1DIGITAL®

SEO SUCCESS STORY

Maintaining Website Performance through a Redesign with a Little Help from SEO

Design and development projects can vastly improve the performance of your website, improve your user experience, and boost your conversions and revenue as well. Businesses that run eCommerce operations are at the mercy of customer behavior, and there are some things that customers just can't stand.

Some of these things are poor checkout experiences, site design that is not conducive to easy navigation, poor product imagery, and lack of brand integration. That is a very small list of things that eCommerce customers can't stand in general, but it makes a strong point.

There are two common ways to fix these problems if your eCommerce website suffers from them. One way is to migrate to a platform that offers the built-in, native functionality that will improve these experiences. The other is to work with the platform you already have and undergo some design and development to improve the lacking features of your website.

There are benefits and drawbacks to both, but one common issue that eCommerce businesses face in either scenario is that their impressions and traffic are both likely to take a hit in the wake of a migration or a design and development project. Here at 1Digital® Agency, we hear these actual concerns from real customers all the time. Questions like "Will my traffic or authority drop if I take on a redesign and development project?" are commonplace.

The truth is, they can; but the truth is also that, as we are uncontested eCommerce SEO experts, there are ways to keep your traffic, impressions, authority, and click-through-rate steady during and immediately after a redesign. Here's how we did it for Divinity Clergy Wear.

Improving UX with Design and Development

Divinity Clergy Wear is a retailer of clerical vestments, clergy shirts, and other such accessories. While it might seem like a captive market with little competition, this is not the case, and the market for what seems to the rest of us like esoteric garments is very strong.

What that meant for Divinity Clergy Wear is that they needed to be competitive with their online presence in order to drive traffic, build sales, and grow as a business overall. They were already on BigCommerce, a platform that is a well-known, preeminent option for eCommerce ventures due to its compatibility with a variety of third-party apps, SEO friendly structure, high security, speed and uptime, and many other factors affecting the UX of eCommerce websites.

BigCommerce is good as it is, but it can be made much better with a little help from some skilled designers and developers. To be specific, Divinity Clergy Wear was dealing with what was effectively a practical-yet-limited aging site design that was not optimized for user experience. Specifically, they experienced issues with internal click-through rate, bounce rate, and session duration. They knew they wanted a new site design with more modern, attractive imagery, a higher level of brand integration, and better functionality, but they were concerned about the impact it would have on their traffic, rankings, and authority.

We knew we could improve their UX while

maintaining their rankings and authority, so we set out to work.

