

EBOOK

Is there a perfect ecommerce customer experience?

CONTENTS

Introduction **3**

What is the perfect ecommerce customer experience? **3**

Step 1: CUSTOMER ACQUISITION **4**

Make subscribing an experience – Commentary from Sleeknote **4**

Step 2: BUILD TRUST **5**

Trust building through responsible data handling – Commentary from more2 **5**

Step 3: DEMONSTRATE BRAND INTEGRITY **6**

Connect with customers through shared values – Commentary from Dotdigital **7**

Step 4: PERSONALIZE THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY **8**

How to maximize your personalization strategy – Commentary from Nosto **8**

Step 5: CAPTURE ATTENTION WITH EYE-CATCHING DESIGN **9**

Dispelling the myth that image-heavy emails impact deliverability – Commentary from Movable Ink **9**

Step 6: BEHAVIOR-TRIGGERED AUTOMATION **10**

Seize opportunities with a powerful abandoned cart program – Commentary from Fresh Relevance **10**

Step 7: REACH MORE CUSTOMERS WITH CROSS-CHANNEL MARKETING **11**

More channels mean more opportunities to convert – Commentary from Dotdigital **11**

Step 8: SMOOTH THE PATH-TO-PURCHASE **12**

Drive loyalty with friction-free checkouts – Commentary from Klarna **12**

Step 9: KEEP CUSTOMERS ENGAGED POST-PURCHASE **13**

How to optimize the post-purchase experience – Commentary from Yotpo **14**

Step 10: CUSTOMER RETENTION **15**

Identify your 'insider' community for long-term loyalty – Commentary from LoyaltyLion **15**

Creating the perfect ecommerce customer experience **16**

About the contributors **17**

INTRODUCTION

The importance of customer experience in the consumer journey is widely acknowledged in the marketing community.

Marketers in every sector, from every vertical or industry understand that customer value strong and personal relationships with their favorite brands – but none more so than ecommerce retailers. To stay ahead of the competition, you must understand exactly who your customers are and what they expect from you.

As online interactions become central to your customer relationships, it's important for you to take a digital-first approach to all your marketing. That is where the bulk of your customers are, so you need to go to them. This will require you to take an even closer look at the customer journey.

Understanding the customer journey is essential for marketers and merchants looking to deliver unforgettable ecommerce experiences.

The four stages of the customer journey

There are four distinct stages throughout the customer journey, each with multiple touchpoints that need to be considered when you're building your perfect customer experience.

1 Awareness

Long before customers make the decision to shop with you, they need to know who you are. With the responsibility of relationship building falling on the shoulders of your email and website marketing strategies, you need to be connecting and collecting contact details from your first interaction. This will ensure potential new customer are aware of your brand.

2 Consideration

To inspire strong customer relationship, you need to show your customers who you are and what you stand for. What are your USPs? What makes you stand out from the crowd. This ensures that you're top-of-mind when the decision-making stage rolls around.

3 Decision-making

Understanding signs of customer intent is crucial for this stage. In order to deliver content that will drive customers to make a final purchase, you need to be on the lookout for signs of intent to buy. Depending on your individual buying cycle these indicators will vary, but once you have identified them, you will be able to power-up these interactions to drive conversions.

4 Post-purchase consideration

This fourth and final stage of the customer journey is often overlooked but it is vital for customer retention. Rather regularly churning customers and onboarding new prospects, perfecting the post-purchase consideration phase will give customers a reason to return to your brand in the time between purchases.

What is the perfect ecommerce customer experience?

As part of this year's Hitting the Mark report, we evaluated the email, website, and cross-channel experience of 100 brands across the globe.

Over the course of our research, we discover key touchpoints in the customer journey that need to be optimized and refined to deliver conversion-driving experiences. As a result, we turned to our extensive partner network to get their valuable insight into these stages.

With their help, we've put together this comprehensive guide, outlining how to create the perfect customer experience.

AWARENESS

Step 1: customer acquisition

Encouraging a customer to part with their email address has become increasingly difficult in recent years. Whether that's due to customers being more cautious about parting with their personal data or because their unimpressed by the exhausted tactics used by online merchants, it's hard to tell. But we do know that the rate of unsubscribes has now outpaced the rate of customer acquisition.

As a result, brands have to think outside the box when it comes to acquisition tactics.

Make subscribing an experience

Commentary from  Sleeknote

When it comes to acquiring customers, capturing a first-time visitor's email address is a top priority for many ecommerce brands. With it, brands can personalize their marketing for each lead, provided, of course, that they follow today's best practices.

