Just a sample

While we'd love to show a real-life web-marketing audit, this sort of information is confidential to our clients. On that note, behold our creation…ACME Scaffolding Solutions, Inc. It's a fake company, but there's real thinking.

If you're interested in a web-marketing audit for your business, let us know. We'd love to talk.

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WEB MARKETING AUDIT

Prepared for ACME Scaffolding Solutions, Inc.

gorilla76

Contents

Insights overview

We interviewed three members of your sales team, three project managers, three foremen and the CEO. The findings that follow represent cumulative perceptions of ACME Scaffolding Solutions.

● Target customer / audience

Our interview findings pointed to three distinct target audiences. Though additional niche segments exist, the following surfaced as your primary targets.

1. Large general contractors

With a niche expertise as suppliers of scaffolding, ACME's business relies heavily upon contracts granted by large general contractors. This audience segment is the most profitable, as contracts scale with the size of the project. Awareness among the largest general contractors throughout the Midwest is a must.

2. Commercial / private sector

ACME has considerable experience in the commercial sector, particularly serving developers of office buildings and apartment complexes.

3. Bridges / public sector

Government work on bridge rehab projects has traditionally provided a significant revenue stream for ACME. Though such rehab projects have dropped off in the past 2-4 years, this market remains viable.

● Source of leads

Our discussion with your team members varied greatly in regard to lead generation. The following sources were most common.

Trade shows

The two industry trade shows attended by ACME in the past year seemed to produce moderate to negligible results. One member of your sales team mentioned that no true system existed for collecting information from leads. Sometimes business cards

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were exchanged, but no consistent database allowed for follow-ups or tracking these leads post trade show. An email marketing database and CRM system would provide solutions to this problem.

Internet searches

Moderate results have come from searching through targeted companies' websites. Often the ideal company representatives are not easily accessible or government websites have lacked the necessary contact information.

Email blasts

There's reason to believe that the current email marketing system used by ACME has produced some leads via inquiry phone calls. Results, however, have not been carefully measured from one month to the next, so these conclusions are really no more than speculation.

LinkedIn / social media

Only one ACME salesman has actively participated on LinkedIn. He has found the search feature and ability to direct message anyone to be successful in making connections otherwise unavailable. We believe opportunity exists here with proper training of remaining salesmen at ACME.

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Buying cycle and tactics

Understanding how your customer buys helps us formulate a plan of action to reach them. Our research with your team members indicated a 6-12 month buying cycle for your prospects. That period of time between discovery of ACME and purchase is often filled with sporadic phone call follow-ups and occasional emails.

We believe that creating a variety of educational content on your website and targeted email blasts that are segmented per your three audiences will help convert more prospects to customers.

Message and points of difference

Noticeable gaps exist between the points of difference being communicated within your existing marketing materials and the perception of your points of difference by team members. These points must be prioritized and made consistent.

You marketing materials communicate the following:

- AMCE prides itself on customer service

- A large inventory allows for quick turnaround time on orders

- ACME carries only the finest brands

Employee interviews, on the other hand, indicated the following points of difference:

- ACME carriers a wide selection of brands that satisfy a range of budgets

- ACME has worked with partners all over the country

- ACME offers cost advantages over competitors

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Brand positioning

Based on the preceding insights overview, we've developed our recommended brand positioning statement. This statement is meant to serve as a guide to your future marketing efforts.

▶ Positioning statement

ACME Scaffolding Solutions, Inc. is a time-tested expert in providing both permanent and rental scaffolding for medium to large-scale construction projects. ACME is second to none in both speed of delivery and customer service. We do whatever it takes to make your job easier.

How to use your positioning statement

A brand positioning statement doesn't necessarily live publicly. It's purpose is to guide the communications that DO live publicly. In many ways you'll use it as a litmus test for any ad, direct mailer, brochure, web page, email blast, social media posting, etc. If your marketing communications align with your positioning statement, they're accurately serving their purpose.

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Current marketing evaluation

We've collected and evaluated a wide variety of existing ACME marketing materials including your website, direct mailers, trade-show materials and email blasts. The following section details our bird's-eye evaluation of your marketing picture as it currently exists.

