A Retailer's Definitive Guide For Shopify Store Optimisation

shopifyplus   nosto   gorgias   STYLA   KLEVU   LOYALTYLION

KLAVIYO   YOTPO   Klarna.   ReCharge   Avalara   Signifyd

Contents

Contents

Contents

Introduction

What is the new normal for commerce? And how can brands thrive in 2021 and beyond?

Lockdowns, travel bans and retail closures have fundamentally changed how people shop. More people are buying online than ever before, and we are all buying a wider range of products. The landscape is becoming more competitive as established brands and DTC startups launch to meet surging demand, while large marketplaces and social platforms strengthen their commerce offerings.

Shopper expectations have never been higher; they expect to be able to browse or buy online and offline, securely and quickly, and receive their products as quickly as possible. In the event of any problems, shoppers expect to be able to resolve these quickly, engaging with brands via whatever channel they feel most comfortable with, live chat, social media, email, phone and in person.

How do leading brands rise to this challenge? Shopify Plus provides the robust and scalable commerce platform that helps over 10,000 brands build the future of commerce. Shopify's developer platform is growing as quickly as our customer base, and brands like Allbirds, Lindt, Knix and Gymshark are leveraging the Shopify developer ecosystem to enhance their commerce experiences.

In this e-book, eleven partners share insights, expertise and examples of how they are helping brands thrive.

For brands that are looking to replatform, to those looking to improve their existing store performance, the ecosystem of Shopify's technology partners provide the insight, capabilities and experience needed to thrive.

Rethinking Personalisation in a Digital-First Era

nosto

Most consumers today continue to rely on ecommerce to connect with retailers. The competition for digital real estate is only growing, and brands that do more than just sell are the ones that win customers for life. The winning formula? Agile personalisation and merchandising combined with subtle cues that turn conversions into valuable connections.

Author: Jake Chatt
Head of Brand Marketing
Nosto

Strategic merchandising that is personal and profitable

For most brands, the global pandemic brought on a number of challenges that have gradually impacted ambitious growth goals: from loss of brick-and-mortar sales channels, to increased competition from native digital brands, to growing customer demand online and minimal resources to capitalize on those demands. In the case of fashion and accessories retailer Skinnydip London, these challenges did little to help them capitalize on the higher site traffic they were experiencing since the start of the pandemic. Their manual merchandising strategy also prevented them from fostering product discovery and driving site conversion.

To tackle this challenge, Skinnydip implemented Nosto's Category Merchandising on their site and A/B tested the impact of automated merchandising against their manual page setups (which were based on the assumption of which products would perform well). The results clearly showed the value that automated merchandising brings to the table.

For their Sale category, Skinnydip tested the impact of promoting trending products that resonate with discount oriented shoppers and generate decent revenue per view. Skinnydip was able to zoom in on the highest potential product range in the sale category to rapidly rotate the most popular discounted inventory - increasing Sales category page conversion rate by 41% and click-through rate by 59%.

For Non-sale categories, Skinnydip tested the impact of showcasing popular products within their Beauty, Clothing and Phone Case and Accessories Category pages that generate a good return in the form of tangible revenue per view. Non-discounted products were prioritized on the respective Category page to maximize AOV and revenue while discounted items were demoted. After testing against their default page setup, Skinnydip saw:

• 36% higher conversion rate and 23% increase in CTR in the Beauty category
• 12% higher conversion rate and 26% increase in CTR in the Clothing category
• 35% higher conversion rate and 38% increase in CTR in the Phone Cases and Accessories category

❝ "Category Merchandising was profitable in less than a month. It's definitely a significant revenue and growth driver for us. That's not the case for every tool." - Meghan Lewis, Head Of Ecommerce, Skinnydip London
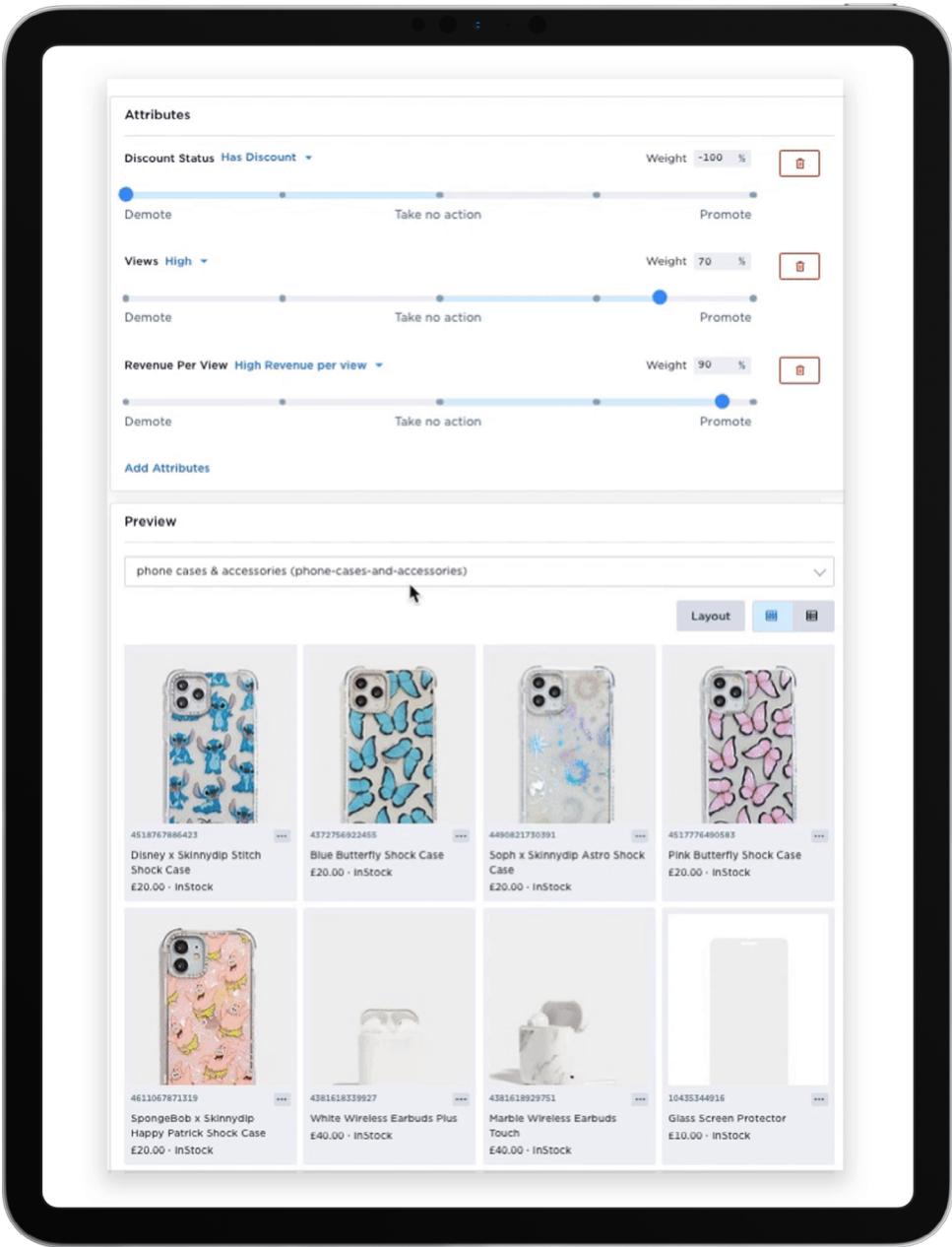
Skinnydip tested the impact of showcasing popular products within select category pages that generate a return in the form of tangible revenue per view.

15.6%

Increase in site-wide conversion rate

8x

ROI

Subtle cues that create urgency

Consumers often trust the buying decisions of other shoppers more than they do their own. FOMO (or' fear of missing out') leverages a shopper's need for communal validation – creating a level of urgency and product desirability that impacts conversion rate.

There are a number of FOMO-inspired tactics brands can use to influence a customer's buying decision, including:

Personalised countdown timers: Both first-time and returning visitors will be constantly aware of the ticking clock as they navigate your site.
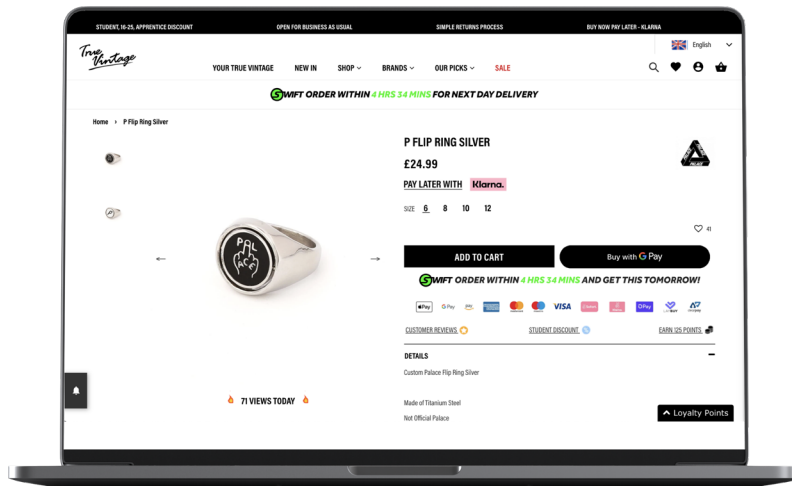
Product availability messaging: Shown when product inventory dips below a certain number, engaging indecisive shoppers by showing them how many units are left of the item they're viewing.

Product views messaging: Similar to product availability messaging, product views play on the influence of social validation - prompting shoppers to eye out a product more if they see others are also interested.

Promo banners: These can include messages communicating free/discounted shipping (and can also target specific customer segments so you avoid discounting across the board)

True Vintage offers next-day delivery to customers who make a purchase within a limited time frame.

Limited-time shipping options: Encourages the customer make a purchase faster by guaranteeing fast shipping if they order within a certain time frame.

Gone are the days of 'basic' personalisation. Strategic merchandising mixed with subtle, yet effective engagement cues are what will ensure your brand leads the digital charge.

