

Making David look like Goliath

by Claude Solnik

Published: July 4th, 2008

Visitors to Groovecar's Web site, a portal for people shopping for cars, find just about everything they might want to know about an automobile in one place. And that's the idea behind Groovecar.com.

The national Web sites have information about the cost of a car, gas mileage, crash test ratings, the top 10 best selling cars in the country," said David Jacobson, president of the Hauppauge-based company.

Our Web site offers the same if not more information. We can provide visitors to our Web site equal or better content and research tools. We tap into a lot of data."

Groovecar, which provides information about vehicles and finances car purchases through credit unions, is getting ready to rev up its site with video.

People will not only see a picture of the car," Jacobson said. They'll see someone driving. Interior shots."

Although it's long been easy for any company to launch a Web site, it's becoming easier to operate elaborate sites that can compete and sometimes surpass those of bigger competitors.

We had a very poor Web presence until about four years ago," said Rob Basso, president of Hicksville-based Advantage Payroll, which spruced up its site. Now our site is as good as or better than the larger corporations. The Web is a powerful tool to make you larger than you really are."

Advantage, which employs 30 and has more than 2,000 business clients, found a high-tech site can put it on an equal footing with giants.

Jacobson concurred: The technology allows us to have the presence and tools available that will match anything else."

Groovecar, which has 18 employees, contracted out the construction and maintenance of its site to MSED in Deer Park. Information is garnered from myriad sources. Gas mileage comes from the Environmental Protection Agency; a treasure trove of facts comes from Chrome Data.

They provide every bit of information to build a car online," Jacobson said. The MSRP [manufacturers suggested retail price]. The options. Invoice pricing. All the comparisons with other cars. Crash test ratings. All the options. And it's factory-specific information. You're building a car the way a factory would build it."

Smaller companies are not only investing to provide more information, but rolling out newer versions that include video. Advantage is even creating its own online talk show including interviews with executives.

We feel that creating your own content rather than purchasing it gives you a unique appeal," Basso said.

Meanwhile, Groovecar is revving up its site with more services for local customers, stretching from Nassau and Suffolk to New York City. A portion of the new site will help Long Islanders locate the cheapest gas.

Jacobson said Groovecar offers up-to-date information about new and used cars on Long Island, lets customers check inventory and be pre-approved for loans.

Groovecar also offers personalized service via phone that's hard to come by with giants such as Cars.com.

Jacobson said his site gets 150,000 hits monthly and expects the souped-up site to bring in bigger numbers. Site visitors, Jacobson said, are likely to get the best of both worlds, top technology with a local touch.

I have the ability to offer all the tools and support people are looking for, with a local feel. I can talk with them on the phone," Jacobson said. We visit the dealerships. We actually train them. When somebody comes from our Web site to the dealership, the people are better trained with Groovecar."

Complete URL: <http://libn.com/blog/2008/07/04/making-david-look-like-goliath/>