As you can see from the before and after image below, their newer site is not only more modern, it is more engaging, more involved, and more appealing. The product imagery is enhanced, their logo is updated, and the overall feel of the website is more inviting and reassuring. We even developed custom banners for their homepage design that showcase their enhanced product imagery and make it appear more lifelike, more realistic, and more approachable.
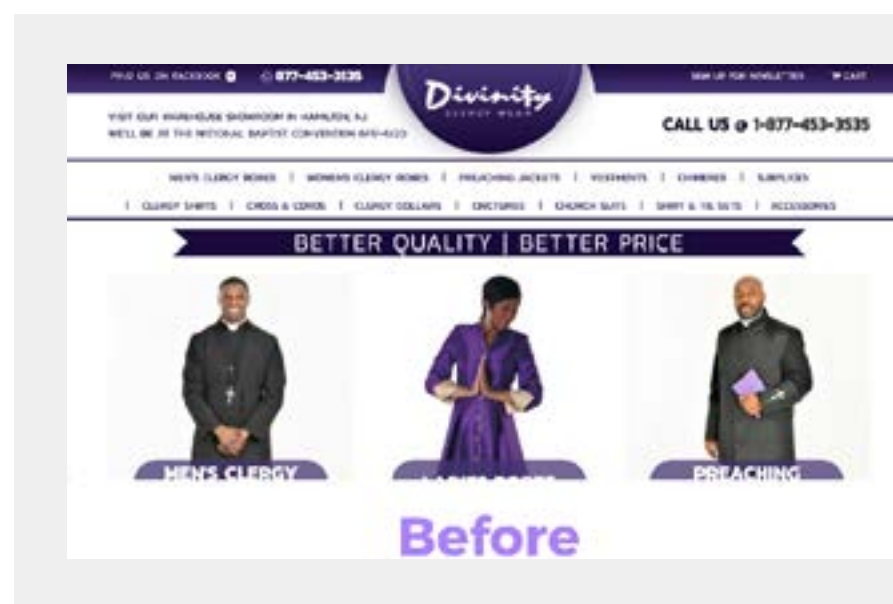
The above image incorporates a lot of negative space, and while their product imagery is fresh and original, it lacks the artful, insightful framing that our designers created for the finished homepage, below.
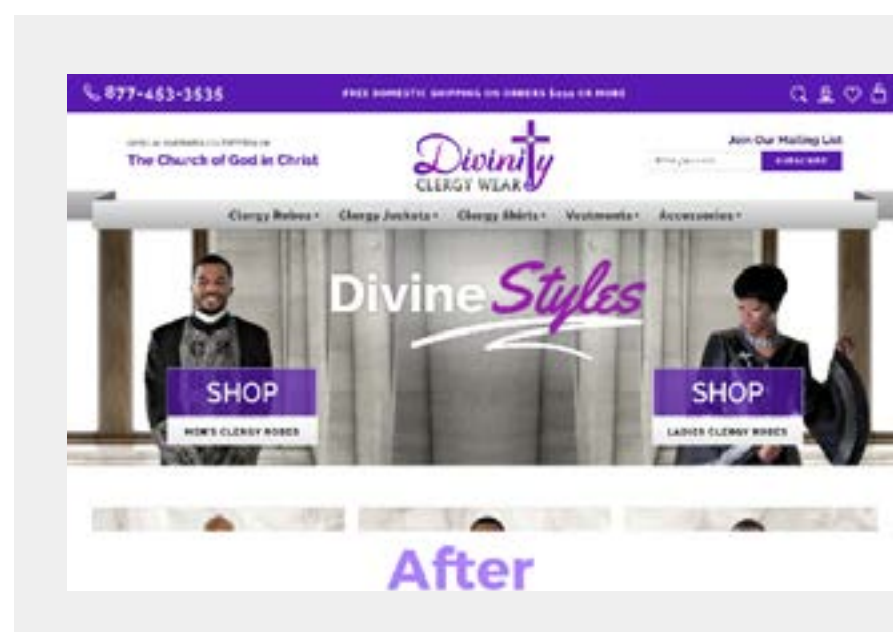
These things impact the ways users interact with Divinity Clergy Wear's brand, yet they are somewhat cosmetic, and here at 1Digital® Agency, we care about substance. While we created a custom BigCommerce design for their new website that was aesthetically pleasing, we were sure to design and develop some features that would concretely impact their user experience to increase their overall UX, specifically with the intention of increasing time on page and internal click-through rate.

The search functionality of their old website was limited; it contained no search bar, only a mega menu that, while it was neatly arranged, was unintuitive and consisted solely of words. It's a commonly known fact that high-quality imagery increases click-through and conversions, and so we updated their mega menu design with high-quality images of their products. In an industry where words like "Cassock," "Surplice," "Vestments" and other esoteric terms are not only common but competitive, including images is a big booster for experience and conversions.

Consider the following screenshot of their old and new mega menus juxtaposed alongside each other. The old menu was smaller, text-heavy (in fact it contained nothing but text), and much more difficult to navigate. Our updated design features attractive product imagery that is not only easier to navigate; the pictures serve as a prompt for those who are not sure what they are looking for or who needed a visual booster to push them along. A picture says a thousand words, after all, and there isn't room for a thousand words on most mega menus.

The original version of their menu is almost underwhelming and difficult to follow. It may very well have been neatly and concisely arranged, but there is more to user experience than organization. It's hard to place an image to a name like "Clergy Robe & Cinture Sets" without a visual to straighten it all out. Our new mega menu brings the order of the former together with a satisfying visual appeal.