This section reviews cohesiveness of messaging across different media, choice of channels and tactics and execution within individual channels.

● Messaging

As detailed in the preceding section, the brand message is disjointed between different marketing media. Our research indicates that the greatest points of difference for ACME include your customer service and speed of delivery. Our recommendation is to let those serve as lead points in messaging moving forward.

● Overview of marketing channels

Up to this stage, ACME's marketing efforts have primarily focused on traditional channels, including direct mail, trade shows and cold calling. Though web-based marketing efforts have been in play in recent years, the ACME website and email marketing system are outdated and lack lead-generating capabilities.

● Website assessment

Positive: Extensive product database

ACME offers more than 100 products across a variety of categories and most are well represented on the site in a catalog-like format. When clicked, each product has its own page containing specs and additional information. This info can all be reused and modified if needed in a website rebuild.
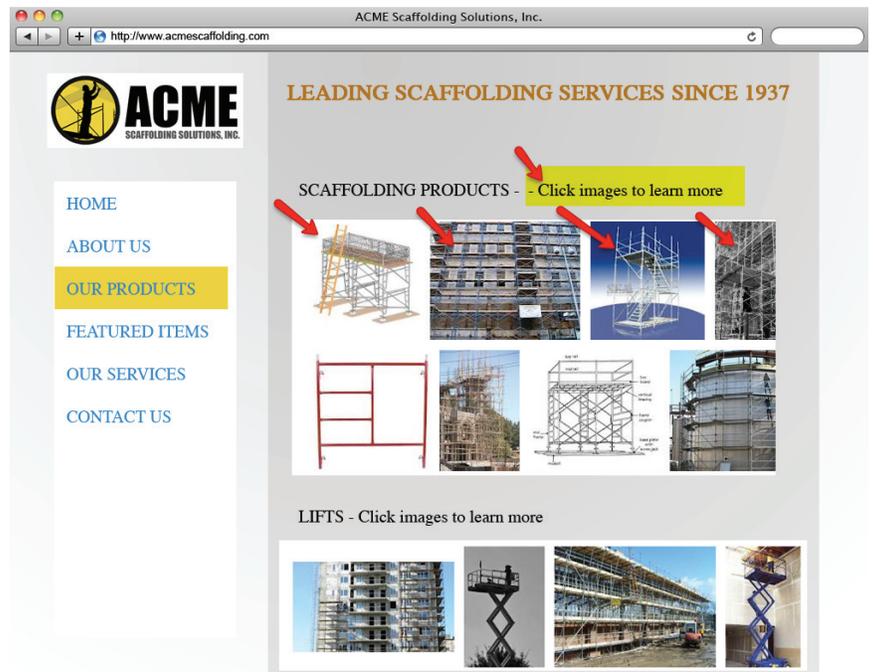
Opportunity: Search engine optimization (SEO)

