



SUPERIOR NUT COMPANY BOOSTS ONLINE SALES: TURNS “BROWSERS” INTO BUYERS WITH RATEPOINT

Growth Demands More Growth

Superior Nut Company got its start in the basement of a movie theater in Somerville, Massachusetts in 1929. Diversifying its product line and expanding its operations worldwide over the succeeding decades, the company is now housed in a modern four-story plant in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Today, Superior Nut Company provides a wide variety of nuts and specialty nut candies to businesses and consumers.

Despite Superior Nut Company’s accomplishments, no business, no matter how successful, can afford to rest on its laurels. So about six years ago, the company launched its online store – www.superiornutstore.com – to sell directly to consumers and businesses by using the Internet as a new channel.

According to Hicham Chraibi, manager of the online store, the site initially flourished. However, in order to maintain growth and attract new customers in the face of increasing competition, Chraibi knew he would have to employ a new online strategy. “We looked at advertising and other avenues, but nothing we were using was functional enough. We needed something that could put us directly in touch with our customers, and provide us with enough options so that we could connect quickly and efficiently with them, and really find out what they thought of us.”

Superior Nut Company Takes Control of Its Online Reputation

In August 2007, Chraibi was driving home from work when he heard about RatePoint on a local radio news program. He recalls, “The radio program described an online solution that would let us collect, manage, and promote customer reviews [of our products and services] – and improve consumer confidence and trust – all in a single, easy-to-use platform...I signed up the same day.”

Superior Nut Company has integrated the RatePoint platform into its online store environment, and as a result the company has been able to take control of and promote its online reputation to new prospects. In so doing, the company is better able to serve existing customers and convert more browsing prospects to buyers.

Driving Repeat Business: Winning Over the Unhappy Customer

The capacity to effectively stay on top of customer-satisfaction issues is essential to maintaining growth of online sales and eliminating the impact of negative customer experiences. Superior Nut Company regularly uses RatePoint to send out and track e-mails to customers that ask them to provide ratings and feedback.



Challenge: Superior Nut Company sought to increase sales on its e-commerce site by cultivating its existing satisfied customers, posting the positive reviews of these customers for new prospects to see, and gaining insight into the hidden needs of the company’s customer and prospect base.

Solution: Superior Nut Company met this challenge by employing the capabilities of RatePoint’s online reputation-management and customer feedback tools.

Results: During the period 2006-2007, Superior Nut Company’s Internet sales more than doubled. What’s more, with the addition of positive customer reviews to the e-commerce site, together with RatePoint’s moderated Dispute Resolution Process, more and more browsing prospects became buyers. In December 2006, for example, 6% of unique visitors to the online store were buyers. The following year, in December 2007, after implementing RatePoint, fully 9% of unique visitors to the online store were now buying: a growth rate of 50%.



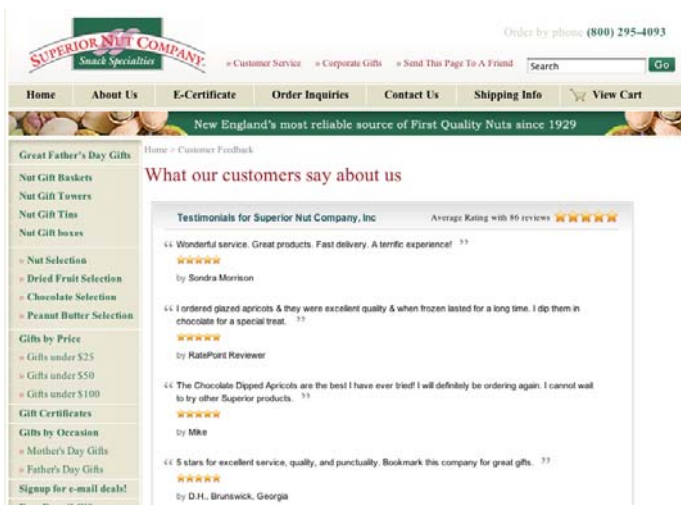
"We get an incredible response rate, the majority of which is positive," says Chraibi. RatePoint has also enabled Chraibi's team to uncover otherwise-hidden cases of customer dissatisfaction, permitting them to take action and turn those situations around. "By being proactive about it, we've been able to identify a few customers who have had a less than stellar experience with us and quickly resolve those issues."

Though Superior Nut Company was initially unaware of it, one such "hidden" customer was unhappy with some peanuts he'd ordered. As it happened, this customer responded to one of the company's e-mail feedback campaigns with a two-star review (which automatically kicked off RatePoint's Dispute Resolution Process), promising that he'd never order from the company again. Using the moderated dispute resolution system, Chraibi was able to communicate directly with the customer and get more details about his specific concerns – ultimately offering him a different product, which met with the customer's complete satisfaction. In the end, "we turned an unhappy customer into a happy, loyal one," Chraibi says, "You can't put a price on that."

Results: "Satisfied Customers Market Our Brand for Us"

Before integrating RatePoint with their online store, Superior Nut Company had run into some issues using another method to post customer testimonials. "Our old testimonial page was hard to manage – and it really provided a lot less value for consumers visiting our site because the testimonials weren't authenticated [as RatePoint-managed consumer reviews are] and they were also outdated," says Chraibi. "Now, with RatePoint, we don't even have to think about it. We know our visitors are seeing fresh, relevant testimonials when they click on that page. It sounds old-fashioned, but satisfied customers market our brand for us: RatePoint just provides us with the tools to be able to reach them and get them to interact with us."

According to an interview with Chraibi published in The Wall Street Journal, recent statistics indicate that more than 10% of unique visitors to the Superior Nut Company online store end up placing an order – compared to just 2-3% three years ago. "When browsing prospects read our customer reviews, it helps convert more visitors into buyers, and the more buyers we are able to keep as regular customers, the more we grow," Chraibi says enthusiastically. The RatePoint platform has "really been an effective sales, marketing and customer service tool for us."



RatePoint gives Superior Nut Company all the tools to:

Collect Authentic Feedback and Reviews:

The company collects customer feedback and reviews through its Web site, e-mail, and through RatePoint's online business directory.

Manage Reviews:

Superior Nut Company manages its reviews and feedback through the RatePoint Business Center: a simple Web console and "dashboard." Once a review has been received, the designated manager is immediately notified via e-mail.

Promote & Publish Reviews:

With a single click, one of Chraibi's team members can easily publish consumer reviews from the company's Business Center account. Team members can also choose to have reviews automatically pushed out to their RatePoint site seal (which is posted visibly on the online store), to their testimonial page, and to their Business Profile – in real time.

Respond to Negative Feedback:

Any negative feedback (a one or two-star customer rating) automatically kicks off a RatePoint-moderated Dispute Resolution Process that permits Chraibi's team to interact directly – and privately – with the customer to resolve legitimate (authenticated) issues. If the issue is resolved to satisfaction, the negative review does not impact the business' overall rating and is not posted.



100 Crescent Road Needham, MA 02494
Phone 888.777.1636