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Exclusive Sponsorships and Local Online Search Blend Well to Achieve New Dollars for Classified Categories for Schurz Newspapers' *Bloomington (IN) Herald-Times*

While newspapers have long competed against Yellow Pages in the print arena, they are now finding themselves in heated battles in the online space as well. While Internet Yellow Pages sites only make up about 34 percent of local searches (search engines such as Google and Yahoo! claim around 66 percent), users of Yellow Pages sites are getting their information more quickly and finding more desirable information in key advertising categories such as automotive, home and garden and general services. What does this mean for newspapers? "It's all about local!" said Mike Blinder president of the Blinder Group. "Newspapers already have the relationships with the local advertisers—they just need to offer them a single multimedia option to help them better target local shoppers with traditional offerings, as well as enhance their marketing exposure on search platforms such as Yahoo! and Google."

Many newspapers have created dynamic and interactive online business marketplaces for their classified advertisers. These new online platforms can be a wonderful resource for the newspapers' online users—giving them direct, searchable access to the ads within their print products. When the newspaper is able to combine the display, line ads and all listings from any classified "vertical" platform, the user is able to search in one place to find local businesses who provide goods and services. And since many of the ads include time sensitive offers and other marketing messages, the results can have more value for a local shopper, who will see with the results of their search having more information than just a list of all businesses within the area as provided by Google and the many Yellow Pages websites available online. One newspaper who built such an online "marketplace" is the *Bloomington (IN) Herald-Times*.

The HTO Marketplace (<http://www.heraldtimesonline.com/shop/class.php>) was built locally by the online team of the Herald-Times. It not only allows users to search content and categories within the newspaper's aggregated autos, employment, real estate, merchandise and daily display ads, but the user can also search all the combined content areas with a single keyword--seeing all relevant results on a single page.

The sales program developed by the Blinder Group for this newspaper blended three elements together for each participating advertiser. The first element was to offer the advertiser traditional print advertising within the classified section of the daily newspaper. In this case we offered a participating advertiser exclusive sponsorship in the form of a 1-column by 4-inch ad that appeared daily at the top of their selected classified category. In short, this advertiser was the "king of the category" for a year. Their print ad appeared daily with the message changeable each week.

CLASSIFIEDS

We accept
AMEX, Discover,
MasterCard and Visa

1-800-989-5253



MISCELLANEOUS	PERMITS	PERMITS	PERMITS WANTED	SERVICES
OUTBOARDS	CLASS & BOWTIE PERMIT	NE MULTIPURPOSE PERMIT	WANTED AREA 2 FEDERAL LICENSE PERMIT	MUFFLER INSULATION
MERCURY	FEDERAL LICENSE PERMIT	NE MULTIPURPOSE PERMIT	PNEUMATIC TOOLS	TRANSPORT FISHING VESSELS
2004 2005 LEVY EXEMPT	FEDERAL SEA BASE & SCUP	NE MULTIPURPOSE PERMIT	Best Style Best Quality Best Price	WILCOX
SOFTY PORT	MULTIPURPOSE IN A DAYS	NE MULTIPURPOSE PERMIT	Thompson Furniture	Coastal Documentation
NOTICES	AGRICULTURE LEASE TERMINATED	AGRICULTURE LEASE GRANTED	PROP-DR.COM	PROP-DR.COM
AGRICULTURE LEASE TERMINATED	AGRICULTURE LEASE GRANTED	AGRICULTURE LEASE GRANTED	PROP-DR.COM	PROP-DR.COM
AGRICULTURE PUBLIC HEARING	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	TRUCKS	TRUCKS
AGRICULTURE PUBLIC HEARING	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	TRAPS & GEAR	TRAPS & GEAR
GOY STUFF ?	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	R. KNIGHT & SONS	R. KNIGHT & SONS
GOY STUFF ?	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	Attention New England Lobster and Fixed Gear Fishermen	Hoop Gate and Bream Cup	Hoop Gate and Bream Cup

ad appears **daily** for a full year as the **exclusive** category sponsor

- Limited to 15 category sponsors
 - Add can change weekly
 - Appears at head of column
- 1 column x 4" display ad

(Blinder-Bloomington1.jpg) Shows an actual training slide used by the Blinder Group to instruct the traditional ad reps of this client newspaper about the program offerings and how to “take it to market” effectively.