As more and more people are shopping on their phones and other mobile devices, offering a conversion rate optimized responsive design is critical to user experience. As a part of the responsive design that we developed for Divinity Clergy Wear, we included a sticky "Add to Cart" Button that remains at the bottom of the screen as the user scrolls through.
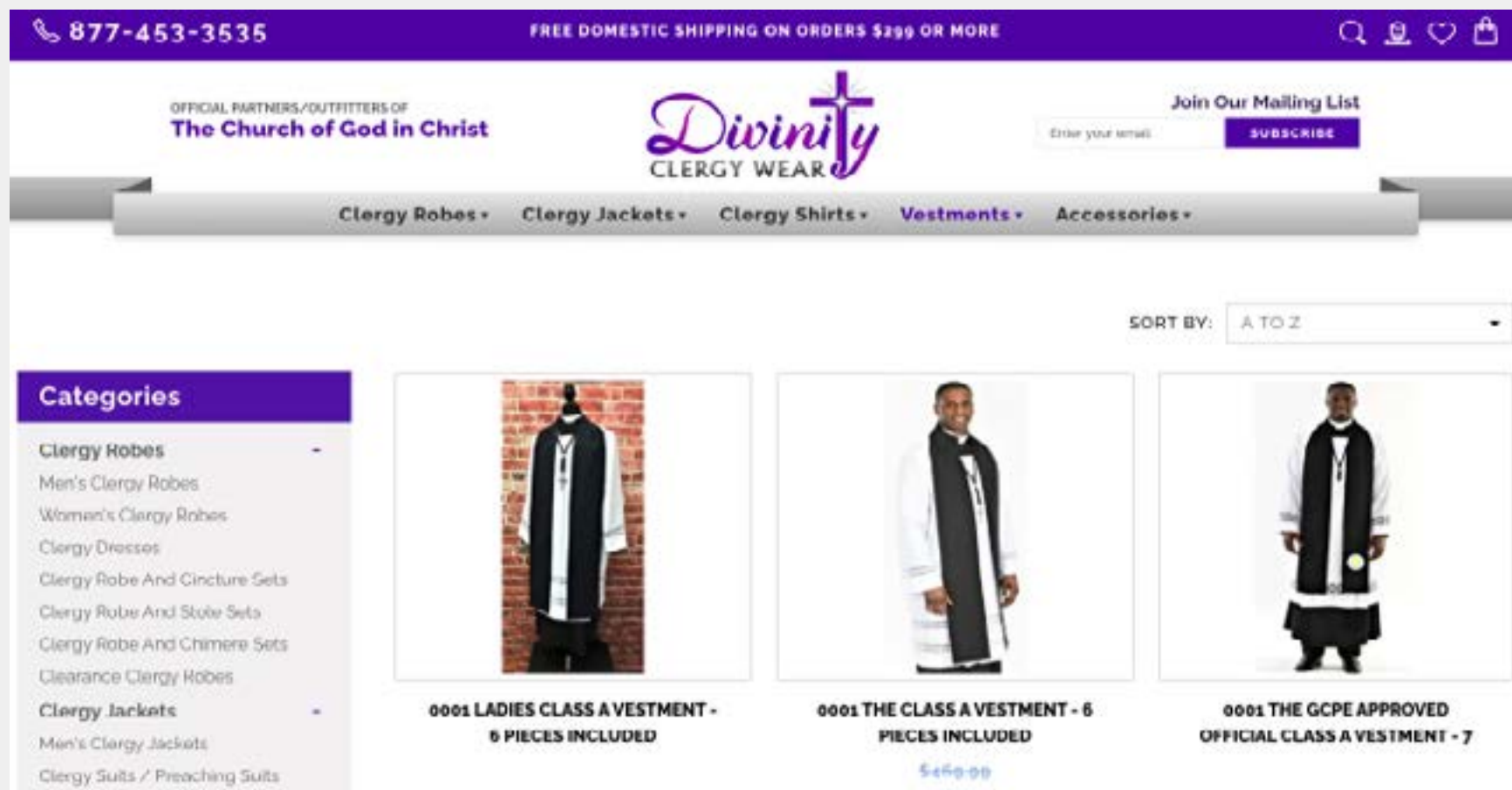
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Divinity
CLERGY WEAR

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Clergy Robes ▾   Clergy Jackets ▾   Clergy Shirts ▾   Vestments ▾   Accessories ▾

Your One-Stop-Shop
for All Your Clerical Apparel Needs.

