



Closer connections with customers are generating greater sales leads for Ciena

Business problem:

Improve customer engagement and lead generation through improved site search and analytics

Solution:

Integration of SLI Systems Learning Search and Site Champion with Omniture SiteCatalyst

Result:

Increased leads for sales pipeline - 18.5 percent of visitors who used site search registered and downloaded files; whereas 4 percent of visitors who did not use site search downloaded files

Ciena Measures Lead Generation Efforts with SLI Systems and Omniture

Ciena, a network infrastructure provider based in Linthicum, MD, relies on its website for lead generation to fill its sales pipeline. The company provides extensive educational materials on its site - items like whitepapers, product data sheets, videos and webinars - all designed to capture visitors' contact information when they download any documents.

However, if site visitors can't easily find the product information they need, they don't have the opportunity to register or download collateral - which means fewer leads for the pipeline. This was the situation faced by Ciena previously, when the company was using another vendor for its site search solution. Their previous vendor's offering did not offer the fast and intuitive search or reporting capabilities that the company needed - and as a result, Ciena had a difficult time understanding how effective the search tool was in driving more leads, explained Cory Reed, Ciena's manager of web marketing.

"We didn't have visibility into how our visitors were moving through the site once they conducted a search," said Reed. "We couldn't see what they were doing after they left the search results page, and we weren't confident that they were finding useful information to download."

Adding to the problem was the fact that their previous site search couldn't integrate with any type of analytics solution, such as Omniture, which Ciena had begun using to gather other website metrics. Because of this lack of integration, Reed and his team couldn't determine how relevant each visitor's search experience was. "The reporting tools were almost non-existent," said Reed. "The site search wasn't tied into analytics, which meant we couldn't see the downstream conversion effects."

The web marketing team also found it difficult to prepare new web pages to turn up in search results. "We had to do a lot of special coding to get the site search engine to pick up any changes in the pages," said Reed. "There was no automation. We had to create custom HTML pages to ensure the pages would be visible in search results. It was time-consuming work."

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Cory Reed

Managing of Web Marketing, Ciena.



Marrying Robust Site Search with Analytics

Reed knew that he needed to find a site search solution that would deliver robust analytics and would easily integrate with Ciena's chosen analytics solution. "The most important thing for us was engagement - making sure the site search connected visitors to the information they needed and improved the user experience," said Reed. "We also wanted intelligence in our search results. We wanted it to be smart enough to know what visitors wanted."

Reed also wanted a site search that would allow for customization and changes on the fly. "Before, the search page wasn't visually appealing - and there was no flexibility on design," Reed said. "We wanted to be able to change the layout and design of search results, and to promote webpages as needed."

Ciena's web marketing team decided to conduct one-month trials with SLI Systems, as well as with another search vendor.

Ciena tested SLI's Learning Search and Site Champion products. Learning Search provides hosted site search that "learns" from visitor search behavior, improving the relevance of search results. The complementary Site Champion creates webpages that are optimized for search engines, based on the most common search terms used by site visitors.

It quickly became clear that SLI offered all the benefits that Ciena required. "We saw that users were more likely to engage with our site search when we started using SLI," Reed said. "Now, they're not only using search, they're more engaged during their visits."

The implementation of Learning Search and Site Champion, said Reed, "couldn't have been easier. There was just a simple chunk of code that our developers had to place in the page headers. It was little more than a flip of a switch." Learning Search also integrated quickly with the Omniture solution, as the SLI team simply added the appropriate code to track search activity in Omniture.

Registrations and Downloads Rise

With the integration of SLI's Learning Search and Site Champion with Omniture in place, Ciena has experienced marked improvement in online visitor engagement. Using metrics from Omniture, Reed is able to demonstrate the value that SLI brings to the search experience, and therefore to the company's lead-generation efforts.

According to Omniture data, in the second half of 2009, 18.5 percent of online visitors who used site search went on to download one or more files, compared to just 4 percent of visitors who entered the site via the home page, and who did not use site search.

Search engine-optimized pages created by Site Champion have proven to be particularly effective at drawing traffic from web search engines to the Ciena site. "These pages have become the number-one entryway to our site," said Reed. "We've tied 7,000 downloads and 800 registrations directly to these pages. And those registrations go straight into our sales lead funnel."

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Reed places high value on the information gleaned from Learning Search. "The learning feature helps us determine how site visitors search, and how we can make that process easier for them," Reed said. "We're not just telling our visitors what to see - we're learning what they want to see, and what keywords they're using. Any web initiative now has data to back it up."

SLI's attention to service also helps vault the company ahead of other site search vendors, Reed said. "We're not a huge company, but SLI responds to our needs immediately and makes us feel important," he said. "We're continually amazed that SLI has offered us so many extra services. We often do updates to our navigational structure, and SLI can implement these in just a day or two. And we can throw any design changes at SLI, and they can execute on it."

That support, said Reed, has helped Ciena achieve the improved results in terms of lead generation. "I can't stress enough how easy it is to work with SLI - everyone from the account executives to the developers," Reed said. "SLI, coupled with Omniture, has become our partner in finding new ways to connect potential customers to our site's content."

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