Sadly, many brands continue to rely on outdated principles, including burying opt-in form in the website footer, offering unimaginative incentives ("Get Updates!"), and using website popups that target all visitors, regardless of where they are in the buyer's journey (not to mention resorting to boring copy).

One brand that is a rare exception to the above is lifestyle brand Fabletics. When you visit a product page as a new visitor, the brand invites you to become a VIP (i.e., loyalty club member) by asking which of three new VIP offers you want.

Regardless of the option you choose—including "Any of these" for the more ambivalent—Fabletics asks you to "Create Your Profile" with the option to add your birthday. (This, presumably, is to email you happy birthday later and offer a discount on a future purchase).

After entering your details, such as name and email address, the brand asks you to create a username and password to become a VIP member. Once a member, Fabletics assures you, they will unlock your special deal promised in the first step.

Finally, after creating an account, Fabletics uses a countdown timer in the bottom right corner of the product page to drive urgency and nudge new subscribers to make their first purchase.

Granted, using false urgency won't convince all new subscribers to buy. But, given how long Fabletics have been using this tactic, it's safe to assume a healthy percentage are becoming first-time buyers. Acquiring new customers through collecting emails is no longer enough. Visitors are more skeptical than ever, and for that reason, need gentle coaxing into giving up their email through a variety of worthwhile incentives. You need to meet each segment where they are in their journey (first-time visitor, email subscriber, repeat buyer) and give them what they need to take the required next step.

Offer new visitors a coupon code they can use on their first purchase. Reward loyalty club members (i.e., email subscribers) with points they can put toward a future purchase. Surprise repeat buyers with a discount on their birthday, a freebie for spending a certain amount. Treating each segment as you would in a real, physical store won't happen overnight, but it's a crucial step in rising above the noise and building a brand buyers want to do business with now and in the future.

Step 2: build trust

Worries about data breaches and personal information being sold to third parties have changed the way shoppers think about their relationships with brands. Before they hand over any type of personal information about themselves, even a simple email address – shoppers want to know they can trust your brand to handle their data responsibly.

Trust building though responsible data handling

Commentary from **more2**

Customers are placing increasing importance on how brands handle their personal data. They are better informed and better protected than ever after a year where iOS 14 and iOS 15 dealt a hammer blow to customer tracking and targeting via apps, websites, and email. And, there's more to come with the demise of third-party cookies in Google chrome planned for 2023.

As third-party platforms lose large chunks of their data points, so brands need to mitigate for this by strengthening their first party data.

It is imperative that marketing teams understand how they will use their customer data and the implications regarding data collection and permissions. Think about when you need to collect data and why your customer might share it at that stage. A good use case is the collection of email address during shopping so you can target cart abandoners. Lightboxes have proven effective pre-transaction, but you should test the location, context, and copy of these data capture points, e.g., on homepage vs. product page.

Once you're clear on the how and the when, does your privacy statement reflect that? For example, does it explain that customer data is used for lookalike list building and retargeting, and whether this is based on legitimate interest or consent?

The more sophisticated brands take a pragmatic line taking into account both legislation and best practice, and then inform customers of how data is used. Making the right decision can have a huge impact on your targetable base. We always recommend taking legal advice on your obligations, but you don't write your privacy terms for lawyers – they are for your customers. There are customer benefits to you being able to recognize and contact people so take the opportunity to explain them.

For customers who really want to stop hearing from you, is it clear what they need to do? If not, they may choose more damaging options like clicking 'Spam' on your email or rejecting your social media ads. One large furniture brand saw a significant reduction in unsubscribes by offering reduced frequency as an option.

Building on the idea that customers benefit from you recognizing them, marketers need to look for ways to demonstrate those benefits throughout the purchase process. Bravissimo have done an excellent job of linking data capture to the customer experience – whether buying in-store or online, you know you'll get good advice and tailored recommendations because your fit and history is stored in your account. And collecting data incrementally, in context, rather than all up front maximizes initial signup levels.

As a final point, it's commercially important to ensure unsubscribe data is fed back from your ESP to your CDP or CRM platform. This means you have an accurate understanding of your opt-in base and their economics compared to those who have unsubscribed.

CONSIDERATION

Step 3: demonstrate brand integrity

Once a shopper has engaged and subscribed to your marketing it's important you give them a reason to remember you. Modern shoppers increasingly choose to shop with brands they trust and who have similar interests as themselves. That means demonstrating your brand's mission or values around social, economic, and environmental issues is essential for conversion and retention.

