



Gehm & Sons, LTD

Case Study:

***100 year old local, family business
leaps into the digital age.***



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Focus: Specialty dry ice and products distribution

For over 100 years the Gehm family has been in business for themselves. The family business originated with a wagon shop in the late 1800's, a bottling company in the 1920's and the distribution of dry ice and equipment beginning in the early 60's which, continues to this day.

The Gehm family is proud of their heritage. They are equally proud of the fact that today, the 5th generation of Gehm family members run the day-to-day operations of the company founded by their great, great, great, great grandfather Jacob.

There are some businesses that you just wouldn't expect to find on the Internet. There are still others that you wouldn't expect to be remarkably successful on the Internet. Certainly, one of those company types might be a distributor of super-cooled Carbon dioxide (CO²), or dry ice.

However, there are many businesses and individuals who use dry ice every day. Others may have occasional needs for the special super-cooling or sublimation properties of dry ice. Clearly, these customers need to be able to find and source their dry ice from a reliable supplier.

Local businesses have tremendous opportunities on the Internet too.

Gehm & Sons, LTD tried a number of things over the years to promote the business. Because of the local nature of the business they felt that one of the only options was to advertise in the yellow pages. After all, where else were people going to look for a dry ice distributor? On the Internet, that's where...

Harry Gehm II, current owner and business manager discusses how the company has changed since signing on with Cazbah and developing their comprehensive website, "Before Cazbah, our situation was that we only had a basic internet service. Now we are fully active and increasing our sales every single month."

He went on to say, "we are starting to see more and more people doing searches for our products through the web and not using a phone book." As a result of this change in how his customers find their way to Gehm & Sons website Harry said, "we have eliminated about three quarters of our phone book usage. By comparison, the Internet usage has picked up and has worked out very well."

"At least 30% of our new business comes from the Internet, not from a phone book," he went on to say. "People do Internet searches much faster than they will pick up a phone book."

Many people believe that a comprehensive website will only work to promote a national or international company. Harry Gehm knows better, "we are primarily a local business. We don't compete on a national or international level. We use the Web to get more local business and it's worked out very well".

"With the savings we've gotten by getting rid of the phone book and using the Internet to promote our business, we haven't increased our advertising costs at all. It has been a total wash. Our Cazbah website has been a very cost effective way to get our new business," Harry said.

The Cazbah solution

Gehm & Sons, LTD has been a Cazbah customer since 2007. For 8 years they have gained the benefits of their website to promote their business to the local community and beyond.

Among the items Cazbah provided:

- **Comprehensive website and ecommerce shopping cart.** Gehm & Sons, LTD is a specialty small business and Cazbah built their website to reflect that fact. Not just anybody was going to be interested in the products and services offered by the company so, special care was given to ensure that the new website and ecommerce shopping cart reflected the unique value that Gehm & Sons offered to their local customer base.
- **Search engine optimization.** As Harry Gehm points out, being found on the Internet has made all the difference... Cazbah took the time to learn about Gehm & Sons' customers and then went further by understanding exactly, how they went about searching for the products the company had to offer. Armed with this intelligence Cazbah developed the content and optimized the individual web pages, ensuring these pages showed up at the top of the search results.
- **Dedicated service and support.** Service after the sale will always make the difference in keeping a customer long-term. Cazbah understands this and is committed to their customer's long-term success. Harry's dedicated account manager is an Internet Marketing expert who helps him determine the appropriate Web strategies and tactics necessary to gain and keep his customers.

Give your customers the ability to quickly find the products they are looking for on your website.

The Bottom Line

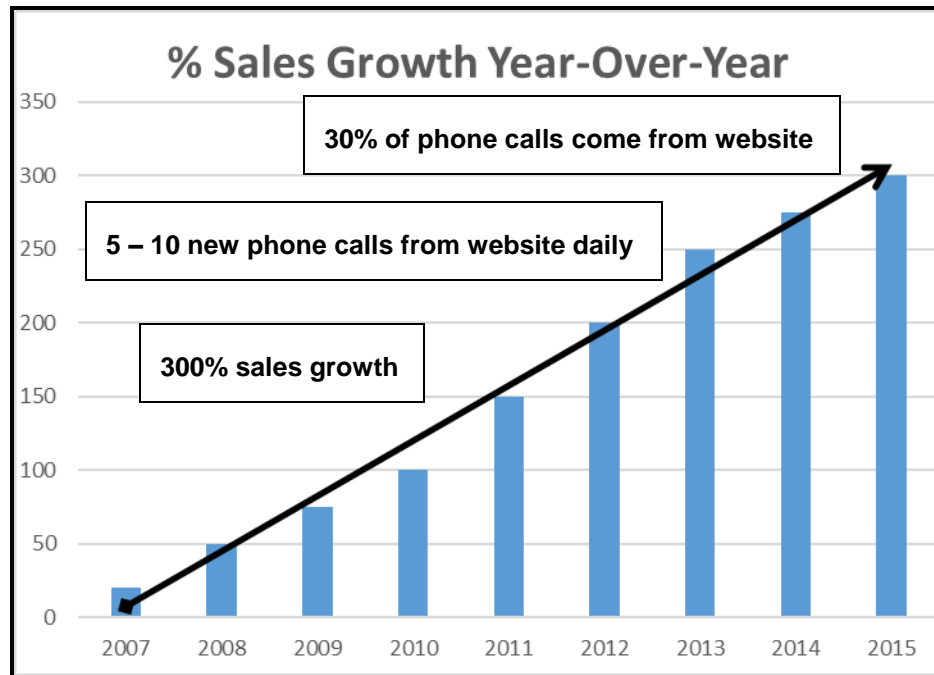
Ecommerce sales, resulting from Internet searches, are not the only way that Gehm & Sons gets their new business. Many customers still prefer to contact the company via the telephone, as a result of a thorough review of their website.

Harry explains, "our phones are ringing constantly. I'd say that **our phone calls have increase along the lines of 30%, due to our website.**" He went on to say, "I get calls all the time from people just looking for an answer to a dry ice question. I get emails all the time too. That means I'm getting internet hits and that's a very positive thing for the business."

"On a typical day, I'd say we get 5 - 10 new phone calls from our website. During our busy season, we can get up to fifty phone calls per day, in some cases," he said.

Even with these great results Harry admits that, "I have not fully used the resources of Cazbah yet. We went from a non-active site to an active selling website and **our sales are up 300%!**"

It's not just about ecommerce. Don't forget how important the telephone still is to your business.



Lessons Learned

With 8 years of experience working with Cazbah, Harry Gehm II knows exactly what it takes to make his 100 year old, local family business a success on the Internet.

A Cazbah website solution is just-the-ticket for a specialty local business.

- “Our business has continued to grow at a steady pace. We're not out to break any selling records. I figure as long as sales continue to grow, it's good. The more toe you have, the bigger your foot, the stronger you are able to stand”
- “Our success on the Internet? It's all due to Cazbah. I would highly recommend Cazbah to any small business.”
- “Even if you just to try it for a few years, see where it leads your business. You will soon see that the Internet is a much better resource for advertising your business than a phone book per se.”