Quickfire

The State of *Ecommerce*

Trends. Innovations.
What's Next?



Introduction

This is ecommerce in 2025



Nathan Lomax

Co-founder at Quickfire Digital

I’m not going to lie, this is a meaty whitepaper. But it had to be, because if you want a true picture of the state of ecommerce in the UK in 2025, you have to take a thorough look.

After all, ecommerce is an increasingly significant and change-making industry. According to ECDB, the UK ecommerce market value was estimated at over £120bn in 2024, and it’s growing. It’s an exciting industry to be in right now. However, there are thousands of brand leaders confronting very real challenges – and opportunities – every single day as they seek to grow their business. In an increasingly mature and competitive market, understanding where to make small gains can be the difference between stagnation and growth.

And we want to help.





So, we've gathered expert insight from 25 ecommerce thought leaders across 20 key subjects. We wanted answers to five big themes: How do you sell better? How do you drive greater engagement? How do you build lifetime value? How do you get AI right? And how do you do all of this ethically?

Those questions cover a huge amount of critical ground: Unified commerce, store design, hyper-personalisation, generative AI, data privacy, digital accessibility, email and SMS, loyalty programmes, customer service, and plenty more. We wanted to explore these areas in depth, assess the key challenges, and cast an eye on emerging themes and technologies. Most importantly, our expert contributors provide advice, solutions, and actions to help brands scale and thrive.

We didn’t stop there. Over the next few pages, you’ll see the results of our state of the nation survey. Our friends at Luminous PR have helped conduct the survey, and we spoke to just over 200 ecommerce retailers and over 2000 consumers, to get insight directly from business leaders and their customers. We wanted to find out what ecommerce brands and retailers are getting right, what problems need solving, and where the gaps are between customer expectation and brand delivery.

That’s why this whitepaper is so meaty.

Because ecommerce demands it.



The journey so far *in Ecommerce*

How Ecommerce Transformed Retail

Commerce was rooted in face-to-face interactions, relationships were formed over counters and stockrooms. From that personal touch emerged the data-driven world of ecommerce, where every click is a connection, and the concept of “shopping local” is now global.

High Streets and the Traditional Trade

The high street was trade hubs where retailers built reputations and relationships through direct in-person transactions. Urban areas grew and shopping trends evolved, demand for convenience and variety led to the rise of shopping centres - keeping the essential brick and mortar experience.

Ecommerce: A Disruptor Born

The internet transformed how we live, work, and shop, turning ecommerce from novelty to necessity as broadband and logistics evolved. Consumers gained convenience, endless choice, and price competition, while high streets now compete with a 24/7 global marketplace.

The Shopify Effect Decentralised

Amazon shaped the early days of ecommerce and Shopify played a transformative role in opening up the market. Simplifying complex online store creation into an accessible solution empowering independent businesses to craft digital experiences reshaping consumer buying habits.

Ecommerce: The New High Street

The “new high street” is a global digital marketplace. Platforms like Shopify equip businesses to sell and build loyalty through AI, analytics, and social commerce. Expectations for seamless experiences, fast delivery, and easy returns pushes brands to strengthen logistics and user-friendly design.

Foreword



Yasamine Behesti

Group Head of e-Commerce at Batra Group

Welcome to The State of Ecommerce, your essential guide to understanding what your consumers actually want and what they truly need.

Ecommerce is gearing up for some **serious transformations,** with technology evolving at speed and customer expectations growing sharper, the future of online retail will be smarter, faster, and **way more personal.**

This report looks beyond surface-level trends.

It combines insights from leading ecommerce brands, retailers, and most importantly, consumers themselves. To highlight what's working, where the gaps are, and what problems need solving.





Let’s talk about AI. It’s no longer ‘the future’ - it’s already here. Right now, it’s powering the basics: product recommendations, customer service chat, smarter targeting. But here’s the thing - AI isn’t the magic answer. It’s not replacing creativity, instinct, or brand building. The best ecommerce experiences are still emotional, still human. AI just helps us get there faster, stripping out friction so we can focus on connection.

For us at Reebok, it’s helping us with the less glamorous but critical side of ecommerce: cleaning up product data, automating workflows, and speeding up campaign testing. That means our teams spend less time buried in spreadsheets and more time building the brand.

Looking ahead, I think we'll see a shift from "helpful tools" to true predictive commerce. Not just "customers who bought this also bought that," but AI that actually understands intent - surfacing products, content, or offers before a customer even thinks to search. The brands that succeed won't be the ones that throw the most AI at the problem. They'll be the ones that use it to make shopping feel seamless and human.

For me, AI isn't the headline. It's the toolkit.

The story is still the customer - and AI just makes it easier to tell it well.

Join us as we explore what's really shaping ecommerce - where insight meets action, and data driven decisions define growth.



The BIG ecommerce *survey*

Where are brands going wrong with AI?
What features should retailers be focusing on?
What really fosters loyalty for customers?
We asked retailers and shoppers the *big questions*

If you really want to know the state of ecommerce in 2025, it’s best to ask the two groups who really matter: retailers and consumers. So we did.

Our friends at Luminous PR surveyed 2,005 consumers and 201 ecommerce retailers to provide a better understanding of how the ecommerce landscape is shaping up and reveal what’s really happening on both sides of the digital checkout. The results paint a picture of an industry working out how best to implement new technologies, where ambitious AI investments meet the reality of customer expectations, and where the gap between promise and performance determines who thrives in the new retail landscape.

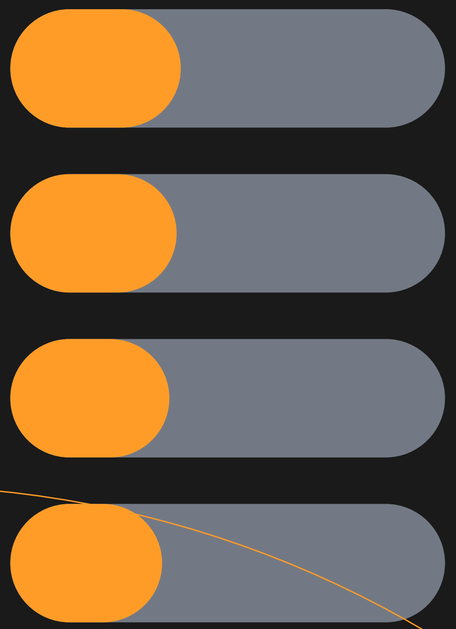
Let’s take a look.



What the consumers say: *4 takeaways*

1. Customer experience: The good news

Consumers are clear about which AI-powered shopping features improve their journeys:



33% Automated returns/refunds

32% AI-generated product descriptions/images

31% AI-powered chat/support

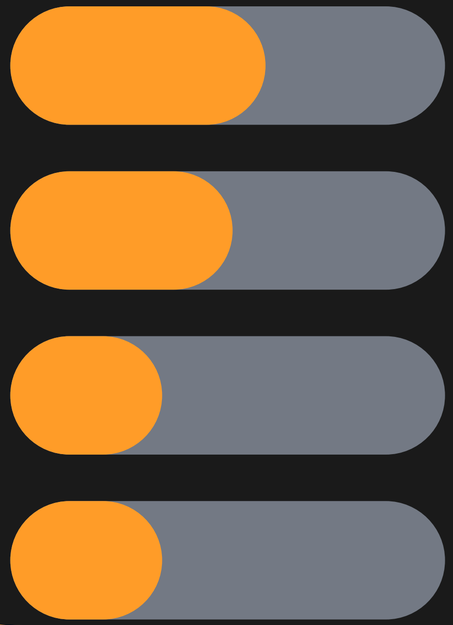
30% Visual search

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Invest in AI that can enhance the customer experience by removing friction through convenient returns, visual search, and immediate support. Investing in novelty AI tools may have less payoff than tools that directly enhance trust, clarity, and speed.

2. Customer experience: The bad news

Consumers were also clear about what would most likely make them abandon an online purchase:



54% High delivery fees

37% Complicated checkout processes

19% Forced chatbot use

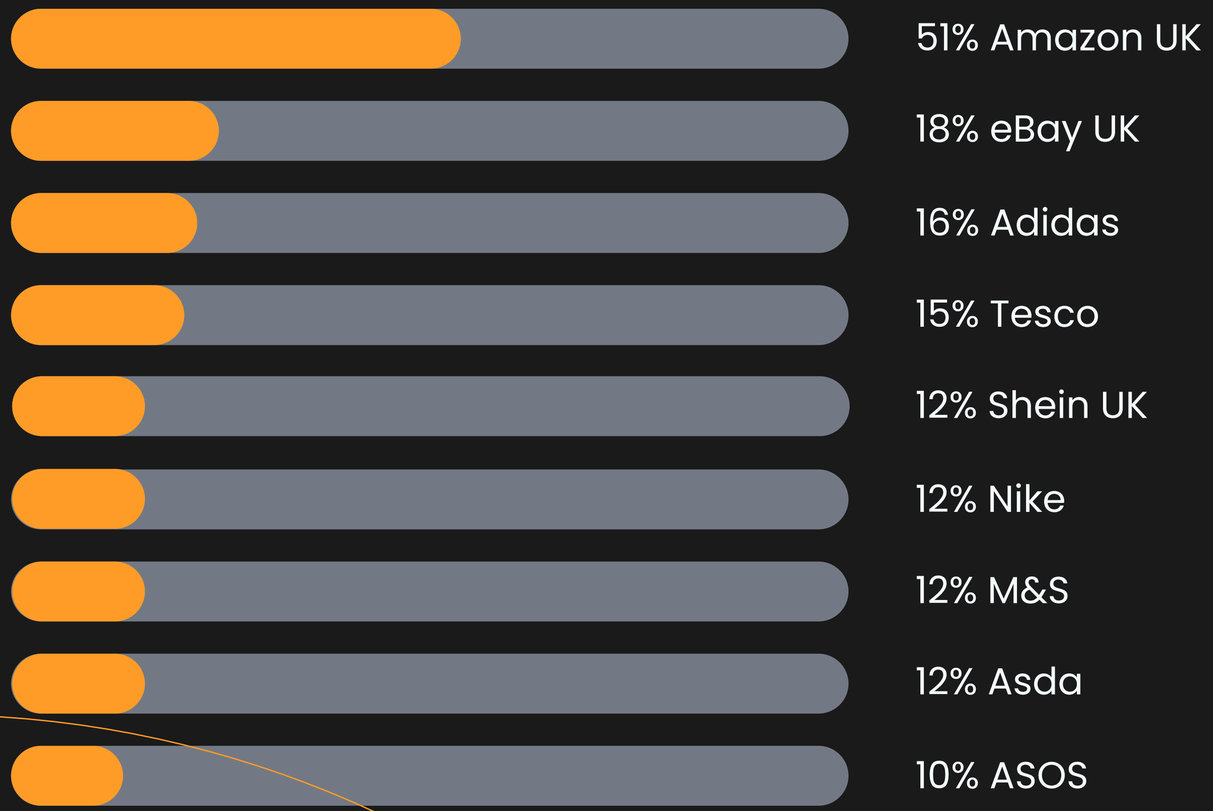
18% Lack of return options

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Brands must strike a balance between automation and transparent pricing, offering human options to avoid alienating customers. Prioritise tech solutions that drive efficiency and reduce costs.

3. Customer loyalty: Setting the AI standard

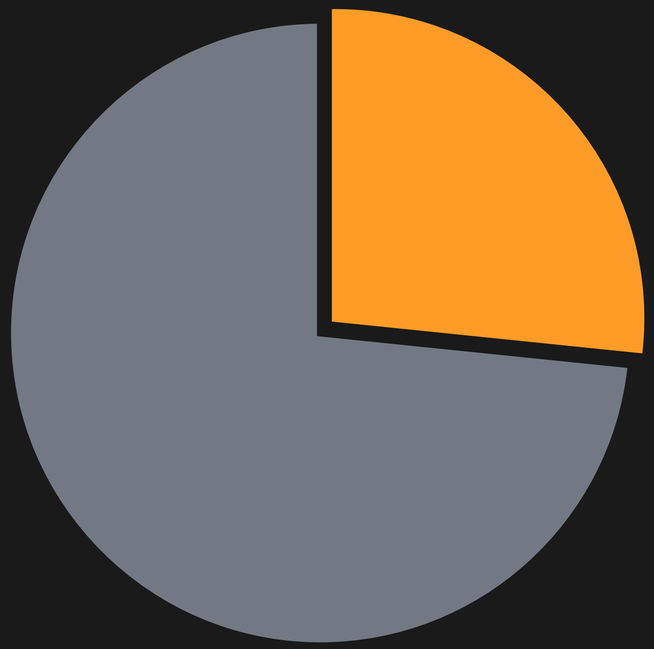
Our consumers were asked which retailers they'd had a positive AI experience with:



KEY TAKEAWAY:

Amazon remains streets ahead, and only nine retailers polled above 10%. Amazon demonstrates how AI helps build positive experiences, such as personalised experiences that foster loyalty.

4. Customer loyalty: Room for improvement



27%

Notably, over a quarter of respondents reported never having had a positive AI experience with any retailer.

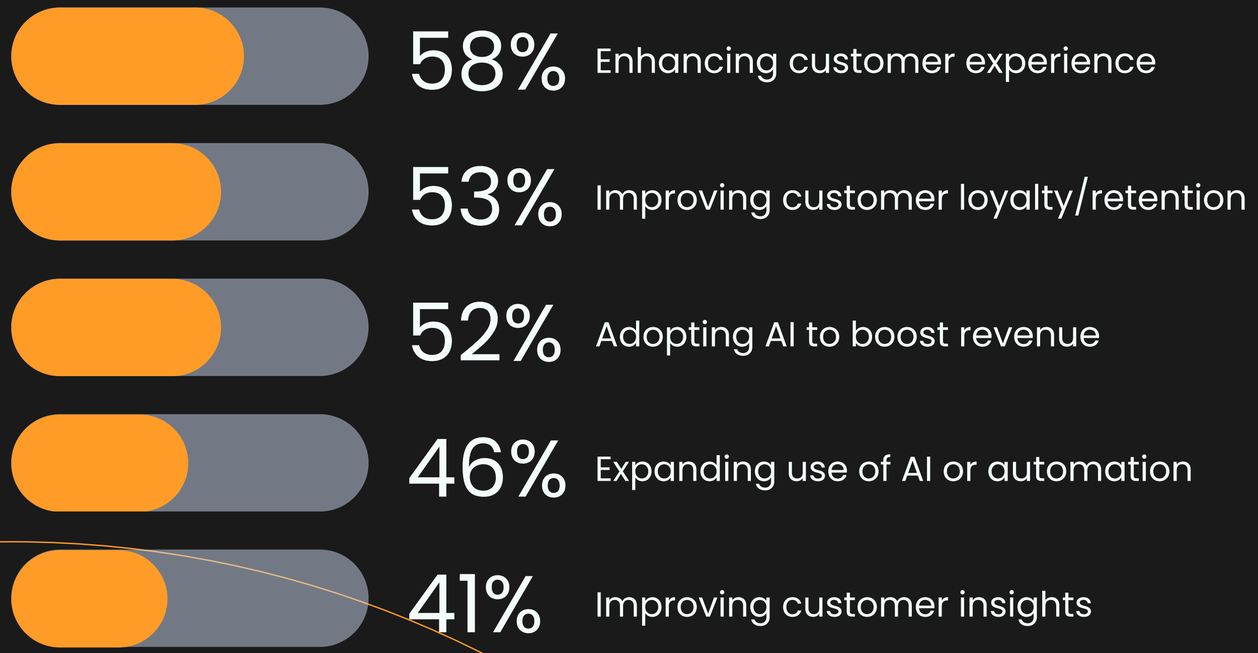
KEY TAKEAWAY:

Loyalty remains fragile, and incoherent use of AI can have long-term consequences, particularly if competitors utilise technology more effectively.

What the ecommerce brands say: *6 takeaways*

1. Ecommerce businesses: Top priorities

Retailers were asked about their biggest focuses for the next 12 months:



KEY TAKEAWAY:

The industry is placing customer-centricity and AI adoption at the heart of strategy. Experience, retention, and data-driven AI are the key levers for growth, while hyper-personalisation is key to promoting loyalty and engagement.

2. Loyalty programmes: Where they fall short

When asked what areas could be improved in their loyalty programmes, retailers acknowledged several weaknesses:



44% Customers don’t use them enough

37% Programmes could work better across multiple channels

34% Programmes could offer more relevant rewards and benefits

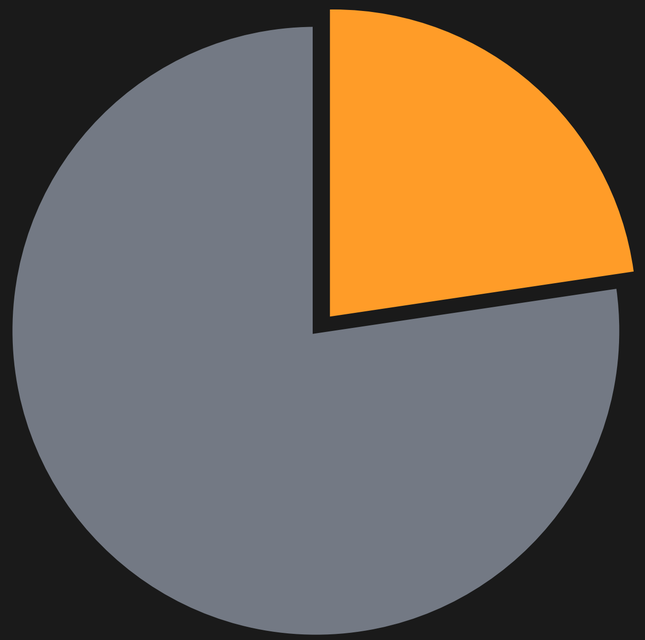
33% Programmes could be more personalised

33% Programmes could be smarter to drive better insight

KEY TAKEAWAY:

While loyalty is a priority, execution gaps remain. Programmes must evolve to be multi-channel, data-driven, and personalised to genuinely strengthen long-term relationships.

3. AI implementations: Delivering



23%

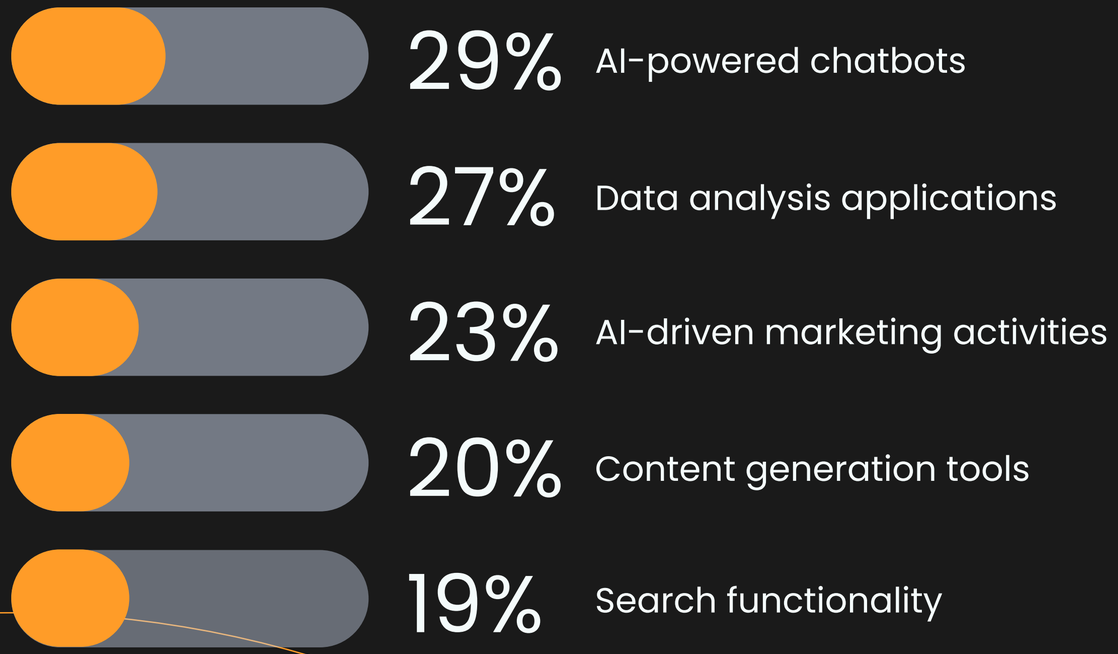
said that all AI implementations have been a success.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

For almost a quarter of respondents, AI is already a competitive advantage. However, it also shows that 77% believe AI isn't working hard enough for their brand.

4. AI implementations: Failing to deliver

Not all AI experiences have been successful:



KEY TAKEAWAY:

Chatbots and basic AI marketing are not meeting expectations, suggesting consumers – and staff – want smarter, more intuitive tools. Retailers who can crack effective AI in service and insight stand to be more competitive.

5. New customer experience features: Which didn't work?

When asked which new features trialled in the past year didn't live up to expectations, retailers said:



KEY TAKEAWAY:

Even well-intentioned digital investments often fail when they don't deliver true differentiation or convenience.

6. Customer experience: Pain points

Retailers identified where their ecommerce customer experience offerings still fall short:



27% Checkout and payments

25% Customer support

25% Loyalty systems

22% Returns and refunds

20% Data security and trust

KEY TAKEAWAY:

The fundamentals still matter most. Even with AI investment, checkout, trust, and support remain critical areas to fix.

Strategic *insight*

Four key lessons from the survey.

1 Prioritise experience and retention

Consumers want seamless, reliable interactions. Retailers know this and are aligning strategies accordingly.

2 Fix loyalty execution

Programmes must be omnichannel and personalised, not just points-based gimmicks.

3 Rethink AI in service

Chatbots and surface-level AI are failing. The opportunity lies in deeper analytics and customer insight tools.

4 Back-to-basics

Even as AI scales, checkout, payments, and trust remain decisive factors for success.

So, what next?

While this survey brings into focus the challenges faced by ecommerce brands, this should be seen as an opportunity. By addressing these challenges, retailers can grow, they can outsmart the competition, and they can future-proof operations. How do you get started? Well, how about diving into this whitepaper to explore actionable solutions that will help your brand thrive.



Section

01

Selling: how to do it *better*

Section

01.1

Unified *commerce*

How brands can seamlessly sell across all sales channels and storefronts



Matt Parkes

Head of Development at Quickfire Digital

Unified commerce isn’t just a buzz-term; it’s a strategic shift. One platform, one brain, one source of truth. It’s how modern brands sell online, in-store, through social, and to wholesale partners without disrupting their operations every time they launch a new channel.

For too long, omnichannel selling was a compromise rather than a solution, with techstacks, middleware, and integrations failing to work together. However, with everything increasingly under one roof now, unified commerce is the solution it always promised to be – if done right.

Let’s look at how.



Why unified commerce *matters*

Unified commerce is a business strategy where all your sales channels are powered by one centralised system. This means your product, orders, and customer data all flow from a single platform, not a tangled mess of third-party tools and integrations. It's not about appearing connected on the front end but *actually* being connected at the core.

As Shopify puts it, "True unification can only occur when product, order, and customer data flow from a single source of truth – or a single brain. This is only possible when eCom and POS solutions are built natively on the same platform."

That 'single brain' matters because it enables real-time visibility, faster innovation, and operational efficiency that omnichannel approaches simply can't match.

With customer expectations constantly evolving, shoppers look to shop wherever and however they want: mobile-first, store-located, socially influenced, and frictionless. At the same time, retailers are under pressure to scale globally, support B2B and D2C, and deliver hyper-personalised experiences without increasing their tech stack.

How to reap the *benefits*

With a single view of inventory, orders, and customer data, unified commerce platforms keep track of what's happening across a business in real-time. Customers benefit from up-to-date product inventories and the flexibility to browse, pay, and fulfil orders however they want. The result? Growth, greater efficiency, and a better customer experience:

Growth

When your data and systems are unified, adding a new sales channel doesn't mean hiring a consultant or bracing for months of integration problems. Want to sell D2C and B2B from the same backend? Do it. Want to launch a TikTok shop and still manage your inventory in sync with your store? Go ahead.

Unified commerce supercharges growth by removing friction, therefore delivering more conversion opportunities, more insights, and faster time-to-market. It's not about selling more, it's about selling smarter.



Efficiency

Retailers are exhausting resources trying to manage multiple systems that weren't intentionally designed to work together. Unified commerce solves this with streamlined operations, reduced tech costs, and teams who finally have time to focus on customers, not troubleshooting backend issues. Efficiency isn't a nice-to-have; it's a survival strategy.

Better customer experience

Personalisation is seamless when all customer interactions across all channels are tracked from one platform. Meaning smarter recommendations, faster fulfilment, and frictionless transitions between channels. This isn't omnichannel 2.0, it's intelligence and intuitive commerce at every touchpoint.



Technical infrastructure *goals*

Making your platform unified isn't just a UX improvement. It demands a rethink of the foundations of your infrastructure.

At a minimum, unified commerce requires:

- A centralised commerce platform (combining eCommerce + POS)
- Real-time data sync across all endpoints (stores, warehouses, apps, social)
- APIs and extensibility for headless and composable needs
- Native support for B2B, D2C, and marketplace integrations
- One source of truth for products, inventory, orders, and customers

Most platforms weren't built this way; that's why platforms such as Shopify lead the market: its POS, D2C, and B2B capabilities are built into one system, creating a one-brained Commerce Operating System, no matter what channel or market you want to sell in or expand to.

Getting *synchronised*

Retailers can’t afford to show a product online that’s already sold out in store or launch a discount on one channel and forget it on another. Unified commerce solves this sync problem.

With one centralised data model powering all channels, inventory levels, pricing rules, and promotional campaigns are instantly updated across every touchpoint. That means no more overselling or underselling, no pricing discrepancies between POS and online, and campaigns that launch everywhere, simultaneously, without extra developer work.

By integrating inventory management systems across channels, unified commerce enables real-time visibility into stock levels and locations. This visibility helps businesses optimise inventory, reduce stockouts and efficiently fulfil customer orders. It also enables features such as ‘buy online, pick up in-store’ and ship-from-store, improving convenience for customers. Unified commerce platforms like Shopify don’t just support these capabilities, they automate them.





Integrating B2B and D2C

B2B selling used to live in spreadsheets, portals, and ageing ERP systems. Now, B2B buyers expect the same slick experience as D2C shoppers, and that means the commerce platform needs to support both without compromise.

However, retailers are typically forced to manage two separate stacks – one for B2B and one for D2C. That means duplicate catalogues, different pricing engines, siloed customer data, and integration hell. This is where platforms like Shopify come in. Its unified system supports both B2B and D2C in one place so that retailers can manage custom B2B pricing, net payment terms and purchase orders on the same back-end used for everyday D2C sales.

Those that adopt a unified B2B and D2C model report on reduced operational complexity and costs by managing fewer systems, faster time-to-market for new product launches and channels, and improved forecasting and demand planning due to centralised insights.

We’re better *together*

Unified commerce is non-negotiable. Brands still relying on disconnected tech stacks and manual sync processes will fall behind as customer expectations grow and operational complexity increases. For retail leaders planning their next phase of growth, the goal is clear: unify operations, simplify infrastructure, and unlock smarter commerce across every channel.



5 key *action* points

1. Audit your stack to eliminate siloed systems and unify under one platform.
2. Align inventory, pricing, and promotions across every channel.
3. Run B2B and D2C from the same backend to cut complexity and avoid duplication.
4. Use one source of truth for products, orders, and customers by centralising your data.
5. Power smarter experiences by prioritising personalisation with unified customer insights.



Matt Parkes is Head of Development at Quickfire which builds high-performance Shopify websites that turn growth plans into reality. With deep development expertise and a focus on commercial outcomes, helping ambitious brands scale smarter, not just bigger. Reach out to Matthew with any of your Shopify development queries.

Quickfire

Section

01.2

Driving conversion *rates*

Why the future of conversion is conversational



Abhishek Chandra
Chief Revenue Officer at GoKwik

In 2025, attention isn’t just short; it’s fragmented, impatient, and on the move. Customers expect immediacy and relevance at every touchpoint, across every channel, without ever saying so.

According to McKinsey, 71% of consumers now expect personalised interactions from businesses, and 76% are frustrated when they don't receive them. This shift hasn’t just raised the stakes for performance; it’s quietly rewritten the rules of what ‘conversion’ even means. It’s no longer about persuading someone to act. It’s about recognising when they already intend to and removing anything that stands in the way.

So, let’s look at how the sharpest brands are turning to WhatsApp to meet the moment.



Conversations that *replace clicks*

Click paths are being replaced by conversation threads. This is particularly relevant on mobile, where high-intent discovery and decision-making often starts in a chat window, not just on a website. We're seeing commerce journeys unfold entirely within messaging platforms. According to WhatsApp, 66% of customers said that they made purchases after communicating with a brand on the platform. A customer browses a curated selection, asks a question, receives a personalised offer, and checks out – all in one native thread.

No redirects. No lag. Just resolution.

What matters here isn't just presence, it's tone. Automated flows that respond with speed and nuance are outperforming traditional channels by orders of magnitude. Not because they're cheaper, but because they're simpler. Seamless. Human, even when they're not. Automation in customer service workflows has also been linked to a 36% rise in repeat purchases, indicating enhanced customer retention.

WhatsApp's rich media support, conversational checkout capabilities, and deep user familiarity make it the ideal environment for these flows.

Behaviour-based triggers over *broadcast campaigns*

The spray-and-pray era is over. The brands winning today operate more like real-time systems than static campaigns. They move when the customer moves.

A cart left behind triggers a reminder. A product viewed three times without a purchase cues a limited-time offer. A support query becomes a chance to upsell. All of this happens behind the scenes; silent, smart, and sensitive to individual context. WhatsApp makes these moments actionable. The message lands where the customer already is – on their most-used chat platform – creating a high-visibility, high-intent opportunity.

What's changing isn't the tech. It's the mindset: conversations aren't being timed to marketing calendars, they're being timed to behaviour. McKinsey's research indicates that personalisation can reduce customer acquisition costs by up to 50%.





Mobile-only is the *new baseline*

It’s no longer about optimising for mobile. The entire journey needs to exist on mobile natively, from product discovery to checkout to support.

In the UK, over 80% of ecommerce traffic now originates on mobile devices. And yet many experiences still lean on slow-loading pages, password resets, or complicated payment screens designed for desktop. The most efficient experiences feel more like an app than a website, even when they’re delivered through something as lightweight as a chat thread.

WhatsApp’s mobile-first design ensures that these experiences are not only fast but familiar, reducing friction dramatically. The difference? Mobile-native design that removes decisions, not just friction.

Support that converts, *even at 2am*

Support has traditionally been seen as a cost centre. In 2025, it's becoming a performance channel.

That's because today's always-on, multilingual, AI-assisted support doesn't just solve problems, it re-engages. It answers product questions, nudges abandoned carts, and offers real-time resolutions that feel tailored. Not because there's a person on the other side, but because the system has learned how to behave like one. More importantly, the loop is closed instantly.

When this support is delivered via WhatsApp, it feels natural, real-time, and instantly accessible, with no need to open another app or wait for a callback. Another bonus: it stays in the very app that the customer already uses to talk to friends and family.

For a generation that values time over everything else, that's the difference between drop-off and conversion.

Dynamic journeys powered by *real signals*

The concept of a fixed user journey is obsolete. What we see instead are dynamic paths that respond to a customer's signals in real time.

Did they open a message but not click? Did they visit a return policy page twice? Did they stall at payment? Each of these is a moment to adjust, not just observe. WhatsApp offers real-time visibility into message activity, helping brands segment more intelligently, which has also gone beyond demographics and purchase history.

It's now built on live behavioural inputs such as message activity, channel preference, and buying hesitancy. Journeys shift mid-flow, conversations reroute, and what was once a broadcast becomes something that feels bespoke.





Real-time nudges, *not retargeting*

Traditional retargeting is a blunt instrument. It reminds. It repeats. It often irritates.

What works better in 2025 is real-time relevance: the well-timed nudge that responds to now, not last week.

A message that says “Those size 9 blue trainers you looked at? Back in stock for 24 hours. Want us to hold them?” lands differently. It feels helpful. It respects context. It converts.

Delivered over WhatsApp, this feels more like a helpful ping from a concierge than an ad from a stranger.

This is retargeting that feels like memory, not surveillance.

Conversion's *final mile*

By the time a customer reaches checkout, every previous touchpoint has done its job. Or so it seems. But here's the truth: the payment moment is often the most fragile, and the most fertile. It's where intent meets hesitation, and where smart brands don't just facilitate transactions; they influence them.

The sharpest conversion strategies now bring intelligence right into the chat window, especially WhatsApp. Not in the form of loud offers or aggressive nudges, but through timely, contextual cues that guide the customer forward. Think: a reminder about limited stock or a one-time offer surfaced at just the right second, delivered right inside WhatsApp, where the customer is already engaged.

This is what next-gen enablement looks like: real-time insights triggering relevant prompts, adaptive flows adjusting to user behaviour, and checkout decisions happening inside conversations, not after them.



Turning chats into *checkouts*

Conversion in 2025 isn’t about persuading people to care. It’s about proving you already do. Tools like KwikEngage that focus on meaningful engagement can help you maximise retention ROI and boost shopper interaction significantly, right on WhatsApp.