Connect with customers through shared values

Commentary from  dotdigital

At Dotdigital, we're proud to be the world's first and only carbon-neutral customer engagement platform. Our commitment to making every aspect of the business sustainable extends far beyond customer expectations. It's a change that came from within, influenced, directed, and executed by our people. There's no 'greenwashing' here and our customers can have complete faith in our integrity as we continue to change and update our business practices to reflect our sustainable business model.

During the course of our mission to 'go green', we've seen a significant shift in customer behavior in all industries, sectors, and verticals. These kinds of values are no longer a 'nice-to-have', they're a key consideration in the decision-making process.

Customers want to connect with a brand that shares their specific values.

It's time for brands to be open and vocal about the causes that resonate with them. Over the course of the last few years, we've seen brands that do flourish. Toms, Bombas, Patagonia, even big hitters like Ben & Jerry's are all open and honest about their socially responsible activities which makes them stand out from the crowd.

In the long run, this will significantly help your customer retention. Shoppers looking to choose between your brand or your competitor are increasingly looking to shared values to make the final decision.

How can you communicate your socially responsible brand values?

Modern shoppers are more astute to brands 'greenwashing' and falsifying green credentials or social impact. To demonstrate your brand integrity, you need to talk to your customers openly and honestly.

1

Make it a part of your brand story

Your brand story is a vital element of your marketing. It shapes how customers see and remember your brand while forging an emotional connection between you both. By weaving your corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments throughout, outlining your values, and stating your mission in your brand story, your messaging will resonate with your audience.

2

Weave your values across the whole customer experience

If you're committed to sustainability, you need to think about how you can weave this throughout the entire customer experience. During our research for Hitting the Mark, we found that the brands who branded their packaging to communicate their green messaging came across as far more authentic than those that simply had 'recycle me' labels on boxes. Never forget to think about every stage of the customer journey.

3

Back it up with facts and figures

Back up your statements with facts and figures. Brands 'greenwashing' are facing increasing trouble. Making false or unsupported claims will damage your brand image significantly. If you've put in the work, brag about it. Eco-credentials, money raised, funds donated; it all contributes to your brand integrity.

4

Get your staff and customer involved

For Dotdigital, our sustainability mission was driven by our staff and we actively encourage them to take to our channels to express their interest and commitment to the cause. Our corporate gifting policy has changed so customers can choose to plant trees through our partner charity Ecologi, getting them actively involved in our mission. The more people who are invested in your mission, the greater success you will have.

5

Take to social media about it

Social media is a great place to let your brand personality shine, so what better place to shout about your brand values? Using this channel, you can connect with a whole new audience base who may not previously know about your brand, but share your values thanks to shares and likes from your customers.



Step 4: personalize the customer journey

Customers are well aware of what's possible with the tools at a marketer's fingertips. As a result, they expect brands to use their personal data to deliver one-of-a-kind experiences. However, Hitting the Mark found that brands are failing to effectively execute their personalization strategies.

How to maximize your personalization strategy

Commentary from **nosto** 

Once upon a time, ecommerce personalization was a differentiator. Today, it's expected—by your customers and your bosses—to guarantee desired shopping experiences that, in turn, help you hit those KPIs. Here are some pointers for getting the most out of your personalization efforts.

Tip 1: Know your target

Identifying clear personas is key, so you know you're targeting your core customer groups.

Use behavioral and transactional data to adapt the experiences you craft—and in real-time. Target specific campaigns to customers based on affinities (such as product categories or discounts individuals may sway to), as well as people's traffic sources.

Tip 2: Always think about the bigger-picture

Your personalization strategy should complement your overall strategy. By this, we mean it should address problems, acknowledge priorities, and work alongside other technologies to meet broader, overall business goals. When planning what to implement, look to group people from your different teams to make more broadly-informed decisions. Structures differ between companies, but having someone from Customer Service, Marketing, and Ecommerce will leverage a mix of vital perspectives and prevent siloed conversations.

Tip 3: Ensure cross-channel consistency

We mentioned other technologies already; 72% of people say they're more likely to purchase brands that consistently provide them with a personalized experience—for which you need a well-integrated tech-stack. Given the missed opportunities for personalization within marketing emails, here's an example of creating consistency between this touchpoint, and your website:

A Nosto user syncs a VIP customer segment to Dotdigital to have a marketing email surface a discount code specifically to VIP customers (such as by using Dotdigital's dynamic content blocks). VIP visitors click through to the site and see dedicated content showing the same discount code. The result? No forgetting the code, no clicking back to the email—just a consistent, efficient experience that powers click-throughs, conversions and gives customers what they want.

