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ONE LOCAL SEARCH LAUNCHES IN EUROPE

Leading international Local Search company sets its sights on European market Jonny Crowe appointed European Managing Director

Real, effective Local Search has arrived in Europe, in the shape of the Local Search Technologies Group (LST) and its UK subsidiary, One Local Search.

One Local Search has established its European headquarters in London as it prepares for an aggressive assault on the European search market. The office is One Local Search's first outside Australia and indicates the strategic importance of London as a key centre of the new media industry and launch-pad into the European market.

Sister company Australian Local Search has taken the Australian business listings market by storm, unseating incumbent yellow pages provider Sensis as the sole provider of business directory listings and powering Yahoo! Australia's local search product.

Former Overture and idealab! senior manager Jonny Crowe has been appointed Managing Director, Europe and will work closely with Group Chairman David Mayman to develop the European business in cooperation with key partners. One Local Search is initially seeking to partner with major UK print media groups, search engines, portals and ISPs to replicate its success in Australia and become the UK and then Europe's number one local search business.

One Local Search provides unbranded yellow-pages-style business listings and local search services to major Internet destinations. It is currently the number one 'white label' search company in Australia, providing search services for Yahoo! and other distributors. Its is one of Australia's fastest growing firms with more than 60 staff having started only 18 months ago.

The Elusive Local Search

Search has seen huge changes in recent years, as outlined by European Managing Director Jonny Crowe: "until 1998, search was a cost to businesses, with big portals like Yahoo! outsourcing search and declaring themselves out of the game. Then along came Overture [at the time, GoTo] and paid search was born, turning search from a cost centre into an estimated \$4 billion market in a short few years, with Overture and then Google re-writing the search landscape. We see ourselves as the next generation in that chain of evolution".

According to Jonny Crowe, paid search works well for large companies who can employ dedicated agencies to manage bids and orchestrate keyword campaigns, but in the so-called "long tail" of SME advertisers the benefits have never really been felt.

"All this means that the holy grail of the paid search market has become the commercialising the hard-to-get, but very lucrative, SME market. LST is the only company internationally to focus solely on monetising this "long tail", and on tailoring local search related algorithms. This has lead to better user experience and results relevancy for our Search Partners, and great traffic for our customers."

The YPs Want Your Traffic!

In the past, companies wanting to provide an online local search product had to rely on "yellow pages" businesses for data and search algorithms. OLS has broken this monopoly by offering its services in an unbranded format to allow print media groups, search-engines, ISPs and portals to maintain their brands without challenge from branded business listings providers.

Jonny Crowe explains; “One Local Search is the only company in the UK to offer business listings to Internet destinations without branding risk. The household name “yellow pages” directory companies offer similar services to us, but they insist on branding and challenge the search engines for traffic, making them competitors rather than partners.”

“SMEs don’t understand Pay-for-Performance”

SMEs have long been excluded from the advertising benefits of paid search by the sheer complication of pay-for-performance search models. Now, thanks to One Local Search, they can receive unparalleled traffic from key Internet properties, without the need for complicated campaigns and a wildly variable monthly ad-spend. One Local Search’s subscription model and transparent ranking also mean that advertisers only get targeted leads and don’t spend hours every week managing their bid-search campaigns.

Jonny Crowe sums up; “We give SME advertisers what they want – a simple way to market and a new source of leads. Our pure-play local search approach and distributed model mean that we leave our search partners’ brands unchallenged, while we serve-up SME customers with great leads and provide those same search partners with the suite of local search services they need.”

Group CEO and Chairman David Mayman comments; “We have filled a need for this type of service with Yahoo! and others in Australia, and now we are looking to do the same in UK and then elsewhere in the EU. Our success in Australia has demonstrated that we can provide to our search partners (including print media groups, ISPs, portals and search engines) services they could never get from traditional YP providers without significant competitive risk. We’re very excited about the opportunity in Europe.”