



Aug 30 2010 **DMO Pro to DMO Pro: San Antonio Innovates with Smart Content**

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By *Kerry Allison, San Antonio CVB*

Six months ago, the San Antonio CVB faced a challenge to which CVBs can relate: *How can we use our website to attract more visitors to our city, knowing that they're coming from different places and are looking for different things? What's the ONE message that will appeal to everyone?*

We quickly realized that no ONE message would work for everyone. So instead, we segmented our audience and utilized innovative technology to deliver targeted messages to each of our main audience groups through our existing homepage: <http://www.visitsanantonio.com>. In essence, we stopped saying the same thing to everyone and instead started saying the right thing, to the right audience segment, at the right time.

The results: a 51.2% increase in Travel Guide requests and a 16.94% decrease in bounce rate (i.e., people leaving the site after they land on the home page). This decrease in bounce rate equals 120,000 additional site visitors who will choose to learn more about San Antonio by clicking deeper into the SACVB's website rather than leaving.

Like many websites our homepage had a slideshow that displayed images supporting our brand tenets. The slideshow was designed to provide images and information that would appeal generally to everyone but not strongly to anyone.

Our first step was to replace the slideshow on the homepage with targeted "smart" content. Whereas, in the past, every website visitor saw the same message (e.g. Visit the Alamo), our new content speaks directly to website visitors as audience groups. Now, each visitor sees a message tailored to their interests – increasing the likelihood they'll take action.

The next step was to segment our audience and set "rules" based on visitors' unique profiles and web-based interactions. We segmented some audiences by their geographic location – flying versus driving distance, others by the way they found our site and others by their previous actions on our website. Here are some examples:

Geographic Targeting

If a website visitor is in a key market such as a cold climate area in winter then we can show them a warm weather vacation message.

If a website visitor lives in a direct flight market, we show them an ease of travel message with an image of the River Walk and call to action to learn more about weekend hotel packages.

If a visitor is one of the 8 million people who live within drive distance then we talk about finding a hotel for the evening.

Search and Inbound Link Targeting

If a visitor was searching online for theme parks or they followed a theme park link to get to our website, we talk about our great theme parks and offer them theme park coupons.

Repeat Visit Targeting

If a person has visited the site multiple times, we know they are interested in our destination but they may not be finding what they need! In this case we focus on the free Travel Guide as a detailed planning resource.

After we had our audience segmented into groups, we started seeing a drastic reduction in people bouncing from our homepage and a great increase in Travel Guide requests. People are engaging us through our site because we are engaging them with valuable content targeted to their interests.

Best of all adding targeted content to our site was easy. We didn't build a new website; we just made our current website smarter and today.

Ease of implementation was a real key for us. While our marketing team knows how to present our destination's key benefits, we are not technical programmers, so we chose to work with [Smart Content](#), a third party service.

Key Takeaways for DMO Professionals

- You target your direct mail and ad spend so you already understand the benefits of segmenting your audience and delivering a message that is relevant to them.
- Your website is the first place most potential visitors will experience your destination, so research and leverage new technologies to make your website more effective.
- Increased engagement on your website is a success measurement for your entire DMO and you don't have to build a new website to have a better one.

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