The ACME site lacks the presence of the most important keywords and phrases that a prospective customer might use to find ACME in a Google Search. Competitors such as Sunbelt and Scaffold-Rental.com dominate searches for related terms.
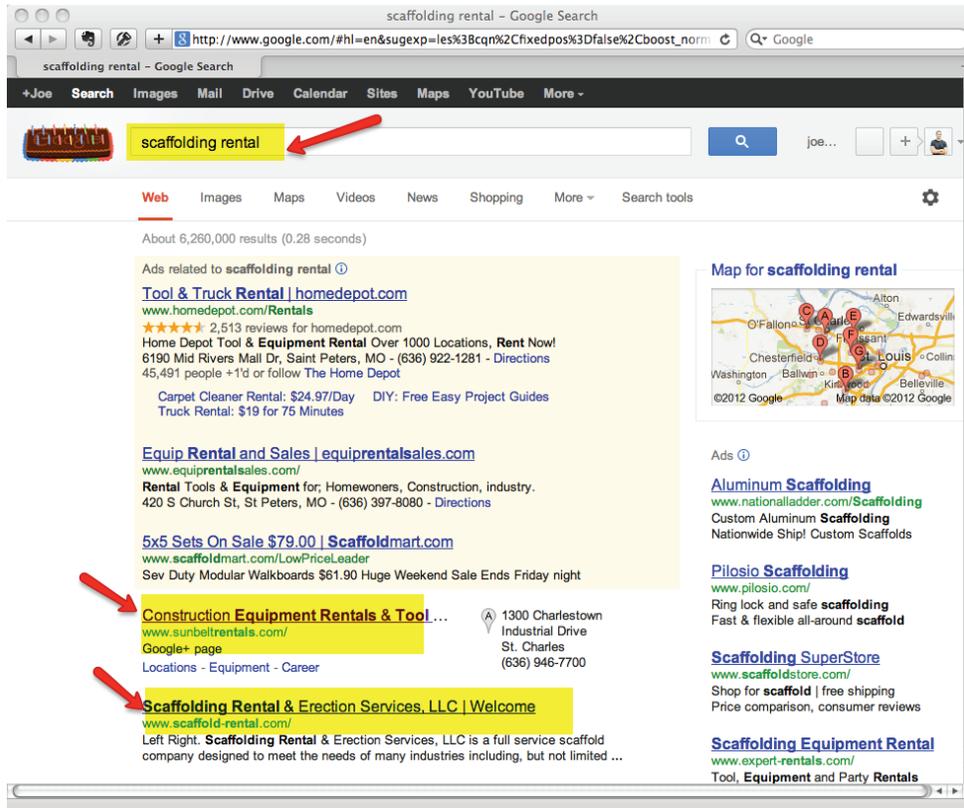
This problem can be addressed through strategic copywriting that is not only audience-centric and easy-to-read, but also search-engine friendly. The screenshot to the right illustrates a few key places on the ACME site (page titles, headlines) where keyword use rather than general terminology can assist with SEO.

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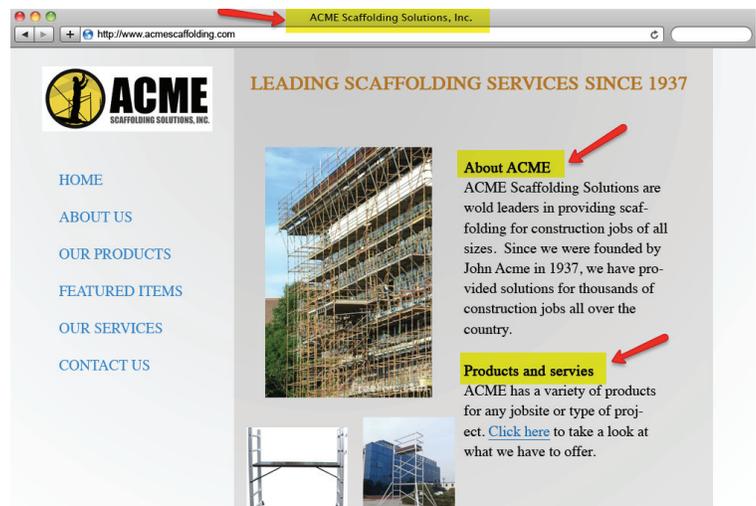
Opportunity: Audience-centric blog content

The ACME site currently acts as a web-based brochure. As previously outlined, the product information is strong and mostly complete, but the website remains static. To reap the benefits of search engine optimization and to provide your prospective and current customers with reason to return, it is highly recommend that a plan is implemented to develop and consistently contribute to a company blog.

A successful blogging strategy will fill the ACME website with commentary on industry news and tips/advice that turn your scaffolding expertise into useful resources for your audience. These blog posts provide additional entry points to your website that can be promoted in social media channels, email blasts and advertisements.

Opportunity: Calls-to-action and lead-capture mechanism

The ACME site lacks any sort of method for capturing leads. The Contact page at least provides a phone number, but no calls-to-action throughout the site direct visitors there. We recommend forms on all pages of the website that allow a visitor to easy contact ACME. We also recommend strategically placing email subscription forms throughout the site. Email blasts will help nurture leads who may not yet be ready to hire ACME.

