

Professional Case Study

YMCA Website & Digital Optimisation



Background and challenge

One of New Zealand's oldest not-for-profit organisations, YMCA offers a wide range of periodic and membership-base consumer services including Holiday Programmes, Fitness Memberships and Swimming Lessons. YMCA's website, launched in 2009 was seven year old and with no investment in maintenance and upgrades website functionality was no longer in line with current technology trends i.e. being mobile responsive. YMCA was experiencing decreasing website traffic from new and repeat visitors which had resulted in a 30% drop in online enquiry volume from the recorded peak, negatively impacting user experience and revenue.

Business: YMCA Auckland

Website:

www.ymcauckland.org.nz

Target Customer: Household Shopper

Service Offering: Active family services

My Role: Marketing Manager

Investment Level: ~\$120,000

Case Study Period: 2016/17

What we achieved

1. Increased average monthly website user sessions by 80%

Drove an 80% increase for total user sessions, increased new user sessions by 85% year-on-year and increased user engagement evidenced by over 17,000 content downloads i.e. group fitness class timetables or holiday programme timetables.

2. Increased organic site visitation by 108%

More than doubled site traffic originating from Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

3. Increased web-based service enquiries 100%

Achieved a 12% entry from website sessions to enquiry, book or join functions, increasing average monthly online service enquiries from 300 to 600. Enquiry volumes continued to grow with on-target projection to achieve 1,000 per month.

Source: *Google Analytics ymcauckland.org.nz*

All results stated compare activity for the three-month period November 1st, 2015—January 31st, 2016 to November 1st, 2016—January 31st, 2017.

Website visitation continued to grow. 12-Months post website launch organic (SEO) traffic had grown by 250% and total website visitation had grown by 170%.

Source: <https://thespaceinbetween.co.nz/our-work/project/ymca>

1. Website Analytics

Used existing analytics to understand user behaviour on the website and identified positive and negative attributes about the user experience, critical pathways and high traffic areas.

2. Keyword Research

Completed keyword research to understand the terms and topics that customers were searching for, their importance based on average monthly volume, YMCA's current rank and the level of competition for the term.

3. Content Strategy & Website Architecture

Developed a dual approach to content strategy leveraging regional and localised search terms e.g. 'gym Auckland' or 'gym Ellerslie'. Developed a website architecture based on content strategy.

4. User Experience Design

Conducted ~50 in person user experience interviews with individuals reflecting the variety of personas who YMCA serves and the breadth of services offered. From the results, developed key design principles and service specific mandates designed to optimise the online experience for the user.

5. Website Development

Following the development of comprehensive specifications, YMCA reviewed multiple supplier submissions to successfully select a development partner. After completing statements of work, the technical development of a new website platform was completed over a three month period including front-end and back-end development.

6. Content Creation

Development of full custom content including video, photography and copy was created for approximately 10 programmes and 20 locations. In total we developed 30 videos, took over 30,000 photos and wrote countless lines of copy. Copy was custom written to support Search Engine Optimisation.

