unilog

Strong site search lets your e-commerce customers pave the way to your success

*Search engine optimization (SEO) helps **get** people to your e-commerce site, but only powerful internal site search will keep them **on** your site. Effective search functionality has an impact on the rate of conversion of search to sale: customers who use an onsite search box result in an average conversion rate of 2.4% against the 1.7% rate of customers who don't.* In short, your internal site search can prove to be a highly valuable resource for your e-commerce site.*

Unilog, a global technology and services company specializing in technology and product data management for e-commerce, knows just how important internal site search is for businesses. For over 15 years we have helped take B2B companies to the next level by offering powerful e-commerce solutions with proven results. If you're looking to take your website business up a notch, Unilog suggests you include these essential tools in your e-commerce arsenal.

Internal site search necessities
An internal site search involves much more than just a search box on your website. The search functionality must be intuitive, flexible, and useful for customers. There are specific "must-haves" for your e-commerce site search in order to keep your customers engaged:

1. Search bar visibility
If customers can't find a search bar on your site, they probably won't stick around for long. Search bars should be located near the top of the sidebar or header of each page of your website where they're clearly visible. Highlight the bar in some way to make it stand out from the rest of the site. Also, clearly identify that it is a search bar by including watermark text within the box and an accompanying search button or icon.

2. Top-notch search capabilities
Different customers can search in different ways for the same product, whether it's by brand, keyword, product name or even part number. Your site needs to be able to point customers to the product they want regardless of how they search for it.

*Source: Mycustomer.com

Increase your site's search vocabulary by making sure your search tools can interpret misspelled words, alternative words/synonyms, and even different orders of words so your customers get to the products they want. This requires some configuration effort on your part, but it pays off in better search experience for your users.

Provide search assistance by helping customers fill in search terms. This is huge. Known as auto-complete or type-ahead, this feature creates a list of suggestions when a customer enters a few characters into the search box. Not only does auto-complete speed up the search process, it helps avoid misspellings, and ensures your users find what they're looking for.
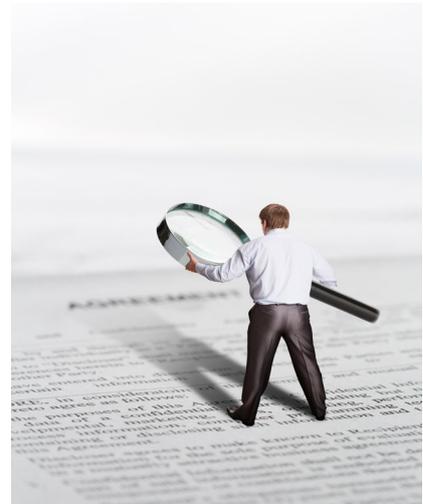
3. Helpful filters

Your users should also be able to refine their search results. With the ability to filter by, for instance, color, length, amperage, size, or manufacturer, people can find what they're looking for more quickly and easily. However, don't crowd your navigation with too many filters. Focus on those most used and most relevant to the product category.

4. Rich product content

Another way to help customers find your products is by offering detailed and informational descriptions. Many other companies – your competitors – are selling some of the same products as you; chances are you all have the same basic product descriptions and specifications, with little or no variation. In order to differentiate yourself from the competition, use descriptive, well-written, original content that contains relevant keywords. The benefits of having original and detailed product information are two-fold: your products will rank higher on search engines, and, customers will be more apt to make a purchasing decision when they have additional product information.

Very few companies take the time to enrich the product content on their e-commerce sites. It's a daunting task and hard to scale for large numbers of products. Unilog offers product catalog services that include data enrichment. Through research and sourcing, we can enhance the descriptions for your products AND the associated digital assets.

Reporting tools: the key to optimizing internal site search

Once you have integrated enhanced search capabilities into your site, you can start reaping the fruits of your labor by collecting and interpreting the data from your customer searches. This information will not only help you improve the content on your site, it will provide valuable insight as to how your customers search. In order to tap into this data, though, you'll need a robust search tool that includes reporting.

Some e-commerce platforms have comprehensive reporting tools built into their software. For example, Unilog's e-commerce software package, CIMM2, is a user-friendly web-based system that includes built-in reporting tools and custom analytics specifically for internal site search. These tools allow you to personalize and optimize your web content to ensure the most relevant and effective promotions are shown to each shopper at every stage of the shopping cycle.

Google Analytics offers a free basic reporting tool, as well as a premium service, to analyze customer segmentation and visitor behavior.

The rewards of reporting

The wealth of information you collect from site search reporting not only benefits you, it also helps your customers. Consider, for a minute, these four wins gained from internal site search reporting:

1. See through the eyes of your customers

By tracking how and what your customers are searching for on your site, you can improve findability and offer the most relevant results. If a specific product is being searched for or purchased the most, make sure it's ranked at the top of search results. An easy-to-find product is more likely to lead to a purchase.

2. Find missed opportunities

You may find that customers are searching on your site for a product that you don't carry. Consider selling the product, or, instead of showing a No results found page, display related products that may satisfy the customers' needs. There is a better chance of them making a purchase if they are shown a product than if they see a blank screen, even if it doesn't exactly match their search term.

3. Speed up time to conversion

Studies show the more intuitive a site search is, the greater the chance a visitor will make a purchase. If you're constantly monitoring customer search patterns, you can adjust your site search as needed to filter out underperforming products and bring customer preferences to the top of their search results.

4. Offer a better overall experience

If customers have a positive user experience, they're more likely to spend more time on your site, and come back for return visits. Use reporting from site search to help guide you in providing a memorable experience. As a result, you'll build customer loyalty and trust, and improve your brand.

Providing strong internal search on your e-commerce site doesn't come easy. But with the right search tools and reporting, you can learn exactly what your users want and meet their changing needs. Customers speak volumes, even when they just type a few words in a search box. It's time for you to listen!

Contact Unilog today to learn how we can implement an e-commerce platform and analytics to give your company the power to thrive on the Internet.

About Unilog / CIMM2

Unilog is a global technology and services company that specializes in e-commerce solutions and enriched product catalogs for the B2B marketplace. Unilog's flagship product, CIMM2, is a fully integrated e-commerce platform designed to fit the unique requirements of the wholesale distribution industry.

unilog

Schedule a
CIMM2 demo

DEMO

Receive an enriched
sample of your product

SAMPLE