

Online shoppers more likely to buy when security's assured, test finds

Online shoppers who saw a Hacker Safe certification mark on the site on the web site of 14-year-old coffee and tea retailer JL Hufford spent more than shoppers to whom the mark wasn't displayed, the company reports. In an A/B test last year after J LHufford.com already had implemented Hacker Safe, the web site security product's developer, ScanAlert Inc., served the certification mark to every second visitor to the coffee and tea site in a sample that totaled more than 30,000 visitors. The result was that 12.8% more shoppers purchased after seeing the certification mark.

Though sales on the two-and-a-half-year-old web site are expected to reach \$1 million this year, "We were a lot smaller when we ran the test, and \$150 a month wasn't a drop in the bucket," says manager James Pappas. "Our competitors were doing this, but we wanted to know whether or not what we were investing in was going to pay off," says Pappas of the test.

Pappas adds that while he was initially surprised at the impact of the Hacker Safe badge on sales, he understands it now. With roasted coffee, chai tea and coffee machines the company's top sellers, the average ticket is about \$100, he says. "We sell \$1,800 to \$2,200 espresso machines on our site. If you are going to give somebody your credit card online, you want to know who's involved if it's going to be for \$2,200," he says. "One of the ways we could express that we are a legitimate outfit to people without spending tens of thousands of dollars on a total web site redesign is to have a third party say it."