



Rejuvenating Online Bidding and Browsing Conversion Rates with SiteSpect's Multivariate Testing Solution

Results with SiteSpect:

- 429% increase in bidding activity
- 83% increase in catalog browsing activity
- 166% increase in individual item views
- 590% increase in opt-in registrations

Challenge:

Boost conversion rates to keep pace with growth of Skinner's overall site traffic and elevate the web's role as a significant source of revenue.

Solution:

SiteSpect enabled Skinner to focus on improving site areas that most significantly contribute to revenue-generating conversion. By running a series of SiteSpect test campaigns, Skinner learned which variations in web site content would result in the highest improvements to conversion rates.

Skinner Auctions, the renowned auctioneer and appraiser of antiques and fine art, launched its auction site SkinnerInc.com in 2000. Within a short period of time, the site was a great success – many of Skinner's existing clientele went online and embraced the new web-based auction format. But four years after the site's launch, Skinner realized that despite overall visitor growth, bidding conversion rates were actually declining.

Skinner's web marketing team took on the challenge to not only improve their site's lagging conversion rates, but to elevate the web channel as a significant contributor to the company's top line.

The team formulated a plan to experiment with the site's content, and learn which changes would positively influence conversion rates. Adding to their challenge, the SkinnerInc.com site was built with a third-party web catalog system, meaning that specific types of changes would require costly customization by the product vendor. The team had to be sure that the resulting improvements in conversion rates made up for the additional IT funds needed.

A bid for success.

Skinner brought in SiteSpect, the leading provider of non-intrusive multivariate and A/B testing solutions to help them meet the challenge of improving conversions. The combination of SiteSpect's technology and professional services helped Skinner identify website adjustments that significantly improved visitor engagement, boosted email newsletter enrollment, and increased the quantity and average value of auction bids.

Using SiteSpect, Skinner's web marketers ran a series of multivariate test campaigns to understand which elements were most influential in bidding conversion. The team tested variations in elements such as catalog page layout and messaging, individual item landing pages, and calls-to-action.

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Kerry Shrives,
Manager of Online Auction Operations, Skinner Auctions, Inc.

SiteSpect allowed Skinner to test variations in critical elements on their site, such as creative elements, event promotions, image sizes, copy, navigation and page layouts, without the need to make a single change to the underlying catalog auction system. With SiteSpect, Skinner was able to quantify the expected ROI of each variation, before embarking on expensive IT changes.

"SiteSpect enables us to create variations of our site content, test them, and measure impact on conversion rates – before we expend the effort and funds to make those changes to our baseline site," said Kerry Shrives, Manager of Online Auction Operations, Skinner Auctions, Inc. "To date, we've significantly boosted our bidding activity, self-service rates, and overall site quality based on insights gleaned through SiteSpect."

Using SiteSpect, Skinner was able to:

- Create and test site changes without having to modify their actual site.
- Run multiple test campaigns to optimize both dynamic and static site content.
- Improve key conversion rates such as bidding and frequency of return visits.

One of Skinner's most significant conversion factors turned out to be product image size. Testing a variety of image sizes revealed that enlarging images from 250 pixels to 350 pixels yielded a 429% boost to bidding conversions.

Shrives noted that Skinner also tested navigation changes to increase the time visitors spend on the site, resulting in a 40 percent increase in number of items viewed and a 22 percent increase in catalog downloads. As well, Skinner used SiteSpect to run tests designed to increase newsletter registration. These tests optimized the placement of sign-up links, copy, and buttons on the Skinner site and resulting in a 590 percent increase in opt-in registrations.

"Our testing revealed numerous opportunities for improving visitor engagement and conversion rates," Shrives commented in a recent interview with MultiChannel Merchant ("Little Tweaks Pay Big for Skinner Site," January 1, 2008). "The ability to test our hypotheses without involving IT resources has enabled us to make multivariate testing an essential part of our online strategy, helping us to grow our auction community and improve the success of our auctions. With SiteSpect's help, the changes we've made have had a very positive impact on our site's overall effectiveness."

About SiteSpect, Inc.

SiteSpect provides the industry's only non-intrusive multivariate testing and behavioral targeting solution, enabling web marketers to optimize their websites across any browser, including any mobile device. With SiteSpect, marketers enjoy unsurpassed speed and flexibility for optimizing all aspects of their site, without the need for ongoing IT involvement. SiteSpect's patent-pending technology and professional services are used by some of the world's leading online businesses, including Wal-Mart, Staples, Mozilla, Newegg, JCPenney, MTV, Cabela's, Overstock.com, VEGAS.com, iStockphoto, and Unitrin Insurance. For more information, visit www.SiteSpect.com or call 617-859-1900.

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