

59%

more revenue

54%

higher conversion

69%

less bounce

Conns Cameras makes finding complex product names easy

Conns Cameras is a camera specialist, offering over 12K products to photographers. When launching their online shop, Conns was aware of the difficult product language used in the camera industry and its effect on their bottom line. "The big problem was people finding what they were looking for because most of the product names are based around odd codes," explains Gareth Craig, IT & Communications Manager at Conns Cameras. They first used their platform's built-in search but realized it wasn't intuitive enough. They then used Celebros search but recognized that price didn't necessarily equal value. In 2017, Conns Cameras switched to FactFinder, and in the first year, saw impressive results in their online shop.



Conns Cameras in focus

Located in the heart of Dublin's city center is Conns Cameras, a customer-loved authority in camera equipment. The company, which was established over 50 years ago by Phil Conn, remains family-run by his two sons Bob and Mike. The Conns team is made up of 20 employees, the majority of whom have been with the company 10 years or longer – Gareth, for example, has been with Conns for over 20 years. “The big names in cameras in Ireland are all family businesses to some degree. It's a close-knit industry where everyone knows everyone.”

Conns demonstrates that tradition does not contradict innovation. Equipped with a knowledgeable team and cutting-edge eCommerce technology, this retailer distinguishes itself through its unrivaled customer service – a key component in competing against Amazon and grey labels. “You can't beat them on price, so you have to beat them on your knowledge, your service, and your ability to solve problems. Customer service is the be-all and end-all of what we do. We build everything else around that,” describes Gareth.

Product names present a challenge

ConnsCameras.ie first launched as a catalog site in the early '90s and then as an eCommerce site in 2009. One of their primary goals was to make their catalog easier to navigate when customers seek specific products – a common challenge for any retailer. This retail vertical, however, faces a unique challenge due to its complex product language.

Gareth explains, “Manufacturers don't always advertise a memorable name even though the product would have a unique code – similar to Apple's iPhone naming scheme, they might lead with a sub-brand, and that's what sticks in a customer's head.” Although there may be internal criteria manufacturers consider when choosing names, to consumers the system can seem illogical – for example, Canon choosing the number 650 as a starting point for a new range of cameras.

Conns knew they needed a search that was intuitive and capable of managing the language, product codes and misspellings that are customary to their vertical. They initially used the built-in search from their previous platform but soon became aware of the need for a

specialized solution. “No built-in search could ever cope with the oddness of the language around cameras. It was causing more confusion than it was solving,” Gareth recalls.

When the platform went into partnership with Celebros, Conns went on to use their solution but found it to be overpriced for its performance. “Rather than visitors having to dig through multiple levels of menus, we wanted a search solution that provided a way for the user to type in what they are looking for and get relevant products results based on something more than just product codes,” explains Gareth.

Then, the platform learned about FactFinder and began integrating the solution into their tech stack. As soon as it was ready, Conns Cameras made the switch. “We were delighted to hop across,” remarks Gareth. “It's been brilliant, especially the customer care and the assistance from FactFinder – Stuart and Holly are much more hands-on than what we had before. It's a much better value and it really works.”



- **Knowledgeable team**
- **10+ photo lab services**
- **Certified European stock**
- **Dublin's largest range of rental equipment**

High dynamic search that doesn't need to be babysat

Gareth reveals that a large portion of traffic to Conns Cameras uses the search, 70 to 80% the last time he looked. "Manufacturers get very hung up on appearing on the homepage and in banners, and we tell them: it makes no difference where you sit on the homepage, people don't scroll past the search."

True to their dedicated focus on customer service, the search is another way Conns delivers a great experience. Just how a staff member assists a customer in store, FactFinder works in the same way – only digitally. With functions such as error tolerance, multi-word, product ID, and predictive autocomplete, visitors experience the online equivalent of a Conns' in-person exchange: interactive, helpful, and intuitive. "The search is something we have people commenting on how easy it is to find items. They know they can trust the site because they can find the right products."

