



Nimble Books sees efficiency increase with Google Apps and gains exposure for titles with Google Book Search

“At Nimble Books we use Google solutions throughout the process of publishing. They’re ideal from a cost and capability standpoint – especially for this type of business.”

Fred Zimmerman
CEO, Nimble Books

FPO

ABOUT GOOGLE BOOK SEARCH

Google Book Search enables authors and publishers to promote their books on Google. Google scans the full text of a partner’s titles so that Google users can see books that match the topics they are searching on. When users click on a book search result, they’re taken to a Google-hosted web page displaying a scanned image of the relevant page from the book. Each page also contains multiple “Buy this Book” links, which enable users to purchase the book from online retailers. Users may also see contextually targeted Google AdWords ads on these pages. Partners receive a share of the revenue generated from ads appearing on their content.

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

Business

Nimble Books lives up to its name. The company is a boutique publisher with a “no inventory” business model that helps manage risk and improve time to market. The company offers timely, relevant books on topics of current interest ranging from Harry Potter to science and international politics.

Approach

Like any savvy business owner, Publisher and CEO Fred Zimmerman looks for ways to increase revenues and cut costs. Although most of Nimble’s offerings are ultimately sold through other online booksellers, Zimmerman works to find ways to increase the visibility of every title. Simultaneously, he seeks opportunities to reduce expenses and run the business more efficiently in order to make the company’s fleet-of-foot business model a continued success.

Solution

Since 2004, Nimble Books has been using Google Book Search to increase exposure for its books. The company combines Google Book Search with other online marketing initiatives, including using Google AdWords™ to manage keyword-driven marketing campaigns for titles, and Google AdSense to cover hosting costs for the company’s site. “We heard about Google Book Search on the web, and we were immediately interested in joining the Partner Program,” says Zimmerman, whose company now has 28 books available on Google Book Search. Zimmerman



“Publishing is inherently a collaborative business, so we wanted a solution with collaboration baked in. When we saw Google Apps, we felt it would help us live up to our vision of being a nimble publishing company by shortening the time required for fundamental interactions like negotiating contracts and reporting on royalties.”

publishes several books each year, and Google Book Search is an integral part of every new book launch. “These days, it’s important to have an online footprint to reach more readers,” says Zimmerman. “And why not? Making books available on Google Book Search is very easy and takes less than half an hour.”

In addition to building awareness, Zimmerman strives to keep his distributed staff of 11 flexible and efficient using Google Apps. The company had been using POP3 email clients and e-mailing documents as attachments. “Publishing is inherently a collaborative business, so we wanted a solution with collaboration baked in,” says Zimmerman. “When we saw Google Apps, we felt it would help us live up to our vision of being a nimble publishing company by shortening the time required for fundamental interactions like negotiating contracts and reporting on royalties.”

ABOUT GOOGLE APPS

Google Apps is a suite of applications that includes Gmail, Google Calendar (shared calendaring), Google Talk (instant messaging and voice over IP), Google Docs (online document hosting and collaboration), Google Page Creator (web page creation and publishing) and Start Page (a single, customizable access point for all applications). Google Apps offers editions tailored to specific customer needs, including the Standard Edition (ideal for family domains), Education Edition (K-12 schools, colleges and universities) and Premier Edition (businesses of all sizes). Visit www.google.com/a for more information.

Visit www.google.com/a for more information.

Since adopting Google Apps in fall 2006, Gmail and Google Docs have become mainstays for communication and collaboration. Google Docs comes in handy for multiple business processes, including negotiating contracts, tracking sales and royalties, and gathering addresses for sending review copies of books to multiple recipients. Zimmerman and his team use Gmail to manage marketing campaigns by importing contact lists and using tags to create structured mailing databases.

Results

Google solutions have contributed positively to both sides of the balance sheet. On the income side, Zimmerman has been impressed with the success of Google Book Search as an online marketing tool that enhances branding and provides an easy way to gauge readers' reactions. "The advantage of Google Book Search is that it reaches people at the point of sale," he says. "If there's a review, we can see what people are saying. It's a great way to keep a pulse on our market."

Zimmerman adds that he's looking forward to taking advantage of Google Book Search's online access option to make a wider variety of books available for purchase without having to stock them in print. He's also eagerly anticipating the ability to build social networks around books or authors. "We envision Google adding even more value by rallying communities around specific titles to draw interest," he says.

Google solutions have also had a positive effect on productivity and cost reduction. Gmail allows staff to easily search email and Google Docs keeps everyone more organized. "The search features in Gmail are excellent, and much appreciated," says Zimmerman.

Gmail and Google Docs together streamline many of the company's core business processes. Negotiating contracts using shared documents in Google Apps eliminates the need to e-mail documents back and forth. The company no longer deals with the uncertainties associated with document version numbers and has reduced the likelihood of inadvertently missing a change in contract terms. It has also simplified the process of tracking sales and royalty figures. By using a shared Google spreadsheet, the company has eliminated the need to send hard-copy quarterly updates. "Those unfamiliar with publishing may not realize what a huge increase in transparency and immediacy the use of a shared spreadsheet is when compared to the typical six-months-late cryptic royalty statement," says Zimmerman.

Best of all, the comprehensive communication and collaboration tools in Google Apps come at no charge. "Free is a much better price than the typical price for commercial contracts tracking solutions for publishing, which start at around \$2000 per year," notes Zimmerman.

For Nimble Books, Google solutions help the company reach more readers, enhance branding and keep its operations running at peak efficiency. "At Nimble Books we use Google solutions throughout the process of publishing. They're ideal from a cost and capability standpoint – especially for this type of business."

