
Using Live Chat to Increase Conversions

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Introduction

Many online retailers and other web-based businesses are suffering from a conundrum known as high-traffic, low-conversion. This truly challenging phenomenon occurs when enterprises are able to drive large amounts of traffic to a site, but are only able to convert on a very small percentage of it.

One prevalent theory as to the cause of this conundrum is that visitors are looking for a highly personalized experience, but find most sites offer a very generic experience.

How can site owners fix this problem? The answer is simple – engage the customer in a one-on-one conversation. Much like being greeted when walking into a store, a live chat window that pops up after arriving on a site can be a big part of the personalized experience today's online consumers are craving.

While some customers may choose to ignore the live chat window and continue shopping on their own, the customers that have questions or need help finding what they are looking for will most likely respond and begin a very personalized experience with your site via live chat.

Studies have shown that a personalized online experience leads to higher conversion rates and increased sales. For this reason, live chat should be a part of any customer service and experience strategy.



Live Chat Overcomes Common Enterprise Challenges

One Design For All Visitors

You can do your best to design your site and customer experience for every user, but there will always be users that need help finding what they are looking for, or just refuse to take the time to find it. By reaching out to each customer via live chat, you can quickly begin an interaction with these customers, keeping them engaged and guiding them throughout your site, and more importantly, to purchase.

Market Saturation

Think how difficult it would be to count the number of websites that sell socks. From brick-and-mortar retailers to big box warehouses to wholesalers to online-only specialty shops, you may find that thousands of other sites sell products and services similar to what you sell. Setting yourself apart from these competitors can be a daunting task. But, if your site is one of the few to offer live chat to visitors, you could find yourself rising from the crowd of competitors.

Customers Prefer Chat

One of the most surefire ways to succeed in business is to give your customers what they want. A recent survey from Forrester Research found that "Around 44% of online consumers say that having questions answered by a live person while in the middle of an online purchase is one of the most important features a website can offer." With each passing day, more and more consumers are going to expect the personalized experience chat provides.

Real-time Customer Expectations

Gone are the days when consumers would send away for something and wait four to six weeks to receive their purchase. Gone are the days when consumers are willing to even sit around and wait for you to return a phone call or an email. So much in the world today is real-time, and so are customer expectations. Customers expect to hit your site and find what they are looking for in an instant. If they have to ask you a question, they want an answer just as fast. Live chat can provide the perfect solution for meeting these real-time expectations.

Live Chat Offers Other Benefits, Too

Saves Money

Using live chat to support online customers reduces overall customer support costs. Live chat is instantaneous and very easy to implement. It's a quick software upload and appears right on the customer's screen. Live chat reduces the amount of calls into support lines and can often be handled quicker than phone calls.

Creates Conversation Records

Live chat provides your enterprise with a written record of your customer interactions. This gives critical insight into customer concerns and problem areas that can be targeted for improvement in future products and services.

