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Jeremy Linder (left), marketing manager, and Larry Inman (right), president, are part of the family-owned Ag-Bag Forage Solutions, Astoria, Ore.

Great Ideas

Ag-Bag Forage Solutions Revamps 4-Year-Old Website, Sees Immediate Results (Part 1)

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By [Lynn Marcinkowski Woolf](#) posted on July 31, 2018 | Posted in [Best Practices](#), [Dealership Marketing](#)

Part 1 of this 2-part story features Ag-Bag Forage Solutions, a single-store, 7- employee dealership that is building business through digital marketing solutions for its website, emails and online advertising.

[Ag-Bag Forage Solutions](#), a single-store dealership in Astoria, Ore., has evolved its focus from feed storage solutions to the wider rural lifestyle segment and is now integrating digital marketing solutions targeted at its growing customer base.

“Most of our clientele are hobby farmers or small acreage beef operations. There just wasn't really anybody that was serving them, at least not what we thought was good enough, so we started adding lines to meet the demand. At that time, the economy was good, so that helped catapult things as well. Our business has really shifted and now probably 80-85% of our revenue is from our rural lifestyle customers. The feed storage is a much smaller portion than when we started. We've evolved with what our customers wanted and what our new customers were looking for,” says Jeremy Linder, who is part of the family that owns the dealership and is marketing manager.



The dealership carries LS Tractor, Kioti, Deutz-Fahr, Sitrex, Pottinger, Ag-Bag silage baggers, Hustler Turf, Cub Cadet, Jonsered and RedMax.

Linder helped develop the dealership's first website using WordPress software and recently launched a new website through [Dealer Spike](#). He also works with Infusionsoft for email marketing and handles Google and Facebook advertising himself.

Rural Lifestyle Dealer talked with Linder about the dealership's marketing program and the kinds of results they are seeing.

Rural Lifestyle Dealer. Can you share what kinds of marketing you were doing when you first became marketing manager 4 years ago?

Jeremy Linder: We were doing a lot of traditional marketing in print and industry publications and it's very expensive. We did some things to try to attribute revenue back to efforts, such as call tracking and asking people how they found us. We discovered that most people were still finding us online, even though our online presence wasn't that impressive vs. what we were doing in all these print publications.

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I thought that we really needed to step up our online presence. I know just enough about website development to be dangerous, but not enough to really be that great at it. I revamped our 10-year-old site at the time — you can imagine 4 years ago, what a 10-year-old website would look like. It was pretty poor. I revamped it on a WordPress platform just because it's easy to use and fairly search engine friendly. The biggest thing was probably not only revamping the site, but creating a bunch of content so there was actually something for people to read.

RLD: What kind of results did you see from those first changes?

Linder: Within about 6 months, our unique visitors went from maybe 300-400 unique visits a month to about 3,000. (A unique visitor is someone that visits the site at least once in a reporting period.)

Initially, that was without any paid traffic at all. It was just strictly organic search. (Traffic coming from Search Engine Optimization is free and considered organic vs. traffic generated from pay per click ads.) That was pretty exciting, but then I looked at the analytics and saw that people from all over the country were finding our site, which obviously doesn't do us a lot of good.

That opened our eyes to the possibilities and the potential for being more purposeful about a website and digital marketing. I started spending more time outside of business hours trying to keep our online inventory listings up to date, adding new inventory and things like that. I found that I wasn't able to keep the inventory up to date, which is probably worse than not having inventory on your site at all.

RLD: What were the next steps in finding a better digital marketing solution?

Linder: I started looking at providers that could take some of that load off of my shoulders. I'm sort of a website snob and I was only seeing template solutions. I wasn't all that happy with a lot of them. For many people, your website is the first impression they have of you. Whatever we did had to look good and really convey who we are in a professional way.

I stumbled across Dealer Spike and what initially attracted me is that they're

Ag-Bag Forage Solutions, Astoria. Ore.

Founded: 2004

Employees: 7

Lines Carried: LS Tractor, Kioti, Deutz-Fahr, Sitrex, Pottinger, Ag-Bag silage baggers, Hustler Turf, Cub Cadet, Jonsered and RedMax

Dealership Management System: C-Systems

Website Vendor: Dealer Spike



Titan Implement's Expanded Offerings

Rural Lifestyle Dealer columnist Mike Wiles talks with Baily Turner, vice president of Titan Implement, at the 2018 National Farm Machinery Show. Turner highlights the company's expanded product lines and its second facility in Georgia.