ABOUT NOSTO

Nosto enables retailers to deliver personalised digital shopping experiences at every touch point, across every device. An AI-powered Commerce Experience Platform designed for ease of use, Nosto empowers retailers to build, launch and optimise 1:1 omnichannel marketing campaigns and digital experiences without the need for dedicated IT resources or a lengthy implementation process. Leading commerce brands in over 100 countries use Nosto to grow their business and delight their customers. Nosto supports its clients from its offices in Helsinki, Berlin, Stockholm, London, New York, Los Angeles and Paris. To learn more, visit www.nosto.com.

Optimizing ROI with an ecommerce marketing platform

For brands, the biggest accelerator to success is leveraging an ecommerce marketing platform that enables you to maximise revenue and scale fast. There are many benefits to an integrated platform, but here we've highlighted the top five.

Author: Talia Shani
Director of Marketing
Yotpo

4 benefits of an ecommerce marketing platform

Learn how five brands used Yotpo's ecommerce marketing platform to meet — and in many cases, exceed — their goals.

Reduce abandoned carts with SMS: When accessible supplement brand Alkaline Herb Shop was looking for a more meaningful way to connect with customers, they decided to take a chance on SMS. In less than six months with SMSBump by Yotpo, Alkaline Herb Shop has been able to recover over 33% of abandoned carts using SMS Cart Abandonment flows and has seen an overall 160x ROI from SMS alone.

Collect more reviews: Implementing Yotpo Reviews has helped UK-based sports nutrition brand Bulk collect a staggering 200,000+ reviews across all domains and over 1,000 reviews per month per domain. This has led to 30% YoY growth and 150% uplift in the average time onsite. Rather than make claims about how a product affects health and fitness outcomes, Bulk uses customer reviews to educate shoppers about their products and recommend items based on the goals they are hoping to achieve.

Increase CLTV with a loyalty program: Customizable footwear brand PLAE needed a way to drive lifetime value in an industry where customers typically make infrequent purchases. By switching to Yotpo Loyalty, PLAE was able to create a tailored program that weaves loyalty throughout the site, with pages that display point balance and incentives while shoppers browse. As a result, PLAE loyalty program members are 2.7x more likely to make multiple purchases than non-program members, and they have 26% higher annual LTV.

Drive revenue from referrals: As Ministry of Supply expanded their clothing line, they wanted to create a referral program that could successfully bring new customers into their community. Over half (52%) of referrals now come from loyalty program members who have spent over $300. With engaging loyalty program perks, the brand's referral solution now gets 10x higher engagement, accelerating customer spending between tiers to drive ROI.

> **"** "I was skeptical about SMS, but if you're on the fence, I recommend going for it." - Suhail Rivera, Founder, Alkaline Herb Shop
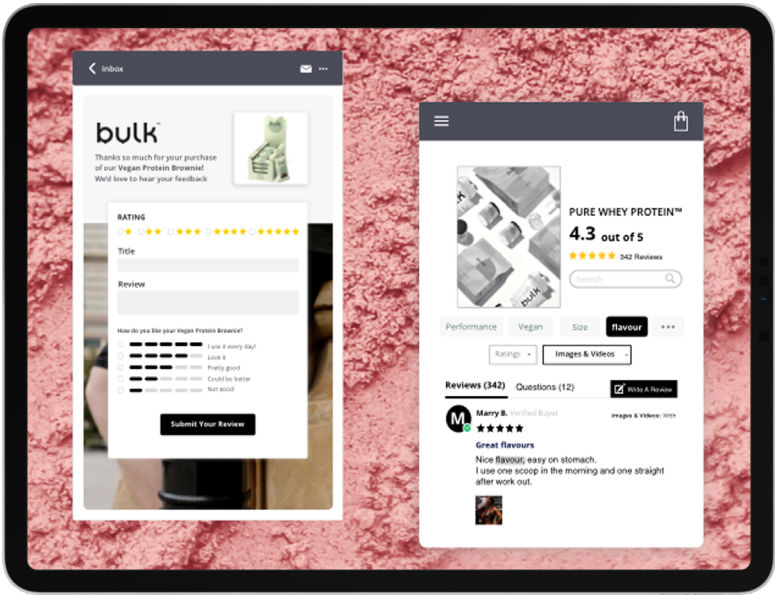
Bulk collects a staggering 200,000+ reviews across all domains and over 1,000 reviews per month per domain.

30%

YoY growth

150%

Uplift in the average time onsite
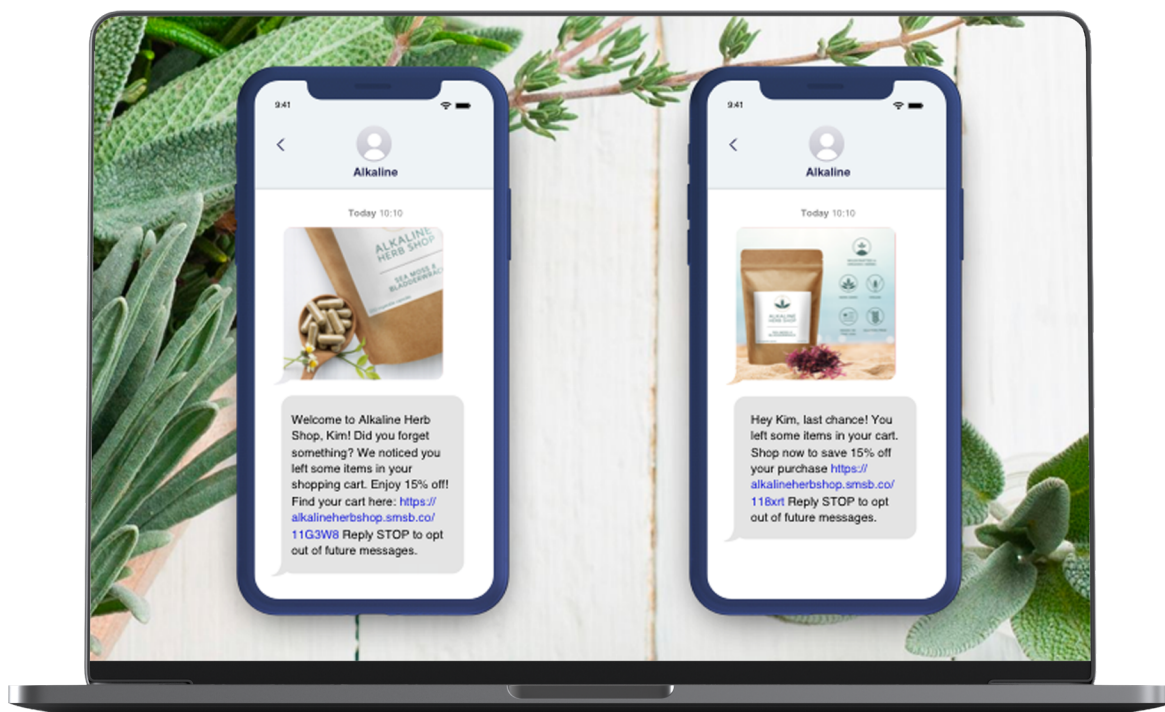
Alkaline Herb Shop has recovered over 33% of abandoned carts using SMS Cart Abandonment flows — generating an overall 160x ROI from SMS alone.

Hit your 2021 goals with an ecommerce platform

Without a consolidated platform, your brand might be stuck relying on various marketing technologies, resulting in siloed data, difficult time management, and missed engagement opportunities. A disconnected marketing tech stack results in disconnected customer experiences — making it harder to extend lifetime value.

An ecommerce marketing platform like Yotpo is the key to maximizing efficiencies, lowering costs, building community, and driving revenue. With an integrated platform, your brand can streamline operations and focus on what matters most: delivering cohesive — and high-converting — customer experiences.

ABOUT YOTPO

Yotpo, the leading ecommerce marketing platform, helps thousands of forward-thinking brands like Patagonia, Rebecca Minkoff, MVMT, Tweezerman, and Bob's Discount Furniture accelerate direct-to-consumer growth. Yotpo's single-platform approach integrates data-driven solutions for reviews, loyalty, SMS marketing, and more, empowering brands to create smarter, higher-converting experiences that spark and sustain customer relationships. We integrate with the tools you use every day, including Google, Instagram, top ecommerce platforms, and the rest of your tech stack. Yotpo is a Forbes Cloud 100 company with offices worldwide including New York, London, Tel Aviv, and Sofia. More information can be found at www.yotpo.com.

CHAPTER 3: THINK FLEXIBLE PAYMENTS AREN'T SEXY? THINK AGAIN.

PAYMENTS

Klarna.

Unlocking new audiences with payments partners

Unprecedented disruption means there's a growing number of factors impacting how retailers can attract, engage and retain consumers.

Payments companies continue to demonstrate their value to retailers when it comes to introducing them to their own loyal community of shoppers.

Author: Samantha McCarthy
Senior Marketing Manager
- UK B2B Marketing Lead
  Klarna

An evolving customer journey

Shopping used to be straightforward. Consumers would decide what to buy, visit the appropriate shop and make a purchase. However, from unlimited inspiration and a cacophony of product choice, to new ways to pay and the disruption of physical retail over the past year, the purchase journey has become complicated and non-linear.

Not only is this redefining the relationship between customer, retailer and service provider, but also breaking down the boundaries between marketing, brand and sales. However, what is clear is that the end customer is more demanding than ever before and retailers need to recognise and address this to thrive.

It's a brave new world for retail. Concepts of customer value are changing at each key stage of the shopper journey – acquisition, conversion, retention and loyalty – meanwhile consumer behaviour is becoming more nuanced, and entry points and touch points are becoming increasingly diverse. For retailers, accessing and engaging new audiences has never been more complex.

With such a broad range of entry points into the shopper journey, brands and retailers need a new approach. And payments companies, such as Klarna, can be valuable partners, helping merchants to acquire new shoppers, optimise purchase power, and deliver the best experience at every touch point.

