



 american BRIDAL

## Helping brides find wedding favors & bridal party gifts since 1997

### The Results:

Revenue per site visitor increased by 400%

Revenue from searches increased from 3% to 9%

### Bridal Retailer Boosts Revenue Per Site Visitor by 400% with SLI Systems

Like any online seller, American Bridal ([www.americanbridal.com](http://www.americanbridal.com)), a San Francisco-based wedding favors retailer, must make it easy for Web site customers to quickly find the products they seek. Yet this requirement can be a challenge for companies that do not have the internal resources necessary to monitor how people are searching and what products they're clicking on. Compounding the challenge for American Bridal in particular is the sheer volume of products available: at any moment, there are more than 2,000 items for sale, ranging from wedding cameras to personalized chocolate bars.

With some 2 million page views a month, American Bridal is a success, selling online and by phone – but the company needs to keep site visitors happy in order to remain a top player. “It’s a very competitive industry – everyone and their uncle is in the wedding favor business,” says Shirley Tan, president and CEO of the West Coast company.

### Online Shoppers Demand Relevant Searches

Such a bewildering array of products demands an efficient way to guide site visitors through the process of finding just the right decorations and favors for their big day. “We need to provide the tools so they can make these decisions without frustration or confusion,” says Tan. “Research is the key to good wedding planning. When shoppers come to our site and find products they love, they’ll buy more from us.”

Obviously, the quality of the search experience affects shoppers’ ability to find and buy products. Previously, American Bridal was using the default search product packaged with its e-commerce platform. This search solution was not providing the relevant search results that Web site users expect – which Tan believes prevented shoppers from finding the right items, and spending more time shopping on the site.

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***Shirley Tan, President and CEO  
American Bridal***

 **SLI SYSTEMS**  
Search, Learn & Improve



“The search tool is crucial,” explains Tan. “For instance, someone might be searching for personalized coasters. The original search product we had would provide links that didn’t have anything to do with our products – like articles with the word ‘coasters’.”

This lack of relevance frustrated American Bridal’s customers, as well as its customer service reps, who also made heavy use of the search function so they could provide quick answers to people shopping by phone. If the reps couldn’t find a product within a few seconds, they risked losing a sale.

“Someone might call us about a certain product they had seen on the site, but couldn’t remember how to find it,” says Tan. “If they didn’t have an item number, my own people often couldn’t find the product either. We were having difficulty giving our customers the best possible service.”

### Learning Search to the Rescue

Tan decided she needed a search solution that would be cost-effective, easy to bring on board, and wouldn’t tax the company’s IT resources – and of course, would provide the relevant responses sought by shoppers. American Bridal decided to do a free trial of SLI Systems’ Learning Search solution, which continually “learns” from past site search activity in order to deliver more relevant results to site visitors.

In addition, American Bridal tested SLI Systems’ Site Champion solution for automated search engine optimization (SEO). After the free trial, the company implemented the two products as its chosen search solutions in mid-2006.

Within just a few months, Learning Search brought about a dramatic improvement in revenue generated from searches. Over the past six months revenue per site visitor has increased 400%, while the percent of total revenue from searches has increased from 3% to 9%. In addition, because American Bridal is using the Site Champion SEO offering, the site is seeing more new visitors each month thanks to these new pages ranking for relevant search terms on search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN.

“Since Learning Search and Site Champion are fully managed and hosted, we don’t have to worry about maintaining the solution,” says Tan. “And whenever we’ve had a question or needed to further tailor the product, SLI Systems has been extremely responsive. We don’t have to think about search – we can just go about serving our customers.”

### Learning Search Encourages Buying Decisions

SLI Systems’ Learning Search is able to achieve significant revenue improvements like these because it continually tracks visitors’ aggregate search terms and the corresponding items clicked on, and uses that data to deliver results based on popularity. For example, if a visitor to American Bridal searches for “wedding guestbooks,” Learning Search automatically ranks the results so that those with historically higher click-rates are listed at the top.

In addition, Learning Search offers several features that make it easier for online shoppers to find the products they need, and to make buying decisions. Learning Search also shows how many products exist and in what categories, and gives visitors the option to sort the results by ascending or descending prices, or filter by category. Search results can include pictures, graphics and links (for example, a “buy” button beside products). Learning Search also presents spelling suggestions when people enter mis-spelled words, and can allow people to browse via multiple paths, such as manufacturers or size.

“Learning Search has become a great sales qualifier,” says Tan. “As soon as people find what they want, they can buy it, and then move on to other searches for the wedding supplies they need.”

#### 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

 **SLI SYSTEMS**  
Search, Learn & Improve  
[www.sli-systems.com](http://www.sli-systems.com)  
[sales@sli-systems.com](mailto:sales@sli-systems.com)