Innovative Stock Photography Brand Moves to Scalable, High-ROI Growth Strategy

"*Single Grain significantly increased our customer acquisition volume month-over-month. It has a lot to do with their approach to experimentation and scale - their integrated testing strategy makes them world class. By leaning on Single Grain as a strategic partner and an extension of our team, we get more time to focus on refining our product.*"

Micah Cohen
VP Growth
Twenty20

Twenty20 knew it possessed a key differentiator from other entrants in the marketplace, yet subscription revenue growth was stagnant due to reliance on an inconsistent sales process.

Could a radical commitment to only using digital marketing help Twenty20 break into the mainstream of brand designers?

Free-Trial Volume
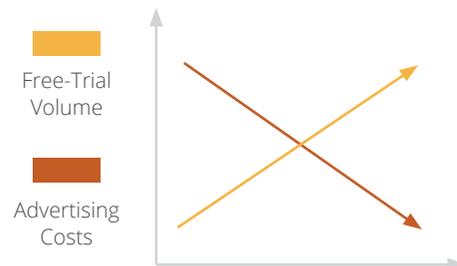
Advertising Costs

Free trial volume grew exponentially, while advertising costs shrank.

Results with Single Grain

403%

403% increase in overall web traffic

16.42x

16.42x growth in MQL volume (exceedings the best results of internal sales team).

72.49%

72.49% decrease in cost per MQL

Before Single Grain: Awesome Idea, Inconsistent Sales & Lack of Brand Recognition

- What if stock photos weren't cheesy?
- Could authentic, user-generated stock photos actually help brands tell their story more compellingly than a series of smiling men in suits giving a "thumbs up" to the camera?
- Could amateur submissions beat out professional stock photography?

The answer was a resounding "yes" -- but to get from their brand mission to a successful company took time, effort, and ingenuity.

With Single Grain: Focus on Scalable, Consistent Digital Marketing Results

Twenty20's partnership with digital marketing agency Single Grain began in 2016. Their mission: to overcome barriers to growth. Key challenges to overcome were the reliance on in-house sales and the competition for attention in a crowded field of digital design resources.

Both parties agreed on "Work smarter, not harder" as the ethos that would pilot the best route to success.

They set to work: Single Grain designed a customized all-digital solution to marketing that united the brand recognition boosting powers of social media advertising with the compelling "value right now" urgency of search engine marketing.

Unburdened from the pressures of cold-calling and account-based marketing, Twenty20 could focus their attention on the pillars that truly differentiate them from their competitors: a refreshing message of authenticity in content marketing, and technical excellence applied to on-site CRO and split-testing.

As Twenty20 successfully crossed the proverbial chasm with an accelerated rate of growth, Single Grain was positioned with a unique capacity to help them shine even brighter.

Single Grain soon implemented a revised Alpha-Beta-Gamma campaign structure better geared at cost-effectively snatching inventory from enterprise competitors like Shutterstock and Getty Images.

As a Google Premier Partner, Single Grain teamed up with special engineering resources from Google Labs to transform Twenty20's marketing analytics model to a complete closed-loop conversion attribution system capable of connecting clicks to sales across multiple channels, devices, and architectures.

Twenty20 - located in Venice Beach, CA - is an innovative new player disrupting the crowded stock visual media space with a revolutionary twist on a tried-and-true business model:

Sharing Twenty20's enthusiasm for aggressive experimentation, Single Grain expanded into social advertising channels. 28 ad variants and 20 audience segments were tested across Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook. Segments with a propensity to engage with Twenty20's brand were identified, engaged and then driven to take action.

Single Grain's methodical test and expand strategy dramatically increased the volume of MQLs from paid channels without sacrificing cost efficiency. Now, Twenty20 is a formidable brand in the stock photography market, with a contributor network of over 300,000 photographers and an asset library of over 55M images.

Single Grain's Solutions

- Test and expand approach, which was used to identify cost-efficiency and achieve scale across multiple channels, segments and creative.
- Alpha-Beta-Gamma SEM campaign structure. Leverages high, medium, and low relevance keywords to optimize return on investment in experimental market segments.
- Competitor-specific customer journey map with contextual ads, landing pages, and promise of value. Prospects are proven more likely to enter new funnels or re-engage with existing material if they interact with branded content that anticipates their needs.
- Renovation of conversion attribution model to select fewer but more meaningful customer interactions as critical success metric informing optimization decisions. Due to the highly customized nature of Twenty20's platform, it had been difficult to optimize for interactions that indicated a prospect was close to converting to a paying customer. Under Single Grain's new attribution model, prospects enrolling in a free fixed-duration service trial were defined as the goal KPI against which advertising investment could be optimized.

While the strength of Twenty20's product offering ensured a healthy per-visit-value, scaling overall traffic had been a challenge. After Single Grain's efforts, Twenty20 consistently received more traffic volume with the same consistency in revenue per session.

Single Grain successfully **reduced advertising costs eating into product margins** by efficiently broadcasting to prospects more likely to opt for a free fixed-length trial.

Usually, improvement in cost-efficiency is countered by a decrease in volume. Not the case here! Twenty20's **free trial user volume grew while advertising costs shrank.**