

Fusionbox: Denver Interactive Agency

A Featured Article from the [Denver Business Journal](#)

Fusionbox Builds Sites To Be Found

by [Katherine Michalske](#)

Google has become so popular it's widely accepted as a verb in common speech. What do you do when you need to know the 36th U.S. president? Google it. So, if web users turn to Google to find what they want, shouldn't that be the first thing web designers consider when creating a site?

[Fusionbox](#), a web design and development company based in Denver, thinks this is exactly what it should be doing for its clients. "How are people going to find you? We build all that search engine friendliness into the site from the beginning of the process," said Ivy Hastings, who has been director of business development for Fusionbox since 2003. "A lot of customers and companies make the mistake of launching a site and then considering search engines. That's a big [SEO](#) mistake," Hastings said.

Fusionbox took one client's web site from page five on a Google search to the first listing by changing the HTML code, said Alexander Groth, president and programmer at Fusionbox. Everything on the site stayed the same, including the wording. The team at Fusionbox just cleaned up the code used by search engines to rank sites.

This approach to [web design](#) has helped drive Fusionbox's annual revenue from \$64,271 in 2004 to \$403,910 in two years. "A big part of why people hire us is the search-engine results. That's the programming side. Other companies don't always create a search-engine-friendly design," Groth said.

The company has two programmers and one designer -- a unique composition in the digital-marketing industry. "A lot of companies are mostly designers and one programmer," Hastings said, "but more and more, our clients want tools; they want it to be easy to update."

Fusionbox set up one of its clients, [Saint John's Cathedral](#), with a site the church could manage itself. Church volunteers have edited and added content to 100 pages for three years -- all on their own.

While the company's profits have grown exponentially since it was incorporated in 2002, Groth has kept the size fairly small. Fusionbox began as a three-person team: a programmer, a designer and a project manager. Today there are just four more employees, bringing the total to seven.

"This is a very deliberate slow growth. We want to keep up the quality and the attention. When you get too big, you lose some of that," Hastings said.

"There's also the case of the market -- competitors go through big hiring stages, and then they lose a client and have to let people go," she said. Both Groth and Hastings have witnessed a company go under first-hand, adding to their caution as the company grows.

The two started out at Across Media Networks, a cable company later bought by Adelphia Communications. The company crashed in a financial scandal, leaving Groth and Hastings jobless.

Groth started getting Fusionbox together in 2000, keeping in mind what he had observed from his time with Across Media, he said.

"The company was just hemorrhaging money away," Groth said. "We were spending \$20 million on software, and we had nothing." The company was trying to modify software into third-part software solutions, an expensive method that produced less than desirable results.

Fusionbox uses all open-source software instead of using closed-system software with big brand names. It also reuses object-oriented programming techniques, a way to build modules without starting from scratch each time. "We try to strip away stuff that clients don't need, and find easier ways for them to do things," Hastings said.

Fusionbox encourages clients to think outside of the Flash intro, which is costly, doesn't help with search engines, and most users skip anyway, Hastings said. "We don't want to be the kind of company that is suggesting a bunch of stuff the client doesn't understand and doesn't need," Hastings said.

During Fusionbox's rapid period of growth, the company has helped many of Denver's inner-city youth on their own way to success. Fusionbox works with [Arts Street](#), a non-profit organization mentoring kids with web design and web development. It hires interns from the program and helps with its web site.

The youth are "incredibly creative, bright and talented, but they don't know what's out there for them," Hastings said.

No. 5 - Small companies

Fusionbox

President: Alexander Groth

Location: Denver

Industry: Interactive Agency

Web site: <http://seo.fusionbox.com>

Phone: 303.952.7490

No. of employees: 7

Revenue growth: From \$64,271 to \$403,910; 528 percent

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