

COMMUNICATOR AWARDS – MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS ENTRY

ALWAYS BEST CARE SENIOR SERVICES 2011 National Advertising Program

Summary/Brief

The Company

Always Best Care Senior Services began franchising late in 2007, and more than doubled the number of franchises and franchise revenue each year for the next three years. The company now provides non-medical in-home care, assisted living placement services and skilled home health care for seniors and others through a network of more than 175 franchised territories throughout the United States and Canada.

In 2011, *Entrepreneur* magazine named Always Best Care the fastest growing Senior Care franchise system in the United States. Other accolades earned by the brand in 2011 included: One of the top franchises for veterans, one of the top for minorities, one of the best for franchisee satisfaction and one of the best low-cost franchises.

Situation

Always Best Care entered 2011 with just under 100 individual franchisees in the USA. The company instituted a National Advertising Fund with required participation by all franchisees, and established a National Advertising Committee with members of the franchise community. In association with the brand marketing team, the Committee developed a basic positioning statement and created a marketing campaign designed to accomplish the goals of building and enhancing brand awareness, and generating leads to help local franchisees build their businesses.

Plan

With a first-year budget of less than \$400,000, the company determined (through research) that we would concentrate primarily on online marketing and advertising in order to build a foundation for future success, launching our first search engine optimization program, redesign websites, create pay-per-click search and display advertising in support of specific products, email advertising and other components.

We believed strongly that given our limited budget, by focusing on a few specific strategies and components and doing those few as strongly as possible we would be better served than if we diluted our efforts by trying to be all things to all people and not being able to make a solid impact on anything. Therefore, we concentrated primarily on developing websites and landing pages that were conducive to capturing consumer information and converting visitors to leads, and on search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising to drive visitors to our websites.

Results

Initial pre-campaign base metrics included fewer than 2,500 monthly visitors to the website, virtually no leads distributed to franchisees (fewer than 25 per month), and no keywords which placed the brand on either page one or page two of Google search results.

By the end of October, just less than six months after the start of the campaign, visitors to our websites exceeded 20,000 per month, more than 1,700 leads were distributed to franchisees, and the brand achieved first page search results with 12 distinct keywords.

Creative Elements

National consumer website: www.alwaysbestcare.com

Franchisee websites; example: www.sandiego.alwaysbestcare.com

Landing pages: www.alwaysbestcare.info/landingpages.html

Consumer brochure: <http://www.alwaysbestcare.info/consumerbrochure.html>

Print advertisements: <http://www.alwaysbestcare.info/printads.html>

Online display advertisements: <http://www.alwaysbestcare.info/webads.html>

Email marketing: <http://www.alwaysbestcare.info/emailcampaign.html>

Background Information

Always Best Care provides non-medical in-home care, assisted living placement services and skilled home health care through an international network of franchisees.

In 2011, the company launched its first national advertising program, supported by contributions from all franchisees.

Prior to the campaign, initial base metrics included fewer than 2,500 monthly visitors to the website, virtually no leads distributed to franchisees (fewer than 25 per month), and no keywords which laced the brand on either page one or page two of Google search results.

The campaign was designed to increase and enhance brand awareness, build substantial visits to the websites, create a presence on the web through a combination of SEO and pay-per-click advertising, and generate leads to our franchisees.

Web marketing was determined to be the best approach to achieving initial goals, as research showed...

- 30 percent of all web traffic on any given day was generated by members of the “boomer” generation (the brand’s target audience)
- 88 percent of boomers used search engines
- 79 percent researched health information online
- Monthly online searches for target keywords were increasing at a rate of 15 percent or more per year
- The number of monthly searches for several keywords was staggering: More than 1.5 million per month for “home care,” more than 800,000 for “assisted living,” more than 600,000 for senior care homes, and more than 300,000 for both “home services” and “home health care.”

Always Best Care has a variety of specific services it offers to seniors, including non-medical in-home care, assisted living placement services, and skilled home health care.

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Target Audience

1. Adults (men and women) ages 35 – 55 with incomes of \$75,000 or more who have family members in need of in-home care, skilled home health care or assisted living facilities
2. Adults (men and women) ages 65+ (or younger with disabilities) who require assistance with the activities of daily living or life's daily routines

Specific Campaign Objectives

- Increase and enhance awareness of the Always Best Care brand name, image and reputation
- Drive visitors from among our target audience to the national websites, increasing total visits from a level of 2,500 per month pre-campaign to at least 20,000 per month within six months of launching the campaign
- Provide educational value to visitors
- Convert visitors to leads (inquiries for service)
- Provide a means for visitors to reach local franchised offices

Challenges

- Low level of pre-campaign visitors to our website (approximately 2,500 per month), indicating low brand awareness and limited interest in our services
- The company had never attempted a national advertising effort in the past, and therefore specific targets for lead generation, costs per lead, and return on investment were difficult to establish
- The company provided service through a national network of franchised offices which covered less than 25 percent of the country
- The company had little infrastructure in place, no call center, limited website
- Competitive advertising was at significantly higher levels than we could attain with our first year budget; in some cases, competitors were spending more than \$2 million on online campaigns alone, versus our \$400,000 budget for everything
- We were the “new kids on the block,” having launched franchise efforts in late 2007, less than four years from the start of our campaign – by contrast, some competitors had been advertising nationally for 15 years or more

Methods & Strategies

- By focusing on a few specific strategies and components and doing those few as strongly as possible, we believed we would be better served than if we diluted our efforts by trying to be all things to all people and not being able to make a solid impact on anything. Therefore, we concentrated primarily on developing websites and landing pages that were conducive to capturing consumer information and converting visitors to leads, and on search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising which focused on individual aspects of our services to drive visitors to our websites.
- Focus group research dictated creation of new websites for both the national brand and franchisees to provide a more compelling, colorful, warm and compassionate image and impression; also to make it easier for consumers to respond to offers by providing multiple opportunities, including calls, online requests, email and live chat, plus opportunity to locate and contact local offices.
- Additionally, individual landing pages were developed, each of which focused on a single aspect of our services, such as a landing page for home care, another for Alzheimer's care, another for assisted living placement, and so on.
- Online display, online search and print advertisements were developed in a variety of sizes, with each advertisement focused on a single aspect of our services: Home care, assisted living placement, Alzheimer's care, veterans care, skilled home health care, etc. All online advertisements were then linked to the specific landing page for the product or service being advertised.
- A consumer brochure and Power Point presentation were created for across-the-desk presentations by franchisees to introduce the brand and our services, and to reinforce the positioning and image established through the websites and advertising materials.
- Multiple email campaigns were developed and tested to bring the Always Best Care story to consumers and drive potential customers to our websites.

Results

Campaign launch: May 16, 2011

- Website visits: Total of 21,570 visits in month of October, 2011 per Google Analytics (18,885 to national website, and 2,685 to franchise website), exceeding goal of 20,000 – increased from average of 2,500 monthly visitors pre-campaign
- Website visits on steady upward trend, reaching higher highs and higher lows each month
- Leads: 1,715 leads were generated through October, 2011 – an increase of more than 7,000 percent versus pre-campaign for a similar period
- Keywords: Attained page one Google search results for 12 keywords, up from zero pre-campaign