



Head Strong

HelmetTown.com combined Google AdWords, Analytics, and Checkout to increase orders by more than 30% and website traffic by more than 400%.

Who they are

- Helmet Town
- www.helmettown.com
- Reno, Nevada
- Online motorcycle and ski helmet and accessories store



What they needed

- To shift to a predominately online model
- To grow their customer base
- To reach an international market
- To match their seasonal inventory to a year-round advertising strategy

What they did

- Started with **Google AdWords** in 2006
- Added **Google Analytics** tracking to their website
- Began using **Google Checkout** as a payment processing option
- Used Analytics in conjunction with AdWords to test, optimize, and track campaigns
- Improved site design based on Analytics data
- Lowered costs by using AdWords, Analytics, and Checkout in concert

What they accomplished

- **Boosted traffic:** Website visits increased more than 400%
- **Increased orders:** Grew orders by 30%
- **Expanded customer base:** Targeted international customers based on seasonality
- **Redesigned website:** Used Analytics and AdWords data to restructure their site for a better user experience
- **Redefined business:** Used Google products to shift business focus online

Jon Scott was 14 when he discovered skiing. “I went on a school ski trip to France and was hooked.” He had just one little problem: he happened to live in England, a country not exactly known for snow, much less mountains. For years, Jon fit ski breaks in between a hectic career in mobile phone sales, where he managed more than 100 people. But one day he realized he wanted a life that was more about quality than quantity. “Since the mountains weren’t about to come to me, I went to the mountains. First I moved to Vail, then Seattle. But after a road trip to California in 1991, I fell in love with Lake Tahoe. I was home.”

In 2000, Jon opened a local ski shop in South Lake Tahoe that focused on sales and rentals. Then in 2005 he decided to try and sell some of his overstock online. “I always try to look for hot new items or concepts and get involved on the ground floor,” he explains. Helmets turned out to be one of those hot items. Jon’s online helmet sales impressed him so much that he launched HelmetTown.com, an online store selling helmets and ski equipment.



Endless winter

Snowfall in the Tahoe area had been low for the previous two years, and Jon’s business was feeling the impact. He began to rely more and more on the Internet as a way to reach customers. “It’s always winter somewhere in the world,” he says, “and I wanted to limit the effects of seasonal swings on my business. The Internet was exciting because there was so much potential: I just needed to reach people interested in what I sell.”

In the fall of 2006, Jon signed up for a Google AdWords™ account. “I’m not what you’d call a computer expert, but I’ve been in sales all my life and I understand the importance of getting to the customer. Rather than just a ski shop in Tahoe, we were suddenly part of the world market. Helmets were our way to a part of that market share, and AdWords helped us send out our call to the world. It’s increased traffic to our website by more than 400 percent.”

Not so hardheaded

“The traffic increase was great, but our sales didn’t increase as much as I’d hoped,” says Jon, “which told me people were interested in buying, but weren’t finding exactly what they wanted. I realized I needed to improve the site. So I decided to give Google Analytics™ a whirl to see what was and what wasn’t working.” Analytics is a free tool that offers comprehensive analysis of a variety of important site metrics and works with AdWords to track how visitors reach and navigate HelmetTown.com.

“You think the more people looking at your site, the better, but that’s not true

About Google AdWords

Google AdWords™ is a performance-based advertising program that enables businesses large and small to advertise on Google and its network of partner websites. Hundreds of thousands of businesses worldwide use AdWords for text, image, and video ads priced on a cost-per-click (CPC) and cost-per-impression (CPM) basis. Built on an auction-based system, AdWords is a highly quantifiable and cost-effective way to reach potential customers.

For more information, visit
<http://adwords.google.com>

About Google Analytics

Google Analytics™ is a free, powerful web analytics tool. It precisely tracks visitors, referrals, search engine performance, email promotions, and even offline initiatives. Featuring visually enhanced reports, Analytics helps users focus their marketing resources, improve site navigation, and achieve a higher ROI. It measures the success of both AdWords and non-AdWords advertising campaigns, revealing which ads and keywords convert the best.

For more information, visit
<http://www.google.com/analytics>

About Google Checkout

Google Checkout™ is a fast, convenient checkout process. Online merchants use Checkout to process orders and charge their customers' credit or debit cards. Shoppers can make purchases quickly and securely, using a single username and password. Checkout also works with Google's search advertising program, AdWords, to help merchants increase sales and minimize expenses throughout the online sales and marketing process.

For more information, visit
<http://checkout.google.com/sell>

if they aren't buying," says Jon. "I didn't understand that at first. AdWords and Analytics help you analyze the habits and desires of your customers, allowing you to capitalize on the data that the Internet can provide." Using data from Analytics, such as what content customers find most useful, John is redesigning HelmetTown.com page by page.

Check this out

Early this year, Jon began using Google Checkout™, which offers a faster, safer, and more convenient checkout option. Customers can make purchases quickly and securely with a single username and password. He highlights Checkout on his homepage, and the Checkout badge is featured in all of his AdWords ads. "The ratio of clicks to sales is critical, and we want to make it as easy as possible for customers to purchase," explains Jon. "The ease of Checkout is very appealing: you just point and click and then you're done. All of our customers who've tried it have loved it. I hope it becomes the future of online checkout."



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The combination of Google AdWords, Analytics, and Checkout has helped Jon improve his overall conversion channel. "Different pieces work together," Jon explains. "The data from Analytics provides more insight into my AdWords campaigns, and the Checkout badge on my AdWords ads helps increase my clickthrough rate. Together, Google's products have helped me increase orders by 30 percent."

Student life

In May 2007, Jon closed down the rental shop and moved his operations across the border to Reno, Nevada. HelmetTown.com has added motorcycle helmets to its inventory and now occupies a showroom and a warehouse, allowing Jon to focus wholly on his online business. "I'm the student and Google is the university," states Jon. "AdWords, Analytics, Checkout – it's all a learning process. Google helps you understand how to reach your customer, and allows you to be very specific with your product positioning."

He still fancies himself a ski bum, but one with a business that is full of quantity and quality. "Adapt and modify – that's kind of, well, life," Jon muses. "Nothing is set in stone. You see trends and opportunities and try to jump on them. That's what we did with motorcycle helmets. And that's why we use Google."