Increases Conversions

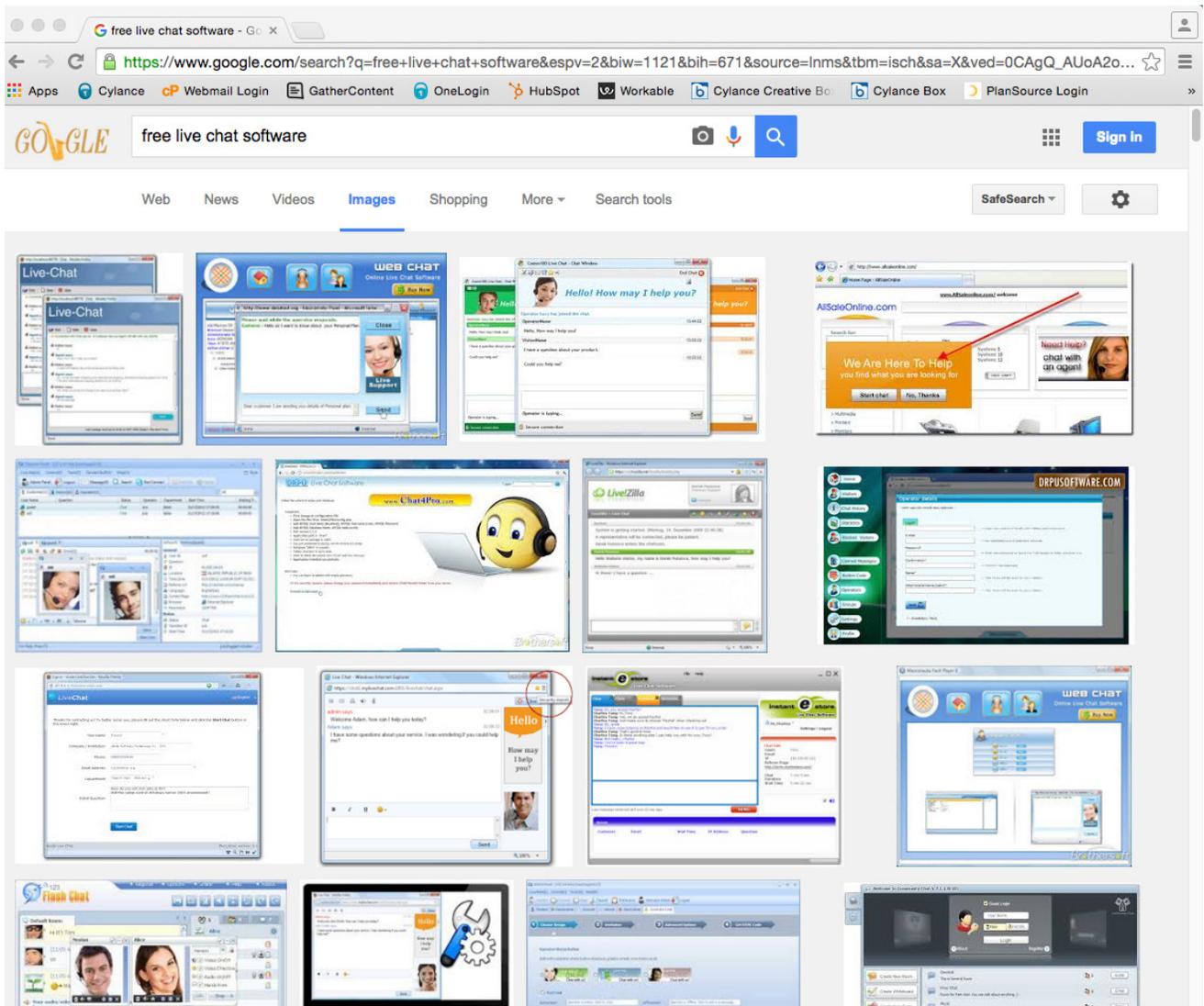
Live chat provides a better customer experience and puts you face-to-face with the customer, one-on-one, so you can guide them through the process of selecting what to buy. In addition, according to research from Sitepoint, the top reasons buyers abandon an online sale are often due to confusion at the checkout stage. With live chat, you can make sure to work with the customer through any confusion they may have at check out.



Getting Started

There are a number of reasonably priced chat solutions available for online retailers, many of which can plug seamlessly into your existing website architecture and customer relationship management systems. Some are completely self-contained and are so easy to use, they can simply be downloaded and engaged in a few minutes. Some are even free for smaller businesses that require just a few seats.

It is important to find a chat solution that is easy to install, easy to use and offers real value through an ability to track and analyze the consumer data obtained through chat. You'll most likely be able to find a viable solution through a Google search.



In Conclusion

Today's customers want answers quickly. They do not want to wait for an email response or a return phone call. Live chat is a smart way to ensure you are reaching out to customers to assist them with purchases on your site as well as a means to answer any questions they may have as quickly as possible. Live chat can help solve a number of common ecommerce challenges and provide a great deal of benefit to site owners, including increased conversions. It can be relatively easy and inexpensive to launch a live chat solution with just a little research.



About

William L. Savastano is a business professional and two time Society for Technical Communication Award Winner with over two decades of experience in the corporate arena. William trained extensively in advertising and marketing copywriting, technical writing, journalism, and both print and electronic publishing. William's body of work includes a large volume of marketing content, collateral materials, websites, operating manuals, technical manuals, as well as inclusion in national publications and a number of published poems and short stories.

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