> "Payments companies, such as Klarna, can be valuable partners, helping merchants to acquire new shoppers, optimise purchase power, and deliver the best experience at every touch point."
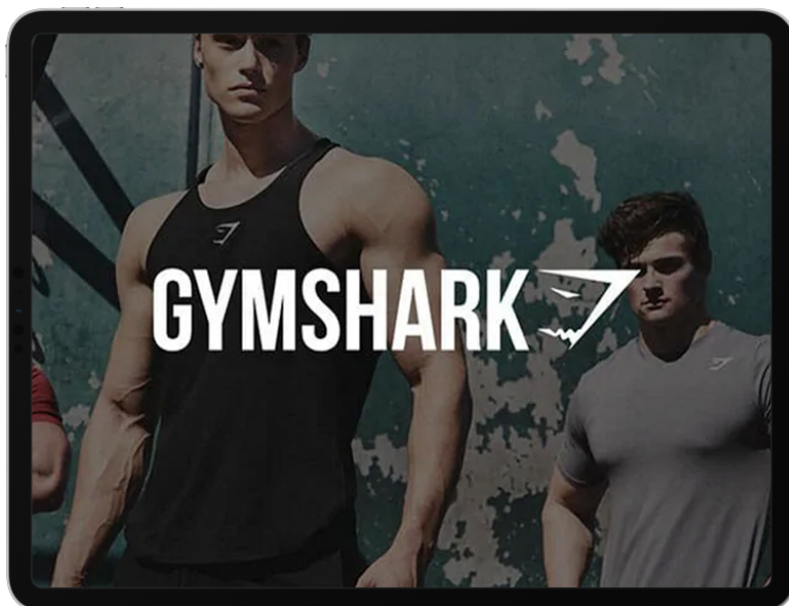
By partnering with Klarna, both Gymshark and houseof have experienced the 'Klarna effect' on acquisition, spend and customer experience.

33%

Gymshark increased average basket size by about 33%

15%

Of houseof customers choose to spread payments

CHAPTER 3: THINK FLEXIBLE PAYMENTS AREN'T SEXY? THINK AGAIN.

Klarna.

With over 3.4M app downloads, Klarna's community of 10m+ shoppers in the UK enjoy a smoooth shopping experience: from wish lists to price drop notifications.

Payments partnerships a win win for brands

These partnerships have the potential to provide all round benefits for retailers and their customers.

At Klarna, we help our merchants reduce customer acquisition costs by providing a gateway to our loyal consumer network of over 10 million UK shoppers who trust Klarna to feel safe and secure across the shopping journey - amplifying their purchasing power whilst protecting them as buyers. Klarna protects sellers too and, by bringing to the table a pre-engaged cohort of shoppers seeking flexible payment options, Klarna acts as a driver of acquisition for merchants, while ensuring the foundations are built for long term loyalty.

For Gymshark, one of the UK's fastest-growing online retailers and specialists in conditioning apparel, partnering with Klarna resulted in an influx of new customers who might have only shopped because of the flexibility and security provided by Klarna at checkout. Gymshark also noted an uptick in customer spend – with an average 33% increase in average basket size with pay later.

Meanwhile, houseof, the lighting and contemporary design brand, has found that around 15% ofcustomers choose to spread payments using Klarna, demonstrating the value add for customers.

For houseof, Klarna has allowed for a more balanced sales cycle, as there is no longer the traditional dip from customers delaying spending as they wait for credit cards to clear.

In a world where entry points to the shopper journey are myriad, customer behaviour is increasingly unpredictable. If they're to survive the seismic shifts the next decade will bring, retailers must adapt their approach, seeking out new ways to create customer value and reduce costs. And for those forward-thinking retailers who adopt a partnership approach, there will be huge opportunity to win over shoppers, grow share of wallet and steal a march on the competition.

ABOUT KLARNA

We make shopping smooth. With Klarna, consumers can buy now and pay later, so they can get what they need today. Klarna's offering to consumers and retailers includes payments, social shopping and personal finances. Over 200,000 retail partners, including H&M, IKEA, Expedia Group, Samsung, ASOS, Peloton, Abercrombie & Fitch, Nike and AliExpress, have enabled Klarna's innovative shopping experience online and in store. Klarna is the most highly valued private fintech in Europe and the fourth highest globally, with a valuation of $10.65 billion. Klarna was founded in 2005, has over 3,500 employees and is active in 17 countries. For more information, visit klarna.com/uk/business or contact sales@ klarna.co.uk.

Solving personalisation challenges with automation

Customers' inboxes are flooded with emails, so only the relevant earn attention. Failing to take customer preferences into account means risking customer loyalty and revenue. So how do you effectively scale 1:1 customer communications in email?

Author: Aubrey Harper
Content Strategist, EMEA Klaviyo

The key to keep customers? Personalise + automate

When we say personalise, we don't mean simply including a first name in an email. The key to customer retention is crafting a relevant experience based on someone's behaviour with your brand.

Automated emails are inherently personalised because they're based on the actions that someone takes on your site. Manual email sends can be timely and relevant, but there are certain messages (like an order confirmation) that resonate immediately after someone takes an action (like making a purchase).

In 2020, the average click rate for automated emails was 6.34% (based on all emails sent with Klaviyo). In comparison, the average click rate for manual email sends was 2.25%. Delighting customers with highly relevant messaging can be the tipping point to convert a one-time buyer into a lifelong customer, and automation is a time-saver for your business.

For coffee business Grind, 71% of revenue comes from repeat customers. And one of the key drivers is

the brand's automated emails triggered by the data they've collected about customers and the actions they've taken on the brand's site.

One example of the brand's automated campaigns is their email reminder to repurchase. Based on how long it takes to use a tin of 30 coffee pods, Grind's customers receive a reminder to resupply. This automated email flow drives 19% of Grind's total automated revenue and converts at 4.4%.

Grind's subscription cancelation is another example of a tailored automated message. Customers who cancel their subscription receive emails that address the specific concern they cited as their reason for cancellation.

The takeaway from these campaigns?

Your customers have engaged with your business because they see its value, so at key points in their journey, prove to them, in a personalised way, how they will benefit from your product or service.

> " "If you're sending content that's interesting, relevant, and personalised, then it's no different from marketing in person. You can't ignore email marketing—even if you'd like to." - Frankie Cooke, Brand Coordinator, Grind
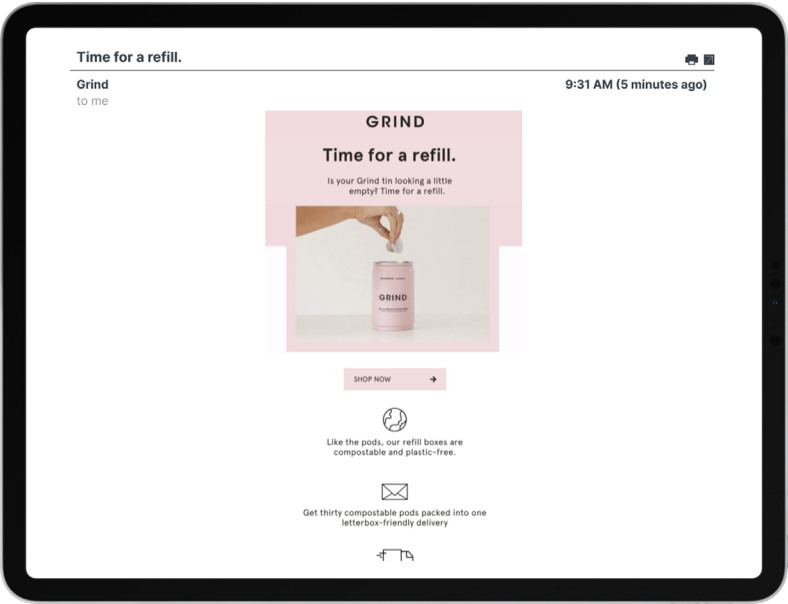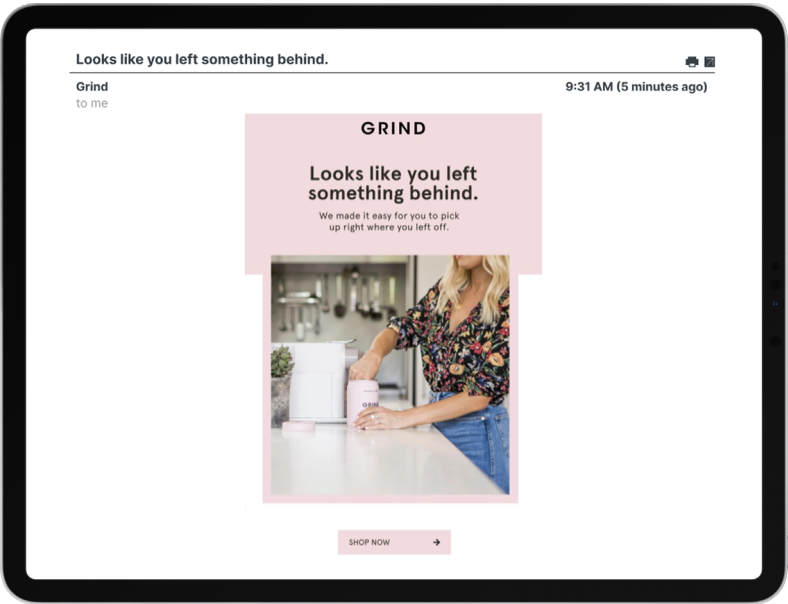
These automated emails help Grind send tailored messages at the perfect time in response to a customer's actions without having to manually click send.

41%

Of automated flow revenue from abandoned cart

3,142%

YOY increase in revenue from email

Use real-time data to map out your ideal customer experience, based on key triggers like an abandoned cart or X number of days since last purchase.

Win new customers with behavior-driven flows

Your current customers aren't the only people who respond to the personalisation you employ with your automated emails. Capture the coveted attention of your future customers by showing them you're paying attention to and care about them.

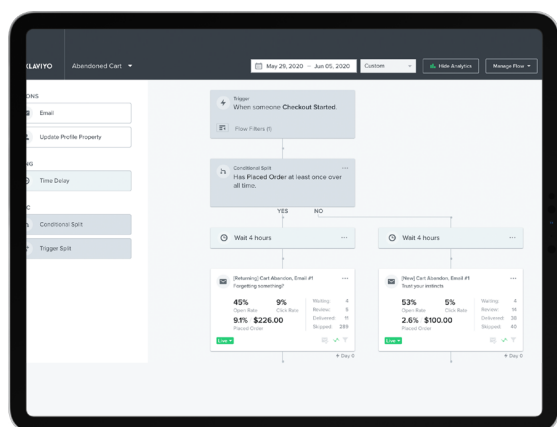One popular automated campaign is the abandoned cart email. Ecommerce brands may lose up to £12.9 billion ($18 billion) in yearly sales revenue from abandoned carts, according to Forrester Research. ecover some of that lost money by setting up an email series to nudge people to become customers.

