

By Renato Cruz Sogueco,
BloomNet Vice President of
Digital Strategy and Education



ORGANIC RANK IS NOT ENOUGH

Making the case for online advertising

Search engine optimization (SEO) is arguably still recommended as the best practice for floral businesses to drive traffic to their websites. Times are changing! We highly recommend you equally invest time and dollars into search engine marketing (SEM).

Why? Just take a look for yourself. Conduct any search for “florist, city, state” and the first thing you’ll see are ads. Online marketers have accepted for years that consumers scrolled past ads and focused more on the organic listings as the rule. But look closer, the search engines no longer clearly define ads with a different colored background which they removed a few years ago. Only a small “ad” badge identifies the listing as paid.

Research from Mediative also supports the idea that eyeballs fixate and linger on ads first in their search engine results page (SERP) heat map studies. The same research also proposes that mobile devices condition searchers to scan vertically and to click items at the top hoping to find the fastest path to relevant websites.

The last and most profound reason you need to invest in search marketing? Competitors—national and local, may be using your business name as keywords in their ads. So if you ever searched for your own business name (like most of your long-time and repeat customers do), and a competitor’s ad appears at the top, this is the likely reason.

Yes, this is legal—they just cannot use your name in the actual ad. This is made easy—and inexpensive—for competitors because it’s likely you are not running your own campaign, so the pay-per-click (PPC) bid for your business name is low.

Right now, you may be thinking of all the revenue being sucked away by a competitor using your own name, then recalling angry customers who may have called you complaining about an order you never filled (but they honestly believe you did). Take a breath as we recommend not to rush into this because advertising is a long-term strategy. Plus, there are a couple of tasks you need to do.

First confirm your shop is listed correctly as a business with Google. Visit www.google.com/business to claim your shop and input complete and accurate information. Do the same with Bing at www.bingplaces.com/. Next is to adjust your marketing spend for a budget of at least \$300 to \$600 a month toward your online campaigns (or \$10 a day). Too rich for your taste? Think again of the revenue you may be losing to competitors using deceptive practices we just outlined! And losing customers—forever—because they were left dissatisfied thinking it was you.

We recommended investigating using Google’s Adwords Express if you are totally new to online advertising. Why not Bing, Yahoo or another search provider? The reason is simply this: Google owns 70 percent of the search market. Visit www.google.com/adwords/express and click on the “How It Works” link at the top to get up to speed. If you are familiar with Adwords and want more control of settings, choose the regular Adwords service. The next option to explore is Facebook Ads at: www.facebook.com/business/products/ads.

Be sure to check back in future issues of *floriology* as we dive deep into how to create and configure accounts on Google to protect your brand while targeting mobile customers and building wedding and funeral business on Google and other ad services. 📌