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The Blinder Group and HarvestINFO partner for successful launch of Colorado Springs Gazette's 24-7 *Have It All Mall* shopping website

The Opportunity

As part of its strategy to gain market share amid the growing demand for local shopping information and advertising online, The Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette has launched a new local online marketplace solution at www.gazette.com. Powered by HarvestINFO's integrated search and advertising solutions, Colorado Springs Gazette's 24-7 *Have It All Mall* offers local businesses the opportunity to reach highly targeted consumers through local search engine marketing at the precise moment they are researching local products and services online. By adding new online ad options to existing marketing solutions, Gazette now offers a variety of advertising packages that suit the needs of any size business within their market. Additionally, 24-7 *Have It All Mall* offers HarvestINFO's self-service classifieds and pay-per-click keyword ads that provide a cost effective and simple way for private party sellers and small business owners to enter the local search engine marketing game.

Program Overview

Within the new 24-7 *Have It All Mall* shopping channel, local business advertising opportunities are offered within a searchable framework that includes content from a complete suite of HarvestINFO advertising solutions. Critical mass of content is achieved right off the bat with ShopMountain, HarvestINFO's commission-based shopping program. This "turn key" solution delivers relevant product results from millions of items from top online retailers. For each purchase originating from a 24-7 *Have It All Mall* click-through, Gazette receives revenue. Through HarvestINFO's DealStorm technology, traditional classified line ads, display ads, special section ads, and inserts are converted to digital format and made searchable along with local advertiser inventory feeds and online only "post an ad" items. Gazette also offers Exchange Tree, HarvestINFO's online self-service classified posting tool which offers exceptional text editing and photo upload capabilities, as well as privacy and ecommerce enabling options. Local advertisers can also take advantage of pay-per-click keyword advertising through "Click Lizard" – another online self-service ad technology provided by HarvestINFO.

Once all the online branding elements and functionality were decided and agreed upon, the Gazette brought in Mike Blinder of the Blinder Group to work with management to develop an initial sales training/ revenue generation program that would be easy for the local, traditional ad reps to "take to market." During the initial visit, Mike facilitated a strategic planning session with senior managers, where it was decided that a "bundled" program would be taken to local advertisers, offering them a combination of:

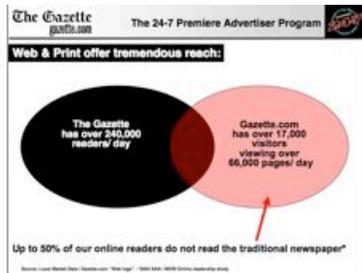
- Rotating online "in story" ads that appeared throughout the Gazette.com Web site

- A complete “store front” placed within *24-7 Have It All Mall*.
- And weekly “house promo ads” that appeared within the traditional newspaper product.

Advertiser participating was limited to 15 local businesses, each agreeing to invest \$999/month for a 12-month commitment, entitling them to become one of the few: “24-7 Premiere Advertisers.”

Sales Marketing Support

The Blinder Group assisted the Gazette in the development of a complete, eleven-page presentation to help the local, traditional ad reps, explain the value propositions of the program to local advertisers. The support materials outlined the Web site audience demographics as well as the features and benefits of the total program.



The Gazette
The 24-7 Premiere Advertiser Program

24-7 is The Gazette's all-new shopping channel!

All advertisers receive a “store front” that can display products, company info, logo, website/ e-mail links. Plus an online version of your latest print ad!

The Gazette
The 24-7 Premiere Advertiser Program

Reaching the “ACTIVE shopper” You get your print ad online within a “storefront” in our new “24-7 Shopping Channel”

The Gazette
The 24-7 Premiere Advertiser Program

Reaching the “PASSIVE shopper” you get an online ad displayed 100,000 times/month on ALL “story pages” of gazette.com

The Gazette
The 24-7 Premiere Advertiser Program

Hundreds of thousands in media promotion will support the all-new 24-7 shopping channel

Premiere Advertisers will get a logo in Gazette promo ads no less than 1x/week

The Gazette
The 24-7 Premiere Advertiser Program

- Reaching the “active shopper” ✓ Your ad online within your own “storefront” in our new “24-7 Shopping Channel”
- Reaching the “passive shopper” ✓ Online graphic “in story ad” appearing 100,000 times/month on “most story pages” of the gazette.com Web site
- ✓ Plus weekly logo mentions within Gazette promotional ads

\$999/ month investment
(weekly print ad needed)
limited to only 15 advertisers

(Blinder-ColoradoSprings-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-ColoradoSprings-Sales.doc>)

Sales Training Support

Mike Blinder also during the initial visit to the Gazette conducted an onsite motivational, training program for all managers and “outside” salespeople. Topics covered included:

- Prospecting New Multimedia Business
- The Methods of Selling Multimedia
- The basics of the Internet and how the medium works
- The benefits of bringing interactive products to market
- How to effectively offer Web based products to your advertisers
- Methods for using the Web to garner more market share

During the meeting the sales staff was also informed of the Blinder Group’s pending return visit (see below), in which “4-legged” sales training/closing calls were to be performed. Salespeople were urged and encouraged during the meeting, to set up a large amount of appointments, with qualified “decision-makers” of area businesses, so that they could experience “first hand” how to sell online products to their advertisers with Blinder Group assistance. Salespeople were given a “success kit” which reaffirmed the most important elements of the training. Plus it offered them a proven “appointment setting” script to assist in setting up the sales calls.

Sales Strategy

One of the key elements in ensuring sales success of this initiative is garnering advertiser approval of meeting attendance as well as the validity of the concept in general. Some of these advertisers are wary of trying new ideas. One of the most effective means of accomplishing attendance and acceptance is to introduce the advertiser to an industry respected “outside” consultant who has had success with similar programs, with similar businesses, in similar markets, all over the world. That is why many media companies contract with the Blinder Group to perform “4-legged” sales training closing calls with traditional ad reps, to assist in the launch of programs like the one defined in this document. Frank Dorf, of the Blinder Group returned the Colorado Springs market 14-days after the initial “set up” visit to conduct these calls with the local ad reps, on targeted advertisers.

Results

During the 5-days of assisted sales calls, close to 50% of the qualified advertiser “decision makers” committed to the 12-month program, in a single sales call setting, resulting in over \$100,000 of new online revenue for the Gazette.

“We are very pleased in this initial deployment of the 24-7 shopping channel,” stated Susan Kelly-Gilbert VP, Sales and Marketing for The Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette. “We valued Mike and the Blinder Group’s input and assistance in training the team as well as getting some significant revenue on the books. We plan to use their services again this year in some future online deployments.”

Added Michael Galamb, Senior Vice President of Sales, HarvestINFO: “Working with The Blinder Group prior to implementation on Gazette.com, we were able to provide

leading edge technology solutions supported by industry-leading sales training that resulted in impressive revenue generation for our mutual client from the outset. The great results in Colorado Springs solidify our confidence that The Blinder Group and their services are a perfect compliment to our technology solutions.”

For more local information on the local sales strategy of this program, contact:

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