

MAKE GOOGLE YOUR EMPLOYEE

BY PATRICK RYAN

Cutting Through the Slop

My Dad, Bill Ryan, started [The Stove Shop](#) alongside my grandfather, Ted Ryan, in 1977. I'm fortunate to own The Stove Shop now. My number one job is to make The Stove Shop the best hearth shop to work at in the country. After that, I add value by getting more customers in the door. My marketing degree from Penn State and background in digital advertising over the past 15 years help me think of our small business differently. I'm deeply passionate about marketing strategy and love to think of new ways to benefit our business.

The Stove Shop has grown quite a bit in the past five years, and there's no indication of any slow-down. I attribute this growth to our world-class team, top-notch reputation, and unique advertising strategies.

My grandfather started selling Vermont Castings in 1979. He wrote letters to Stephen Morris for two years appealing to become the first dealer of Vermont Castings wood stoves in Pennsylvania. My Pop believed it was our job to sell only the best products in the industry. "Customers deal with

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enough low-quality junk in their lives," he said. "A wood stove must be reliable!" In my Pop's mind, he saw our role as a guide for the community, one who kept folks away from low-quality slop.

In 2026, slop is still our enemy. Poorly written, out-of-touch information hurts our industry in particular because many folks don't know what they're talking about outside of the hearth industry. We don't always have the resources to set the record straight. Inexperienced insight confuses the customer and points them to the wrong solution for their home. There's infinite bad information from AI-generated articles, and it will only get worse. It's a battle of education!

"THINK OF GOOGLE ADS AS PAYROLL INSTEAD OF ADVERTISING IN THE SENSE THAT YOU'RE EMPLOYING ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE COMPANIES TO WORK ON YOUR BEHALF 24/7."

Creating Quality Information

So how can you cut through the slop? You can write educational resources to change the AI overview on Google. You can put out information that is straight from your human brain. No AI influence at all. Just you writing what you know. Videos can have the same impact. Trevor from [Embers Fireplace](#) is a fantastic example. He clearly incorporates the Alex Hormozi philosophy that inspires so much of my work: "Figure out what you want. Ignore the opinions of others. Do so much volume that it would be unreasonable to be unsuccessful."

We have written over [80 blog posts on our website](#) that drive traffic to us from all around the world. Believe it or not, Google wants the best information. It just doesn't always find it. Sometimes the best information just hasn't been created yet. Google rewards your website with higher placement if people actually click on your article and read it. The longer that person stays, the more of a reward you get in Google's eyes. This influence can extend beyond Google to other search algorithms and all of the AI chatbots as well.

Advertising in the Era of Slop

Our modern internet is filled with slop. Content, videos, podcasts, and more blind our customers from real solutions. The noise online is becoming louder than the actual solution, making looking for high-quality truth on Google a fool's errand. Be-

yond writing blog posts (organic content), you'll need to learn to advertise your business on Google Ads using a Performance Max account. If you are spending under \$100 daily in the burn season, you're wasting your money in my view.

Low-quality content is very difficult to combat, so Google decided to make advertising necessary. Advertising is seen as a quality indicator now, whereas in the past it was highlighted as almost a negative thing.

The days of small businesses hiring an outside firm to do their advertising need to end. You need to be the driver of your Google Ad strategy as the business owner. Here's why:

- 1. Spend More, Make More:** In the world of Google Ads, budget is king. If you have a middleman, your business suffers because your budget can never compete with someone who's doing it in-house.
- 2. Remember That Safe Installation Is Required:** Our business model is unique because we take on the liability of selling and installing fireplaces and stoves. Installing fire in homes on purpose makes us risk mitigation businesses that install fireplaces. Your expertise can't be properly communicated if you're playing whisper down the lane.
- 3. Leverage Your Knowledge:** Keywords, descriptions, images, videos, and more are important assets when designing your Google Ads campaign. If your manufacturers have pictures with people actually using the products, use them! (Pictures or time lapses of before and after installs completed by your own team work wonders.)
- 4. Increase Your Budget:** Google is one of the world's most valuable companies. They have all the data. They serve most of the ads online. Think of Google Ads as payroll instead of advertising in the sense that you're employing one of the world's most valuable companies to work on your behalf 24/7. If you want to learn more about what kind of budget is appropriate for your shop, shoot me an email at patrick@fireplaceexperts.com.

Getting Started

There's so much to this internet onion: Google Ads, AI, SEO, organic content, and more. In many cases, an article like this can feel overwhelming to the point of paralysis.

But don't get overwhelmed. You can do this! We have a wonderful industry of kind, smart people who love to be useful. I'm here to help over the spring and summer if you need help in the future. I love this industry, and I want to see business owners like myself succeed. It's always an honor to have a chance to share my ideas for the hearth industry.

Credit to Matt Reed from Barnhill Chimney for the inspiration behind this article.

**"BUT DON'T GET
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You don't want to miss what ICC will be doing in New Orleans at HPBExpo!



Manufacturer Training session: RSF Technical Training

- March 18, 12pm-2pm
- By Dan Bonar
- CEUs available



ICC's legendary Hospitality Event

- March 19, 6pm-10pm



For the first time EVER, we'll have a fireplace burning in the booth!

- March 19-21

Drop by booth 423 to find out more!