POWER UP PLUS:
6 TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE YOUR SHOPIFY PLUS STORE

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS:
ACHIEVING A BETTER ELECTRONIC SEARCH EXPERIENCE
Online retailers across all sectors are continuously looking at the performance of their stores and searching for ways to improve the customer journey, in order to reap the financial rewards associated with an optimised store.

In recent years, there’s been a huge surge in demand around machine learning and AI technologies in the eCommerce space, with retailers wanting various areas of their store to be influenced by more than just the data they possess around products and customers. Whilst Shopify Plus offers a native search solution, it isn’t designed to provide an advanced search experience, beyond matching keywords to basic product information. This leads to most mid-level and enterprise merchants looking at bringing in a specialist, third party solution.

Typically, users who complete a search within the search bar are 3-5 times more likely to convert than customers who don’t. As a result of this, search is really capturing the attention of switched-on merchants. In addition to depth and accuracy, aspects like usability, speed, the ability to manually merchandise results, reporting etc have become de facto requirements for even merchants with small catalogs.

Retailers therefore need to examine their current on-site search offering, identify weaknesses and limitations, and consider how to deliver a best of breed search experience to their customers. The six steps outlined below go a long way towards a key requirements list for an optimal on site search experience.
UTILIZE AN AUTO-SUGGEST OVERLAY TO SPEED UP THE PURCHASE PROCESS & REDUCE ERRORS

Online shoppers can easily make mistakes when using on site search, and an auto-suggest or instant search solution can go a long way towards reducing the impact of such mistakes.

In the example below, Oco Glasses utilise an overlay to speed up the search process considerably. The search experience is also enhanced by listing automated popular and recent searches.

Using the overlay, as opposed to needing to wait for the search results page to load, reduces the chance of error as the user can simply adapt the query there and then, ensuring that the visitor accesses relevant results as quickly as possible. With speed being so important in ecommerce, especially for mobile users, presenting relevant results to visitors so quickly offers clear benefits to merchants, and typically results in significant improvements in conversion rates.
POWER UP TIP:

Deliver products to your customer, faster, with a javascript auto-suggest overlay.
LEVERAGE MACHINE LEARNING TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SEARCH RESULTS AUTOMATICALLY

Machine learning offers automated support in optimising search results, based on things like the products clicked, search queries used, add-to-baskets and conversions etc. Machine learning, in the search merchandising context, draws out automated sorting of products, which reduces the manual overhead of choosing where to display products, whilst keeping results relevant. Thus reducing the manual overhead of the team in optimizing products, saving you time and money. While we’d always recommend adding additional business logic, this machine learning can add great value, particularly for longer-tail queries.

In this keyword example, a retailer is unlikely to merchandise the ordering manually, so a machine learning input helps to ensure that the products performing best are prioritized.

The self-learning algorithm results are optimized in real-time, reducing the manual overhead of the team in optimizing products, saving you time and money.
As touched on above, it is also important you have the capability to override the machine learning and merchandise results based on your own business logic. Within Klevu, for example, users are able to use values from tags and meta fields to create rule-based logic and also assign hero SKUS for specific queries. A good example of how rule-based boosting could be used could be boosting products with a higher margin, which could be imported into Shopify as a meta field or tag.

POWER UP TIP:
Utilize machine learning alongside core business logic to achieve the optimum ordering of products within search results.

In this example Discount Rubber Stamps have chosen to override the machine learning to ensure their traditional stamps always appear first for this query.
POWER UP TIP:

Use additional data points in Shopify to allow for more contextual boosting.
IMPROVE USER EXPERIENCE

Having retrieved an accurate and relevant result set for a search query, those results should be presented to the visitor in a coherent and consistent way, to maximize the chances of products being added to the cart. This is not only great from a UX perspective, but it also makes the front-end of the site more maintainable. An example of this can be seen below.

The Faceted grid overlay delivers a fast and intuitive solution without navigating away from the page the user is on. Consequently, products are served far quicker, speeding up the purchase journey across all devices.

**POWER UP TIP:**

Provide additional types of results and filtering to serve more relevant results and allow for browsing.
CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Maintaining brand identity is imperative, especially when looking to implement a third party solution, which can often lead to a disjointed experience. A non-merchandised page can look chaotic and confusing, and can lead visitors to abandon their journey, in favor of a store that makes it easy to find exactly what the shopper wants to buy. Merchandising of search results can take a number of forms, including displaying prices, price breaks, configurable options such as color or size, alternate product thumbnails and merchandising badges, such as sale stickers.

POWER UP TIP:

Be consistent with your brand’s design by customizing your search overlay and search landing page, to align with the branding of your store.
INDEXING OF NON-PRODUCT CONTENT

The ability to serve different types of results is something that we’re seeing more and more - be it content pages, forum pages, blog posts, guides, videos etc. With more and more retailers investing heavily in ‘content & commerce’ and lots of publishers investing in ‘direct-to-consumer’ ecommerce stores, this is becoming a standard requirement in search.

The above example shows how Glitzy Secrets deliver content pages for informational queries.
CONCLUSION

Site search plays a critical role in the overall shopping experience and should not be overlooked. With competition for online sales fiercer than ever, and with mobile usage looking set to dominate the online sector going forward, now is the time to leverage an advanced search capability to simplify the purchase experience and make customers’ lives easier.

Last year, Klevu’s team analyzed $1.4B of total online trade from 869 online stores (over a 7 month period) the findings from this showed that over $360M of this (27% of the total recorded business) was directly attributable to site search. With the latest breed of search solutions delivering considerable ROI and conversion improvements, on-site search represents one of the simplest ways of gaining a competitive edge and boosting sales.
Klevu is an intelligent site search solution designed to help online businesses increase onsite sales and improve customers online shopping experience. To ensure that visitors to your site find exactly what they are looking for, Klevu powers the search and navigation experience by leveraging advanced semantic search, natural language processing, merchandising and multilingual capabilities. Over 3,000 of the top retailers across the world use Klevu with the support of their global team.

To learn more, visit www.klevu.com.