Because, in the end, every sale begins with a conversation worth having. And WhatsApp is the best channel in today’s day and age to achieve it all.



5 key *action* points

1. Trigger context-aware follow-ups in messaging apps to recover abandoned carts with minimal friction.
2. Adjust tone, timing, and content dynamically based on how users interact (or don't) with your messages.
3. Resolve customer queries 24/7, with AI that adapts to history, sentiment, and urgency.
4. Replace generic product drops with curated, opt-in experiences delivered natively within chat conversations.
5. Treat replies, hesitations, and drop-offs as signals to fine-tune future outreach in real time.



Abhishek Chandra is Chief Revenue Officer at GoKwik. Launched in 2020, GoKwik is the largest eCommerce enabler in Asia. It has helped over 12,000 brands across Asia, US, UK, Europe, and the Middle East increase conversions, reduce fraud, and boost revenue realisation. In 2024, GoKwik helped brands to process a GMV in excess of £3bn and powered over 2bn conversations on WhatsApp. Looking to make WhatsApp a part of your strategy, feel free to reach out to Abhishek!

GoKwik®

Section

01.3

Simplified *commerce*

Why unified beats fragmented, every time



Nick Raymond
Unified Commerce Consultant

In retail, complexity rarely arrives all at once. It creeps in – an integration here, a workaround there – until the once-streamlined becomes unmanageable. What starts as flexibility becomes fragility. Therefore, simplified commerce isn't just about optimising checkout flows or using fewer clicks; it's about questioning every part of the stack.

In 2025, the retailers pulling ahead aren't the ones just adding more. They're the ones removing what they no longer need.

Here's how.



Complexity isn’t just a tech problem – it’s a *business problem*

Plenty of brands are still managing sales across legacy tills, disconnected POS terminals, and CRMs that can’t speak to their eCommerce platforms. Inventory data is exported and reconciled manually. Returns are managed through shared inboxes. Customer value is calculated by copying and pasting between systems.

That’s not digital transformation. It’s digital duct tape.

Despite every founder’s instinct to believe their setup is unique, the reality is that most retail businesses share the same core needs: selling products, processing orders, and serving customers. These fundamentals are already being solved at scale. With over 4 million websites built on Shopify alone, chances are your problem isn’t unique, and nor is the solution.

The cost of building custom systems for everything isn’t just financial. It’s operational: teams waste hours bridging data gaps; customers experience inconsistent service; leadership loses clarity because reporting is stitched together from too many tools. In a business that needs to move quickly, disjointed systems are an anchor.



Unified systems are *simpler and stronger*

The foundation of simplified commerce is a unified stack, where inventory, payments, order history, and customer data are connected through a single source of truth. The whole operation runs cleaner when store tills and eCommerce checkouts are aligned and when customer support sees the same data as logistics.

Fundamentally, it’s not about chasing the newest tool. It’s about building around a stable core where fewer things can go wrong. For most modern retailers, that central platform is Shopify. One client I work with used to run separate systems for store stock and online inventory. The website team couldn’t see what was on the shop floor. Now, they’ve rationalised around a shared source, creating visibility across the entire business. They didn’t need a complete rebuild, just a simpler way of working.

Agility isn’t just for startups *anymore*

Established retailers often assume smaller brands move faster because they’re smaller. But the real difference is structural. Large retailers are often tied to outdated infrastructure. I’ve sat in meetings where changing a banner colour required a sprint and a signed-off statement of work.

Meanwhile, smaller teams are launching new storefronts, experimenting with AR, and adapting to customer feedback within days. That’s not because they have more money. It’s because they have less in the way.

Today, many of the tools that used to cost tens of thousands to develop can be implemented for the cost of a SaaS subscription. One client added full augmented reality functionality to their site for around $70 a month. Five years ago, that was a six-figure development project. The gap between “startup” and “enterprise” capability has collapsed.



From “call the developer” to *“click save”*

A decade ago, eCommerce sites were clunky and rigid. Changing a product description or updating navigation meant logging a ticket, and then waiting. There were no themes. No apps. If you needed a new feature, you built it (or paid someone to).

Today, that world is unrecognisable. Even small retailers can run drag-and-drop storefronts, bulk edit product data, and sync marketing activity without writing a line of code. You don’t need an in-house development team to compete; you just need adaptability.





The culture has *changed*, too

But there's more to this shift than software. The culture of commerce is changing.

Go to a DTC or Shopify-focused event, and it's clear: eCommerce has become more open, collaborative, and product-led. Founders compare conversion strategies. Ops leads share fulfilment tips. People move fluidly between tech providers and brand roles. There's an energy, particularly at events like Shoptalk, Pulse, and the smaller community-driven meetups, that just didn't exist 10 years ago.

Compare that to the grey-suit expos of the past, where enterprise tech providers pitched six-figure systems to bored procurement managers. This new generation of eCommerce builders is sharper, faster, and often better connected, not to agencies, but to each other.

And that's where the best insights live: in Slack groups; in Discord chats; in Twitter threads. In conversations between people who've tried the thing you're trying to do, and can tell you what worked (and what didn't).

It’s not just about platforms. It’s about *principles*

Yes, platforms like Shopify have made simplification more accessible. But this isn’t about any single provider. It’s about choosing systems that work together, keeping your architecture lean, reducing handoffs, and avoiding complexity-for-complexity’s sake.

Whether you’re a solo founder or managing a global team, simplicity isn’t a constraint. It’s an advantage.



5 key *action* points

1. Audit your tech: Identify redundant tools and streamline where you can.
2. Unify your operations: Align online and offline inventory and orders.
3. Avoid unnecessary custom builds: Use proven solutions where they exist.
4. Centralise your data: Give every team access to the same customer picture.
5. Tap into the community: Don’t solve problems in isolation when others have solved them already.



Nick Raymond is Unified Commerce Consultant at Invictus Global, has 15 years of experience in online retailing, specializing in home, luxury, and consumer brands. He has held leadership roles including Head of Ecommerce and Digital Director, and now consults for multiple retailers across various sectors, driven by a passion for tech and innovation. Feel free to contact Nick regarding any platform selection, RFP processes, or project management queries.

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Section

01.4

Peak selling *times*

Smarter pricing for peak season



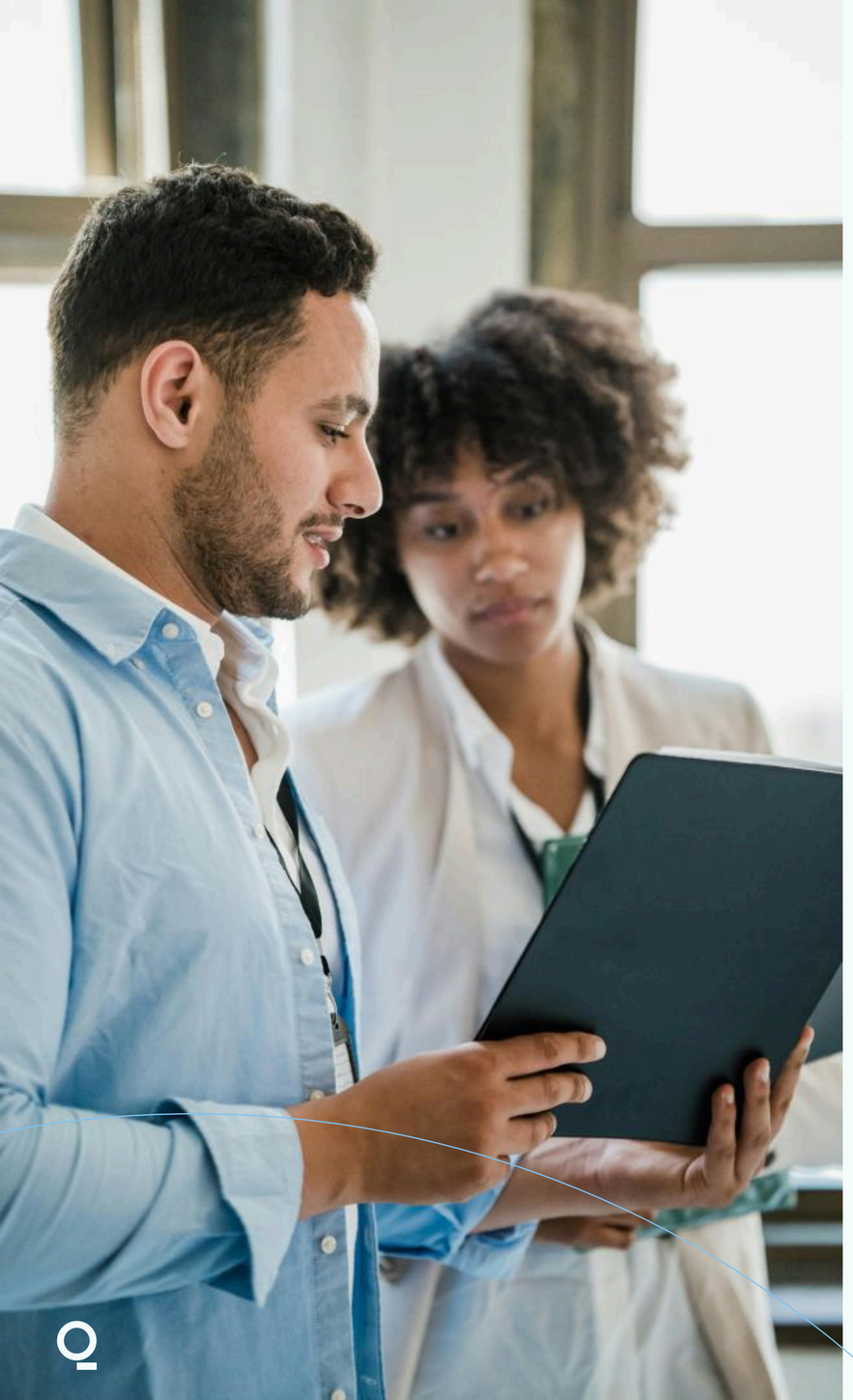
Melike Ulaman

Growth Marketer at Prisync

Every retailer lives for peak seasons. Whether it’s Black Friday, Valentine's Day, or back-to-school rushes, these high-traffic seasons can make or break eCommerce brands.

However, busy doesn’t automatically mean profitable. What separates the winners from the crowd? Pricing strategy. Not just any strategy, but dynamic, agile, and competitive pricing that turns the chaos into more revenue. Let’s break down how to nail your pricing game during peak seasons and leave competitors behind.





Why timing (and pricing) is *everything*

Peak seasons such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Amazon Prime Day, and Christmas aren't just dates on a calendar, they're psychological triggers. Shoppers look for deals, bundles, and value-packed offers and promotions. But here's the reality: shoppers are also comparing your prices to competitors in real-time, often across multiple browser tabs, before buying. If you're still setting prices manually or waiting days to react, you're practically handing sales to the competition.

For instance, Amazon's algorithmic repricing tools adjust prices every 10 minutes during Prime Day, a tactic that has contributed to the event generating $12.7 billion in 2023. Retailers without similar tools often struggle to keep pace.

Dynamic pricing is your *secret weapon*

Dynamic pricing isn't just for airlines and Uber. It's your lifeline during peak seasons. Simply put, it's adjusting prices in real-time based on factors such as competitor moves, demand spikes, and inventory levels. Think of it as autopilot for your pricing strategy.

Take Prime Day. Your top competitor slashes the price of a best-selling coffee maker by 5%. Instead of panicking, your pricing tool detects the change instantly and automatically adjusts your price to stay competitive, all before your morning coffee gets cold. That's the power of automation. But of course, the choice of adapting your prices is up to you and your business strategy during the peak seasons to match competitor prices.

Pricing tools do the heavy lifting: tracking competitors, analysing trends, and nudging prices up or down to protect margins while maximising sales. The result? No more sleepless nights refreshing competitor websites.



How shoppers change during *peak seasons*

Peak season shoppers are different.

Urgency and the wish to find the best deals skyrocket, which means price sensitivity goes to super high levels.

Here's what's shifting:

- **Tab comparing:** Most shoppers check at least three sites before buying.
- **Discounts or more?** Shoppers want bundled deals (think "laptop + case + mouse"), fast shipping, and hassle-free returns.
- **Early starters:** Most of the holiday shopping now happens in October. But, during the year, we see lots of peak seasons.
- **Values matter:** Sustainability claims or 'buy now, pay later' options can tip the scales in your favour.

Your pricing strategy needs to reflect these behaviours.

A 10% discount might have worked in 2019, but today's shoppers want personalised, value-driven offers – fast and with good deals.

Predicting *peak profits*

By crunching data from past sales, market trends, and even weather forecasts, AI-powered tools can predict surges with more accuracy than ever. This means you are more equipped to extend your peak season.

Here's how:

Pre-peak whispers:

Use early-bird offers to capture shoppers before the peak moments.

Post-event momentum:

Retarget cart abandoners with time-sensitive discounts after the main event.

Unified commerce:

Sync pricing with inventory and marketing.

For example, a fashion retailer using dynamic pricing could extend its Black Friday success by launching a 'winter warm-up' sale in December, targeting shoppers who missed the main event. This can lead to significant success, driving a substantial revenue boost during what is typically a slow month.

It is not about surviving eCommerce. *It's about winning.*

Peak seasons are retail's Olympics, and ecommerce brands should be training all year to get it right. So, don't show up with outdated tools and hope for the best. With dynamic pricing and unified commerce strategies, you're not just reacting to the chaos, you're controlling it.

The bottom line? Shoppers aren't just buying products during these seasons. They're choosing which retailers to trust (and revisit) all year. Make sure your pricing strategy – not your competitor's – is the reason they click 'buy'.



5 key *action* points

1. Sync inventory and pricing tools so that if inventory dips below 10%, you can pause discounts automatically and avoid ‘out-of-stock’ messages.

2. Use automation tools to set rules to match competitors’ price drops within hours, not days.

3. Learn from last year by looking into past data to find out which products sold fastest, where you over-discounted, etc.

4. Run a ‘last chance’ sale post-event or offer exclusive bundles to email subscribers to stretch the peak.

5. Always watch the calendar because new shopping holidays pop up yearly (TikTok’s Cyber Week, anyone?), and you must plan in advance.



Melike Ulaman is a Growth Marketer at Prisync, where she develops impactful strategies and content centred on ecommerce pricing strategies. Prisync is a competitor price tracking software for ecommerce companies of all sizes. The software lets you track competitor data such as product prices, price history, stock information, and more. Connect with Melike to discover how you can utilise competitor price tracking.

Prisync

Section

02 Engagement: *How to drive it*

Section

02.1

Generating *traffic*

How to keep pace and win in the AI era



Josh Fletcher

Founder & managing director at Target

Winning brands are leveraging generative and agentic AI to automate repetitive tasks and increase meaningful output. However, with the barrier to entry so low, AI is also giving birth to a lot of crap. Generic, soulless blog posts born from weak prompts and tons of paid social creatives riddled with mistakes and zero consideration for art direction and meaningful copy.

This saturation of low-quality content and ads is going to be both the biggest threat and opportunity for brands over the next 12 months. The brands that lose will be those stuck on the hamster wheel, vomiting out a high volume of generic ads and unoriginal blog posts, forever lost in a sea of mediocrity.

The winners will be those marketers who think like an old-school advertiser. Getting cut-through with paid social messaging centred around customer psychology and original creative ideas, and writers bold enough to pen well-researched content that is as unique as it is helpful.

With that in mind, here's how I believe eCommerce brands can grow traffic and conversions in increasingly crowded markets.



Take bigger swings with your *paid social creative*

Recently, the narrative among thought leaders on LinkedIn has been “a high volume of ads is the key to winning on Meta”. But the real winners are those with a high volume of good ads.

Many of the under-performing paid social accounts we’ve audited over the past six months have been littered with two things:

- 100% AI-generated static ads with no post-production retouching or refinement in Adobe
- Ad concepts centred on copycat ideas or trends (e.g. Us vs. Them, POV, “5 reasons why I hate X brand” etc... Yuck)

Average ideas and effort generate average results, at best.



The outlier ads for our clients, the ones that genuinely move the needle with quality traffic and conversions, higher ROAS, or lower CPA, almost always take unique creative routes, use authentic scripts, and utilise distinctive messaging.

Take a premium dog food subscription brand that we work with. The best ad that this account has ever seen is a video where a Michelin-trained chef plates up the dog food ingredients in their raw form to showcase that they're human-grade, before filming the reaction of dog enthusiasts at Crufts. The message was simple: human-grade dog food – the best in the world. Unique, with a bit of a 'shock' factor. The business-building performance born from these ads simply isn't possible with copycat ads that customers have seen several times before from your competitors. Nor does it come from generic, weak AI-generated static ads.

Invest heavily in creative strategy.

I promise you, the juice is worth the squeeze.





Optimising for LLMs *with GEO*

Google still has the lion’s share of search. However, more people are turning to generative engines such as ChatGPT to answer their queries and find new products. This means it’s time to take conversational commerce seriously.

A good place to start is understanding exactly how and where your brand is showing up in LLMs. The tools that you can use to do this today are: GPTrends, AiRank, and Waikay. You also track generative engine keywords in Ahrefs.

When it comes to optimising for generative engines vs. traditional search engines, there is some nuance.

Successful GEO requires:

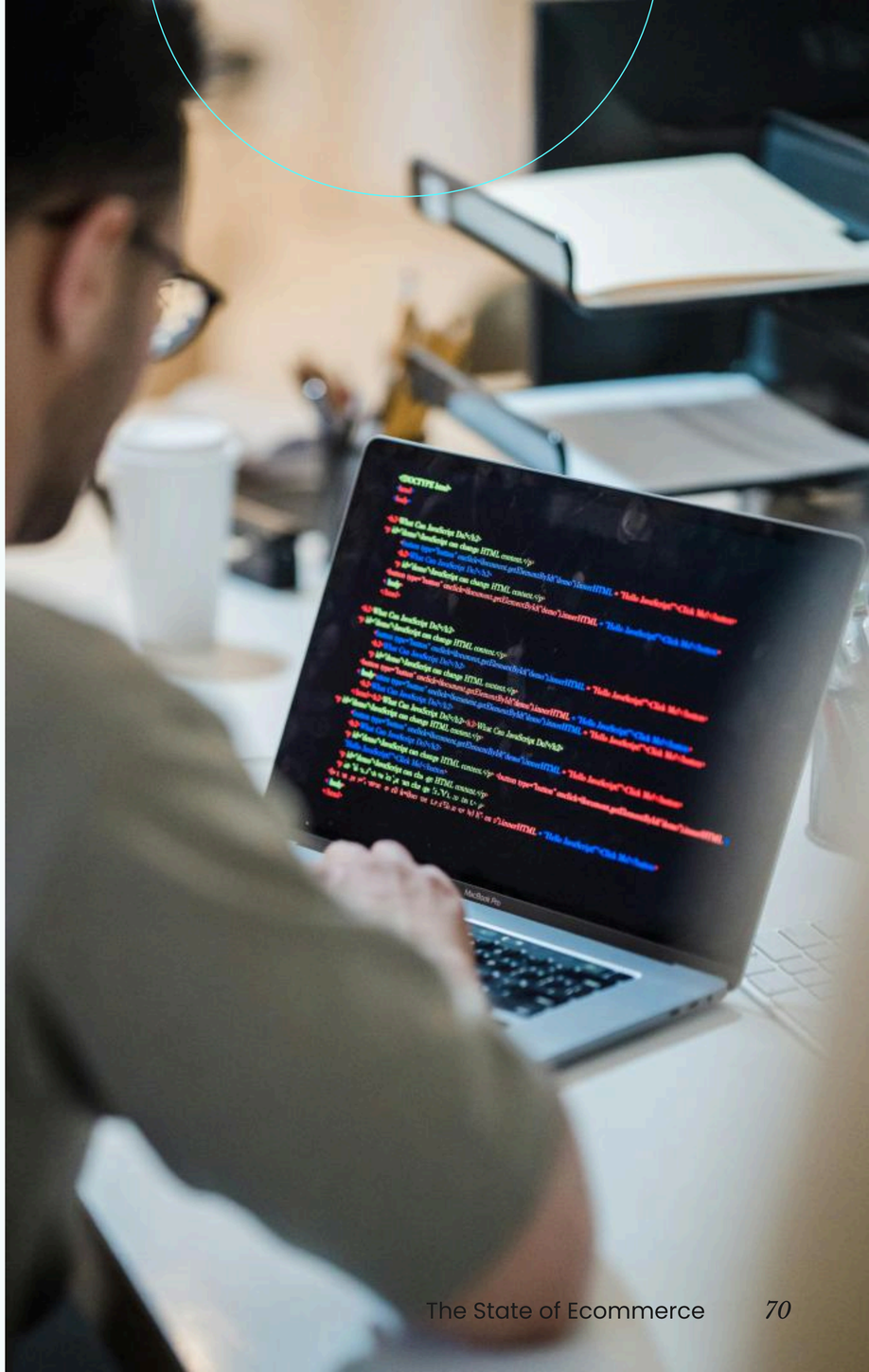
- **AI-specific schema markup:** To enable generative engines to provide context around content and help engines to understand and feature your content.

- **Optimise for conversational queries:** Lean into long-tail keywords that match the way that users submit queries to generative engines.

- **In-depth content:** Ensure that your content is in-depth and easy to understand, and avoid jargon and complex sentences where possible.

- **Brand mentions and social signals:** LLMs also rely on a strong brand presence on socials, customer reviews, and credible PR backlinks.

- **High-quality product data:** You probably saw the integration between Chat-GPT and Shopify, which relies on a well-optimised product feed with key attributes such as pricing, reviews, sizing, titles, and descriptions structured in a way that AI can process and understand.

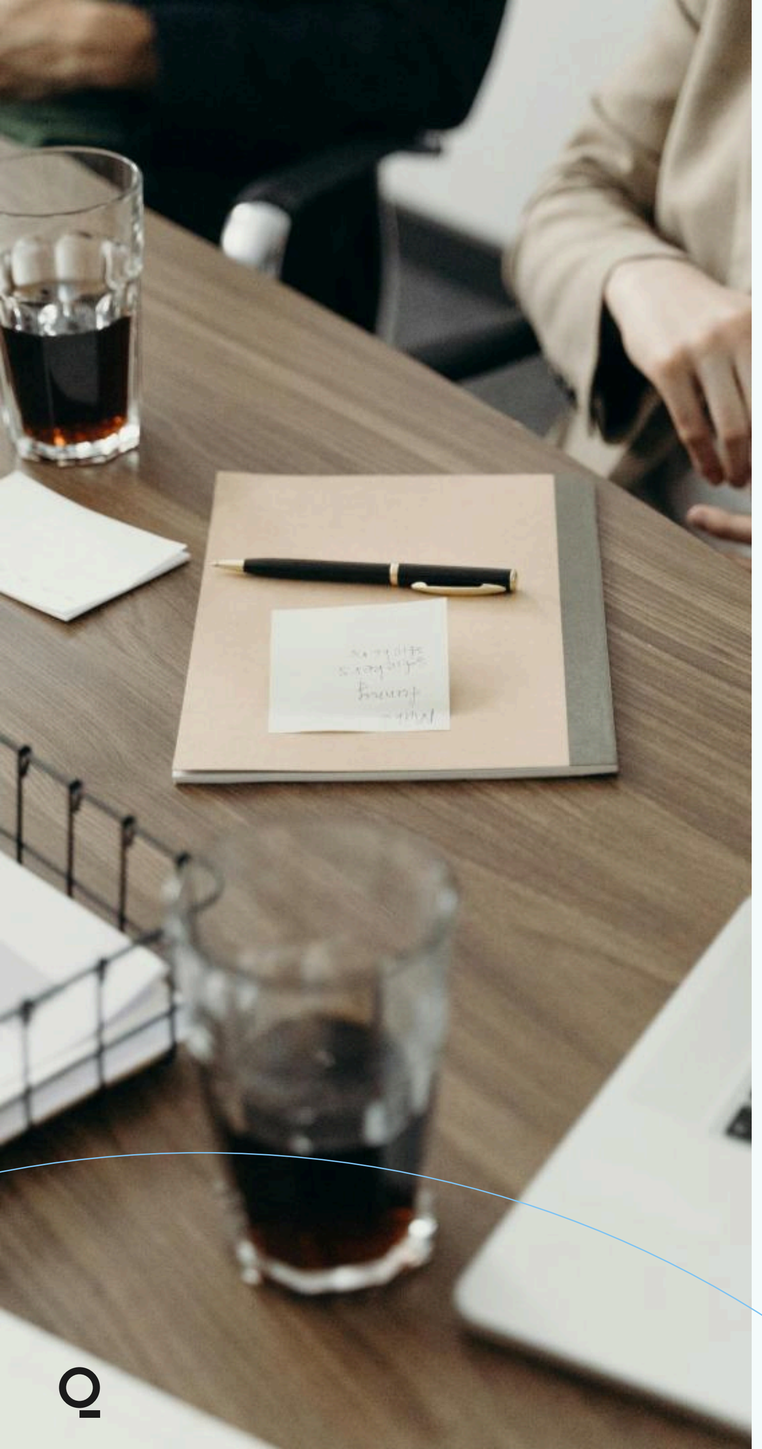


Helpful *content*

In a world of rising CPMs & CPCs, being over-leveraged on paid media can get costly, very quickly. Offsetting these costs with strong organic rankings for non-brand terms via SEO is a solid long-term investment.

When it comes to SEO content writing, the most important principle to consider is E-E-A-T. This stands for: ‘Experience-Expertise-Authority-Trust’. This concept is used by Google to assess the quality and reliability of content. It's a framework that helps Google's Quality Raters evaluate whether a page's content is trustworthy and helpful to users.





At Target, we follow this very principle and bucket content into three types: Hero, Hub & Help.

Hero content: This is a single piece of content delivered quarterly, and the heaviest lift of the three. It's generally 3,000+ words and integrated cross-channel as part of a bigger campaign. We encourage brands to commit resources to conducting independent research on a topic, so that we have a unique perspective and new data to talk about.

Hub content: This is delivered monthly and designed for our prime prospect. It covers the trending topics that are relevant to the audience.

Help content: This is evergreen content produced weekly. It's based on high search-volume queries and FAQs that our audience is consistently searching.

By looking at SEO content through this lens, ensuring everything you produce is helpful and meets Google's EEAT guidelines, your brand will be another step closer to climbing the search engine results page.

5 key *action* points

1. Think like an old-school advertiser with customer psychology and creative ideas at the forefront.
2. Invest heavily in original creative rather than relying on boring AI-generated slop.
3. Take conversational commerce seriously and optimise for generative search engines.
4. Use Google's Experience-Expertise-Authority-Trust framework to get SEO content writing right.
5. Climb the search engine results page using Hero, Hub, and Help content.



Josh Fletcher is Founder and Managing Director at Target, a performance marketing and ecommerce growth agency that helps challenger brands to punch above their weight by unlocking more predictable and profitable growth with paid search, paid social, SEO, and creative. Connect with Josh to explore strategies that could help your brand grow with more confidence.

Section

02.2

Store *design*

How to turn browsers into buyers



Martin Harper
Co-Founder at Quickfire

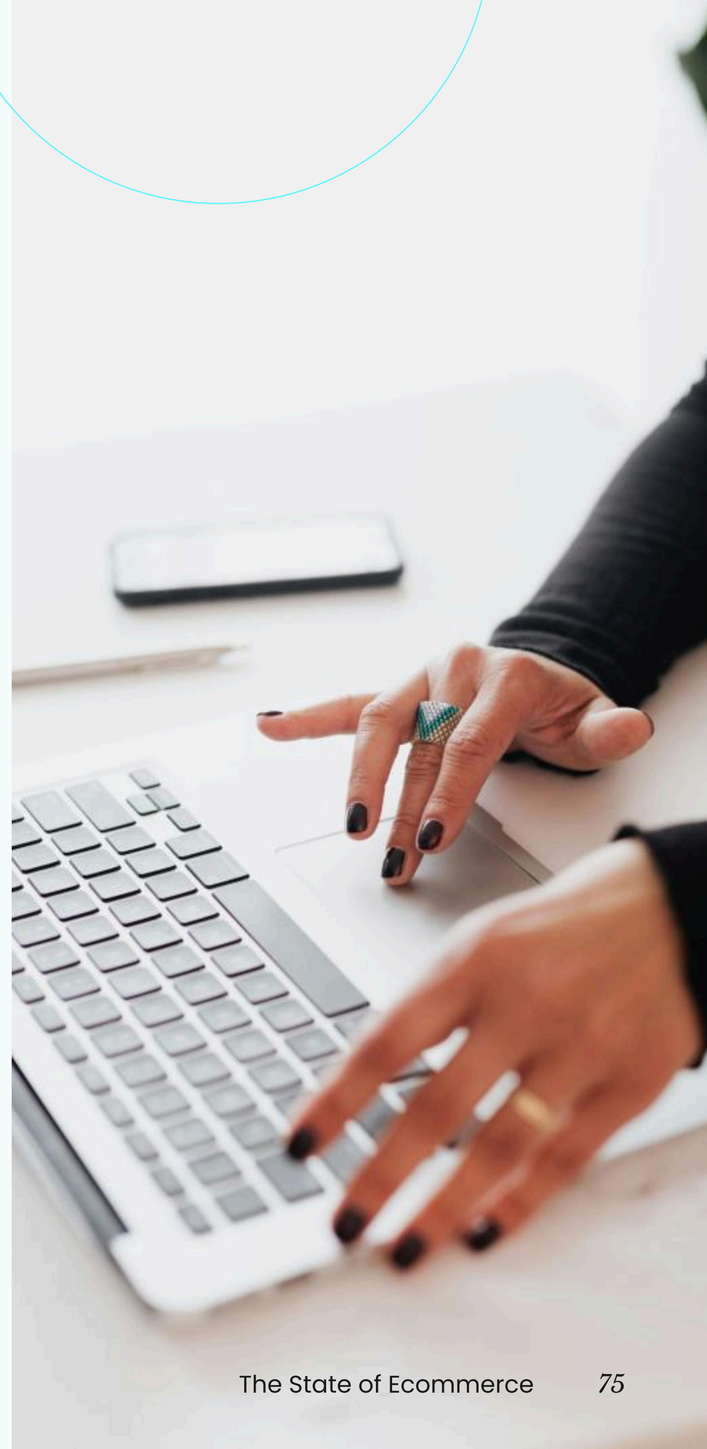
You've done the hard bit. You've got someone through the door, or more accurately, onto your homepage. Now what?

For too many brands, the answer is... not much.

But in eCommerce, your store design is the shop floor. It's your greeter, your merchandiser, your sales assistant, your till. And if you want to drive engagement and repeat custom, you need to treat it like a full-time team member that earns its keep.

Store design isn't just about looking good. It's about reducing friction, building trust quickly, and making it effortless for real people to take action. When the design works, people don't notice it. They just move. And that's exactly the point.

Here's how to get it right.



Design isn't just what it looks like. *It's how it works.*

Every element of your store should serve a purpose. Whether it’s helping someone find a product, compare options, or get a question answered, the design needs to do something.

You’re not designing for aesthetics. You’re designing for outcomes.

Ask yourself:

- Can customers find what they’re looking for in under three clicks?
- Does the design make them want to stay, not just scroll?
- Are you removing doubt and helping them say yes, faster?

If the answer’s no, there’s a gap between what looks good and what actually works, and that’s costing you.





Function first. Aesthetic second. *Always.*

There’s nothing wrong with a visually stunning site. But if it’s confusing to navigate, hard to shop, or takes forever to load, it’s just window dressing.

You’re not trying to impress. You’re trying to convert.

So, start with the basics:

- Clear CTAs above the fold
- Menus that make sense
- Filters that help, not hinder
- Clean layouts with room to breathe

You don’t need flashy motion graphics to hold attention. You need clarity, simplicity, and design choices that actually help people move through the store without thinking twice.

