



Tools To Boost Conversion

Third-party resources worth considering

By: Mitch Bettis

Wednesday, May 9th 2007

Most ebusiness owners can find ways to increase traffic to their site, but turning a visitor into a buyer remains an ongoing challenge. To get a visitor at your site to do what you want him/her to do - whether it is signing up for a newsletter, buying a product online or some other desired outcome - is a blend of art and science, and it's not easy. An ecommerce site with 6 to 9 percent of its visitors making purchases can be considered a success, according to conversion experts, but, unfortunately, the industry standard hovers around 1 to 2 percent. A retail site is frequently considered a success when its purchase conversion is in the high single digits, but for lead generation sites, numbers in the high teens are considered good. An average retail site is converting about 1 to 2 percent of visitors, and an average lead generation site is doing 5 to 6 percent.

Top Three Mistakes: Conversion

There are many things that can negatively impact the experience a visitor has at a website. To improve conversion, a merchant has to identify impediments and improve the customers shopping experience. Some things to avoid include:

1. Requiring customers to register. You should never require customers to register in order to checkout. Doing so will frequently cause massive abandonment from the order process. Customers simply do not want to register to make a purchase and checkout. Give customers the option to register or save their information at the very end of the process-not the beginning.
2. Not having or portraying a secure shopping environment. Customers want to be able to checkout in a secure environment. Having prominently-placed security logos on your site can help assure a shopper his personal data is safe in your hands. Security logos add a perceived level of credibility. The range of conversion improvement achieved through the use of security logos like

GeoTrust, Verisign and Hacker Safe fluctuates among ecommerce websites with average gains between 5 percent to 10 percent.

3. Not having clearly-defined exchange policies. Another common reason why people are gun-shy about an ecommerce transaction is they do not feel they are going to get easy return and exchange policies.

Keep in mind that meaningful conversion data is difficult to attain because sites offer such distinctive products and services, and many companies define conversion so differently. How can you calculate a purchase conversion rate? It's simple. Using your site's analytics package, locate the number of unique visitors during a given period and divide that by the number of sales transactions during the same period. If you are 2 percent or less, the good news is that you have plenty of room to grow your business. Improving conversion requires plenty of testing and analysis of the entire shopping experience a merchant's site provides - its site's usability, message, content, pay-per-click keywords, landing pages, checkout process and more. The number of tools to help improve conversion rates has grown as more firms study ways to convert more visitors into customers. There are a variety of tools that can help impact conversion, and the list below isn't meant to be comprehensive. In addition, before making a wholehearted leap to add any third-party solution, you should do plenty of testing to ensure it will respond well to your market.

Some tools to consider are:

UserVue

UserVue is a web-based service that lets you remotely observe and record users' actions as they navigate your website. It allows you to see what your shoppers are doing at your site, perform user testing, conduct user research and collect design feedback.

Second Bite

Second Bite is a solution designed to recover revenue lost to shopping cart abandonment. Using automated email messages and phone calls from customer service agents, Second Bite reaches out to shoppers who have abandoned their cart and encourages them to complete their purchases. Second Bite is offered on a performance basis - which means that you pay only when we are able to recover sales for you.

Secure-eBill

Secure-eBill is an online payment service owned by MODASolutions Corp. It allows consumers to shop online without credit cards and without releasing personal or financial information over the Internet. Online shoppers are simply emailed an e-Bill from a merchant where the shopper made a purchase and the shopper pays for the product through the security of his/her online checking account through the bill-paying service at his/her local bank.

Vertster

Vertster offers a suite of testing tools to enable you to maximize response rates from your site. Testing capabilities range from simple A/B split testing to more advanced Taguchi Multivariate tests.