Tip 4: Don't forget same-session personalization

Many merchants are used to relying on existing CRM data to inform their personalization campaigns. But, it's also important to use dynamic campaigns that change in real-time based on same-session shopper signals.

Leveraging expected buying preferences a user demonstrates immediately on the first page-load to have your campaigns adapt in real-time can be really powerful in converting them upon their first visit.

Step 5: capture attention with eye-catching design

From the moment a customer opens your email, the countdown begins. You have four seconds to grab their attention. How are you going to do that while also thinking about readability and deliverability. A beautifully designed email is no good if it ends up in the trash folder anyway.

Dispelling the myth that image-heavy emails impact

Commentary from **Movable Ink**

Email marketing has come a long way since its inception over 50 years ago. While text-based campaigns laid the foundation for email communications to blossom, image-based emails are now an industry standard for creating the compelling experiences consumers expect to see.

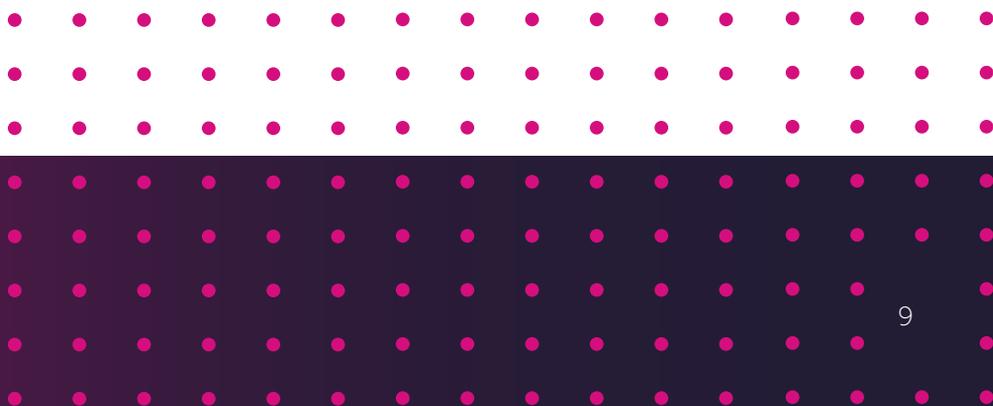
It used to be that spam filters didn't like image-heavy emails because they couldn't 'read' the text on the images in order to identify them as spam. This may have been the case at one point in time, but spam filters have evolved and now pay closer attention to other factors that are better indicators of the message's content and value.

These days, spam filters are mainly looking at the behavioral actions of the recipient; for example, are recipients engaging with the content? How your customers interact with your emails is a far better indicator of the message's content and value than 'spam' trigger words. With that in mind, personalizing email content to increase customer engagement is a more important factor in email deliverability than the image-to-text ratio.

Spam filters often also assess HTML code length when deciding on the placement of an email in the inbox. In fact, a recent Email On Acid test found that if an email has 500 characters or more, the content-to-image ratio had no impact on deliverability. Factors such as slicing images, adding ALT text and including header, footer, T&Cs, and the unsubscribe link as text, can all contribute to reaching this threshold.

Conversely, if you're using a significant amount of text in the email, that may lead to your email campaign getting caught in promotional filters. Inboxes generally flag messages as promotion or spam when the body copy uses words that promote or sell something. So, when marketers compose an email with a lot of text, especially of a promotional nature, there is a higher probability of using those keywords and getting flagged. Think phrases like "Hurry! Buy now" or "Get your 50% discount!".

The key here is balance. Filling your email campaigns with promotional text is not advised, nor is using one huge image with no ALT text. Both may trigger spam filters. Email marketers should prioritize engagement via personalized image-based content, whilst also ensuring their campaigns are over the 500-character threshold.



DECISION-MAKING

Step 6: behavior-triggered automation

Recognizing customer intent is vital for success for ecommerce merchants. Key customer actions will let you know when a customer is thinking about converting. Think abandoned cart, abandoned browse and pageviews. Adding behavior-triggered automation programs will drive engaged shoppers closer to conversion.

Seize opportunities with a powerful abandoned cart

Commentary from  freshrelevance

61% of shopping carts are abandoned. And, whilst some people may never return to the checkout, shoppers who got distracted before completing their purchase or abandoned to do more research can often be persuaded to return with an effective cart abandonment strategy in place. In fact, cart recovery email campaigns can result in up to 25% more sales YoY.