At Divinity Clergy Wear, we are proud to offer the largest selection of clergy suits, clergy robes, preacher robes, and more clerical wear online. We have minister attire as well as all of your other church apparel needs. Whether looking for discount clergy robes or big and tall shirts and jackets, we are sure to have the perfect piece that will complete your outfit. Our warehouse in Hamilton New Jersey has everything you and your family need to look your best.

We promise nothing short of top quality customer service provided by experts in religious garments. Our family-owned and operated business has serviced countless customers and has maintained a spotless record of customer satisfaction since the start.

The "About Us" page is another important aspect of design that impacts user experience as well as the credibility of a particular brand. It is one of the first things that visitors to an eCommerce store will visit. After all, if your organization can't tell us about you, who can?

For that reason, we designed a fully brand-integrated About Us page for Divinity Clergy Wear populated with valuable information about their mission and featuring attractive contemporary fonts and product imagery. Keep in mind, we

did all of this with the intent of boosting click-through-rate and user experience.

We also designed custom category pages for their products, which, as you can see from the image below, are contemporary, elegant, and denote a bespoke branding approach. They also feature attractive imagery, and as you notice, provide several methods of navigation. The user can navigate visually downward by scrolling, which is popular with mobile shoppers, but they can also filter through products via the display to the left,

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Clergy Robes ▾   Clergy Jackets ▾   Clergy Shirts ▾   Vestments ▾   Accessories ▾

SORT BY: A TO Z

Categories

Clergy Robes   –
Men's Clergy Robes
Women's Clergy Robes
Clergy Dresses
Clergy Robe And Cincture Sets
Clergy Robe And Stole Sets
Clergy Robe And Chimere Sets
Clearance Clergy Robes

Clergy Jackets   –
Men's Clergy Jackets
Clergy Suits / Preaching Suits

0001 LADIES CLASS A VESTMENT -
6 PIECES INCLUDED

0001 THE CLASS A VESTMENT - 6
PIECES INCLUDED
$450.00

0001 THE GCPE APPROVED
OFFICIAL CLASS A VESTMENT - 7

or by the mega menu overhead.

As another development of their BigCommerce website, we created a one-page checkout. The checkout experience is very important to eCommerce shoppers and it is the prime indicator of shopping cart abandonment. It is also one of the most important elements of UX. As you can see from the image below, the checkout all takes place on one page and is extremely simple. There are only a few, necessary fields for inputting information. It's nearly as close as you can get to choosing a product from the shelf, swiping your card at the register, and being on your way.

These are some of the more salient features that we designed and developed as part of Divinity Clergy Wear's new and improved custom design. Yet as stated at the beginning of this article, one of the main concerns clients face is related to their fears about how design and development projects will impact their SEO.

While there is a real potential for a design or development project to impact your traffic in the short term, the good news is that there are ways around it. At 1Digital® Agency, we are not just intuitive, crafty designers; we are also a collective of shrewd SEO analysts and gifted content creators. We knew we could maintain Divinity Clergy Wear's traffic, impressions, and rankings, if not improve them, so while our designers and developers got to work on their website, our SEO team got to work at optimizing their site for long term performance.

Holding the Line with SEO

Our goal for Divinity Clergy Wear's SEO campaign was relatively simple. There were two things we knew we needed to accomplish: we needed to prevent short term losses to traffic and impressions while also building keyword rankings and authority that would generate long term gains.

Our SEO process is complex; first, we conduct an industry analysis taking into account the structure of competitors' eCommerce sites and rankings. Then we conduct thorough keyword research to identify a fleet of high-volume short and long-tail keywords that customers are already searching for and for which our clients, like Divinity Clergy Wear, need to rank or increase in ranking.

Our process involves a variety of activities to improve our clients' onsite optimization as well as a robust backlinking strategy. Once we identified the right suite of keywords to target, we got right to work optimizing meta titles and meta descriptions, removing duplicate content, optimizing internal links, removing broken links, and more.

As a part of our onsite optimization, we also publish optimized category page content for Google to crawl and pick up for keywords, as well as blog posts of varying lengths, optimized for readership, keyword density, and length, among other criteria. These efforts work hand in hand without other activities, which include the publication of offsite content to a variety of third-party sites as a part of our backlinking strategy.