Opportunity: Design and brand voice

The ACME site was built in 1999, and as a result is dated in many ways. We recommend a refresh that will position ACME as the modern and top-of-the-line service provider that you are, without losing the company's sense of heritage. Along the same lines, we recommend developing a distinct brand voice that will create consistency across all marketing media.

Email marketing assessment

Positive: Existing database

Though many opportunities to grow the list exist, ACME is off to a good start having built an email database of more than 3,000 recipients.

Opportunity: Design and content

The current email blasts utilize a preset template that does not align with the ACME brand. Should the website and other marketing materials be addressed, we recommend developing a custom email template.

Regarding content, our recommendation is to abandon the long-form copy in your email blasts in favor of short snippets of content that link back to full blog posts and product pages on your website. Shorter content is easier to digest in the over-crowded inboxes of most recipients, and allows for you to higlight different bits of content rather than one long article.

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HOME

ABOUT US

OUR PRODUCTS

FEATURED ITEMS

OUR SERVICES

CONTACT US

New product lines are coming in soon!

We're excited to announce that a whole new line of products will be coming to ACME in the next two months. Though we'll continue to carry all of the same brands, we've added a variety of additional brands and products to better serve all of your scaffolding needs. We'll be attending the Scaffolding Today trade show in St. Louis next month and will have information on all of our new products available. Make sure to come stop by our booth so you can see everything we're adding. We'll be at booth number

Opportunity: Growth and segmentation of lists

No process exists for adding new contacts to the database. Our interviews indicated that some employees have been instructed to add their contacts to the system and others have not. A process for doing so must be developed.

Additionally, opportunity exists for segmentation of your email list. Right now one over-arching list of email addresses receives the same content. These lists can be subdivided into (for example) General Contractors, Public Sector Contacts, Private Sector Contact and Family/Friends. This will allow for customized, targeted content

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to be separately distributed to each segment. We anticipate much higher open and click-through rates if this step were taken.

Opportunity: Consistency in email distribution

Email blasts have been distributed sporadically since your current system was implemented in 2009. We recommend one email per month to each segment. A marketing content calendar should be developed with email blasts scheduled (for example) on the first Wednesday of each month.

Printed materials assessment

Positive: Targeted audience (general contractors)

Direct mailers, trade-show materials and trade advertisements have all been developed in recent years. The primary audience for these materials has been general contractors. Given that audience, they've been strong from a messaging perspective. While we recommend refining design and developing that brand voice, the content of these pieces have communicated the right points for this particular audience.

Opportunity: Consistency

An overarching brand look is missing. The same goes for brand voice. We often use John Deere as an example of a brand that projects a certain consistency across all of their marketing media (TV ads, print ads, in-store experience, etc.). The point is to assure that your audience says "that's ACME" any time they encounter one of your marketing communications.

Opportunity: Extend to social and other digital media

As advocates of web-based marketing, we see a wealth of opportunity in extending your marketing communications online. We've discussed enhancement of the AMCE website and email marketing efforts and would highly recommend developing a social media strategy to complement these as well.

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We believe the greatest opportunity within social media exists with LinkedIn. We also suspect that testing the waters in Twitter may open doors not only to new business opportunities, but the chance to get in front of industry publications and authorities whose (much larger) audience can be reached through strategic execution.

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Competitor marketing evaluation

ACME identified Safway and ScaffoldMart as two leading competitors in the scaffolding supply market. We've evaluated their online marketing efforts and for comparison purposes, outlined positives and negatives for each on the following pages.

Competitor 1: Safway

## Strong web design / lack of educational content

Safway has developed a very buttoned-up brand. Their web design is strong, communication is very clear, they keep their site updated with news and press releases, and the site's navigation is straight-forward.

Like the ACME site, however, there is a lack of lead-nurturing materials such as educational blog posts or white papers. This points to an opportunity for ACME to be a thought leader in this arena.