Not all cart abandonment emails are created equally, though. Here are some tactics to elevate your abandonment emails:

Send more than one email

Adding multiple stages to your cart abandonment email campaign can increase sales by 30%. Our research shows that many companies already use multi-stage triggered sequences. But if you're not doing this, you're missing a trick.

It's worth noting that there's a fine balance between engaging your customers and spamming them when using marketing automation. It's important to avoid sending emails if a shopper has activity on your site after an abandonment signal is raised but before the first email is sent. Likewise, exclusion periods after a shopper has made a purchase are a must. By following marketing suppression best practices and using segmentation to include or exclude customers from receiving certain triggered emails, you can avoid simply 'adding to the noise' and overtaking inboxes.

Add product recommendations

Recommendations give the shopper more options and help them find that perfect product. Show shoppers similar alternatives to make their purchase decision easier or up-sell by inspiring them with items that complement the one they have carted. Cart abandonment emails that include dynamic content such as personalized product recommendations are proven to boost sales by up to 5% compared to standard recovery messages. Our research shows that certain brands have implemented this tactic to their cart abandonment emails, using the touchpoint as an opportunity to recommend additional products that the recipient may like.

Keep testing

It's important to test timings of your cart recovery emails and the content you include in them to make sure your campaigns resonate with your customers. Test wait times to find the sweet spot for your email cadences. In some instances, we've seen that a shorter wait time increases conversions and sales uplift. Additionally, mix up your subject lines, layout, and content. Test short and snappy subject lines against name or product personalization, for example. Despite the clear benefits of cart abandonment emails, only 48% of the brands we surveyed use them. To those brands, we advise testing the emails you have in place and implementing the tactics discussed above. And to the 52% of brands not using cart abandonment emails, it's time to get the ball rolling.

Beyond cart abandonment emails

There are many types of triggered emails that create opportunities to drive your customers to convert. Two examples include price drop and back in stock emails.

Price drop emails alert shoppers when a product they browsed drops in price. They're the perfect reminder for impulsive online browsers and can also encourage price-conscious shoppers.

Back in stock emails let shoppers know when an out-of-stock product they browsed comes back in stock. It's a great way to recover potential lost revenue, keep customers engaged with your brand, and delight shoppers by connecting them with the product they want.

Step 7: reach more customers with cross-channel marketing

Modern customers interact with your brand on the channel that suits their needs at the time. This means that shoppers are constantly switching between platforms and channels. The best way for you to meet these new expectations is to expand your channels. But remember, consistency is key.

No matter which channel customer choose to interact with you on, the journey should feel smooth and seamless.

More channels mean more opportunities to convert

Commentary from  dotdigital

We all know about the power of email marketing. It's still consumers' favorite marketing communication channel. According to the DMA, 63% of consumers continue to place email in their top two preferred channels to receive marketing messages.

With an estimated return on investment (ROI) of £38.33 for every £1 spent, there's no denying the unrivalled clout of this channel in the world of ecommerce marketing. But that doesn't mean it should be the only channel retailers rely on for their outbound marketing. With smartphones in the palm of their hands, modern consumers have a multitude of channels available to them, on which they now expect to be able to reach their favorite brands.

Cross-channel marketing – that is, the ability to connect with customers on a range of communications channels such as email, SMS, social media, apps, and more – improves the customer experience and drives ROI. Using three or more channels in one seamless, connected campaign can help you achieve a 287% higher purchase rate than a single channel campaign.

It's important for ecommerce marketers to remember that it is the modern consumer that dictates the customer journey. If your brand isn't on their channel of choice, they'll find another that is. Convenience is a strong driving force behind their actions. With 98% of consumers switching between devices throughout a single day, cross-channel marketing campaigns are vital for driving conversions.

Campaigns that contain SMS messages are 48% more likely to result in conversion. Why? Because of its unprecedented open rate. Time-sensitive messages

about flash sales, limited time discount codes, and new product or feature releases are particularly successful. Delivering content directly into the palm of their hand adds a sense of urgency and taps into the consumers' fear of missing out.

Push notifications from your ecommerce app also tap into the FOMO effect. Personalized pushes can include deep-links that drive customers to the exact page where you need their attention to be, shortening the path to purchase. Paired with a simplified checkout, any barriers to conversion are practically gone.

Personalization and relevancy are essential for cross-channel marketing success. Retargeting ads can be displayed across customer's favorite social media channel and personalized based on browse behavior, purchaser behavior, or what interest they've shown across your other marketing channels.