Abandoned cart emails have high conversion rates: People open 45% of cart abandonment emails and click on 21% of emails, and 50% of the recipients who click make a purchase, according to Moosend.

Based on those figures, cart abandonment emails have a purchase rate of just over 10%.

Grind uses two separate abandoned cart flows: A general one for customers who abandon one-off purchases and another for customers who abandon setting up a new subscription.

Grind's general abandoned cart series is their highest revenue-generating flow, driving a 12.3% conversion

rate and 41% of all revenue attributed to their automated emails.

"Quite often, people have a look at our website and then they might forget about it and get distracted. It's not the case that they didn't want to purchase, so we send them a reminder and give a discount, which always helps," says Frankie Cooke, brand coordinator at Grind.

Take advantage of the higher engagement and elevated customer experience value of automated campaigns. Your current and future customers will remember it—and your brand.

ABOUT KLAVIYO

Klaviyo is a world-leading marketing automation platform dedicated to accelerating revenue and customer connection for online businesses using the channels they own like email, web and mobile. Enabling brands to leverage these owned marketing channels, Klaviyo makes it easy to store, access, analyze and use transactional and behavioral data to power highly-targeted customer and prospect communications. The company's hybrid customer-data and marketing-platform model allows companies to grow by fostering direct, high-fidelity relationships with customers, without giving up their valuable data to Facebook or Amazon. Over 60,000 innovative companies sell more with Klaviyo. Learn more at www.klaviyo.com.

⩓ KLEVU

On-site search: Make the journey to product delightful

Truly innovative product discovery technology has been the privilege of tech giants for too long. Here's how using an advanced on-site search solution can give your ecommerce business a boost from day one.

Author: Ian Scarr
Head of UK
Klevu

The rise of natural language in search

Ecommerce search is changing, fast. Voice-led technologies are turning 'zero UI' interactions into ubiquitous experiences and consumers are getting more comfortable with using natural language for searching in all search experiences. Shoppers have realised that being more specific in how they search can get them relevant results more quickly and this behaviour is influencing not only web discovery, but ecommerce discovery. In fact, according to Google, mobile searches including qualifiers like "me" and "I" have grown over 60% in two years, signifying another shift toward a penchant for personalised results. This makes natural language processing within on-site search engines essential.

Klevu did research into the state of product discovery experiences on ecommerce websites and found that 78% of websites fail to deliver relevant results when processing complex search queries. Ecommerce websites that can deliver exact match results not only on the search results pages but also the type ahead search-as-you-type on mobile and desktop will see conversion rates soar.

For luxury brand, Toteme, built by We Make Websites using Klevu's JSv2 library, the type ahead search delivers relevant results even when searching for product attributes such as price range and color (try it here and search for 'black boots under 600').

When the results are hyper-relevant, as in the Toteme example, it's beneficial to display relevant product information as quickly as possible. Displaying rich content such as product imagery, price and promotions can help shorten the journey to product and in the case of Oco Glasses, led to a 20% increase in site-wide conversion. (Check out the search overlay here).

All of these 'bells and whistles' on ecommerce websites can significantly impact conversion. If the search engine can handle natural language and display hyper-relevant results, the impact will be positive, if not, it may cause more harm than help.

> **"**
> "78% of websites fail to deliver relevant search results to complex queries."

> "We've got to make sure that we are selling the right product. Giving us insight into what brands people are searching for is really good.
>
> - Adam, Co-founder at OCO Glasses
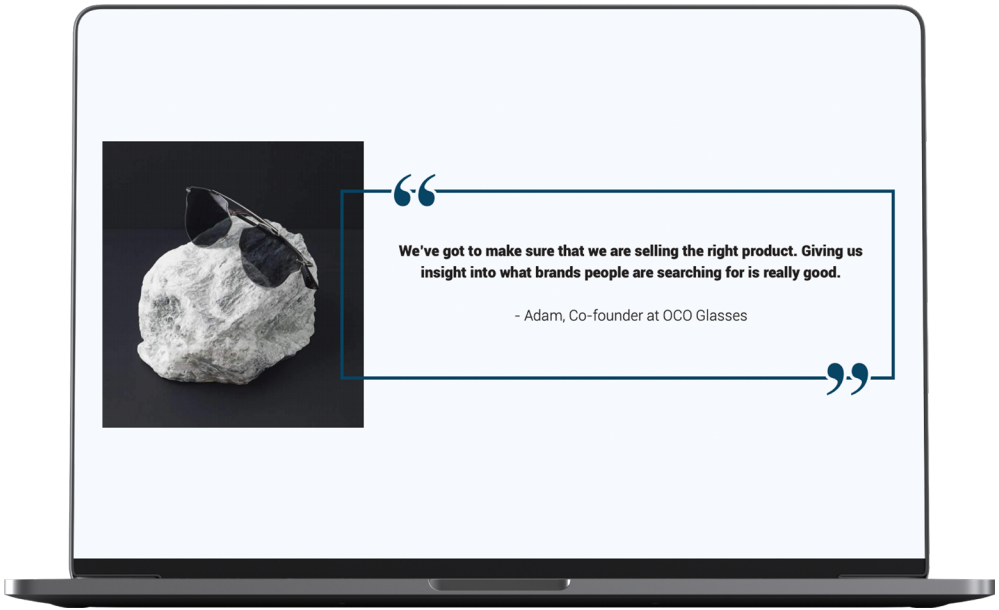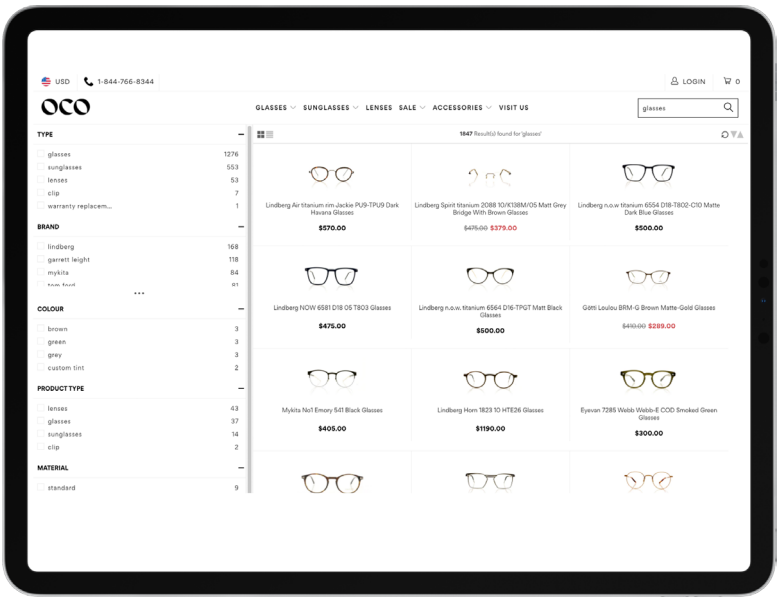
Product discovery at its best:
OCO Glasses + Klevu

20%

increase in
conversion
rate site-
wide

26%

longer time
spent on the
website after
search

Using NLP, Klevu Smart Search can identify nuances of spoken or typed language, identify shopper intent, and display relevant results.

Delight your shoppers with discovery

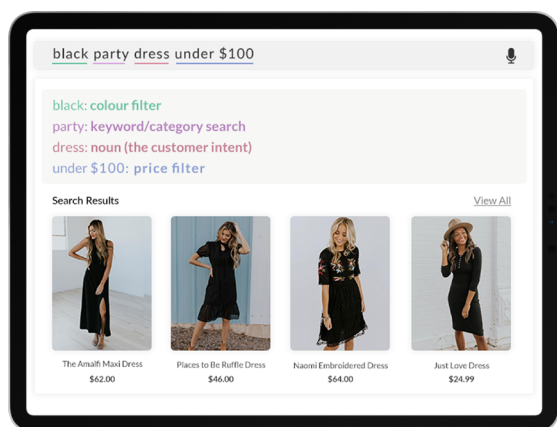Truly innovative product discovery technology has been the privilege of tech giants such as Amazon and Google for too long. Retailers invest so much getting shoppers to their websites, only to hemorrhage much of that investment because the on-site search just doesn't work.

Exposing the search bar drives more shoppers to use search, and since search converts 4-6x higher than other website journeys, it's a no brainer to expose the search bar on mobile and desktop devices and make it really clear what shoppers can search for.

In brand new Klevu Ecommerce Discovery Index research, Klevu found that many retailers were not optimising the start of the product discovery journey, especially on mobile. The research found that 52% of retailers display the full search box on mobile, compared to 86% that display it on desktop devices. In addition, only 36% of retailers make it clear what shoppers can search for.

In conclusion, making search the best possible discovery journey is not just beneficial for shoppers, it provides you with relevant high-intent data you can use to personalise the rest of your website. How to optimise your search experience:

1. **Have the search box clearly visible** on page load with text in the box that helps shoppers know what they can search for, e.g. brand, advice, products.

2. Show a search overlay that **starts showing product and relevant content right away** when the shopper types into the search.

3. Ensure the on-site search can **handle natural language**, meaning that it can identify nuances of spoken or typed language to identify shopper intent and searches all available product data to return only relevant results.

There's never been a better time to double down on your on-site customer experience, and Klevu can help.

ABOUT KLEVU

Through AI and NLP-powered product discovery technology, Klevu enables merchants to deliver hyper-relevant, personalised ecommerce experiences powered by real-time shopper intent. Klevu's AI Discovery Suite includes Search and Merchandising. For more information or to learn more, schedule a demo. Klevu solutions are quick and easy to install and compatible with all ecommerce platforms. Klevu powers thousands of ecommerce businesses worldwide and has offices in the UK, US, Sweden, Finland, and India.

Customer communities: Your untapped revenue stream

54% of customers are loyal to brands if they feel part of a community – but "community" often gets a bad rep. It can be seen as a vanity tactic that's hard to measure and doesn't impact the bottom line.

