

SearchVoice Inline contributes to a 17% increase in OpenTable's natural search

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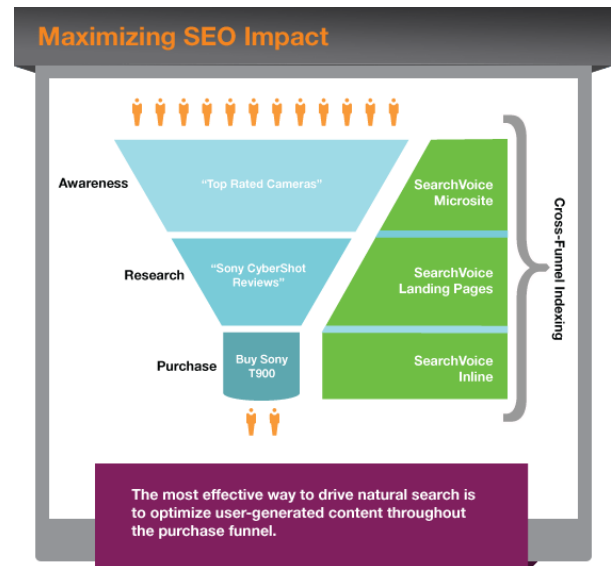
OpenTable, a leading provider of free, real-time online restaurant reservations for diners and reservation and guest management solutions for restaurants, counts more than 13,000 restaurants worldwide as customers, throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, Germany, Japan, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. For their network of restaurants, they provide profile pages that contain restaurant and cuisine details, as well as the ability for customers to search real-time table availability and reserve online. Diners can also learn about special offers from the restaurants, read reviews by other diners and share reservation information with friends.

To keep search engines visiting these pages, OpenTable needs fresh content submitted regularly, but producing that individually for more than 10,000 pages just isn't scalable. In August 2008, they launched a market-by-market rollout of Bazaarvoice's Ratings & Reviews on these pages to publish additional content, provided in the form of review feedback submitted by confirmed diners who have honored their OpenTable reservation. And in September 2009, they leveraged Bazaarvoice's SearchVoice Inline (SVI) to place the content of the first four reviews directly into the pages' code — effectively updating their content in a scalable way. Each restaurant profile page receives updated content as often as once a day.

OpenTable has multiple partnerships with major search engines and regularly introduces products which benefit search engine users directly. In the past, these efforts have included Google's Rich Snippets tagging, the addition of sitemaps and user-friendly URLs. OpenTable found SVI particularly successful among these efforts at driving more traffic.

What we measured

We looked at search traffic to the restaurant profiles on OpenTable.com before and after launching SVI. Specifically, we compared the four-month period following the launch of SVI (October 2009-January 2010) to the same time period from the year before (October 2008-January 2009).



Search traffic to the review-indexed pages increases 17%

Just three days after launching SVI, OpenTable noticed an uptick in natural search traffic to the restaurant profile pages and to the overall site, as well as an increase in the number of keywords driving traffic to their pages. Over the next four months, the total search engine traffic to the restaurant pages on OpenTable.com increased by 10%, as compared to the same months in the previous year, and 17% from Jan. 2009 to Jan. 2010. The number of unique search terms for these pages ranked also increased by 100+% year-over-year.

The bottom line

User-generated content not only has a unique ability to capture long-tail searches and increase a site's number of ranking keywords, it can also keep search engines visiting the site by providing freshly updated content in a scalable way. Businesses can further drive incremental traffic by leveraging SVI to place review content directly into the pages' code. SVI enables businesses to maximize their return on investment on all their collected user-generated content.