



12871 Research Blvd. Suite 200  
Austin, TX 78750  
(512) 989-2945 || Fax (512) 989-9476

## **Case Study: Using Natural Search to Stand Out in a Crowded Market**

### ***Acquia***

Acquia is a Boston-based company that provides commercial support for the open source Drupal social publishing system. Drupal is both a CMS and a social software platform, enabling users to publish and manage all types of editorial and user-generated content on the web—for example, a corporate website, a social networking site, or a multi-user blog. As a commercial vendor for Drupal, Acquia helps organizations large and small meet their web-related business goals using Drupal-based websites.

### ***Problem***

In March of 2008, Acquia launched their company and website in preparation for their eventual product release. This start-up company faced the challenge of entering an already crowded field, and was virtually invisible to the communities they were trying to reach on the web. They recognized that Search Engine Optimization (SEO) was essential from the get-go.

In order to improve a website's presence in the search engines, there are two common methods:

#### **1) Paid search engine advertisement**

One benefit of paid search engine ads is that results are immediate. The downside is that results are typically in direct proportion to how much you spend, and last only as long as the cash flow. This method also does not impact the customer experience since it is not driven by the content of the website.

#### **2) Natural SEO**

Results will take longer to achieve, but rather than paying for each person that clicks on your link, it is a one-time investment that involves improving the relevancy and quality of your website content, leading to a higher ranking and long-term credibility.

## Volacci Search Marketing Case Study

### ***Solution: Volacci SEO***

Acquia's goal is to be a trusted source of information and support for Drupal. Enter Volacci, an internet marketing firm that specializes in natural SEO. Volacci partnered with Acquia in May of 2008 to provide content optimization, conversions consulting, and link-building solutions for Acquia.com.

To optimize their site's content, Volacci provided Acquia with a customized Drupal SEO Checklist that advised the implementation of specific Drupal modules for SEO. These modules included Pathauto, XML Sitemap, and others. Then, the site's content, html, and structure were modified to better communicate to the search engines that Acquia is an authority on Drupal. Consequently, its attractiveness to both visitors and search engines was enhanced.

Volacci also provided recommendations to maximize the conversion rate. Increasing the rate at which visitors to the website download or purchase Acquia subscriptions directly affects the bottom line, so this was an important consideration. Successful websites construct an optimal path for visitors to follow to conversion by understanding their usual visitors and their expected behavior. Volacci worked with the Acquia team to identify high quality content and improve its utilization on the site to maximize conversions.

Finally, to introduce Acquia to the internet community, Volacci launched an extensive link-building campaign. Links are what search engines use to determine the importance of a website. The core of Volacci's link-building techniques revolves around the utilization of best practices, methodologies, and processes. Acquia press releases, special content, directory submissions, and link-exchange were all utilized to benefit the project. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of sites that link to Acquia.com, improving their overall site ranking with search engines.

### ***Results***

Volacci provides its clients with detailed tracking reports on a weekly basis to measure progress. When Acquia was ready to launch their product in September, they had achieved a significant increase in market awareness with the help of a drastic increase in their Google ranking. If we look at the search ranking of two highly-competitive terms over the first six months of the campaign, the results are striking:

#### **Highest rank achieved in Google (as of Nov.1)**

| Term Searched               | May        | October |
|-----------------------------|------------|---------|
| "content management system" | not listed | 11      |
| "drupal"                    | 65         | 5       |

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Clearly, the combination of high quality, targeted content and SEO optimization in partnership with Volacci has propelled Acquia to the top of the search engines, but has a higher ranking resulted in more traffic? Over the same six month period, there was an exponential increase of site visitors.



Comparing the first thirty days with Volacci (05/01-31) to the sixth month (10/01-31):

- **Site visits increased by an incredible 310%** (from 17,000 to 56,000)
- The bounce rate decreased by 8% (from 48% down to 40%)
- Average time spent on the website has doubled (from 7.5 minutes to 15), with the number of pages visited up by 35% (from 3.2 to 4.3)

It's clear from examining both the Google ranking and traffic to the website that Volacci's team met the challenge. Volacci helped Acquia maximize its web visibility, leading to a dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of web traffic, ultimately setting the stage for a successful product launch.

***“Partnering with Volacci has proved invaluable to our SEO initiatives.”***  
**-Bryan House, Director of Product Marketing, Acquia**