



CASE STUDY



Partnership with VeriSign
Helps Keep Revenues Strong
for Fitness Footwear





SOLUTION SUMMARY

*UK footwear e-tailer Fitness Footwear Ltd. allied with VeriSign for its unparalleled name recognition and excellent technical support, both of which have produced strong benefits. VeriSign® Extended Validation (EV) SSL Certificates, the relationship's most recent facet, delivered a 13.3% drop in cart abandonment and a 16.9% increase in conversions to sales among site visitors who saw a green bar, over those who did not.**

Industry

E-commerce

Key Challenges

- Inspire customer trust
- Reduce shopping cart abandonment
- Command strong support at any time of the day or night

Solution

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

Results

- Reduced cart abandonment rate by 13.3%
- Increased conversion rate by 16.9%
- Received the technical support needed to keep Web sites robust

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+ Fitness Footwear Ltd.

In just three years Fitness Footwear, Ltd. has become the largest independent footwear retailer in the UK, the number one supplier of several name brands, and a recent finalist for the country's prestigious Drapers Award for footwear. The company sells a range of sports and outdoor footwear from its store and via its web site FitnessFootwear.com, which accounts for 95% of sales. The Fit Flops line, which has received a great deal of media attention, is proving especially popular. The company offers free delivery to customers in the UK and also services continental Europe as well as a 365 day no quibble returns service.

"We choose VeriSign to work with for two excellent reasons, its outstanding support and the whole issue of trust—by which I mean not only the trust we place in them, but also the trust that customers place in us because we've allied with VeriSign."

—Luke Barlow, Director, Fitness Footwear Ltd.

+ Heeding Recommendations for VeriSign from Experienced E-commerce Companies

When Fitness Footwear first chose an SSL Certificates provider, it had two criteria in mind. "First of all, we wanted a well-known, trusted brand name that inspired confidence in customers, and secondly we wanted a company we could count on to help us with any technical issues that arose," said Luke Barlow, Director. "So we spoke with a lot of people who were experienced in E-commerce and over and over we heard recommendations for VeriSign. We wanted more than a vendor—we wanted a real partnership, and that's the potential we saw with VeriSign. History shows we were right."

The relationship grew strong during the firm's first year of prominently displaying the VeriSign Secured Seal on FitnessFootwear.com, and so at renewal time the company approached its partner to explore ways of achieving even greater success. VeriSign replied that it had recently introduced EV SSL Certificates, which trigger the display of the green address bar in the latest high-security browsers. This visual trust indicator can help reduce cart abandonment rates and thereby boost conversions to sales. "VeriSign's people explained that many customers abandon their carts out of fear that they are communicating with an imposter intent on stealing their credit card numbers or other personal information. They presented EV as a way to assure these people that the site at the other end is genuinely FitnessFootwear.com," said Jonathan Dicks, Head of Colors and Shapes. "Then they showed us case studies about customers who had already recouped their investments in EV many, many times over and strongly recommended the uplift. If it had been another vendor we probably wouldn't have trusted them, but VeriSign had already proven itself to us."

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“We saw EV as the next level in security, the natural progression in building our relationship with VeriSign,” added Luke. “Besides, it just plain makes sense that people who see the address bar light up in bright green when they commence a purchase will feel more confident continuing the process.”

+ Cutting Abandonment and Boosting Conversions with EV

Shortly after implementing EV, Fitness Footwear decided to verify that it was indeed cutting shopping cart abandonment and increasing conversion. Therefore it ran a test to measure and compare abandonment and conversion rates from users of Internet Explorer 7 (IE7), which is equipped to turn the address bar green when EV is employed, with those from users of IE6—which lacks this capability. To make sure to employ a statistically significant sample the firm ran the test for three months, during which over 100,000 IE7 visitors conducted more than 2,000 transactions and nearly 45,000 IE6 visitors conducted almost 800 transactions.

“We found that IE7 users abandoned their carts significantly less often than their IE6 counterparts—33.15% versus 38.23%, or 13.3% less often,” reported Jonathan. “Even more importantly, IE7 visitors converted to sale 2.08% of the time versus only 1.78% of the time for IE6 visitors. That’s a 16.9% higher conversion rate for users who saw a green bar over those who did not. EV was an excellent investment.”

+ Saving a Project with Midnight Technical Support

The wisdom behind the other reason why Fitness Footwear chose VeriSign—strong technical support – has also become apparent. By way of example, late one evening the firm was finalizing a change from an outdated server to a new one when security errors arose that threatened to stop the project, causing the firm to revert to the previous server, and waste many days of work. The changeover had to be completed that night so that the site would be on the air again the next morning. “Would someone from VeriSign be available to help? Could they fix the problem on such short notice? I was dreading it,” Jonathan recalled.

He put in a call to VeriSign live chat and, to his relief, found it to be staffed by support personnel who pinpointed and rectified the problem within half an hour. “We just about repaid our investment with that one instance alone, and we’ve had several similar incidents where VeriSign support came through in full,” Jonathan said. “There has been someone available to help us on live chat every time we’ve called, at all times of day and night, and the quality of the support has been amazing. I’ve always been a believer that you get what you pay for, and with VeriSign’s support we get our money’s worth and then some.”



+ Fueling Growth with a Second EV-based E-Commerce Site

In late 2007 Fitness Footwear continued its explosive growth by launching another E-commerce Web site, onshoes.com, to provide general types of footwear rather than dilute the sports and outdoor specialty of FitnessFootwear.com. Based on all its success with VeriSign, the firm went with EV on the new site from day one.

“We choose the companies we work with for good reasons,” concluded Luke. “In the case of VeriSign we have two excellent reasons, its outstanding support and the whole issue of trust – by which I mean not only the trust we place in them, but also the trust that customers place in us because we’ve allied with VeriSign.”

+ 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.

Visit us at www.VeriSign.com for more information.