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## **New York Times Regional News Group Deploys Planet Discover’s Local Search in Sarasota**

While the main players of online search—namely Google, Yahoo! and MSN—claim to be leaders in the field, many believe that the domain of “local search” can still be won by local media like newspaper companies. Planet Discover, a leader in online technology solutions encompassing integrated local search, advertising and content creation and management, is hoping to help newspapers throughout the US not only get into the local search game, but come out as winners in their markets. The modular solutions offered by Planet Discover “provide newspapers with the versatility needed to deliver robust results, reliably, high performance and richer everyday user experiences tailored to their markets.” The idea seems simple: enhance local site search and the user experience and you will gain more users—which ultimately means more revenue.

Conquering the search game allows newspapers to own local search much like they own the local market. “It is really imperative that newspapers move forward with this online initiative,” said Mike Blinder president of the Blinder Group, an internationally respected multimedia sales training and consulting firm. “With turn-key solutions like Planet Discover and others, newspapers large and small can begin solidifying their place as the local leader in the online space.”

As newspapers continue to get more serious about adding local online search elements to their websites—specifically to help bolster their classified sections—they are experimenting with several different programs and ideas. With the help of Planet Discover’s technology and the Blinder Group’s sales and marketing experience, newspapers in the New York Times Regional News Group are beginning to see big dividends by creating what some experts term as “secondary brands”—sites with different content, functionality and navigation. These sites allow newspapers to experiment with building a local “Google-type” website while still preserving the main newspaper site.

Searchasota.com is the new *Sarasota (FL) Herald-Tribune*, local search website. It offers users the ability to not only search local products and services, but also seek relevant results within the newspaper’s editorial content, event listings and content from the print and Web classified vertical offerings. Users can search all content areas at once via keywords or narrow their query by content category. Now thanks to the new technology provided by Planet Discover, not only can all the local content be searched in one platform, but the newspaper can serve online ads both graphically and/or in text form based “contextually on the user’s search terms” so they appear beside relevant results. “It is already proven that if you can serve an ad when the user is “engaged” in a search looking for relevant information, the online ad works better!” stated Mike Blinder. “In short, the new Searchasota.com platform is a local Google.” But the technology does not

stop there. The *Herald-Tribune* is also now able to serve “contextual” ads based on the relevance of content within the existing newspaper’s online classified and editorial pages as well.

“The key to offering this type of program to local advertisers is to combine it with traditional print elements,” stated Blinder. “When you add print components to the online offerings you give the ad rep more “muscle” to take to market by giving the advertiser the benefit of more eyeballs within the combined media. Plus, you have a better competitive advantage, in being able to offer the “active” shoppers who may be looking for products and services within the search environments along with the “passive” shoppers who are reading the traditional newspaper product. And finally, by blending the print and online together, you can “drive up the price points” to make the entire package more palatable to the traditional print reps who need to feel some form of an incentive to sell it.”

The “package” that was crafted for local offering in Sarasota allowed advertisers to exclusively sponsor a limited number of specific categories in print and online. These “Premiere Sponsors” received:

- A contextual based “premiere business listing” that appeared on the top of all related keyword related searches on the results page of the new Searchasota.com website.
- A contextual based “premiere business listing” that appeared on the right rail of all related category searches on the results page of the existing HeraldTribune.com classified Web site.
- A non-contextual based “premiere business listing” that appeared randomly on the right rail of all story pages of the existing HeraldTribune.com Web site.
- A category exclusive, 2 columns by 1.5 inch, weekly print ad that appeared each Tuesday in the traditional newspaper.

Initial offering to advertisers was \$899 per month with a one-year contract agreement.

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. This approach has been successful in markets large and small and for many it has helped them gain significant online revenue. “As we were developing our local search strategy we knew that we wanted to get the word out quickly to our key advertisers,” said Conan Gallaty online director for *Sarasota (FL) Herald-Tribune Media Group*. “We hired the Blinder Group to help us train and motivate the ad reps in how to take it to market. Because they had good success selling a similar program in other markets, we relied on their expertise in packaging and presentations. We were quite happy with the initial results—good advertisers acceptance along with some significant new revenue on the books. This is just the beginning of making our local search an integral part of our online strategy.” The Blinder Group helped this newspaper team secure more than \$180k in new revenue, in just one week of joint sales training/ closing calls.

“We could not be more pleased with the success of the recent launch of our technology in Sarasota,” stated Vance Gorke, Vice President of Business Development for Planet Discover, the technology provider for the local search platform. “We see a great deal of

benefit from the assistance in planning, training and sales deployment offered by the Blinder Group for our client media property. The results tell the story. It is always gratifying to see a newspaper realize a substantial gain in new revenue from cutting edge technology. It helps prove that the newspaper industry can be well poised to gain new ground with new media."

**Herald Tribune** Maximum Impact through Multiple Media

**Multiple-media together, ROCKS!**

The Herald Tribune has over 512,000+ unique readers viewing our website daily. **HeraldTribune.com**

Our Web site **ROCKS** with a growing young, affluent, educated & employed audience!

**41% of our c**

- ✓ 512,000+ unique readers viewing our website daily
- ✓ 91% of our online readers are b
- ✓ 61% earn more than \$50,000/yr
- ✓ 86% attended college
- ✓ 76% employed
- ✓ 38% are "professional/ manage
- ✓ 76% own their home
- ✓ 41% are NEW readers (not read

Source: ABC circulation, 2007 \* Omnibus  
Source: 2004 Belden Research Study \* Omnibus 12-month

**You're featured daily online @ HeraldTribune.com**

**Your Premiere Local Business Listing**

**Herald Tribune** Maximum Impact through Multiple Media

Reaching the "active shopper"

- ✓ Business Profile Page assisting with "Search Engine Optimization" on: Google, Yahoo!, + others!
- ✓ Premiere Local Business Listings appearing on classified pages (based on category) appearing on story pages (randomly)
- ✓ Top of Page Listings appearing on Searchasota.com (based on category)

Reaching the "passive shopper"

- ✓ Exclusive Weekly newspaper ad in the Herald Tribune within the category of your choice  
2 x 1.5" - copy can change weekly

Total value of above: \$1300/ month

**\$899/ month investment**  
(advertiser must agree to a 52 week term)

**limited to only 1 advertiser per category**

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

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