

**Woodman's Of Essex- 2-3  
million pageviews, massive  
media attention, #2 for  
“lobsters”**

# From local restaurant to national media darling, how solid strategy reaps big results

## Case Study Background

On July 3, 1916, Lawrence “Chubby” Woodman invented the fried clam. Now, Woodman’s of Essex is a famous restaurant where people from all over the world come to enjoy New England lobsters, smell the salt air, and eat gluten-free fried clams.

Over the years, Woodman’s has become known for a number of other important services, such as catering, weddings, and functions. They also ship seafood and live lobsters across the country.

## The Challenge

In addition to having numerous service and product areas, there is also a second website for The Essex Room, which is a moderately-priced wedding location.

Each of these areas has their own seasonal considerations that we have to track and react to, such as:

- The peak season of the restaurant versus the shoulder and off-season
- The timing of when brides typically book weddings, in relation to Christmas, New Year’s and Valentine’s Day
- The New England backyard party and outdoor corporate event season

They are also a family business with dozens of employees with the last name Woodman (as well as non-Woodman relatives). Some of these employees directly interact with the company’s marketing and business growth.

They are one of our most wonderful customers of all times, but as a multi-generational advertising agency business owner myself, I’d be remiss to say family business situations add a little bit of extra spice when trying to get approval on new things like branding, web design, or content marketing.

# Marketing Strategy

Multiple strategies were implemented within this project, including:

1. Using public relations and coupons to drive customers into the store on a national level to grow the brand.
2. Positioning Maureen Woodman as the wedding whisperer, an expert wedding planner.
3. Understanding the interplay of referrals versus digital marketing for corporate catering.
4. Using competitive analysis to determine how “guy in a garage” companies shipping lobsters overnight are aggressively doing search engine optimization — and finding a way to compete in rankings and in price.

So, our idea is to break up the strategies into different groupings and use different ideas for each area. Some areas rely heavily on Google searches, and others on an amazingly designed website that captures the attention of a prospective client or customer. Some require hyper drill down paid search ads using landing pages, because of rising click costs in Google ads.

## Marketing Tactics

The marketing tactics vary depending on the product or service, but in general, we rely heavily on digital. The traditional ads they ran for thousands of dollars each resulted mostly in people acknowledging that they saw the ad, but did not convert to a sale.

1. **Branding** - We are continually working to stay true to a consistent brand message, color scheme and set of value propositions.
2. **SEO** - We handled multiple website redesigns and keyword optimization in areas such as ‘live lobsters’, ‘catering’, ‘wedding locations’, and ‘restaurants’.
3. **Content Marketing** - We produced podcasts and videos with customers, Maureen Woodman (as a wedding planner and corporate catering guide), elders of the family, the owners and founders (in relation to the trends in the seafood industry), demonstrations with the chef, as well as blogging. This content is often turned into Ebooks and infographics.
4. **Link Building** - We generated numerous link bait articles ranging from fun facts about seafood to roundups of North Shore businesses and vendors.
5. **PPC & Paid Advertising** - Google ads are proven to work in certain specific areas, and we dramatically refined and niched down our strategy so that we only use keywords that match our best offerings.
6. **Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO)** - Landing pages proved to be a significant part of increasing conversions, but we have conducted extensive user testing and heat mapping to improve the website.

7. **Email Marketing** - Ebook downloads and better calls-to-action for email marketing were used to substantially grow the list.
8. **Public Relations** - Building up to and during the 100th anniversary of the restaurant, we capitalized on this milestone. Rather than just relying on PR, we coupled it with our content marketing strategy to get even more out of it, including fantastic backlinks.
9. **Social Media** - We helped train their team to follow a consistent social media strategy. Content marketing is a part of this, but engaging with customers and following up quickly on any negative comments is an important part of the process.
10. **Referrals helped by online tactics** - Some of the personas we target, such as meeting planners, are not as likely to be focused on Google searching as they are checking out the Woodman's brand after talking to current customers. We make sure the website is ready for these visitors, as well as optimizing brand searches to have positive results.
11. **Design** - We recently redesigned their website after getting half a dozen years out of the first redesign. We also redesigned The Essex Room website and dramatically changed its ability to capture referrals and search results. We have done everything from occasional print ad design to infographics that get handed out while customers are waiting in line.
12. **Development** - We do all of the website development work and make sure they are trained on using the CMS system. We also make use of Hello Bar by Neil Patel, so they can easily make announcements on the top of the website without calling us or even using the more robust CMS system.

## Redesign Examples



# Results

We generated 2 - 3 million pageviews since 2012! Not bad for a local restaurant.

## Public Relations

Woodman's wrote a book on their family history and included a lot of recipes. We were able to leverage that and their 100th anniversary to get an incredible amount of media coverage.

Media examples:

- Forbes' FYI Magazine "Best Seafood in America"
- Phantom Gourmet
- NESN
- CBS Boston
- Vogue
- The Wall Street Journal
- The New York Times
- Boston Globe
- Boston Herald
- Gloucester Times
- Salem Evening News
- Yankee Magazine
- USA Today
- Gourmet Magazine
- Coastal Living Magazine
- Better Homes and Gardens
- Boston Magazine
- Cape Ann Magazine
- North Shore Magazine
- This Old House
- Celiac Corner

# SEO

- We went from 281 keywords driving traffic to 8,462 keywords driving traffic
- SEO top 100 keyword ranking increased 2,911.39%
- SEO rankings include things like being #2 in Google for the single word “lobsters”
- Link building generated over 200,000 page views on our link assets

Brand Searches in 2019 are growing as well.

‘Woodman’s’ 49,500 (though not all them)

‘Woodman’s essex’ 2,400

‘Woodman’s of essex’ 1,300

‘Woodman’s essex ma’ 880

‘Woodman’s essex hours’ 2,400

The key is to build on what we learned in our wins along the way. We focus 80% of our efforts on the most important tactics, while lightly keeping up with the tactics that do not have as much of a clear return on investment.