Strategically placed website calls-to-action

Overall, Safway does a good job placing calls-to-action in the appropriate places throughout the site. The "find out more" and "find out how we can serve you" links below are a few examples.
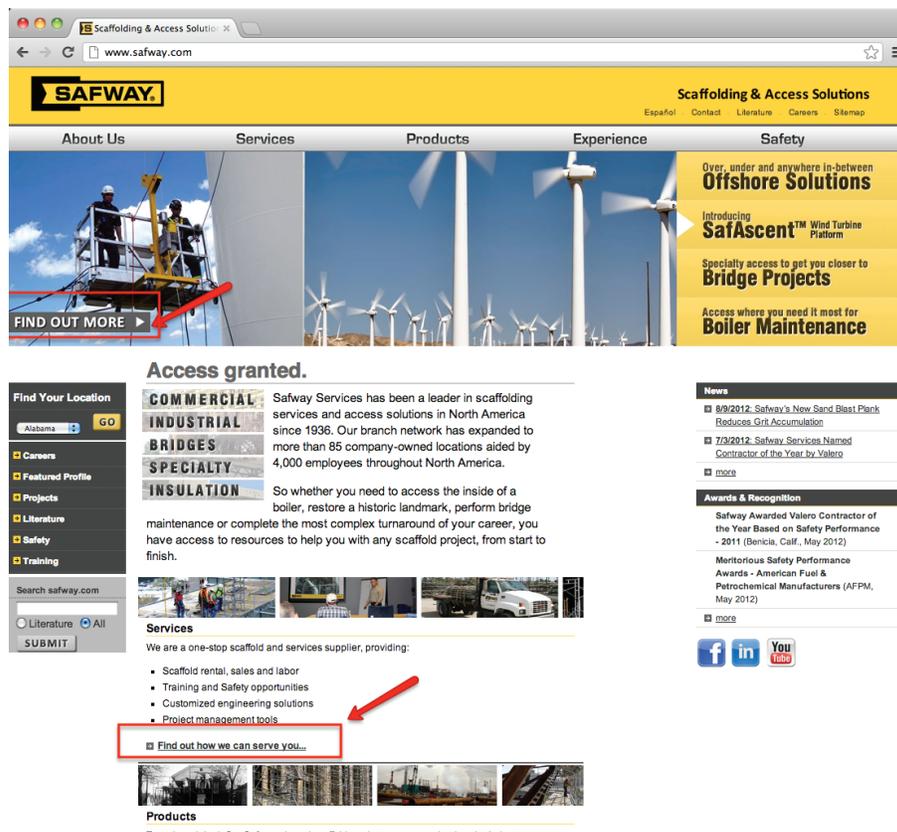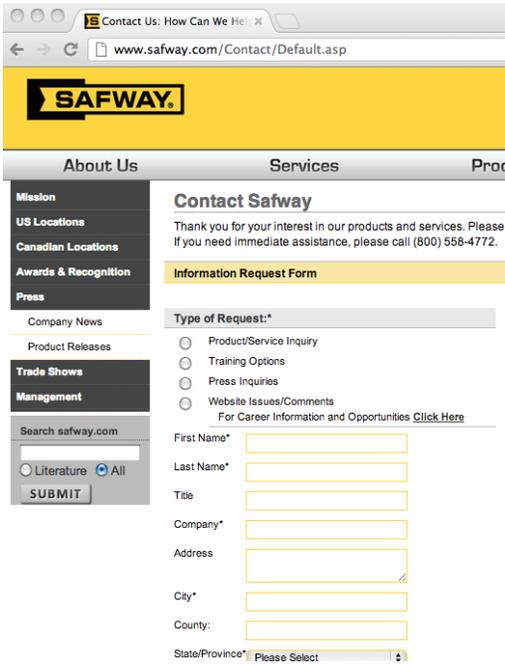
Moderately successful use of lead-capture tools

Calls-to-action throughout the site direct visitors to the contact page, but Safway misses the opportunity to capture leads for nurturing purposes (e.g. newsletter subscription forms).

Social media: strong on YouTube / weak elsewhere

Safway has figured out how to use YouTube to its benefit, compiling videos that document products they offer. Many are raw, but the content is still useful for their target audience.