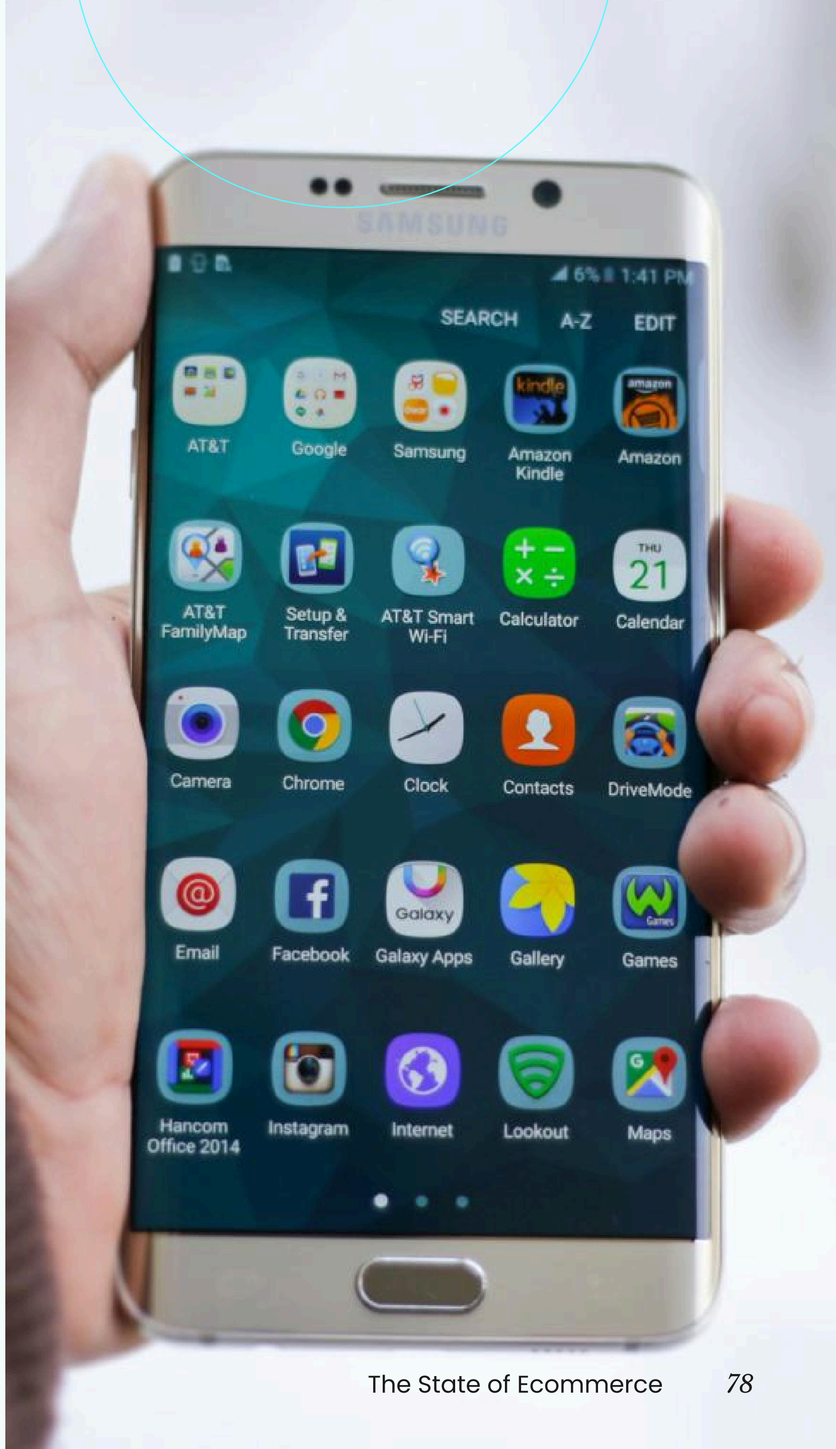
Mobile-first isn't optional. *It's expected.*

Mobile traffic dominates. So, if your store isn’t built for mobile from the ground up, you’re already behind.

Mobile-first doesn’t mean cramming your desktop layout into a smaller screen. It means making smart decisions based on real user behaviour. Think thumb-friendly navigation, tap-sized buttons, fast load speeds, and fewer distractions.

If your checkout takes five steps and a zoom-in just to type a postcode, that’s a broken experience. As a result, people won’t push through. They’ll bounce.

You should always be testing your site like a real user. Scroll on the bus. Try the checkout while juggling a coffee. If it’s not seamless, fix it.



Product discovery should feel natural. *Not like hard work.*

People aren’t hunting, they’re browsing. And if you make them dig, you lose them. Therefore, your job is to remove the effort. Great product discovery flows without friction by anticipating needs and serving up what matters.

Think:

- Predictive search that feels smart, not clunky
- Labels and tags that surface what’s new, popular, or back in stock
- Product categorisation that mirrors how your customers actually shop
- Recommendations that are helpful, not forced

Every click should feel like a step forward, not a detour.

Carousels look slick. *But they don’t convert.*

Carousels might wow stakeholders in a pitch deck, but most users never see past the first slide. They kill load speed. They bury key messaging. So, if your most important offer is slide two or three, it might as well not exist.

Instead, use static hero images with a single message. Keep it focused and don’t make your customers swipe to get to the point.

Test. Learn. *Improve.*

Your store should never stand still. Even if it’s performing well, there’s always a way to make it sharper. Treat your store like a product, not a project. You don’t need to blow everything up. Instead, small, intentional tests can lead to meaningful gains.

Start here:

- A/B test button placement or colour
- Switch up the headline on your most visited landing page
- Test different versions of your product images
- Try a new layout for mobile navigation and track engagement

Look at the data. Make a call. Move forward. Then do it again. That’s how you build momentum.



The future of store design? *Interactive.*

People want to see products in action, visualise how something fits into their life, or experience a bit more than scroll-click-buy. This doesn't mean you need to go full AR or VR, but simple things like 360° views, short product videos, or interactive size guides can make a huge difference.

It's not about being flashy. It's about giving people confidence. The more you help them visualise, the faster they'll move from maybe to yes.

One last *thing*

At the end of the day, your store's got one job... help people buy with confidence. Strip it back. Make it easy. Make it human. That's what gets results.

5 key *action* points

1. Treat mobile as your primary storefront, not a sidekick.
2. Simplify navigation and prioritise product discovery.
3. Test one store element a month and learn from the data.
4. Balance aesthetics with usability; function always wins.
5. Design every page with a single goal in mind: action.



Martin Harper is Co-Founder at Quickfire which builds high-performance Shopify websites that turn growth plans into reality. With deep development expertise and a focus on commercial outcomes, helping ambitious brands scale smarter, not just bigger. Connect with Martin if you're looking to develop your Shopify store.

Quickfire

Section

02.2

Store *design*

How impactful branding influences conversion rates



Laura Hanlon
Director at Studio 3.5

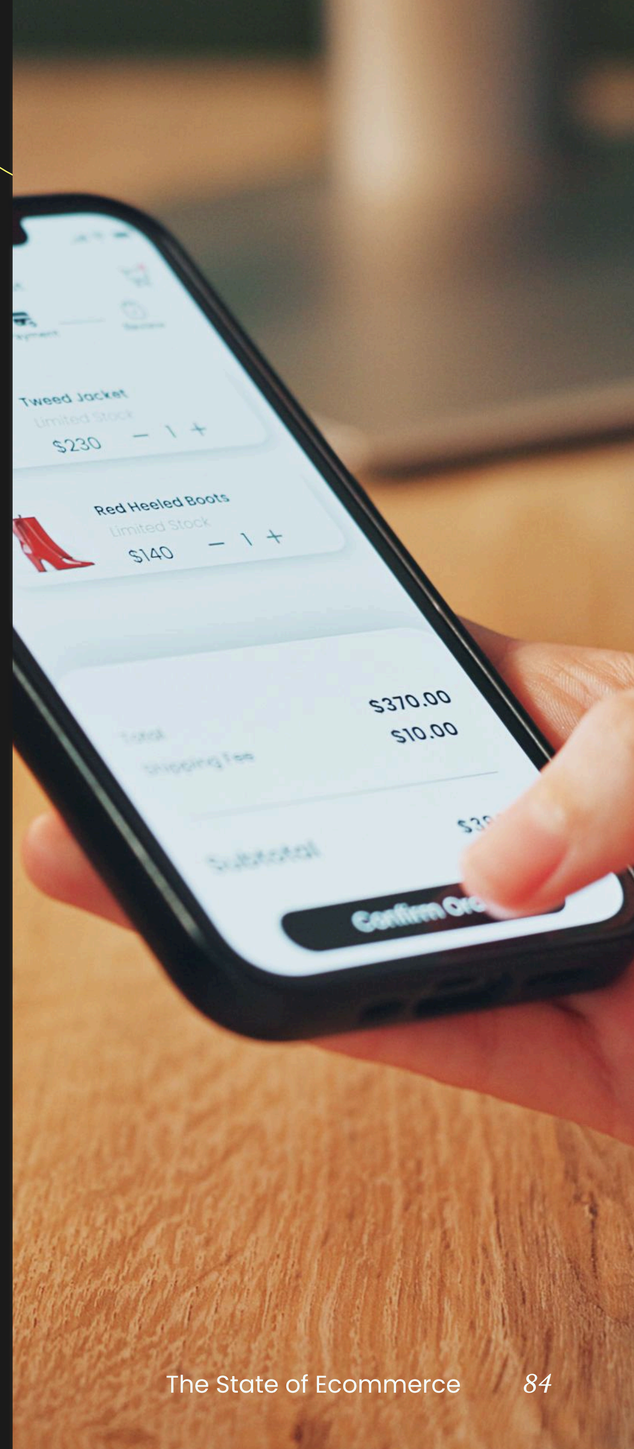
Most of the time, people aren't shopping. They're living – working, commuting, catching up on life. But when the need arises, when they're in-market, they turn to what they recognise and trust.

That's where branding steps in.

A strong brand isn’t just a logo or a catchy tagline. It's a clear understanding of who you are, what you stand for, and who you're speaking to. It's about consistency across every touchpoint – ads, social media, your website. This consistency builds trust, and trust drives conversions.

But it's more than just being consistent. The best brands make you feel something. They stay with you. You might not need new trainers today, but when you do, Nike comes to mind. That's the power of branding – it gets you on the shortlist before a customer even starts comparing options.

This gives brands a significant advantage at the moment of truth: the point when someone decides to buy. If your brand has done its job, you're already in their consideration set.



Food for *thought*

When someone lands on your site, your brand is already doing the talking before they've read a single word. Does the messaging feel like it's speaking directly to them? Does it continue the conversation that started in your ad, your email, or your Instagram post? Or does it feel like a dead end? Is your creative simply filling space, or is it pulling its weight, reinforcing who you are and why it matters?

These aren't just nice-to-haves. They're the difference between someone bouncing or buying.

Effective branding doesn't just look good. It creates familiarity, connection, and emotional relevance. These are the elements that turn visitors into customers, because impactful branding doesn't just help you get seen. It helps you get chosen. It makes you desirable.

It makes your customers want to take action.



Laura Hanlon is Director at Studio3.5 which is a strategic creative agency driven by the belief that real change starts with just 3.5% of people behind a cause. Studio 3.5 partners with brands ready to make an impact through strategy, design, and measurable frameworks, we turn ideas into action. Connect with Laura to learn how Studio 3.5 can help your brand scale impact.

studio 3.5

Section

02.3

Social *commerce*

The hidden revenue leak in your eComm strategy, and how to fix it with video social commerce



Guy Schragger

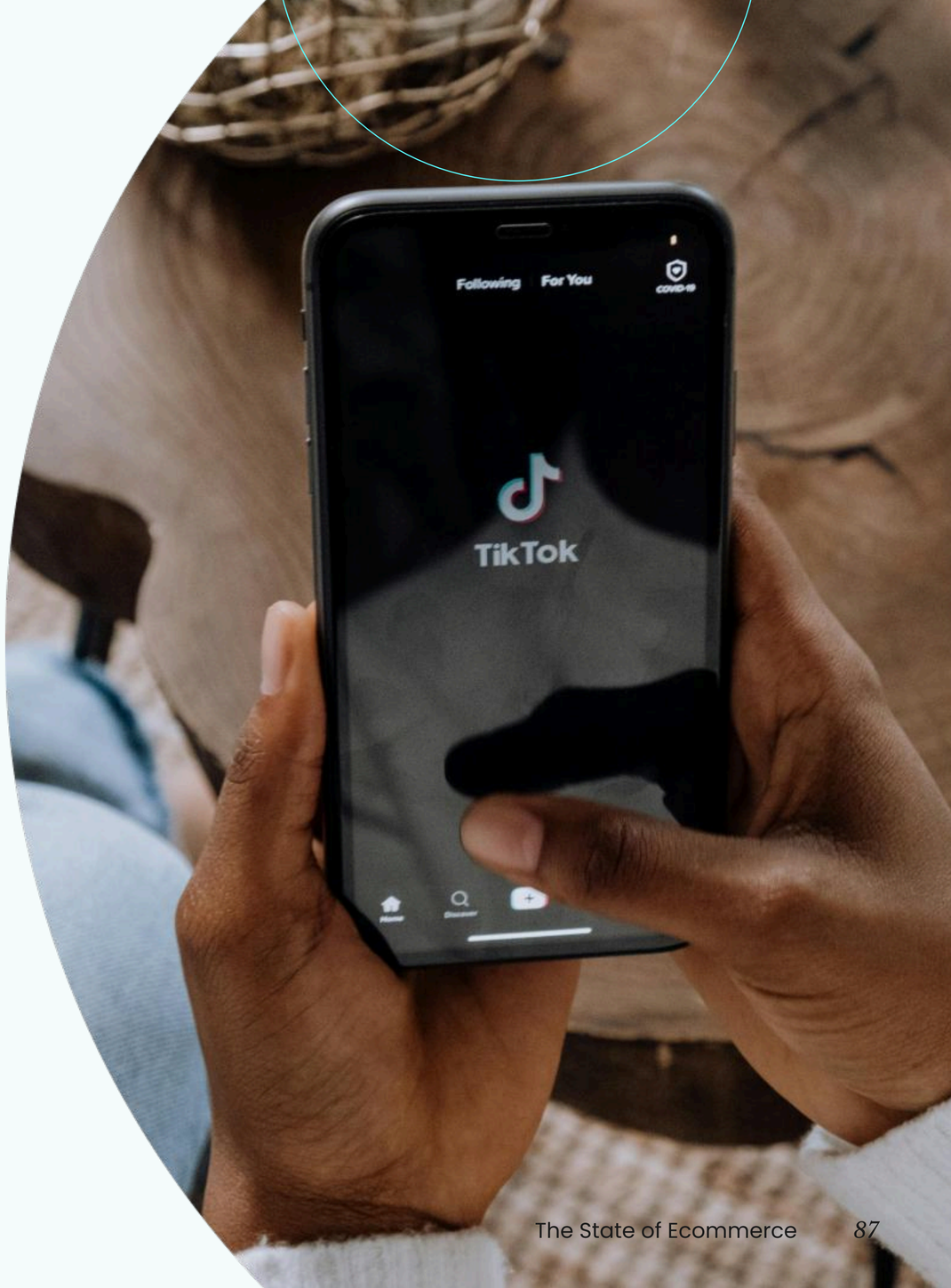
Founder & CEO at Sauce

If your brand is chasing higher conversions, bigger carts, and fewer returns, but still relying on static PDPs and scattered video galleries, then you're leaving serious money on the table.

Here's the truth: most eCommerce teams already own the video content they need to drive growth. It's buried in past TikToks, influencer collabs, Instagram posts, or old campaign folders. But because video isn't treated as a revenue asset, it's siloed, underutilised, or slapped onto a homepage for decoration.

The result? A quiet, consistent revenue leak.

Here's how to turn buried content into a conversion engine.



Low AOV? You don’t have a traffic problem – *you have a context problem*

Most brands slap on static upsell galleries and call it a strategy. But, well, they don’t work. Why? Because they’re lazy – same generic product suggestions, pulled from aggregate order data, shown to every shopper regardless of what they’re looking at or who they are. There’s zero personalisation. Zero context. Zero influence.

That’s why your AOV is stuck.

Now, imagine this instead: The moment someone’s browsing a product, they see a short, engaging video: an influencer walking through a full look, a bundle, a ‘you-might-also-want-this’ story that actually makes sense. It’s visual. It’s relevant. It’s timed perfectly. And it works.

That’s what your video shopping system should be doing. It replaces passive upsells with active persuasion; video that sells without needing a single extra click.

You don’t need more traffic. You need to make better use of the traffic you already have.

If you’re not converting above 4%, you’re already *falling behind*

UK eCommerce brands average a 4.1% conversion rate, beating the global average by nearly 50%. If you’re below that, it’s not a traffic issue, it’s a content disconnect.

Buyers aren’t convinced. They’re not seeing themselves in the experience, and your videos or user-generated videos (UGC) aren’t showing up where they matter most.

To fix that, founders need to rethink how content works across the buying journey, and that starts with nailing the 3Ts:

Trust:

Customers believe content from real people more than polished ads.

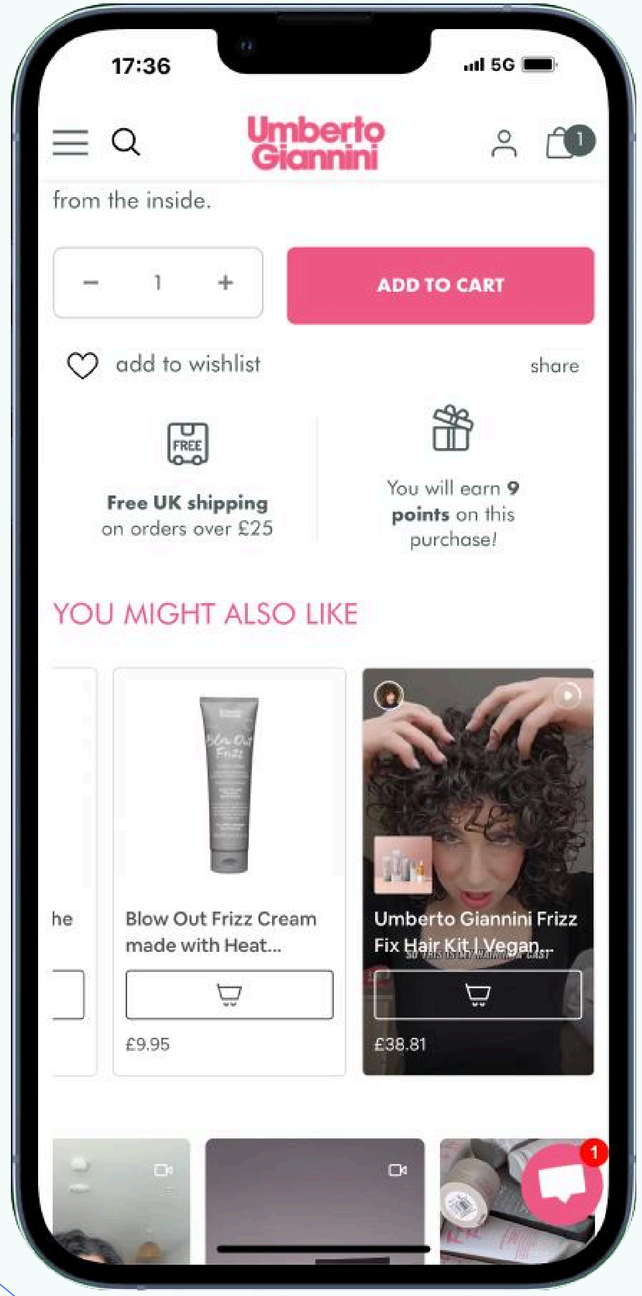
Try-on effect:

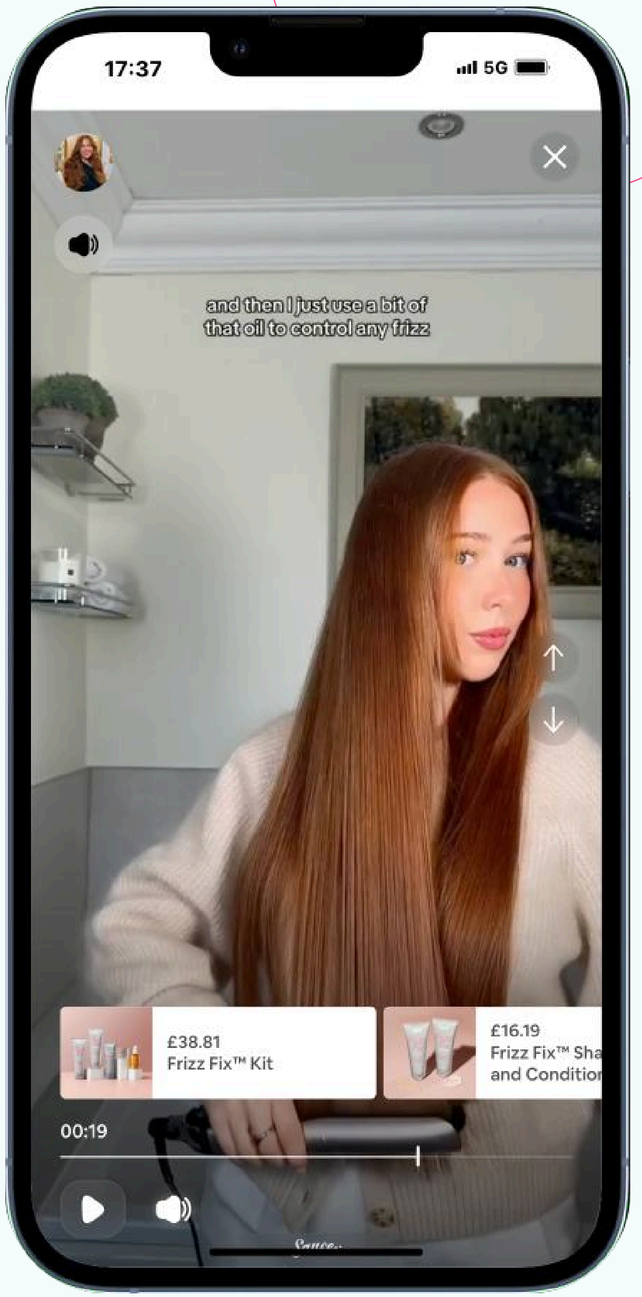
They need to picture themselves using your product, not just see it.

Timing & touchpoints:

UGC and video must appear at high-intent moments (not buried at the bottom of a PDP).

With Sauce, you build this system into every funnel, serving content that builds belief, reduces hesitation, and makes conversion the natural next step. Just ask Bauwerk Colour and Umberto Giannini, who both use video strategies aligned to the 3Ts, built off social insights, to consistently beat conversion benchmarks and maximise ROAS.



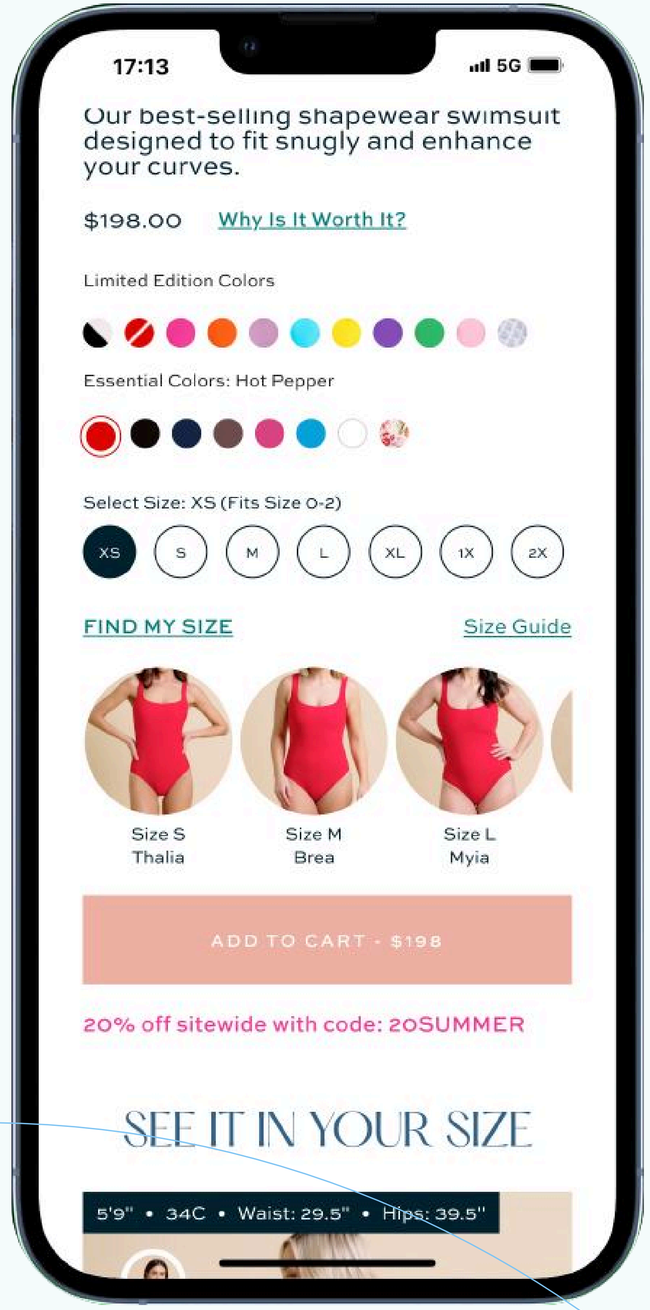


High return rates? You're *not selling with mirrors*

If returns are eating into your margins, it's usually not a product problem. It's a perception problem.

Customers are buying based on assumptions, not clarity. When the product shows up and it's not what they expected, they send it back. Transparent video content that mirrors the customer's needs directly addresses this issue. For example, size guide video loops. With clear, detailed product demos, you set expectations before the buy button is ever clicked. Shoppers feel confident because they see how it fits, feels, and functions, reducing hesitation and returns in one shot.







That's exactly how Stylest slashed return rates. By combining garment demo videos with real body type examples, they built trust and helped shoppers make smarter choices before checkout. The result? Fewer surprises, fewer refunds, and way more satisfied buyers.

High bounce rates? You're losing buyers before the sale *even starts*

UK eCommerce sites see an average bounce rate of 45.7%, with inbound traffic from social faring even worse at 54%.

Why? Because most sites break the experience the moment someone clicks through. That means half your visitors are landing on your site and leaving before doing anything.



Good social content is fast, fun, emotional, and immersive. Your site? Static, rational, and slow to deliver value.

That’s the gap. Here are three fixable actions to close it and keep visitors engaged like you would on TikTok or Reels:

1. Above-the-fold video that sells

Let’s be real: most brands completely blow their shot above the fold. They slap on a slow, founder-talking-head video about their “mission” and hope it moves the needle. It doesn’t. That’s not sales, that’s a TED Talk.

Here’s what does work:

Autoplay a UGC video in the bottom-left or right corner the moment someone lands. No sound? Fine. Make it visual. And here’s the kicker: make the content follow the 3P Formula:

Pain:

Show the problem your customer is dealing with. Frizzy curls, boring ear stacks, dry skin, whatever it is. Hit the nerve.

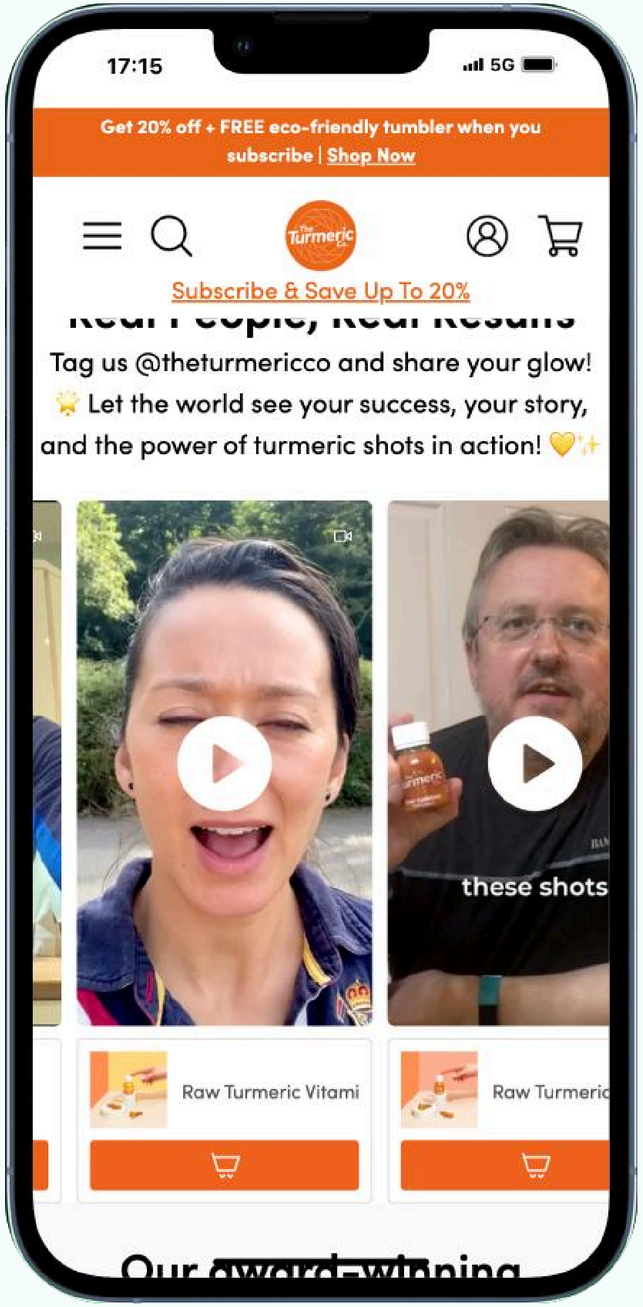
Promise:

Show what’s possible. The transformation. The look. The vibe. The outcome they want but haven’t nailed yet.

Plan:

Lay it out: “Use these products, in this order. Here’s how I got this look.” Easy. Tangible. Repeatable.

And here's where 99% of brands mess up: they forget the CTA. Let's fix that. Every product mentioned in the video? It's tagged, clickable, and buyable. You're not giving your shopper a brand story – you're handing them the *solution* in the first five seconds.







2. It’s time for a video hub that converts

This is where most brands stall: they make one great video, bury it on a PDP, and move on. But if you want to turn browsers into buyers and buyers into loyalists, you need a central destination – a place where the experience sells for you.

Enter: Sauce TV. This is your shoppable Netflix, built right into your site. A dynamic video hub that lives just beneath your hero video, designed to keep people watching, discovering, and buying.

3. Turn your homepage into a funnel

Start with a high-impact hero video; something bold, visual, and immediately relevant to your buyer. Then guide them into your Sauce TV hub – a sectioned video gallery split into binge-worthy, purchase-driving channels.

Think of each channel as an extension of your funnel, built off the same 3P framework:

Channel 1 – The problem:

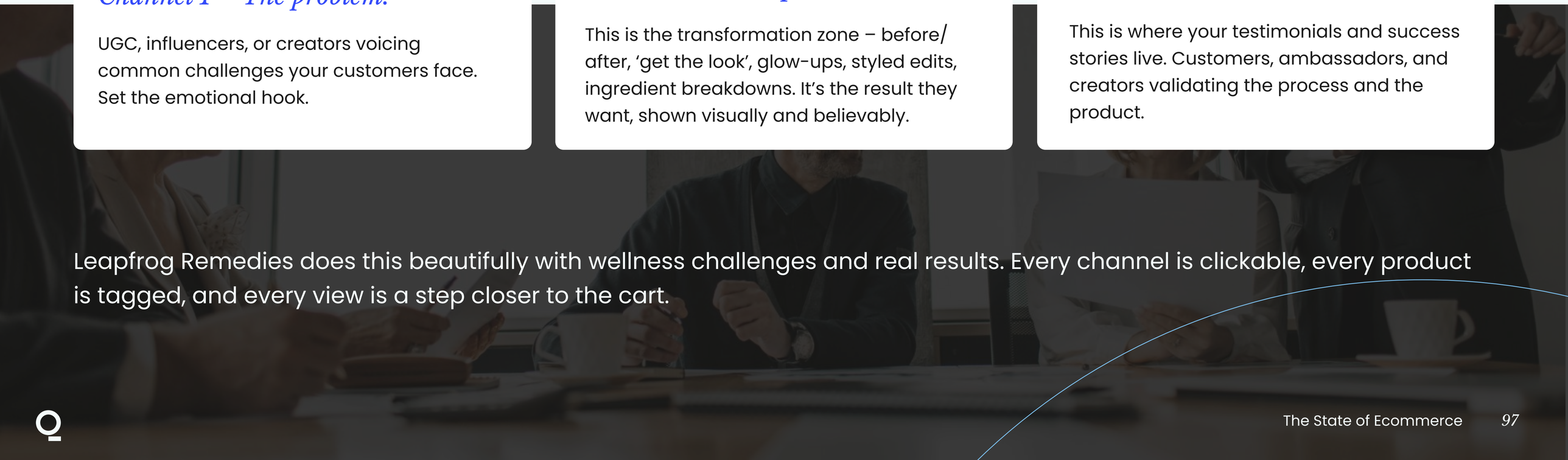
UGC, influencers, or creators voicing common challenges your customers face. Set the emotional hook.

Channel 2 – The promise:

This is the transformation zone – before/after, 'get the look', glow-ups, styled edits, ingredient breakdowns. It's the result they want, shown visually and believably.