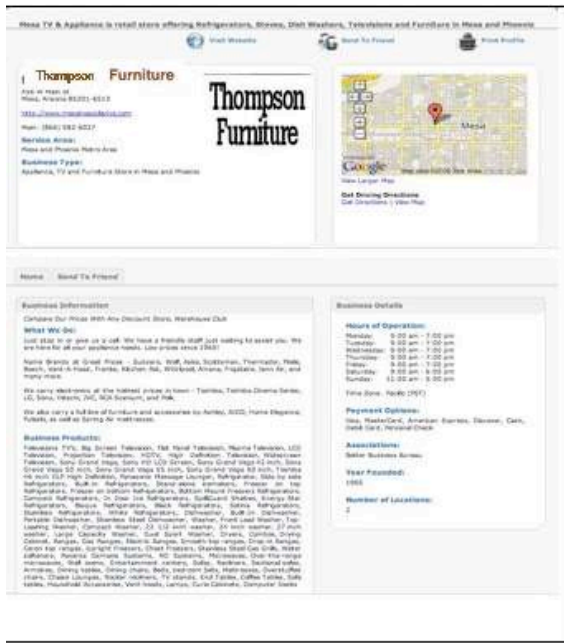
The second element offered to the advertiser was to give them contextual presence on the search result pages of the online marketplace. We allowed the same advertiser that appeared exclusively within the print product to receive relevant placement on the results pages of the local platform based on the keyword or category the user chose to search. These ads were to appear at the top of the relevant results page in the form of the advertiser’s logo and contact information. As well as the display of the advertiser’s weekly current classified display ad on the right rail of the very same results page.

Premiere Sponsorship appears
 at the top of selected
 category page. Includes:
 Logo
 contact info
 Web /E-mail link
 link to a profile page



(Blinder-Bloomington2.jpg) Shows an actual training slide used by the Blinder Group to instruct the traditional ad reps of this client newspaper about the program offerings and how to “take it to market” effectively.

The third element each sponsor received involved the offering of some form of “Search Engine Maximization.” “It is essential that we as an industry become the conduit between the advertiser and their global (as well as local) search needs!” said Mike Blinder. “We can not ignore that one out of every two local searches in our markets is taking place through Google. We should attempt to own this relationship rather than ignore it.” In order to be able to assist the advertiser with their listings on the major search platforms, newspapers can offer a simple “profile pages” on the newspaper’s website. The profiles not only give general contact information about the business, but also include user-friendly features such as maps, photos and a link to their website. Each profile page is given a unique URL within the newspaper’s website, which enables the business to appear higher on the “organic” results pages of major search engines—those same search engines that are currently getting 66 percent of local online searches. It is a simple method to help the advertiser since these search engines reward the newspaper’s web pages with high results, newspapers simply add a page for the advertiser to the their site to help them appear higher as well.

