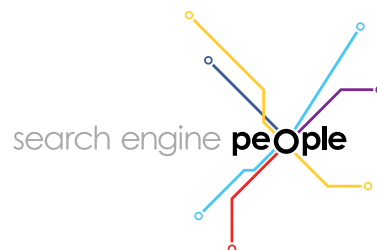




Superior Searches



Search Engine People finds success by mastering the Web



Many entrepreneurs would have cringed at the idea of launching an Internet marketing firm in 2001. Google was only a few years old. The so-called dot-com bubble was beginning to burst. More to the point, Jeff Quipp had two kids at home and just \$24,000 in the bank.

But he knew the idea behind www.searchenginepeople.com **Search Engine People (SEP)** had value. In his job that involved attracting customers to yellowpages.ca, Quipp had already seen how difficult it was to find experts who could optimize websites for search engines.

He left his job, put the days of commuting behind him, and bought a copy of HTML for Dummies to begin learning about the technology that could be applied to sound marketing strategies.

The commitment paid dividends. **Search Engine People's** first client came in the form of XCopper, a business devoted to defending against traffic citations. Now the client list includes Air Miles, Scotiabank, Purolator, Discovery Channel, MTV, Much Music and ING. And Profit Magazine has for the second year in a row named Search Engine People as one of Canada's 100 fastest growing companies.

"We got really, really lucky and hired the right people," he says, explaining the success.

The choice of launching a business close to his Ajax home was about the quality of life it could bring. "Our kids were young and I wanted to be here for them," he says. The home-based business simply expanded into a shared office complex, an industrial plaza, and ultimately a 10,000 square foot facility right next to the GO Train, offering easy access to employees who commute from Toronto.

Quipp is now a coveted speaker about Internet marketing trends, search engine optimization, paid search management, and social media marketing. As important as Google rankings have been, his team also remains focused on the value that new social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter will have on marketing efforts. "Ultimately we trust the recommendations of our friends more than anything," he explains.

The trends will place a greater emphasis than ever on the Internet marketing strategies of the future. Consider the impact they can have on a restaurant. The complaints from an unhappy diner would once be limited to a few people. Now it can immediately be shared with hundreds of friends on a social networking site and form a permanent record of the experience. It will only be a matter of time before this information is coupled with the maps on a mobile device, steering diners to one establishment over the next, he says.

"We practice what we preach," Quipp adds, referring to his company's own marketing initiatives. "We understand where this is going."



The Business Development & Marketing Team

is dedicated to assisting in business and employment opportunities within Ajax and the Region of Durham. From one employee to over 600 employees, each business in Ajax can be connected to customers and resources to enable growth.



Innovation involves the Town's services focusing on connecting entrepreneurs, new technologies and processes with commercialization and funding resources. We connect businesses with regional assets such as: University of Ontario's Institute of Technology (UOIT), Durham College's Commercialization team, and Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Greater Peterborough-Durham (GPD) Resource Alliance.

Determination includes bringing requested information to entrepreneurs that enable long-term sustainability – in good economic times and bad. Recent information sessions included: Business opportunities with the Green Energy Act through the 'Solar FIT Workshop for Businesses'; export service support through the Ministry of Economic Development & Trade (MEDT), sales and marketing events through the Ajax Business Network (ABN), and best practices on positioning Requests for Proposals through the Durham Region 'Preparing Your Best Bid' workshops.

Collaboration involves the efforts to connect businesses with municipal resources to assist with business growth. From early stage planning through building permits and marketing, the Town of Ajax is proactive and solutions-orientated in helping businesses expand.



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