

**Business problem:**

Cruiser Customizing's previous site search solution didn't help convert visitors into sales

Solution:

SLI's hosted Ecommerce Site Search and User-generated SEO service

Result:

People who conduct keyword searches converted at three times the rate of people who don't
Customers who use the site search spend more than three times as much per visit as those who don't

Cruiser Customizing triples conversion and spending rate of site search users vs. non-site search users across 5 e-commerce sites

"We take motorcycles - and the people who ride them - very seriously. Which is why we knew we needed to make search a much better function on our site," said Tammie McKenzie, marketing director for motorcycle parts and accessories e-retailer Cruiser Customizing. "We have nearly 200,000 registered users across our five e-commerce sites, all of whom expect an 'easy ride' when they're shopping online. Our previous site search was a disaster on many levels, and we knew we needed something better."

Cruiser Customizing has 20,000 motorcycle parts and accessories listed across its five distinct e-commerce sites: CruiserCustomizing.com, RealHog.com, GoldWingCountry.com, RideGear.com and DollarRider.com. The company is constantly adding new items to its inventory, and as McKenzie explained, they had challenges with getting new products indexed in a timely manner by the previous site search solution.

"We would conduct searches ourselves and noticed that new items weren't showing up in search results where they should have - which caused major problems for us," she said. "We lost a lot of revenue because of this, and our previous vendor's responsiveness was extremely slow - we sometimes wouldn't get an answer to a request for almost a week. I joined the company in the fall of 2008, and it didn't take me long to realize our site search was broken and we desperately needed something different."

In addition to the technical difficulties and lack of responsiveness by the previous site search vendor's customer service team, McKenzie noted that the solution required someone at Cruiser Customizing to manually configure the order of search results - which posed additional challenges since the company has limited IT resources. Additionally, it lacked the level of customization and cutting-edge features they needed to provide an optimal online experience for their customers.

A quickly deployed, customizable solution

McKenzie began her hunt for a better site search soon after she joined the company. After researching the top vendors, she narrowed her list to three: Endeca, Mercado and SLI Systems. "SLI was leagues ahead of the others we talked to and quickly became our number one choice," she said. "They had an impressive prototype of our search up and running within 24 hours of our first meeting and demonstrated high-quality, relevant search results. We were also drawn to the fact that they offer a hosted solution which requires almost no maintenance on our end - and we had it functional on our site in no time at all with very little effort."

"With SLI Systems, we have had nothing but great results and excellent customer service."

*Tammie McKenzie
Marketing Director, Cruiser Customizing*



According to McKenzie, people who visit one of Cruiser Customizing's sites can now search with part numbers, singular or plural terms and even mis-spelled words, and SLI's Learning Search will deliver the right results. "This not only generates higher sales and conversions for the company - but a better online experience for our customers."

McKenzie and her team were also excited by the level of customization SLI offered. For example, the search provider created a "Tire Finder" that appears on the home page of all of Cruiser's sites, allowing shoppers to find the right tire based on variables like measurements, make and model of their motorcycle, front or rear tire and other criteria. The results are served up by SLI and demonstrate the power of the technology's "learning" - the results that come back are ranked in order of the most click-throughs for previous searches with similar criteria.

SLI also powers a gift finder which shows up on each site's home page and is included in weekly emails sent to Cruiser Customizing customers. The gift finder shows recommended products for men and women, as well as by manufacturer, model and various other elements - all based on search activity on the various sites.

Visitor terms drive natural traffic

"Another innovative feature SLI provides is the ability to remember a customer's bike make and model, so when they're searching for parts and accessories they don't have to enter the information each time they come to the site," said McKenzie. With SLI's make and model memory, users can enter the type of motorcycle they own when first conducting a search - and the results will show only items that match their type of bike. If someone says they own a Honda Magna, for example, they won't see products designed for a Harley Davidson. "People can change their make and model any time, but they don't have to re-enter the same information each time they search our site."

Cruiser Customizing is also using Learning Search's complementary Site Champion user-generated SEO product to draw more traffic to its site - currently about 13,000 unique visitors per month. Site Champion creates optimized landing pages that include "Related Search" terms that help these pages achieve higher ranking in natural Web searches on Google, Yahoo! and other search engines. When web searchers click on one of these Site Champion-generated links in the search engines, they are taken to the Site Champion landing page on Cruiser Customizing - rather than a generic home page - which results in higher conversions.

"With SLI Systems, we have had nothing but great results and excellent customer service - which means our customers are more loyal, and they're more likely to recommend us to their friends," she said.

"We have found a tremendous partner in SLI, and every one of us at the company goes to sleep at night knowing our e-commerce sites are in good hands."

Tammie McKenzie

Marketing Director, Cruiser Customizing

Reving up sales and conversions

Now that Cruiser Customizing is using SLI, the company is seeing dramatic results that are having a direct impact on the company's bottom line. For example, people who use the site search at CruiserCustomizing.com are converting at nearly triple the rate of those who don't search. Also, people who use the site search spend on average \$5.14 per visit, whereas people who don't search spend only a fraction of that amount, or \$1.42 per visit.

Also, people who search spend more time on the site and view more pages - more than 11 minutes and nearly 20 page views per visit, compared to under five minutes and less than nine page views for non-site search users. Additionally, the bounce rate for site search users vs. non-site search users is 11.5% vs. 35%. Overall, site search users account for about 54% of Cruiser Customizing's revenue, and non-site search users account for roughly 46%.

McKenzie plans to integrate SLI's site search into Cruiser Customizing's community site (<http://community.cruisercustomizing.com>), an online community with more than 40,000 active members - which gains 150 new members daily. "Our company started as a community site to connect bikers with one another and give them a way to get reviews and other useful information from others about motorcycles and gear," said McKenzie. "We have more metric cruiser user reviews than any other site out there, and as we continue to grow, we want to make sure content on the community site and our e-commerce sites is accessible from both places. Based on our experiences with SLI so far, we're certain this next step will have even more positive outcomes.

"Working with SLI Systems has certainly helped our business, and we should continue to see even stronger results as the learning improves over time," she continued. "But even more than that, we have found a tremendous partner in SLI, and every one of us at the company goes to sleep at night knowing our e-commerce sites are in good hands. The SLI team responds to our requests almost immediately and we've never given them a task they couldn't handle."

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