E-Commerce Website Experiences Dramatic Sales Growth with Thawte SSL Web Server Certificates

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Started as a retail store in 1990, Scuba.com is the world's largest online retailer of scuba diving and other underwater equipment. In addition to its website, Scuba.com operates a retail dive center at its headquarters in Irvine, California, that is staffed by professionally trained diving instructors and features a state-of-the-art compressor room. The company serves the needs of individual divers as well as large organizations, including NASA, CBS News, Sea World Orlando, the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, and dozens of other aquariums across the country.

Challenge

PROTECT CUSTOMER DATA COST-EFFECTIVELY

When Melinda Herndon and her husband, James, decided to turn their passion for scuba diving into a business 20 years ago, they opened a small scuba equipment and repair shop in Southern California.

The company experienced steady growth, eventually expanding to several retail locations, but Herndon knew they could reach even more customers by selling products online. "When we began to consider starting a website in 1996, e-commerce was still very new, but we saw that it was going to be the next big thing," she says.

SSL Certificates were also relatively new, but Herndon believed that strong SSL security was a must-have for the company's new site, Scuba.com. "I've always been very cautious with customer data, so having strong security on our website was an absolute necessity," she says. "As business owners, we are the safekeepers of our customers' information, and it was just not an option for us to fail them."

To protect customer data while helping to build trust in Scuba.com, Herndon and her team not only needed an SSL solution that delivered robust, cost-effective security, but also a trusted SSL provider that could offer ongoing expertise and support to help ensure the company's success selling online.

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Industry:

- Sales and service of scuba diving and other underwater equipment

Key Challenges:

- Provide robust, cost-effective security to protect e-commerce transactions
- Establish a trusted online presence to reach more customers and increase sales
- Select an SSL security vendor that offered superior customer support and service

Solution:

- Thawte® SSL Web Server Certificates with EV

Results:

- Enabled tremendous growth in online sales, with Scuba.com now selling 95 percent of its products on the Web
- Green extended validation bar, available in high security browsers, gives customers a highly noticeable signal that their transactions are secure
- Live chat support feature allows Scuba.com IT team to quickly address implementation and security questions

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"We've been with Thawte for almost 15 years, and each time I consider renewing I think to myself, 'easy deployment, high-level support, lower cost solution, a company that's been good to the Web,' and all of those things add up to Thawte. It's just a no brainer."

—Melinda Herndon, CEO, Scuba.com

Solution

THE GREEN BAR TAKES THE GUESSWORK OUT OF SECURITY

Herndon and her team explored several SSL security solutions before launching the company website, but opted for Thawte because the company offers affordable SSL technology backed by superior customer service. "I had a lot of questions about using SSL to secure customer data, and Thawte experts gave me all of the answers I needed," Herndon says. "When we combined the quality of Thawte customer support with the fact that Thawte SSL Certificates were also less expensive than other providers, the choice was easy."

The fact that Thawte SSL Certificates are an open source solution also played a major role in Herndon's decision to choose Thawte, a move that was strongly supported by the Scuba.com programming team. "We do all of our programming in-house, so open source code is much easier for our team to work with and integrate into our site," says Herndon. "I knew that selecting Thawte was a smart business decision, but the programming team also valued the fact that Thawte is a big contributor to the open source community."

When implementation or security questions do arise, Scuba.com programmers continue to take advantage of Thawte's excellent customer support. "When we have specific questions, our team uses the very convenient live chat feature to get detailed answers within a matter of moments," Herndon says. "The live chat experts at Thawte are always very friendly and knowledgeable, and having clearly explained technical information at your fingertips when you need it is invaluable."

Choosing Thawte made sense from a business and technical perspective, but Herndon's top priority has always been to help Scuba.com customers understand that their data is safe. That's why she made the decision to upgrade to Thawte® SSL Web Server Certificates with EV (Extended Validation). "I think we have an obligation to ensure our customers don't have to guess whether their transactions are secure," she says. "The green extended validation bar[1] is a big deal because it makes it easy for my customers to understand that they don't have anything to worry about when they shop at Scuba.com."

Results

PEACE OF MIND AND STRONG SALES GROWTH

Since its launch in 1996, Scuba.com has grown to become the world's largest and most popular retail scuba diving equipment website. The company has also experienced tremendous growth in web-based sales and now sells 95 percent of its products online, a fact that Herndon attributes to the strong security and peace of mind provided by Thawte SSL Certificates. "Before we launched Scuba.com, we were lucky to see maybe five to seven percent growth at our retail stores every year," she says. "Our first year selling online, we saw our sales triple, and we've continued to see strong online sales growth ever since. There's no doubt that Thawte has played a key role in that success."

Future

CONTINUING TO BUILD ON ALMOST 15 YEARS OF SUCCESS

As Herndon and her team further expand Scuba.com – adding new social media tools and other community features – the company will continue to rely on Thawte solutions to provide strong, customer-friendly security. "Every time a vendor relationship comes up for renewal, I look at it as if it were brand new," she says. "We've been with Thawte for almost 15 years, and each time I consider renewing I think to myself, 'easy deployment, high-level support, lower cost solution, a company that's been good to the Web,' and all of those things add up to Thawte. It's just a no brainer."

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1. Extended validation SSL certificates trigger a green address bar in high-security browsers.

To learn more, contact our sales advisors:

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