



REAP FINANCIAL

Overview

Building specific local pages, adding multiple contact forms and featuring calls to action throughout a website is a great way to complement traditional marketing efforts. Combined, this meant more traffic, more engagement and ultimately more business for a small financial firm in Austin, Texas.



Client Profile

REAP Financial is a boutique financial and retirement advisory firm based in Austin, Texas. The family-owned firm has focused on retirement planning in addition to insurance and investment advisory, and features purpose-driven retirement plans for their clients. They also offer free retirement and Social Security reviews and no-cost educational seminars.

The Challenge

With many baby boomers approaching retirement, Austin is undergoing a "silver tsunami." REAP Financial has been in the retirement space for years, but is starting to face stiff competition from new financial firms in the area. REAP needs to attract and retain clients as it competes against these startups. Simultaneously, it needs its website to be easy to find and easy to use for older clients who may not be familiar with handling finances online.

REAP has built a strong reputation in Austin, and its advertising and public relations efforts include a live radio show, radio ads, billboards, and TV ads. People in the area are familiar with the brand, so both branded and unbranded search queries are important targets for search engine optimization.

“ They hear our name and when they see that it's like a trigger. That will get them closer to reaching us.”
- Hanna Heerlein, REAP Financial Partner

What did we do?

REAP Financial had been successful offline but came to OnlineImage® in search of grabbing low-hanging fruit in the digital marketing space. We approached the situation starting with a thorough analysis, and then created a strategic digital marketing plan to help REAP Financial succeed. Our efforts focused on hyper-local search optimization to get potential clients to the site and conversion optimization to lead clients down the sales funnel.



Off-Page Optimization

First, we tackled off-page optimization, including making sure they were listed in all relevant directories online. We also audited the site's backlink profile, and have kept an eye on directory listings, backlinks, and online reviews.

Design Work

Next, we focused on user experience on the site. In addition to technical cleanups, we redesigned the site to make it responsive and mobile friendly, added calls to action in hotspots, added trust badges throughout the site and built a contact form. We also updated the URL, created a seminar registration form and more.



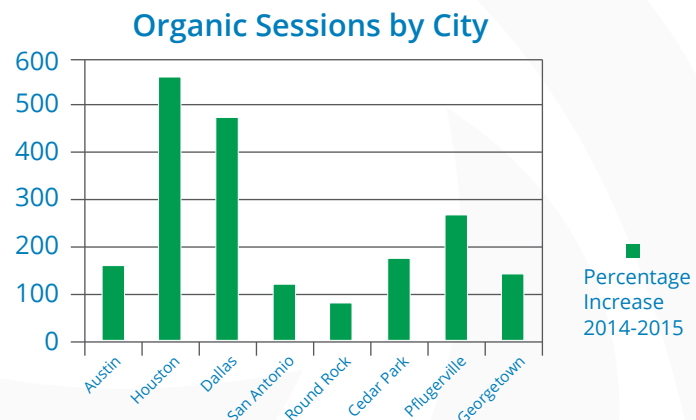
On-Page Optimization

SEO takes time, and the case of REAP Financial was no exception. We completed the redesign a few months after they came on as a client, and then focused our efforts on providing high-quality content about the services provided. We focused on specific areas in and around Austin to bring in more qualified traffic. First, we optimized page titles, meta descriptions and headlines throughout the site with a focus on services in geographic areas. Then, we created new pages and added helpful information, based on ongoing keyword and trend research. Our goal is for potential clients to recognize immediately that they have found a local solution to their finance and retirement planning needs.

What We Learned

Several months in, we have REAP Financial. By putting the focus on targeted traffic and hyperlocal optimization, we saw faster results and more qualified leads, and we did it all while saving the client money on unnecessary paid marketing campaigns. Here's a little of what we learned:

- Traditional and digital marketing work well together, especially with older demographics. We saw clicks and sessions for many branded and unbranded search terms, and the branded terms (which show that the searchers had seen the brand somewhere else) saw the highest click-through rates.
- Basic optimization on and off page resulted in increased keyword rankings and impressions within six months.
- The site relaunch resulted in some of the highest impressions, sessions and conversions in the site's history.
- The focus on locally targeted pages for Austin and surrounding cities boosted impressions and sessions, even when users saw the homepage in search listings rather than the targeted local pages. Year over year, we saw a 267 percent increase in sessions, 301 percent increase in users, and a 54 percent increase in pages viewed per session. New users made up more than three quarters of all traffic to the site, and this figure increased by 9 percent year over year.



- Bounce rates and pages per session are not always correlated with conversion. While we saw many metrics improve, we were surprised to see an increased bounce rate and decreased session duration. On closer inspection, we realized that people who visited the site either saw quickly that REAP didn't offer what they needed, or they jumped right to filling out contact and appointment forms or signing up for seminars.
- Forms and calls to action are an effective lead management strategy. When prospects first learned about the company, they took the first step toward becoming clients. Finding the website in search results and clicking on the link were the next steps. They then entered the learning phase. That quickly and easily turned into engagement with the forms. When these prospects meet with financial professionals at the firm, they are almost ready to make a deal.

How did this translate to ROI for the client?

- Rather than getting clicks from Austin alone, we saw ranking improvements, increased clicks and increased conversions in surrounding cities such as Round Rock, Cedar Park, Pflugerville and Lakeway, Texas.
- This highly qualified local traffic has helped REAP Financial compete in Austin against new firms.

“When we have perspective clients who Google search terms and we're up on that first page, that is huge for us. People are not going to page 2,3,4,5 - they're looking for what is the top 3. It definitely gives us an edge on our competitors. Our clients are not super consumer savvy and they're going to go to whatever shows up first on that page.”
- Hannah Heerlein, REAP Financial Partner

- Increased traffic led to increased conversions and more business for REAP Financial. A year ago, only about 30 participants showed up for each retirement seminar hosted by the company, and only about 10 percent signed up online. Today, each seminar brings in about 120 people and at least one-third of them sign up through the website.

REAP Financial Seminars

