

# Cashing in ON CLICKS

Reload Media is poised to roll out its successful business model abroad.

Jayne McIntyre writes

AS AUSTRALIA'S digital advertising spend continues to boom, Brisbane-based Reload Media is poised to roll out its successful business model abroad.

Founded in 2008 by Managing Director Llew Jury, Reload specialises in web strategies for big-name clients including the Queensland Government and Queensland University of Technology.

Jury previously owned one of Queensland's largest web design firms, Alfresco, which was sold to a company run by Australian businessman John Singleton.

After a forced absence from the industry, Jury got back into the game three years ago and took young entrepreneur Craig Somerville on board as Reload's first employee.

Somerville, 22, is the current general manager of Reload and was last year appointed as the newest director of Reload Consulting.

The business now has 35 staff internationally with offices in London, Auckland and Ahmedabad (India).

According to Somerville, who studied both business and marketing at the University of Queensland, the United Kingdom and New Zealand markets present promising opportunities for Reload in the coming year.

He says the plan is to apply the business model, which has already achieved success in Australia, in both these areas while the dollar remains strong.

## SERVICES

Reload provides high-quality search engine optimisation (SEO), internet marketing and web strategy services to a number of notable Queensland businesses. These include Subway, Devine Group, Andersons, Price Attack and Tangalooma Island Resort.

Somerville says small to large businesses



GENERAL MANAGER CRAIG SOMERVILLE

across various industries can benefit from the services of Reload, especially with today's advances in web technology.

"I think that a lot of the services we provide in terms of digital marketing is very much applicable to everyone who's got an opportunity to be connecting with customers or selling online," he says.

Somerville describes SEO as the organic component of Google, which is located on the left-hand side of the page and builds up over time.

Meanwhile, search engine marketing (SEM) is the paid side of search engines where businesses pay for placement among the sponsored links.

Reload Media is a Google AdWords Certified Partner, meaning it can put businesses in the best possible position to achieve results online. Its services also include detailed reports allowing clients to easily see and measure their online performance.

## FROM BRICKS TO CLICKS

So what makes a heightened web presence and top-end search ratings such an important aspect of business branding?

According to Somerville, "the first port of call for consumers looking for any sort of new product, new service, whatever it might be, is Google."

"They're going to Google and searching for the product. If you're not there and your competitors are, then you're not going to win the sale," he says.

While Yellow Pages and traditional advertising will always have a place as a business search tool, Somerville says their use is diminishing very rapidly as Google takes a lot of their marketshare.

He says another upside of web searches and social media is that it levels the playing field, and gives smaller businesses a fighting chance.

"Big businesses that are ignorant of what's happening online can easily be beaten by smaller, more web-savvy companies who get in early and make moves in the right areas, particularly in search engines," he says.

In order to stand out in the online world, Somerville says it is crucial to identify a target market.

It is then just a matter of actively targeting them through keywords and phrases.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

To tweet or not to tweet? That is question weighing on many businesses that want to connect with their customers across social media platforms.

While Somerville encourages this

grassroots level of interaction through mediums like Twitter or Facebook, he says it must be done for the right reasons.

"Probably the worst reason for getting into social media is 'because it's popular,'" he cautions.

The 'right' reasons include wanting to engage with customers, wanting to get feedback on products and services, and seeking consumer opinions.

However, he adds that businesses with an existing website do not necessarily need to get involved in social media.

If a business does decide to engage with social media, Somerville says it is important to have someone responsible for updates.

"It's just like installing another phone line. You can't leave it ringing," he says.

For something that was once seen as a teenage communication tool, Somerville says businesses are starting to spend up big on social media marketing.

"A lot of the recent figures are showing that about a quarter of Australian businesses are committing big marketing dollars to social media presences in the

next couple of years — in fact in the next 12 months," he says.

## GOING MOBILE

The combination of mobile and local is the next big thing in online marketing, according to Somerville. He says this technology would apply when you are walking down the street and use your phone to search for a nearby coffee shop or restaurant.

In order to keep up with this trend, Somerville advises businesses to make sure their website is visible on, and compatible with, mobile applications.

"Particularly if you're a localised business — like restaurants and coffee shops and hairdressers," he says.

COMPANY NAME: Reload Media  
YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2006  
HEAD OFFICE: Toowong  
PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY: SEO  
STAFF NUMBERS: 24  
2011 RANKING: 277  
2010 RANKING: 366

Web giant Google in particular is continuing to launch additional new products in this space.

"They've just rolled out one called Google Wallet, which is essentially going to be a way for you to ... pay for all your purchases using your mobile device in exactly the same way you would have a credit card," Somerville says.

## OUTLOOK

Reload's key focus for the coming year is to grow the UK and NZ markets.

"As their economies start to recover, we're well placed to be able to take a lot of that growth," Somerville says.

While there is a lot of activity abroad, Somerville says the Australian market is also continuing to grow at a "huge" rate.

In the long term, Somerville says Reload will have a presence in the Asian markets.

"What will be the big trend is when Google starts rolling out much more multi-lingual support for some of its new product innovations," he says. *Q*

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