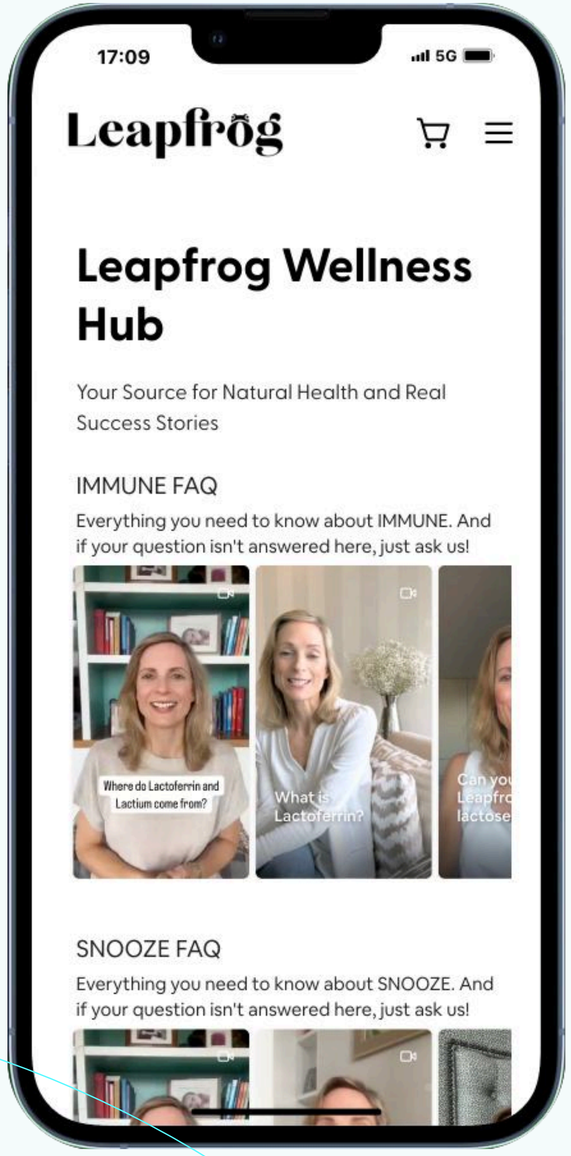
Channel 3 – The Proof:

This is where your testimonials and success stories live. Customers, ambassadors, and creators validating the process and the product.

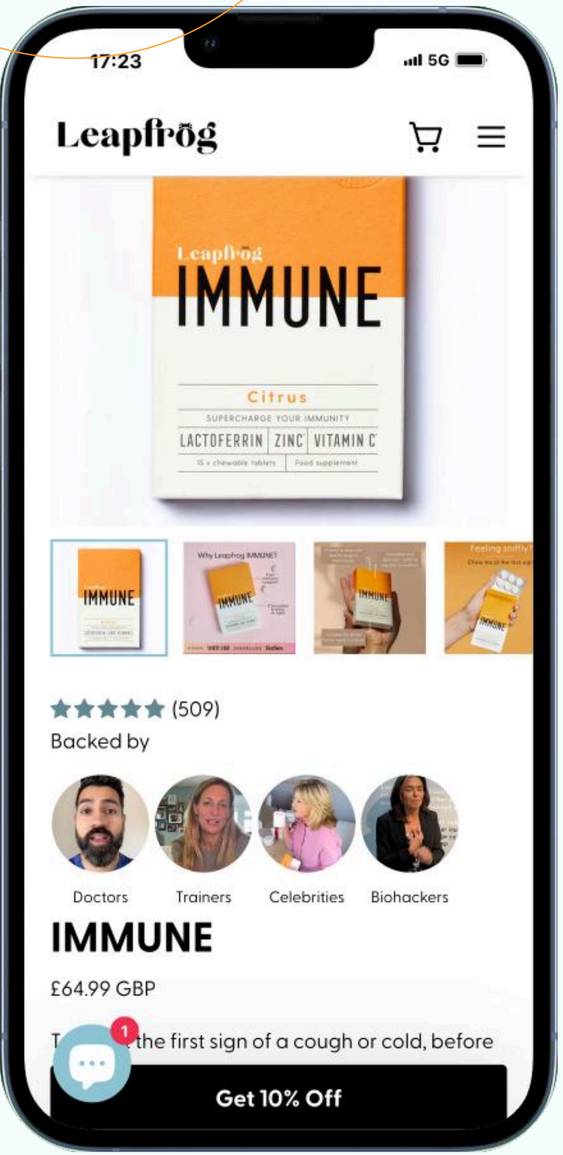


Leapfrog Remedies does this beautifully with wellness challenges and real results. Every channel is clickable, every product is tagged, and every view is a step closer to the cart.

With this framework, your videos don't just sit on pages. Instead, they become your highest-performing sales reps, active at every moment that matters.







5 key *action* points

1. Fix your AOV by replacing static upsells with contextual video
2. Break the 4% conversion ceiling by deploying the 3Ts
3. Slash returns with transparent, real-world video demos
4. Match scroll energy with video that converts
5. Turn your homepage into a funnel



Guy Schragger is the Founder of Sauce which is the visual shopping system trusted by fast-growing ecommerce brands to turn UGC and video into serious revenue. Helping DTC brands plug hidden revenue leaks and unlock scale, without adding headcount or code. Book a free strategy call and they'll map out your visual commerce funnel live.

Sauce

Section

02.4

The inbox of *the future*

Why your email brand matters more than ever

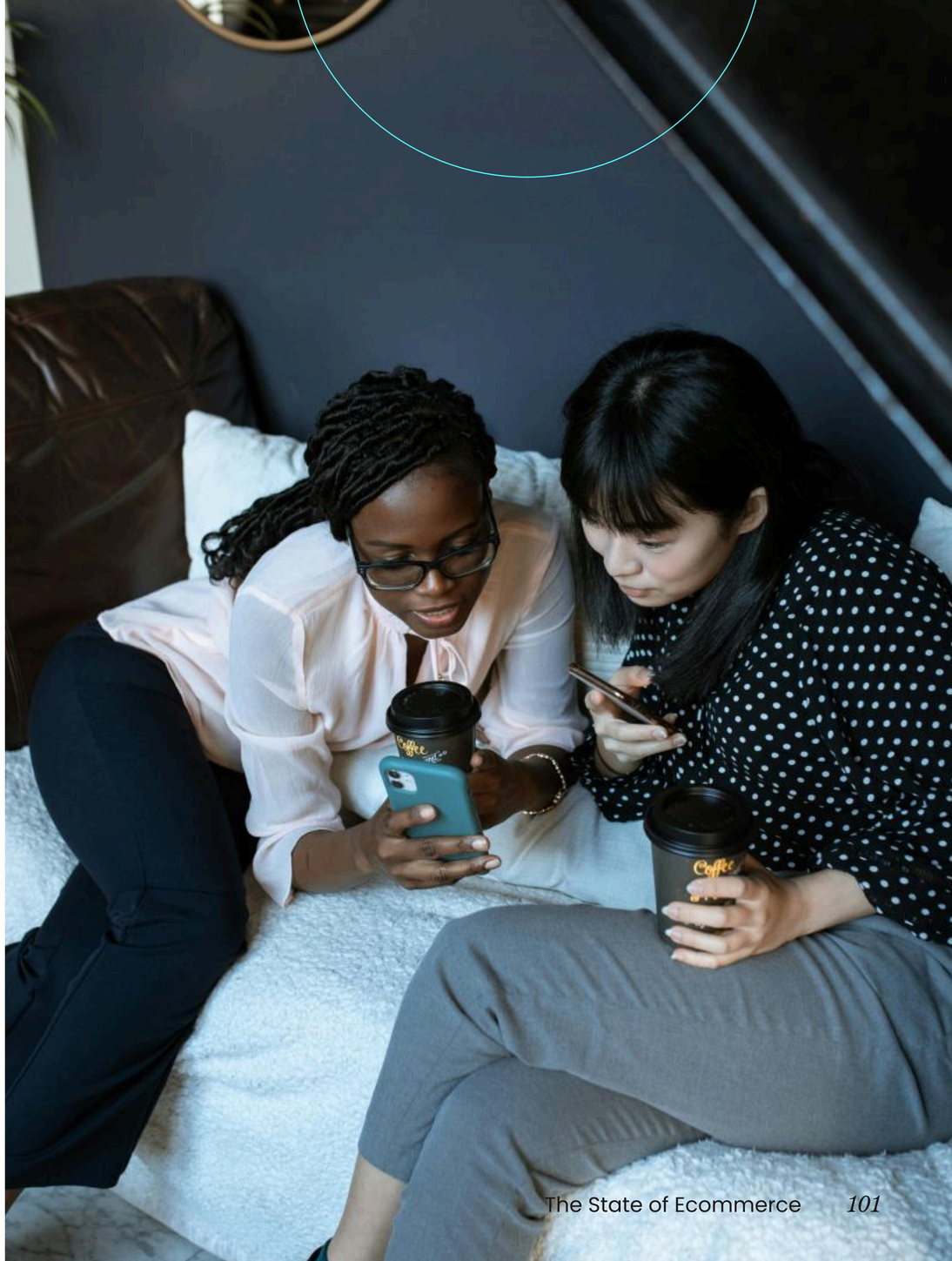


James Copeland
Co-founder at The Inbox Club

Here’s something you probably already know: AI has made email marketing feel more human-to-human than ever before. In the immortal words of Alanis Morissette, isn’t it ironic?

Email segments like ‘Men aged 30-45’ don’t cut it anymore. Now, anyone with the right Klaviyo subscription can use AI to create ultra-granular segments, like ‘First-time buyers of eco-friendly products who tend to browse their phones after 9pm.’

This is all incredibly convenient because hyper-personalisation tends to lead to better email engagement. It’s a simple formula: The more you’re able to make your audience feel like you’re emailing them and only them, the better your engagement (and subsequent email-attributed revenue) tends to be.





But hyper-personalisation isn't just for email marketers. Everything, from the Instagram content you're served to your Google search results, is edging closer to a unique and fully tailored digital experience.

The inbox is no exception.

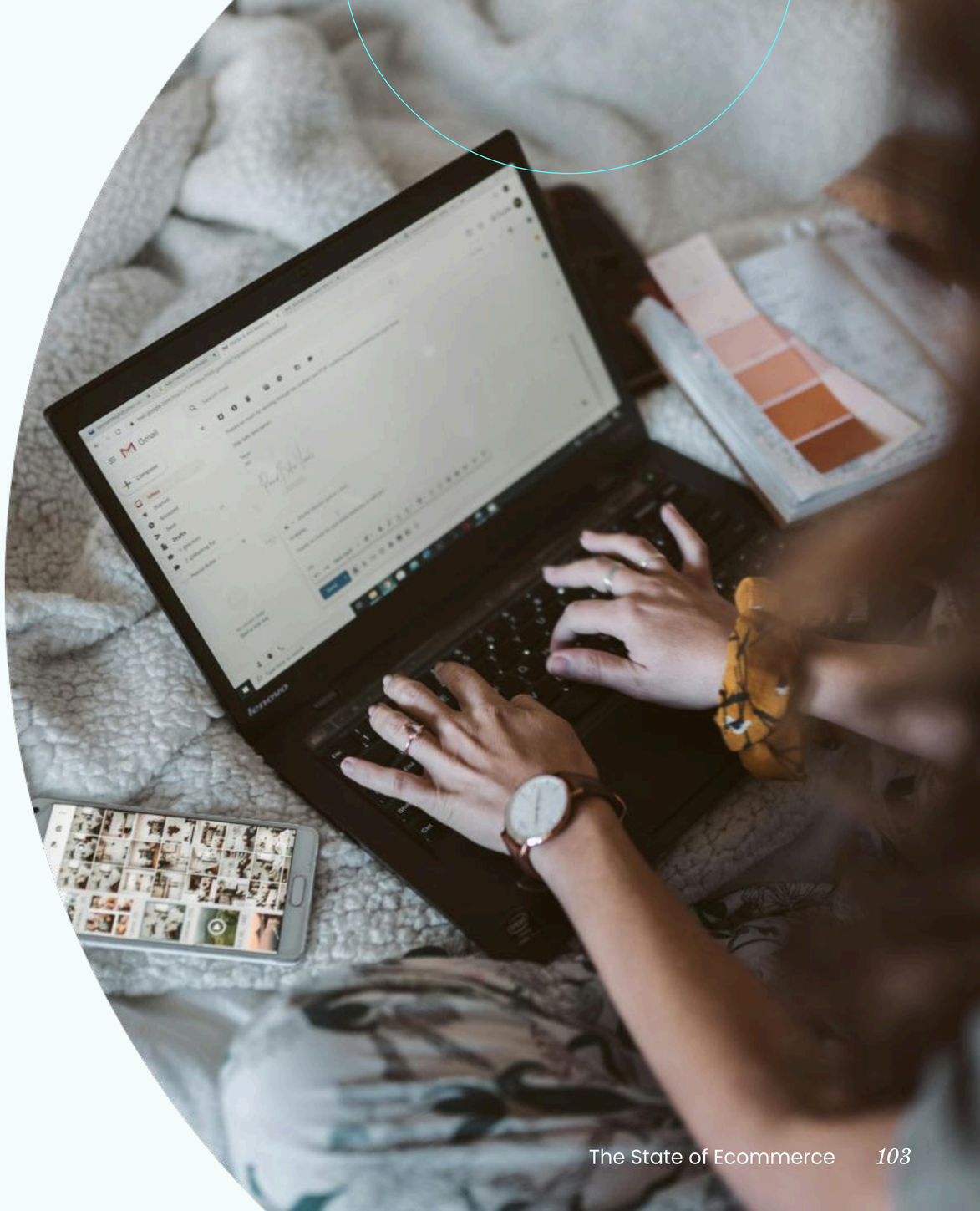
This section won't be about how to use AI to make your email segments more targeted. You can Google that or, better yet, ask ChatGPT. Instead, I want to offer you advice on how your brand can cut through and win attention in the inbox of the future: One that's curated and ordered based on importance, preference, and engagement history, rather than the random serendipity of when an email happens to be sent.

Why you need an *email brand*

AI is a huge value-add, but it also levels the playing field. To truly distinguish your brand, you'll need more than just the technical ability to dish up hyper-personalised emails to past, present, and prospective customers.

You need an email brand.

Your email brand is your sender reputation. How are your emails perceived by your recipients? What are their expectations before they open your email? The stronger your email brand, the higher you can expect your email-attributed revenue to be.





While it’s inextricably linked to your overarching brand, your email brand can take on a life of its own. This is why recipients will sometimes say, “I love <brand name’s> emails” or “These are the only emails I actually read”. Statements like these are about the email brand, not the sender's overarching brand.

Fundamentally, everything a good email marketer does – from using emojis to the shape of the buttons to the deals offered within the email – is in pursuit of strengthening the email brand (whether they’re aware of it or not).

And yes, this includes hyper-personalisation. It can be a great way to strengthen your email brand, but it’s only one part of a much bigger tapestry.

Three non-obvious ways to improve *your email brand*

Improve accessibility

The European Accessibility Act, which came into effect in June 2025, obliges businesses with more than 10 people who serve an EU-based audience to meet a range of accessibility criteria.

Even if you don't fall into this demographic yet, it's likely that these rules will become more universal in the next few years. As well they should.

This presents an excellent opportunity right now to differentiate your email brand and gain a competitive edge. Aside from the moral obligation to make your digital content accessible and the deliverability improvements it yields, there's a substantial financial reward on offer for the brands that exert the small effort needed to send accessible emails.



Here are some easy things you can do to ensure you're reaching the maximum number of people on your list:

- Use WebAIM's colour contrast checker to ensure those with colour perception issues can still read your emails
- Don't build your emails as images because most text-to-speech software can't read them. Use your email platform's native text instead
- Use descriptive and fun alt-text on your images, particularly those that're hyperlinked

Embrace 'boring' design

Have you noticed the growing number of social ads that feature the CEO of a company filming a selfie video on her phone while walking the dog?

The best-performing ads in 2025 are the ones that don't look like ads. It doesn't matter the medium: brands are beginning to realise that their content and ads need to look user-generated, even if they aren't. But email marketing is slow to catch up. Plenty of brands continue to prioritise elaborate, graphic-laden email templates over simple, functional ones. The result? Inaccessible emails that tend to look like promotional spam (and are often treated as such by Google).

If an email brand is strong enough, you'll read it and trust it regardless of how it looks. This is why Grandma's emails always get opened, whilst Amazon's promotional junk probably doesn't.





Deliver on your promises

Brands are generally quick to make promises and slow to keep them. The best email senders don't have some secret subject line hack: they just deliver on their promises.

If your subject line is "We've never done this before…", you might see a momentary spike in your open rate. But unless it's actually true, you're going to alienate a large chunk of your audience in the process. Good luck maintaining those open rates in future emails.

Clickbait, false promises, and hyperbole might give you short-term gains, but in the long run, they'll eat away at your email brand. Don't be that sender.

Resonate with your *readers*

Just as SEO has evolved to reward genuinely great content, just as TikTok's algorithm rewards genuinely engaging videos, so too will the inbox evolve to reward genuinely good emails. It already is.

The best email marketers aren't afraid of that reality, but invigorated by it.

The brands that will thrive in this new inbox aren't the ones peppering their audience with generic, desperate sales messaging. They're the ones who send accessible, simple, and hyper-personalised emails that resonate with readers and prompt action.

Be that brand, and look forward to years of successful email marketing to come.



5 key *action* points

1. Audit your emails from an accessibility perspective.
2. Experiment with a ‘boring’ design and see what happens.
3. Your ‘From Name’ is an overlooked variable you can use to your advantage, so get creative with it and watch your engagement improve.
4. Experiment with sending your emails from a person at your brand, rather than the brand itself, and use “I” and “me” instead of “us” and “we”, too.
5. When AI is everywhere, a bit of humanness goes further than ever: share an anecdote, admit to a mistake, laugh at yourself.



James Copeland is the Co-Founder of The Inbox Club which turns your emails into a conversion machine with mould-breaking email marketing that won't send your audience to sleep. Helping you drive high-quality engagement through value-laden content that’s so darn engaging that people might actually wanna read it. Connect with James if you’re looking to turn those clicks into action.

THE INBOX club

Section

02.4

Getting SMS right throughout the *customer journey*

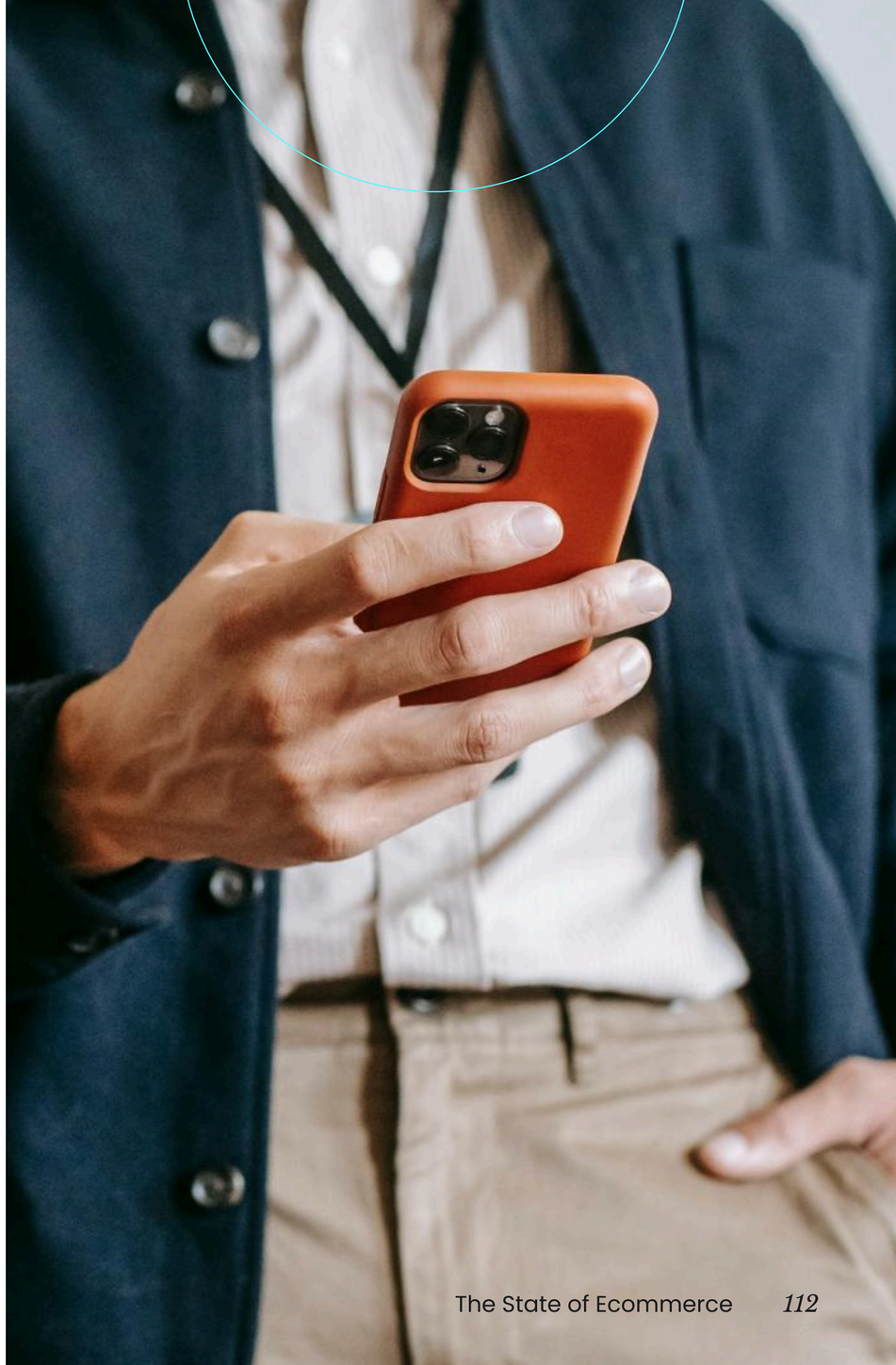


Julia Trischetta
Director, Client Strategy UK, Attentive

SMS marketing can strengthen customer relationships, drive sales, and create meaningful touchpoints throughout the customer's journey. Despite this, many brands and retailers remain hesitant to dive in because they can see it as intrusive or another form of spam.

The key to getting it right lies in understanding how to deploy SMS strategically and thoughtfully, respecting customer preferences while delivering genuine value at exactly the right moment.

Let’s explore how.



Starting out: Getting the *basics* right

As you expand or begin your SMS marketing efforts, keep the following five strategic guidelines in mind to ensure long-term success.

1. Ensure legal compliance from the start

Adhering to the UK's data and communication laws is essential. Make sure your SMS initiatives comply with GDPR and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR). Attentive's team of experts can support your brand in staying compliant at all times.

2. Build a high-quality subscriber base

An effective SMS strategy begins with growing a list of interested and engaged contacts. Encourage sign-ups by incorporating opt-in opportunities across your website, social media, and email marketing. Consider offering incentives – such as exclusive access or rewards – that align with your brand's tone and customer expectations. And remember: not every incentive needs to be a discount!



3. Establish a strong messaging framework

Before launching full-scale SMS campaigns, focus on setting up essential automated messages. This includes your welcome series, as well as triggered texts for scenarios like browse and cart abandonment reminders. These foundational flows help create conversions early in the customer journey.

4. Monitor performance and optimise constantly

Treat SMS like any other major marketing channel by regularly reviewing performance. Pay close attention to subscriber growth, message engagement, opt-out percentages, and attributed revenue. This data will help you identify what's resonating with your audience, and what needs adjustment.

5. Create engaging, direct experiences

The widespread adoption of SMS in the US demonstrates how powerful this channel can be when used correctly. UK customers are equally open to receiving brand messages via text, provided those messages are timely, relevant, and respectful of their preferences.

As digital expectations rise, the brands that succeed will be those who offer personalised, immediate communication. In today's market, the direct, convenient nature of SMS is exactly what customers are looking for.



Diving deeper:
Taking SMS to the *next level*

As you up your SMS game, here are five strategies you can implement to grow your programme.



1. Leverage AI for personalised customer interactions

AI is revolutionising SMS marketing by enabling brands to deliver tailored messages that resonate with individual consumer preferences. Attentive's 2024 UK consumer survey revealed that 52% of consumers want brands to better personalise offers and discounts to their interests and past purchases. Implement AI-driven strategies to:

- Segment audiences based on real-time behaviour and preferences
- Trigger messages that are timely and relevant
- Predict buying intent to deliver product recommendations

Attentive AI™ automatically analyses every customer interaction, behaviour, and data point to maximise your messaging performance.

2. Optimise timing for maximum engagement

A promotional text can be a powerful trigger: Attentive's survey found that 74% of consumers say a message about a sale has prompted them to buy. However, success isn't just about the content; it's also about timing. To maximise response rates, you need to align your sends with the moments your audience is most receptive. Attentive's survey insights show that 80% of respondents are more inclined to shop on their phones in the evening while watching TV. Another key shopping window is during the morning coffee routine, where 54% of people say they're likely to make mobile purchases. To optimise timing:

- Analyse behavioural trends and purchase windows
- Factor in time zones and local events
- Leverage AI to personalise send times per individual

3. Focus on building long-term customer relationships

Attentive's survey shows that 80% of UK consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases from brands they're subscribed to via SMS. Once you've built that high-quality subscriber base, now it's time to retain them and make them feel like VIP customers. Here are a few ways you can do this:

- Send birthday or anniversary offers
- Provide timely updates on orders and product arrivals
- Request feedback and offer loyalty perks

Explore our top 5 loyalty plays for more strategies.

All consumer data points referenced in this article are sourced from two surveys conducted by Attentive: Attentive's International Survey (April 2022), which gathered responses from 701 UK consumers, and Attentive's Consumer Survey Report (August 21–29, 2024), based on answers from 1,370 UK respondents.

4. Integrate SMS into your omnichannel strategy

Your SMS and email programmes are stronger together. Incorporating SMS into a broader marketing strategy ensures consistent messaging across all touchpoints. A staggering 95% of UK SMS subscribers also opt into emails, highlighting the need for a unified approach.

- SMS is ideal for short, urgent messages
- Email suits longer, non-urgent content

Uniting each channel on the right platform will unlock higher engagement, conversions, and ROI than either can achieve alone.

5. Stay ahead of trends and continually test out new messaging strategies

SMS is a dynamic channel, so don't be afraid to test and iterate. Align messaging with seasonal moments, holidays, and cultural events for more relevant campaigns.

- Test out two-way journeys to create real conversations
- Personalise messages beyond just first names, tailor them based on behaviour and preferences
- Organise multi-touch, multi-channel campaigns for a major product launch or sale
- Stay inspired with seasonal examples, such as these summer trends for UK shoppers



Julia Trischetta is Director, Client Strategy UK at Attentive® which is an AI-powered mobile marketing platform that helps brands personalise consumer engagement through SMS and email. By activating real-time data and advanced AI, marketers can craft tailored 1:1 messages that boost revenue and campaign performance. Connect with Julia to explore how you can unlock stronger results for your brand.

attentive®

Section

03 Lifetime value: *How to build it*

Section

03.1

Customer *service*

Beyond the buy button: the logistics behind customer loyalty



Giorgia Pollastrelli
Growth Lead at Reveni

In ecommerce, the finish line isn’t the checkout button. It’s everything that happens after.

Brands that truly win aren’t just those who attract the most customers, but the ones who know how to make them stay. That’s what Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) is all about: turning one-time buyers into long-term fans. And while that may sound like a job for marketing, the real key lies in a place that’s often overlooked: logistics.

Shipping, returns, exchanges. It’s not glamorous, but it’s where loyalty is built – or broken. When customers get their order quickly, know exactly where it is, and can return or exchange it easily, they remember it. And more importantly, they come back. This is especially crucial when your team is small and your resources are stretched thin. Because when you can’t outspend, you have to out-execute.

Let’s explore how to make smart logistics a superpower.



Cross borders, *drive growth?*

Cross-border ecommerce is becoming a key growth engine for many brands. Expanding internationally opens the door to new markets and new customers, but it also brings new complexity, such as taxes, duties, customs clearance, and local returns. If you don't manage this well, it's not just the customer experience that suffers. It's your margins, your brand perception, and your operational sanity.

At Reveni, we've seen this firsthand. Brands that invest in their post-sale experience, especially through well-oiled logistics, not only reduce operational headaches but also increase revenue. It's simple: when you make it easy to buy and even easier to return or exchange, customers feel confident shopping with you again. That confidence is what drives lifetime value.

And when it comes to cross-border logistics, that confidence comes from clarity and control. That's why we built Reveni Atlas, a solution designed to help ecommerce brands navigate the complexity of selling and servicing customers across borders.

Of course, not every brand has a full warehouse team or a sophisticated tech stack. But that doesn't mean you can't deliver a top-tier experience. Today's tools – many powered by automation and AI – enable small teams to offer real-time order tracking, proactive delay notifications, or exchange-first return flows. These are features that don't just save time but reduce customer anxiety, cut down on support tickets, and turn what used to be painful moments into delightful ones.

Turning returns into an *opportunity*

One of the biggest mindset shifts we see in high-performing brands is this: they stop treating returns as a loss and start seeing them as a second chance. This is because returns don’t have to be the end of a sale; instead, they can be the beginning of another.

Customers who exchange instead of return tend to have higher lifetime value. But to encourage that behaviour, you have to make it easy: suggest relevant alternatives; issue instant store credit; ship the new item before the return even arrives. These are small tweaks that add up to big loyalty.





Embracing data and *emerging tech*

Another underrated advantage of a strong logistics setup is the data. Your shipping and returns data is full of gold: which products have sizing issues, which carriers are consistently late, which customers are churning after a poor delivery experience. When this information flows freely into your product, CX, and ops teams, your business becomes more agile. Simply, you stop reacting to problems and start preventing them.

Emerging tech is making all of this more accessible. AI can now recommend exchange products based on return reasons, automation platforms can refund instantly and restock inventory in real-time, and chatbots can handle the top 50 support questions without breaking a sweat. These aren't just tech trends – they're the building blocks of a leaner, smarter customer experience.

In the end, building CLV is about more than one great campaign or an eye-catching ad. It's about consistently delivering on your promise – even after the sale. That's where trust lives. That's where loyalty grows. And that's where logistics becomes not just a cost to manage, but a strategy to scale. Especially when that scale crosses borders.

5 key *action* points

1. Automate return flows to reduce friction and support load.
2. Connect logistics and customer data to spot and solve issues early.
3. Promote exchanges by default to retain revenue.
4. Use return insights to improve product fit and reduce churn.
5. Simplify cross-border logistics with Reveni Atlas to scale globally with confidence.



Giorgia Pollastrelli is Growth Lead at Reveni, where global sales, returns, and logistics are centralised in one seamless dashboard. By simplifying purchase and post-purchase flows, Reveni helps brands deliver instant refunds, reduce complexity, turning returns into a growth lever. Feel free to reach out to Giorgia if you have any questions!

reveni

Section

03.1

Customer *service*

Proactive customer experience is no longer an option

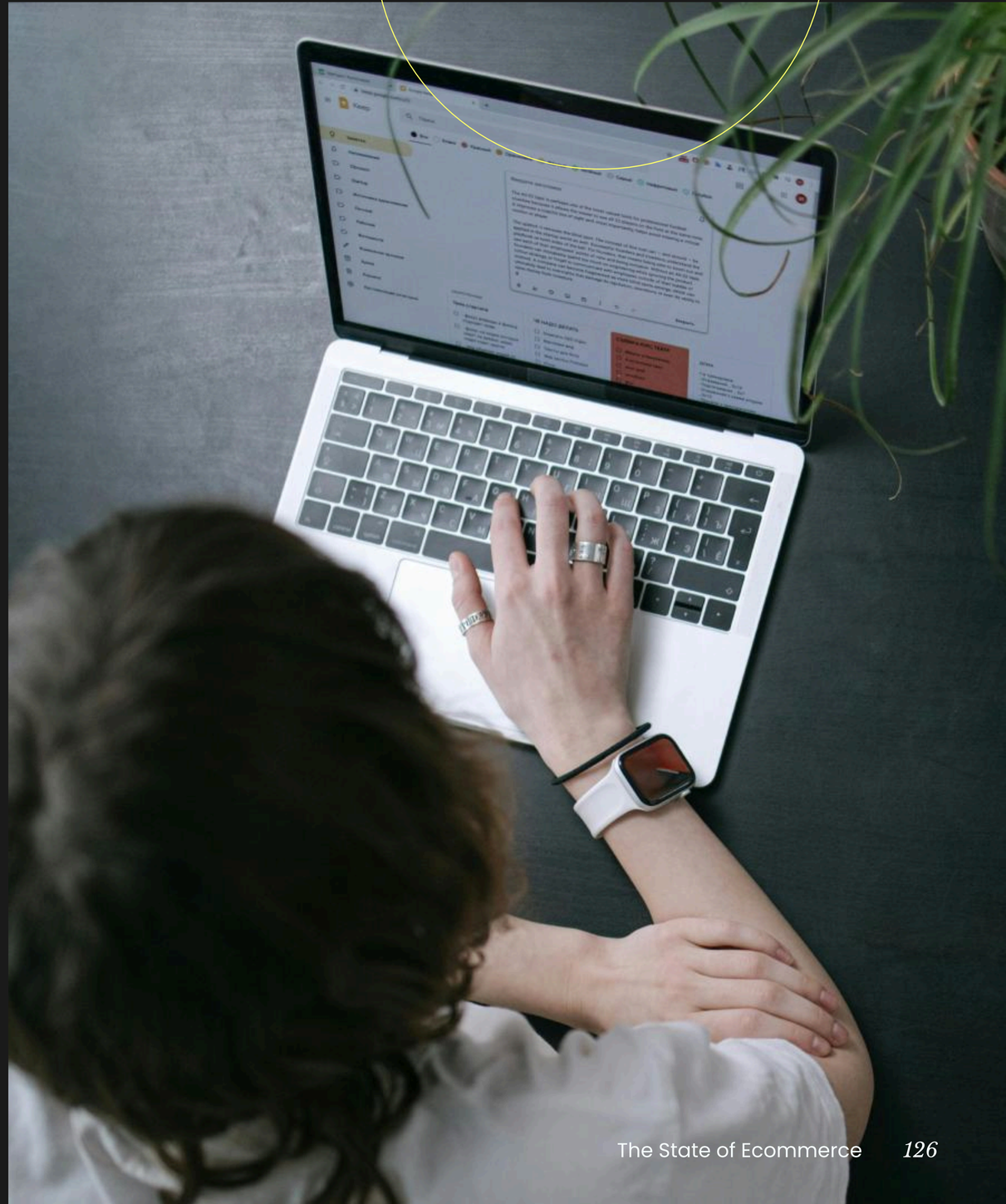


Yohan Loyer

Senior Agency Partner Manager - EMEA at Gorgias

Today’s customer experience teams are used to doing more with less. Small teams, tight budgets, and customers who expect more than ever mean that every ticket that enters your inbox leaves you scrambling to meet the next set of demands on limited resources.