The offsite pieces we compose as a part of our SEO process contain backlinks to our clients' online stores and these backlinks slowly build their authority over time. These are some of the SEO services that we extended to Divinity Clergy Wear at the same time that we were working on their new design and continued afterward. The idea here was to prevent a loss of impressions and traffic, so how did we do?
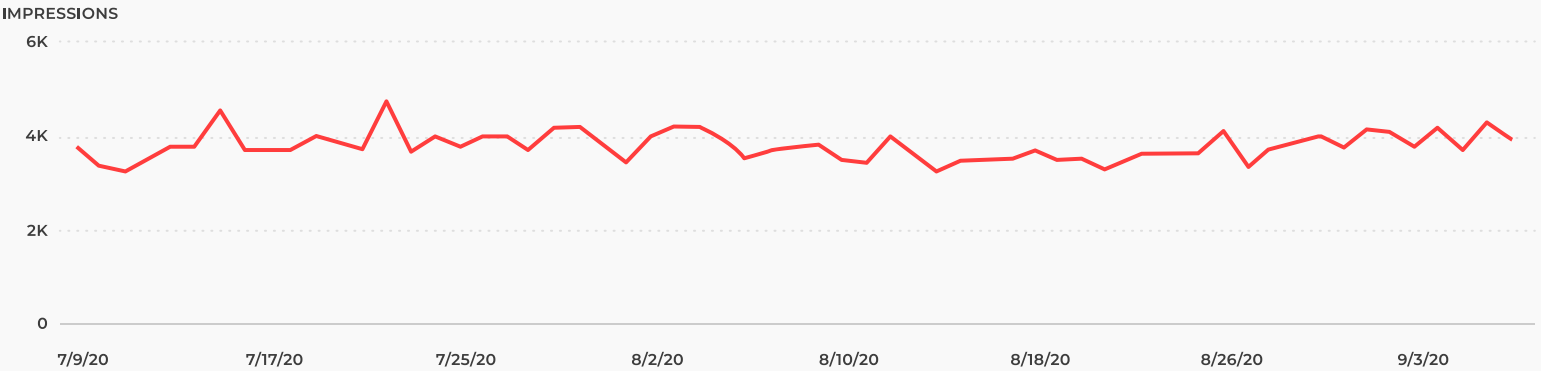
Proving the Process

We've explained how we altered Divinity Clergy Wear's site for the better, as well as how our SEO process works, but the proof is in the pudding. For Divinity Clergy Wear, their website experienced no appreciable change in impressions throughout the period from July 2020 to August 2020, right after the new site was launched.

CHANGE IN IMPRESSIONS

Conversion Rate	Total Impressions	Average CTR	Average Position
7.46k	**229k**	**3.3%**	**21.2**
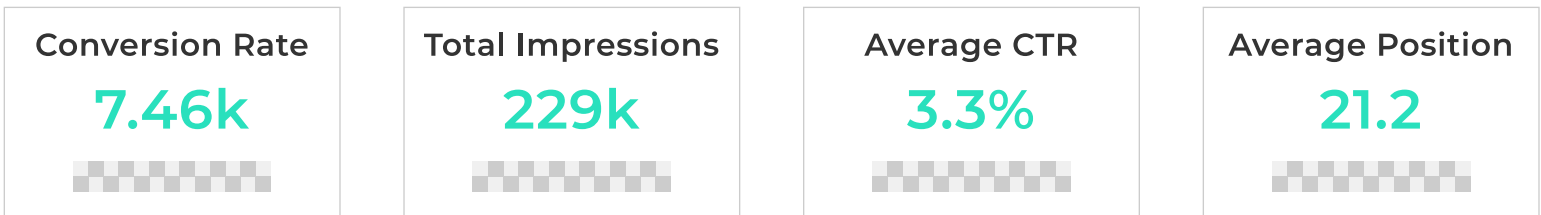
TOTAL CLICKS, IMPRESSIONS, AND CLICK-THROUGH RATE (CTR)

IMPRESSIONS

6K

4K

2K

0

7/9/20 7/17/20 7/25/20 8/2/20 8/10/20 8/18/20 8/26/20 9/3/20

This is impressive enough to those who have had experience with the negative effects that a redesign can have on SEO, but to others, it might seem like a breakeven. In this situation, a breakeven is really a win, and for proof, consider the following evidence.

