



SITUATION

Instawares.com, a reseller of food service equipment and supplies, wanted to acquire new online business customers and looked to marketing programs such as comparison shopping engines (CSEs) to help. While few think of CSEs as a place to capture commercial interest, the company knew that commercial and consumer shoppers of restaurant supplies and equipment tend to be price sensitive, so advertising on CSEs could be a prime opportunity for the company to expand its online presence.



CHALLENGES

The company's initial foray into CSEs went well, bringing more orders and sales. This signaled to Instawares that there would be opportunities to enhance the program even more. Next, the company saw improved results by targeting product selection, but determining which products to advertise on which CSE was time intensive, in part due to the commercial aspect of the products sold. Another limitation that Instawares faced was the need to access separate reports from each CSE in addition to its own site analytics program to try to measure performance.



"We had a small marketing staff and just didn't have the bandwidth to devote the time needed to effectively grow our CSE program and accurately measure the performance," stated Elaine Reed, e-Commerce Marketing Manager with Instawares.

SOLUTION

Instawares started searching for a vendor to take over management of its CSE program in the summer of 2007. The company came across Channel Intelligence (CI) in the Internet Retailer Top 500 guide. Working with a top vendor that held extensive expertise in shopping channel management was a priority for Instawares, and CI was the ideal partner to take the program to its full potential.



Instawares is an e-Commerce company selling foodservice equipment and supplies to commercial and consumer markets. Founded in October 2002, Instawares has become one of the leading foodservice suppliers in North America through tremendous growth and deep market penetration. Instawares distributes more than 215,000 products from over 300 vendors through a unique platform that caters to national, regional and independent accounts.



"Instawares would definitely recommend CI to anyone looking to improve their CSE program. Our SMC is great and continually looks for other areas in which CI can help us excel."

- Elaine Reed
e-Commerce Marketing
Manager
Instawares.com



KEY RESULTS

As Managed Services customer, Instawares works with a Strategic Marketing Consultant (SMC), who manages all aspects of the day-to-day tasks for its CSE program. While lead generation and new customer acquisition remained the key goals, with the help of CI the company also looked to build its name recognition and reputation. To this effect, the improved accuracy of the product data appearing on each CSE helps provide a positive brand experience. Clicks and sales are driven from each CSE with the placement of products where shoppers expect to find them, complete with image, product name, description, and price.

Once product placement was improved, Instawares and its SMC scheduled weekly calls to discuss performance results from each CSE. The company lets the SMC know of promotions and which products are hot sellers on Instawares.com to coordinate its marketing on the CSEs.

The coordination and efforts to manage even the tiniest details of its CSE program have paid off. **December 2008 CSE sales surpassed the forecast for instawares.com.**

Instawares.com Performance in Comparison Shopping Engines

Time Period	% of Revenue Goal Achieved
Q2 2008	102%
Q3 2008	110%
Q4 2008	104%

"With CI's expertise we have seen a steady increase year-over-year in traffic and sales from CSEs," adds Bruce Brown CEO of Instawares. "As well, we have enjoyed a significant uplift in market share and brand recognition of Instawares.com through the dedication and hard work from our SMC. He's been a real asset to our internal marketing team."

In addition, CI's Pixel Manager has helped Instawares collect valuable data to improve customer confidence and overall conversion rates by ensuring the correct customer satisfaction survey was rendered on the right CSE at the right time, a program the company had been unable to implement on its own. Pixel Manager has also helped ensure accuracy in its affiliate network payments by assigning the correct party credit for each sale, avoiding double billing.

NEXT STEPS

Instawares has found that the CSE program managed by CI regularly exceeds its goals. Due to its resounding success, the company also asked CI to manage CSE programs for its other properties InstaOffice.com, SuiteSupply.com and BrightShine.com. The CI and Instawares partnership is entering its second year and is expected to continue and grow for many years to come.