As a conversational AI platform for ecommerce, we’ve guided numerous brands through this exact dilemma. What was the breakthrough? Shifting from reactive to proactive CX. By using AI to anticipate customer needs, brands realise that success is within reach, even with a smaller toolkit. This is how.



The best brands *prevent problems* rather than simply solving them

Boody, a sustainable apparel brand serving 16+ global markets, and Psycho Bunny, a premium menswear retailer with over 100 stores, were both facing surging volumes of repetitive support tickets.

By using AI Agent, Gorgias's conversational AI tool for chat and email, both brands automated up to 30% of all customer interactions. This freed their teams to focus on high-impact conversations. For Boody, that shift led to a 10% increase in revenue generated by support, and they didn’t have to increase headcount.





Let AI *initiate* the conversations

Upselling during support conversations can be tricky. When a customer is frustrated or asking for a refund, making a sales pitch is the last thing you want to do. Shopping Assistant, Gorgias's sales-focused AI product, solves this by identifying high-intent moments and stepping in with relevant product recommendations or discounts when the time is right.

Psycho Bunny used this approach to double its ecommerce revenue without expanding its CX team. With AI Agent handling sales prompts, teams were able to stay focused on other conversations while making conversions at scale.

CX teams are using data to *act earlier*

Whether it's negative sentiment or shipping delays, AI-powered helpdesks help surface early warning signs faster so teams can jump in before problems escalate. Boody uses Gorgias's built-in sentiment detection and custom routing to flag frustrated customers and escalate sensitive conversations to experienced agents. This proactive model turns potential churn into loyalty and, often, long-term brand advocacy.



Ecommerce teams want fewer tools that *do more*

According to our 2025 ecommerce Trends Report, 42% of CX professionals use six or more tools daily, leading to slower workflows, fragmented data, and inconsistent customer experiences.

That's why brands are consolidating. Instead of patching together disconnected apps, teams are choosing platforms like Gorgias that bring support, automation, app integrations, and conversational AI together. With one workspace, you get a more cohesive experience for agents and customers.



Yohan Loyer manages EMEA Agency Partnerships at Gorgias. He is passionate about ecommerce, particularly how customer experience and customer support can help ecommerce brands generate more revenue. Yohan also loves connecting people and has deep expertise in the French market. Feel free to reach out to him if you think he can help!

gorgias

Section

03.2

Community *building*

How brands can build and nurture customer communities



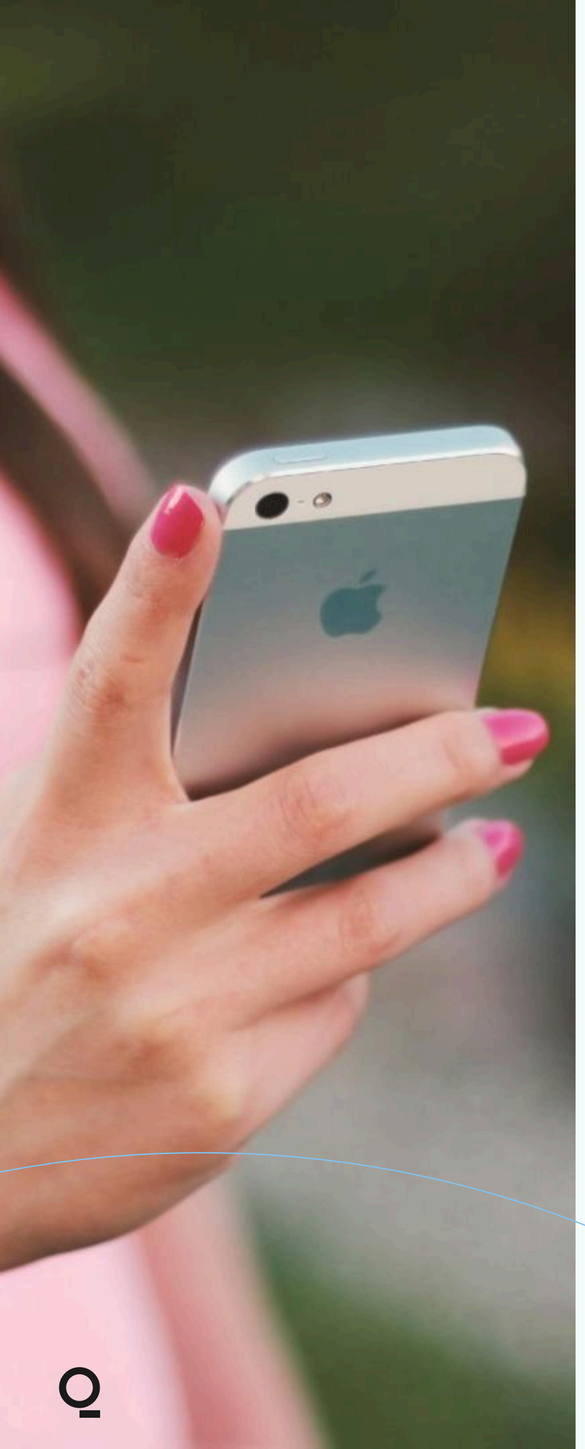
Paul Rawlings

Founder and CEO at TheNextLevel

Let’s cut to the chase. Today’s consumers don’t just want to buy from brands, they want to belong. And that’s exactly where brand communities come in.

Building a thriving and engaged customer community is one of the most powerful ways to deepen loyalty, generate advocacy, and drive revenue. But it’s not about setting up a forum and hoping people show up. Great brand communities are intentional, structured, and built with long-term value in mind for both the customer and the brand.





Why community engagement *directly impacts* purchasing behaviour

Before we dive into the ‘how’, let’s talk about the ‘why’. Community isn’t fluff. It’s ROI.

According to recent studies, 86% of companies believe community is critical to their mission. Even better, companies with dedicated branded communities see up to a 20% increase in customer spending as people buy from brands they trust, and trust is built in community spaces where customers connect with peers, share experiences, and see real value beyond the product.

Engaged communities:

- Increase customer lifetime value (CLV)
- Improves customer retention
- Turn buyers into brand evangelists (referrers)
- Reduce reliance on paid acquisition

Now, let’s look at how to get community right.

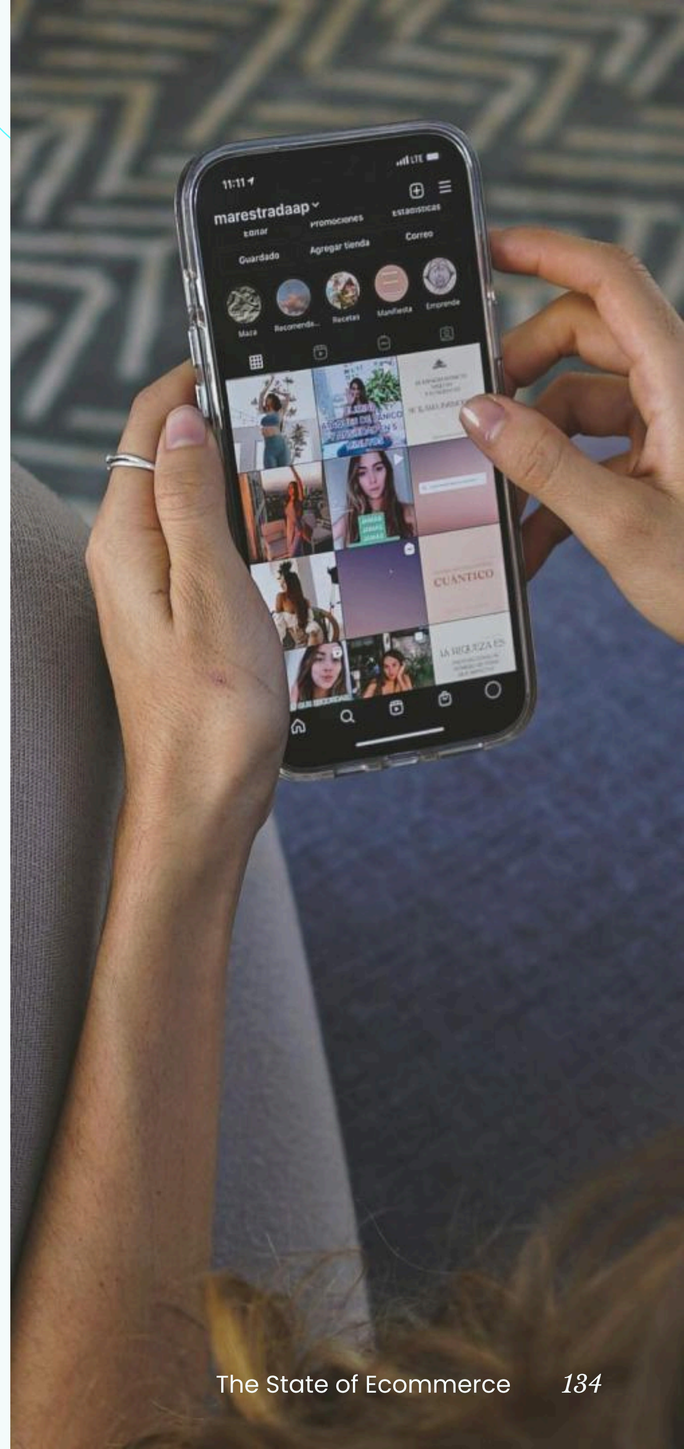
Choose the right *community platform* (and keep it simple)

Not every brand needs a custom app or private Slack group. What matters most is that your community lives where your audience already hangs out, and that it supports interaction, content sharing, and easy moderation that gives the brand control.

Options to consider:

- Facebook Groups: Great for lifestyle brands with wide appeal
- Discord: Perfect for tech-savvy or younger audiences who value real-time chat and multimedia
- Shopify + community app (TheNextLevel): Seamlessly blends commerce and community within a place a brand can control
- Reddit: Good for content-heavy or niche-interest brands

Start small. Pilot a single platform, produce a community plan, test engagement for three months, and then scale.



Design content and programming for your *community type*

Not all communities are the same. For example, content that gets a skincare fanbase won't resonate in a B2B SaaS circle. Know your people, then build programming and content that resonates and energises them.

Examples of successful formats:

- Product drops or early access (e.g., Glossier's Slack insiders)
- AMA (Ask Me Anything) sessions with founders or creators
- Customer spotlights or 'Member of the month' features
- Challenges or community goals (e.g., Lululemon run clubs)
- Behind-the-scenes content and roadmap previews
- Leaderboards to drive healthy competition

Tailor your programming to your goals:

- Engagement-focused communities: Prioritise discussion prompts, live events, and user-generated content
- Support-focused communities: Emphasise knowledge bases, peer problem-solving, and FAQs
- Innovation-focused communities: Build feedback loops, ideation boards, and co-creation sprints

Use community insights to power *product development*

Your community isn't just for engagement. It's also a goldmine for insights.

Brands like LEGO and Canva routinely mine their communities for product ideas, beta testers, and feature feedback. It doesn't just make your products better; it makes customers feel heard and invested.

How to do it:

- Run regular polls, surveys, and voting rounds
- Create private 'insider' channels for your most engaged members
- Invite top contributors to join advisory boards or beta groups
- Use sentiment analysis tools to track patterns in discussions

The feedback loop becomes a flywheel. When people see their input leading to real changes, their loyalty deepens.



Measure what *matters*

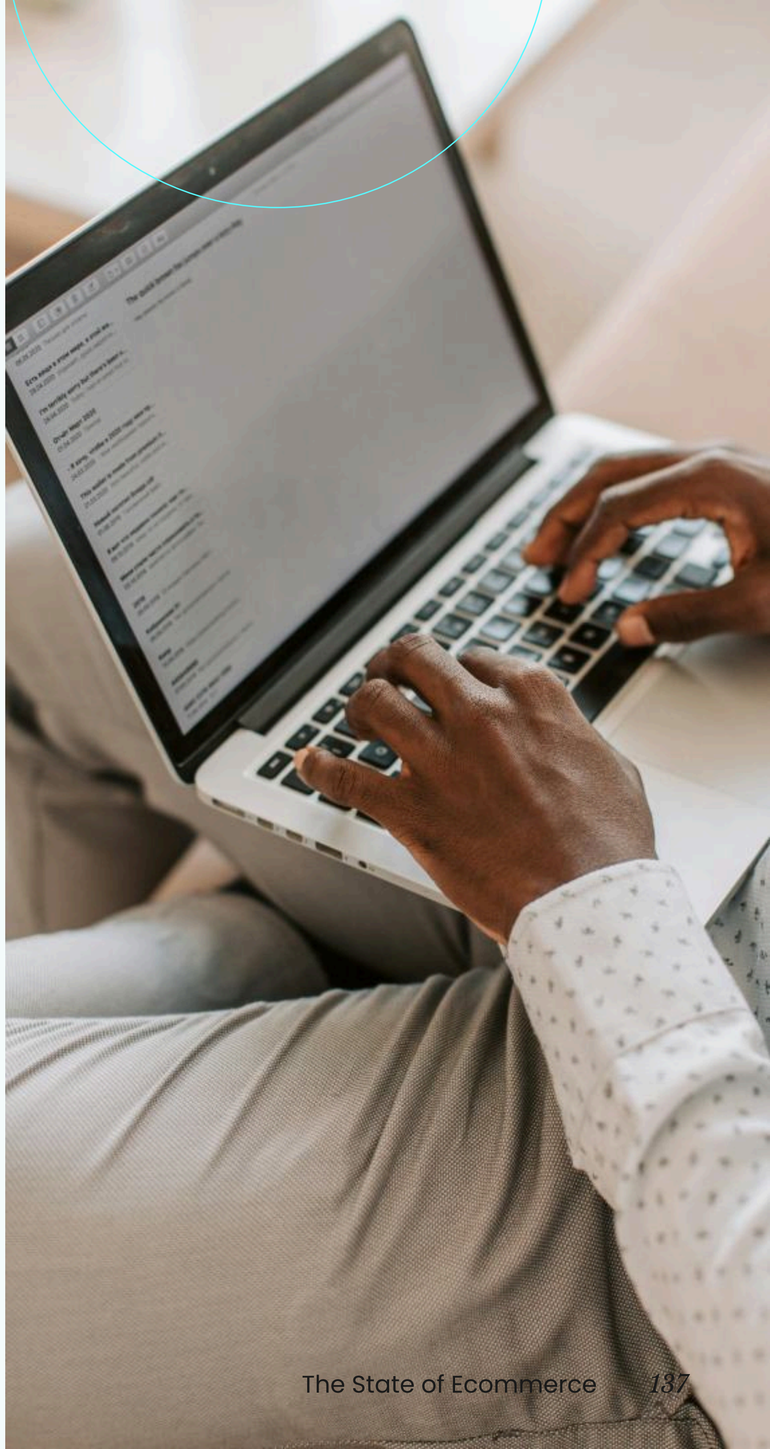
Vanity metrics (likes, members, impressions) only tell part of the story. You need to connect community engagement to business outcomes. For any DTC brand, the more a member is engaged, the more they are worth over their lifetime.

Community health metrics:

- Engagement rate per post/thread
- Active members (monthly/daily)
- Contribution ratio (active vs. passive users)
- Response time to community queries

Business impact metrics:

- Repeat purchase rate among community members vs. non-members
- Net promoter score (NPS) shifts over time
- Customer acquisition cost (CAC) savings through advocacy/referrals
- Community-driven product adoption rates





Design for belonging, *not just broadcasting*

Successful communities are designed for people. The fastest way to kill momentum is to treat your community like another marketing channel.

Instead:

- Encourage peer-to-peer connection. Step back. Let people talk to each other, not just you. Encourage engagement
- Celebrate contributions with recognition, badges, rewards, or perks
- Define and communicate clear values and a sense of purpose
- Create rituals: Weekly threads, monthly challenges, leaderboards, or even “community birthdays.”

Communities thrive when members feel seen, valued, and like they’re part of something bigger than themselves.



Community isn’t a campaign. *It’s a commitment.*

Building a brand community isn’t a short-term growth hack, it’s a long-term strategy. But when done right, it delivers compounding returns. You’ll spend less on acquiring new customers and your current customers will stick around longer. And best of all? They’ll do your marketing for you.

So start simple. Choose the right platform. Create content that resonates. Build feedback loops. Measure what matters. And above all, treat your community like the VIPs they are. Because in the end, belonging beats branding every time.

Emerging models and *technologies to watch*

The future of brand communities is being shaped by innovation, and it's exciting.

Web3-powered communities:

Think token-gated access, co-ownership, and member rewards (e.g., Friends With Benefits)

AI-driven moderation and insights:

Tools that help you scale without burning out your community team

Hybrid event models:

Virtual + IRL meetups to deepen bonds (think Nike Run Club or Sephora Squad)

Vertical communities-as-a-service:

Platforms like Mighty Networks make it easy for any brand to launch community hubs

Combined Storefront technology:

Platforms such as TheNextLevel combine both selling and community into a single app

Stay agile and test what works for your audience, but keep an eye on the tech that enhances a customer connection and does not distract from it.





Building loyalty through *intent-led personalisation*

To truly grow lifetime value, brands must go beyond transactional data and dig into buyer intent. Tracking on-site behaviours such as browsing patterns, quiz interactions, or abandoned product views and enriching that insight with zero-party data such as preferences and motivations enables brands to create precision-targeted flows that feel human, not robotic.

Klaviyo's ability to unify this data means every touchpoint, from replenishment reminders to post-purchase education, can be timely and contextually relevant.

The result? Customers feel understood, not targeted. When a brand reflects a shopper's goals, helping them look great, save time, or find inspiration, lifetime value isn't just increased; it's earned.

Rich Evans

Founder @ GetBetter

GetBetter

Real-world examples across *sectors*

- *Peloton:* Turned fitness into a lifestyle movement. Their community is the brand
- *Notion:* Built a cult following by empowering superusers, running community events, and sharing user templates
- *Fenty Beauty:* Regularly engages fans for feedback, features real users, and promotes inclusive conversations
- *YETI:* Created a lifestyle brand around rugged adventure, with loyal fans contributing stories, content, and event meetups
- *GymShark:* Created a community of raving fans through online and offline events such as run clubs, physical stores

These brands didn't build communities around products. They built communities around shared values and identities, and the products followed.



Paul Rawlings is the Founder and CEO of TheNextLevel which gives ecommerce brands the tools to create meaningful, personalised customer experiences - going beyond just shopping moments or basic mobile app creation. From amplifying customer engagement and creating a vibrant community to offering instant shopping, TheNextLevel is here to take your business to new heights.

Section

03.3

Subscriptions and *loyalty programmes*

Building an effective loyalty programme



Marton Kosdi-Kovacs

Co-founder at Love Loyalty

There is a growing trend among Shopify brands of shifting their focus from customer acquisition to customer retention. As someone working in the loyalty and retention space, I'm genuinely excited to see this, especially as acquisition costs continue to rise.

However, retaining customers is difficult. Even with a great product, brands need to get a lot of things right: loyalty or membership programmes, email and SMS marketing, community-building, and a strong social media presence. But, in my opinion, it all starts with what a brand shows the customer and how that makes them feel at the first potential purchase.





Understanding the customer's *problem*

Clearly communicating the value of a loyalty programme is critical. Many loyalty solutions fall short simply due to poor user experience; if the programme is too complicated or unclear, customers won't engage with it. Shoppers want a seamless buying experience, so brands need to be strategic in how they present their loyalty offerings.

Key questions to consider:

How to set up the loyalty programme's earning and redeeming rules? How does the customer benefit? Where and when are they most likely to care? For example, showing how many points a customer could earn directly on the product page can increase participation rate and motivate them to make the purchase. Displaying point balance in the cart and allowing quick redemptions (within just a few clicks) helps customers understand the value of their points and increases conversion.

Looking beyond *points-based* programmes

For many brands, a standard ‘earn and redeem points’ model might not be enough. What we’re seeing – especially among larger brands – is a shift toward membership programmes: paid monthly or yearly plans that offer discounts, exclusive perks, early product drops, and more. This model is proving highly effective for many fashion and beauty brands, leading to higher AOV and LTV. The best part is that with the right tools, brands can offer one-click membership upsells right at checkout, giving customers immediate access to benefits at the first purchase when subscribing to the membership plan.

For newer or smaller brands where customer trust is still growing, a points-based system combined with VIP tiers may be a better fit. Offering points for actions such as birthdays, sign-ups, reviews, or social shares allows customers to engage and earn value even before making a purchase. Redeeming points on their first order not only incentivises that purchase but also helps customers realise the benefit of the loyalty programme. Introducing different VIP tiers not only provides customers with even more benefits or bigger discounts but also adds a gamification aspect to the purchases for further motivation.



The importance of working closely with your *loyalty programme provider*

When working with a brand or agency, we usually start by analysing customer behaviour to understand what drives repeat purchases. Every customer base is different, so the most successful loyalty programmes are those tailored specifically to a brand's audience. That's why close collaboration with your loyalty programme provider is crucial – they can help customise your setup, whether you're using points, VIP tiers, memberships, or a hybrid model.

If the programme is going well, you'll quickly realise it. If not, always check the analytics to see where you need to improve and work with the provider to implement a programme refresh.

Building a loyalty programme that truly works isn't easy. The brands that have mastered it have invested significant time and effort, but it pays off every single time. If you're serious about customer retention, it's absolutely worth putting in the work.

5 key *action* points

1. Use screen recordings to analyse customer behaviour.
2. Interview your most loyal customers to find out what keeps them coming back and what might convince first-time buyers to return.
3. View the loyalty programme from the customer's point of view so you can showcase the benefits exactly where customers care about them the most.
4. Work closely with your loyalty programme provider to tailor the programme to your specific audience.
5. Experiment with combining points, VIP tiers, and paid memberships, then analyse results and modify where it's needed



Marton Kosdi-Kovacs is Co-Founder of Love Loyalty, which turns first-time shoppers into loyal customers. Allowing brands to add loyalty placements throughout the customer journey results in higher participation and conversion rates, and built with Shopify's latest technologies, it is the fastest on the storefront while being safe and reliable. Connect with Marton if you have any questions!

LOVE

Section

03.3

Subscriptions and *loyalty programmes*

How to refresh your subscriber offering



Fiona Stevens
Head of Marketing at LoyaltyLion

Subscription models are well-established in eCommerce, but are they really the differentiator they used to be?

The evidence suggests not, but that brands can get ahead by refreshing their subscriber offering, ASAP.

This is how.





We've entered the *'opt-out era'*

Following the recent dip in consumer confidence and related price hikes as some brands pass on cost increases to shoppers, many are sense-checking their bank statements, striking through the luxuries and conveniences they feel they don't need. In fact, a quarter have cancelled one or more subscriptions because prices have increased and they can no longer afford them.

Losing subscribers doesn't just impact your recurring revenue. It also impacts your potential for growth and erodes one of your most reliable sources of revenue.

Subscriptions + loyalty = *revenue growth*

Use your loyalty programme to supercharge your subscription service.

It's a tried-and-tested approach based on consumer behaviour: 63% of shoppers said loyalty points would make them sign up for a subscription. And the businesses taking this approach are getting ahead.

Subscriptions plus loyalty can give you the edge you need, not just to keep your subscribers signed up (locking in that reliable source of revenue and long-term profits), but also to collect the data you need to continue delivering the best possible experiences for your subscribers.





Using loyalty to boost your *subscriptions*

Subscribers are already repeat purchasing from you. The key to keeping them is to reward that loyalty with unmissable, exclusive rewards they couldn't get anywhere else. As a result, loyalty programmes increase customers' lifetime value, reduce churn, and ultimately help your brand grow.

When it comes to integrating loyalty and subscriptions, our experts have seen these five approaches help the Shopify brands we work with:

Enticing subscriber rewards

Make subscribing highly appealing by offering exclusive rewards – after all, 46% of consumers expect exclusive offers when signing up for a loyalty programme.

The loyalty points that subscribers earn each time they shop can be redeemed for rewards – the more points, the better the reward: think £5 off their next non-subscription order, a free product, or an exclusive pattern.

More points for subscribers

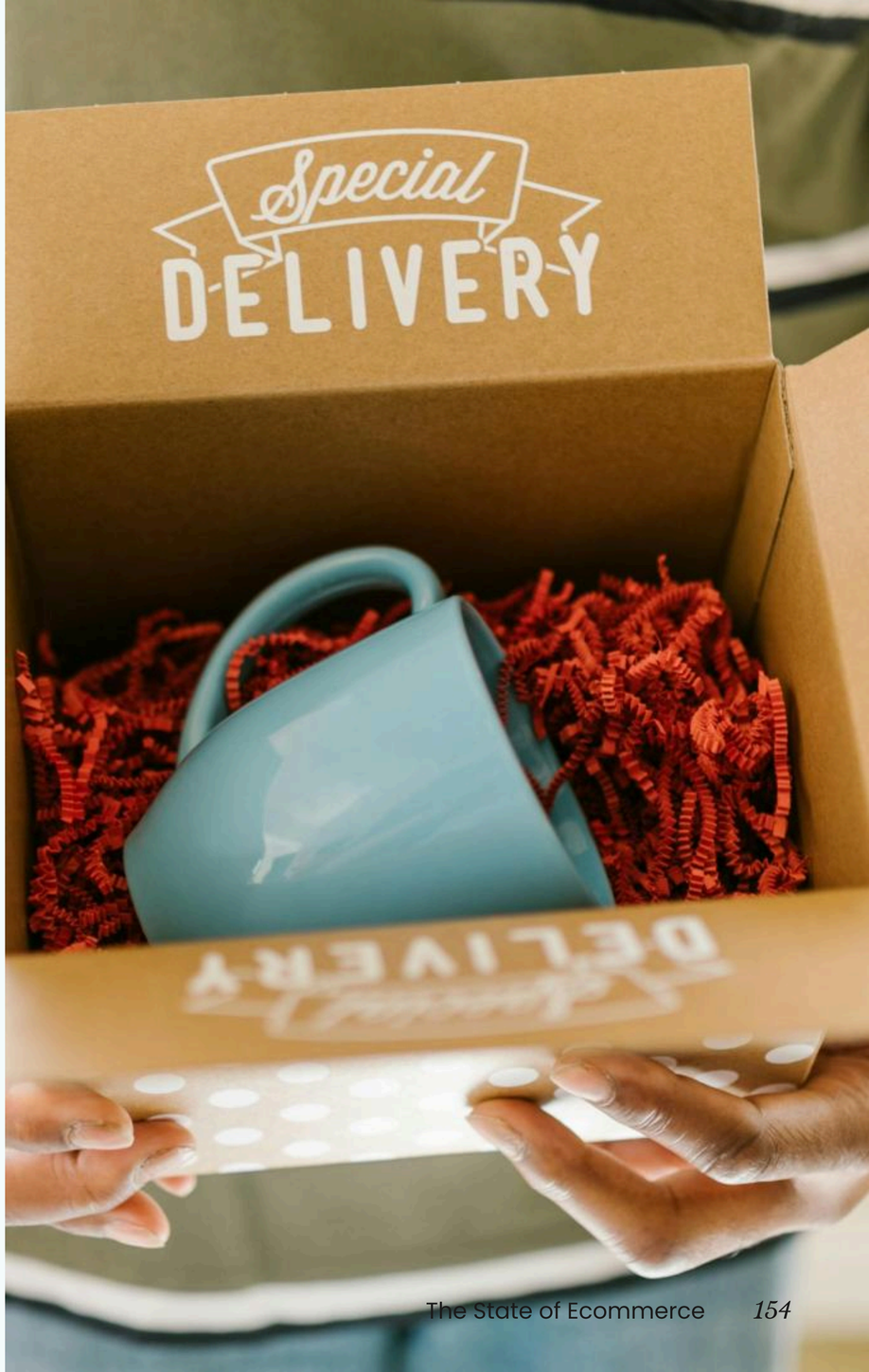
Make subscribers feel a cut above the rest by offering more loyalty points for specific activities, such as purchases outside of their subscription. This way, they grow their points balances faster and unlock more rewards.

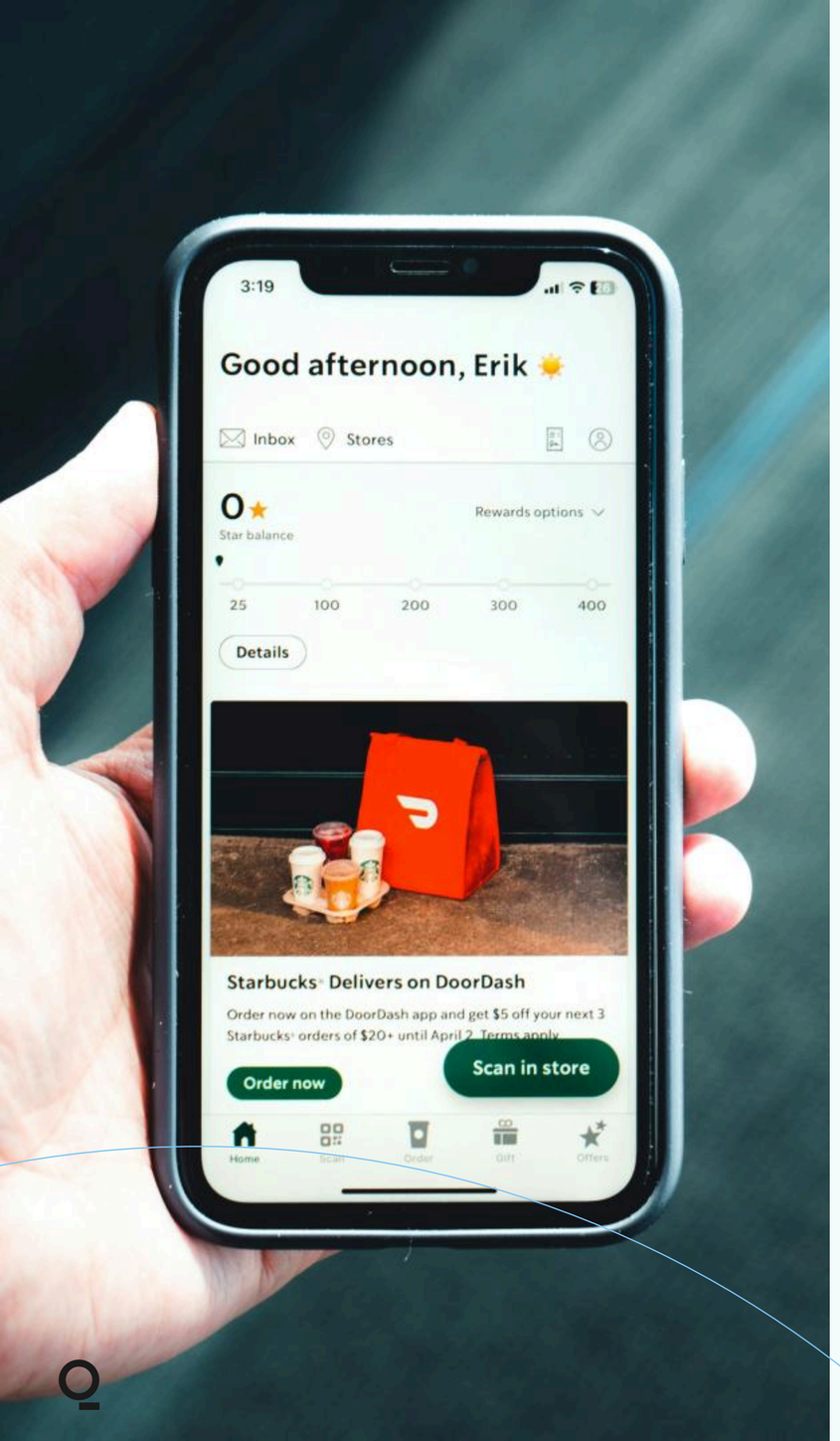
Your reward? Being able to rely on their subscription as a reliable source of revenue for the foreseeable future.

Exclusive subscriber tier

Access to VIP perks compels shoppers to repeat purchase. So, having a VIP tier with fantastic perks exclusively for subscribers helps prevent them from churning, and gets others subscribing too.

These perks mean the world to them, but cost you little. Try early access to sales, discounted shipping, or special content such as product tutorials or behind-the-scenes videos.





Personalised subscriber experiences

When a customer sets up a subscription with you, they share their data. There are numerous responsible ways to use it for mutual benefit.