However, brands with communities can see over 4,000% ROI.

Author: Mollie Woolnough-Rai
Senior Content Marketing Executive
LoyaltyLion

I'd like a perk with that: customer community in practice

2020's quickest thinkers were the ones who built communities to stay in touch with their customers.

They knew that as consumers became disconnected, they would seek ways to fill gaps. For many shoppers, brands they already felt connected to satisfied that craving:

• In the first half of 2020, 68% of consumers preferred to return to the comfort of brands they already knew and trusted.

Brands that built on this emotional attachment and united their existing customers saw more brand engagement. They gave customers a reason to return to their store and engage even when they weren't looking to spend. But how?

Astrid and Miyu are an example of a brand that built up their customer community in a tricky year.

First off, they created and promoted community-centric content: including inspirational playlists and podcasts to get their customers through the hardest parts of lockdown. These pieces made shoppers feel like Astrid & Miyu really cared about them and, as a result, the brand became part of their daily lives.

> " "Community is at the heart of Astrid & Miyu's retention strategy. Their loyalty program rewards customers for being active and engaged in their community."
> Megan Kealey, Customer Success Manager, LoyaltyLion

21
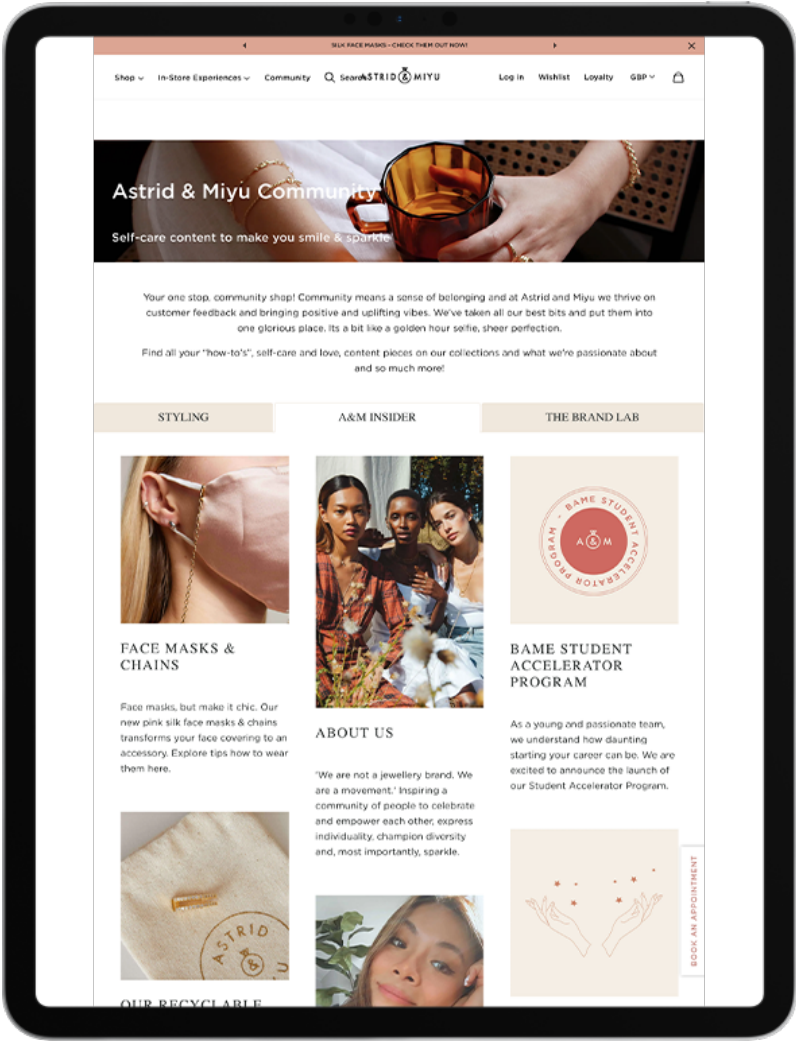
Astrid & Miyu's community hub.

While this community content lived and breathed on public channels (on social media and on their website) the brand uses their loyalty program to add another, exclusive layer.

Community members who participate in the loyalty program are gifted points each time they purchase, or undertake other positive actions such as referrals, reviews and social likes or follows. These points are then redeemable for rewards. Customers also get exclusive perks including 20% discounts on products from their partner, TRIP drinks.

10%

increase
in repeat
purchase rate

20%
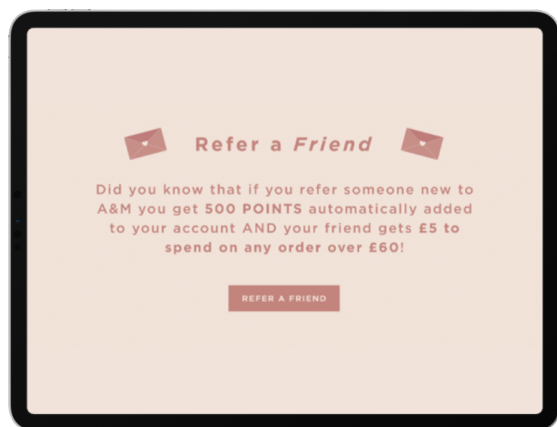
Exclusive 20%
discount from
partner TRIP
drinks

Astrid & Miyu's community get loyalty points for referrals.

This value exchange strengthens the emotional bond customers feel with the brand. The more they love you, the more they're going to become active community members that engage with your marketing and tell others about you. At the same time, the perks and rewards give them reasons to return and spend more.

Let's connect: Finding your shared consciousness

Customer communities aren't only about giving your shoppers a better customer experience. They're also about promoting shared values and finding common interests you can connect on.

With conscious consumerism on the rise (62% of customers will be loyal to a brand if it has a positive social impact on the causes they care about) why not connect over a shared, moral responsibility? Brands like Edgard & Cooper and Pacifica Beauty are using their loyalty programs to unite their communities through charitable initiatives:

• Edgard & Cooper lets customers spend their loyalty points to plant a tree

• Pacifica gifts shoppers points if they return their empty packaging to be recycled

By giving their communities the tools to do good through the program, brands can encourage customers to connect with their store (and one another) around shared values. This means they'll return and spend more with these stores, rather than turning to others in the market they aren't aligned with. Once you've welcomed your existing customers into your community you need to stop it from getting stale. It's now your job to get fresh faces interested and engaging with it.

If you've done a good job of making your customers feel valued through perks and shared values they'll be itching to share you with others they think will like you. Encourage your customers to welcome new members to your community with a referral program that rewards shoppers for introducing your store to others. The bikini brand, Cupshe, rewards customers 1,000 loyalty points if they refer a friend, for example.

Customers acquired this way spend 200% more on average. This is because the recommendation came from someone they know. And, if you've got community initiatives they can go back to and engage with, bingo: you've got them locked in and spending for the long-haul.

ABOUT LOYALTYLION

LoyaltyLion is a data-driven loyalty and engagement platform that powers ecommerce growth. A loyalty program is about more than points and rewards. It is about unlocking real insights to increase customer lifetime value. With LoyaltyLion, you can build a better understanding of what drives longer-lasting customer relationships, and use those insights to connect and accelerate your existing marketing efforts. Proven to increase retention and spend, LoyaltyLion is trusted by thousands of fast-growth ecommerce merchants worldwide.

Creating a first-class customer experience online

Having a well-designed website no longer sets brands apart from competitors. With more ecommerce stores opening, it's become difficult to attract new customers.

How can ecommerce businesses stand out without a traditional physical store experience?

Author: Travis Cross
Partner Marketing Manager
Gorgias

Personalised experiences for online shoppers

The COVID pandemic accelerated ecommerce growth by 5 years as consumers move online for their shopping needs. As more shoppers moved online, merchants had to figure out how to accommodate all these new shoppers with smooth operations, support, and customer experiences.

Providing all these new shoppers with fast, helpful and empathetic service for their shopping became a difficult task - especially for those not equipped to handle it. By using a Helpdesk, brands could centralize all their customer communication into one platform (from email, social media, SMS, live chat and more).

Providing a positive customer experience pays off with improved conversion rates, retention and loyalty. Now more than ever is key for brands to personalise the experiences of online shoppers with friendly, helpful reps from your brand.Optimised customer journeys play a significant role in purchasing decisions and conversions. And the online experience is a key

differentiating factor as 86% of shoppers are willing to purchase if the experience is great. And 91% of consumers "are more likely to shop with brands that recognize, remember and provide relevant offers and recommendations".

5 out of 10 people would not make another purchase if given a bad customer experience, and as marketing and acquisition costs continue to increase, it's more important than ever to focus on retaining the customers who are taking a chance on your brand.

During the pandemic, being able to provide helpful service was critical to elevating a customers experience, rapport and trust building.

Merchants using an ecommerce helpdesk can drastically upgrade their customer service even with small teams. Gorgias is built to automate commonly asked questions - personalised with Shopify customer data - to improve first response times, give agents more time on complex tickets, and provide live chat to support shoppers through their buying decisions.

