

By Cheryl Pabich

Marketing your parts inventory online

Make it easy and fast for customers to find your website and buy parts from you

Today, most people research and purchase products online. According to the Forrester Research U.S. Online Retail Forecast, 2010 to 2015, U.S. online retail sales grew 12.6 percent in 2010 to reach \$176.2 billion. With an expected 10-percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2010 to 2015, U.S. eCommerce is expected to reach \$278.9 billion in 2015.

The report indicates that several factors continue to propel double-digit growth for the Web channel: omnipresent Web connectivity among consumers, increasing consumer familiarity with and preference for online shopping (and the subsequent cannibalization of store shopping), best-in-class shopping experiences, and new online shopping models, such as flash sales — time-limited offers of high discounts — which have generated excitement and grown rapidly.

There is no doubt that your Web marketing efforts should be fully integrated in your growth strategy. Online marketing starts with understanding online buyers and implementing processes and tools designed to quickly and efficiently respond to their needs and demands to drive more sales — faster.

Effective online marketing includes getting noticed to attract visitors to your website; making it easy for them to find and purchase the product(s) they're looking for; and building loyalty to turn buyers into returning customers. The following guidelines will help your dealership drive online traffic and increase sales.

Leverage Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to make it easy for prospects to find your products

Your website is a 24/7 store. Easy to navigate, it should feature informative, eye-

catching content, positioning your dealership as the authority on all things related to outdoor power equipment. It should also incorporate a solid call-to-action strategy designed to entice visitors to take the next step, whether it be requesting more information or, better yet, buying a part. These criteria are necessary but not sufficient to attract potential buyers who do not know of your dealership and are using search engines to find a particular product that you have available in your inventory. That's when SEO comes into play.

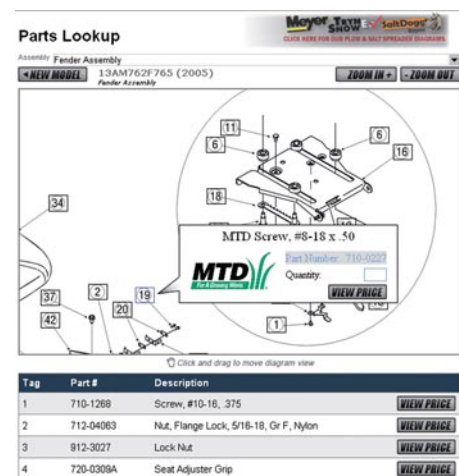
SEO is the process of achieving higher rankings for a website's most relevant keywords (i.e. the most applicable and/or commonly typed phrases when researching a specific product or topic). A Web solutions provider with a proven track record in creating traffic-building websites should optimize your site for maximum search engine visibility, so that when a prospect searches for a specific part that you happen to carry, your online inventory appears above that of your competitors. Most prospects that are looking for a part typically enter a brand name and a part number or description. That's why it is critical to have your brands, part numbers and descriptions indexed for SEO, making it easy for qualified buyers to find and purchase your parts online.

Enhance the shopping experience to make it fast and easy for visitors to buy your products

Assuming that your search-engine-optimized parts inventory is driving traffic to your site, the next step is to meet the expectations of the online buyer. According to recent studies, you only have 10 seconds to engage visitors once they've landed on your website. If they don't immediately



Turf Depot's website makes it fast and easy for customers to navigate and buy. It features clear calls to action, promotions and specials, and a dedicated section for its service department.



A consumer-friendly parts lookup and ordering system — hosted on a dealer's website — helps convert visitors to buyers, enhances customer satisfaction and retention, and leads to increased sales and profits.

find what they are looking for, they will undoubtedly click the Back button to try another link and move on to another site. Today's shoppers want to find the part they're looking for quickly, add it to their shopping cart, enter their billing information, and be done with it — all in as few clicks as possible.

Ordering the right part online can be a daunting task, even for the most technology-savvy consumer. If you want to respond to the online buyer's need for speed and convenience, you should seriously consider providing visitors with a consumer-friendly lookup and online ordering system that makes the right part information available immediately and in an easy-to-use format. With a solution inte-

grated in your website, your prospects and customers can identify the right part, using a quick search tool, intuitive illustrations and parts listings — all from your site so you can keep their attention focused on your business.

A consumer-friendly lookup and online ordering system will not only convert more visitors into buyers, but it will also enhance customer satisfaction and retention to increase sales and profits. If you had a first, positive online buying experience on a website, wouldn't you return to that seller for future purchases?