Personalise your communications, suggest additional products they'll love, or remind them of their loyalty points balance. Don't forget to give them a special reward on their birthday! The personal touch keeps them coming back for more.

Points incentives for referring new subscribers

83% of consumers refer a brand to others after a positive experience. Your subscribers are already committed to an ongoing relationship with you and are the best customers to act as advocates.

Use your loyalty programme to encourage subscribers to refer your store to friends and family members with point incentives.

Case studies: How brands boosted *subscriptions*

Waterdrop: VIP Tier for Subscribers

A company dedicated to helping people drink more water, Waterdrop wanted to scale fast. Its subscriber tier, built through LoyaltyLion's integration with Recharge, gives customers who subscribe unique benefits such as community giveaways and early access to new releases.

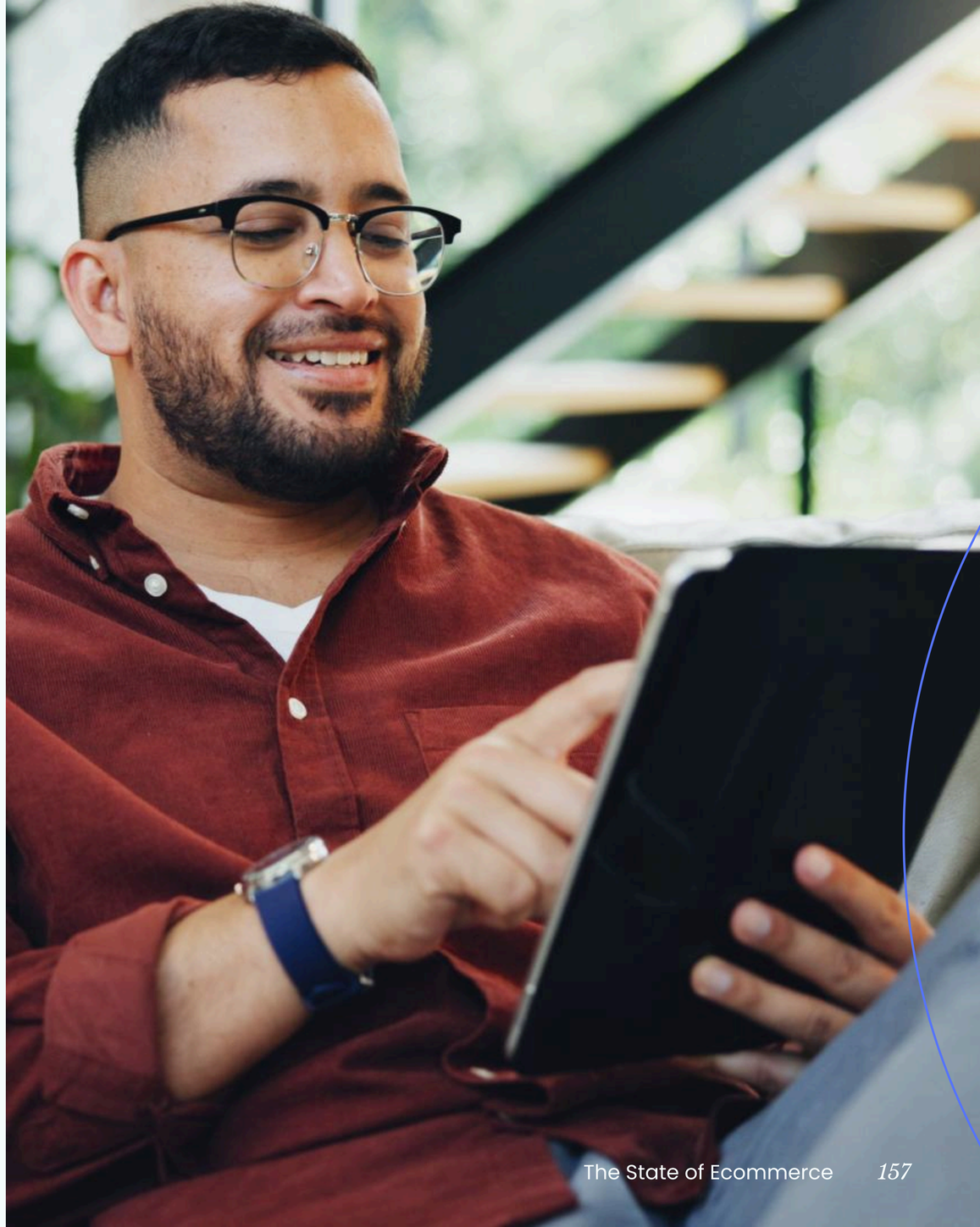
Integrating with Klaviyo, an email service provider, they promoted their programme and combined their loyalty and email marketing strategy. The results? By making loyalty the heart of its marketing strategy, Waterdrop increased customer spending by 90% and repeat purchase rate by 70%.



Amora Coffee: Exclusive subscriber rewards

Amora Coffee gives subscribers access to a wide range of benefits once they unlock the points required to redeem them. For example, 90 points will allow a member to unlock a travel mug, 100 points will win a subscriber 20% off their next order, and 450 points would be enough to redeem an entire coffee maker.

This successfully keeps subscribers engaged for longer, as they have a clear goal to aim for, and they can see additional benefits to remaining signed up.



5 key *action* points

1. Define your goals, and understand how your subscriber audience shops.
2. Choose the types of rewards you'd want to offer subscribers. Experiential rewards help keep your costs low, but the value to customers is high.
3. Choose a loyalty programme provider with subscription integrations in mind.
4. Promote your loyalty programme and communicate its exclusive benefits to subscribers – and non-subscribers – to drive new enrollments.
5. Track and optimise your programme based on performance.



Fiona Stevens is Director of Marketing at LoyaltyLion. With over 15 years' experience in global marketing, she has specialised within the retail and ecommerce space for the past decade. Loyalty Lion turns customer loyalty into your new growth channel, boosting repeat sales and unlocking a new stream of revenue from customers you already have. Feel free to reach out to Fiona with any questions!

LOYALTYLION

Section

03.4

Value-added *content*

Content that converts: Personalising the customer experience



Valeria Granda

Manager, Atlantic Partnerships at Rebuy

Personalised content is no longer optional; it's essential for growth. Brands that excel at personalisation generate 40% more revenue, while 78% of consumers say it makes them more likely to repurchase.

The most effective strategies deliver value at every stage of the customer journey, from site entry to post-purchase. With today's tools and integrations, it's easier than ever to embed creative, personalised content across touchpoints — tailoring onsite experiences, enhancing the cart, building trust at checkout, and re-engaging post-purchase — all at scale.

Here's how.

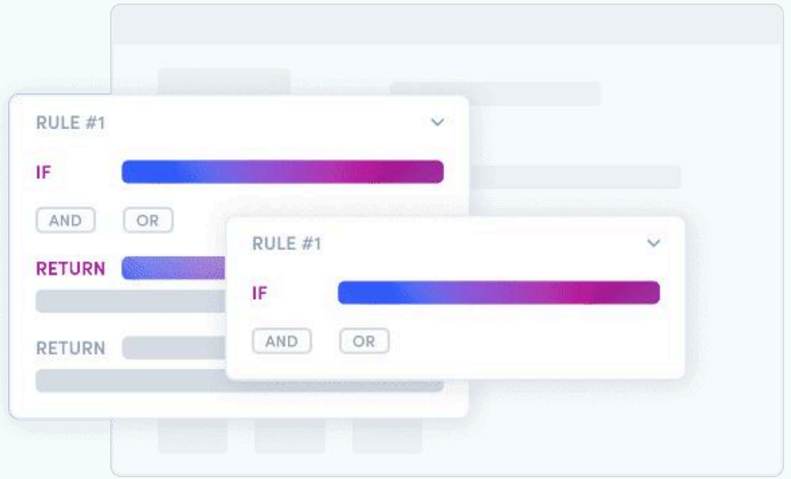


Deliver *segment-specific* experiences across the site

Not all shoppers are the same, so their onsite experience shouldn't be either. Personalising content by customer segments is a powerful way to drive meaningful engagement and conversions. Personalisation tools simplify the process of applying dynamic rules to tailor messaging and recommended products based on real-time data and behaviour.

Here are real-world examples you can use to tailor the on-site journey:

- **Date-based rules:** Power messaging and recommendations based on seasonal moments. Running a summer sale? Highlight your summer collection to help customers beat the heat.
- **URL-based rules:** Driving traffic from Facebook ads? Personalise product offers for these visitors – recommend best sellers at a discount for new customers.
- **Customer-specific rules:** Use metafields to update messaging for returning customers. When they log in, greet them with simple, loyalty-building copy such as, "Welcome back, John! Check out our new summer collection!"



By leveraging dynamic rulesets, you can serve more relevant, value-added content that makes every visit feel personal.

Transform the cart drawer into a *personalised shopping hub*

The cart drawer is no longer just a place to view items. It's a powerful, often overlooked opportunity to deliver personalised, high-impact content at a key touchpoint in the customer journey.

Modern personalisation tools make it easy to turn the cart into a dynamic shopping hub that anticipates customer needs. By leveraging data such as cart contents and customer info, you can include content that encourages deeper engagement:

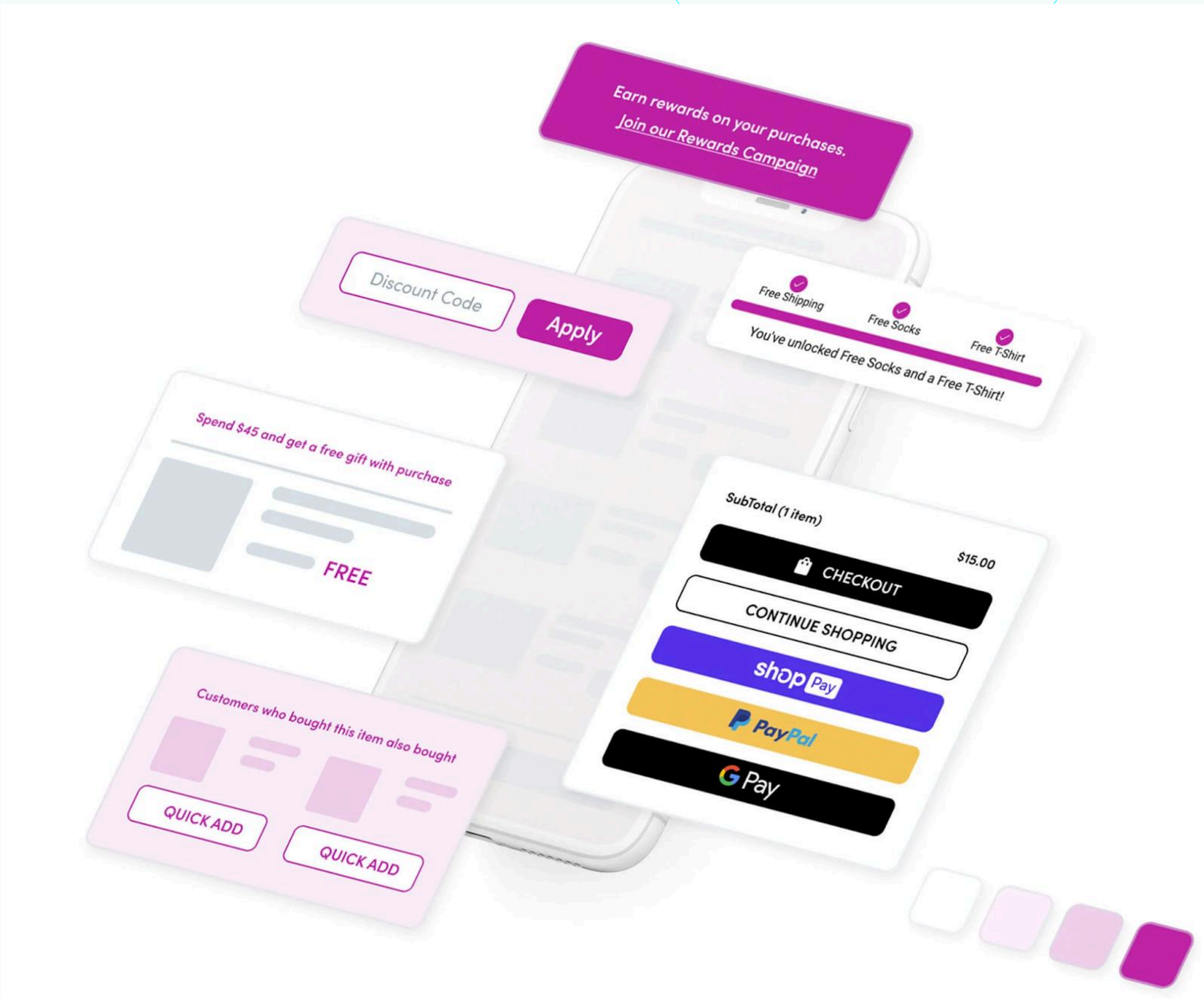
- **Cart cross-sells:** Recommend relevant products directly below in-cart items with one-click ATC buttons. Personalise using custom rules or AI endpoints.

- **Tiered rewards & GWP:** Motivate shoppers to add more with rewards such as free shipping, discounts, or gifts. These are great for boosting AOV and delighting new customers.

- **Buy more, save more discounts:** Show tiered discounts alongside cart items to incentivise bulk purchases, e.g. ‘Buy 2, Save 10%.’

- **Subscription upsells:** Pair products with discounted subscription offers to drive loyalty. Try ‘Subscribe & Save 20%’ to grow your subscriber count.

By making the cart an extension of the shopping journey, you can drive more conversions and leave a lasting impression before checkout even begins.

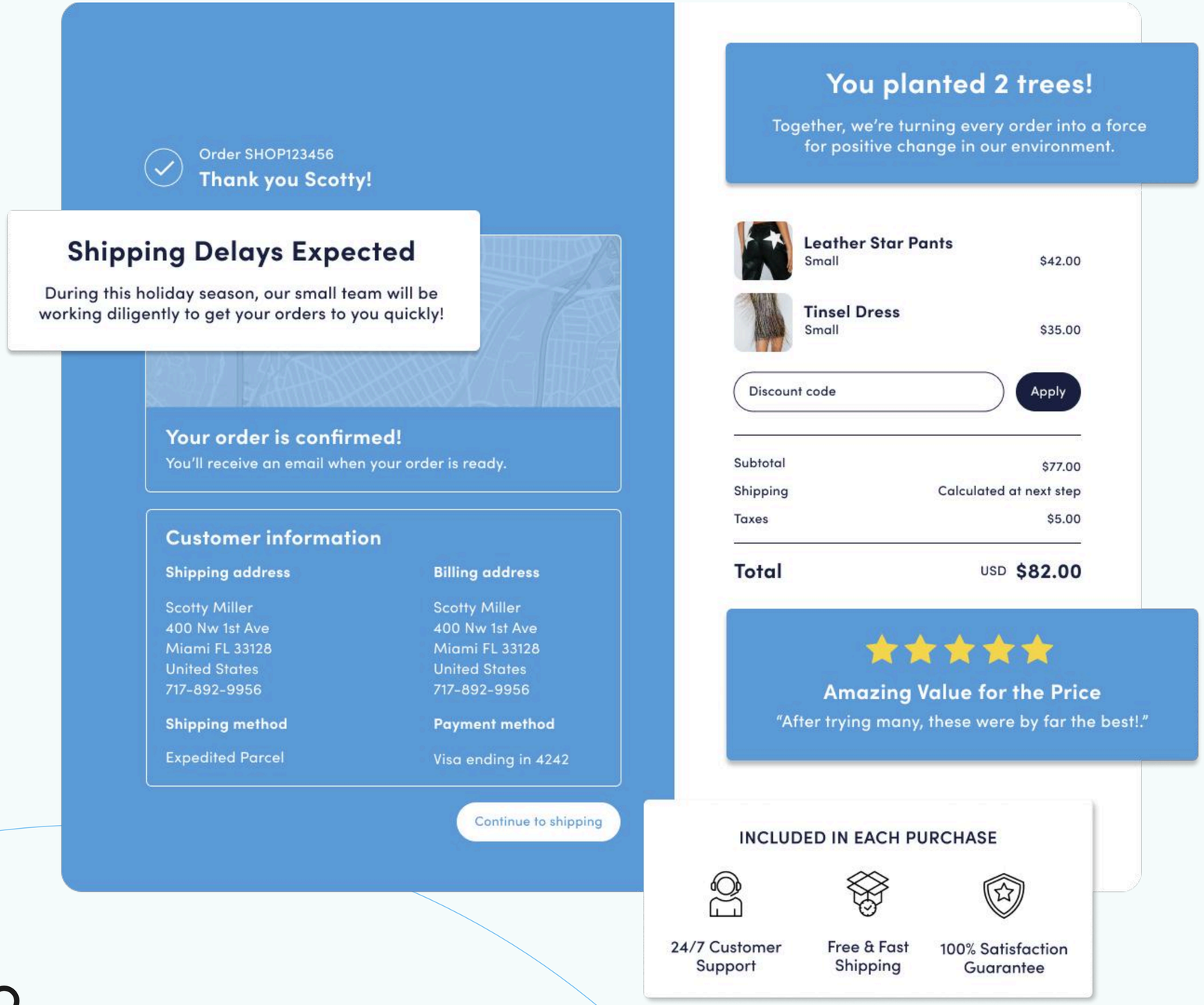


Build trust with *strategic* content blocks

Customer touch points such as checkout, thank you, and order status pages aren't just the final step in the on-site customer journey; they are a critical moment of trust. It's a place where hesitation can creep in or confidence can be solidified. Merchants who use this space thoughtfully have an opportunity to strengthen brand credibility and increase conversion rates.

One popular strategy is to personalise these customer experiences with custom images and text blocks that deliver relevant, value-added content. Consider configuring modular blocks to highlight key trust-builders such as satisfaction guarantees, fast shipping timelines, or secure payment messaging.





Content blocks can also be dynamically tailored:

- **New customers:** Leverage content blocks to reassure first-time buyers with messaging such as, 'You're in good hands — 10,000+ 5-star reviews!'
- **Repeat customers:** Leverage content blocks to remind returning customers about their loyalty points.

Strategic content not only informs, it reassures, aligns with intent, and reinforces brand integrity at the most pivotal moments.

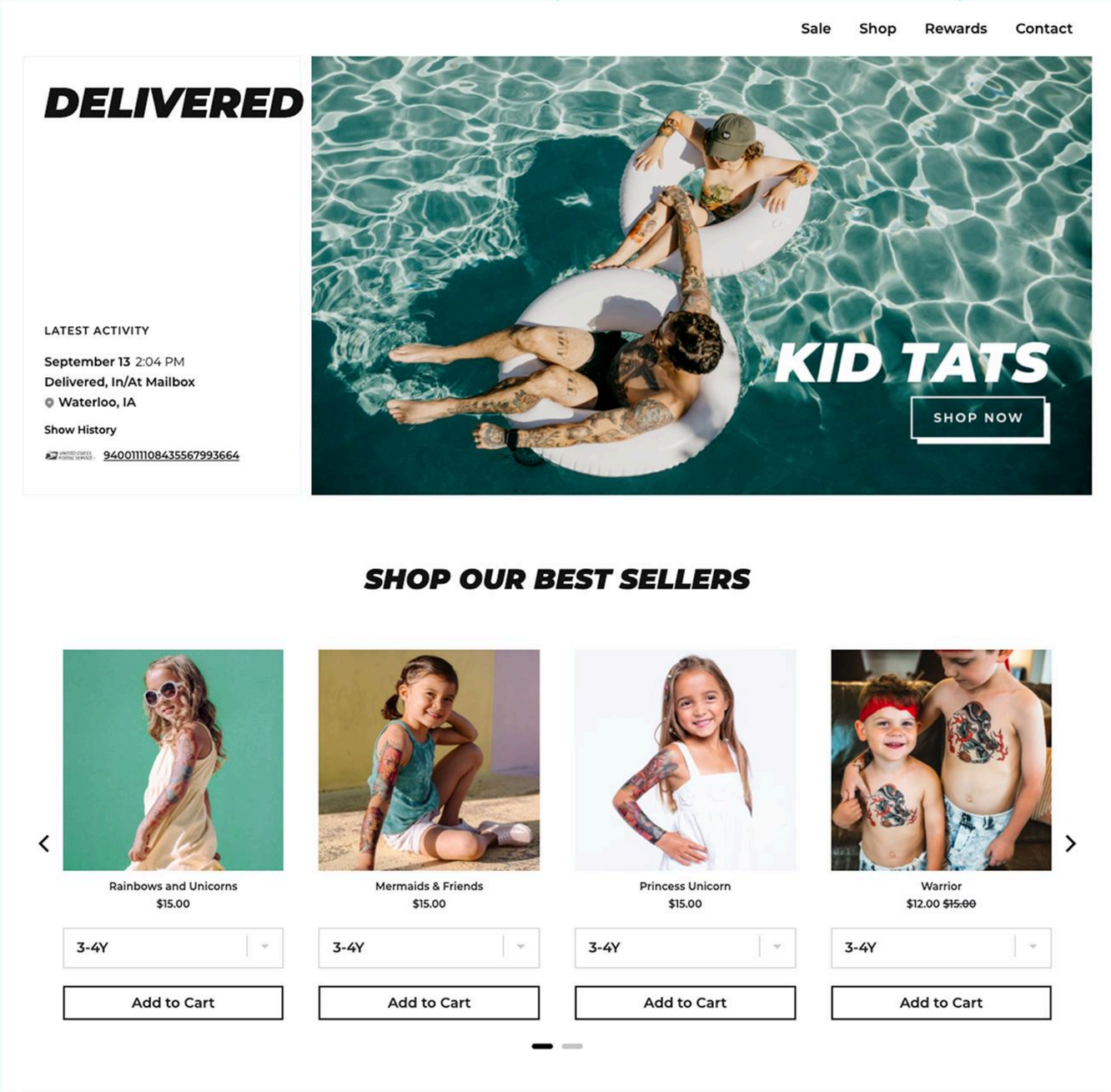
Turn order tracking pages into *repeat purchase engines*

The post-purchase experience is a prime, yet often underused, opportunity to drive repeat revenue with already converted customers. Order tracking pages, in particular, are high-traffic destinations that most customers revisit multiple times. Instead of offering a static status update, consider elevating this page into a personalised shopping experience that deepens engagement and encourages a second purchase.

By embedding product recommendations based on past orders, customer behaviour, and real-time inventory, you can transform order tracking into a curated product discovery moment. For example, shoppers awaiting a protein powder delivery might see complementary items such as shaker bottles or new flavour bundles, tailored specifically to their interests.

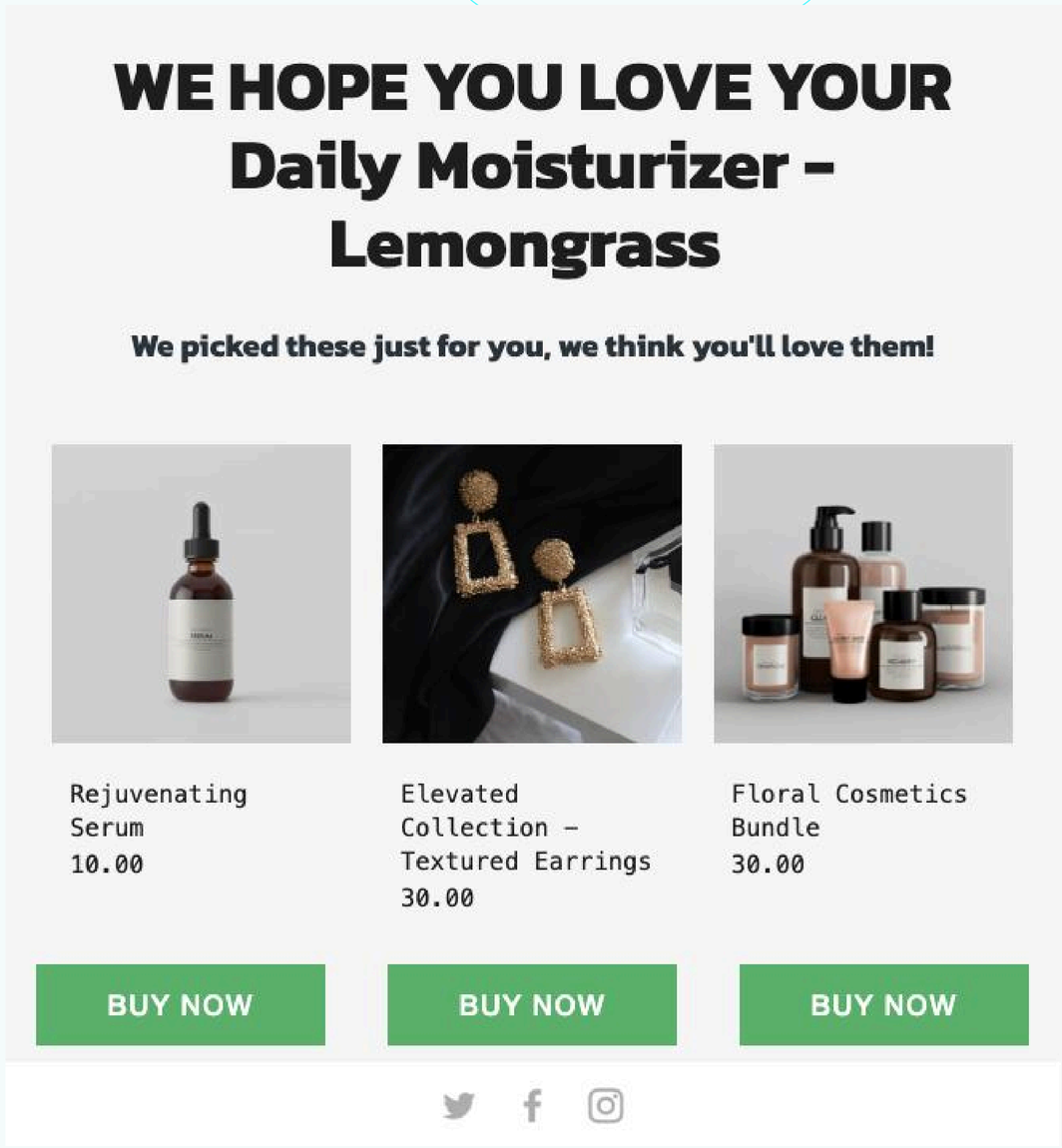


Integrations like Rebuy x Malomo make this possible, allowing brands to deliver data-driven recommendations directly within the post-purchase flow. It's a simple, high-impact way to re-engage customers during a peak moment of brand attention — all without leaving the branded experience.



Supercharge email campaigns with *dynamic product recommendations*

Email remains one of the most effective channels for post-purchase engagement, but static messages are no longer enough. Personalising email flows and campaigns with dynamic product recommendations can significantly boost engagement, conversions, and long-term customer retention.



Consider embedding intelligent product suggestions into post-purchase emails, abandoned cart flows, and win-back campaigns to craft content that feels relevant and timely to each shopper.

Furthermore, emails can be tailored to each customer by leveraging dynamic metafields to surface information regarding previous orders or individual shopping preferences.

Dynamic content doesn't just fill space; it creates real value for customers while giving you a chance to showcase more of your product catalogue. It's a powerful, scalable way to extend the shopping journey beyond the inbox and drive repeat purchases.

Turning content into a *competitive advantage*

Delivering personalised content across the customer journey is essential for sustainable growth. With the right strategies and tools, you can create meaningful moments that drive conversions and long-term customer loyalty.

5 key *action* points

1. Deliver segment-specific experiences across the site.
2. Transform the cart drawer into a personalised shopping hub.
3. Build trust at checkout with strategic content blocks.
4. Turn order tracking pages into repeat purchase engines.
5. Supercharge email campaigns with dynamic product recommendations.



Valeria Granda is Manager, Atlantic Partnerships at Rebuy, the leading personalisation, recommendation, and merchandising platform helping ecommerce brands boost revenue and cut costs with AI-driven tools. Rebuy's comprehensive suite of revenue-generating tools have already generated over $1 billion in additional revenue for merchants. Connect with Valeria if you have any questions!

REBUY

Section

04 AI: how to use it *correctly*

Section

04.1

Data-driven *decision-making*

Clean data, smart decisions



Dena Bakr

Chief Revenue Officer at Renude

AI is only as good as the data it is trained with. This simple truth is the difference between brands that thrive and those that stall with these technologies.

The quality, structure, and relevance of data (not just its volume) can determine whether AI becomes a powerful growth accelerator or just another underutilised tool. Having worked on AI projects with a variety of brands, a number of themes have emerged that help to prepare for true AI readiness, overcome common data hurdles, and evolve into organisations that make sharper, faster, and more customer-aligned decisions.

Here are some of my biggest takeaways.



Renude

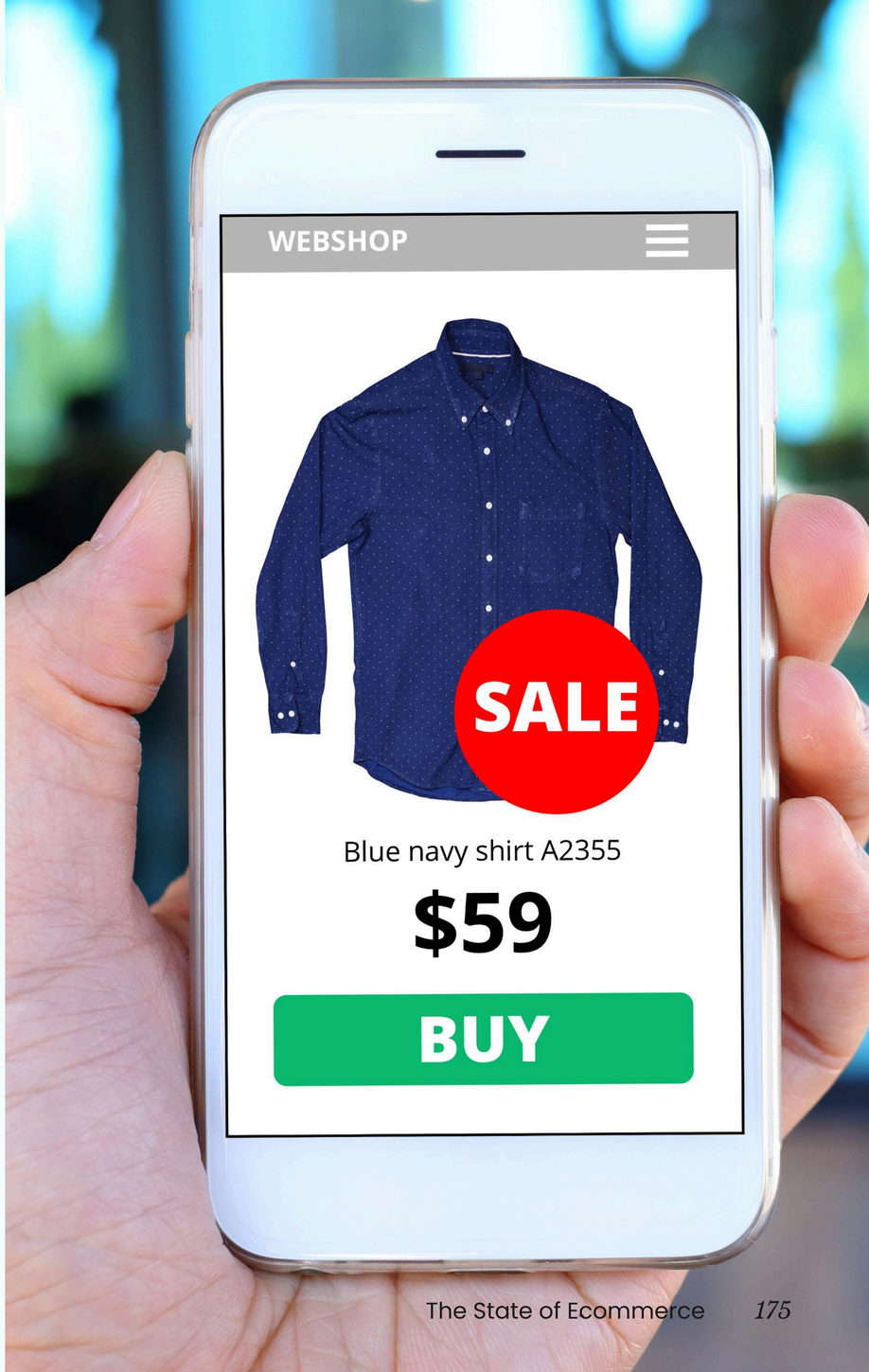
Renude is your expert skin consultant, scaled for every customer.



Start with structured, *intentional data*

A major misconception in eCommerce is that having ‘lots of data’ means you’re ready to implement AI. In reality, most datasets are messy, siloed, or unstructured, meaning they tell part of the story, but not the full one.

What drives meaningful output is data that’s clean, standardised, and enriched with context. That means product attributes that go beyond vague tags. In the context of beauty, this could mean ‘hydrating’ or tagging by granular textural or sensory attributes and/or reflecting customer needs or product performance traits. The result? Customer profiles that aren’t just name, email and last order, but include skin concerns, preferences, pain points, and outcomes – all systematically tagged and enhanced to work together across systems and customer touch points.



