



Hole in One

GolfNow uses Google Print Ads and Audio Ads to drive online business and manage key parts of its advertising strategy in one place.

Who they are

- GolfNow.com
- Portland, OR; Phoenix, AZ; Waikiki, HI; and Vancouver, BC
- Online tee time bookings
- 50+ employees



What they needed

- To grow the business nationally
- To increase online tee time bookings

What they did

- Ran **Google Print** and **Audio Ads** to reach new markets
- Chose sections and stations popular with their intended audience

What they accomplished

- 200% more traffic from brand-specific searches in one city
- Increased signups and sales
- Larger national presence

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://www.google.com/adwords>

In 2001, two entrepreneurial golfers named Frank Halpin and Brett Darrow launched GolfNow.com, a virtual market for the 10 percent of Americans who play golf and the thousands of courses that offer a place to do it.

“Many golf courses only sell half their tee time slots in a given day,” says Matt Arzen, director of marketing for GolfNow. “With GolfNow.com, they can put that inventory online, and golfers can book it online at any time of the day, with savings of up to 70 percent.”



Pain relief

In 2004, GolfNow started using Google AdWords™ to reach golfers searching for tee times on the Internet. “AdWords has always been a successful avenue for us,” Matt says. “We can easily target the right people and the right geographic markets. That’s why we spend 85 percent of our pay-per-click budget on Google AdWords.”

Around the same time, GolfNow began experimenting with print and radio advertising, working with a number of newspapers, magazines, and stations. Its goal was to make a name for itself and reach potential customers in cities throughout the country.

For a medium-sized company, this multi-channel approach quickly grew unwieldy. “It becomes a management headache when you have lots of different providers, each with different contracts and prices,” says Matt.

And then one day, Matt learned that GolfNow could launch newspaper and radio campaigns from within its existing Google AdWords account.

With Google Print Ads™, companies can place ads in hundreds of newspapers across the U.S. With Google Audio Ads™, they can create custom radio ads and broadcast them on stations their customers listen to.

In June 2007, GolfNow gave them both a try.

“Managing the largest segment of our marketing strategy through one interface is very helpful,” Matt explains. “I can do everything: create our AdWords campaign, choose the newspapers and stations, upload radio spots, negotiate with publishers, see and hear our actual ads, and track performance down to the city level with Google Analytics™.”

GolfNow decided to run its print and radio campaigns in cities where it lacked an established presence, including Atlanta, Louisville, Indianapolis, and Washington, D.C. It adjusted its campaign targeting options so its newspaper ads would appear in the sports section and its audio ads would play on sports talk radio stations.

“We know that’s where our customers are,” Matt explains. “Rather than using a blanket approach, we can choose to place our ads where our target audience will see and hear them.”

About Google Print Ads



Google Print Ads™ is an extension of Google AdWords that makes newspaper advertising easy. Google partners with hundreds of publications, including *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post* to reach millions of readers throughout the United States. Using the AdWords online interface, advertisers identify target newspapers, enter bids for available ad space, and upload ad creatives for publisher approval. Tracking is simplified through online reports, which feature virtual tearsheets indicating where the ads ran.

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

About Google Audio Ads



Google Audio Ads™ makes radio advertising easy and cost-effective. Google has partnered with hundreds of radio stations that reach millions of listeners throughout the United States. Using the AdWords online interface, advertisers can develop and launch campaigns, and target their audience based on time, location, station type, and demographics. Audio Ads connects them with qualified creative professionals who can help produce ads. Tracking is simplified through online reporting, which features real-time recordings of radio spots in context.

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

Name brand

Almost immediately, traffic to GolfNow.com reached new heights. “The place we really felt the effect was in online searches,” says Matt. “In other words, potential customers hear the radio ads or read the print ads, sit down at their computers, and start searching for GolfNow.”

In June and July, right after launching its first print and audio ads through Google, GolfNow saw a five percent increase in website visits from people who typed a brand-specific keyword like *golfnow* on Google.com, followed by an eight percent increase in August.

In cities where its print and audio campaigns ran, the spikes were more dramatic, with traffic from brand-specific searches in Atlanta rising 200 percent after GolfNow ads appeared in local newspapers.

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Meanwhile, overall traffic jumped 23 percent in Washington, D.C., and 35 percent in Greensboro, North Carolina.

“Obviously, brand recognition and traffic aren’t the only things we’re after,” Matt says. “Our primary goals are signups and sales – in our case, bookings.”

After GolfNow ran its first print and audio campaigns in June and July, Washington, D.C. saw increases of 33 percent in sales and 15 percent in signups. In Raleigh-Durham, NC, signups and sales increased 29 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

The next round

“Without any marketing, it can take three or four years to really get up to speed in a new city,” Matt explains. “Here, we made significant strides in just a month. Expanding across the country has helped transform our business. When golf season winds down in one place, it picks up in another.”

Now that the trial phase is over, GolfNow is moving ahead with its print and audio ads, and plans to devote a larger portion of its marketing budget to them.

“Print and audio advertising with Google has been all advantages,” says Matt. “It’s cost-effective, it’s targeted, and it complements our online initiatives. Plus, the single interface saves us time.”



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