



SLI Systems helps Shore.co.uk surf the online business wave

Business problem:

The on-site search was frustrating customers resulting in the loss of potential sales

Solution:

SLI Systems Ecommerce Site Search and Merchandising solutions

Result:

Improved site wide conversion of 0.5 per cent and increased sales, with people who used search up to three times more likely to convert

Shore.co.uk discovers the power of site search

Allowing online customers access to a wider choice of products than they would get on the high street - and helping them to find the items they need - is at the heart of every successful e-commerce website.

This was the challenge for Shore.co.uk, a specialist surf and watersports retailer. As the popularity of its online shop grew, it needed a powerful site search feature that would allow customers to find the items they want as quickly as possible.

Founded in a hut in East Wittering, Sussex, in 1982, Shore has grown to be the UK's premier surf shop, providing services to its customers through its surf superstore and website - Shore.co.uk - which offers the widest range of surf fashion and hardware of any British company on the Web.

Since the very early days, Shore has been a pioneer. From spotting a niche for volume wetsuit sales at a time wetsuits were very hard to find, through to selling windsurfing kits by mail order and launching its first full mail order brochure in 1992, the company has been at the forefront of industry trends.

In 1996, Shore was one of the first companies to see the opportunities the Web had to offer and launched its first site. Since then, based on a philosophy of simplicity, the site has grown to offer more than 10,000 line items, and processes around 400 orders each day.

The appointment of Peter Youell as Web Development Manager marked the beginning of a new era for Shore.co.uk. Tasked with developing and improving the site, Youell began to look at each element in detail, as he explained:

“We have a reputation for service that is second to none, the biggest range of products in the UK and virtually all customer orders go out the same day. However, customers were finding it hard to find the products they wanted on the site - this came through from customers, via our ongoing customer feedback programme, as well as our staff, who often found it difficult to find items when they were responding to requests.”

“The Web is our major channel for growth - both in the UK and internationally - and at the heart of that growth is site search.”

Peter Youell

Web Development Manager, Shore.co.uk



Customer feedback indicated a need for improved site search

“Not only did the search capabilities frustrate people, it also meant that we were losing potential sales - even with top sellers like bikinis or boardshorts. If people searched for ‘bikini’, the search would return a range of items, but using ‘bikinis’ - which many people did - would return zero results. That simply couldn’t go on.”

As a result, one of Youell’s first tasks was to improve the website’s search function. The team looked at the range of products that were available and decided to trial Learning Search from SLI Systems. This was because it was a hosted service that had a range of measurement and analytical tools in addition to its powerful search capabilities.

Shore.co.uk sees instant benefits of SLI’s Learning Search

“SLI Systems offered a free 30-day trial, which allowed me to measure how a better site search would help improve the conversion rate and drive increased sales. The first thing we noticed was that we were selling a lot more extras - small things, like fin bolts,” said Youell.

As the trial continued, Shore.co.uk worked with SLI Systems to make changes to the site, such as moving the search bar up the page. As a result, over the course of the trial, the company saw an improved site-wide conversion of 0.5 per cent and increased sales, with people who used search up to three times more likely to convert.

“With the old search, we had the search bar at the bottom of the page,” said Youell. “On the suggestion of the team at SLI, we moved the search bar up the page. When we did that, we saw an immediate increase in sales as people were using the search function. Interestingly, those customers who used the search bar were more likely to convert to sales than those not using search.”

In addition to improving the site search, Shore.co.uk also began to use the results produced by Learning Search to improve its merchandising, using certain popular terms in banners and text. It has also begun using search results to create individual landing pages for other marketing initiatives.



“It’s amazing how powerful search within a website can be - not only does it make the difference as to whether people buy or not, it also influences what they buy.”

Peter Youell

Web Development Manager, Shore.co.uk

Site search is at the heart of Shore’s growth

The improved search also makes products easier to find - whether by manufacturer, product type or Web code - which has helped increase sales around flyers and promotions.

“It’s amazing how powerful search within a website can be - not only does it make the difference as to whether people buy or not, it also influences what they buy because it allows us to push certain products, as well as create cross and up-sell opportunities,” concluded Youell.

“Far from hiding the search bar, we now have it at the top of each page and want everyone to use it. The Web is our major channel for growth - both in the UK and internationally - and at the heart of that growth is site search.”

SITE SEARCH THAT LEARNS • MERCHANDISING • USER-GENERATED SEO

S.L.I. Systems, Inc.
20370 Town Center Lane
Suite 208
Cupertino, CA 95014
USA

US Toll Free: 866-240-2812

SLI Systems Ltd
Second Floor
65 Leonard Street
London, EC2A 4QS
United Kingdom

UK Free Phone: 0800-032-4783

S.L.I. Systems, Inc.
Level 10, BNZ Building
129 Hereford Street
Christchurch 8011
New Zealand

NZ Free Phone: 0800-754-797
Australia Phone: 1800-139-190



www.sli-systems.com

sales@sli-systems.com