



Smart Financial Credit Union and V Digital Services Win AMA Houston Crystal Award for SEO Excellence

PHOENIX, AZ, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Smart Financial Credit Union](#) (SFCU) and its digital marketing agency partner, [V Digital Services](#), today announced they have been awarded the prestigious [AMA Houston Crystal Award](#) in the Digital Marketing category for SEO Excellence. The award recognizes the powerful impact of their data-driven organic search strategy, which delivered unprecedented growth in member acquisition and established a foundation for future AI-driven visibility.

The AMA Houston Crystal Awards celebrate excellence and the powerful impact of Houston's marketing community, elevating campaigns that drive business and community impact.

The winning submission detailed a strategic pivot executed in 2025 aimed at transforming SFCU's organic presence from passive traffic generation to actively driving high-intent business conversions. Facing a competitive digital banking landscape and evolving consumer search behaviors, SFCU and V Digital Services executed a full-funnel strategy combining deep technical SEO with a pioneering AI Engine Optimization (AEO) and content expansion plan.

Key elements of the award-winning strategy included:

Technical & UX Overhaul: Resolving 37 outstanding redirect issues to secure site health and refining sitewide Call-to-Action (CTA) placements.

AEO & Content Restructuring: Aggressively overhauling the "Smarter Life" educational content section and implementing robust schema markup to ensure content was easily discoverable and digestible by emerging AI models like ChatGPT and Gemini.

Hyper-Local SEO Optimization: Transitioning to dedicated, optimized landing pages for each branch and initiating a strict monthly Google Business Profile content calendar to increase local market share.

Record-Breaking Results

The campaign was an overwhelming success, achieving triple-digit year-over-year (YoY) growth in targeted conversion metrics:

Organic Search became the #1 driver of digital growth, accounting for 51% of all website sessions and over 40% of all Key Events.

Member Acquisition ("Join" form submissions) skyrocketed by 606%.

Direct Engagement (phone call clicks) surged by 2,268%.

Organic traffic achieved a 137% YoY increase in total sessions.

The strategy successfully future-proofed the credit union's presence, with traffic specifically tracked from emerging AI chat tools like ChatGPT growing by 85% period-over-period.

"Winning the AMA Houston Crystal Award validates our commitment to digital innovation and our mission to serve our community with a 'Digital-First Banking, Rooted in Trust' approach," said Andrew Huang, Vice-President, Marketing at Smart Financial Credit Union. "Our partnership with V Digital Services allowed us to move beyond traditional SEO and establish organic search as a powerful, durable engine for new member acquisition and core business growth."

"This award is a testament to the fact that technical excellence and forward-thinking strategies, like AI Engine Optimization, deliver tangible ROI," said Stuart Folb, Chief Revenue Officer at V Digital Services. "We focused on measurable results, driving key events and boosting loan business, which led to unprecedented conversion growth for Smart Financial and proved the value of a comprehensive, conversion-focused SEO strategy."

About Smart Financial Credit Union

Smart Financial is one of the oldest and most trusted credit unions serving the greater Houston area having been formed in 1934 by Houston educators. Since its beginning, Smart Financial has grown into a strong Houston first financial institution serving more than 60,000 members. In today's modern financial landscape, Smart Financial offers members a robust digital banking experience and is committed to smart, efficient and useful digital expansions across its products and platforms. Smart Financial strives to provide a personal, human relationship with its members as they navigate their financial journey in today's digital world.

About V Digital Services

V Digital Services is the digital marketing agency on record that provided the award-winning SEO services for Smart Financial Credit Union. Their expertise covers full-funnel strategies, including SEO, content marketing, paid media, and innovative AI Engine Optimization.

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