CASE STUDY

VeriSign EV Certificates Deliver a 48,000% ROI for dwell

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SOLUTION SUMMARY

*After its success with the VeriSign Secured® Seal, contemporary furniture supplier dwell of the UK decided to find out how much further help the VeriSign® Extended Validation (EV) Certificate would provide. The green bar boosted conversion rates by 13.8% and monthly sales by £18,000 (over $35,000)—a 48,000% return on investment.**

Industry
E-commerce

Key Challenges
- VeriSign Secured® Seal
- VeriSign® Secure Site Pro with Extended Validation (EV) SSL Certificates

Solution
- VeriSign Secured® Seal
- VeriSign® Secure Site Pro with Extended Validation (EV) SSL Certificates

Results
- Achieved 13.8% more conversions to customers who saw the EV green bar than to those who didn't
- In one month, saw £18,000 ($35,000) in incremental sales with EV
- Achieved 48,000% ROI

+ dwell

dwell.co.uk markets a wide range of excellently priced contemporary furniture throughout the United Kingdom, with rapid delivery for in-stock items. After just five highly successful years in business, the firm will reach £25 million (nearly $49 million) in sales in 2008 and is doubling its sales every year. dwell achieves this revenue through a combination of retail outlets, catalog sales, and a fast-growing online channel that already accounts for 30% of results.

> ""The Internet is a fantastic tool, but customers are concerned about security on Web sites. Our use of the VeriSign Secured Seal and EV certificates is one of our most important ways of instilling confidence in customers and assuring them that their information is secure when they do business with dwell."
>
> —Richard Theobald, IT Manager, dwell.co.uk

+ Engaging the Leader in Name Recognition

One reason for dwell's success is that its people are proactive about heading off obstacles before they impact the revenue stream, such as its early-in-life decision to replace another vendor's SSL Certificates and seal with VeriSign's. "Our Web hosting company used a certificate provider that I had never heard of before. And if I didn't know them, I could hardly expect our customers to," said Richard Theobald, IT Manager. "Name recognition is so important in e-commerce that we didn't wait for the off-brand security seal to start costing us sales. Instead we preemptively made the change to VeriSign just as soon as we could."

"We didn't even consider anyone other than VeriSign as our new SSL Certificates provider," Theobald added. "People see the VeriSign® Secured Seal everywhere. It's the brand they've come to trust, far and away the leader in name recognition. Reputable companies use VeriSign, and that's how we wanted to be perceived."

+ Moving Early to VeriSign Extended Validation

Theobald and his team closely monitored VeriSign's EV certificate development and were among the first in the world to adopt them upon their release. In fact they had EV in place on their site before Microsoft turned on the green bars in Internet Explorer 7 (IE7), the first browser to take advantage of EV by changing the address bar to green. "We wanted everything to be in place when people began using IE7, and it really paid off for us," explained Theobald.

After a year and a half using EV certificates, dwell decided to find out just how much the investment was delivering. Therefore Theobald and his staff ran a test of 2194 transactions over a one-month period that compared results from users of IE7 with that of IE6, which does not display the green bar.

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+ Achieving 48,000% ROI

First they compared conversion rates: 1.07% of site visitors who used IE7 converted to purchase, whereas only 0.94% of visitors using IE6 did so—indicating that IE7 users are 13.8% more likely to convert.

Next they examined the revenue effect of IE7's higher conversion rate. By extrapolating the results from the 2194-customer sample to the entire month's population of 213,000 site visitors and applying average purchase amounts, they calculated that IE7 users bought approximately £9,000 more that month than their IE6 counterparts. Then, by considering the percentages of IE7 and IE6 users in the customer base, they computed that on the average IE7 users would be expected to account for approximately £9,000 less in sales during the month if all else were equal.

"The bottom line is that we saw an £18,000 uplift in sales that month among IE7 users, and there is no doubt in my mind that it's because of the EV green bar. Certainly the sample size is large enough, and there is no other difference between the two browser experiences that could matter," said Theobald. "When one considers that the incremental cost of EV is just £37.50 per month, our return on investment is a phenomenal 48,000%. That sounds like a lot and it is, but it's actually about what I expected."

+ Analyzing the Psychological Effect of the Color Green

"It's interesting to speculate on the reasons why the green bar stimulates so many more sales," Theobald added. "Certainly some customers know about the vetting process that VeriSign performs before it allows a company like ours to display the green bar, and this gives them extra confidence in our authenticity. However there must be many who don't understand its precise meaning, but feel more confident anyway. I think a lot of it is psychological—the use of the color green. Green conveys 'safe to proceed' in people's minds."

"The Internet is a fantastic tool, but customers are concerned about security on Web sites," Theobald concluded. "Our use of the VeriSign Secured Seal and EV certificates is one of our most important ways of instilling confidence in customers and assuring them that their information is secure when they do business with dwell."

+ About VeriSign

VeriSign is the trusted provider of Internet infrastructure services for the digital world. Billions of times each day, companies and consumers rely on our Internet infrastructure to communicate and conduct commerce with confidence.

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