Early Settler

Find out how Early Settler transformed the shopping journey and delivered true omnichannel experiences.



10+
hours of merchandising saved every week

3.3x
higher conversion rate using search than without

71.6%
YoY revenue increase from search

> *"We needed something where the team could go into a single point and execute our digital strategies efficiently across AU and NZ sites. What we liked about Searchspring was the ability to combine search, merchandising, and personalisation within a single platform and leverage them together."*
>
> Dean Boudewyns
> Head of Digital & Ecommerce, Early Settler



The Brand

Since its establishment in 1985, Early Settler has been committed to bringing customers a wide range of stylish and affordable furniture and homewares. Its collections of beautiful modern living pieces are built to last – a trait reflective of the business' enduring nature. Over the years, Early Settler has grown to a network of 60 stores throughout Australia and New Zealand with a successful online presence.

Even though Early Settler has strong roots in brick-and-mortar retail, the company turned its focus to digital transformation. It was looking to take advantage of growing online demand and build a true omnichannel experience. Head of Digital & Ecommerce Dean Boudewyns says, "We did the research and found that 9 out of 10 customers were starting their shopping journey on the website before they even visited a store. How those customers were discovering products online was pivotal to the way digital, in-store, and omnichannel experiences could all work together."



The Challenges

Early Settler wanted to create an omnichannel experience as remarkable as its in-store service has always been. A key aspect of driving this strategy forward (and leveraging digital efficiencies), was to enhance the company's online product discoverability.

Throughout the digital transformation process, Early Settler carefully considered the total cost of ownership within the proposed tech stack. Dean and his team knew that using multiple different systems for search, merchandising, and personalisation would incur separate account platform fees while increasing the costs of training resources and maintaining multiple systems. When the company came across Searchspring's consolidated search, merch, and personalisation platform, the value proposition was a simple equation. Dean explains, "With local customer service, and ongoing success management, it made Searchspring an extremely competitive choice."



> "Being able to set up dynamic rules during sales events like Black Friday means we can automatically boost in-stock items, best-sellers, and even have multiple rules stacking to constantly update collection pages. This has been critical in selling through our stock on those high volume days."
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> Dean Boudewyns
> Head of Digital & Ecommerce, Early Settler



The Solutions

With seamless integration into Early Settler's tech stack, Searchspring was the all-in-one solution the company needed to drive results. Dean explains, "When we moved across to Shopify, being able to implement Searchspring straight into our new tech stack and have it highly customisable was critical. We were able to work with Searchspring on how we wanted our search and filters to work, building out a custom solution for our business. Working with Searchspring's local team, which we were able to contact in our same time zones, was also pretty vital."

Searchspring has become an essential tool for connecting various digital channels into the website, and consequently, saving merchandisers significant time. Searchspring now accompanies and supports the company's marketing channels, such as email, social media, and advertising.

Dean comments, "We're able to prioritise our marketing SKUs through rules set up in Searchspring to create seamless cross-channel experiences. For example, when shoppers click through on a product category from an email, that's what they see on the resulting landing page. It might sound like basic website merchandising – but being able to use rules within Searchspring to just make that all happen means that my team isn't spending time on multiple changes per day for different email campaigns, ads, and social. It's all just set up with Searchspring's automated rules and facilitated that way."

Dean says that processes previously taking up to 15 hours per week now only require around 3-5 hours with Searchspring's merchandising rules. "This gives the team way more time to be executing major projects and strategically optimising everything else across the site", adds Dean.

Insights gained from Searchspring's reporting and analytics have also been invaluable to Early Settler. Dean elaborates, "I think when we first started, we had maybe five or six product filters on the site. Most of it was just around product type category, stock availability, stuff like that. By using Searchspring's Search Insights reports, we've been able to pull data on things like patterns, shapes, extensions of colours, and material combinations". As a result, Early Settler has built out its filters in line with what customers are searching for – and can now help shoppers find what they want much more effectively.



The Results

Searchspring has driven impressive results for Early Settler. Conversions from search in 2022 increased by 34.2% YoY, while revenue from search jumped 71.6% YoY. Customers who use the search function are also 3.3x more likely to purchase than those who don't.

The digital transformation initiative involving Searchspring has also enriched the in-store experience. For example, team members use the stores' iPads to see "endless aisle" opportunities. Regardless of how many couches are on display in store, sales assistants and shoppers can scan the display product's QR code and immediately see highly-relevant, curated website pages. All possible sizes, colours, and variations of what a shopper wants are instantly available with advanced filters, including in stock, ready to ship, material, pattern, style, and more.

Early Settler's merchandising team uses Searchspring to apply global rules that automatically promote products with attributes such as be in stock and ready-to-deliver. This tactic has put more products in front of customers which they can "walk out the door" with and, as a result, has boosted conversion rates by 10–15% on those items. Dean adds, "Combine that with attributes like been online exclusive, or only available in store, and it's a great opportunity to show shoppers products to customers that are available – but also that the business wants to sell". Product badges further highlight features such as on sale, in stock, and online clearance lines to get more eyes on the right items.

Personalised product recommendations have also enhanced customers' online product discovery. Features such as "often purchased with", or "customers also viewed" show shoppers items based on their individual behaviours. These personalised suggestions have also provided inspiration to the Early Settler team in building data-led product collection pages. Dean comments, "When we see a high volume of customers clicking through on suggested products, it gives us insights into how to improve future landing pages. For example, it might not be a page of just couches, but of couches and related loungeroom items. Analysing Searchspring's personalised recommendation data has really opened our minds to switching up traditional product-type formats of shopping to more of a simulated in-store experience."

Searchspring has already played a pivotal role in the company's digital transformation strategy, and is now a vital part of the tech stack that will deliver outstanding omnichannel experiences to Early Settlers' shoppers for years to come.



> "My advice to anyone looking to improve the shopper experience would be to remove your internal business bias and listen to what your customers are actually asking for. Just because you want to sell something doesn't mean customers want to buy it. Look at the data, understand what your customers want, then strategise how to set up your site more effectively."
>
> Dean Boudewyns
> Head of Digital & Ecommerce, Early Settler

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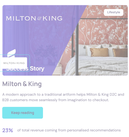

Fashion & Apparel

Milton & King

A modern approach to a traditional artform helps Milton & King (CC) and B2B customers move seamlessly from imagination to checkout.

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23% of total revenue coming from personalised recommendations

2XU

2XU

Searchspring helps 2XU Use High-Performance Automation and Insights to Optimise the Shopper Experience

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100% Increase in Search Revenue (AU)

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