Include incentives to encourage visitors to buy

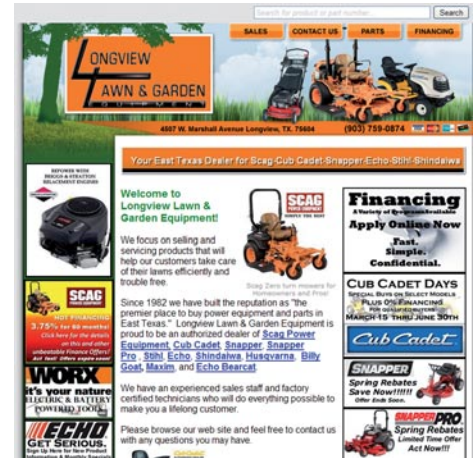
Let's say that your SEO efforts combined with the availability of a consumer-friendly lookup and online ordering system have delivered results, allowing visitors to quickly find both your site and the part they're looking for. With so much online competition, today's buyers are always on the hunt for the best deal. Using the following incentives, as stand-alone tactics,

or in combination with one another, could be the nudge visitors need or — should I say — expect to take action and click "Add to Cart."

- Free or discounted shipping
- Promotional discounts on online orders or on purchases over a certain amount
- Clear calls to action, including "Limited Time Offer," "Online Special," or "15% off. Today only!"
- Competitive pricing on parts

Research has shown that by implementing incentives such as a free shipping offer with conditions (e.g. free shipping on orders over \$30) increases sales fairly significantly. An eHoliday Mood Study by *Shop.org* and *BizRate.com* reported that free shipping with conditions is one of the most successful tools in driving sales. Over 40 percent of retailers listed it as their most effective marketing promotion. In addition, consumers ranked free shipping with conditions as one of the most effective buying incentives.

Of course, a free shipping promotional strategy involves financial considerations



Longview Lawn & Garden Equipment keeps customers coming back to its website by posting limited-time offers on pricing and financing, as well as providing customers with the ability to receive e-blasts about such offers.

prior to its implementation. Shipping costs are particularly important to understand, as each carrier has different rules and rates, as well as discounts, based on the volume of business, what you are shipping, how you are shipping, and where. Fully understand-

Clean Up Your World™
BILLY GOAT™

Clean up with Billy Goat's new products!

HomePro 34

- Ideal for 1/2 - 3/4 acre homeowners
- Cuts 62% faster than 21" mowers
- Easily fits in garage, shed or on trailers
- Stripes your yard like a contractor
- Low monthly payments



(Powered by SUBARU and HONDA)

OSSP Overseeder

- Self-Propelled Hydrostatic Drive and intuitive left & right drive controls
- Auto Drop System automatically starts and stops seed drop
- 22" Cutting Head floats with contour of yards
- Heavy Duty Infinite Height Adjustment for precise cutting depth



(Shown with optional seed box lid)

For more information, Contact Your Local Billy Goat Distributor. www.billygoat.com

Made in the USA

Every buyer is a potential returning customer.

ing your products and the associated cost of shipping has a direct impact on your bottom line.

Build loyalty to make customers come back for more

Once you've converted visitors into buyers, building loyalty will go a long way to increase customer retention and build a base for future sales. Treat online customers the same way you take care of walk-ins. Take the time to personalize and foster the relationship by implementing the follow-up proven tactics:

- Send an e-mail confirmation promptly, including a 'Thank You' note.

- Send an e-mail update when the order has shipped.
- Include a coupon, in the shipment, for a discount on a future online order.
- Invite customers to provide feedback on the product.
- Offer customers the ability to opt-in on e-blasts about special offers and discounts, as well as value-added information, such as DIY tips, FAQs, and how-to videos and demonstrations.

Every buyer is a potential returning customer. Ongoing yet subtle follow-up is necessary to sustain a personalized relationship in order to generate more sales from existing customers. A proven lead

management solution designed to automate portions of the follow-up process, including template-driven e-mail campaigns, calendar management and reminders will enable you to stay in touch with prospects, keep them engaged, and stay at the forefront of their mind without imposing yourself until they are ready to make another purchase.

