



Jelly Belly tastes sweet success by personalizing the online shopping experience through best-of-breed technologies from SLI Systems, MyBuys and PowerReviews

Business problem:

Jelly Belly's e-commerce site wasn't providing a personalized experience for its loyal clientele and new customers

Solution:

Integration of SLI Systems Site Search and User-generated SEO, MyBuys Web Recommendations and Personalized Email Alerts, and PowerReviews Customer Reviews

Result:

- Site conversions increase by 33%
- Average order value by 10%
- Email alerts experience 85% better open rate than industry standard
- 18% of site visitors participate in web recommendations
- More than 1,000 customer reviews added in less than 60 days

A growing online business calls for a more personalized shopping experience

Jelly Belly Candy Company has been delighting candy lovers with its gourmet jelly beans and candies for more than 140 years. More recently, the Internet has become an important sales channel for the company, which makes over 75 flavors of Jelly Belly jelly beans and over 100 other candies such as gummies, licorice, chocolates and holiday sweets.

When Jelly Belly decided to re-launch its website in late 2008, the company was dedicated to maintaining its long-standing reputation for excellent customer service. "We wanted our customers to quickly and easily find what they were looking for on our site, and to feel like the shopping experience was personalized just for them," explained Jason Marrone, E-commerce Marketing Manager for Jelly Belly.

Jelly Belly's previous e-commerce platform lacked the search and personalization functionality the company needed for its site to prosper. Search was one of the first areas the company focused on, as its former site search solution did not allow customers to locate products and information in all of the ways they wanted to - whether by typing keywords into the search box or navigating through the pages on the site.

Site Search prompts 33% increase in conversions, 10% increase in average order size

Jelly Belly selected Learning Search and Site Champion from SLI Systems, a provider of intelligent, on-demand search services for Internet and e-commerce sites. Since implementing SLI's site search, conversions have grown nearly one-third, average orders have increased 10 percent, and Jelly Belly has boosted its visibility on major search engines - a combination that helps the candy retailer's bottom line.

Marrone considered six site search vendors before choosing SLI Systems. "SLI offered superior technology, the price was right, and they could easily integrate with partner technologies like MyBuys and PowerReviews to provide an even more unique, customized experience for our customers," he said. "SLI also offered more sophisticated merchandising tools, such as the ability to add jelly bean color swatches to search results."

Data from Learning Search has also helped Jelly Belly make product decisions based on search requests from site visitors. "We used to offer only a 10-pound bulk case of our Champagne Bubbles candy," Marrone said. "Using information from Learning Search, we discovered that Champagne Bubbles candy had become the third most-requested search. We decided to offer a one-pound container - and it's now one of our biggest sellers with wedding planners."

Personalized email alerts prompt 85% better open rate than industry standard, while 18% of site visitors purchase Web recommendations

In addition to providing a seamless site search experience for its customers, Jelly Belly turned to SLI Systems partner, MyBuys, to provide personalization services for its web-based customers. Through MyBuys Web Recommendations - showcasing products that customers might be interested in based on a current behavior and/or past purchase, as well as customized Personalized email Alerts based on customer preference, Jelly Belly has seen its email conversion rate jump 85% higher than the industry standard and prompted close to 20% of visitors to take action on web recommendations.

“When we first started working with MyBuys, our intention was to implement the personalized email alerts, but only post web recommendations on certain pages of our site,” said Marrone. “Because of our success working with MyBuys, we have now implemented recommendations on our home page, as well as throughout SLI’s SEO-optimized pages. Additionally, the prompting from MyBuys has resulted in requests for email alerts from customers, so we are sending out more email communications than expected, which is having a positive effect on our sales.”

Thousands of customer reviews provide a more streamlined e-commerce experience

Another important element of the Jelly Belly online shopping experience is its use of user-generated reviews. Marrone knew that reviews were an integral part of shopping research for its customers, and that they would feel more comfortable making purchasing decisions after seeing input from their peers. In addition, reviews prompt the ongoing creation of useful, relevant content, which helps with web site optimization and better natural search engine rankings. He turned to PowerReviews, a partner of both SLI and MyBuys to provide Jelly Belly site-goers with the confidence needed to complete more e-commerce transactions.

Working with PowerReviews Customer Reviews, preferred by consumers 2-to-1 over traditional reviews, Jelly Belly has been able to add more than 1,000 user reviews in less than 60 days, which has provided the company a greater level of credibility with its customers, and has contributed to an increase in sales.

“Customer-generated product reviews provide a powerful way to keep people on our site longer, as they are able to do the research they need without looking elsewhere,” said Marrone. “In addition, we believe the reviews we have generated thus far are contributing to a more enjoyable online experience for our customers as they can quickly and easily find the products that are just right for them.”

Integrating information across applications sets the Jelly Belly experience apart

The ability for an e-commerce company, like Jelly Belly, to utilize the wealth of information gleaned through multiple channels, such as on-site search, ratings and reviews and personal recommendation clicks, might just be considered the Holy Grail of marketing, as it provides immense opportunities for cross-selling, up-selling and building solid customer relationships.

“We knew that to accomplish the lofty goals we had set for our e-commerce site, we were going to have to outsource some needs to a number of technology service providers to reduce the burden on our IT staff, while setting us apart in the minds of our customers,” said Marrone. “After uncovering the best-of-breed technology providers in site search, web recommendations and customer reviews, we were ecstatic to find that the three we chose - SLI Systems, MyBuys and PowerReviews - were partners and that their technologies could be easily integrated. This unique implementation allows us to offer a compelling shopping experience for our customers, to keep them coming back.”

SLI Systems and MyBuys are able to share information based on buyer preferences, as well as the ways shoppers are finding information on the Jelly Belly site - through keywords via the search box or page navigation. One way this is used is by adding MyBuys Web Recommendations throughout SLI search pages, so when a customer searches for a Jelly Belly product like, “Very Cherry,” the combined technologies take into consideration what the customer is looking for, as well as past purchases. That information is then captured and acted upon in real-time, providing recommendations of other products that specific customer might enjoy in addition to Very Cherry. Likewise, leveraging past visitor site search activities - the search terms they used and the items they clicked on most - MyBuys is integrating that information into each shopper’s profile so that Jelly Belly can send personalized email alerts, to show customers the best flavors and related products they are more likely to buy.

In addition, MyBuys is utilizing information from PowerReviews customer reviews to include in its email alerts, such as star ratings for each product recommended. MyBuys also sends out reminders to Jelly Belly customers post-purchase, asking them to fill out a review, along with other product recommendations based on their profiles. SLI Systems uses the information contained in the reviews PowerReviews generates by including ratings in search results. This means that searches can be weighted, based on the rating a product has received via a review and indexes the text contained in reviews to help with SEO efforts.

“We could not be more pleased with the results of working with SLI, MyBuys and PowerReviews,” stated Marrone. “We have implemented all three technologies on a level that is not typical, but goes beyond what many other customers have done. And, we’re happy to report that the project has gone off without a hitch. Our customers are happy, our sales are increasing and our website provides a more personalized shopping experience.”

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