CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Lancôme

Making Digital Connections a Thing of Beauty
Lancôme, a brand that has epitomized beauty and elegance for decades, wanted to extend its well-known personalized customer experience to its online shoppers. The company deployed LivePerson’s LiveEngage platform in the fall of 2012, rolling out Click to Chat and proactive chat for sales support. Click to Chat was later added for mobile devices. Live chat now has the highest conversion and customer satisfaction rates of any channel, resulting in significant live chat-assisted revenue for the company. And LivePerson’s enrichment analytics features have helped the company improve the customer experience further over time.

For nearly 80 years, Lancôme products have brought the French concept of beauty to a global market. The company’s cosmetics and fragrances are available at upscale retail outlets, at branded stores around the world, and on the company’s e-commerce site, managed by Alessio Rossi and his team.

“Lancome.com is the main hub of the Lancôme experience,” explains Rossi, the company’s vice president of Digital Marketing, eCommerce, and CRM. “It is not only a well-designed catalog, but is also a place where customers can engage with us so they can learn the story of this incredible brand. We put a lot of effort into inspirational ‘how to’ videos and other coaching content to help women use our products for the best result.”

Delivering stellar customer service

Customer service is one aspect of the Lancôme brand that Rossi’s team strives to replicate online. “It is the inner nature of our brand to serve our clients,” he asserts. “What we say internally is that we don’t sell products, but rather provide a service for our clients. An obvious way to achieve this goal is to add a patch of human factor into the digital experience.”

The Lancôme team knew that live chat would be one way to accomplish this. “We felt that women might open up more fully with live chat, and explore what they really want,” Rossi explains.
The Challenges

- Build in-store and e-commerce sales through digital engagement
- Support the “inner nature” of the Lancôme brand, individualized service, for online customers
- Provide an intimate channel to help customers open up

Selecting a solution

The team began a formal evaluation of live chat solutions in early 2012, and they had some detailed requirements. “Although we knew we would not be using all the features right away, we wanted to make sure our future requirements were available in the solution we selected,” Rossi relates. “We wanted to have proactive chat with robust targeting, a customized live chat experience for mobile devices, the ability to push marketing content to selected visitors, and extensive reporting and data analysis capabilities.”

With these prerequisites in mind, the Lancôme team settled on LivePerson’s LiveEngage platform. “LivePerson has the reputation as a market leader, and the fact that their platform resides in the cloud is a big benefit,” Rossi notes.

LivePerson’s tight integration with the Demandware Commerce platform, on which Lancôme’s e-commerce site is built, is highly valued. LivePerson is a premier member of Demandware’s LINK Technology Partner Program, while Demandware is a LivePerson Platform Partner. A cartridge that integrates the two solutions is available in both LivePerson’s Apps Marketplace and the Demandware LINK Marketplace.

Rolling out the channel

Lancôme deployed the LiveEngage platform in August 2012, with deployment assistance from its LivePerson Customer Success value manager. “Our value manager not only got the platform up and running, but also made sure it worked well with our Demandware infrastructure,” Rossi explains.

The value manager helped Rossi’s team design Click-to-Chat buttons with customized graphics for the shopping cart, beauty advice, and product pages on the website. “We wanted a particular brand image to be a part of the experience,” Rossi explains. “And when some of our branding was updated last year, our value manager helped us redesign the live chat graphics to match the new look.”

Lancôme also created behavior-based targeting rules for proactive chat, with input from the value manager. “If a customer is in our store, an associate will approach her if she appears to need help,” Rossi relates. “That is exactly what we are trying to do online. When a visitor’s behavior indicates that she needs help, the invitation is sent, and the rest happens organically.”

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Getting to optimal operations

Live chat agents engage with customers between 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time on weekdays. Lancôme started with two concurrent agents but has since increased that number to three during peak hours. The LiveEngage platform is configured so that agents can conduct up to three conversations simultaneously. Agents respond to visitor-initiated live chat requests, and proactive chat invitations go out when agents are available.

Rossi’s team is using the enrichment analytics capabilities built into the LiveEngage platform to make proactive chat invitations more productive over time. “The data analysis tools are helping us to fine tune the logic of our targeting rules,” Rossi explains. “We want to understand when a customer can really benefit from a live chat conversation.” Enrichment analytics is also helping Lancôme make improvements to its website by analyzing where customers are getting stuck during the buying process.

Connecting with mobile visitors

Like most websites, Lancôme has seen rapid increases in traffic from mobile devices from recent years. “Mobile is growing very aggressively in terms of the number of visitors, and also in terms of a share of revenues,” Rossi notes. “And mobile devices are used differently than desktops. Visitors may be trying to find a store. They may already be in the store. Since our charter goes beyond e-commerce, mobile is in many ways at the center of what we do.”

Because of this, Lancôme deployed the LiveEngage platform’s mobile Click-to-Chat tool in April 2014. The live chat engagement window automatically fits the size of the device, and visitors do not have to leave the page they’re on to initiate a conversation with an agent. “We think that live chat on mobile may have different importance because of the variety of objectives consumers are trying to achieve,” Rossi relates. “Smartphones allow the entire research process to be done in a compact time frame, and it is often done while people are approaching the store.”

Achieving impressive results

Since rolling out live chat nearly two years ago, Rossi’s team has seen growth in the program and significant impact to Lancôme’s bottom line. Live chat quickly achieved the highest conversion and customer satisfaction rates of any channel, resulting in significant incremental revenue for the company. “Live chat has had a significant impact on our sales,” Rossi sums up.

When asked for any recommendations for his peers, Rossi is direct. “No one in e-commerce should hesitate to deploy live chat, as it is among the top expectations of customers today,” he says. “But they should look for more than rudimentary live chat. They should find a solution they can grow with.”

For Lancôme, that solution was LivePerson. “I like the fact that data can be pulled easily, and that data can provide a lot of opportunities to improve the customer experience,” Rossi contends. “And our Customer Success value manager is a phone call away when we have questions. It has resulted in a collaborative partnership that has enabled us to move to the next level.”

About LivePerson

LivePerson, Inc. (NASDAQ: LPSN) offers a cloud-based platform that enables businesses to proactively connect in real-time with their customers via chat, voice, and content delivery at the right time, through the right channel, including websites, social media, and mobile devices. This “intelligent engagement” is driven by real-time behavioral analytics, producing connections based on a true understanding of business objectives and customer needs. LivePerson is headquartered in New York City with offices in Atlanta, Amsterdam, London, Melbourne, Paris, Reading, San Francisco, Santa Monica, Tel Aviv, and Tokyo.