

GNC Meets Customers' Digital Needs and Finds Opportunity in a Crisis

Opportunity

Help people live healthier lives by giving them easy access to wellness products. That foundational value statement helped launch a simple storefront in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1935, and it still holds true today. With more than 4,800 locations in the U.S. and Canada, GNC has become a global wellness brand that prides itself on meeting the growing and fast-changing needs of its customers.

That mission was put to the test in the spring of 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many other retail businesses, GNC experienced sudden declines in store traffic, was hampered by having to shift customer service representatives to remote work, and saw a welcome but challenging increase in digital orders—four times the traffic compared to pre-COVID.

Health and wellness products were suddenly in high demand, and loyal as well as new customers turned to a trusted business. For GNC's ecommerce team, filling orders on time wasn't the only worry. The team also needed to meet high expectations for great service and an exceptional experience.

Solution

Ecommerce has been a growing field for GNC for some time. With the goal of giving the company a more solid and modern digital sales platform, in January of 2020 GNC invested in new ecommerce infrastructure. This move provided GNC with its own tech stack and control over its data. The updated infrastructure was a timely and positive change, but a major disruption was about to surface.

"A lot of problems hit us all at once," says Chadwick Hamby, senior director of ecommerce at GNC. "COVID-19 negatively impacted our store traffic and forced us to transition customer service reps to work-from-home arrangements. Plus, filling orders was suddenly a challenge because every business was competing for scarce distribution resources. This jeopardized the one positive development for us, which was a four-fold increase in online traffic and sales, especially with immunity products."

The ecommerce platform changes GNC had put in place just two months prior, while beneficial to the team in the long term, complicated the issue resolution process. Verint® Experience Management™ helped them overcome both sets of problems. With improved customer data collected via digital feedback, and the ability to merge that information with other data in its Salesforce CRM platform, GNC's ecommerce group was able to provide a newly formed digital triage team with vital insights about customer experience related to the use of the company's website.

VERINT®

Customer Success Story



Solution

Verint® Experience Management™



Industry

Retail



Region

North America

Results

- Consolidated web data helped a cross-functional triage team discover and remedy digital issues as they occurred during increased website traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Improved find-and-fix processes helped fulfillment teams handle surging online orders and overcome pandemic-related shipping and call center challenges.
- Ecommerce feedback from Verint is now integrated with GNC's Salesforce instance to help engagement teams close the loop with customers.

“GNC is a big company with many moving parts, but we’re all seeing the same feedback data, so we can coordinate and respond as one. Our customers have noticed, and we have clear evidence that the changes we made have had a positive impact on sales.”

– Chadwick Hamby, Senior Director of eCommerce, GNC

“We could see the trends behind our digital CX,” explains Chadwick. “Why customers were contacting us, how elements of the site were performing, or if we have the right key word for product searches. Plus, it was all integrated, with comments feeding into the service cloud so we knew what required a response or an action.”

Benefits

“We saw a problem with the payments gateway immediately,” adds Chadwick. “Our credit card system was dropping customers at the end-stage of the buying journey. Once our triage team was alerted to the issue, we contacted the customers, turned the problem over to IT, and they had it fixed in two days. Without that feedback knowledge, I don’t know how long the problem would have lasted. We saved many weeks of sales on that correction alone.”

Detailed feedback also enabled the ecommerce team to improve customer outreach. Through email and phone contact, they were able to tend to specific customer problems or address broader issues with targeted messaging.

“At one point, there was a clumping problem with one of our powdered products, which we discovered through customer feedback,” notes Chadwick. “We worked with the producer to get a new batch and contacted people who had logged complaints. Customers were so appreciative. Being heard as individuals and seeing our efforts to makes things right means a lot to them. It’s helped us strengthen our reputation for one-on-one service and improved customer satisfaction.”

GNC’s digital triage system is now stronger and more informed than ever. In daily meetings, developers, customer service, QA, ecommerce, and other stakeholders have insight into channel friction and receive instant alerts when a problem occurs. Plus, leadership receives weekly CX reports that highlight positive and negative trends. That means data and insights from Verint Experience Management are being shared across the organization at every level—tactical, operational, and strategic—coordinating cross-functional efforts and streamlining actions.

Spurred by the improvements it has seen, GNC plans to implement “buy online, pick up in-store” (BOPIS) options at hundreds of stores across the U.S. and Canada. Chadwick and his team are eager to see the results. “Feedback from those BOPIS orders will be added to our system, letting us see how the process is going and further enabling our holistic view of the customer experience,” he says.

“The positive changes that have taken place are surprising and encouraging,” Chadwick concludes. “We’re adding permanent CX positions. Our customer chat is now seen as an equal channel because we’ve seen how easy it makes it for customers to talk to us, whether they’re happy or upset. And we have data to back up decisions. If a promo isn’t working, we can replicate the problem immediately. My team can see it, customer service can see it, our executive team gets a read-out, and all of our agents are on the same page. GNC is a big company with many moving parts, but we’re all seeing the same feedback data, so we can coordinate and respond as one. Our customers have noticed, and we have clear evidence that the changes we made have had a positive impact on sales.”

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