

Reaching New Peaks with eCommerce and Personalization



+15%

growth in online revenue

+57%

increase in website conversations

+32%

increase in holiday revenue

Sun & Ski Sports was founded more than 30 years ago as a snow sports shop that sold cycling and outdoor gear in the summer. As the company grew and opened new outlets, it maintained a tight focus on outfitting customers for a select range of outdoor activities and catering to active lifestyles. Rather than trying to become a one-stop sports and recreation warehouse, “We stick to an old concept: Do a few things, but do them better than anybody else,” co-owner Steve Rath said.

Sun & Ski Sports has 31 stores in 11 states – ranging down the east coast, across the Rockies, and south into Texas – plus a great website that serves customers nationwide. Each location offers its clientele the most relevant possible selection, from running shoes to patio furniture to snowboarding gear, paired with expert assistance from store staff.

“The customer is the boss, in an upside down pyramid where customers are at the top, store and front-line customer-facing associates are the next level, and the home office employees and executives are the subsequent levels that support the top layers,” explained Jennifer Skeen, VP of Omnichannel and Marketing for Sun & Ski Sports.



With Monetate, we have improved our customer shopping experiences on sunandski.com leading to double-digit growth two years in a row.

JENNIFER SKEEN
VP of Omnichannel and Marketing,
Sun & Ski Sports

The Challenge

With the launch of their eCommerce site 10 years ago, Sun & Ski Sports sought to meet the same standard of relevance and customer service for online shoppers nationwide as they did for their store customers. As technology advanced, Sun & Ski Sports’ online team sought to find fresh ways to connect shoppers with the right products, not just based on their geographic location, but on their individual interests and activities. Sun & Ski Sports also sought to showcase online its specialist focus on key recreation categories, setting it apart from Amazon.com and other broad-but-shallow mass merchant competitors. To prove brand credibility, Sun & Ski Sports needed to be able to adapt its online offerings to the latest trends in outdoor recreation, while providing knowledgeable and responsive customer service.

Dynamic, Personalized Experiences

With Monetate, Sun & Ski Sports found optimal merchandising flexibility, coupled with the power of real-time personalization, to respond deftly to shoppers' needs.

The eCommerce platform enabled development of new ways to discover products, including themed collections and categories organized by brand. Sun & Ski Sports could also adjust merchandising quickly to reflect the latest trends. Seamless integration with third-party tools for social listening and search engine keyword optimization gave Sun & Ski Sports the ability to create new categories on the fly, adapting to shoppers' priorities — including a dynamic “trending wall,” accessible from the home page, showcasing top items chosen as wish list favorites on the platform. This flexibility has helped Sun & Ski Sports maintain fresh merchandising in keeping with the season, recreation trends, and shoppers' feedback.

In addition, Sun & Ski Sports implemented Monetate to implement segmentation strategies and deliver one-to-one recommendations in real time. Not only can online shoppers see what others like them viewed and bought and access content targeted by region or recreation activity, but the entire site experience, from category pages to promotions, is tailored to their interests based on past site activity.

Monetate's built-in measurement and testing tools provide feedback on which strategies are most successful. “We continue to tweak and re-evaluate to provide the most conversion-rich and relevant experiences to the customer,” said Skeen.

Results and Looking Forward

The investment in Monetate has paid off with higher conversion rates and overall revenue growth. Skeen reports Sun & Ski Sports has achieved “double industry-standard double-digit growth two years in a row.”

With the ability to cull localized feedback from social media and product reviews, Sun & Ski Sports has already brought a new level of insight to its in-store operations. Moving forward, the retailer plans to knit together online and offline experiences even more seamlessly by finding new ways to integrate in-store customer activities with online behavior to create a unified customer relationship profile. Sun & Ski Sports aims to use that information not only for online personalization, but in clienteling tools that put customer intelligence into the hands of store associates and call center reps so they can provide even more relevant experiences for customers in person.

