

# Speedway Motors revs up its Site Search Engine with the GSA for eCommerce



## At a Glance

### What they wanted to do

- Implement an e-Commerce search solution with faceted search that could handle the new data meta tags they attached to the products
- Improve the overall site search performance, especially the speed of results
- Reduce the administration time required for the solution

### What they did

- Ran an A/B test between the current solution and the Google Search Appliance for e-Commerce, measuring specific metrics

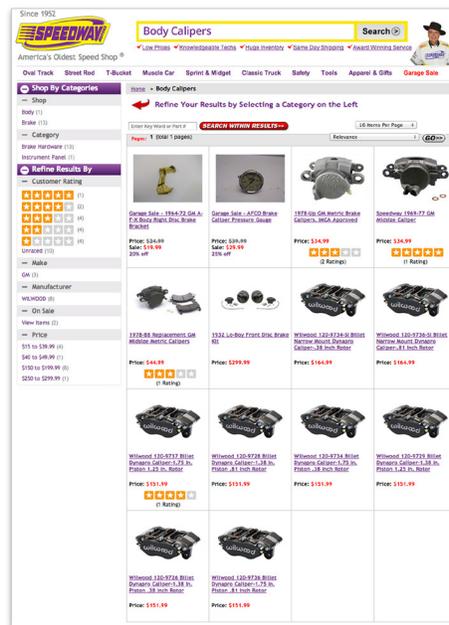
### What they accomplished

- 45% increase in conversion rate
- 116% increase in search-attributed revenue
- Search results delivered in under 500 milliseconds vs. previous solution's 4 seconds
- Reduced administrative time from up to 10 hours to 10 minutes per week

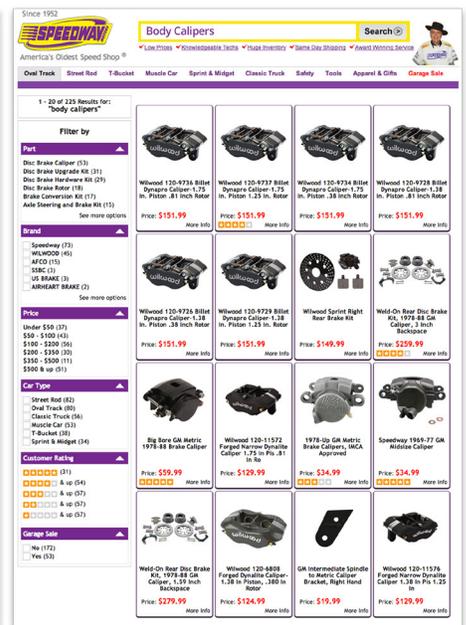
## Business

Founded in 1952 by "Speedy" Bill Smith – a racer and street rodder himself – Speedway Motors has grown from a one-man operation to become the world's largest manufacturer, distributor and retailer of street rod and racing products. Speedway fulfills thousands of orders a week from their state-of-the-art 500,000 square foot distribution facility, and their online operation nets over 500,000 unique visitors per month.

## Previous search solution



## GSA for e-Commerce



*The Google Search Appliance provides more relevant search results and more robust Dynamic Navigation than Speedway Motors' previous search solution.*

## Challenge

For six years Speedway Motors chugged along with Mercado's e-Commerce search system and merchandising suite (now Adobe® Search&Promote). They had initially spent nearly six months implementing the solution, and over the years, had trained it to perform adequately by manually tuning synonyms, stemming, and other search attributes.

"A lot of the time it felt like we were fighting against the Mercado system to get it to do what we wanted," says Chris Chance, Director of IT for Speedway Motors. "So a lot of time we had to build workarounds because it wasn't delivering particularly relevant results for certain search terms. Even after six years, we were still spending 5 to 10 hours a week tweaking result sets or modifying business rules, testing new rules, et cetera."

Perhaps most embarrassing for a company whose products are designed for speed, no matter what they did, the search results were painfully slow – up to four seconds.

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## About Google Search Appliance

With the Google Search Appliance (GSA) for e-Commerce, the search experience shared by millions across the globe can be harnessed for your e-Commerce site to make searching for products easier, more intuitive, and customizable. The GSA for e-Commerce provides high-quality relevance right out of the box that is enhanced by incorporating shopper behavior on your site.

For more information visit:

[www.google.com/enterprise/search](http://www.google.com/enterprise/search)

Contact: [GSACommerceSales@google.com](mailto:GSACommerceSales@google.com)

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Speedway Motors was “somewhat leery” about changing their site search solution, given the long period of implementation Mercado required. But an initiative to clean up data to improve faceted search finally made them wave the yellow caution flag. Mercado just could not handle it.

“It was increasingly apparent that our competitors were using more sophisticated search solutions, and we repeatedly ran into situations in which we found that modifications we wanted to make in terms of search results or merchandising landing pages, we just couldn’t solve with Mercado,” Chance reports.

The time to switch gears had arrived.

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*“Customers can not only find the parts they need faster, but they will also get the technical articles and manuals they need for their hot rod projects. That’s a pretty dramatic improvement in the service and experience that we can provide our customers.” —Chris Chance, Director of IT*

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## Solution

Being leery of making wholesale changes, Speedway Motors decided to first perform an A/B test between their Mercado solution and a new solution. They considered Amazon CloudSearch, Google, and SLI Systems as the Site Search challenger.

“We had a couple of conversations with Google about what we’re doing,” reports Carson Smith, Owner, Speedway Motors, “and we thought they’d be a good fit for the A/B test in terms of the relevance, speed, and features like Dynamic Navigation that Google’s e-Commerce Search solution had to offer. Looking at Amazon, there were pieces missing that we wanted.”

Adds Chance, “The Google Search Appliance offered a clearer path of implementing faceted search for our customers.”

With over 60,000 products in their online database, many of which have unique names that require stemming, synonym, and keyword work, and with their ambitious plans to implement both Dynamic Navigation and a customized merchandising platform, Speedway Motors hunkered down for a long implementation phase. They were delighted to discover that it was so easy to implement the GSA, it took them only four weeks.

“We were very happy with the GSA’s ability to serve up good results from strange queries,” says Smith. “With its ability to learn, the result sets coming back were so much better than Mercado’s without any hand crafting.”

Chance agrees. “We did almost no stemming work. During the first two weeks, we carved out a little time each day to review search terms that returned no results. That’s no longer the case. Now we spend about ten minutes each week eyeballing the search results to make sure everything is OK. That’s it. The GSA runs with automatic feeds, so everything is hands off.”

## Benefits

Going into the A/B test, Mercado had the clear edge having had six years of racing on the course that the Google Search Appliance would be racing on for the first time.

Still, it wasn't even close. In the first four weeks, the GSA for eCommerce lapped the Mercado solution on some key metrics.

- 45% increase in conversion rate
- 116% increase in search-attributed revenue

Moreover, with the GSA for e-Commerce, most of the search results were served up in under 500 milliseconds vs. the four seconds it took Mercado to serve up results. And instead of spending up to 10 hours per week tweaking their search solution, they now spend 10 minutes "checking in" on the solution, which dramatically lowers the Total Cost of Ownership.

"Even though the A/B testing ran over a few months, we knew within a week we wanted to go with the Google Search Appliance," Chance says.

The Speedway Motors team plans to leverage the power of the GSA for a content initiative they are working on to enhance user experience and drive even more sales.

"We're pretty darn excited to do that," Chance says. "Customers can not only find the parts they need faster, but they will also get the technical articles and manuals they need for their street rod projects. That's a pretty dramatic improvement in the service and experience that we can provide our customers."

