

Trust in the outside experts

Pam Macharola can recognize a sweet deal, after all she's worked in candy almost all her life. So while her Internet marketing efforts weren't exactly milk duds, having managed services turned out to be a real sugary deal.

"We let Solid Cactus as the experts run it for us so we don't waste money or make a wrong move."

—Pam Macharola, BlairCandy.com

BlairCandy has been selling online since 2001, but the family owned and operated business began as a brick and mortar store (retail and wholesale) in 1939. Pam Macharola, third generation co-owner and Internet division president stays on top of the changing trends in Internet marketing.



Founded in 1939, Blair Candy Company has been a family owned and operated business for over 71 years!

Macharola says the company looked into Solid Cactus when they first entered eCommerce to help with their initial website that was unfortunately not "built to sell." Solid Cactus started from the bottom up, redesigning and programming a new site. Since then, Blair Candy has added several managed Solid



Pam Macharola owner and president of Blair Candy's Internet Division saw immediate results when she let Solid Cactus take over PPC three years ago. "In the first year, sales went up 68%," she said.

Cactus services including pay per click (PPC), search engine optimization (SEO) and comparison shopping engines, (CSE).

While Macharola began managing PPC on her own, with some successes and sales, she knew it could be better.

"I did not know what I was doing basically," she admitted, adding that when she let Solid Cactus take over PPC several years ago, she immediately saw results. "In the first year, sales went up 68%," remembers Macharola.

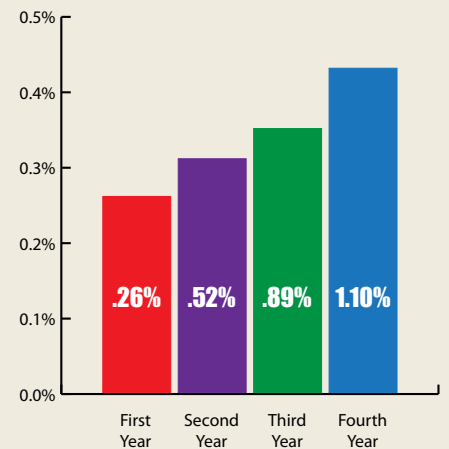
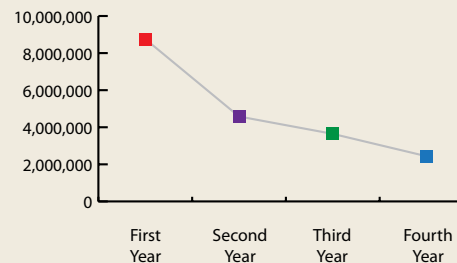
Much of Blair Candy's business comes from repeat customers, so it's important when these customers come back for more they don't just think "candy"; they think Blair Candy. Pam says PPC management has done a great job of making Blair Candy visible to customers on Google results pages where she's consistently held the third position, always above the scrolling area.

The average click through rate from Google, which began at .11% in the first month, more than tripled in the first year. The average rate is now between .65% and 1.59%. The cost per conversions remained fairly consistent during the same period.

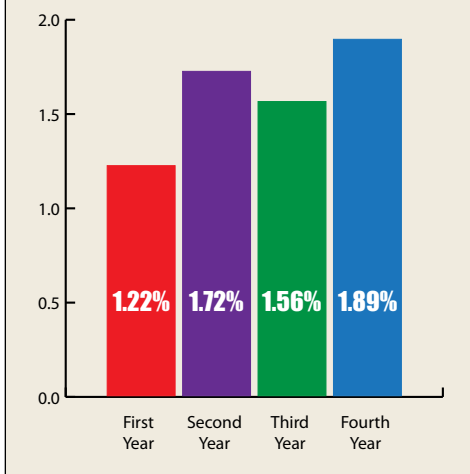
Continued on page 2

More clicks make for more leads!

Over four years Solid Cactus worked with Blair Candy to cut down impressions by more than half, weeding out those uninterested consumers. Over the same time the click through rate has more than tripled, showing a greater quality of interested customers, with overall clicks on the rise as well.



Conversions on the Rise



The dedication of Solid Cactus PPC specialists have increased average conversion rates, not including phone sales!

Part of the appeal of Blair Candy is its focus on niche markets, like nostalgic candy and holiday lines. Chocolate coins and gold rocks nugget bubble gum were promoted for St. Patrick's Day. Macharola says their PPC specialist has gotten to know the products as well as any Blair Candy employee. While Macharola's expertise in the candy is hard to beat, she recognizes the need for more than industry expertise in PPC campaigns, which is where her Solid Cactus PPC specialist comes in.

"We know candy inside out. We let her as the [PPC] expert run it for us so we don't waste money or make a wrong move," says Macharola.

Solid Cactus has gradually worked down the number of impressions by more than half. These quality impressions have led to more click throughs and conversions, more than tripling the click through ratio. Over the past year the click through ratio has reached almost 1% or higher; the conversion rate has doubled from 1.14% her first month, to 2.25% in one month. In the first year conversions doubled in both Google and MSN.