> "Shoppers who open a live chat conversation are 2.8x more likely to convert and purchase."
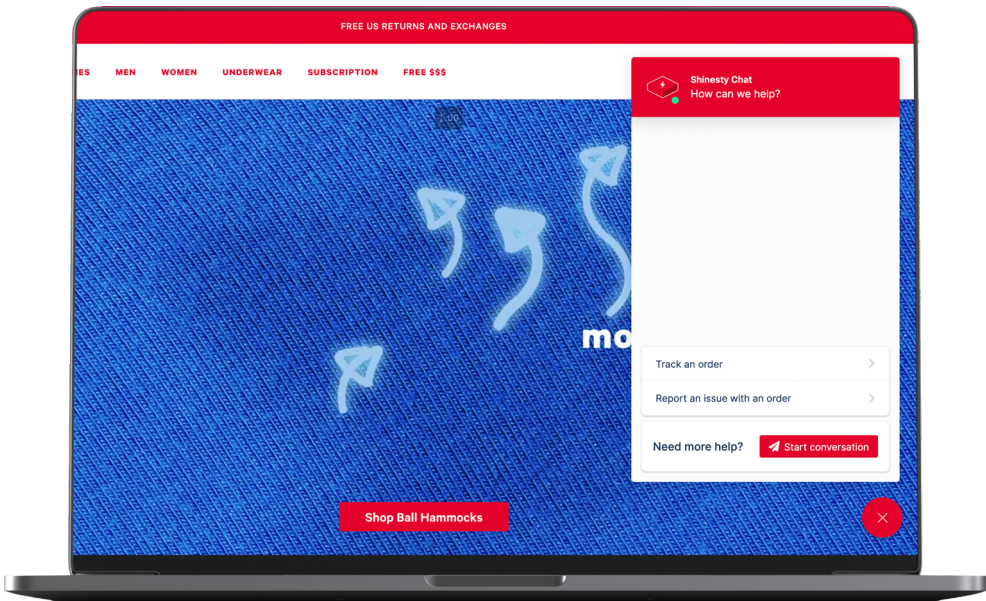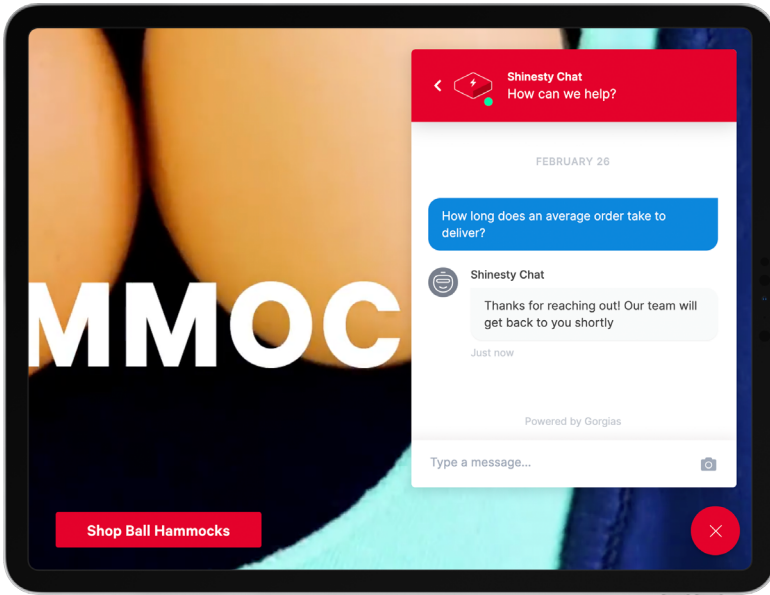
Launch live chat on Cart or Product pages to ease into inquiry volume and optimise based on consumer feedback before offering live chat site-wide.

28%

Conversion rate for pre-sale chats or SMS replied in < 10 min

>25%

In sales via 5% increase in retention

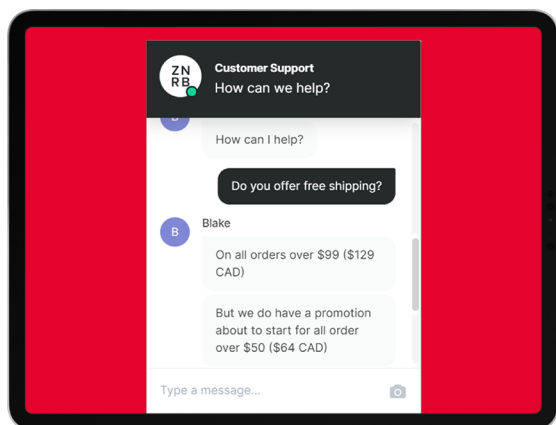Respond to your audience asking about your products on ads and social posts, increasing your sales and ad effectiveness by 5% increase in ad-spend.

Replicating the in-store experience with livechat

Providing fast, always-on, personalised shopping experiences have been traditionally challenging, and few brands have actually been able to deliver to modern online shoppers. The modern online shopper is always "on" and is looking for exceptional CX from the brands they shop and engage with.

Traditionally, ecommerce websites have not been flexible enough to meet these expectations. But with new tech emerging, brands have an opportunity to set themselves apart from the rest of the pack.

How? Utilizing live chat to replicate the in-store experience, online.

Knowing your busiest hours and supporting shoppers when they are most engaged on your website can catch potential shoppers as they're thinking about a purchase. When a website visitor is in the midst of their decision-making process, you can send a stand-by message letting them know you're available to chat immediately.

Shoppers who open a live chat conversation are 2.8x more likely to convert and purchase. Live chat is a great way to engage shoppers on a personal level and overcome the obstacles to purchase that are concerning them at that very moment.

Incorporating live chat on your checkout page gives shoppers a chance to ask any questions they might have that could prevent them from completing their purchase.

But if not used correctly, live chat can damage your conversion rate.

You don't want to distract your shoppers in the most important stage of the customer journey. So, the best way to use live chat on checkout pages is to insert a live chat button in a visible spot on these pages that never pops up by default.

Additionally, options like Gorgias allow you to add fields (such as email) to your chat. Visitors can be required to enter their email address to start chatting with you, which allows you to capture new leads.

ABOUT GORGIAS

Gorgias is a leading helpdesk for Shopify, Magento and BigCommerce merchants where retailers can manage all of their customer communication & tickets in one platform (email, social media, SMS, phone). It's powered with machine learning to automate up to 25% of commonly asked questions and seamlessly integrates into your existing tech stack to deliver better customer support.

Converting Visitors with Content Experiences

STYLA

The good news first: online-retail is booming! With this trend, however, consumer expectations are also continuing to rise. If retailers don't deliver engaging content and digital experiences, the chances of losing customers to competitors are high.

Author: Richard Buettner
VP of Marketing
Styla

The Right Content Experience at the Right Buying Stage

When considering content requirements, there are four stages consumers go through before making a buying decision:

Awareness stage: The first impression counts

It takes visitors only 50 milliseconds to decide if they like your website, which means you need to create a great impression right from the start. The homepage and landing pages are key areas for engaging and relevant content. On landing pages, it is crucial to incorporate as many topics as possible around your brand, while also displaying just as much shoppable content.

International sailmaker North Sails, for instance, regularly creates engaging campaign pages to introduce new products. Instead of just listing products in a grid, products are showcased in videos and photo collages, which provides interesting context.

Consideration stage: The power of guided selling

Once shoppers are in the consideration stage, it is critical to leverage multimedia content to provide educational advice one would receive from a helpful salesperson in a physical store, but in a fun and interactive way. Strellson, Switzerland's largest menswear manufacturer, offers detailed shopping guides with explanatory pictures, videos, and drawings. Overcoming the informational hurdle will result in more confidence in purchasing decisions and fewer shopping cart abandonments.

Decision stage: Maximising product detail pages

When a browser is closer to becoming a buyer, it becomes essential to provide educational content that drives them closer to conversion - including user-generated content that showcases how much customers use these products.

Loyalty stage: Re-engagement is key

The best way to build loyalty and re-engagement is through an email newsletter or a blog serving as an 'inspiration hub'. This is useful for both customers and visitors who have no specific purchase intent. On shoe brand Melvin & Hamilton's blog, they present themselves as an expert in their field by providing their audience with engaging content such as guides and tutorials around current trends.

> **"** "We chose Styla to create a narrow connection between content and commerce. Their simplie, yet high-quality solution allows us to tell our brand stories in a more attractive way."
> - Lorenz Würgler, Manager E-Commerce & Online Marketing at Calida
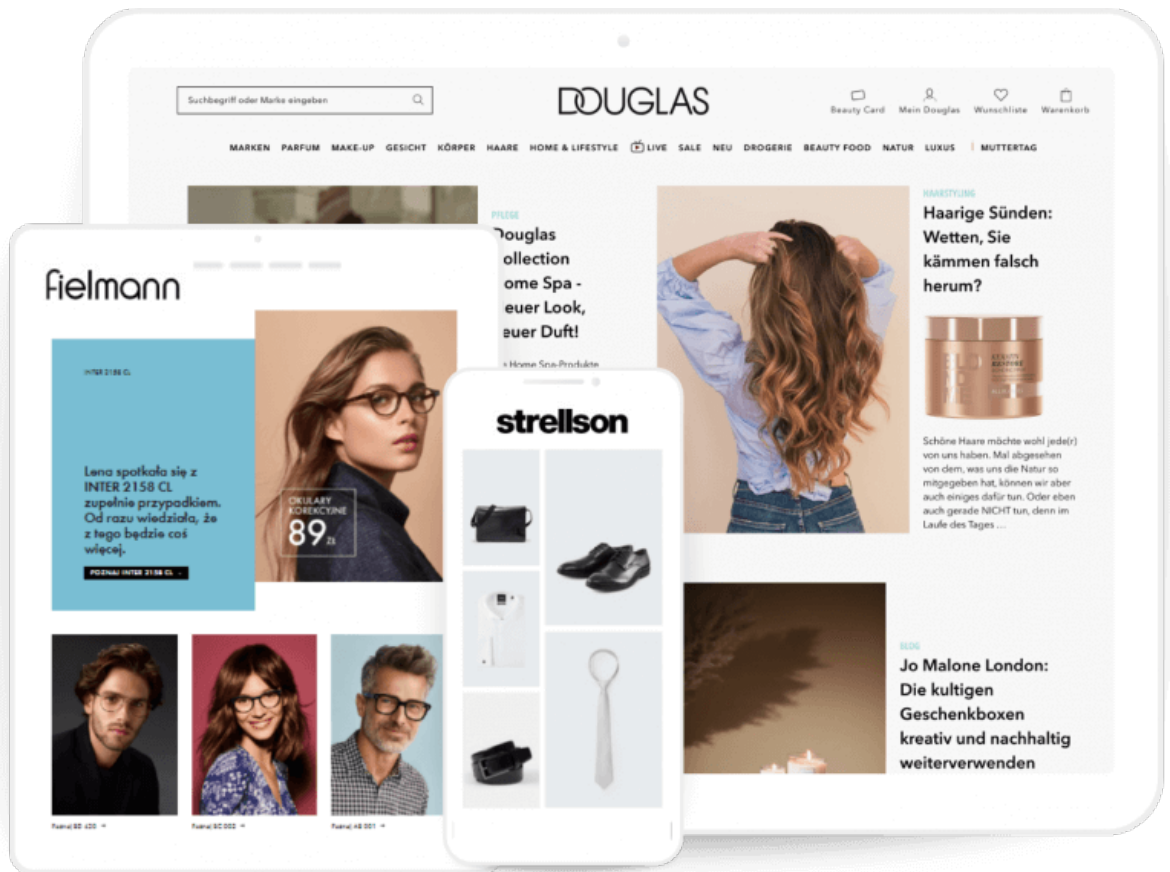
Companies like Douglas, Fielmann and Strellson use Styla's technology to create inspirational content hubs that drive higher engagement.

