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Bob Keating
Project Lead



ABOUT GOOGLE SITE SEARCH

Google Site Search is a hosted website search solution, powered by Google.com. Google Site Search leverages the relevancy and sub-second response times of Google.com to improve your website experience. As a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution, you can setup Google Site Search in just minutes; customize the look and feel of search results; apply refinement labels; enjoy reporting features; obtain email and phone support; and turn off the ads on your searchresults.

For more information, visit
www.google.com/sitesearch

Background

The Business Gateway is a Presidential e-government initiative aimed at simplifying small businesses' interactions with the government. This unique U.S. federal government program helps its customers find information from federal, state and local government. The Business Gateway's goals are to reduce the paperwork and compliance burden so small companies can focus on building their business. Twenty-one federal government agencies participate in the initiative, which is managed by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

This group launched the website business.gov in 2004 to provide information to help small companies start, manage, and grow their businesses.

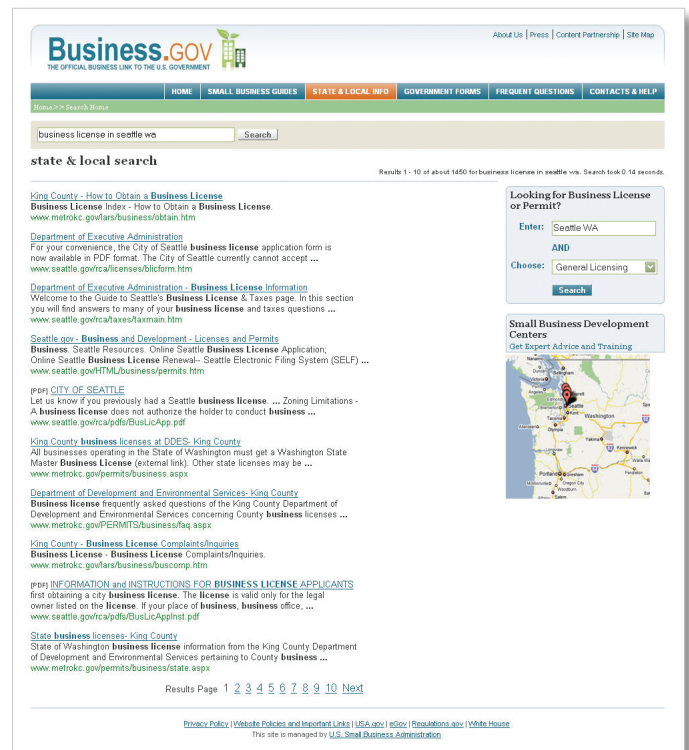
Challenge

Small businesses that are just getting started may need to interact with the government for a variety of reasons, including: complying with government regulations like taxes and environmental laws; applying for financial and technical assistance available to small businesses; and learning how to become a government contractor.

Most businesses have obligations to government at the federal, state, and local levels, so the quantity of information for small businesses to navigate quickly becomes unwieldy.

“You should not need a degree in government to understand where you need to go for information,” said Nancy Sternberg, program manager for the Business Gateway initiative. “Everyone knows about the IRS, but if you're a business who deals with trade or workplace safety issues, people don't know where to go.”

The Business Gateway project aims to provide a complete picture to small business owners searching for information across all levels of government. Initially, they used



another search solution which was extremely expensive and did not provide relevant results to business.gov visitors. The site saw a drop in customer satisfaction scores in 2006 due to content gaps and poor search results. The Business Gateway team promptly decided to investigate other search options that could meet their needs for cost-effective, relevant results that would help small businesses locate exactly what they needed across the various government websites.

Solution

Business Gateway, with the help of Touchstone Consulting, implemented Google Site Search on the business.gov site in November 2007 for all federal government information specific to small businesses. Google Site Search runs off the same index as Google.com and requires no hardware or software installations.

“Setting up Google Site Search was really simple,” said Bob Keating of Touchstone Consulting, project lead for Business Gateway. “It was unbelievable. I had all the data and it was just a matter of dropping it in there.”

After the first phase was complete, the project team dedicated their attention to incorporating state and local content, which was made easier with Google Site Search. In February 2008, the Business Gateway introduced search spanning 9,000 state and local websites and returning geographically appropriate results for the customer’s query, all with sub-second response time.

A query parser looks at any geographic terms included in a search – such as a city and state, county, or zip code – and then returns results from the state and local agency websites for that area. In addition, business.gov has integrated Google Maps into its search results so that users can find locations and contact information for in-person services.

“We now make information available easily in an accessible manner,” said Nancy Sternberg. “We have pulled together information from across the federal government, and took it further recently by going to the state and local level. This allows business owners to go to one place and not search and search.”

Results

For business.gov, customer satisfaction scores – as measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) – are rising, and the feedback from small businesses in usability testing is positive. Small business users are much happier with the quality of the search results they receive when searching for information for their business.

The switch to Google Site Search was key in raising the site’s Search satisfaction score from 61 to 75, a dramatic improvement on the ACSI scale. As a result of implementing Google Site Search and other content changes, the overall ACSI score for business.gov has risen from 63 to 74 in the past year.

“Google Site Search is easy to maintain, update, and keep current,” said Bob Keating. “It was the right approach to take and is working very well.”