Visitors to Conns vary from inexperienced beginners to professional photographers and everyone in between. Just like skill levels vary, so does search behavior, which is why a responsive search function is crucial. "As long as we spend thinking about the categorization of products and the menu structure and everything else, people either understand the terminology of the cameras or they have no clue," explains Gareth. "The majority of people who understand the terminology still don't want the hassle of looking through the menu. They know exactly what they

want, they type the name or the product code, and the search shows them exactly what they're looking for. If they don't understand the terminology, they type what they think, and the search shows them relevant results."

The technology behind the search is powerful but its usability is quite simple. The out-of-the-box capabilities require no extra effort on the retailer's part, meaning no need for IT or tying up valuable resources such as time and people. "I occasionally jump in just to add language equivalencies," says Gareth. "I know there's a lot of power we should be making use of but because it just works so well, we tend not to tinker much with it. It runs without needing to be babysat." This allows the Conns team to focus on what really matters, helping customers navigate the maze of new technology. "Even though I have a grand-sounding title, at the end of the day we are a small business where everyone takes part in everything."

There was no other search as intelligent and hands-on as FactFinder.




Gareth Craig
IT & Communications
Manager

Conns Cameras eCommerce goals for FactFinder:

 Improve customer experience

 Make our catalog easier to navigate

 Increase revenue

expert

novice

🔍 4960759903761

- Avoid zero results
- Product ID
- Multi-word

🔍 f2.8 70-200mm

- Thesaurus
- Predictive suggestions
- Product images

🔍 coolpic

- Error tolerant
- Generic terms
- Stop words

From beginners to pros, FactFinder's built-in functionalities support all types of search behavior





+61%

**new users in Q1 of
2021**

Instant and rich suggestions

Conns' search isn't just accurate, it's also dynamic. When visitors type the first few letters of a query, it prompts an intelligent menu of relevant suggestions including products, categories, and brands. This autocomplete tool helps the user construct their search, leads them to their desired items with fewer clicks, and encourages exploration into alternative items.

Having this type of responsive design is important in an online shop as it's something customers are accustomed to in their personal lives (for example, in Google search). When online shopping, they expect the same type of usability and ease. This is especially true for users on hand-held devices where typing can be tedious and lead to increased text errors.

Gareth believes the suggest function plays a key role in enhancing the customer journey. "It helps the customer know that their search is working and they're not just typing into a vacuum, which is a big benefit," he says. Conns supplements its suggestions with images to help users quickly identify and differentiate products. "Manufacturers use very similar names in very different areas of their product range, so the product image helps reassure customers that it's the right version of the product name."

Covid-19 and beyond

Conns Cameras has long operated as an omnichannel business, interacting across multiple touchpoints. "We've always been omnichannel even before it was called that. Even when the first catalog-style site launched, there was always an element of talking to customers on the phone. Now, customers start browsing on the site, then walk into the shop and then complete their purchase online. Or start on the phone, then go online and come into the shop to order in person. We've never really partitioned channels into different silos."

That changed during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Conns was able to keep their physical store partly open as their products were classified essential for people working from home i.e., teleconferencing equipment. Still, a majority of Irish didn't want to travel unless it was necessary, yet they wanted to shop from someone they could count on. "The proportion of business through the store versus through the website has completely inverted. The site has been a godsend with everything that's happened," Gareth remarks.

In 2020, Conns' KPIs rocketed, with increases of +100% across the board. The end-of-year holiday season brought in revenue growth of +245% and already in the first months of 2021, their conversion rate has risen by 95% with 61% new users. With no signs of slowing down, Conns Cameras is a living image of eCommerce success.

About FactFinder

FactFinder is the European leader in eCommerce product discovery and search. We help over 2,000 online shops worldwide like MyTheresa, Intersport, OBI, Stihl and Elkjøp Nordic increase revenue by 20-33% with outstanding shopping experiences.

By combining human and artificial intelligence, we understand every shopper's intent from the first click. We call that authentic intelligence. Smarter algorithms and human expertise create a union that will always give a competitive edge.

Every day millions of B2C and B2B shoppers find what they are looking for with FactFinder – fast, personalized and with joy.



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Our eCommerce experts can offer support in multiple languages.

2,000+ online shops grow and excel with FactFinder

