended up using an AdWords management software and power tool called the AdWords Editor. This is a tool for making extensive changes to a variety of ads. With the AdWords editor, we were able to work offline, making large scale changes to our ads before uploading them back into Google.

"We created a spreadsheet and developed a script that went through and put the name of the plant, the content of the ad, and the correct landing page URL into a format that Google Adwords could work with. The process was complex and took many hours.

"Once this new system was in place, we watched the data and were pleased to see we not only recreated our previous success but improved upon it as well. In the first half of 2018, our cost-per-click for all search ads across all campaigns was $0.97, over 56% below Google's national CPC average.

"Another effect we've seen is that searchers call Plumline directly from the phone number displayed in the ad, saving our client the cost of a click all together."

Additional Behind the Scenes Features

As a full-service partner in digital marketing and web services, Chroma Studios has also been called upon by Plumline to create behind the scenes or "back-end" tools that enhance the functionality of the website.

One example is the Mulch Calculator.

A common challenge for garden center customers is knowing how much mulch they need for any given project.

Chroma's software team developed an easy-to-use onscreen calculator, one that delivers the total cubic yards of mulch needed when the dimensions of the bed and the desired thickness of mulch is entered.

Another add-in provided by Chroma was a delivery cost calculator for use in ordering bulk materials online.

Websites today serve their customers best when they provide more than basic information. Virtual tours, event calendars, Facebook feeds, calculators,

Mulch Calculator

How Much Mulch Do I Need?

Having a hard time figuring out how much mulch you'll need? Find out by using our mulch calculator.

Length Of Your Bed (In Feet)	
Width Of Your Bed (In Feet)	
Thickness Of Mulch (In Inches)	
Total Cubic Yards Needed	0

newsletter signups, form downloads, and even account logins where clients can review their purchase history and project status are possible.

More than fancy extras, robust website functionality helps boost customer confidence and engagement with your brand.

At Chroma Studios, we work closely with our clients to meet their web and online marketing challenges. Our efforts help companies like Plumline do what they do best – putting their decades of experience to work for both old and new customers. At Plumline Garden Center, that means award-winning landscaping services, a plant nursery with an extensive selection flowers, trees, and shrubs, and stone garden décor, as well as providing wholesale supplies for local contractors.

When in Murrysville, PA, make time to visit Plumline's Living Waters Memorial Display Garden. This 40-year-old garden boasts over 50 varieties of Japanese maples, numerous rare and unusual conifers, broadleaf evergreens, and perennials. The Garden was constructed in honor of Plumline's founder, bill Tribou.

For more information on services from Chroma Studios, visit our website at www.Chroma-Marketing.com, or call us at 724-523-3001.

For more information on Plumline Garden Center & Landscaping, visit their website at www.PlumlineNursery.com, or call 724-327-6775.

Have Questions?
Talk to one of our experts.
We are happy to help.

www.chroma-marketing.com/lets-talk

www.chroma-marketing.com
724-523-3001
info@chroma-marketing.com