Fix your data *quality*

Some of the most common blockers we see to quality data are:

Disconnected systems

Too often, marketing, eCommerce, CX, and merchandising each track data differently. This leads to fragmented views and suboptimal action based on the data being received and a lack of interconnectedness and optimisation. This misses a huge opportunity to use data from an AI source to benefit multiple departments cohesively.

Inconsistent product metadata

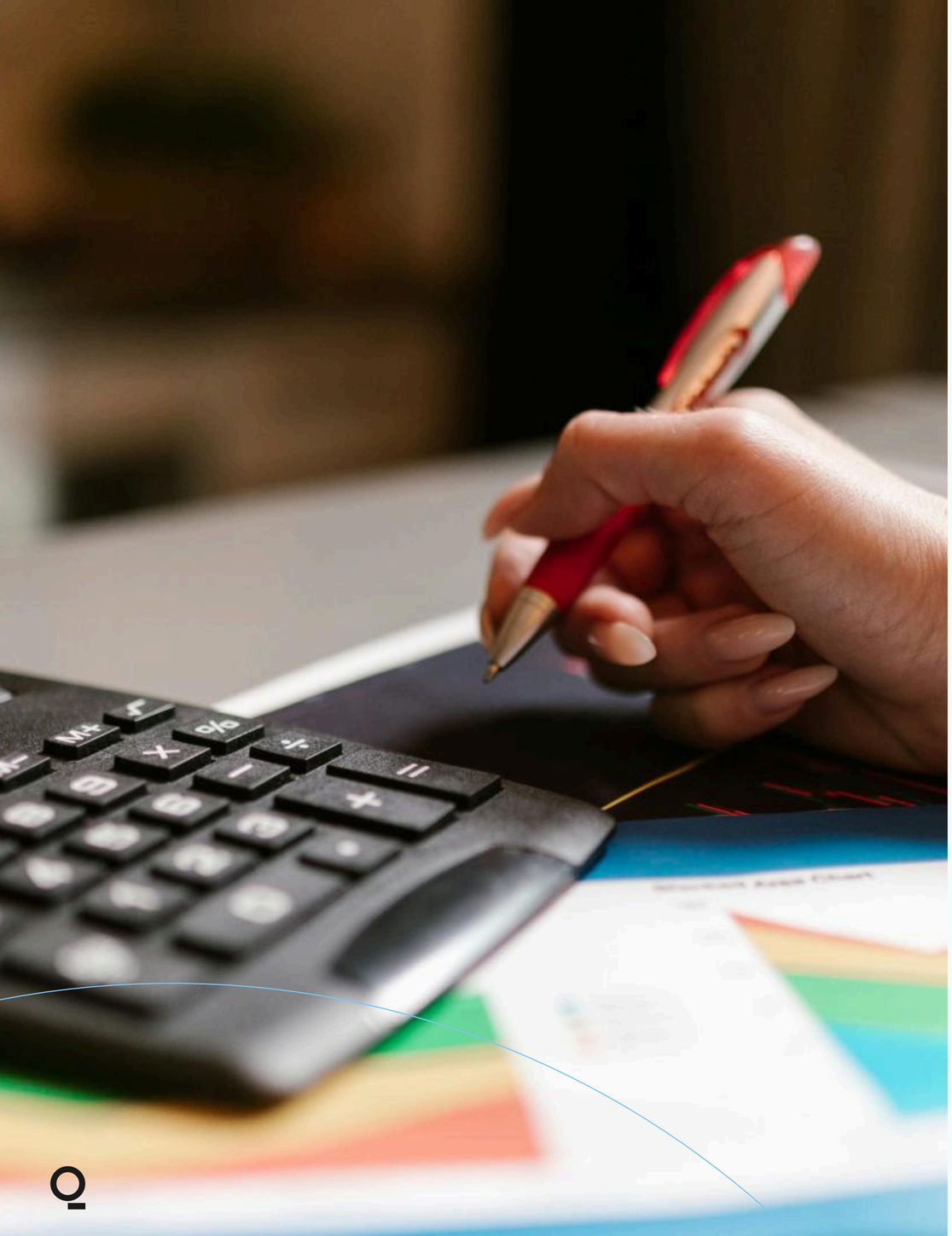
If the same product is tagged five different ways in different systems, it becomes impossible to group, recommend, or measure accurately.

Poor use of zero-party data

Brands collect valuable customer information from the likes of quizzes, chat, and service tickets but don't structure or store it in ways that make it actionable.

To overcome these challenges, the most progressive teams are building bridges between departments, aligning around shared product/customer taxonomies, and rethinking how they capture and store real-time insights.

A strong trend we're seeing is the rise of digital touchpoints that act as personal consultants, including Renude Skin Chat AI. These kinds of tools capture structured customer needs data at scale and integrate it into CRM, email systems, and analytics layers to power intelligence beyond the first touchpoint. These insights drive far better decision-making than browsing history or third-party tags ever could.



Embrace predictive analytics for *informed bets*

Brands can’t afford to rely on instinct anymore.

Predictive analytics allows you to see not just what happened, but what’s about to happen, whether that’s identifying underperforming SKUs based on your audience’s skin profile, or knowing which products and ingredients will go viral after a TikTok trend.

Democratise access across *teams*

The data shouldn’t sit in a business intelligence or analytics dashboard collecting dust. One of the most underrated unlocks is data accessibility, which comes from empowering non-technical teams with the tools and context to act on insights fast.

Imagine if your CX team knew in real-time which ingredients were triggering negative feedback, or if your merchandiser could see product gaps based on skin concern prevalence from quiz data. This is what happens when AI tools aren’t just reserved for tech or data science teams; they become part of everyday workflows to inform broader business efficiency.



Keep the *human touch*

AI should be your co-pilot rather than a human replacement. The most successful retailers we know are pairing algorithmic insights with human intuition because data tells you what is happening, but your team can still help learn the why.

Brands such as Glossier and Dr. Sam's, and even mass players like Walmart, are using AI to refine pricing, personalisation, and retention, but always with clear human oversight and brand context. We're seeing this combination result in smarter decisions, fewer missed nuances, and AI that works in service of the brand, not the other way around.

Renude's AI Skin Concierge uses brand-new technology to meet inter-departmental needs, with a human touchpoint being via the website in the form of a real-time skin advisor and shopping helper. Built with dermatology, formulation science, and real consumer consultations, it links to everything from checkout, inventory, NPD, CX, email campaigns, marketing, socials, buying, personalisation and more.





Looking *ahead*

Data quality drives efficiency, powers better interactions with consumers, improves retention, reduces CX burden, and enables more informed decisions.

We see clients 10x email opt-ins, 2.5x AOV, and 3.5x conversion uplift simply by improving the quality of personalised recommendations at the point of decision. Simply, when your AI feels like a helpful guide, not a blunt instrument, customers return.

5 key *action* points

1. AI readiness isn't about the quantity of data, but about being structured and being context-rich enough to drive meaningful output.

2. Fixing data quality includes breaking down silos, so making zero-party data usable across systems and teams across the biz is essential.

3. Predictive analytics lets brands move from reactive guesses to proactive decisions by forecasting customer needs and product trends before they happen.

4. Making data useful is really about putting it in the hands of every team so insights are integrated into daily workflows and become immediate and actionable.

5. AI should be a co-pilot rather than a replacement, so pairing smart tech with human judgment leads to better brand decisions.



Dena Bakr is Chief Revenue Officer at Renude, which provides a simpler, smarter way to find custom skincare routines that work. Renude uses the power of AI to build the skincare of the future and gives customers the most effective routine possible. Connect with Dena to explore how AI-driven innovation can unlock new growth in beauty and wellness.

Renude

Section

04.2

Efficiency *gains*

5 retailers using automation to save time, reduce costs, and elevate CX



Sara Sousa
Product Marketing Director at Brightpearl

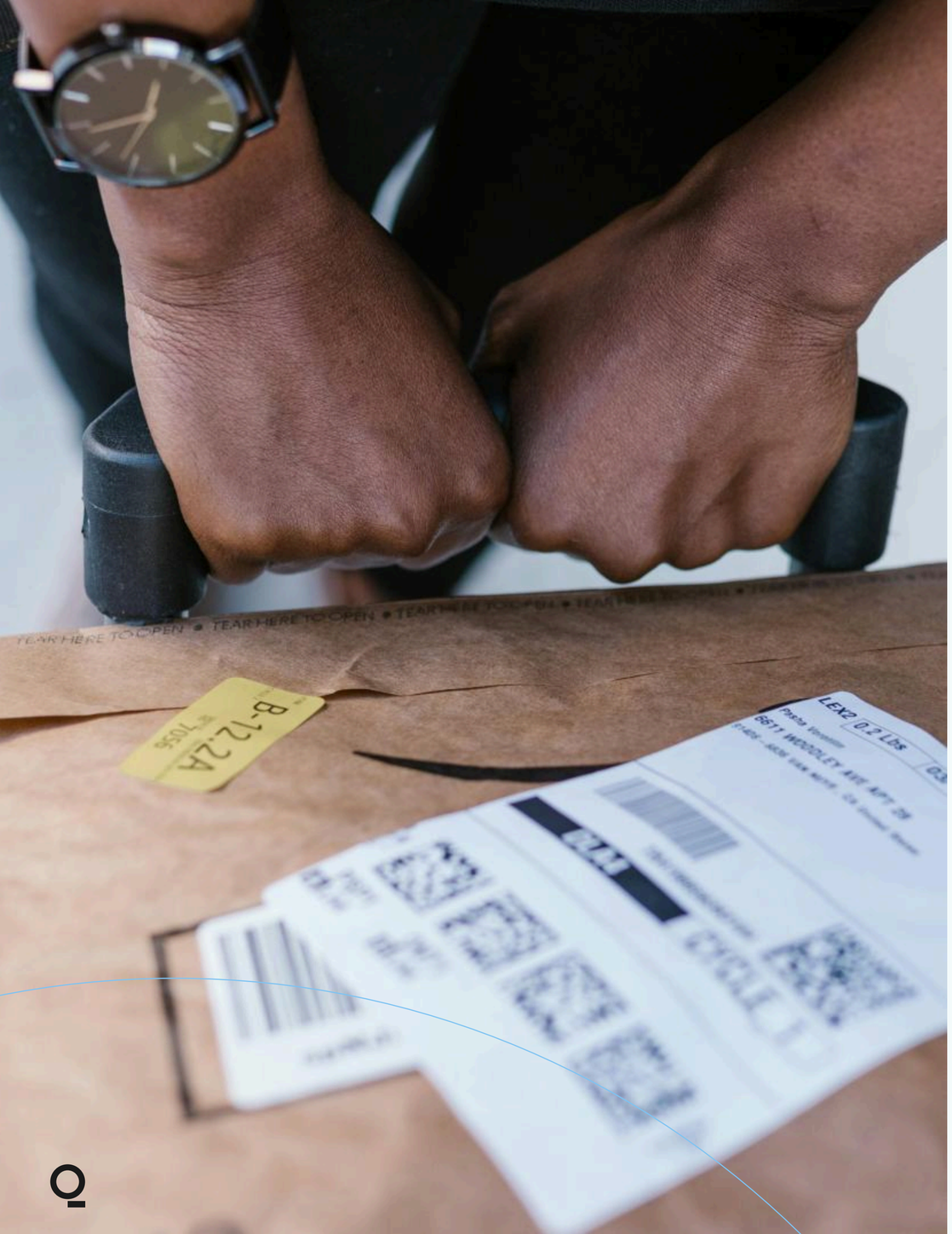
When you’re starting out in retail, handling operations manually makes sense.

You process orders one at a time, update stock in spreadsheets, and invoice by hand. It’s a hands-on approach that helps you stay close to the action. But once your business starts scaling, manual processes quickly become unsustainable.

Processing hundreds of orders manually turns into an operational nightmare. Errors creep in. Customers get frustrated. And your team burns out.

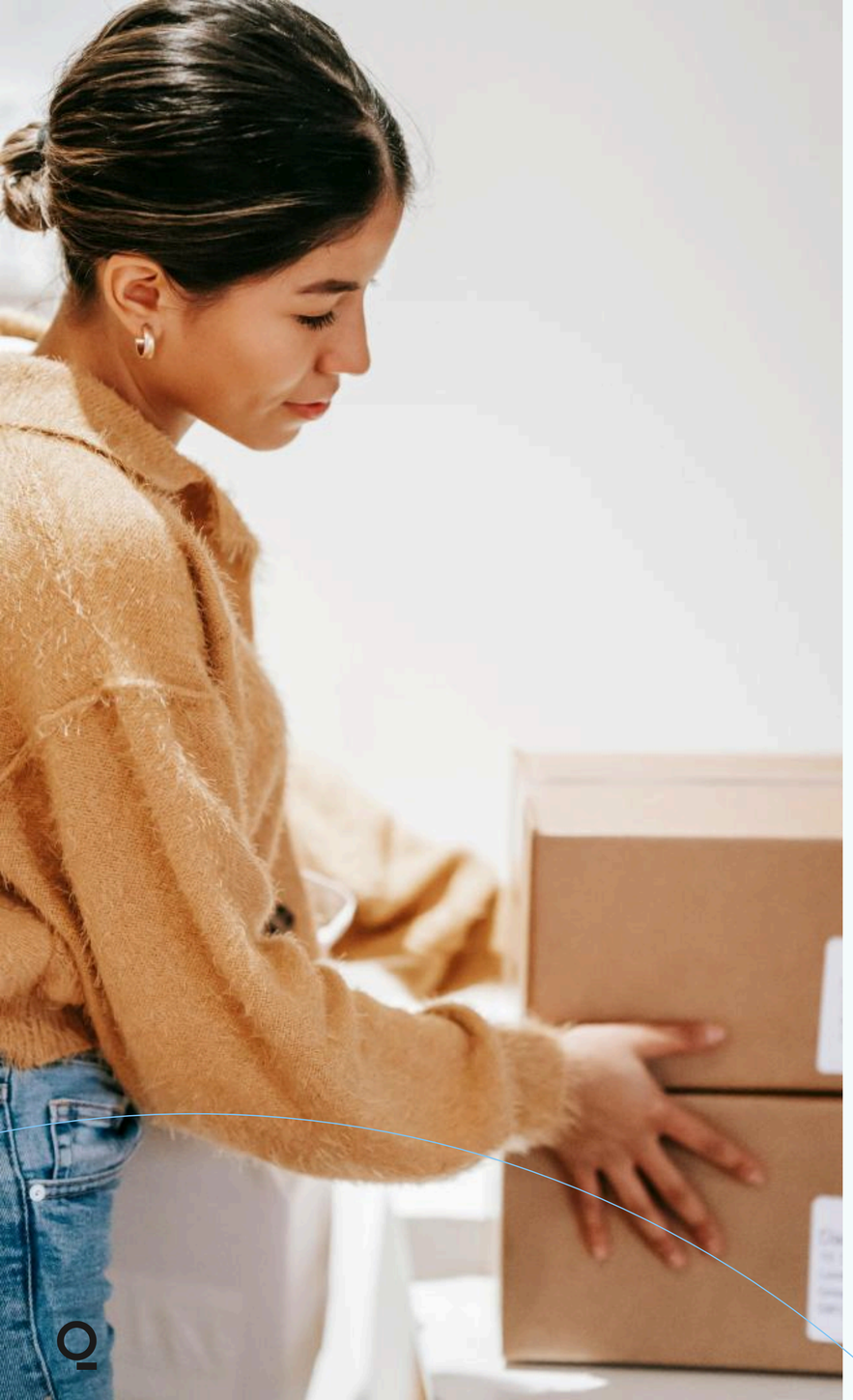
This is where automation *changes everything.*





From order routing and inventory management to fraud detection and invoicing, automation can replace hours of tedious admin with seamless, rules-based workflows. With the right automation tools, you can reclaim huge amounts of time, improve customer experience and focus your team on tasks that drive your business forward. Simply, there's really no reason for retailers to still be doing manual tasks that automation can handle in seconds.

Here are five standout examples of retailers who've embraced retail automation and transformed their operations, proving that, with the right tools, automation can help you scale with confidence, improve customer experience, and do more with less.



TBCo

TBCo (formerly The Tartan Blanket Co.) is a B Corp-certified Edinburgh-based retailer offering fashion accessories and homeware via Shopify, physical stores, and wholesale.

Powered by Shopify, Brightpearl automates 82 manual workflows. This freed up teams to focus on growth, streamlined warehouse operations and improved customer experience.

> The automation power that Brightpearl has given us has been truly game-changing. Individually, it's lots of small wins but it adds up to a really *significant time-saving*. It also means our teams can focus their time on outreach and sales and developing new products, which all contribute to our growth and profitability.

Alice Davidson,
Lead Operations Specialist,
TBCo

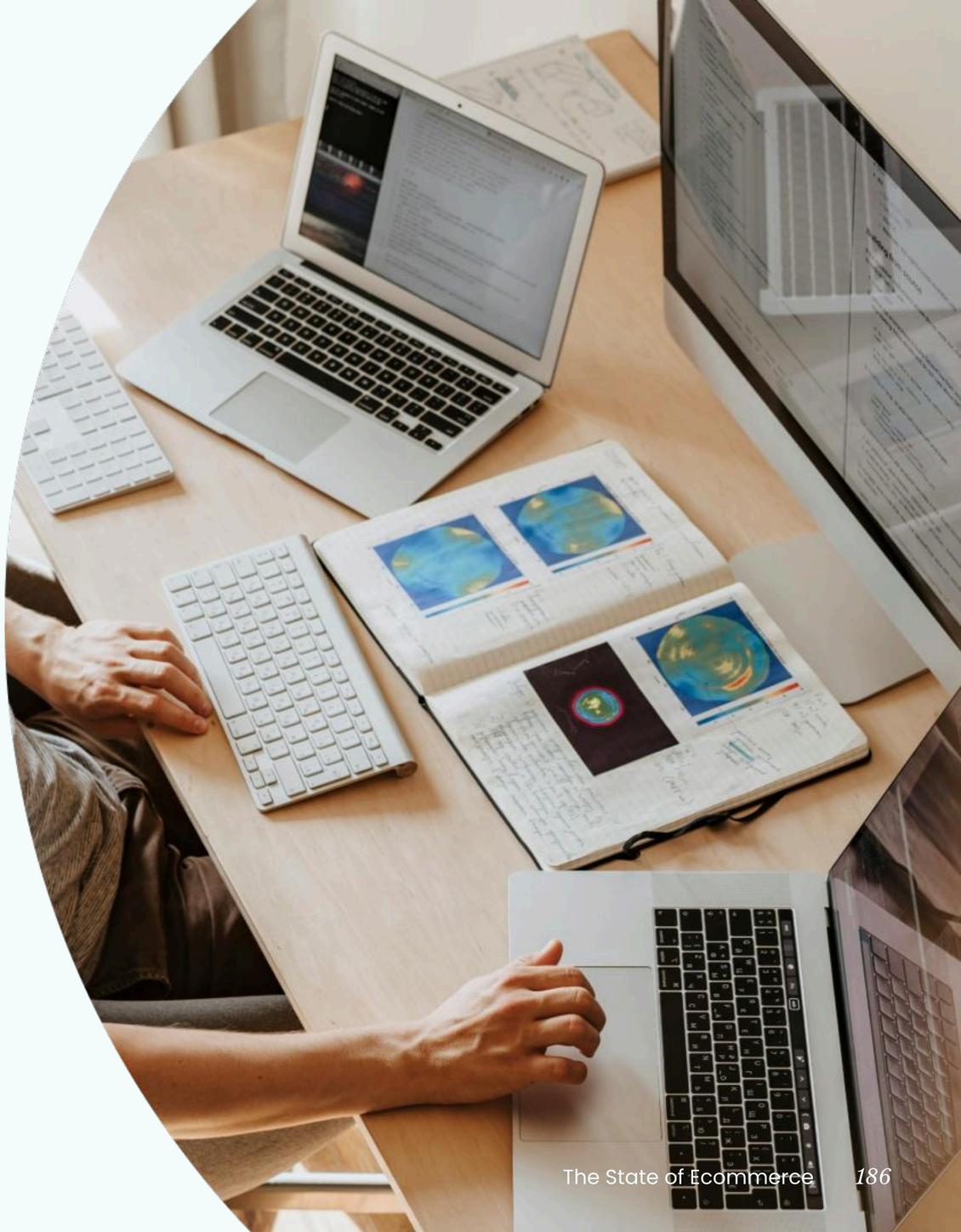
Dan-O’s Seasoning

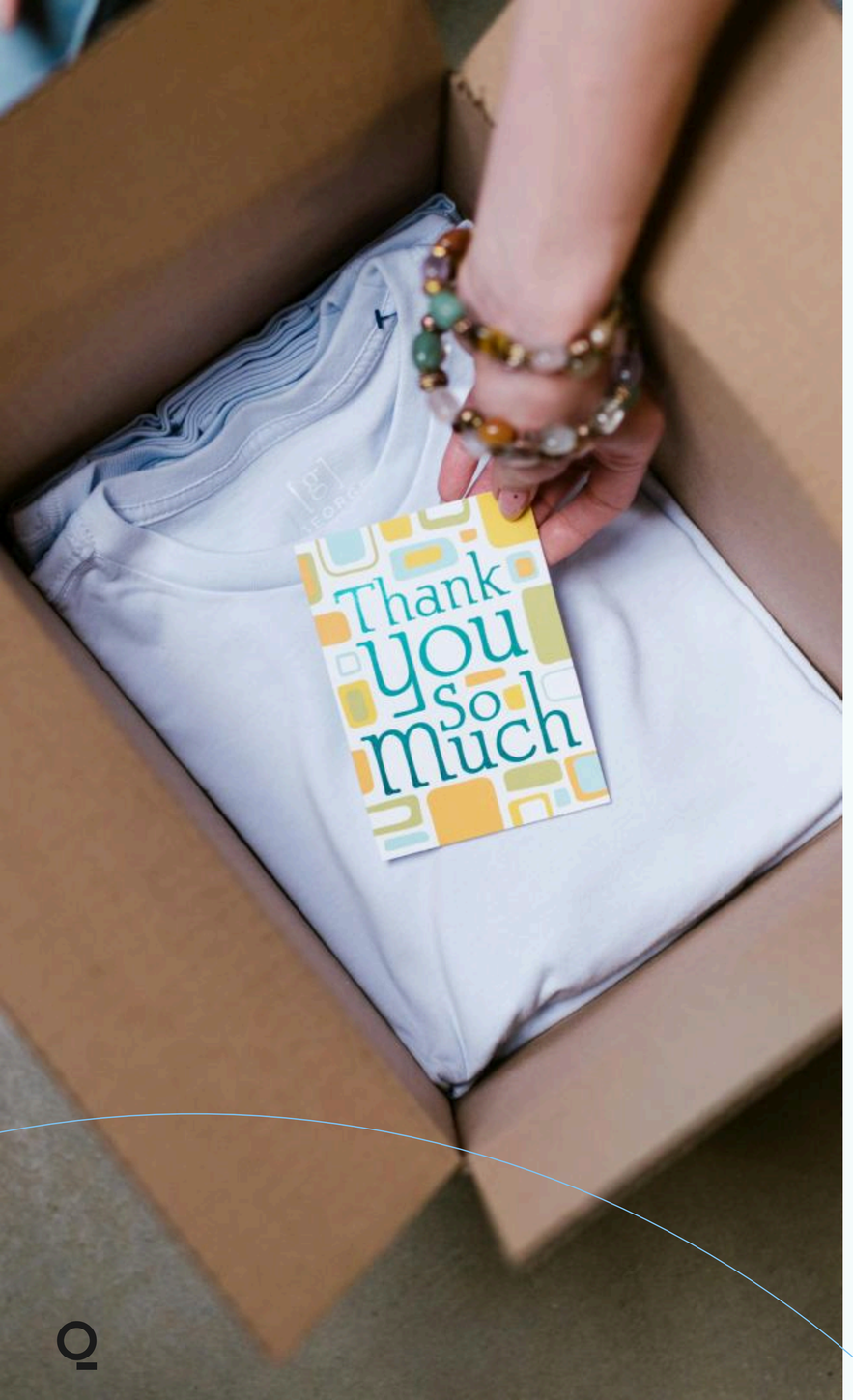
Dan-O’s Seasoning is a US-based spice brand that’s grown from a grassroots favourite into a household name.

By automating manual processes and improving demand forecasting, Dan-O’s saved the equivalent workload of seven full-time hires. The team used those gains to scale operations efficiently, tripling revenue without increasing headcount.

> Brightpearl has been instrumental in us becoming a successful $30M retail brand.

Sean Bowman
VP of Finance,
Dan-O’s Seasoning





Goose & Gander

Goose & Gander is a fast-growing unisex clothing brand that evolved from a small high street shop to a high-volume Shopify Plus business.

By automating repetitive, routine operations using Brightpearl's Automation Engine, orders are processed five times faster than before. The rules in place have dramatically improved customer experience and freed up the business's key team members to focus on growth.

> Brightpearl has totally transformed our business. We now feel in control of our behind-the-scenes processes and everything runs like clockwork, including our stock and order management.

Olly White
Director,
Goose & Gander

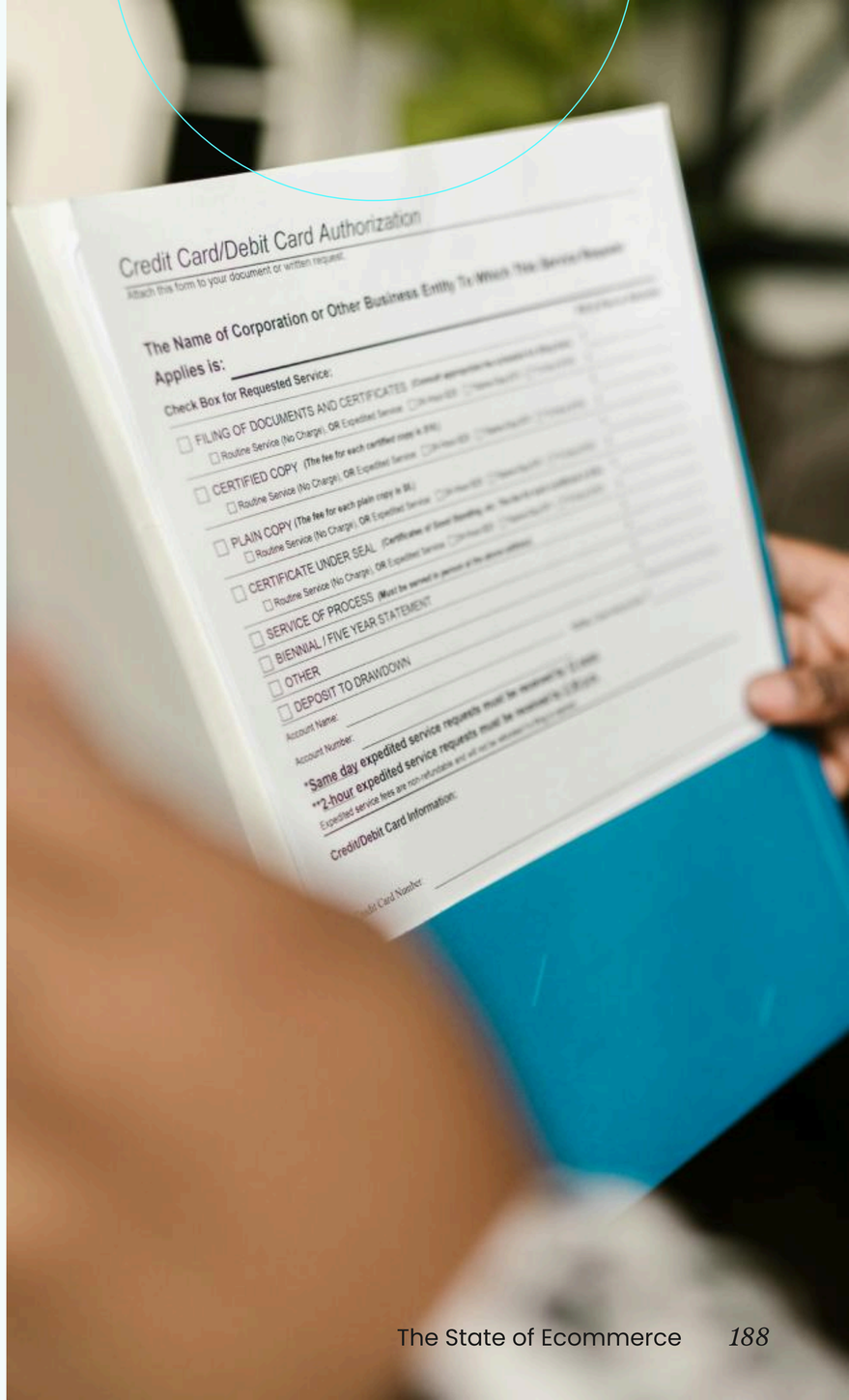
Bond Touch

Global multi-channel retailer Bond Touch makes wearable tech that lets people stay connected through touch.

After the brand experienced rapid growth, relying on manual workflows and spreadsheets to run multiple channels with large order volumes became unfeasible. Automation has saved the retailer three full-time hires, equating to around 120 hours a week, or 480 hours a month.

> Our aim was to stop our team doing almost all manual tasks, and we were able to achieve that very quickly. Brightpearl is a very intuitive, hands-off solution – we now only need one or possibly two people to manage hundreds of thousands of orders. We can easily create custom automation rules to meet our needs – for instance, if one warehouse runs out of stock, a rule kicks in to automatically route orders to a second warehouse option.

Jorge Henriques
COO,
Bond Touch



Popcultcha

Founded in 2013, Popcultcha is Australia's biggest retailer of pop culture collectables, selling over 20,000 products through its Magento-powered online store.

The retailer used Brightpearl to cut order processing time by 95%, quadruple invoicing efficiency, and eliminate errors. Freed-up staff were redeployed to more strategic roles.

> It's not just the time savings, though that is a massive win. It's also the impact on mistakes. Our error rate has gone from 15% to 0%.

Adam Benson
Operations Lead,
Popcultcha



Most popular ways to automate with *Brightpearl*

On average, retailers using Brightpearl's Automation Engine save 352 hours a year. They cut shipping time by 92%, reduce human error by 65%, and slash labour costs in half – all by setting up simple rules (no coding necessary!).

1. Fulfil orders
2. Create POs
3. Invoice orders
4. Detect fraudulent orders
5. Process returns
6. Arrange dropshipping
7. Prioritise top customers
8. Add autotags for marketing
9. Delay shipments for pre-orders
10. Forecast demand

5 key *action* points

1. Automate your manual workflows early to avoid scaling bottlenecks.
2. Set up rules-based order routing to speed up fulfilment and reduce errors.
3. Use automation to forecast demand and prevent over/understocking.
4. Free up your team by automating repetitive tasks like invoicing and returns.
5. Integrate all channels into one system to gain real-time operational control.



Sara Sousa is Product Marketing Director at Brightpearl, which helps brands using their Automation Engine cut shipping time by 92%, reduce human error by 65%, and slash labour costs in half - all by setting up simple rules (no coding necessary!). If you're interested in how Brightpearl Automation could help your business, book a free demo.

Brightpearl by Sage

Section

04.3

Hyper-*personalisation*

Using AI to build a smarter clienteling strategy



André Brown

Founder & CEO, Advanced Commerce

Today, customers expect more than convenience.

They expect experiences tailored to their preferences, habits, and needs. That's why generic product recommendations and "Dear Firstname" emails no longer cut it and why retailers are turning to hyper-personalisation.

The ability to deliver uniquely relevant experiences across every touchpoint, hyper-personalisation can deepen loyalty, boost conversion, and increase lifetime value – if it's done right. And, to get it right, hyper-personalisation requires an intelligent clienteling strategy.

Here's how brands and retailers can make it work.





Creating unified customer *profiles*

The first step is building a rich, unified profile of every customer. That means integrating data from all channels: website, mobile app, in-store visits, call centres, email engagement, social media, loyalty programmes, and beyond.

To achieve this, many retailers turn to a Customer Data Platform (CDP). A good CDP pulls data from multiple systems, de-duplicates records, and creates a single, real-time view of the customer. From there, AI can analyse patterns to predict what a customer might want next, when they're most likely to engage, or which channel they prefer.

These insights are the fuel for effective personalisation. Instead of treating customers as broad segments, retailers can interact with each one as an individual.

Personalisation across the *journey*

Hyper-personalisation needs to be consistent across every channel – not just online, but in-store, on mobile, via email, and even in customer service interactions. Here's how it might look across key touchpoints:

In-store

Equip store associates with clienteling apps that show a customer's recent purchases, wishlist, product preferences, and sizing. With these tools, staff can offer informed, one-to-one service.

Website & app

AI-driven personalisation engines can customise everything from homepage banners and category pages to product listings and checkout flows. By tracking browsing behaviour in real time, retailers can serve up more relevant recommendations, price points or promotions.

Email & SMS

Use dynamic content to tailor product suggestions, incentives, or editorial features based on each customer's profile. CDXP platforms such as Ometria can even optimise send times and channels to improve engagement.

Client outreach

AI can also generate personalised messages for store teams or customer service reps to send, such as check-ins after a purchase, reminders for replenishment items, or birthday offers. These touches may be highly automated, but they feel human.

