



e-Commerce
Optimization Services

eSTARA CASE STUDY

Home Office Solutions

It's the thought that counts

Home Office Solutions, one of the largest online retailers specializing in high end office seating, provides expert pre-sales support with eStara Click to Call.

THE CHALLENGE:

When is a chair not just a chair?

Perhaps more than any other product, choosing the ideal desk chair is a uniquely personal decision. Subjective issues such as comfort, personal fit, and sense of style can be as important as price and quality. To win business, online retailer Home Office Solutions has to find the perfect fit for its customers, without the option of letting them "sit for themselves" in a showroom.

"We were not surprised to find our conversion rate for Click to Call customers was far higher than our Web-only shoppers. What did surprise us was that Click to Call customers not only had a larger average order, but converted at a much higher rate than even the customers who had dialed the phone to reach us!"

– Michi Kustra
Vice President, Marketing,
Home Office Solutions



THE SOLUTION:

Give them a lot to love

Home Office Solutions found a winning combination by offering top-drawer product support before the sale to "high touch" shoppers. Adopting eStara Click to Call proved a perfect fit, prompting shoppers to connect with HOS' expert product specialists, faster.

THE RESULT:

Boosting cart conversions & increasing profit

eStara Click to Call provided instant results, improving sales performance throughout the online shopping process, from search to shopping cart. In addition, the service has proved invaluable in delivering dead-on target reports to support follow-up telemarketing to unclosed prospects.

THE STORY:

To many, the office chair is nothing more than, well... a place to sit. And for them, models available through numerous discounters, costing as little as \$40, may be quite sufficient. Yet the simple chair also provides product designers with limitless challenges and opportunities for improvement. Matters such as comfort, durability, ergonomics and style have driven the creation of a stunning array of options. Available to those who want or need more from their chair, these choices can cost up to several thousand dollars or more.

“One of the biggest benefits of the technology is that it tells us exactly what the customer is shopping for. I can’t emphasize enough how important that’s been to us.” – Michi Kustra Vice President, Marketing, Home Office Solutions

Chicago-based Home Office Solutions caters to these high-end segments, through its store, catalog, and e-commerce operations. With a long history in traditional retailing, the introduction of Internet operations was a true turning point for the company, with 95 percent of revenues now captured through non-storefront channels. HOS currently operates three Internet brands: HomeOfficeSolutions.com, OfficeDesigns.com, and UltimateBackStore.com.

Speaking the language of style

For HOS, customer experience is the crown jewel of the realm. HOS serves affluent professionals such as lawyers, physicians, Wall Streeters, and architects – typically in mid-sized or home-based companies. These customers expect to be treated with extraordinary levels of attention.

“Home Office Solutions responds by providing best-in-class product expertise and customer care with a high-end boutique experience,” says HOS Vice President, Marketing, Michi Kustra.

The human interaction between product specialist and HOS customers is so important that all marketing efforts are designed to funnel shoppers toward contact with a product specialist.

Making the best even better

HOS’ decision to initiate a pilot project with ATG was serendipitous. Michi Kustra was doing her banking online, and the bank’s site offered a Click to Call option. Instantly the technology clicked for her as a natural for reaching HOS’ high-touch clientele. “It’s funny how much of a barrier simply picking up a telephone to make a call is to Web shoppers,” says Kustra. “Entering a phone number via one’s laptop is far more appealing – and that achieves our strategy of connecting customers to our product specialists during the shopping process. Our customers never have to move their hands from the mouse; the connection with our product specialists is instantaneous and personal.”

Next for Kustra was selling the idea internally, followed by evaluating alternatives. But for HOS, two factors made it crystal clear why ATG was the best way to go: product expertise, and high quality customer care. Says Kustra, “We fell in love with our ATG Account Rep, and

soon found that the entire ATG organization was on the same page as our company. Just like HOS, ATG builds its business on unbeatable customer care and product knowledge. This cultural match played an important role in our decision to incorporate ATG’s services, and we are thrilled that we did.”

Delivering the goods

While Home Office Solutions’ senior management was at first hesitant to even try a pilot project – why fix a phone sale & customer care service system that wasn’t “broken”? – the advantages of eStara Click to Call became clear immediately. From the first month of the trial, Click to Call demonstrated an impact on revenues and profits. “We found that people who requested a call were eager to talk. They were committed shoppers, usually with a specific question,” says Kustra.

“We were not surprised to find our conversion rate for Click to Call customers was far higher than our Web-only shoppers. What did surprise us was that Click to Call customers not only had a larger average order, but converted at a much higher rate than even the customers who had dialed the phone to reach us!” HOS has Click to Call prompts customized to the different sections of its sites: the prompts appearing on the search results pages are different from the ones that appear on product descriptions – which are different from those appearing in the shopping cart. While Click to Call drove a significant improvement in cart abandonment, Home Office Solutions found that their highest conversions rates originated from product catalog pages.

eStara Click to Call also provides additional marketing value. Reports of Click to Call customers who didn’t place an order can easily be prepared for outbound calling by product specialists. After-hours requests for Click to Call support are also an important marketing tool, enabling specialists to call customers the next morning. In both cases, the report captures the specifics of what page and product the customers were shopping. “One of the biggest benefits of the technology is that it tells us exactly what the customer is shopping for,” says Michi Kustra. “I can’t emphasize enough how important that’s been to us.”

about ATG

A trusted, global specialist in e-commerce, ATG has spent the last decade focused on helping the world’s premier brands maximize the success of their online businesses. The ATG Commerce application suite is the top-rated platform by industry analysts for powering highly personalized, efficient and effective e-commerce sites. The company’s platform-neutral e-commerce optimization services can be easily added to any Web site to increase conversions and reduce abandonment. These services include ATG Recommendations and eStara Connections. For more information, please visit <http://www.atg.com>.