Drive incremental parts sales from your service department

Though retail sales are beginning to grow again, consumers are still reluctant to invest in new products, electing to repair their existing equipment instead. This is your opportunity to position your dealership as the go-to contact for repair and maintenance work, as well as provide a

Parts Look-up Software



PartSmart & PartStream by ARI

PartSmart, parts lookup software known to more than 50,000 users worldwide, provides dealers with fast, easy and accurate access to parts information and pricing to increase efficiency, productivity and profits. Compatible with all existing PartSmart catalog databases, it also interfaces with more than 90 dealer business management systems.

Based on PartSmart and more than 30 years of experience providing content, PartStream is a consumer-friendly lookup and online ordering system that makes the right part information available immediately and in an easy-to-use format. PartStream instantly adds seamless eCommerce-enabled OEM parts lookup to any website. It improves parts lookup efficiencies, converting more visitors into customers — faster, and enhancing customer satisfaction and retention to increase sales and profits.

Other ARI products include WebsiteSmart, an award-winning website solution with integrated eCommerce; FootSteps, a proven lead management tool; and SearchEngineSmart, a complete end-to-end solution for creating, managing, and optimizing search engine advertising.

ARI/(800) 755-6040
www.arinet.com

Business Management Systems (listed in alphabetical order by company name)

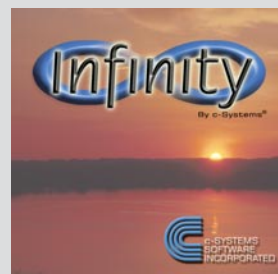


BASIC Software Systems

When it comes to managing parts inventory, there is no "one-size-fits-all" strategy for OPE dealerships. That's why BASIC Software Systems proudly teams up with hundreds of manufacturers

across the country to provide the most up-to-date pricing for parts and equipment. BASIC also integrates with numerous manufacturers in providing seamless interfaces that help improve parts availability, increase inventory productivity, and allow the parts manager to perform other necessary functions. In addition to a powerful Parts Inventory management tool, BASIC's entire system provides departmentalized management capabilities that ease the day-to-day processing. For more information on this powerful system solution, call BASIC at the toll-free phone number listed below or send e-mail to sales@basic-software.com.

BASIC Software Systems/(800) 252-4476
www.basic-software.com



Infinity by c-Systems

One of the smartest strategies for interacting with customers in today's highly competitive marketplace is customer relationship management. With the Infinity business management system by

c-Systems, you can generate more return and add-on sales with the following:

- **Customer Mailing Labels:** This feature allows users to export data to their mailing service providers, create e-mail lists, target e-mails, and create postcards. It also lets users export entire lists, as well as lists specific to certain makes and models.
 - **Unit Follow-up:** The Unit Sales Follow-up Report feature lets users create and export customized reports based on selected criteria such as date sold, make and model.
 - **Repair Follow-up:** The Repair Follow-up feature makes it easy to be certain your customers are satisfied that their equipment was repaired as requested and functioning properly.
 - **Completed Shop Jobs Panel:** Infinity's Completed Shop Jobs Panel automatically sends an e-mail or text message to the customer upon completion of the repair.
- c-Systems Software, Inc./ (800) 334-3114**
www.csystemssoftware.com



ASPEN business management system

Windows based, user friendly. ASPEN integrates with Microsoft applications, and it allows for easy export of data to Microsoft Excel, PDF and other popular formats. Navigation to program functions has familiar look and feel of popular Microsoft programs. It allows for multi-tasking and multiple users to log on to one desktop.

Regularly updated EPC/e-commerce interfaces create streamlined integration with suppliers and alleviate the need to re-key or duplicate efforts. PartSmart integration.

Affordable startup options based on dealership size. As your dealership grows, additional locations can be added to the system in less than a minute. Charter Software's hosted solution is an ideal fit for smaller dealerships.



Thank you note from Lappan's of Gaylord, Inc.

high level of customer service to drive incremental parts sales.

Follow these simple guidelines to highlight your service department and encourage prospects to raise their hand and ask

for more information or schedule service:

- Dedicate a section of your website to your service department on the homepage.
- Include clear contact information and calls to action on your service department page.
- Post promotions and specials on your homepage and service department page.
- Advertise limited-time, online promotions offseason.

The development of millions of impressions is how you draw more eyes and raise more hands: First impressions that lead to traffic and sales; ongoing impressions that lead to more returning customers. Small and large dealerships alike are leveraging industry-leading, technology-based solutions to woo the online buyer with a fast and easy shopping experience, followed by

an ongoing, open dialogue. Engage. Convince. Sell. Marketing your parts inventory online should facilitate all of the aforementioned to consistently enhance your visibility and nurture a positive environment in support of your sales efforts.

