



## Paid inclusion works for West Marine

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West Marine has more than 400 West Marine stores and Boat U.S. Marine Centers in 38 states, Puerto Rico and Canada. The company now carries more than 100,000 products, ranging from the rope that started it all, to the latest in marine electronics. In addition to its retail stores and Port Supply wholesale divisions, the company serves boaters in more than 150 countries worldwide through its mail order and Internet divisions.

While West Marine already had a comprehensive and diversified online marketing program, there was a potentially untapped area to test that could help it achieve additional exposure and revenue on the Web.

This untapped area was Yahoo's paid inclusion program called Search Submit Pro. With more than 60,000 online products for sale, West Marine wanted to ensure that time-sensitive data in its search listings (e.g. new products) stay up-to-date.

In addition, West Marine preferred not to pass back and forth "data dumps" to third parties to achieve this goal. Finally, to

confirm West Marine's analytics and tracking software, BeyondROI wanted independent tracking of visitors, conversions and return on advertising spending (ROAS) statistics for comparative purposes.



Hal R. Samuelson

To that end, West Marine partnered with BeyondROI to collaborate on, test and implement the Yahoo Search Submit Pro product offering. After a meeting of the minds, BeyondROI seamlessly crawled West Marine's site to gather data for relevant product pages to promote into the Yahoo index.

The initial test strategy was to choose a limited number of category and competitive product pages to be indexed for this product offering. West Marine wanted to focus on hot market categories and products such as electronics, navigation, water sports and clothing.

BeyondROI then developed a consistent messaging pattern with a strong call to action for those categories and specific product offerings by each specific page. The final and critical piece of the pre-campaign test was when West Marine placed and tested BeyondROI's tracking code on its site to validate visitors, conversions, sales amount and ROAS statistics.

(BeyondROI is a certified Yahoo partner that accepts "trusted feeds" to be indexed in the Yahoo natural listings area.)

An initial weeklong test showed that:

- For every dollar spent on advertising, West Marine earned 16 times more in gross revenues than it spent on advertising for this campaign
- All relevant pages submitted to Yahoo were indexed
- There was enhanced control over messaging and targeting

After concluding the test and reviewing the data, West Marine ultimately continued with the product offering. Continuous tweaks are made to the feed based on data retrieved from search and conversion results. Now the focus is on:

- Optimizing broad and specific hot market merchandise products and terms
- Crawling the site and updating the index for constant freshness of new product offerings
- Putting emphasis on promoting products in season
- Monitoring data to increase specific and overall ROAS (now earning 20 times more in gross sales than it spends on advertising for this campaign)

In short, West Marine has now filled a gap in its already comprehensive online marketing plan that is aligned with the retailer's overall business objectives.

***Hal R. Samuelson is chief financial officer of BeyondROI, Hallandale, FL. Reach him at [hsamuelson@beyondroi.com](mailto:hsamuelson@beyondroi.com).***