

LIVEPERSON SUCCESS STORY

Leading online retailer of skateboards dramatically increases sales conversions with live chat

About Warehouse Skateboards

Based in Wilmington, North Carolina, Warehouse Skateboards is a premier online retailer of skateboards, skateboard accessories and skate clothing. The company helps skateboarders and their parents select or custom design the perfect skateboard. With over 10,000 skateboards, and 4,000 accessories to offer, Warehouse Skateboards is one of the largest online providers, serving customers throughout the United States.

The Challenge

Selling to the youth market has its charms and challenges. "For kids who love skating, you're basically hooking them up with something that will be one of their most treasured possessions. These are kids who'll practice a kick flip 5,000 times until they get it right," explains Mike Duncan, founder and CEO of Warehouse Skateboards and an avid skateboarder himself. "They have skating heroes. They speak the language. It's a huge part of their lives."

But the challenges are real. "The youth market is really interested in getting free stuff. It doesn't matter what it is, just as long as it's free. Kids would call our customer service number asking for a sticker or a decal. They couldn't buy anything because they don't have a credit card; they need their parents for that. So they'd look at our site, and then call to see if we're giving anything away."

They can also be a bit starry-eyed. "They'd call to ask our phone reps, 'Are you a pro? Do you know Tony Hawk? Have you ever met Bam Margera? What's he like?' They think that if you sell all the cool skate gear you must travel in the same circles as the pros," said Mr. Duncan.

While it's important to engage the end users of their boards, the costs of doing so via an 800 number were getting out of hand. "Our phone bills were eating up all of our profits. We needed to find a way to move those conversations away the phone" Mr. Duncan said.

The Solution

Warehouse Skateboards implemented LivePerson's award-winning live chat solution on its site. Today, a click-to-chat button invites visitors to 'Chat with a real skateboarder.' And they do! Each day, Warehouse Skateboards chats with a hundred or more visitors. The company has four fulltime agents, and offers chat 24 hours a day.

Some chats are quick, especially if they're with ten or eleven year old boys who have selected a board they're going to ask their parents to buy. "At that age, they're so impressionable and they need validation. They'll ask one of our agents, 'Is this board cool? Our agent will text back, 'Yeah man, that deck is dope' and that's the end of the chat," Mr. Duncan explained.

Chats with parents on the other hand, can take up to 40 minutes. Warehouse Skateboard agents probe the visitor about their children and help them select an appropriate board (see side bar). Agents make suggestions by pushing product pages directly into the parents' browsers. Using co-browsing features, "our agents literally walk customers through the process."

Creating a custom skateboard

Lead Question

Style recommended

Girl or Boy	Style of deck
Height/Weight	Size of deck
Skating terrain (asphalt, skate park)	Type of trucks, wheels, bearings, rise pads
Skating heroes	Brand, board graphics
Graphics preference	Butterflies, skulls, Rasta Pandas, etc.

Most parents don't know how to select a skateboard for their children. Fortunately, Warehouse Skateboards has developed a script of lead questions that let them surprise their children with a "totally awesome" board.

LIVEPERSON SUCCESS STORY

Surprise Benefits

"I was expecting to see a huge cost savings as a result of chat, and that happened. But that's not what blew me away. What blew me away was a slew of benefits I didn't expect at the time I signed up LivePerson," said Mr. Duncan. Those benefits stem from features of the LivePerson Agent Console.

Real-time visitor monitoring. LivePerson lets chat agents watch visitors as they click through the site. The agent sees how visitors arrive, their click-through paths, and how long they spend on each page. "Within a week of implementing

the software we realize we were doing everything all wrong. Our menu options were wrong; they didn't reflect how people shopped. Our conversion paths were off, and we needed to fix them," said Mr. Duncan.

Watching visitors on the site also helped Warehouse Skateboards improve their marketing promotions. "In the past, we'd launch a promotion and hope for a certain result. If that didn't happen, we wouldn't know why. Our Web analytics program tells us what happened, but it can't tell us why it happened. But watching visitors as they land – or skip over – a promotion page tells us a lot."

The screenshot shows the Warehouse Skateboards website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Warehouse Skateboards logo, a shopping cart icon showing 0 items for \$0.00, and links for Customer Service and Order Status. Below the navigation bar is a main banner area with a large '20% off pre-assembled completes' promotion on the left and an 'element' brand banner on the right. The 'element' banner features the brand logo and the text 'NEW ELEMENT DECKS IN STOCK!'. Below the banners is a row of brand logos including Element, Spitfire, Enjoi, Flip, Independent, Almost, Girl, Birdhouse, Baker, and others. At the bottom of the screenshot, there's a 'Top Searches' section with a list of popular items like 'Element Skateboards', 'Zero Skateboards', and 'Spittfire Wheels'. There are also sections for 'Skate Accessories', 'Skate Clothing', and 'Skate Pads'. A 'LIVE HELP' chat button is visible on the right side of the bottom section.

Live chat agents help Warehouse Skateboards customers select skateboards and accessories. Chat agents query visitors, and then make suggestions from their stock of over 10,000 boards.

LIVEPERSON SUCCESS STORY

Interacting with website visitors. Chatting with visitors was another eye-opener. "We had created all of this content on our site based on how we believed customers choose and customize skateboards. But it turned out that's how we think. We think as retailers. Chatting let us understand how our customers think. We ended up re-doing a lot of our content," Mr. Duncan said.

Canned messages. Warehouse Skateboards makes extensive use of the canned messages feature. In fact, the company uses three full sets, one in kids-speak, one in moms-speak, and one in dads-speak. "We have canned messages for everything, including lead questions. Our agents don't have to type in anything. I can have ten chats open, and not be stressed-out at all."

Tangible Results

Cost savings. By migrating customer inquiries to live chat, Warehouse Skateboards has significantly lowered its toll free costs. And with strategic use of canned messages, chat agents can serve more customers.

Increased conversion. Live chat has helped Warehouse Skateboards increase its conversions dramatically. Mike Duncan estimates that the company is converting an additional one percent of all visitors. "That's huge, when you consider how many visitors we get in a day. We spend a lot of money driving traffic to our site, and that extra one percent really pays off. For us, one seat of the software brings us \$50,000 in revenue."

Better Promotions, better content. Warehouse Skateboards has enhanced all of its conversion paths based on how real

visitors interact with the site. They've also improved their content, making it easier for parents to buy their skateboards and accessories their children will love.

Customer satisfaction. Parents who are buying birthday or holiday gifts need assurance that the items are in stock and will arrive on time. Being able to provide such assurance in real time before the order is placed leaves customers feeling good about the company.

Agent satisfaction. Warehouse Skateboards chat agents love their jobs, and that means less attrition. "Our agents spend their days helping parents design a custom skateboard that their children will think is awesome. It's like every day is Christmas," Mr. Duncan said.

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.

Contacts

LivePerson, Inc.
462 Seventh Avenue
3rd Floor
New York, NY 10018

T: 917.477.0520
F: 212.609.4201
consultation@liveperson.com
solutions.liveperson.com