It's not just the pre-purchase stage of the journey that's important. Well-executed cross-channel campaigns can boost customer retention to 89%, so it's vital to consider the post-purchase stage too. Customer service should also adopt a cross-channel approach by adding live chat, email, and instant messengers to its repertoire. Accessibility and quick responses are the difference between a good experience and a poor one.

Ultimately, a well thought through cross-channel experience will keep customers coming back. The more opportunities they have to connect with you - their preferred brand - the more likely they are to turn to you when it's time to buy again.

Step 8: smooth the path-to-purchase

Creating a smooth and seamless checkout process is essential for driving conversions. Today, seven out of ten shopping carts are abandoned for reasons including: long, complicated checkout process, not wanting to create a new account, and not seeing their preferred method of payment listed.

Making the customer journey as simple as possible is a rising demand for shoppers. From account creation to delivery options, optimizing the path-to-purchase is key to driving long-term customer loyalty.

Drive loyalty with friction-free checkouts

Commentary from **Klarna.**

Customer loyalty is one of the fiercest battlegrounds for ecommerce retailers today.

Abundant choice, channels, technological advances, and rising customer demands mean that consumers are constantly on the lookout for simpler, swifter, and smoother ways to shop. It also means that they're far more likely to bounce between brands and merchants, swayed by convenience and experience – rather than loyalty.

To succeed in this hyper-competitive online environment, merchants need to configure every stage of the digital shopping journey with their customer in mind – however and wherever they prefer to shop. So, while it's important to pique initial interest in a product, the process of guiding customers through the purchase funnel must also be seamless, intuitive, and experiential.

For example, as merchants look to enhance the online shopping experience, we're seeing a rise in in-app virtual shopping functionalities which bring the benefits of the in-store experience to their online customers, complementing the journey. Here, online customers have the opportunity to instantly connect with a brand's trained associates, stylists or experts to ask any questions they have, or get personalized recommendations based on what they're on the hunt for.

Meanwhile, as the last step in the purchasing journey, the checkout process is arguably the most important – and one that retailers can't afford to neglect. As a trusted payments partner to some of the UK's biggest retailers, we know that success depends on making payments as seamless and pain-free as possible. For today's on-the-go shopper, a clunky, complicated, and non-mobile optimized checkout experience with many steps and forms is an instant turn-off. The result? Dropped baskets and lost sales.

It's no surprise then that our recent report, *Owning Omnichannel: winning at clicks and bricks*, revealed that 84% of Klarna shoppers value autofill functionality, while 65% appreciate one-click payments. And let's not forget the importance of flexible payment options – something which 74% of shoppers look for.

Ultimately, while the 'always on' nature of online shopping offers huge opportunities to brands, one thing holds true: we're living in the age of the consumer. The focus should always remain on how we can not only cater to consumer demands and remove friction from their shopping experience, but how we can add "positive friction" – giving shoppers something extra that turns online shopping from a transaction to an experience.

In the battle for customers' loyalty, it's the retailers that put experience first who will come out ahead.

POST-PURCHASE CONSIDERATION

Step 9: keep customers engaged post-purchase

What happens to your customer after they've converted? If you're not sure, then this is the area in the customer experience you need to focus on. The post-purchase stage is just as important as trying to get the conversion in the first place. Don't let these customers become unengaged from neglect.

How to optimize the post-purchase experience

Commentary from



Your customer's journey or overall experience with your brand goes well beyond simply making a purchase. It continues through the post-purchase experience, which is a combination of interactions, messages, and overall sentiments once they've completed a purchase and used your product.

This is the experience that determines whether your shoppers will convert into repeat customers – which is why getting it right is even more critical.

Strategizing on the post-purchase experience

One of the key elements to the post-purchase experience is strategy. Consider your business goals in relation to the post-purchase experience and what action you're driving your customers toward. For instance, if you're hoping that shoppers will purchase from your brand again in the future, entice and incentivize with discount codes sent via SMS and email. On the other hand, if you're looking for their feedback on the products or services you provided, set up automated review requests. And if you're hoping to reach a larger audience and reward your most loyal customers, starting a loyalty and referral program will be essential to your brand's success.

But with other brands creating similar strategies, you'll need to innovate to showcase what makes your brand unique.

What makes a brand a stand-out?

Brands stand out the most when they're able to stay authentic and invest in their community to build an emotional connection. In fact, brands that are able to cultivate that connection outrank their competitors in gross margins by 26%, and as a result, their shoppers are three times more likely to make another purchase.

