

A LinkShare Moment with Rick Renaud, Online Customer Acquisition Manager, Gardener's Supply

"Getting on board with LinkShare Search Advantage was the best move we could have made. Search is driving our online customer acquisition, and making my portfolio shine!"

Rick Renaud, Gardener's Supply, Online Customer



How many keywords are you tracking, and which search engines are you currently working with?

We are currently bidding on thousands of keywords, and work with the following:

- Overture Paid Placement
- Overture SiteMatch (Paid Inclusion)
- Google Adwords
- MSN Featured Site Listing
- Kanoodle
- FindWhat

What were your greatest challenges in managing search in-house?

For one, it was impossible for us to set up a detailed tracking system internally. But more importantly, there were a lot of best practices that we knew we wanted to implement. Much of it was highly detailed work that would require a significant amount of time and resources - which we did not have.

Why did you decide to outsource your search marketing efforts?

We knew we needed someone dedicated to the day-to-day details of managing a large campaign like ours. It made sense to outsource instead of hire in order to leverage experience, a powerful backend tracking system, and minimize overhead.

Why did you choose LinkShare's search marketing solution?

Gardener's Supply has had a positive relationship for LinkShare for over four years. In the two years we have worked together, I've gotten to know the people that make up the company, and I had faith that they would get the job done. The search marketing team at LinkShare impressed me with their knowledge and insight into the kind of questions/issues we were confronting. Gardener's Supply was one of the first to commit to LinkShare's Search Advantage Solution. As such, they gave us a good deal that I knew would ultimately help grow our affiliate program with them as well. And lastly, LinkShare's performance-based compensation model gives them an added incentive to aggressively grow our program while staying within the parameters of our strategic goals.

Did you consider tracking and management services offered directly by the search engines, such as Google and Overture?

Yes. In fact, we used Google's tracking and management service for about four months before deciding to move all campaigns to LinkShare.

What are some measurable results that you achieved after switching to LinkShare's search marketing solution?

We experienced almost immediate results. After the first 5 months -

- Close to 50% increase in total revenue compared to the same period in the previous year
- Over 50% decrease in Cost per Order
- Over 135% increase in our break-even metric

Additionally, our conversion rates have increased, and our CPC costs have decreased.

How did LinkShare help you optimize your search marketing campaigns?

When we partnered with LinkShare, we gained detailed individual keyword performance visibility. That, coupled with a dedicated representative, who helped us implement the best strategic practices that we knew we needed to do, as well as those suggested by LinkShare, have been the foundation for our new level of search marketing success.

What do you think is the greatest strength in LinkShare's search marketing solution?

For us, it has been the LinkShare Search Advantage team, and in particular, our Search Marketing Account Manager. The dedication to helping partners succeed is evident in everything that they do. I believe that a truly successful search marketing campaign is one that invests the time required to focus on the fundamental elements of the campaign - from targeted creative to long term analysis and optimization - rather than one that relies on automating the process.

What is your policy on working with affiliates in search? How has LinkShare helped you with managing your search affiliates?

Currently, our only restriction is that affiliates do not outbid us on our branded terms. We are, however, continuing to evaluate this policy and the impact to our overall performance. Because LinkShare manages both our search and affiliate marketing programs, when we made a change in our bidding policy, LinkShare was instrumental in helping us to coordinate the communication of the new policy, and to help us identify those affiliate who were not compliant with the new policy. We found all of the affiliates to be very cooperative, and were able to manage the process seamlessly.

**Discover what LinkShare can do for your business at www.linkshare.com
or call us at 646.943.8200 or toll-free in the US at 800.875.5465,
outside the U.S call +1 646-943-8300**