



SLI Systems helps Interflora's online business blossom

Business problem:

Interflora's search wasn't delivering the level of accuracy customers were demanding.

Solution:

Interflora overhauled its site search and implemented SLI's learning Search.

Result:

An improved understanding of how customers use Interflora.co.uk, allowing Interflora to develop its merchandising and improve conversion rates.

Improved site search creates better shopping experience for customers

When a significant portion of your business comes from your online channel, it's essential to keep one step ahead of the competition, whilst making sure customers' shopping experience is as easy and pleasurable as possible. It is critical to understand how customers shop, the search terms they use and their journey through the site. This is the challenge that faced Interflora, as it does many online retailers.

Interflora was founded over 80 years ago and is now the world's largest and most recognised flower delivery network. It was an innovative service back in 1920, when two flower merchants transferred flower orders by telegraph. Today it continues to offer the latest services, allowing customers to order flowers and gifts how they want. Interflora has invested heavily in its online presence as more and more customers turn to the Web to place their orders.

Following an analysis of search metrics earlier this year, it became clear that Interflora's site search system wasn't delivering the level of accuracy or results which search savvy customers were demanding.

Ben Freeborn, Head of Channel Development at Interflora, explains: "The system we had in place worked for us as we grew our online business, but gave us very little control over search algorithms and also gave us limited information about customer search habits on the site. This made it extremely difficult to gauge our customers' requirements and make any necessary changes to the site. Eventually we realised that we needed to overhaul our site search."

"SLI Systems enables us to make improvements that make it easier to find goods, develop our merchandising capabilities and improve conversion."

*Ben Freeborn,
Head of Channel Development, Interflora.*



Interflora discovers search specialist

Interflora began exploring its options, including the possibility of developing its own tool to improve its search function and large-scale search tools. After careful examination of all the options and a feasibility study, the channel development team decided to implement Learning Search, a hosted site search solution from SLI Systems.

“When you’re developing an effective Web presence, it’s simply not a case of getting everything you need from one supplier - you have to work with specialists in specific disciplines, rather than generalists,” said Freeborn.

“If you think about our site like a racing car, you wouldn’t expect the engine technician to work on the aerodynamics, so why would we have our site designers building the search functionality?”

As well as SLI’s search expertise, the solution offered simple implementation and the ability to track customer journeys in greater detail which, as Freeborn explained, were their main areas of interest.

A simple integration leads to improved conversion rates

“We needed to ensure that we could track orders through from their source - whether that be from a newsletter or a Web search - to when the order is placed. This meant we needed to integrate SLI with a number of other systems, which was much easier than we imagined and has allowed us to improve the customer experience.”

The greater understanding of customers’ journeys through interflora.co.uk, combined with increased control of the search results, has improved conversion. Commonly visitors were also searching for customer service or delivery details, rather than actual products, which is often difficult to track in search applications. However, this was made simple with SLI Systems.



“Integrating SLI Systems was much easier than we imagined and allowed us to improve the customer experience”

*Ben Freeborn,
Head of Channel Development, Interflora.*



“We originally didn’t have products divided into sub-categories that would allow customers to refine their search by things like occasion or price point,” concluded Freeborn. “Having a much clearer understanding of how customers use the site on a day-to-day basis has enabled us to make improvements that make it easier to find goods, develop our merchandising capabilities and improve conversion.”

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