Safway has no Twitter presence, but they do a respectable job on Facebook. The lack of play in Twitter for this industry definitely points to opportunity for ACME.
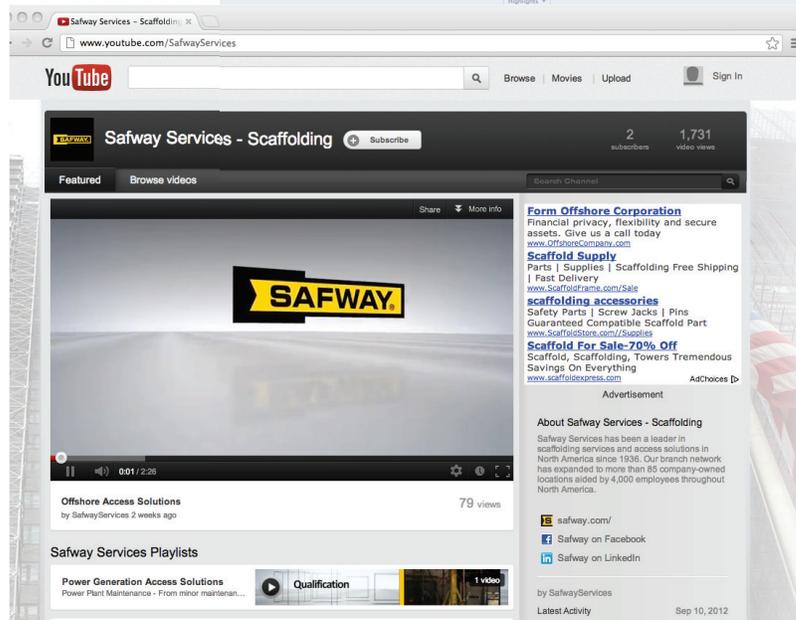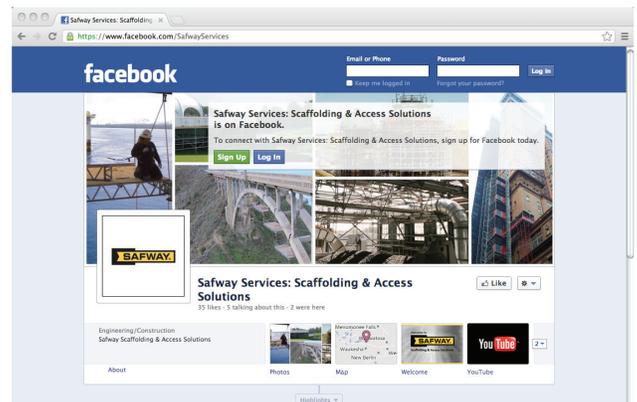
Competitor 2: ScaffoldMart

Very (very, very) weak brand image

ScaffoldMart's brand image is weak across the board. They project themselves as a less premium brand whether or not that is their intention. As a bulk supplier, they focus less on the big sales and more on quantity of sales. This is clearly reflected across their marketing materials.
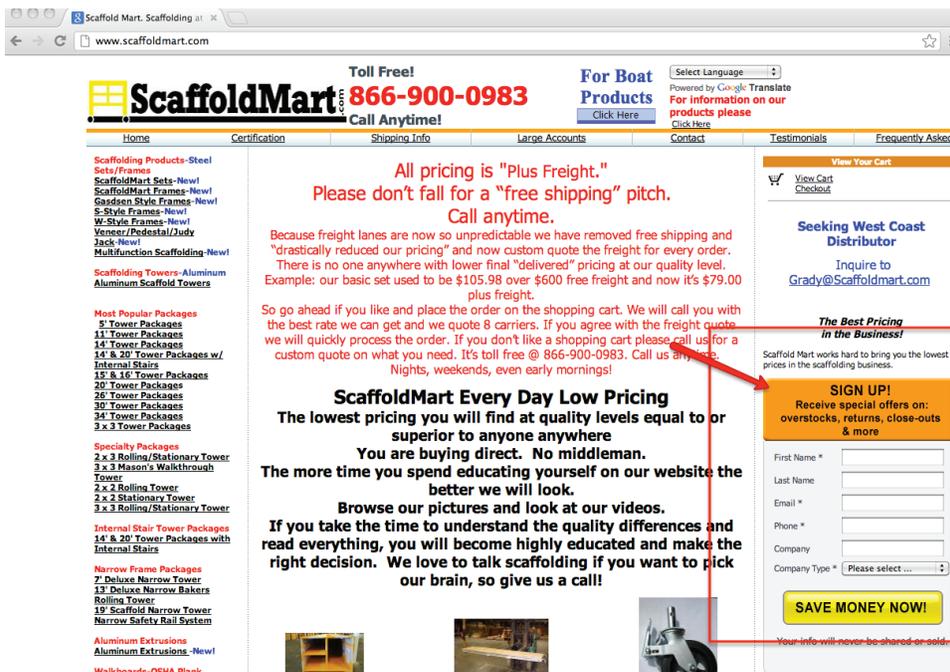
Email capture and email marketing

