

Kelley Blue Book Launches Phase I of Redesigned Web Site

No. 1 Automotive Information Site Maintains Leadership by Going From Clutter to Clarity

Today, Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com reveals its new face to the world. (www.kbb.com/beforeandafter) A comprehensive redesign of the home page and several subsequent pages brings clarity to the No. 1 visited automotive information site(1) making it significantly more user friendly. With the Internet impacting nearly half of all vehicle pricing and make/model decisions among car buyers(2), changes were made to help car buyers more easily find information they are looking for during their vehicle research and decision process.

Additional changes on the all new home page were made to highlight many of Kelley Blue Book's popular offerings outside of used car values, including new car pricing, Kelley Blue Book's 'New Car Blue Book Value,' which tells car buyers what a new car is actually selling for today and Quick Links allowing site visitors to quickly access many of the tools and information shoppers have come to expect from kbb.com. The new design also conveys the heritage, trusted brand and 78 year history behind Kelley Blue Book.

Other noticeable changes include a new global navigation bar across the top of the page. The original 22-link navigation along the left side of the page has been reduced to six simple tabs across the top. Additional pages will be overhauled in a 5-phase process expected to reach completion within the next 12 months.

It Takes a Village

To rebuild and redesign what was already the top automotive information site Kelley Blue Book involved more than 550 online car shoppers, four outside agencies, numerous vehicle manufacturers and their respective interactive ad agencies. In total, the company collaborated with more than 650 people.

"Kelley Blue Book went above and beyond what we typically experience, in that their creative team met with our team in Detroit multiple times to understand what General Motors is trying to accomplish in conjunction with their site redesign," said Curt Hecht, senior vice president and managing director at GM Planworks. "The process was a team effort which should prove beneficial for both companies."

Nine months ago Kelley Blue Book began preparing for the Web site redesign by revamping and restructuring its ad buys. As 2003's No. 1 automotive site for advertising among automakers(3) it was crucial the company work closely with those that will be affected by the change. Without hindering the users' experience on kbb.com, Kelley Blue Book was able to develop a design allowing for better ad placement and the ability for vehicle manufacturers to convey their messages effectively to in-market car buyers.

"With one out of every two online car buyers visiting kbb.com before they purchase a car(4), we have always helped in-market car buyers quickly get the information they need to facilitate the transaction," said Stephen Henson, executive vice president, sales and marketing. "But with the new design, beginning with the home page, we've replaced some clutter with clarity."

Crucial to the process was the input of in-market car-buyers. Focus groups were coordinated with the help of Lieberman Research Worldwide, a market research firm, bringing together car buyers to provide feedback on usability and proposed design. Through focus groups and online quantitative analysis from Vividence, Kelley Blue Book was able to touch more than 550 car buyers to determine how it was they were using the site and what the company could do to make it more intuitive. Long Beach based firm, The Designory, incorporated the learnings from all of the outside sources to create a visually appealing, easy to use home page.

"Everyone we talked to has an incredible amount of trust in the Blue Book brand, but the site as it was, did not convey that trust," said Chris Conn, Director of Web site Content for Kelley Blue Book. "We worked very hard to ensure that we heard from users, partners and advertisers during the redesign process to address that issue. After five rounds of research, four sets of meetings with manufacturers and several strategy sessions, we truly have the beginnings of a site that will be better for everyone."

In the next phase of the redesign, site visitors can expect to see many of the tools they have used on kbb.com for years get a fresh new look including Kelley Blue Book's new car configurator or 'build a car' tool, 'The Perfect Car Finder' recommendation tool, side-by-side comparison tool in which a researcher can compare up to four new or used vehicles and the new and used car pricing paths. More rich content will also be added to the site in the next phase bringing easy-to-print new car reviews, safety information, additional vehicle photos and car buying and selling advice and more.

About Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com)

Kelley Blue Book is the only vehicle information resource trusted by both consumers and the auto industry, providing research tools and up-to-date pricing on thousands of new and used vehicles, including the company's New Car Blue Book Value, which reveals what a new car is actually selling for. Since 1926, car buyers and sellers have relied upon Kelley Blue Book for authoritative and unbiased information to make well-informed automotive decisions. The company reports vehicle prices and values via products and services including the famous Blue Book Official Guide™, software and Internet site, kbb.com. Kbb.com has been rated the No. 1 automotive information site by Nielsen//NetRatings as well as No. 1 and first visited automotive site by J.D. Power and Associates five years running. No other medium reaches more in-market car buyers than kbb.com; one in every four American car buyers complete their research on kbb.com.

- (1) Based Nielsen//NetRatings site visitation data for 2003 and J.D. Power and Associates New AutoShopper.com Studies 1998 - 2003.
- (2) J.D. 2003 Power and Associates New AutoShopper.com Study
- (3) According to TNS Media Intelligence/CMR as reported by Automotive News March 29, 2004
- (4) J.D. 2003 Power and Associates New AutoShopper.com Study

SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

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