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located about 90 miles from us, so are in the same time zone. I talked to them a few times and they were always very responsive and knew their product very well. At the time, they were bigger into RVs and Harley Davidson and companies like that and were just starting to expand into the agriculture market.

They are not the lowest cost provider, but they are great to work with and have a great product.

RLD: Tell us about transitioning over from WordPress to the Dealer Spike solution.

Linder: We decided to make the leap and this meant going from paying a very minimal amount for website hosting to paying about \$4,800 a year, which includes things like hosting as well as support.

We had several initial calls, about 30 minutes or so each, to come up with concepts for the design and making sure that they included all our manufacturers.

They came up with a design concept and we had another 30-40 minute call to talk through it. Once the design was approved, it was less than 30 days for them to build our custom design and transfer our content. That was part went pretty smoothly.

The real effort was making sure we were including the current inventory. They're able to pull in all the manufacturer specs for our major lines. We needed to go in and select the manufacturer, the model, enter the stock number and upload photos.

It wasn't as bad as I thought compared to starting from scratch and having gone through the effort of building a site from nothing.

RLD: What kind of results did you see?

Linder: Amazingly, it surpassed everything they told us it would do as far as increasing leads, page views and time spent on the site. And, we started seeing results pretty quickly, within 60 days.

That convinced us that we needed to really put more effort into adding inventory, which is much easier because they've got most of the manufacturer information in the backend.

About 9 months in, we added their SEO service and that's really paid dividends as well. About that same time, we started with running Google AdWords and pushing paid traffic to the site, which has been really good as well. We only target our market areas.

That's the beauty about digital advertising. You can choose your market areas, so it's much more cost-efficient.

TOP DIRECTORY LISTINGS

YANMAR Yanmar

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RLD: What kind of effort are you putting in now to keep the site updated?

Linder: It's our responsibility to keep the inventory up to date. Dealer Spike is integrated with some DMS programs and can update automatically, but they aren't integrated with ours. I try to update inventory a couple times a week — once a week at a minimum. We have the ability to edit some of the static content on the site, but for the most part, I send them an email with the changes. Within a day it's done and I don't even have to think about it.

Unless I'm adding new content or inventory, I probably spend less than 30 minutes per week on the website. Before, I was spending a minimum of 6 hours weekly on the site. I was having to add in everything manually. Now, most of the information is pulled in.

RLD: Can you explain your efforts regarding search engine optimization?

Linder: Dealer Spike has an SEO team that we work with. Initially, we had some fact-finding calls so they could learn our product lines and geographic areas. They have a good handle on how people are searching. They just needed to know what our priorities were. Now, they send us monthly reports on what they did for the past month and their plan for the next month. We have a call about every 90 days to talk the strategy for the next 3-6 months.

We started working with our major brands first and are now filtering down to the shortlines, such as lawn and garden equipment. We've been working with them for just over a year, so they're now refreshing some of the initial content and adding more so that it's up to date. It's not totally hands off, but it's mostly hands off.

RLD: What have you learned regarding the type of content and information that attracts and interests customers?

Linder: The more unique content you have, the better you are going to rank on search engines. This is probably the most important thing because most dealership sites that feature inventory have the same content as every other dealer of that line.

That's one thing the Dealer Spike SEO team is really great at is creating that unique content that has relevant key words. This helps with search engine ranking and the information gets people to stay on your page once they get there.

It's really just about adding a paragraph or two of concise, but detailed information that's unique about the brands. We haven't yet developed unique content for each models. It's on my list to do.

So, ultimately, we would have unique content about the brand with a landing page that lists inventory, and then start getting into some of the series and models and creating landing pages with unique content. (A landing page is a

section of a website that is accessed by clicking a hyperlink on another web page.)

When you get down to the model level, then it becomes much more time consuming. That effort will have to evolve over time.

READ PART 2 "AG-BAG FORAGE SOLUTIONS TARGETS CUSTOMERS THROUGH EMAIL, ONLINE ADS" [HERE](#)

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