

SIEMENS



Siemens Energy and Automation Doubled Online Auction Charity Donations with Custom Software Application

Challenge: Siemens Energy and Automation needed to find a low-cost way to increase participation in its online charity auction. The company was responsible for managing the auction for four Atlanta-based Siemens Operating Companies (SOCs). The auction raises funds for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Light the Night Walk, an annual event that builds awareness about blood cancers and raises funds for cures. Employees participate in the auction by bidding on items that were donated by the company's executive leadership.

Past auctions were managed manually or electronically through standard online survey tools that collect bids via email. With dozens of items and hundreds of bids coming in, it became difficult to track the bids manually and update participants on the status of their bids in a timely manner. With a goal of encouraging more SOC's to participate and thereby raising more money, Siemens decided a more efficient solution was needed.

Objectives: Siemens needed a solution that would:

- Increase accuracy in tracking and calculating data
- Improve efficiency of data processing
- Increase participation among employees
- Provide timely feedback to participants who may want to increase their bids
- Minimize the IT department's role in administering the auction

Solution: Innovative-e, Inc. developed a secure, custom software application that enabled real-time bidding on auction items. An externally hosted application and completely independent domain eliminated the need for internal IT/security. In addition, the application provided role-based functionality that allowed administrators to have a unique login account to manage and monitor content, images, bid history and auction item status. Administrators were also able to manage exceptions, such as a retraction of a bid, retraction of an item on auction, resubmission of a confirmation email or manual approval of a bid. The application also featured a bid confirmation process to ensure a bidder is legitimate.

Users shared a common login account/password for site access to simplify entry and browsing of site. Users also had unique bid profiles with memorized user details to reduce data entry.

Results: Not only did the application more than **double the auction revenue** the first year, but it **also increased the second year's revenue by 50 percent**, with far less effort from the staff. With the real-time feedback of a live auction, users were able to see if they had been outbid, prompting them to up their bid. This created a more competitive auction (and higher per-item final prices). Since the custom application is simpler to administer and less time consuming, the auction administrators were also able to put more items up for auction, which means more money was raised for charity.