

CASE STUDY

CREATING CONTENT-ORIENTED WEBSITE FOR A SMALL-BUSINESS

- **includes e-commerce element**
- **includes blog**
- **includes SEO (site-wide)**

Problem

[GRS Sign Company Limited](#) had identified a limiting factor in their online growth – the simple fact that their website was old and had not been updated for several years. As a direct result of that, and the use of obsolete technology on that version of their website, their traffic was lacklustre – 100 hits a day on average.

Not only requiring an upgrade, they were also feeling the waters for the ability to sell signs online. This required some kind of e-commerce aspect to the website, which did not exist, but would be integral to any upgrade.

GRS was also looking at a weblog (blog) but this was an ancillary consideration to the website redesign and recode.

Implementation

Knowing that GRS had several goals in mind it was decided to construct a website without any elements that would turn off the average potential customer. So, no flash elements, no proprietary code, no Frontpage, no Java and so on.

The design needed to be a visual representation of the company; since their logo was green and yellow, that main colour, green, was selected for the website's main colour. Not only that but since the company produces signs and labels, there needed to be plenty of examples to show potential customers.

Each section or type of sign that GRS produces needed to have its own page. That page would describe each picture it was associated with, describe the material used, the strengths of that kind of sign, and so on.

The e-commerce section was written in xhtml/css/JavaScript linking directly into Paypal using their API. This was all custom work, allowing GRS to sell their signs online; in particular however, it should be noted that a lot of GRS' work was bespoke. People asked for specific designs, materials, extras and so on, that required a designer to create something unique. The e-commerce section also had to include this kind of uniqueness, and has incorporated this element into several of the online ordering pages.

Every single page on the site was written with Search Engine Optimisation in mind. The types of signs that GRS produces are their keywords, i.e., *aluminium signs*, *corporate signs*, *engraved signs*, and so on.

The last large element to be added to the GRS site was the [GRS blog](#). Implemented using the [WordPress](#) platform this was specifically designed to be seamless with the site itself; indeed – the theme was designed to look exactly like the site.

Results

GRS' initial traffic was around 100 hits/day with no online ordering mechanism. Currently, after six months of work, this has risen to around 10,000-12,000 hits/day. This equates to roughly 600 unique visitors a day.

The immediate results of the SEO work paid off, the search terms were beginning to net search engine results in the first page if not the first few results. This is a tremendous placement considering that some of the search terms yielded many millions of results!

The traffic has risen steadily since the recoding work finished, and the GRS management team has stayed on top of this by continually adding new material to the pages and regularly updating the site – a result of the advice given to them, it should be said. Pushing through the 10,000 hits/day barrier was good news, and the traffic is STILL increasing.

On the e-commerce side the site has grown in leaps and bounds. Originally there were the [fire exit signs](#), [no-smoking signs](#) and that was it. But over the months since the recode GRS has added the [custom signs](#) page, the [labels](#) page, the [tactile & braille](#) page, and expanded the no-smoking signs to include the recent government-mandated text.

The amount of orders online has increased steadily from zero when the original site was still operating, to an average of three a week now. This does not include those customers who primarily ordered online, and who now order through the sales representative or sales director – underscoring both the visible and hidden values of being able to order signs online.

As for the blog, which keeps a separate tally of visitors and traffic, the average amount of visitors per day has increased since the beginning to just over 125 visitors a day now. GRS feels it could be a possible avenue for marketing in the future and has decided to keep the blog up to date every chance they get.