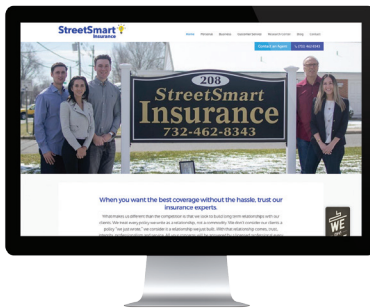


.INSURANCE Success Story: Street Smart Insurance

www.streetmart.insurance



“Insurance is a different type of business now. You need to stand out on the internet and with our new **STREETSMART.INSURANCE** domain name, new customers can easily find us.”

**CARLO FERRARA,
VICE PRESIDENT**

Established in 2003 and headquartered in Freehold, New Jersey, Street Smart Insurance had its start in wholesale insurance and in 2011 expanded its business to include retail operations and selling directly to consumers. This family-owned business initially served customers exclusively in New Jersey and is now licensed in eight states and provides the full range of insurance products from a number of carriers.

WHY .INSURANCE?

With the agency’s expansion to the retail market, Vice President Carlo Ferrara knew the opportunity to attract new customers and increase business was through marketing on the internet. To do this effectively they needed a strong brand. It was also in 2011, during the transition in the business, that Carlo recalled hearing about the planned expansion of internet extensions and thought there could be an opportunity for Street Smart Insurance to secure a “hip and cool name” and one more relevant to its brand. Carlo smartly set a Google alert to stay informed about the expansion and that’s how he learned about the availability of .INSURANCE and secured **STREETSMART.INSURANCE** so quickly.

Before securing the .INSURANCE domain name, the agency first used **STREETSMARTRISK.COM** and later moved to **SSINJ.COM**, which Carlo admits “didn’t just roll off the tongue.” Notwithstanding the challenge of simply saying the old domain name, Carlo commented that on the internet, “You really need to stand out. No one knows about you online so you really need a name or something so people will remember you.”

Carlo acknowledged that while branding was his primary reason for purchasing **STREETSMART.INSURANCE**, he also appreciated the verification that is done as part of the registration process. Agencies come and go in the insurance industry and there are some that continue to operate without properly maintaining their license. This is bad for customers and creates problems for agencies competing in the same market. With the upfront and routine organization re-verification process in .INSURANCE, it gives legitimate businesses a competitive marketing advantage and weeds out a “bad player’s” ability to secure domain names.

MIGRATION

As Carlo manages the technology requirements of the agency, he knew that a quick migration to **STREETSMART.INSURANCE** was the best way to take advantage of his investment. The move to the new domain involved a small team, Carlo and his brother Jake, and took just a few months before going live in



@fTLD_Registry

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October 2016. Carlo chose 101Domain for the registration of STREETSMART.INSURANCE and said they were very knowledgeable about the migration process and “held his hand” along the way. For hosting services Street Smart Insurance continues to use GoDaddy though they had to make some minor adjustments in the service to comply with fTLD’s Security Requirements.

Carlo decided to launch the agency’s new internet identity and email simultaneously so that users would immediately start seeing their .INSURANCE domain and not be confused with continuing use of the previous .COM address. At least for now, the old .COM domain name redirects to STREETSMART.INSURANCE to be sure online traffic and emails are not lost. As Street Smart Insurance customers are typically computer savvy, this has worked well and there were few questions or issues with the change. “It was a pretty easy conversion,” Carlo noted.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

With Carlo’s technical and internet expertise, he was able to work directly with 101Domain staff to identify the changes needed to the current website and email environments. As minimal changes were necessary to the agency’s hosting service, other than installing an SSL certificate, that transition was fairly straightforward, inclusive of redirecting existing .COM domains and email to the new STREETSMART.INSURANCE domain name.

With the agency’s use of Google for email and GoDaddy for hosting, most of the work that Carlo did was to coordinate with these vendors and 101Domain to step through the migration process.

There were initially a few issues with email and implementing fTLD’s authentication requirement that 101Domain helped resolve. Carlo also shared that some large technology service providers did not initially accept the STREETSMART.INSURANCE email address and their email campaign software had to add .INSURANCE to their supported domains but those issues have been resolved. Carlo anticipates the old email addresses and website will be retained for a transition period as they are now being redirected the new .INSURANCE domain name but that they would be dropped in the future.

MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

Street Smart Insurance has been taking an organic approach to sharing the news about STREETSMART.INSURANCE with customers and is informing its vendors as needed. Most customers have just accepted the new domain name without comment but the response from those that noticed it has been that it’s a neat name. A near-term project for the agency is to update its logo that will incorporate the new name and once that’s complete there will be a stepped-up effort to promote the new domain name.

Carlo noted that Street Smart Insurance will continue to build its digital marketing focus now that they have a long term “winner” with STREETSMART.INSURANCE. Collateral materials such as business cards and promotional items will be updated once the new logo is complete, though they are admittedly not as important given the agency’s focus of promoting its brand and services online.

One of the significant benefits of STREETSMART.INSURANCE is the clarity of the name. Carlo commented that having one domain is easy to manage and cuts down on potential customer confusion.

LESSONS LEARNED

The migration to STREETSMART.INSURANCE was a fairly straightforward process and working with knowledgeable services providers was important. When the agency learned that some customers and vendors were having issues with the new email address, 101Domain helped them quickly diagnose the issue and implement a solution to resolve it. Having the right support was critical for a quick response.

Overall, Carlo is pleased with how smoothly the transition process went and that there weren’t any significant issues. Carlo commented that having such a “powerful” domain name and the value of the branding opportunity far surpasses the acquisition and activation costs and emphasized, “If you are going to be a successful insurance agency these days, you need to have one of these domains!”

