

# NUTS & BOLTS

INDUSTRY STRATEGIES, TECHNIQUES, SOLUTIONS

## 5-MINUTE INTERVIEW

### SEM Grows, Your Business Grows

As search engine marketing has grown over the past several years, savvy online marketers have been able to reap the benefits of getting out in front of the technology, and keeping themselves ahead of the curve. One such company is Delray Beach, Fla.-based Levenger, an upmarket retailer of reading accessories, lighting, leather briefcases and more.

Here, Lynette Montgomery, Levenger's vice president of e-commerce, explains to *Target Marketing* how the multichannel marketer embraced SEM, and what it sees as its future.

**Target Marketing:** What specific changes have you made to your site to better optimize it for search engines?

**Lynette Montgomery:** There have been many. We created over 1,500 content pages. These generate significant traffic and give us two opportunities to rank in organic search: both on the dynamic product page and the static content page.

We also redesigned our homepage and category pages, and redesigned the product page so the copy of the product is higher on the page. Our IT staff also developed tools to give our marketing staff the flexibility to change title tags, alt tags, meta tags and product descriptions whenever needed.

**TM:** How do you use and manage key phrases to your advantage?

**LM:** We look closely at our product selection and our internal search logs to identify and isolate the most specific search terms and key phrases

we can. We don't tend to just do 'wallets,' for example—way too generic. But search 'fine leather wallets' and there we are. The more specific your keywords and phrases, the more relevancy and qualified traffic you're going to get. And that's what you're looking for—not just random browsers—but qualified, conversion-ready consumers searching for just what it is that you're offering.

**TM:** How important are links to Levenger's overall search engine marketing strategy?

**LM:** We did quite a bit of testing on links—both internal and external. We found that links are invaluable, allowing us site access by consumers who may otherwise not have found us. One example, in a one week span recently our stores and products were featured on "Oprah," "Martha Stewart," and [in] *The Wall Street Journal*, with links to our Web page on all three sites. You wouldn't believe the jump we had not only in traffic, but conversions the following week.

**TM:** What do you see as the future of search engine marketing in general, and for Levenger's in particular?

**LM:** We started optimizing for organic search in 2004. From 2004 to 2005 we were up 120 percent in organic sales. In 2006 we are up 60

percent with peak season just around the corner. Paid and organic search now account for more than 30 percent of our online sales.

A lot has been [said] about what's ahead—RSS feeds, online video and

blogs—and how those tools will effect search engine marketing. I think because of their relevancy and immediacy, blogs will be the most significant factor. Blogs enhance the organic search, and advance word of mouth or viral marketing.

At Levenger, we're constantly optimizing, adding to our search terms, changing and monitoring our searches

to achieve maximum return on investment. It takes work, but the rewards are truly well worth it.

**TM:** What single piece of advice would you offer a company ready to get serious about SEM?

**LM:** Monitor, test and optimize. Okay, maybe that's three. Work with your search marketing company to determine its rules and guidelines, then test different copy, images and layouts.

And lastly, don't be afraid to make constant changes and little tweaks to the site to make sure that when your customers, or potential customers, are looking for your product or service, they find your company quickly and easily.

—Daryl Gale



Lynette Montgomery, Levenger