

The Search Marketing Situation at Cognos

Cognos is a billion-dollar organization and Canada's largest software manufacturer. To reach its target audience of IT and business buyers in global organizations, the company has no choice but to be online.

"Our audience uses online technology heavily," says John Blackmore, Cognos Senior Manager of Web and Content. "We have to be where these people live. Search is a huge and growing component of the way people find us, so it is extremely important for us to be doing it right."

With only a few sales leads a month generated by their existing pay per click (PPC) investment, Cognos marketers knew something was not right. In addition to low demand generation, Cognos did not appear frequently enough in search engine results to increase brand awareness. For its most important keywords, Cognos functions in a highly competitive market, vying for a top position against 53,000,000 other search results.

Blackmore's team implemented a comprehensive search marketing program to take advantage of multiple touch points. As part of this program, the marketers looked for a search marketing agency that could develop a successful PPC advertising campaign to operate alongside Cognos search engine optimization (SEO) efforts. If Cognos already appeared in the natural results on the first page, then the paid ads would further enhance the company's search visibility. However, for keywords where Cognos was not yet appearing on the first page organically, the paid ad campaign would ensure the company's inclusion on the all-important page one.

Cognos turned to Search Warrant to help transform the company's existing PPC investment into a sustainable competitive advantage.

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– John Blackmore
Senior Manager, Web and Content, Cognos

Search Warrant's PPC Solution

Search marketing prospects must complete several steps before they turn into legitimate sales leads. For Cognos, each of these steps risked the possibility of losing users. Together, Cognos Web marketers and Search Warrant online marketers took a systematic approach to improving the user experience at every stage. They analyzed the keywords targeted by Cognos to ensure the company focused on words that were actually searched on by users, and were most likely to result in a conversion. They then optimized the text displayed in the ads: repeating keywords, offering incentives, and making calls to action prevalent. Next, they optimized the landing pages that appear after a user clicks through on an ad. To date, the company has gone through three versions of its PPC landing pages, fine tuning wording and layout based on ongoing best practice and user behaviour research.

"Search Warrant helps us make improvements at all levels, provides constant management of the program, and continues looking for opportunities to expand," says Blackmore. "From day one, the energy, commitment, and management that Search Warrant brought to our program convinced me that I had found the right search marketing agency."

Rather than outsourcing search marketing entirely, Cognos has in essence formed a partnership with Search Warrant. With its team of Search Warrant search professionals and Cognos Web marketers, Cognos gains both the niche expertise and internal company knowledge required for search marketing to work to its full potential.

"We have the ideal vendor relationship. Search Warrant is an extension of our team," says Blackmore. "Search marketing requires focus as well as market knowledge. We have the inside knowledge, but Search Warrant gives us the focus. Without focus, you can't have excellence in search. You can do it well, but you can't be the best."



Company:

Cognos

Industry:

Software

Audience:

IT and business buyers in global organizations

Search Needs:

- Cost-effective lead generation
- Increased brand awareness online

Results:

- Increase from less than 5 sales leads per month to **more than 700**
- Increase in impressions from **thousands to millions**
- Increase in click-throughs from **tens to thousands**
- Conversion rate **60% higher** than the industry average
- Some of the most cost-effective leads in the industry

