



Overview

Headquarters: Mt. Kisco, New York

Industry: Retail

Contact Center: In-house

Website: www.wineenthusiast.com

Customer Profile

Founded in 1979, Wine Enthusiast Companies is the world's number one source for wine accessories, storage, information, education, events and travel. Started as a direct mail business, Wine Enthusiast has published over 300 million catalogs. Today the company markets its products via direct mail, multiple internet sites and retail stores across the US.

Business Situation

Wine Enthusiast Catalog needed a way to help online shoppers learn more about its higher end products and help the company increase sales, without increasing costs.

Solution

- InstantService InstantInvite® chat solution

Benefits

- Increases web sales
- Enhances customer satisfaction
- Provides productivity tools for staff
- Generates new sales leads

Wine Enthusiast Engages Customers With Proactive Chat and Sees Online Sales Climb

“Our proactive chat solution helps us generate more sales leads and conversions than ever before. And, customers tell us they appreciate the personalized service, which reinforces our belief that it’s a must-have solution for us.”

Ryan Spadaccini, Online Merchandising Manager at Wine Enthusiast Catalog

Over the last 30 years, Wine Enthusiast has prospered along with the world’s ever-expanding love affair with wine, offering quality wine accessories—including wine racking, cooling systems, and storage products—to help consumers fully enjoy their wine “experiences.” As an innovator in multi-channel marketing, the company deployed proactive chat to help its team of experts better educate consumers as they shopped its online catalog. In turn, the company has seen an increase in sales and continued high satisfaction with the service, and the company.

Business Needs

It’s a well-known fact that wine consumption in the U.S. is at an all-time high. Experts attribute the increase to a variety of factors, including intensified interest in wine’s potential health benefits, a growing awareness of wine’s compatibility with food, and rising disposable incomes.

Rationales aside, the trend is indisputable. And, with a thirst for wine comes an associated thirst for products and more knowledge.

With a solid commitment to “making wine a fun and affordable part” of consumer’s lives, Wine Enthusiast has capitalized on this growing interest, serving the industry with wine-related products for 30 years.

Building off a strong and successful direct mail business, the company launched its online catalog – www.wineenthusiast.com – in 1996.

Shortly after its debut, the company saw a unique sales environment emerge. It was becoming clear that Wine Enthusiast’s web

customers needed specialized attention when it came to purchasing higher-priced specialty items, such as custom racking and cellar design.

“These are very high end purchases,” said Ryan Spadaccini, Online Merchandising Manager at Wine Enthusiast. “Helping shoppers understand why they need a wine cooling unit in the first place needs to happen early on in the sales process, or they may make an unfortunate decision – one that could cause their finest wines to not reach their optimum potential.”

While phone and email services were already mainstays at the company, the multichannel retailer knew it needed a different tool to help customers in pre-sales mode. For Wine Enthusiast, the solution was to equip their ‘wine cellar specialists’ with a proactive chat solution.

Solution

After reviewing several industry solutions, Spadaccini and his team selected the InstantService Instant Invite® solution. “Not only did InstantService offer the most advanced reporting capabilities and a wealth of best practices knowledge, but also the best pricing for our situation,” Spadaccini said.

The Seattle-based SaaS provider’s reputation was also factor in the decision. “InstantService customer references were exceptional, each speaking volumes about the level of service,” adds Spadaccini.

Now when shoppers linger on certain pages in the web catalog, they are invited to engage with a wine specialist to learn more about the products.

“For some of our customers, it’s time consuming or challenging to digest paragraphs of text about certain products and features. Our customers tell us it’s a much better way to learn -- and a more enjoyable experience --

when they have a personal conversation with a wine expert who shares their passion about wine, and who addresses their personal concerns and questions.”

In addition to strategic placement and well-timed triggers for InstantInvite chats, the company has also nailed the best practice of using expert personnel.

According to Spadaccini, specialists go through intensive product training before they assist customers. These representatives have first-hand experience building cellars, assembling racking systems, as well as a great knowledge of wine “so the advice they give is top-notch quality.”

After a chat dialog ends, the InstantService solution automatically sends the consumer a quick 5-question survey to gauge their experience with the interaction. “The post-chat automated survey was the other clincher for us. Having continual customer feedback allows us to keep our finger on the pulse of customer satisfaction.”

Benefits

Sell more products, faster

Linking the use of proactive chat to increased sales didn’t take long. “We knew right off the bat that those who chatted with our experts were more apt to purchase,” Spadaccini said. In fact, he reports that the conversion rate for those who chat is twice the rate of those who don’t engage with a Wine Enthusiast expert.

Increased satisfaction, repeat purchases

With their long history of helping customers navigate the complexities of the wine world and over 1400 product offerings, delivering a great shopping experience is paramount to Wine Enthusiast. “Our customers rely on our advice. It’s what separates us from the other sites out there,” adds Spadaccini.

The customer surveys reinforce this philosophy. Since they’ve launched the chat solution, customer satisfaction ratings have been consistently “very positive,” averaging 4.3 on a scale of 5.

“Most customers tell us how much they appreciated the service, and we know that it leads to more sales. What’s better than happy customers and increased sales? With these results, we know InstantService’s chat solution will be part of our web strategy long into the future.”

InstantService, Inc.

InstantService, Inc. is a leading SaaS provider of customer communication technologies for online businesses and contact centers. InstantService offers an integrated suite of live chat, email management, knowledge base, web site analytics and lead capture solutions to increase sales and enhance customer service. InstantService’s hosted software application easily integrates with existing ecommerce and CRM systems, facilitating valuable relationships between companies and their customers - the first step of customer relationship management.

To learn more about InstantService, visit <http://www.instant-service.com> to chat with a representative.

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