Deliver conversion-driven, iconic experiences
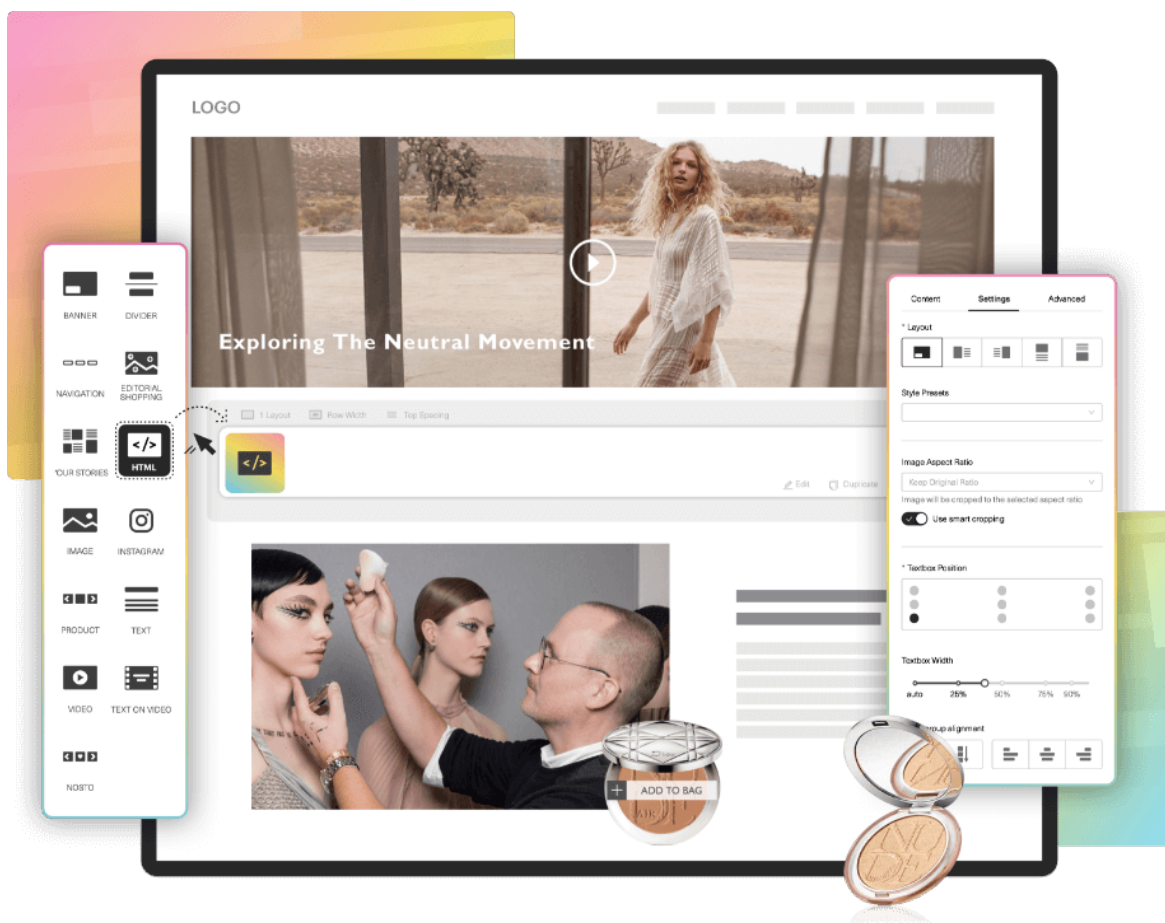
Create a frontend experience without backend changes

Build immersive, digital experiences with Styla to engage with your customers and transform your storefront into the driver of your growth.

Diverting from a "one size fits all" approach

Providing an engaging customer journey has become absolutely necessary for success in ecommerce in 2021. However, a mesmerizing digital experience is not a "one size fits all" approach.

You need to find suitable strategies and content forms which are right for your particular business goals and buyer personas. Plus, appropriate content technologies allow you to stay productive, agile, and inspired while creating rich content experiences.

ABOUT STYLA

STYLA's Frontend Experience Platform allows digital teams to deliver commerce- and customer experiences at scale. Leading brands such as JD Williams, Holland & Barrett, Foot Locker, OTTO and HENKEL are utilising STYLA's no-code platform to enrich their storefronts with no ongoing IT or agency support needed.

Automate sales tax compliance in 2021

Selling online enables retailers to connect with customers near and far - and with COVID-19, it's become essential. Whether your customers are down the street or three states over, your ecommerce store needs to be able to handle the complexities of sales tax compliance.

Author: Gail Cole
Senior Marketing Writer
Avalara

Nexus, tax rates, and product taxability

Sales tax nexus – the connection between a business and a state that allows a state to impose a sales tax collection obligation on the business — was once based almost entirely on physical presence. While physical presence in a state still creates sales tax nexus, states can now base nexus solely on economic activity in a state, or economic nexus.

Since most states enforce economic nexus, many businesses are required to collect sales tax in multiple states. To get it right, they need to know whether the goods and services they sell are taxable, and if so, which rate to apply.

Product taxability rules vary by location and are subject to change. There are complex taxability rules for a host of products and services, and determining the taxability of delivery or shipping charges is often challenging.

Taxability can also impact your nexus footprint: Some states include exempt transactions in their economic nexus threshold, while other states only count taxable sales. You need to know what's what to know whether you're at risk of creating economic nexus.

If you do have an obligation to collect and the products you sell are taxable, you need to know which rate to apply to each sale. There are more than 13,000 different sales tax jurisdictions in the United States, many of them overlapping. Each has its own rate and reporting code.

Sales tax rates do not align with ZIP codes, so the most effective way to determine the proper rate for any transaction is to use geolocation technology that bases rates on the exact location of the sale. When incorporated into an online shopping cart, rates can be determined in the blink of an eye and changes are automatically updated in the system.

> "
> "I don't lose sleep worrying about late or misfiled taxes and penalties, and Avalara keeps us up-to-date as requirements change." - Robin Hecht, Controller Boll & Branch

Boll & Branch's ethos, "We don't do what's easy - we do what's right", guides how the brand's finance department approaches its sales tax obligations.

2014

Selling online with a warehouse in CA and an office in NJ

2021

Selling through Nordstrom, Boll & Branch stores, and online

Tax challenge, meet tax solution. Avalara reduces the hassle and complexity of tax compliance at every stage — no matter the industry or size of your business.

Cross-border/multi-channel sales and managing sales tax

Selling across state and international lines? Once you cross a state's economic nexus sales or transaction threshold, you're required to register with the tax authority and comply with sales and use tax laws. Unfortunately, economic nexus thresholds differ from state to state.

Businesses with exempt customers need an ecommerce platform capable of handling exempt transactions: It should identify when tax should not be collected and work in concert with an exemption certificate management tool to collect all necessary information from exempt purchasers.

It's important to remember that exempt sales can impact your nexus footprint because many states include exempt sales in their economic nexus thresholds.

Businesses that sell through multiple channels can experience complications with sales and use tax compliance. You need to know whether sales made through a marketplace should be included when calculating an economic nexus threshold, and if those sales need to be reported separately. You also need to ensure all sales are reported. The more manual your sales tax management, from calculations to returns, the more onerous and error-prone the task.

Additionally, every seller has to deal with returns at some point. The more streamlined the process — the easier it is for customers to return products — the more satisfied customers will be.

Can an online purchase be returned or exchanged at a brick-and-mortar store? Is the shipping on return packages free? These are all important factors to consider. Equally important is getting the sales tax on returns and exchanges right: Sales tax refunds must be accurately reported. Using one system to calculate sales tax, file returns, and remit tax helps ensure nothing gets lost in the process. Look at your ecommerce platform with a critical eye. Make sure it does everything you need, including calculating sales tax, managing exempt sales, and facilitating returns.

ABOUT AVALARA

Avalara helps businesses of all sizes get tax compliance right. In partnership with leading ERP, accounting, ecommerce, and other financial management system providers, Avalara delivers cloud-based compliance solutions for various transaction taxes, including sales and use, VAT, GST, excise, communications, lodging, and other indirect tax types. Headquartered in Seattle, Avalara has offices across the U.S. and around the world in Brazil, Europe, and India.

More information at avalara.com.

Managing the order tsunami in ecommerce's new era

The pandemic-driven digital acceleration has been good news for many ecommerce enterprises that have seen sales double in a time of lockdowns. But with the order surge comes a need for speed while protecting the business and the customer experience.

Author: Ed Whitehead
Managing Director, EMEA
Signifyd

The great digital acceleration

We can all stipulate that ecommerce is not looking back. The mountainous wave of online sales driven by stay-at-home orders and consumers' wariness of shopping in stores has pushed digital sales to new heights. Sales in key verticals continue to show year-over-year increases of 80% to 100%, according to Signifyd's Ecommerce Pulse data. Each of Signifyd's top 500 customers saw sales at least double in 2020.

Every day now is like the peak of the holiday season. The increase in orders brings a need to scale, while redoubling efforts to protect the enterprise from fraud and consumer abuse. Fraudsters capitalize on chaos. As fraud teams scrambled to keep up with the crush of additional orders, fraud attacks increased.

Fraud pressure — defined as the number of very risky orders likely to be fraudulent — is up nearly 4x this month since pre-pandemic days, Signifyd data shows. And instances of consumer abuse — cases in which a shopper falsely says an online order never arrived or says they never made a purchase that they did — are also on the rise during the pandemic. Signifyd's Customer Abuse Index — a measure of chargebacks filed and won by Signifyd — is up more than 350% compared to a pre-pandemic benchmark.