Macharola supplies the alternative spellings of new products, along with the history and whatever else may be useful. This helps Solid Cactus choose alternative keywords to bid on, directing those customers who are looking for a product they may vaguely remember from 20 years ago, to Blair Candy.

One challenge Blair Candy contends with is managing the hot weather impact on

perishable shipped goods. Solid Cactus has adjusted campaigns to promote less perishable products and diverted more attention to summertime goods, appealing to concession stands, carnivals, etc.

Macharola always brings new ideas, pushing the niche interests. On the eCommerce store, there are sub pages for gluten free, sugar free, snack foods, baby candy, holiday candy and wedding candy. To make wedding and party shopping even easier she introduced a "Candy by Color" page to allow shopping for candies by twelve different hues.

Macharola had also been managing BlairCandy.com's social media presence. As fun as it was, engagement and activity grew so much that she turned to Solid Cactus once more for Search Engine Optimization (SEO.) With both SEO and PPC managed by Solid Cactus, efforts on both fronts are easily united creating a well oiled machine.

"All those departments tie all that together for us. We get more bang for our buck because all of the departments feed off each other," says Macharola.

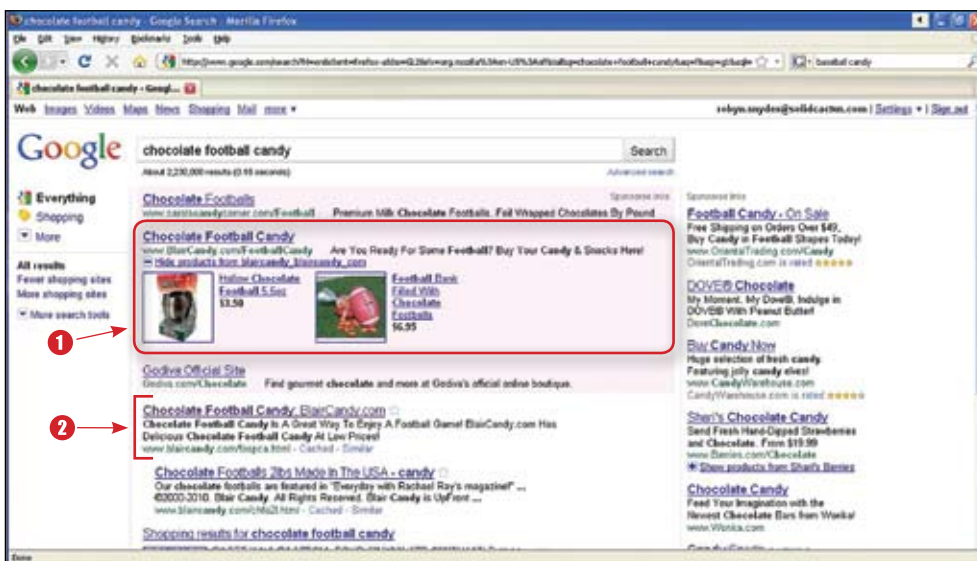
Blair Candy was lacking in just one area, managed (CSE) services.

"It was the one piece of the puzzle missing," says Macharola.

Blair Candy added CSE services with Solid Cactus' Feed Perfect in order to increase exposure through the growing use of shopping engines, making for a very sweet combination, one that Macharola hopes will continue for years to come.

About Blair Candy Company

Family owned and operated since 1939, Blair Candy Company is owned and operated by the third generation of the Dandrea family Pat, Terry, Pam and Ron. Located in Altoona, Pennsylvania, Blair Candy serves both wholesale and retail customers. The eCommerce store specializes in nostalgic candy, gummies, chocolate coins, and holiday candy; it sports only a small portion of what they have in stock. The company has both a retail candy outlet store and a warehouse located in Altoona. 🍬



PPC management from Solid Cactus has kept Blair Candy at an average third position **1** on Google results pages. These sponsored links appear high in the eye of candy browsers. The SEO work from Solid Cactus also increases Blair Candy's organic listings, **2** giving double exposure on search results pages.

When anything is promoted through one channel, like Twitter she knows it carries through to Facebook as well. Sometimes when a new blog post is written, there will be a PPC ad created to promote it. Solid Cactus specialists focus on spreading the word about BlairCandy.com using cross promotions with other departments. SEO and PCC specialists share ideas and feedback internally for better results.

About Solid Cactus eCommerce Marketing

You know your audience. We help you find them. Opening your doors for business alone won't bring you shoppers. Marketing is the lifeblood of your eCommerce website, and when it comes to [eCommerce marketing](#) there are many channels to help you attract the right visitors to your online store. [Pay-Per-Click](#), [Search Engine Optimization](#), [Social Media Optimization](#), [Affiliate Marketing](#), [Comparison Shopping Engines](#), and [Email Marketing](#) are all effective online marketing solutions to target your key audience. eCommerce marketing is much more than just getting traffic to your eCommerce store; it's also about generating repeat business, building customer relationships, and raising brand awareness.