KEYWORD MOVEMENTS

Top 5 Moved up Keywords		
Keywords	Search engine	Position
▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓	Google.com (USA)-...	6 ▲ 77
▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓	Google.com (USA)-...	6 ▲ 73
▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓	Google.com (USA)-...	64 ▲ 33
▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓	Google.com (USA)-...	6 - 24
▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓	Google.com (USA)-...	6 ▲ 16

HIGHER CLICK-THROUGH RATE, IMPROVED EXPERIENCE

Pages / Session	Avg.Session Duration	Bounce Rate
8.30%	**10.74%**	**-5.29%**
4.30 vs 3.97	00:03:02 vs 00:02:45	47.91% vs 50.59%

That chart shows the top 5 keyword movements for Divinity Clergy Wear throughout their SEO campaign, which is ongoing as of September 2020. Their top keyword moved up 77 positions, which is an impressive gain by any standard. At the same time, the next four keywords moved up by 73, 33, 24, and 16 positions, respectively.

For those types of gains to occur while impressions remained stagnant is telling enough, but if it must be spelled out for you, impressions would have dropped without these gains. It can't be said by how much specifically, but it is sure enough. Additionally, considering that their rankings for these keywords have increased so remarkably, it sets them up for ramped up traffic and impressions in the near future.

You probably haven't forgotten that the purpose of the redesign was to improve user experience and that the SEO portion was primarily geared towards maintaining their authority and rankings with the intent to increase them in the future. To that end, consider the following which you can see by their analytics below.

As you can see via this image, from May 2020 through early September 2020, their bounce rate dropped by over 5%, indicating high-quality traffic had been reaching their site and that their page design had improved the experience. Pages per session and average session duration both increased appreciably, by 8.3% and 10.74%, respectively. These figures indicate a higher click-through rate and an overall improved experience. Moreover, as you can see, there was actually a slight increase in new users to their website over the same period, indicating that new, interesting leads had been finding them.

All in all, not only had user-experience improved, the bounce rate dropped and time on page increased, ultimately, they experienced no loss of impressions and had improved in rankings, setting the stage for future increases in traffic and business.

To make short of what's long, 1Digital® Agency successfully designed and developed a new website for Divinity Clergy Wear that concretely improved customer experience while averting the SEO pitfalls that commonly accompany redesigns. In fact, we did much more when you consider how drastically we increased their rankings.

These are not the only eCommerce SEO services that we offer, and we are more than a BigCommerce web development company. If you are looking for an eCommerce SEO agency that works with all the major eCommerce platforms and can pursue several marketing strategies successfully, including but not limited to SEO and PPC, get in touch with a member of our team.

We work with Shopify, BigCommerce, and Magento for all different sorts of design and development projects, even offering a proven migration process should it turn out that your current platform is underperforming. We are an eCommerce SEO company that offers more than SEO. To see more true examples of the work we have done for our clients' websites, visit our page on case studies, and then get in touch with a member of our team at info@1digitalagency.com or by phone at 866-975-1465.

CONSIDERING OUR SEO SERVICES?

SEO for eCommerce is a hard-fought battle. Everybody in your industry is competing for just 10 spots on Google's first page. In order to be one of those people, you need to be smarter, quicker, and work harder than everybody else. 1Digital is the marketing partner that can help you get there. We employ intelligent SEO strategies that grow organic ranking, traffic and conversion. We have highly skilled eCommerce SEO experts that focus on eCommerce merchants and we're widely recognized as one of the best eCommerce SEO companies online.

SEO Experts. 1Digital employs a talented team of eCommerce experts that focus on e-Commerce only. We've been working on eCommerce SEO since our inception and we've slowly grown into one of the top eCommerce digital agencies in the country. Our eCommerce search engine optimization skills have propelled us to the top of the talent pool and we've been helping our clients win more business with more sales and leads since early 2012. Our founder and CEO, Dan Kogan has been involved with eCommerce SEO since the late 1990s and he's carved out our path to being the best in the eCommerce space ever since. If you've been looking for a top company that handles eCommerce SEO, you've found it.

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