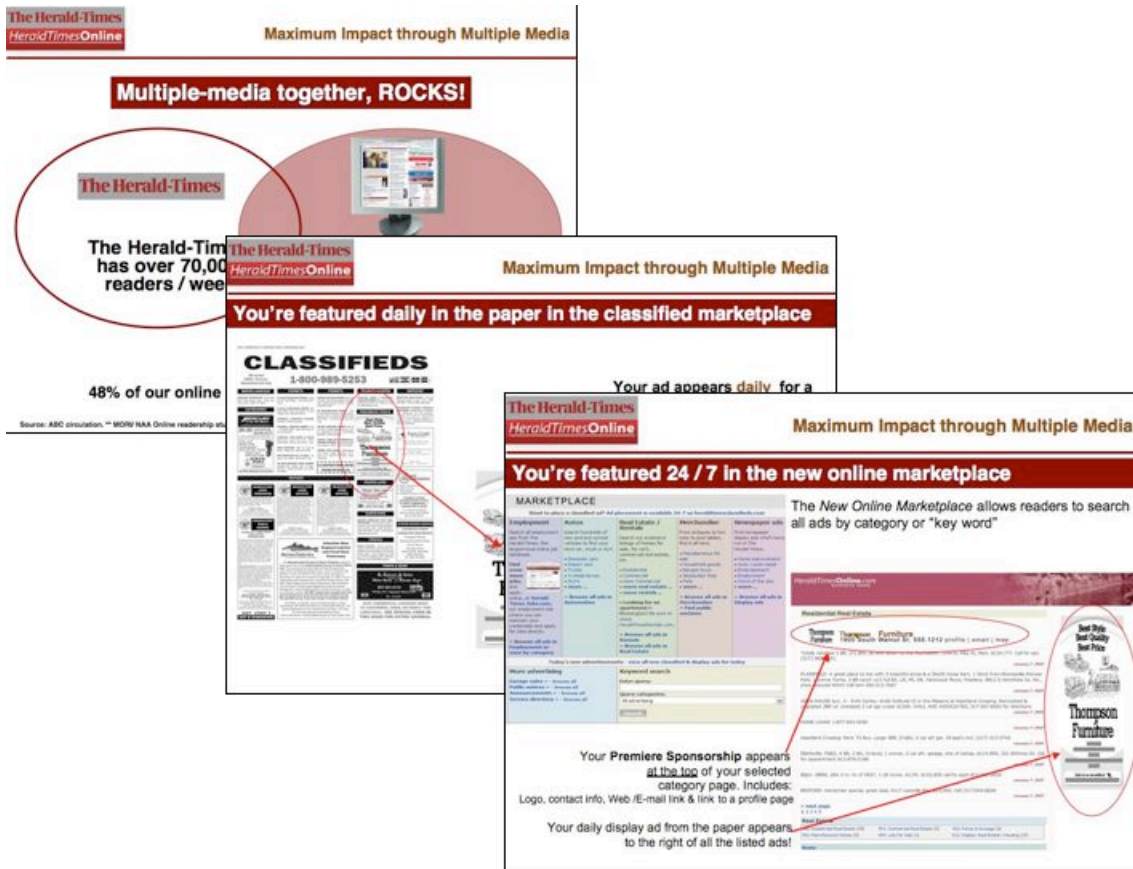


This Business Profile is added to all the popular search engines. Since the "Business Profile" page is within HeraldTimesOnline.com it will get ranked higher on most Internet Search Engines

The Blinder Group not only assists with the development of such programs, but works beside the sales teams to introduce the concept to advertisers and close business. With the local multimedia marketplace offerings, the Blinder Group has experienced high "closing ratios" with advertisers making long-term commitments to participate.

This approach has been successful in markets large and small and for many it has helped them gain significant online revenue. "Our online team developed for us a very effective online "marketplace" platform," said Mayer Maloney, publisher of the *Bloomington (IN) Herald-Times*. "Once we had the technology in place, the Blinder Group was integral in helping us package the perfect offering for us to maximize revenue from our classified categories. Not only did they assist in crafting the offering, but the "4-legged" calls they performed with our reps proved to be most successful in getting our traditional sales reps "on board" with the program. Even after the Blinder Group left we continued to make sales, reached our goal and signed contracts for over \$100,000 in new, local classified based revenue."

Here is a more detailed look on how this program worked in the local market: *Bloomington (IN) Herald-Times* (approximate circulation: 96k)
 Contact: Mayer Maloney, Publisher
 812.331.4251, mmaloney@heraldt.com



(Blinder-Bloomington-Sales.jpg)A look at a few pages from the actual sales materials, developed by the Blinder Group, that assisted this client in successfully taking this multimedia program to market. Download all the sales materials here (<http://www/blindergroup.com/articles/Blinder- Bloomington -Sales.doc>)

As a “Premiere Advertiser”, businesses receive a 1x4 in-column display ad at the top of a selected category within the classified page of the daily newspaper and a branding message at the top of that same category within the online directory. The advertiser’s current print ad also appears on the right rail of the category page. Businesses receive a profile page on the newspaper’s website which is coded to assist the advertiser in being found higher on the results pages of online search engines. Each advertiser paid a fee of \$99/week requiring a 52-week commitment. The Blinder Group helped this newspaper take the product to market, achieve over 70% closes, during “4-legged” sales training calls with the traditional ad reps, resulting in over \$100,000 in new classified revenue for the *Herald-Times*.