

Case Study





Northwest Airlines Improves Online Conversions, Revenue, and Competitiveness with Autonomy Optimost

The online channel plays a key role in Northwest Airlines' business. Explains Melissa Danganan, an e-marketing specialist with the company, "NWA.com is an important channel for sales and customer service as well as for managing relationships with members of our frequent flyer program. We've put a lot of emphasis and effort into providing a positive, customer-focused online experience." NWA's online efforts have enjoyed considerable success to date, with nwa.com receiving approximately 11 million visits per month. Still, intense airline industry competition drives the need for continuous improvement.

NWA has a strong track record of leveraging data to improve its online business performance. Testing helped the company become the industry leader in email marketing, and data-driven pay-per-click decisions earned it recognition as the Google Air Travel Category leader. Now, to stay at the forefront of its market, the company turned to multivariate testing (MVT). Says Danganan, "We've seen more and more of our competitors using MVT. It's a powerful way to inform decisions about site design and funnel design, and it's a natural evolution for our data-driven marketing organization."

"In addition to increasing lift and online revenue, our tests have helped people complete processes on our site more easily and efficiently. This improves customer experience, which in turn helps strengthen our brand. We want people to say that NWA has a great website, and Optimost has had a role in helping us achieve this."

Melissa Danganan, E-marketing Specialist, Northwest Airlines

Autonomy Optimost provided NWA with best-in-class MVT capabilities backed by highly relevant expertise. "Optimost has performed hundreds of tests across many sites, including airlines, and brought a lot of experience and knowledge to the project," says Danganan. "Their testing design reflects the most well-respected, validated MVT methodologies, and their technology platform has proven its performance and scalability on all kinds of sites, some with a huge amount of traffic." As a hosted solution, Autonomy Optimost enabled NWA to perform sophisticated testing without increasing headcount. "With our Optimost account manager, analyst, and developer, we got three new people on our team without having to hire anyone, and the level of service was much higher than other providers offered."

Achieving Rapid ROI from Focused Testing

NWA began its Optimost MVT initiative on a limited scale to build comfort and knowledge, choosing its WorldPerks frequent flyer enrollment funnel for the first round of testing. The company worked with Optimost to test 10 values across three variables on its WorldPerks landing page: the text in the main image, the image itself, and the call-to-action text on the page.

"Even with the first series of tests, our relationship with Optimost was paid for 100-fold," reports Danganan. The winning version of the landing page achieved a 9.8 percent increase in clicks to the WorldPerks enrollment form and a 6.9 percent increase in completed WorldPerks enrollments.

Industry

Airline

Challenges

- Intense industry competition drives a need for continuous improvement in business performance
- NWA wanted to leverage data-driven decisions about site and funnel design to increase online conversions and revenue

Benefits of Using Autonomy Optimost

- NWA has already achieved a \$3 million increase in annual site revenue from Optimost testing
- An optimized landing page delivered a 9.8% increase in click-throughs and a 6.9% increase in completed enrollments in their frequent flyer program
- Upselling and cross-selling of high-revenue products has also improved
- A better online experience helps NWA strengthen brand loyalty



Northwest is part of Delta Air Lines, which is the world's largest airline, offering more than 170 million passengers each year service to 379 destinations in 66 countries.

Solution

Autonomy Optimost provides self-service and complete, managed multivariate testing services, from test planning and design through implementation and data analysis, to enable companies to optimize their Web presence. Delivered as software-as-a-service, Autonomy Optimost helps create a compelling, engaging, and relevant online experience that improves customer satisfaction, increases conversion rates, and maximizes ROI.

Increasing Lift for High-Revenue Pages

NWA proceeded to test and optimize additional landing pages for high-revenue programs such as PerkChoice, which allows customers to combine miles and cash to book flights. "PerkChoice is a huge revenue generator for us, and Optimost has helped us improve the performance of those pages as well," says Dangaran. The company has also tested the purchase funnel for gift certificates; its booking engine search results page; its check-in cross-sell/upsell page; and Flash and non-Flash versions of landing pages throughout NWA.com. As a result of these tests, NWA has increased its annual site revenue by \$3 million to date.

Optimizing Business Performance Quickly and Easily

NWA's experience with Optimost has reinforced a common lesson learned by many customers: "You don't need to make huge changes to your site to get lift," explains Dangaran. "Testing a few simple things like the size of a button, its color, or the call to action on the page can deliver a significant impact quickly and at a low development cost. And if you can increase revenue just by changing a button, who wouldn't want to do it?"

Building Successful Customer Relationships Online

Optimost has also helped NWA enhance its relationship with customers. Says Dangaran, "In addition to increasing lift and online revenue, our tests have helped people complete processes on our site more easily and efficiently. This improves customer experience, which in turn helps strengthen our brand. We want people to say that NWA has a great website, and Optimost has had a role in helping us achieve this." NWA's relationship with Optimost has been equally successful. "If you have a relationship that's so service-based, the people you work with have to be very good. Our Optimost team has been exceptional—they've kept us on track and making progress, even amid competing demands on our time. And the results we've seen prove the value of making MVT an ongoing part of your Web operations to continually improve online performance."

About Autonomy

Autonomy Corporation plc (LSE: AU. or AU.L), a global leader in infrastructure software for the enterprise, spearheads the Meaning Based Computing movement. It was recently ranked by IDC as the clear leader in enterprise search revenues, with market share nearly double that of its nearest competitor. Autonomy's technology allows computers to harness the full richness of human information, forming a conceptual and contextual understanding of any piece of electronic data, including unstructured information, such as text, email, web pages, voice, or video. Autonomy's software powers the full spectrum of mission-critical enterprise applications including pan-enterprise search, customer interaction solutions, information governance, end-to-end eDiscovery, records management, archiving, business process management, web content management, web optimization, rich media management and video and audio analysis.

Autonomy's customer base is comprised of more than 20,000 global companies, law firms and federal agencies including: AOL, BAE Systems, BBC, Bloomberg, Boeing, Citigroup, Coca Cola, Daimler AG, Deutsche Bank, DLA Piper, Ericsson, FedEx, Ford, GlaxoSmithKline, Lloyds TSB, NASA, Nestlé, the New York Stock Exchange, Reuters, Shell, Tesco, T-Mobile, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. More than 400 companies OEM Autonomy technology, including Symantec, Citrix, HP, Novell, Oracle, Sybase and TIBCO. The company has offices worldwide. Please visit www.autonomy.com to find out more.

Autonomy Optimost
160 East Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134 USA
(408) 774-2000

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