Here's how your brand can excel at the post-purchase experience:

Offer a seamless user experience

When brands make it easy for their shoppers to stay engaged and make future purchases, customers are often more inclined to do so. For example, the overall user experience is most seamless when shoppers are able to leave reviews with the click of a button, join your loyalty program after a repeat purchase, and opt in to SMS messaging without a tedious sign-up process. This will help to convert shoppers into long standing customers in no time.

Personalize all messaging

Whether it be via SMS or email, personalizing your messaging to shoppers goes beyond greeting them by name. It involves remembering their past purchases and their concerns leading up to that purchase. Personalization also requires recommending products they might like, as well as following up on purchases they made or any items abandoned in their shopping cart. The goal is to ensure that each and every touchpoint feels relevant and personal. That way, customers will feel that emotional connection and take action.

Build a relationship with your customers

Forming a relationship with your customers isn't easy; it often requires a series of interactions for engagement. While there are different ways to do this, starting with authenticity and transparency is key. Stay top of mind with your shoppers by asking for reviews that feature photos and videos. Display customer content on social media to show how valuable their opinions and experiences are to your brand. Keep them "in the know" with an inside look at your upcoming product launches to further deepen the connection between your brand and your customers.

You can engage your shoppers even better by rewarding them and showing that you value them. Initiate a conversation with your shoppers via SMS, and make it a two-way conversation where you learn more about what they're searching for and provide relevant recommendations. And if your loyal customers continue to purchase your products, reward them with points toward their next purchase for further engagement.

Homing in on the post-purchase experience will allow you to build loyalty and connection with your customer base — and doing so with a tech partner that offers an all-in-one solution makes it even easier. It will show your customers that you're willing to invest in them to ensure that their experiences with your brand meet their expectations.

Step 10: Customer retention

The customer experience doesn't end after the conversion. Serious marketers will be thinking about next steps they can take to guarantee customer loyalty. After all, it's four times cheaper to retain a customer than acquire a new one. Don't let the investment and data you've collected go to waste by letting existing customer pass you by.

Every ecommerce retailer needs a loyalty strategy, what's yours?

Identify your 'insider' community for long-term loyalty

Commentary from  LOYALTYLION

2022 marks the opt-out era. Privacy updates spearheaded by Apple and Google are being noticed by consumers with 96% of US users opting out of app tracking last year. Meanwhile, the cost of digital advertising continues to rise (spending on paid search ads increased by 32% over the past year).

The most sophisticated brands will use the opt-out era as an opportunity to grow and step up their approach to retention. At LoyaltyLion, we believe this starts by focusing on building relationships with your 'insider' customer community.

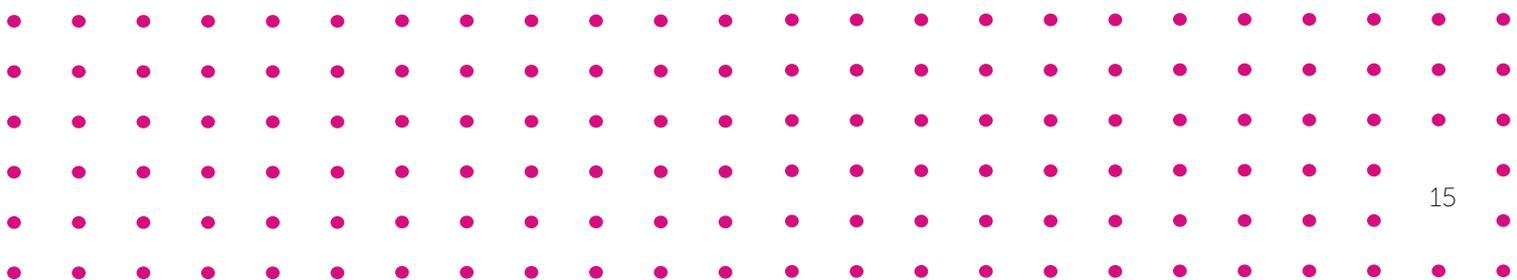
Paying attention to this loyal customer cohort will pay dividends. When they feel connected, they're going to share more of their personal data so you can serve up personalized experiences. They'll then keep coming back to your brand to get more of the same experience, increasing their CLTV as a result. At the same time, the top-tier experience you give will attract new customers through your digital doors for the first time – helping you acquire new customers who have a higher propensity to be loyal. So how do you make your 'insiders' feel special?

A loyalty program is the best place to start. With tiers, fashion brands like Cupshe give customers in top tiers (who spend and engage more over time) VIP rewards. These include experiences like a member hotline, free shipping, and exclusive access to sales.

