

## REI

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) is a leading retailer of specialty outdoor equipment and clothing, with revenues reaching close to \$1 billion a year. REI is also seen as a leader in multi-channel strategies, offering a consistent sales and brand experience to their members and customers – whether through the 70+ retail stores, REI.com, or their catalog business.

### Problem

While REI.com had developed a successful online store, they knew their limited search engine visibility represented a key missed opportunity to drive additional traffic and sales. REI.com didn't rank well in search engines for many of its top products and the majority of its web pages and products weren't getting indexed, resulting in greatly reduced visibility. UJ Cha of REI Online said: "it was a problem we wanted to address right away".

While REI has a great range of products, its website suffered from several problems that were causing many of these products to never appear in search engine indices. The dynamic URLs that were used across REI's online catalog were a big part of the problem, resulting in the site never being fully spidered. Their natural search visibility problem was compounded by small but significant issues with page titles, site structure, page content and link text, for example.

Understanding they had a problem, REI chose to work with Netconcepts to address its natural search challenges.

### Solution

Netconcepts produced an audit report on REI's website listing the problems and making recommendations on how to optimize the site. Realizing that this task involved a significant amount of work, REI engaged Netconcepts to help make the changes. We began by simplifying the URLs to make them more accessible to search bots and then worked on refining the REI site. As UJ Cha states, "The site in general needed optimizing for search engines" and work was undertaken to ease navigation, focus on keywords and make the site more search engine friendly.

Along the way Netconcepts took the time to help REI's staff learn more about SEO best practices. As REI changes and updates their website, this training will help them keep REI.com search engine optimal. Netconcepts continues to work with REI to assist with seasonal keyword targeting and further SEO refinement.

### Results

UJ Cha comments: "Netconcepts' work has been very helpful, so far we have been very happy with all the work we have done together in 2004. We have been able to achieve full indexing in Google and we have had a measurable natural search traffic and sales increase"

UJ Cha continues; "We received more than a 200% gain from overall natural search sales and more than a 250% gain in "non-branded" natural search sales since the start of the engagement with Netconcepts.

Having a successful natural search strategy nicely complements our already successful paid search campaigns”.

In fact, the full indexing by Google means thousands of REI’s products are now visible to web consumers that were never visible before. REI’s site visibility has increased by 1000%, increasing overall natural search sales.

“We have decided to renew our contract with Netconcepts for 2005. Netconcepts has opened our eyes, not just on the importance of many of these elements but on specifically how to implement best practices.”