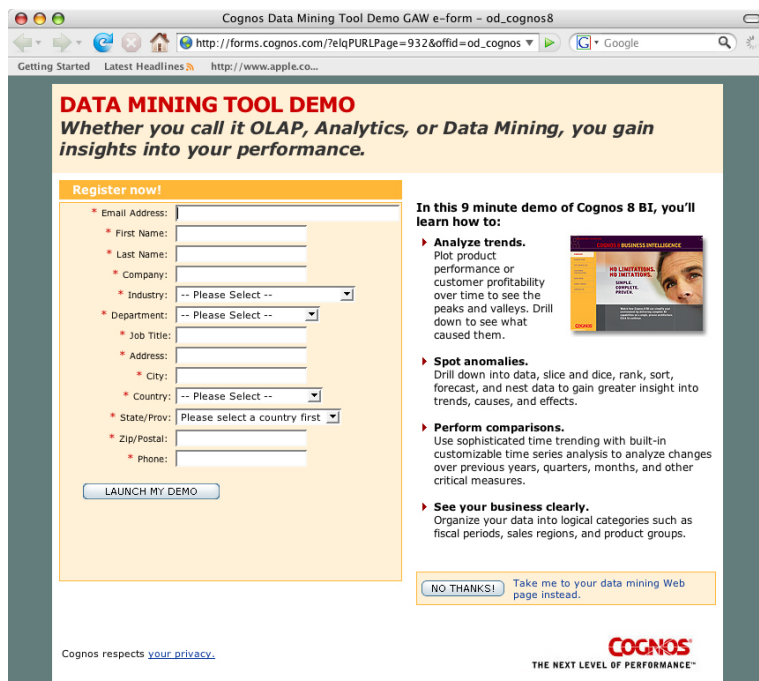
Measurable Results and ROI

Within one month of launching the new program, Cognos saw improvement. The number of leads generated by PPC has steadily increased to the point where it now captures 700 a month compared to less than five per month generated before Search Warrant became involved. The number of impressions has increased from thousands to millions; click-throughs have grown from tens to thousands. The Cognos PPC conversion rate is now 60% higher than the industry average identified by MarketingSherpa in its 2007 Benchmark Guide. Moreover, the leads generated by the campaign are some of the most cost-effective in the industry.

The opportunities generated by the program are making a multimillion-dollar contribution to the Cognos sales pipeline. After substantial growth in 2006, the PPC program is already on track to double its performance in 2007. 2007 has also seen a dramatic increase in Web traffic to the Cognos company site. In May 2007, the number of users entering the site through search was 20% higher than it was in May 2006, setting a new record high for visitors to Cognos.com.

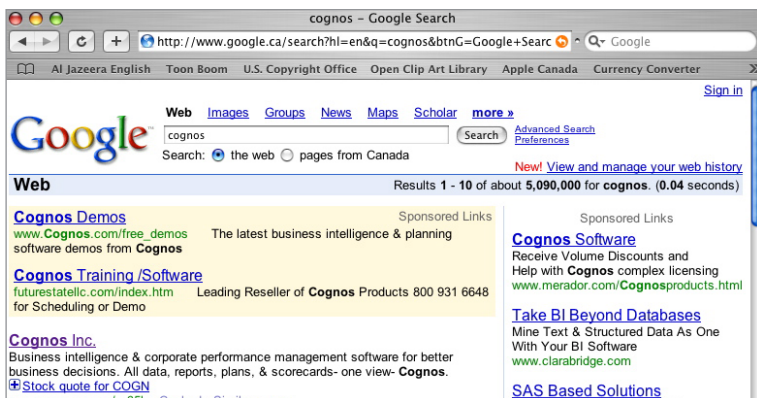
“Search marketing is one of the most cost-effective marketing tools available to any company, big or small,” says Blackmore. “It is especially effective for a smaller enterprise, giving them the ability to compete with bigger companies on an even playing field – and beat them. We may be seen as a large company, but some of our competition are giants.”

For its relatively small investment in search marketing, Cognos gains high ROI, increased site traffic, and an important competitive advantage.



Sample landing page for Cognos PPC campaign, custom made for keywords related to “data mining”

“Any way you measure it, this is a phenomenally successful effort,” says Blackmore. “We took an existing marketing investment and turned it into a great initiative for the company. For essentially the same cost, we now generate millions of dollars in marketing activity for Cognos when before we produced none. The program we’ve been able to develop is among the strongest anywhere. It’s definitely best practice, and I’d stack it up against any other company worldwide.”



Cognos benefits from multiple touch points: the company appears in both paid and natural search results

About Cognos

Cognos, the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions, provides world-class enterprise planning and Business Intelligence software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. Cognos brings together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers a complete performance system.

Cognos serves more than 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries, and its top 100 enterprise customers consistently outperform market indexes. Cognos performance management solutions and services are also available from more than 3,000 worldwide partners and resellers. For more information, visit the Cognos Web site at <http://www.cognos.com/>.

About Search Warrant Online Marketing

Search Warrant Online Marketing offers the B2B market niche expertise in best practice search marketing for rapid, measurable, and sustainable results. Based in Ottawa, Canada, Search Warrant provides search engine optimization (SEO) and pay per click (PPC) advertising services to transform your Web expense into Web revenue. For help with your search marketing campaign, visit <http://www.searchwarrant.ca> or contact us directly.