Another way to use a loyalty program to encourage your 'insider' community to repeat purchase and share the data you need to retain them, is to show you care about the same things as them. If they see they're emotionally connected with your brand, they'll trust their data with you over others in the market.

The jewelry brand, Astrid & Miyu wanted their loyalty program to, "reflect [their] identity and things that are important to [their] community". They achieve this by rewarding customers 1,000 loyalty points when they recycle jewelry in-store – connecting over their customers' eco-conscious beliefs.

Finally, sophisticated brands should be using their loyalty program to grow their Insider community too. This starts by rewarding customers for referring others to the brand and for creating social proof, like reviews and social posts. Your 'insider' community members are your biggest advocates so reward them for acquiring new customers on your behalf. Plus, shoppers acquired this way also convert quicker because they trust your brand from the outset.



Wrapping it all up

Don't see the opt-out era as a road block. Use it as an opportunity to nurture your most valuable asset – your 'insider' community.

By motivating these loyal customers to share more of their personal data through VIP treatment and connecting with you emotionally, you'll be able to give them personalized experiences that retain them for longer (and attract new customers to your brand while you're at it).

Creating the perfect ecommerce customer experience

Tactics will vary but one thing we discovered in our research for Hitting the Mark was that brands that followed clearly optimized each stage of the customer journey delivered a superior customer experience.

We were left excited and delighted at the end of every interaction when there was a strategized approach to the customer experience.

[Find out more](#)

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



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Fresh Relevance is a versatile personalization platform that helps commerce-driven businesses execute highly effective personalization campaigns from start to finish with no technical expertise needed.

Klarna.

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Since 2005 Klarna has been on a mission to revolutionize the retail banking industry. With over 147 million global active users and 2 million transactions per day, Klarna is meeting the changing demands of consumers by saving them time and money while helping them be informed and in control of their personal finances. Over 400,000 global retail partners, including H&M, Saks, Sephora, Macys, IKEA, Expedia Group, and Nike have integrated Klarna's innovative technology to deliver a seamless shopping experience online and in-store. With over 5,000 employees, Klarna is active in 45 markets and is one of the most highly-valued private fintechs globally, with a valuation of \$45.6 billion.



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LoyaltyLion is a data-driven loyalty and engagement platform, helping fast-growth ecommerce merchants power longer-lasting relationships and sustainable growth. Our unique combination of best-in-class technology and dedicated loyalty expertise helps thousands of Marketers drive more revenue from highly-engaged, highly-valuable customers.



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more2 are marketing scientists. We partner with over 100 retail and D2C brands to help them grow faster, putting customers at the heart of every decision. Our expert teams help brands harness their 1st party data to make more confident decisions and execute more effective campaigns, leading to sustained, profitable growth. We are one of a handful of Meta Premium Partners and in the top 3% of Google's Partners, known as Premier Partners.



Becki Francis, Director, Retail Strategy, Movable Ink

Customers don't experience data, they experience content. Movable Ink activates any data into personalized content in any customer engagement. The world's most innovative brands rely on Movable Ink to accelerate their marketing performance. With more than 500 employees, the company is headquartered in New York City with operations throughout North America, Central America, Europe, Australia, and Japan.



Chloé Pascal, Global Head of Marketing, Nosto

Nosto enables retailers to deliver authentic and personalized digital shopping experiences at every touchpoint. As an AI-powered commerce experience platform designed for ease of use, Nosto empowers retailers to quickly build, launch, and optimize 1:1 omnichannel marketing campaigns and digital experiences without the need for dedicated IT resources.



Sleeknote

Sam Thomas Davies, Head of Content, Drip (formerly Sleeknote)

Thousands of ecommerce brands all over the globe trust Drip to build engaging and profitable relationships with their customers. Our ecommerce marketing automation platform has generated more than \$2 billion in sales since 2018. We do this by unleashing the power of customer data to deliver perfectly personalized email and SMS marketing strategies that are proven to grow revenue.



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Yotpo is the leading eCommerce marketing platform that helps thousands of forward-thinking brands like Rebecca Minkoff, Patagonia, and Steve Madden accelerate direct-to-consumer growth. Our single-platform approach integrates data-driven solutions for Loyalty & Referrals, SMS Marketing, Reviews and Visual UGC, empowering brands to save time and create smarter, higher converting customer experiences.



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Dotdigital is a customer engagement platform that harnesses the power of customer data, powering engagement, conversion, and loyalty for brands as they grow and scale. Digital marketers around the world love our easy to use platform that connects first party data across marketing systems, surfacing powerful insights and automating predictive cross channel messages.