



Autobytel's Search Engine Marketing Strategy Revs into High Gear

Autobytel page views and purchase requests through search engines soar, generating steady stream of high-quality customers for dealers and advertisers.

Irvine, CA ([PRWEB](#)) June 6, 2005 -- Autobytel Inc. (Nasdaq: ABTLE) reports that the number of customers who came onto Autobytel sites through search engines and then submitted a new vehicle Purchase Request soared 79% from 2003 to 2004, during which time the percentage of Autobytel website page views generated through search engines rose 67%. These critical site traffic metrics underscore the effectiveness of the company's pioneering Search Engine Optimization (SEO) initiatives, powered by cutting-edge proprietary software.

Autobytel's increasing search engine traffic is good news for the company -- which saw overall site traffic rise almost 20% in April, one of the biggest gains on the Internet -- as well as for the company's nationwide network of member dealers. According to Autobytel data, customers who come into the company's sites through a keyword search, and then submit an online request to buy a new vehicle from a local Autobytel member dealer, are exceptionally motivated, high-quality buyers.

"These are self-selecting, serious shoppers," said Autobytel Senior Vice President of Marketing and Media Services Michael Rosenberg. "They're also confident that they're getting to the best possible auto information sources through a fair, unbiased search process. It all adds up to a stream of high-quality car buyers for our member dealers. That's why Autobytel has made SEO a top priority."

According to Rosenberg, the stakes of Autobytel's SEO mission are high. While fifty-six percent of all Americans use search engines daily, 90% use only the top-10 search engines and 80% don't click past the first page search results so a targeted SEO strategy is key. "A lot of companies are beginning to recognize the make-or-break importance of effective SEO, but it's not necessarily something you can just throw money at. Autobytel has worked for years, really since our inception in 1995, on marketing search strategies."

Part of Autobytel's search engine success is the result of its industry leadership and 10 years of mainstream brand recognition. As the first online car-buying web site, and still one of the premier automotive Internet brands, Autobytel is consistently one of the most visited automotive destinations on the Web, and attracts a significant percentage of its traffic through web links from hundreds of the top automotive-related sites. That success leads to even more success in the democratic process of search engine rankings, which are determined largely by a site's popularity and incoming link count.

Other aspects of Autobytel's SEO strategy require continuous monitoring of the business impact of specific keywords. To this end, Autobytel has developed proprietary software that monitors up to 200,000 popular automotive search terms (like "used cars," "Honda," etc.) every day to measure not only how much search engine traffic they generate, but also how much revenue they create. The software then automatically makes "intelligent" bids on keywords based on their value to the business. "It's like a stock market for words," adds Rosenberg. "If we can determine that a certain word can generate a visit for our targeted cost, then that's our bidding cap. Our software is a major competitive advantage in what has become a heated competition to maximize keyword effectiveness and ROI."

Using that same "keyword intelligence," Autobytel's site content is also continuously updated to optimize



exposure on the major search engines. Search engines regularly index relevant web pages based on popular search criteria, and those pages then become part of the engine's "search universe" — the more indexed pages that correlate to a particular keyword, the higher the ranking, making indexed page count a major determinant of SEO success. On that front, Autobytel easily tops its competitors with more than 10 million page listings currently indexed at the major search engines.

Of course, driving search engine traffic to the Autobytel sites is only the first step in the company's larger mission to channel online automotive shoppers into member dealerships. To that end, the company automatically presents dealership branding and marketing messages to local shoppers based on their zip code and brand selections. This "local dealer search" function, in effect, mirrors, or refines, the search engine process, presenting relevant dealership listings based on buyers' online search parameters.

"Search engines and the automotive Internet are now seamlessly intertwined," concluded Rosenberg. "Millions of people are researching their next vehicle purchase on the Internet every day. Our job is to usher these shoppers from a general research stage into an information-rich environment where they can be confident about what they're going to buy, and where they're going to buy it."

*According to comScore Media Metrix, Autobytel was the 8th biggest gainer in unique visitors on the Internet in April. (comScore Media Metrix press release May 18th, 2005)

About Autobytel Inc.

Autobytel Inc. (Nasdaq: ABTLE) a leading Internet automotive marketing services company, helps retailers sell cars and manufacturers build brands through marketing, advertising, data and CRM (customer relationship management) products and programs. The Company owns and operates the automotive Web sites www.Autobytel.com, www.Autoweb.com, www.Carsmart.com, www.Car.com, www.AutoSite.com, www.Autoahorros.com, and www.CarTV.com, as well as AIC (Automotive Information Center), a trusted industry source of automotive marketing data and technology for over 20 years. Autobytel is also a leader in dealership lead management and CRM solutions and owns and operates AVV, Inc., a top provider of dealership CRM and sales management products, and Retention Performance Marketing, Inc., (RPM®), which powers dealerships with cutting-edge customer loyalty and retention marketing programs. Autobytel was the most visited new car buying and research destination in 2004, reaching millions of car shoppers as they made their vehicle buying decisions. Autobytel's car-selling sites and lead management products are used by more of the nation's top-100 e-dealers than any other program.

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