Despite the messy brand, ScaffoldMart at least includes a lead-capture form to collect email addresses and send monthly blasts. Their emails concentrate on unique offers and keep them top of mind among customers.

Missing social media presence

ScaffoldMart has zero social media presence. Pairing that with Safway's lack of participation in key social channels such as Twitter and LinkedIn, we believe there is ample opportunity for ACME to distinguish itself through these media.

Plan of action

Taking all of our research into account, we've created a tangible, two-page plan of action focused on brand awareness/image and lead generation for ACME through a combination of marketing media.

Recommended marketing plan of action for ACME

STEP 1: Brand positioning

We first recommend solidifying the brand-positioning recommendation documented earlier in this report. If refinement is needed, this should happen first so the statement can serve as a beacon for your entire marketing strategy.

STEP 2: Website redevelopment

We believe the website must serve as the center of all marketing efforts. The ACME site is in need of updating from a design perspective, lacking copywriting that lends itself to a strong brand voice and search engine optimization, and is missing key calls-to-action. A rebuild of the framework that also allows for content to be updated on a regular basis and accommodates blog content will act as a shell for a site that can grow and evolve. The brand look and feel created in this website redevelopment project (as well as the brand voice) will be extended to all additional marketing materials. This is an important first step in building a professional and consistent brand image.

STEP 3: Content and blogging strategy

Our competitive research shows a gaping hole in your market for educational blog content, white papers, infographics and other materials that can help answer prospects' questions and provide them with resources to help make their jobs easier. This content provides additional entry points to your site and positions ACME as a true thought leader and innovator in your market.

STEP 4: Refine email marketing approach

As documented in this report, we recommend documenting a specific process for adding contacts to your email database and maintaining segmented lists for each of your three primary target audiences. Simultaneously with your website redevelop-

ment, an email template that matches the new site should be developed. Moving forward, we recommend pre-scheduled monthly emails to each target audience, made up of teasers that link to full articles and pages in your blog, products and services and other sections of your website.

STEP 5: LinkedIn strategy, training and participation

LinkedIn is an absolute must for ACME. Many new doors can be opened if management buys in and employees are trained accordingly. We recommend a written strategy and one-hour training session to implement the strategy among your sales team members (and ideally your full staff). LinkedIn works primarily at a personal level and should not be managed by an agency. This is our reasoning for a live training.

STEP 6: Twitter strategy and participation

In addition to LinkedIn, we recommend developing a Twitter presence and committing to participation. Twitter serves as a place to not only make new connections with industry organizations and companies, but also as a vehicle for promoting the content being developed on your blog and elsewhere on your website.

STEP 7: Measurement and refinement

Marketing is cyclical. Strategy is written, tactics are executed, performance is evaluated and strategy/tactics are refined. After the new website goes live, we recommend quarterly reviews analyzing data from email reports, Google analytics and social media performance that will allow for constant refinement.

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Now that you've seen a sample…

What do you say? Let us execute a web-marketing audit for your business. Contact us and we'll get started.

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