OPE



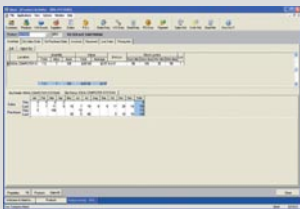
Cheryl Pabich is the director of marketing at ARI. In her position, she develops and manages all integrated marketing communications activities in support of ARI's growth. Prior to

joining ARI, Pabich held several positions of increasing responsibility in sales and marketing across several industries, including healthcare, hardware and software technology. Pabich can be reached at (414) 973-4426, or via e-mail at Pabich@arinet.com.

Data Conversion from existing software. Charter Software has converted data from more than 60 types of systems, and it has converted more dealers from QuickBooks than from any other system.

Outstanding support and training. Charter Software offers complete and professional support from configuration, data conversion, onsite training, phone support and free webinars.

Charter Software Inc. (303) 932-6875
www.chartersoftware.com



Ideal 7.2

Ideal 7.2, the newest and most powerful version of business management software from Ideal

Computer Systems, offers the latest in cutting-edge technology and helps outdoor power equipment dealers gain full control of their inventory, service department, customer service, pricing, purchasing, bookkeeping and overall business management.

Backed by more than 25 years of proven success and recognized for its excellent support services, Ideal is an invaluable tool that will maximize efficiency in all areas of your business. Just a few features include Inventory Control, Shop Management, Powerful Reports, Electronic Parts Ordering, Technician Time Clock, Work Order Scheduling, Key Performance Tracking and optional Accounting Package.

To learn more about Ideal and request a free Information Kit and Demo CD, call the toll-free phone number listed below or visit www.idealcomputersystems.com.

Ideal Computer Systems, Inc. (800) 737-1620/www.idealcomputersystems.com



Lizzy

Lizzy is the latest and greatest creation from

nizeX, Incorporated. The new system features the only inventory management system capable of running on any type of computer from Mac to Linux, including the majority of Internet-enabled cell phones, iPads and iPods. Lizzy offers advanced inventory management, as well as payroll, financing, purchasing, service, customer relations and much more. Lizzy is the only complete web-based solution on the market today with e-mailing, text messaging and customer portal capabilities.

Lizzy has also eliminated the expensive upfront software investment. One simple, low monthly fee offers you complete access to all of her services and an opportunity for you to join the nizeX team and participate in the process of developing a dealer management system.

nizeX, Inc. (678) 359-4187/www.nizex.com



Pathfinder's Mekanix Choice

Pathfinder's newest version of business management software for outdoor power equipment dealers is Mekanix

Choice. It is powered by the .NET environment with the power of an SQL database and the added power of user suggestions. Mekanix Choice includes inventory management, customer invoicing, work order/repair, accounts receivable, QuickBooks interface, data server and price files for up to 20 manufacturers. The package includes data server with 3-year hot swap warranty, automatic software updates, unattended daily offsite data backups,

and unattended price file installations with effective-date notifications. Several options are available.

"With our previous software, if we ran into a hardware failure, we lost all our customer, transaction and inventory data," said Mike Saice, national parts and service trainer, Northern Tool and Equipment. "With Mekanix Choice, all that information is backed up outside of our PCs. It has saved three or four locations already. Mike Waterson, Jeremy Grund and the support staff at Pathfinder solve problems and issues very fast! Great support!"

Pathfinder Computer Systems, Inc.
(330) 928-1961/www.pathfindercs.biz



InvenTrakk by Paulson Computer Systems

InvenTrakk by Paulson Computer Systems comes with an advanced inventory control module for outdoor power equipment dealers. InvenTrakk will import price books for all of your manufacturers to ensure that you have the latest part numbers, cost information and supersede data for all of your parts. The system supports 10 different levels of pricing markup, allowing you to control different profit margins on items in different price ranges. It also offers advanced inventory reporting, including a daily detailed profit margin analysis report that allows you to view the profit on everything that went out the door for the day. In addition, the latest InvenTrakk ships with free CODIS Electronic ordering, which allows you to order parts instantly and electronically. InvenTrakk is completely free for 30 days. Test drive it in your dealership today by visiting www.inventrakk.com/testdrive.aspx.

Paulson Computer Systems (800) 659-8547
www.inventrakk.com