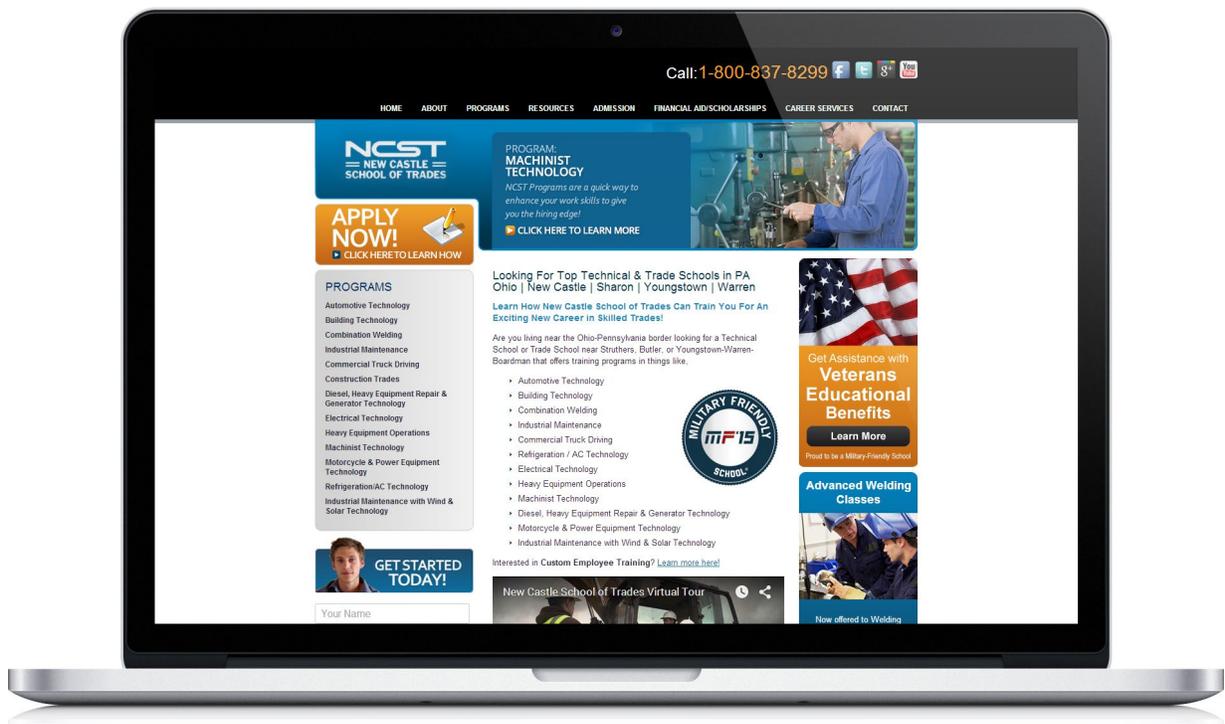




presents:

Increasing Quality Traffic With Conversion-Focused Content

a digital marketing case study



The Company

NCST

Type

Trade School

Website

www.ncstrades.edu/

Case Study Content

Digital Marketing

SEO

Conversion Optimization

Content Creation

Introduction

New Castle School of Trades (NCST) is a regional provider of career training in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Their website served as an excellent brochure for available courses but it failed to attract prospects that were earlier in the decision-making process. NCST's marketing team wanted help targeting those upper-funnel prospects with a clear SEO strategy for the 2013 calendar year. Their team also hoped to improve their lead funnel through conversion rate optimization activities.

The Problems NCST Faced

Eroding ROI From Traditional Media

NCST had always spent the vast majority of marketing and advertising dollars on more traditional media—namely, television—but they found costs rising quickly and returns drying up. They needed another spark to support an expanded sales team and make up for less efficient media investments.

Upper-Funnel Content Gaps

NCST's website content exclusively targeted two segments of their audience:

1. Students currently enrolled at the school, and
2. Prospective students deep in the decision-making process.

The website content included class schedules, financial aid, career services information, and other content relevant for prospects already lower down in the lead funnel.

