

Customer service is everything when it's a face-to-face transaction.



CASE STUDY

CHALLENGE

TruServ wanted to provide its employees with instant access to product information so they could better serve the needs of their in-store customers.

SOLUTION

TruServ implemented EasyAsk's® advanced search and information-retrieval technology.

WHY EASYASK® SOFTWARE

With EasyAsk TruServ could leverage its existing infrastructure, and EasyAsk's search technology accesses both structured and unstructured content, ensuring employees find all their relevant and complementary information, regardless of its format.

BENEFIT

True Value employees are easily and quickly responding to the questions of its in-store consumer shoppers and turning them into satisfied and loyal buyers.

As a retailer, when you have shoppers in your brick-and-mortar store, it's imperative that the best customer service is available to them. After all, the "hot" customers are on site and could at any moment reach out for a product and buy it. The same level of service should be available in your online store. However, many need extra information before making that purchase. And if their questions aren't answered, you stand to lose a sale and potentially a long-term customer.

IMPROVING THE IN-STORE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

TruServ, one of the world's largest member-owned wholesale hardware cooperatives, includes approximately 6,100 independent retailer locations worldwide operating under the store identities of True Value, Grand Rental Station, Taylor Rental, Party Central, Home & Garden Showplace and Induserve Supply.

By implementing EasyAsk's advanced search and information retrieval technology, TruServ member businesses, including True Value Hardware, have instant access to products and product-related information from TruServ's 65,000 SKU catalog. As a result, True Value Hardware members can now offer their in-store customers higher levels of service due to the ability of retrieving specific information from its order-processing intranet.

Because of EasyAsk's superior linguistic processing and filtering capabilities, TruServ has eliminated null searches due to misspellings in queries or source databases. With EasyAsk, TruServ members offer real-time insight into product delivery, product backgrounds and, as needed, appropriate alternatives that meet customer needs. For instance, TrueValue employees are now able use their own chosen words in the intranet's search feature, such as "Find drill driver kits over \$200," and retrieve exact results (see Figure 1) that can be refined with images and attributes, such as specific manufacturer, price range, etc.

LEVERAGING AN EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Because of today's economic climate, organizations cannot afford to scrap their existing IT infrastructure and overhaul their websites, whether they are intranets, extranets or commerce based. Additionally, TruServ didn't want to waste time reformatting and "cleansing the data."

EasyAsk searches all types of data formats (i.e., structured and unstructured) no matter where the data resides (i.e., database, repository, data warehouse, etc.). Training time is minimal because TruServ's employees—the end users—simply type in their question, SKU number, manufacturer, etc., into the search feature.



Figure 1

BETTER SERVICE LEADS TO SATISFIED BUYERS

In addition to premium search and navigation features, EasyAsk enables TruServ to integrate merchandising and marketing programs into their intranet searches through a full-featured dashboard that incorporates search results analysis. EasyAsk allows TruServ to direct searches to items that are in stock as well as to present items in a specific order, for instance, lower-turn inventory or higher margin products.

Because TruServ has engaged EasyAsk's advanced search and information-retrieval technology, True Value employees are easily and quickly responding to the questions of its in-store consumer shoppers and turning them into satisfied and loyal buyers.

“TruServ is committed to providing the highest level of service to our members and their customers. Our order-processing intranet is a key point of contact with our members and, as such, an important component of our service commitment.”

— Eric Lane
Director of E-Business

ABOUT EASYASK SOFTWARE

Founded in 1994 by Dr. Larry Harris, a computational linguistics professor and internationally recognized expert on database systems and computerized natural language, EasyAsk provides the industry's most intuitive Website search, navigation and merchandising software.

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