



ROPO-Strategy

Leroy Merlin creates omnichannel advantage

Italian DIY leader connects online and offline channels with FACT-Finder

Leroy Merlin is a worldwide leader in the home improvement market with a global footprint in France, Spain, Italy, Poland, Brazil, Russia, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, China, Ukraine and Romania.

The chain opened its first Italian store in 1996. Today, it has 49 stores across the country offering a wide range of DIY items spanning construction, decoration, bathrooms, furniture and gardening,

and has an annual turnover of approximately €1bn. 2012 Leroy Merlin created an info-commerce page, which was developed into an online shop in 2014.

FACT-Finder®



Product discovery starts online

The ROPO (research online, purchase offline) strategy is significant for DIY retailers like Leroy Merlin. The store's customers usually plan and think about what to buy at home, before going to the shop to make the purchase.

"In our business model there is no cannibalisation between ecommerce and the physical store. Indeed, ecommerce is a valuable alternative way for us to answer customers' needs and this is why the online channel is so important," says Giambattista Cerri, Head of Ecommerce Solution and Technology at Leroy Merlin, Italy. "Therefore, it is crucial for us to be able to show the full extent of our catalogue to our customers."

He adds: "Our online catalogue is very extensive. It became clear that we needed a powerful search engine. Because search is a fundamental activity that helps our customers find the right products, inspires them, and enables us to sell more no matter whether someone is buying online or offline."

Challenge: delivering the right data to the right customer at the right time

With an online catalogue of more than 80,000 products grouped across 1,000 categories, Leroy Merlin knew that in order to step up from a simple presentation website to a full ecommerce store, it needed to not only display its products in the right way, but it also had to find a solution that would help visitors easily search for products and then display the items in a way that would reflect customer needs.

"Faceted Navigation has to be clear. The differences between the groups of products are significant, therefore the variety of attributes is significant too. It is clear that we had to use different attributes to describe a drill and a garden house and this needs to be reflected in the filter navigation," says Cerri.

Quick and easy implementation means "fast time to market"

In order to cope with its challenge, Leroy Merlin turned to search and navigation specialist FACT-Finder in 2012.



"Compared to a custom solution developed by our team on an open source product, FACT-Finder definitely had a lot more features ready for use or which and required minimum effort to configure and integrate," adds Cerri. "This was a key consideration for us when looking at other products on the market."

Giving Leroy Merlin access to the test environment during the implementation process meant that it took just a few days to set up a demo with Leroy Merlin data and only 15 days to get FACT-Finder up and running on the website.

During the development and integration phase, FACT-Finder made a support team available (both local and at headquarters) which were on hand to respond quickly to questions that came from the development team. "Having someone who knew how to deal efficiently with the integration process has certainly been a great help," says Cerri. The FACT-Finder team has implemented its search, navigation and merchandising features in more than 1,500 online-shops and is therefore quite experienced in the process.

Focus on omnichannel experience

Taking a smart approach to providing long-term value for the business, Leroy Merlin has since started to develop its ecommerce offering.

Omnichannel is core to Leroy Merlin's strategy over the next five years, says Cerri: "Many ecommerce pure players are planning to open physical stores to try and implement an omnichannel strategy but we start with an advantage: we already have a chain of physical stores. And on top of that, a very professional online sales channel. For the moment, we have provided our stores and sales staff with the ability to search products using the bar-code scanners, which also deploy FACT-Finder technology. There is still much more to do to create a truly omnichannel experience. Therefore we chose FACT-Finder."

"Our next action is to build strong search based customised marketing campaign via the Campaign Manager from FACT-Finder. This is one part of how we squeeze the maximum conversion advantage from FACT-Finder's merchandising features," says Cerri.

Leroy Merlin is also planning a managed services project with FACT-Finder's conversion consulting team to generate the best search results and provide the best tool to answer its customers' needs.

Error-Tolerant Search

FACT-Finder delivers relevant results - even with spelling mistakes and typos or complex search queries. The search algorithm adapts to visitors' behaviour and is able to process very large product databases.

Intelligent Suggestions

Trigger the right impulses while customers type: the quick drop down of the search menu displays products and category suggestions already whilst typing the first syllables. You can even display valuable content suggestions like blog posts, videos or local opening hours.

Dynamic filter navigation

Quickly find relevant products: filters are crucial tools to sort and navigate the product range, e.g. for brand, size or colour.

FACT-Finder®
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