

Inside

Automotive

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Published by
MACDONALD

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Profitable Solution

Athens Banner-Herald's print/online program generates \$142k in additional automotive revenue

If at first you don't succeed, try try again ... and don't stop until you've hit upon a profitable solution.

That's exactly the type of mindset that led the Athens (Ga.) Banner-Herald to create a print/online opportunity for its auto dealership clientele that has proven quite profitable for all involved since its January launch.

After failing in its first attempt at maximizing the impact of a print and online combination, the newspaper set out to develop a program that would allow local auto dealers to increase their advertising commitment in both print and online without interfering with their regular advertising schedules.

Working with The Blinder Group, a company with offices in Tampa, Sacramento, Chicago and New York that specializes in helping media outlets maximize their multimedia assets (see page A8), the Athens Banner-Herald developed a product called "Pick of the Lot" that seeks to build print readership, increase online traffic and generate

significant new revenue.

The newspaper began by establishing AthensAutoFinder.com, an online auto product designed to let users view featured autos as well as search each participating dealership's inventory by make and model of car.

"Our participating dealerships, almost every one in our market, are now able to put their entire inventories online at AthensAutoFinder.com, where we also maintain links to each of them," explained Angela Smith, the newspaper's classified advertising manager. "As part of the package, each dealership is entitled to one block in our 'Pick of the Lot' print section that runs every Wednesday and consists of two full-color pages that usually wrap the classified section."

Each page in the "Pick of the Lot" section contains 24 ad blocks, each representing a different vehicle. All print advertisers appear online with their weekly print ad linked directly to the auto dealer's entire

See **SOLUTION**, E2

Pick of the Lot
Dealer Deals for this Week

AthensAutoFinder.com

See page D-1 for more deals!

AthensAutoFinder.com
For the best deals and largest inventory of autos in the Athens and N.E. Georgia area

Pick of the Lot
Dealer Deals for this Week

AthensAutoFinder.com

See page D-1 for more deals!!!

For advertising information, please call 706-238-2288 and ask about **Pick of the Lot**

AthensAutoFinder.com
For the best deals and largest inventory of autos in the Athens and N.E. Georgia area

Additional Promotional and Service Opportunities:

Pick of the Lot

- Each dealer may purchase additional vehicles at \$40 per unit per week.
- Link to the Wednesday print advertisement. (Continued printing is available based on full-page, 8th wheel.)

Photo Management Service

The Athens Banner-Herald will provide a weekly photo service for \$20 per month to ensure current inventory photos are maintained. Stock photos and/or all images will be available at no extra charge.

AthensAutoFinder.com

Dealer Package

Includes:

- Complete searchable inventory
- Pick of the Lot (Wednesday Print Ad Program)
- Featured Ads on AthensAutoFinder.com Home Page

Prerequisites:

- Shipping Services on AthensAutoFinder.com web site
- Print advertising generating the site including daily banners in classified
- Direct Ads to dealer web site

Weekly Investment: \$49.75

AthensAutoFinder.com

Dealer Package

Includes:

- Complete searchable inventory
- Pick of the Lot (Wednesday Print Ad Program)
- Featured Ads on AthensAutoFinder.com Home Page

Prerequisites:

- Shipping Services on AthensAutoFinder.com web site
- Print advertising generating the site including daily banners in classified
- Direct Ads to dealer web site

Weekly Investment: \$74.75

AthensAutoFinder.com

Dealer Package

Includes:

- Complete searchable inventory
- Pick of the Lot (Wednesday Print Ad Program)
- Featured Ads on AthensAutoFinder.com Home Page

Prerequisites:

- Shipping Services on AthensAutoFinder.com web site
- Print advertising generating the site including daily banners in classified
- Direct Ads to dealer web site
- 10 live ads each month being carried (10 days, 2 consecutive days which may include signage - a \$400.00 fee)

Weekly Investment: \$143.75

AthensAutoFinder.com

SOLUTION, *continued from E1*

online inventory, which is uploaded and sorted by Cincinnati-based Celebro, a provider of Web-publishing solutions.

Sales strategy

Frank Dorf, senior associate for The Blinder Group, traveled to Athens in December to assist the newspaper's sales team in selling the new product to advertisers. The Blinder Group created a one-page sales sheet with the goal of making it easier for sales representatives to explain "Pick of the Lot" and its multimedia benefits to advertisers.

"Frank went out with our two outside automotive sales reps and was a tremendous help in introducing the product," Smith said.

All pricing is bundled to include the print and online products.

Prices are based on the total number of vehicles the auto dealer places in the online inventory. Advertisers can also purchase additional ad boxes at a flat rate which are also linked to the online inventory. Every advertiser that purchases a box receives the same position every week in the print product.

The results ...

The Banner-Herald team, with the help of The Blinder Group, was able to generate more than \$142,000 in new business in just three days of selling. The Web site was promoted through links on the various pages of the newspaper's regular Web site (OnlineAthens.com) as well as in print.

The newspaper increased traffic to its Web site without taking

readers and dollars away from its print product.

"It has been a great program," Smith said. "The revenue we are generating really is additional dollars. So far, anyway, dealers have not been pulling money out of their display advertising in order to pay for this service. We obviously hope that continues to be the case.

"We have also been able to attract some dealerships that previously had not been regular advertisers in our newspaper," she added.

For more information on "Pick of the Lot," contact Angela Smith at 706-208-2288 or angela.smith@onlineathens.com.

For more information on the services offered by The Blinder Group, contact Frank Dorf at 916-761-0456 or frank@blindergroup.com.