

## E-retailer GK Elite uses blogs to boost natural search results

Over the past two years search engines have started displaying a mix of video, images, news and other web content beyond traditional web pages in general search results. The practice is called blended search, and one online retailer, GK Elite, has found a way to take advantage of the change—by launching blogs.

While GK Elite sells apparel for gymnasts and sponsors several big-name Olympians, a phrase like “Gymnastic Olympic Champion” wasn’t bringing up GK’s e-commerce site among the first page of search results. So GK tried another approach, creating a blog titled Gymnastic Olympic Champion. The blog now often occupies a page-one spot on Google’s blended search results for the search term “Gymnastic Olympic Champion.”

GK has launched about 30 blogs with specific titles and content. Some of those blogs, such as one on Mens Compression Shirts and others, are appearing high in Google search results. In many cases, the blog postings appear higher than the e-commerce site itself.

“Our web site wasn’t appearing in blended search results for key and common phrases, but our blogs are,” say Andrew Foss, e-commerce manager for GK Elite, which conducts about half of its sales online. In fact, the blogs, which GK launched in January, have increased GK’s revenue from organic search by 39% and the net online revenue increase as a result of the blogs is 30%.

GK uses a blogging software program from Compendium Blogware to manage its blogs. Each blog has its own page title and URL, which is important because it allows search engines to index each blog separately and allows GK to better target specific search terms, says Chris Baggott CEO and co-founder of Compendium.

Because the blogs are appearing high in blended search results, GK has been able to cut its paid search budget 30% since implementing the program. He says the blogs paid for themselves in three months.

Foss says the program is easy to use. Red and green alerts tell him when his copy has too many instances of the key phrase and could be flagged as spam, or when it doesn’t have enough mentions of a key term. “We just keep tweaking until we are in the green, it’s really simple,” he says.

