

LIVEPERSON SUCCESS STORY

PlumberSurplus.com drives sales and improves customer satisfaction with LivePerson Contact Center. Specialty online retailer increases average order value 15% using live chat

Company Overview

Founded in 2004, PlumberSurplus.com is a leading Internet retailer specializing in home improvement, plumbing and building products. By offering thousands of products covering a wide range of residential and commercial applications and a custom e-commerce platform, PlumberSurplus.com provides an easy, secure and customer friendly online destination.

The Challenge

"Point. Click. Plumb." PlumberSurplus.com is simplifying the kitchen, bath and plumbing industry for consumers who want to "do it themselves," providing access to home improvement products that are typically only available at the wholesale distribution level. Customers rely on PlumberSurplus.com for its vast product selection, high percentage of in-stock items, competitive pricing, and robust product data.

As a pure online retailer, one of the company's primary challenges is to meet customer expectations of an in-store shopping experience over the Web. PlumberSurplus needed to provide the highest levels of customer support to successfully sell complex, professional-grade products to a consumer audience. Key customer service objectives included helping customers select the right products, responding quickly to inquiries, and making it easy for customers to place/track orders and return/exchange items.

Before implementing LivePerson Contact Center, PlumberSurplus.com offered two customer service channels: a phone number listed on every page and an email form. Customer service reps used Microsoft Outlook to manage more than 1,000 incoming emails per month. Only one representative could be logged in at a time and each email needed to be manually assigned to a skilled rep. Due to these limitations, response time averaged one business day.

To improve customer service, PlumberSurplus.com decided to add a real-time communication option for customers seeking instant answers and reassurance of their home improvement and plumbing product purchases.

LivePerson Solution

PlumberSurplus.com implemented LivePerson Contact Center to manage customer communication across all channels — chat, email, voice, and knowledgebase in real time. The comprehensive solution allows the company to offer instant answers to online visitors via chat, reducing response time from one business day to 30 seconds or less. The new email management system fully replaced Microsoft Outlook and provided ticketing and skills-based routing functionality, which greatly improved rep efficiency and reduced email response times.

"We partnered with LivePerson because they offered the industry's largest set of features and functions. The solution was easy to implement and use, and customers were familiar with and trusted the LivePerson brand," said Timothy Jackson, Managing Partner at PlumberSurplus.com.

The company sought a contact center solution that provided:

- Live online chat functionality
- Back-end customer email management to replace Microsoft Outlook
- A recognizable brand name that inspires customer confidence
- A scalable solution



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In April 2007, the company added chat to every page of PlumberSurplus.com and leveraged LivePerson Contact Center to:

Interact with website visitors in real time. Customer service representatives initially received 30 to 35 chat inquiries per day. Real-time visitor monitoring and co-browsing enabled reps to deliver efficient and accurate service to customers at any stage of the buying cycle. Reps used page-push technology to drive customers directly to the appropriate information in the Learning Center.

As customers became comfortable with the chat channel, PlumberSurplus.com proactively invited visitors to chat when they appeared to be experiencing difficulty with self-service. A chat invitation is automatically sent to anyone who visits more than 12 pages or spends more than 15 minutes on the site. With proactive chat, the number of chats tripled to over 100 per day and the conversion rates of chatters skyrocketed.

Increase online sales. To increase average order values, reps are encouraged to promote product cross-sells and upsells during chat conversations. They also leverage the channel to prevent abandonment when a customer encounters difficulties checking out or expresses concern about product availability or compatibility. Customers can bypass the

standard shopping cart process by giving reps their order details and credit card information during chat interactions.

In response to the increased number of purchases completed via chat, PlumberSurplus.com tested out LivePerson's McAfee Secure branding options. Displaying the certification mark on dialogue windows helped triple the number of customers completing transactions using live chat.

Improve responsiveness to email inquiries. To better manage its large volume of incoming emails, PlumberSurplus.com fully replaced Microsoft Outlook with the email management system offered in LivePerson Contact Center. Ticketing, skills-based routing, concurrent logins, canned responses, and seamless escalation between channels allowed reps to respond to customers more quickly and efficiently.



PlumberSurplus.com proactively invites visitors to chat based on the number of pages they visit or the length of time they spend on the site.

About 20 percent of customers accept the invitations and chat with category specialists.

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Tangible Results

PlumberSurplus.com has leveraged LivePerson Contact Center to achieve significant improvements in customer service, agent efficiency and sales volume.

Customers are very satisfied with the chat experience; 95 percent of post-chat survey respondents rate chat as "excellent" and 60 percent say chat helped them decide to purchase. They're more comfortable committing to a chat, rather than a phone call or email, because they do not need to provide any personal information; and chat saves them the burden of opening their email program or picking up the phone. Customers have also benefited from the addition of a Frequently Asked Questions section, which was augmented primarily from LivePerson Contact Center's analytics, survey responses and chat transcripts.

PlumberSurplus.com reps prefer the chat channel. Chat is easy to use, and canned answers save reps time and ensures proper responses. Reps are more efficient because they can assist multiple customers concurrently via chat.

The company has increased average order values by more than 15 percent and realized cost savings by deflecting phone calls to the more cost-effective chat channel.

About LivePerson

More than 7,000 small and mid-size business (SMB) customers use LivePerson's award-winning live chat and contact center solutions to improve customer service, increase online sales, and manage interactions across all channels: chat, voice, email, and self-service knowledgebase.

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