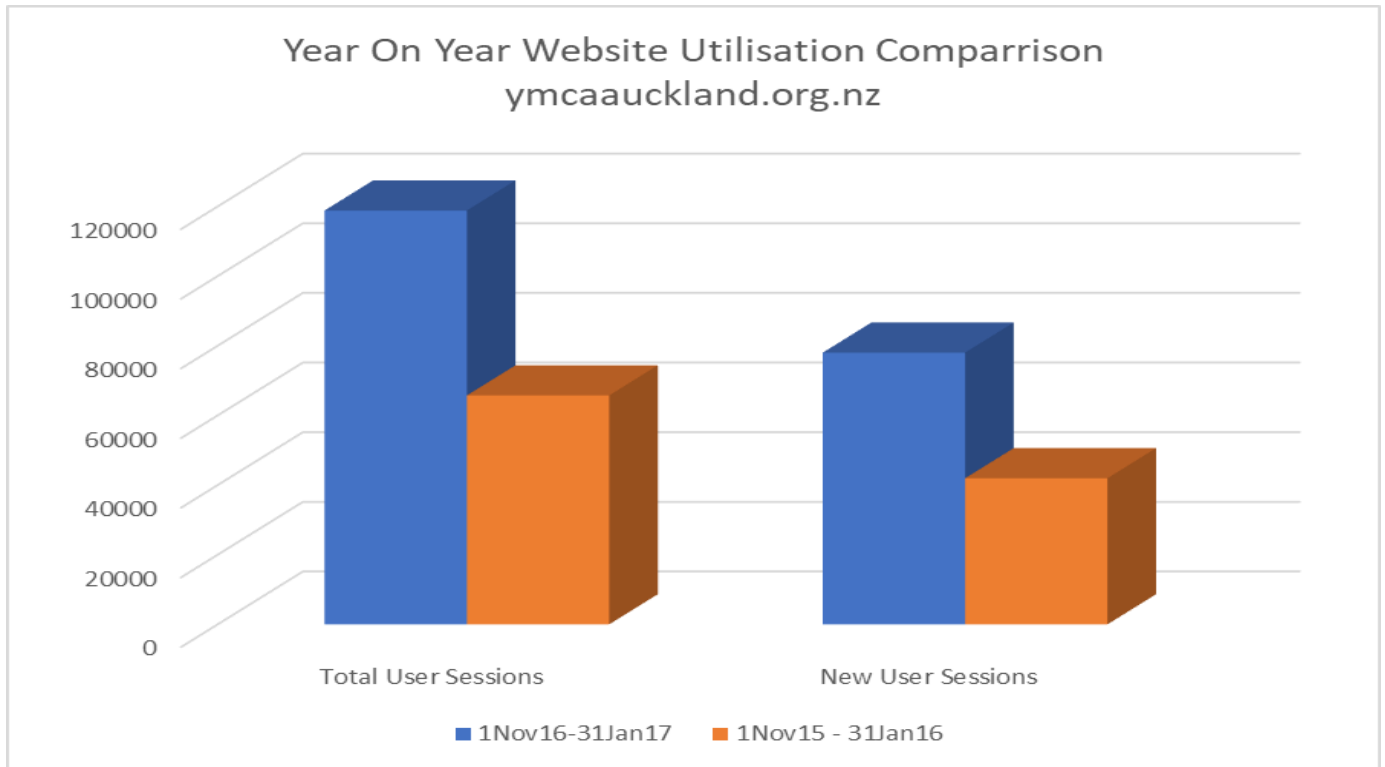
7. Content Loading & Application Integration

Over a three-week period, content was loaded onto over 500 website pages with careful consideration to Search Engine Optimisation methodology (SEO) including keyword density, meta descriptions, readability, URL and targeted snippets. Fully integrated the website into other operational applications including booking and enquiry management systems.