The website lacked upper-funnel content attracting individuals in the awareness and consideration stages. We needed to identify the search queries NCST's ideal prospects were searching early in the decision-making process and create a content strategy that targeted those types of queries.

Limited Calls to Action

The NCTS website's focus on low-funnel prospects and current students meant that upper-funnel inquiries about the school's programs could not easily be made. The options for obtaining more information about the school were:

- Calling the phone number, or
- Submitting an application

We would need new conversion mechanisms to direct the upper-funnel audience to the appropriate methods for contacting the school.

What We Did

Phase One: SEO Backbone Implementation

Our number one recommendation was to identify low competition keywords used by prospective students and optimize each page's on-page and off-page elements for that specific keyword. This is a critical part of our signature "SEO backbone" that is used for new or unoptimized content. Some of the core

steps in the SEO backbone process include:

- Initial performance baselines
- Extensive keyword research
- Development of a “Keyword Universe”
- Detailed technical SEO audit
- Metadata recommendations
- Content architecture planning
- Page-by-page content & internal linking optimization
- Competitive backlink analysis & acquisition strategy

Our team conducted some keyword research and developed a Keyword Universe that revealed commonalities amongst prospective students’ search queries. We nominated target keywords for each existing page and optimized them accordingly.

To optimize the pages, we first updated each page’s metadata to include the target keyword. We also included a well-written hook in the metadata that would entice the searcher to click on that result. We then optimized the on-page content by adding contextually important keywords and building internal links to and from related pages.

Phase Two: Targeted Content Creation

The WebMechanix team inventoried the website’s content and identified the biggest gaps in upperfunnel content. We then put together a content strategy targeting common search queries used by prospects during this early stage of the decision-making process.

Keyword research from the WebMechanix team revealed dozens of high-volume, low-competition content opportunities to fill in these gaps. Our

Organic Visits for 30 Days

▲ 790.70%

Organic Visits since 2013

▲ 57.34%

Performance After SEO Backbone



Performance After Content Creation & Conversion



Search engine visits jumped by **790.70%** in the 30 day period after implementation!

team then created a publishing schedule that was shared with NCST’s executive team for feedback. Their team helped us prioritize the schedule according to their independent insights.

Once aligned with NCST, the WebMechanix team began creating new content each month targeting these upper-funnel search queries. The content was immediately published to the website upon completion and review, averaging about 4 new pieces per month.

Phase Three: New Opportunities to Convert

New content frequently means new visitors and new questions. To accommodate for the anticipated influx of visitors, the WebMechanix team also added new ways to contact NCST team.

The WebMechanix team designed and created in-line calls to action (CTAs) that would be featured at the top and bottom of each new page. We also introduced new “quick” contact CTA that would appear on the sidebar of every page.

Lastly, our team tweaked the language on existing CTAs and forms to make it more accommodating for anyone submitting an upper-funnel inquiry.

How Things Turned Out

Phase One: The SEO Backbone

The NCST website saw a major influx of new visitors following the implementation of the SEO backbone. Search engine visits jumped by 790.70% in the 30 day period after implementation!

The visitors to the website were new prospects as well—our web tracking showed an increase in new users to the tune of 859.92%! These gains were sustained and continued to steadily climb months and years after the backbone was implemented.

Phase Two: Content Creation and Conversion

After publishing the new pages targeting upper-funnel queries, the NCST website saw a 57.34% increase in organic visits for the year of 2013. Compare this to the rest of the website’s traffic, which only grew by 1.38%!

While traffic drastically increased, the question remained: Was any of the new traffic converting from prospects into applicants?

The answer to that was a strong “YES!” Our conversion optimization activities had a very positive impact on the website’s conversion rate for online applications—submissions were up 98.90% where 73% of all applications were attributed to organic traffic. Lower-funnel inquiries were also being more appropriately channeled to the appropriate resource.

Our conversion-focused SEO efforts proved to be a major success and we have continued building on the foundation. With content gaps closing, we are now able to turn our attention to other important SEO and conversion opportunities.

Online Applications

▲ 225.56%

New Visitors for 30 Days

▲ 859.92%

Contact Us

or visit

webmechanix.com

for more information