All of these trends accelerate the challenges that online and omnichannel retailers have faced since well before the pandemic. Health and beauty technology brand CurrentBody has been growing rapidly while expanding globally. The difficulty of sorting legitimate from fraudulent orders in a new territory proved too much for CurrentBody's previous fraud-protection provider. CurrentBody had to pick up the slack, spending as many as 20 hours a week reviewing orders the previous vendor declined.

That commitment simply wasn't sustainable, given CurrentBody's rapid growth.

So, CurrentBody turned to Signifyd.

> " "Our team had to constantly make requests for more information and waste time on the phone with customer success. It was clear this process needed an overhaul." - Lynn Carbine, CurrentBody Head of Trading
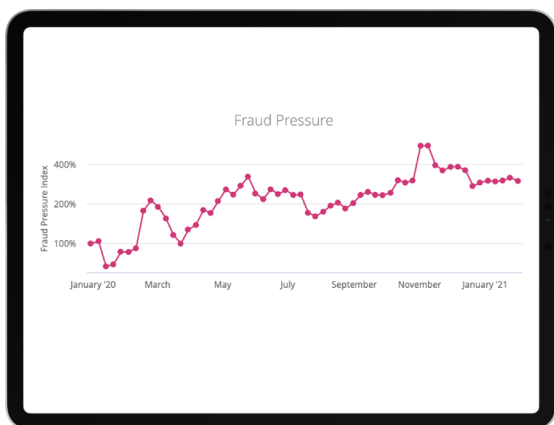
CurrentBody lowered its chargeback rate and boosted approval rate with Signifyd's Commerce Protection Platform — all while growing dramatically and expanding internationally.

.04%

.5% to .04% CurrentBody chargeback rate improvement

98%

93% to 98% CurrentBody approval rate improvement

Fraud Pressure

Fraud pressure has increased dramatically during the pandemic as fraud rings seek to take advantage of the disruption.

Finding answers to pandemic-era challenges

By implementing Signifyd's Revenue Protection solution, CurrentBody significantly decreased its chargeback rate and increased its approval rate, while reducing the time it dedicated to manually reviewing orders from 20 hours a week to one to four hours a week. Furthermore, Signifyd's Abuse Prevention solution helped CurrentBody stamp out unauthorized resellers who potentially could harm the CurrentBody brand and upset key relationships with those who actually were authorized to resell CurrentBody products.

Signifyd's machine-learning-based Commerce Protection Platform was instrumental in CurrentBody being able to expand into three new countries without worrying about scaling up for increased orders with novel characteristics.

And the story doesn't end there — not for CurrentBody, which has additional and aggressive international expansion plans, nor for other merchants looking forward to a post-COVID world.

Signifyd's market research indicates that consumers intend to stick with the habits they've formed during the pandemic. Specifically, 49% of those surveyed by Upwave on behalf of Signifyd said they intended to continue to do more of their shopping online even once the virus is vanquished.

And somewhat less uplifting is the evidence that consumers may have grown more comfortable with being dishonest in order to take advantage of brands and merchants selling online. In a Signifyd consumer sentiment survey conducted six months into the pandemic, 36% of respondents admitted to falsely claiming that a legitimate charge on their credit card statement was fraudulent. Another 31% had claimed that an online order never arrived or that it was unsatisfactory, when neither was true.

All of which is to say that the increase in ecommerce orders is not going to fade. And neither is the increase in fraud and abuse that goes along with it.

ABOUT SIGNIFYD

Signifyd provides an end-to-end Commerce Protection Platform that leverages its Commerce Network to maximize conversion, automate customer experience and eliminate fraud and customer abuse for retailers. Signifyd counts among its customers a number of companies on the Fortune 1000 and Internet Retailer Top 500 lists. Signifyd is headquartered in San Jose, CA., with locations in Denver, New York, Mexico City, Belfast and London.

ReCharge

Capitalizing on revenue growth using subscriptions

You know what's often better than getting new customers? Retaining the ones you have. Attention spans are more fickle than they've ever been, so how can you keep the focus of your customers and convert it into revenue?

Author: Chase Alderton
Growth Marketing Manager
ReCharge

Subscriptions as a retention tool

Subscriptions have been one of the most important and paradigm-shifting business models of the 21st century. Many of the largest and most successful companies have been built on recurring revenue or shifted their legacy businesses to this model like Microsoft and Adobe.

Consumers are well-conditioned to purchasing subscriptions online thanks to trailblazing digital and media companies such as Netflix and Spotify. The data speaks for itself with the subscription market projected to grow to $478 billion by 2025.

Customer retention is one of the major benefits of a subscription model. Merchants who can provide a quality product delivered on a consistent cadence

unlock a key to stable growth and scale past plateaus. Customers share in the windfall as well, enjoying the convenience of the product they desire delivered regularly on a predictable schedule of their choosing.

Replenishable products like kitchen and bathroom items, supplements and nutrition, or beauty and personal care products have seen tremendous success by harnessing the power of subscriptions.

The benefits to reducing churn are baked into the subscription model, with customers getting the products they want on their timelines. What's more, customers who are engaged with the brand often stay subscribed up to twice as long as other consumers.

> "The benefits to reducing churn are baked into the subscription model, with customers getting the products they want on their timelines."
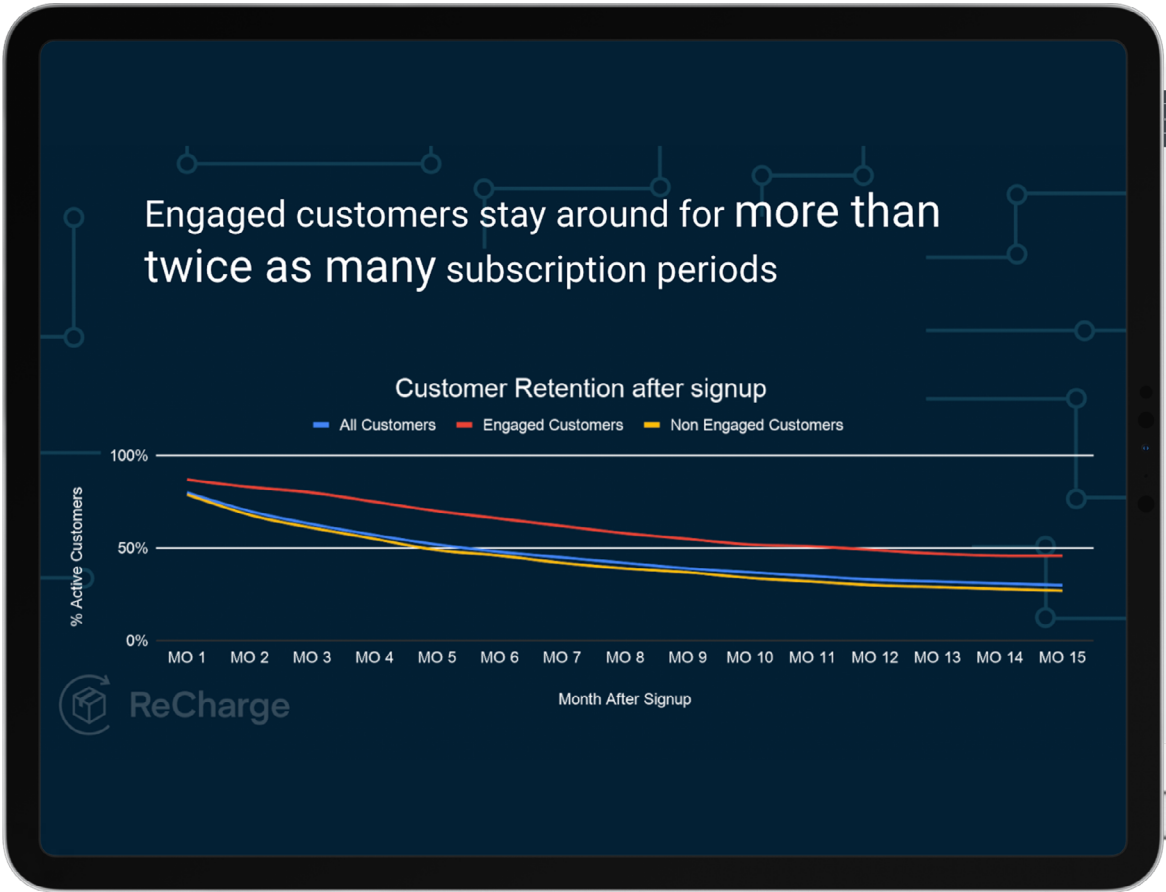
The more engaged a customer is with the brand, the greater retention that can be expected.

$478B

Subscriptions projected to grow to $478B by 2025

2x

Engaged customers stay subscribed up to 2X longer

Non-revenue activities that actually grow revenue

Finding creative ways to engage with your subscribers has proven to be successful in boosting retention, which in turn leads to revenue growth.

Traditional ecommerce companies struggle to maintain attention of their customers in a transactional business model. When the extent of the relationship ends at the checkout, there aren't opportunities to re-engage organically with customers.

With subscriptions and a relational model of commerce, the conversation between merchant and subscriber is ongoing. From initial welcome emails, Customer Portal activities (skip, swap or one time purchases add-ons), upcoming shipment notifications to unboxing notes — there are countless opportunities to continue growing engagement.

As a subscriber to Tiege Hanley, the quality of the engagement they've created has been outstanding. For example, in the first box they send customers receive a handwritten note welcoming them to the Tiege Hanley team as well as an instruction card showing how to use their products to get the best results.

Tiege Hanley's insert showing how to use the products in the box to get the most out of them.

With each upcoming shipment Tiege Hanley were always teasing surprise products to come or sending little notes of appreciation. The experience never gets old or feels disingenuous, which maintains a personal relationship with the brand (and my ongoing subscription) strong month over month.

While most brands continue to look for activities that grow measurable revenue day after day, sometimes the best retention boosting activities are the ones that have nothing to do with revenue, but everything to do with community.

ABOUT RECHARGE

ReCharge is guided by the mission to power subscriptions for the fastest growing brands. The ReCharge platform allows merchants to reduce their churn and increase lifetime value by creating a seamless buying experience. ReCharge is used by over 14,000 businesses and over 20 million end customers, including brands like Native Deodorant, Hubble Contacts, Lola, Soylent and Billie.

38

Produced by Nosto.