8. Online Advertising

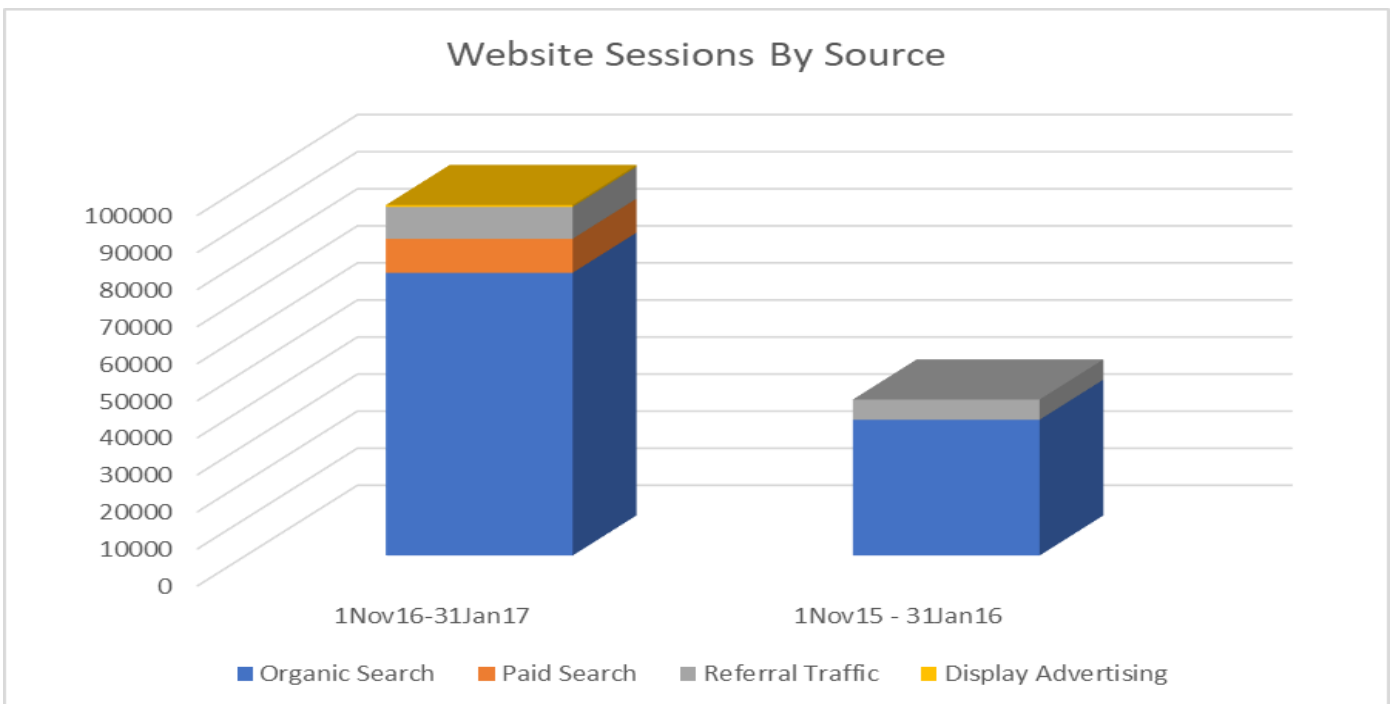
Once live, we applied Search Engine Advertising to create an additional layer of activity driving website traffic to the site.

Graphic 1: Website Sessions



Graphic 1 shows total user and new user website sessions on ymcauckland.org.nz for the periods November 1st, 2015—January 31st, 2016 to November 1st, 2016—January 31st, 2017 (Source: Google Analytics)

Graphic 2: Website Sessions By Source



Graphic 2 shows website session by source for the periods November 1st, 2015—January 31st, 2016 to November 1st, 2016—January 31st, 2017 (Source: Google Analytics ymcauckland.org.nz) and the resulting increase of 108% to organic visitation and 80% increase in total website session.

Who I Worked With



A project this big is no task for a mere mortal and required a rock-start team of super heroes. In addition to yourself truly, YMCA's moon landing, Mars orbiting Marketing team which reported to me, an internal project team was established to provide additional resource and two key partners were vital to the successful deliver of the project.

Business: The Space Inbetween

Website: thespaceinbetween.co.nz

Key Contact: Brendan Jarvis

Overview: Specialist digital powerhouse who provided all development including front-end and back-end, visual design, project management and technical consultancy.

Business: Musthave Marketing

Website: goo.gl/ZZKYnt

Key Contact: Allie McFadyen

Overview: Involved from inception to delivery of the project, Allie provided specialist consultancy services and technical delivery which directly supported the User Experience and Design, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Advertising (PPC). Allie was retained for management of SEO and PPC on an on-going basis.

General Disclaimer

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The material within this document may be changed, improved or updated without notice.

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