Measuring *success*

Hyper-personalisation should drive tangible outcomes. That means defining the right metrics and building a clear measurement framework.

Key performance indicators might include:

- Engagement rates (email opens, click-throughs, on-site dwell time)
- Conversion metrics (basket size, time to purchase, repeat rate)
- Customer lifetime value (CLV)
- Return on personalisation (ROP)
- In-store uplift from clienteling and personalised service

Regular A/B testing helps isolate the impact of personalisation strategies.



What's next in *hyper-personalisation?*

A smart brand or retailer should always be looking ahead, and the future of personalisation is getting even more exciting:

- Generative AI can now create tailored product descriptions, emails and even promotional copy on the fly
- Conversational AI is powering next-gen digital stylists and customer service agents that feel truly personal
- AR/VR and digital twins will enable virtual try-ons and predictive product testing tailored to individual users
- Personalised pricing and promotions are emerging as a way to optimise offers based on value perception and elasticity
- Retailers who stay ahead of these trends and integrate them intelligently will have a serious competitive advantage

In a crowded and competitive market, personal relevance is your superpower – now and in the future. With the right AI tools, a thoughtful clienteling strategy, and a commitment to customer experience, hyper-personalisation isn't just achievable, it's essential.

Success stories: Hyper-personalisation *done well*

Some of the world's leading retailers are already showing what's possible:

Farfetch uses AI to create dynamic styling recommendations based on each user's browsing and purchase behaviour, blending luxury fashion with high-tech insight.

Burberry blends luxury with tech, equipping store staff with clienteling tools that provide access to customer profiles. Store associates use tablets to view purchase history and preferences, while AI supports personalised styling, lookbooks, and event invites. Burberry also experiments with AR and tailored video content. It creates a seamless, high-touch experience that strengthens relationships with VIP and high-value customers.

The key with both of these examples is that the brands are leveraging AI not just to sell more, but to serve better.



5 key *action* points

1. Adopt a CDXP to create real-time unified customer profiles.
2. Empower store associates with AI-enhanced clienteling tools.
3. Use personalisation across all customer touchpoints, not just online.
4. Measure personalisation success with clear KPIs and A/B testing.
5. Balance personalisation with transparent privacy practices.



André Brown is Founder & CEO at Advanced Commerce which combines site search, online visual merchandising and real-time personalisation in one easy-to-use platform - giving retailers the tools they need to optimise the customer journey, increase conversions, and stay ahead of the competition. Feel free to reach out to André if you have any questions!

ADVANCED™ COMMERCE

Section

04.4

Generative *AI*

Real results, not robot hype:
How brands can actually use generative AI



Ricardo Williams
Founder of Beyond Greatness

Let’s be real. Most of the AI chat out there feels like noise. Endless buzzwords, big predictions, and barely any actual use cases. But the truth is, generative AI can be incredibly useful when it’s applied with purpose.

It’s not about replacing your team or reinventing the wheel. It’s about saving time, streamlining the things that slow you down, and helping your customers move through your brand with less effort.

So let’s get into how brands can actually use generative AI to serve customers 24/7, make voice shopping less awkward, and scale up content without losing your voice or control.



Voice shopping: start building *for the now*

Voice commerce has been on the horizon for years, but it's no longer just hype. People are already using voice in more ways than you think: to search, reorder, track deliveries, or get quick answers.

But here's the reality. Not everything needs to be voice-activated. Don't waste energy voice-optimising a whole store.

Instead, focus on the high-intent, easy-to-complete stuff:

- Reordering products
- Checking order status
- Navigating help centres
- Simple product finders or guided gift flows

It's about removing steps, not adding them. Let people speak, get what they need, and move on. And, if you've got a loyalty app or logged-in experience, voice features can work even harder, especially when customers are on the go or multitasking. That's where voice makes sense.

24/7 customer service: Make sure it doesn't sound *like a script*

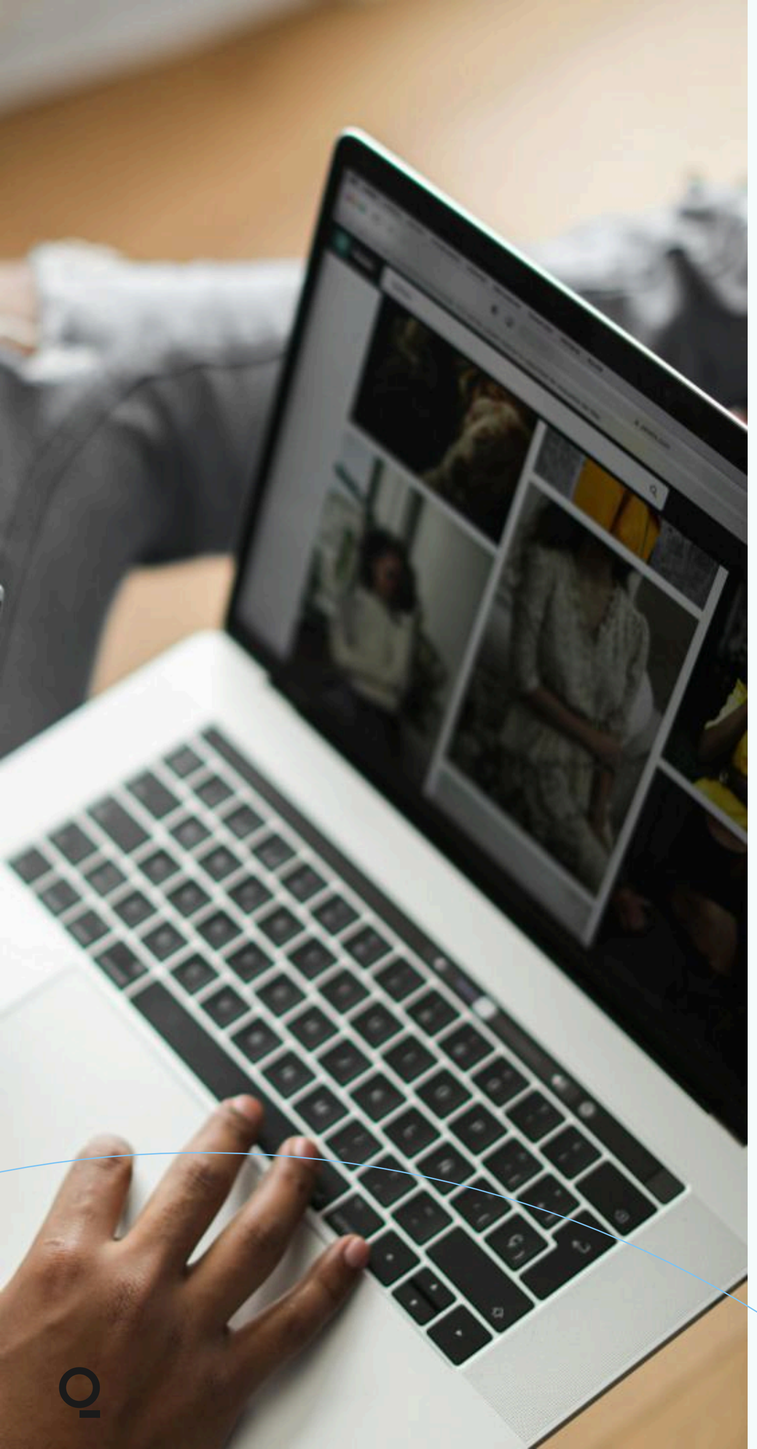
Chatbots aren't new, but most of them still feel like a pain to use. Generative AI gives you a shot at doing it better. More natural, more useful, and more aligned with how people actually ask for help.

Start by training it on your real conversations, such as FAQs, live chat transcripts, and tone of voice guidelines. That way it will know what your customers sound like and what they're really asking.

Smart brands are already doing things like:

- Using GenAI to triage customer queries and escalate when needed
- Matching tone of voice across different audiences
- Blending AI with human support so people can always speak to someone if they want to

The goal isn't to cut humans out. It's to give your team back their time to focus on what really needs a human touch. AI takes care of the routine so people can take care of the rest.



Content and campaigns: Autopilot with *oversight*

One of the easiest places to get started with GenAI is content. Not because it's perfect, but because it gets you moving.

Use it for:

- First drafts of product descriptions
- Multiple versions of ad copy or subject lines
- Generating tone-matched replies for customer service or social
- Translating or localising content across regions

But the key is to keep control. The best teams use AI as a creative jumpstart, not a content vending machine. You still need someone reviewing, editing, and making sure it feels like you.

Speed matters, but so does quality. If your brand starts to sound like every other AI-powered feed out there, you'll blend in. And that's the last thing you want.

Integration and measurement: If you can't track it, *don't bother*

If AI isn't plugged into your systems and your goals, it's just noise. But when it's set up right, it helps you move faster and smarter without creating new chaos.

The best brands are integrating GenAI into tools they already use:

- CRM platforms for personalised emails, follow-ups, lead notes
- CMS and ecommerce platforms for on-page SEO copy and metadata
- Ad platforms for dynamic copy testing and creative turnaround
- Helpdesk software for ticket summaries and live chat support

And they're not just tracking how much AI generates. They're tracking what works: Conversion rates; response times; content delivery speed; actual uplift in performance.

Simply, if it's not doing something measurable, it doesn't need to be there.



Adding value: Where things are getting *interesting*

Some brands are pushing further. Not for the sake of trend-chasing, but because it's actually adding value.

Things like:

- AI-generated video scripts that speed up social production
- Personalised audio messages sent via SMS or email
- Loyalty experiences that respond based on customer behaviour
- Entire product launches supported by AI-led campaign assets

This isn't about being futuristic. It's about getting creative with what's already possible and making your workflow smoother, not heavier. If the tech helps you move faster and connect better, that's when it's worth it.





One last *thing*

You don’t need to chase the hype.

Just focus on what’s useful.

If it helps your customers move quicker, helps your team deliver faster, or helps your brand sound sharper, that’s where generative AI actually delivers. Everything else is background noise.

5 key *action* points

1. Use AI to remove friction, not add extra steps.
2. Keep voice features focused on simple, high-intent actions.
3. Train AI on real brand tone and customer language.
4. Always review content before it goes live.
5. Track outcomes that actually affect your bottom line.



Ricardo Williams is Founder of Beyond Greatness, a strategy-led marketing consultancy with 15+ years of experience helping agencies, ecommerce brands and SaaS companies scale, pivot, and optimise their marketing. Connect with Ricardo if you're looking to bring clarity, structure, and momentum to your growth.

BEYONDGREATNESS

Section

05 Ethical ecommerce: *How to be better*

Section

05.1

Green *commerce*

How AI media optimisation can power sustainable brands



Sagi Keen

Co-Founder & CEO at SpeedSize

Sustainability isn’t just good PR anymore. It’s a core expectation from your customers.

For ecommerce brands looking to build real loyalty, reduce bounce rates, and drive conversions, embracing sustainable practices across every touchpoint – including digital media – has become non-negotiable.

Everyone talks about supply chains and eco-packaging. But what about your media? The images and videos you showcase aren’t just visuals; they’re also carbon emitters. And that’s where most brands are still leaking value.

Let’s get into the practical stuff.





Circular economy starts with *smarter digital choices*

We’re all familiar with product-focused circular models. But your digital presence plays a role too. Each oversized, unoptimised image your site serves burns more energy, slows down performance, and quietly inflates your carbon footprint.

Platforms such as SpeedSize use AI and neuroscience to compress images and videos up to 90% without losing visual quality. Faster, sharper images and videos will enhance the shopping experience, improve site performance, help increase conversions, reduce delivery volume and CO_2 emissions. The result? Cleaner, faster, and greener experiences for every user or shopper.

Your carbon footprint includes your *tech stack*

You track where your materials come from. But do you know how green your site is? Today's consumers care about what powers your digital storefront just as much as your product supply chain.

Brands working with SpeedSize are showing customers they walk the talk – even behind the scenes. From green hosting to low-emission content delivery, your tech stack can either be a blind spot or a brand builder.





Sustainability sells – and performance boosts *conversion*

Consumers care. According to McKinsey, more than 60% are willing to pay a premium for sustainable products. But only if they believe you.

With tools like SpeedSize, you can show real and measurable metrics, such as: “Our product page loads 5x faster and generates 83% less CO2 than the industry average.” This isn’t fluff – it’s conversion-driving proof that builds trust and clicks.

You can’t improve what you don’t *measure*

Digital emissions are trackable and the smartest brands already include web sustainability in their ESG metrics. SpeedSize developed the first-of-its-kind Carbon Reduction Calculator with the help of the AWS Sr. sustainability team to validate all the savings. Watch the numbers drop as SpeedSize AI-optimises all your media for faster loading, better visual quality, and dramatically smaller file sizes.

This kind of visibility turns your marketing, PR, development, and sustainability teams into one aligned powerhouse.





Fast-growth brands leading *the way*

Nobody trusts generic claims anymore. “Eco-friendly” doesn’t cut it. Show your data. Own your metrics. And be proud of your wins. Instead of buzzwords, set out your results. If your media loads with less digital weight, tell people! Customers respect transparency. And when it’s backed by results, they respond.

High-growth ecommerce brands are moving fast – and sustainably. They’re baking AI media optimisation, green hosting, and efficient delivery into every campaign launch and site update. If you’re not doing the same, you’re not just missing efficiency. You’re missing market positioning.



Emerging tech that makes green commerce *scalable*

Modern sustainability isn't about sacrifice. It's about smarter tech. SpeedSize AI-compresses unseen pixels to preserve photoshoot-quality visuals at minimal file size. Adaptive content delivery adjusts to the visitor's browser, device, screen, and location, with the highest uptime and best load times worldwide – your brand can also scale clean commerce without compromising speed or visual quality.

You get brand polish, fast UX, better SEO and conversions, and a reduced carbon footprint – all in one.

5 key *action* points

1. Compress all media assets using AI-powered tools like SpeedSize.
2. Track your site's carbon footprint and share the stats.
3. Add digital media sustainability to your brand messaging.
4. Use adaptive delivery for videos and images, and reduce delivery volume.
5. Pick vendors that prioritise sustainability in infrastructure.



Sagi Keen is Co-Founder & CEO at SpeedSize, which reinvents image and video compression with AI and neuroscience to boost performance, user experience, and sustainability. Trusted by global brands like Suzuki, Dentsu, and Philip Morris. Book a live AI optimisation demo to scale your D2C performance: faster, sharper media guaranteed with no coding.

SpeedSize

Section

05.2

Data *privacy*

Privacy regulations: Stop seeing it as a barrier to growth



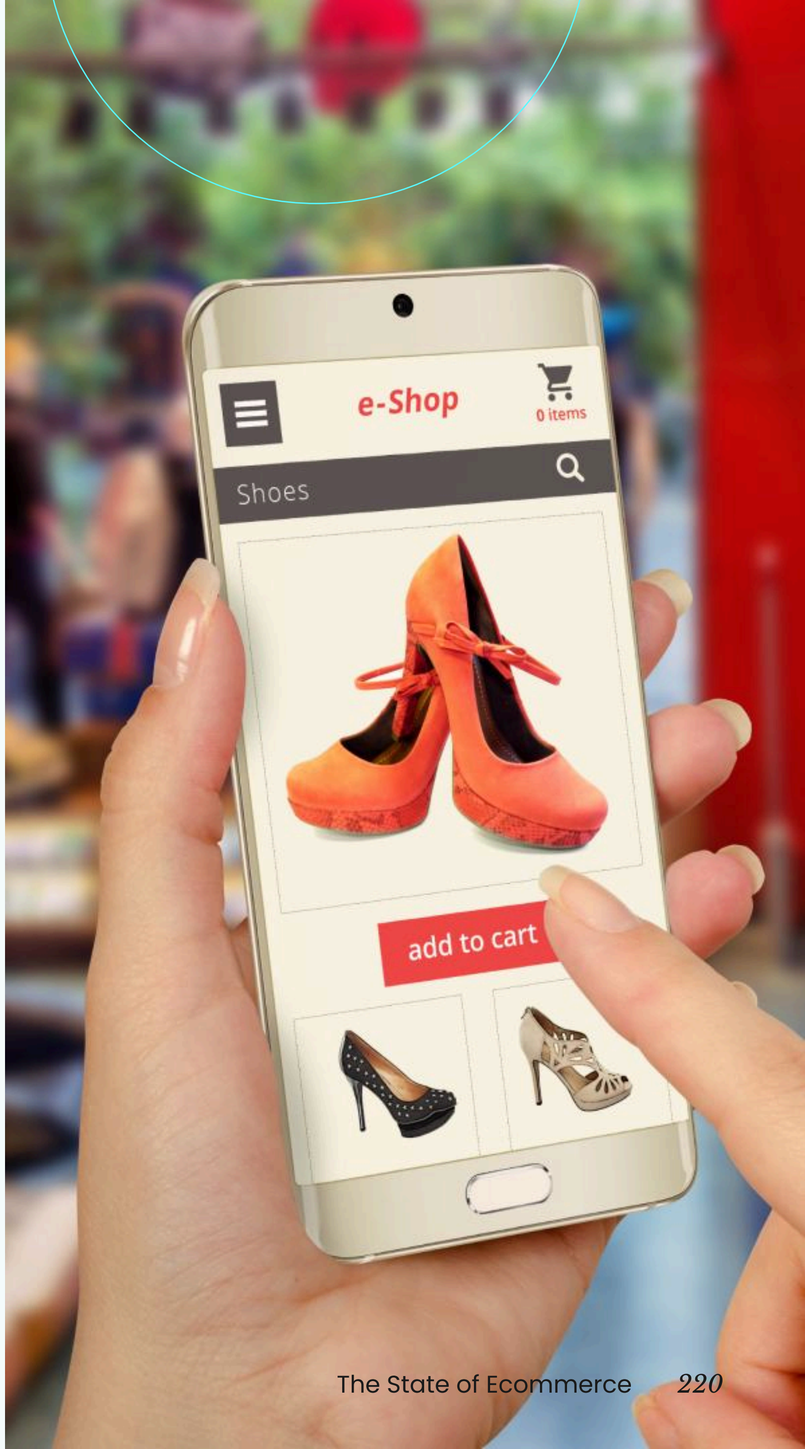
Matt Gottron

Director of Marketing at Dataships

All ecommerce brands have a simple desire: they want to contact people who visit their site or make purchases. However, compliance and data privacy regulations complicate this dynamic.

This has sparked innovation across the marketing ecosystem. Identity resolution tools scrape emails from site visitors, while popups exchange giveaways or discount codes for opt-ins. Yet, there's one critical area that's been overlooked in balancing privacy compliance with audience growth: the checkout experience.

Let's explore how to make the most of your checkout while building trust and remaining compliant.

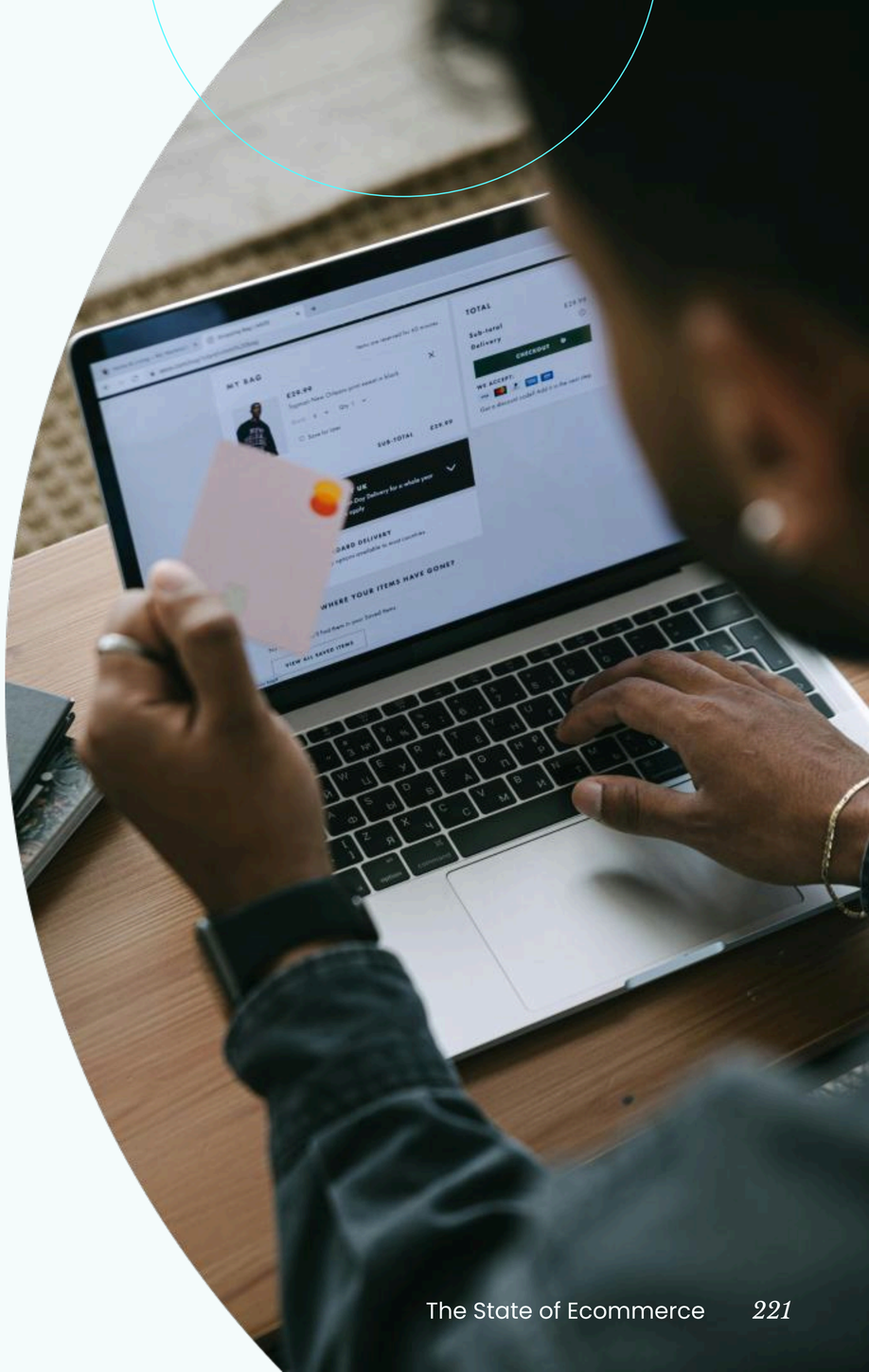


Checkout: The most overlooked area for *data privacy optimisation*

The legal basis for collecting and using customer data is critically important, and there is no area in ecommerce that creates more leverage for brands than during the course of a sale.

However, brands have failed to maximise audience growth at checkout for several reasons:

- The tech ecosystem hasn't provided effective solutions for complex compliance requirements
- Many brands lack sufficient understanding of privacy laws to move beyond the status quo
- Few technology providers want to assume accountability for privacy compliance
- Marketers often focus on acquisition tactics rather than optimising existing touchpoints





The consequences are significant. Brands are often either over-compliant (sacrificing opt-ins) or under-compliant (risking fines). This can result in brands missing out on a 40-80% increase in contactable customers from checkout, while previous purchasers who subscribe to marketing typically have a customer lifetime value (CLV) two-to-three times higher than non-subscribers. Additionally, brands lose efficiency when they must re-acquire customers through paid channels instead of retaining them through email and SMS.

While most privacy innovation focuses on new customer acquisition, the opportunity to innovate for retention remains largely untapped. This is a mistake because it offers tremendous potential for efficiency and incremental LTV growth.

Evolving from status quo to *optimal consent strategy*

Regional privacy laws provide explicit guidelines around when and how companies can contact consumers. Consent requirements vary by region and channel (email vs. SMS), creating complexity for global brands. Even businesses with customers primarily in one region often implement suboptimal strategies due to unclear interpretations of privacy laws.

This complexity explains why Shopify's default checkout consent options are relatively basic:

- For email:
  - A pre-ticked box (recommended only for the USA) that converts at 50-60%
  - An unticked box (recommended for most other regions) that converts at just 4-20%
- For SMS: An unticked opt-in box typically requiring a “Reply Y” text after purchase, converting at less than 1%

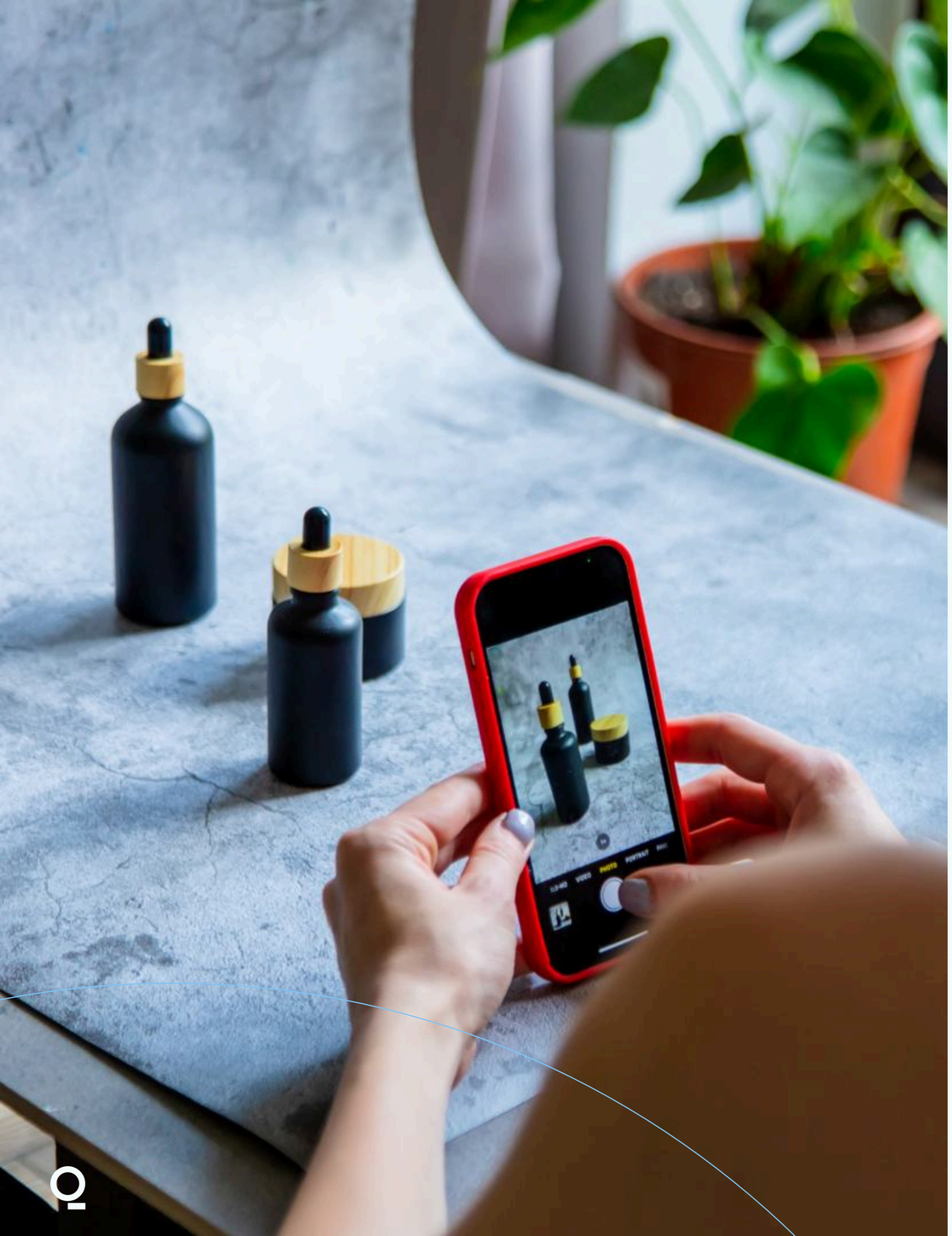
The problem is that these options simply don’t convert well enough. Depending on where you sell, you’re potentially leaving the vast majority of your customers unsubscribed after purchase, creating a massive missed opportunity for future marketing and revenue.

The optimal consent strategy varies significantly by region:

United States: Double opt-in consent is required for SMS marketing. One-tap verification codes can replace the ineffective “Reply Y” approach without disrupting the purchase flow, increasing opt-in rates from below 1% to as high as 10-15% – a massive improvement for this high-value channel.

While consent is not required for email marketing in the US, State privacy laws like CCPA in California and VCDPA in Virginia require that users are presented with “notice at collection” privacy notices, outlining what personal information is collected, how it will be processed, how they can exercise their rights, etc. Additionally, you must maintain opt-ins against previous unsubscribes and global opt-out registries, and you must maintain detailed audit logs on how and when the data was collected, or you’ll violate compliance, especially if even a small percentage of your traffic comes from other regions. If you can adhere to those rules, you can see opt-in rates as high as 95%.





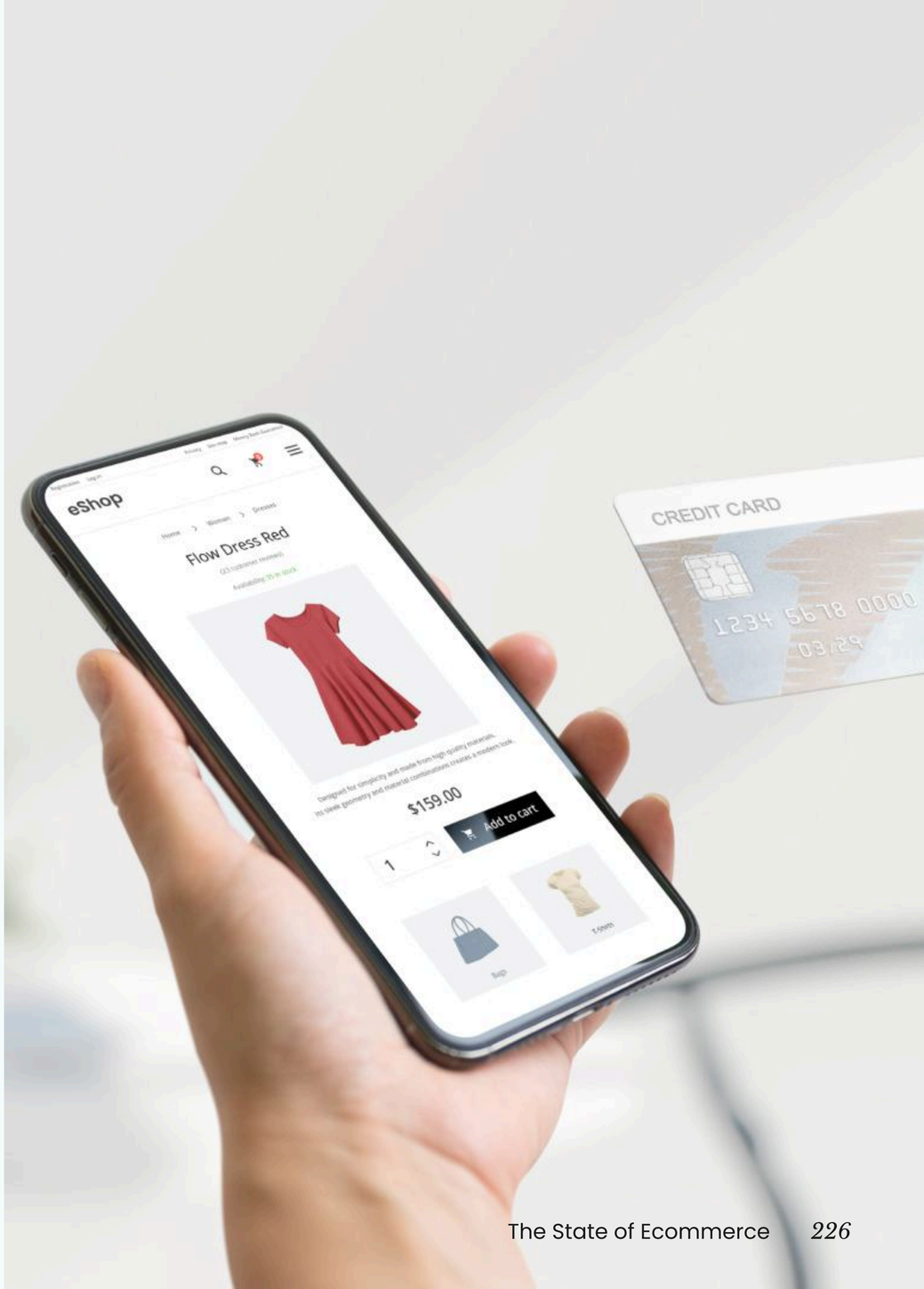
Canada: Implied consent allows brands to contact customers through both email and SMS marketing if information was collected during a sale, potentially converting up to 95%. However, this approach requires careful implementation as Canada's anti-spam legislation (CASL) demands detailed compliance logs, and without proper privacy policies and robust compliance tracking, brands face significant legal risk. Additionally, you must maintain opt-ins against previous unsubscribes and global opt-out registries and maintain audit logs, or you'll violate compliance, especially if even a small percentage of your traffic comes from other regions.

UK, South Africa and most of Europe: Soft opt-in approaches for both email and SMS allow consent language that instructs customers to tick a box only if they want to opt-out. This typically converts at around 80%.

Germany: Requires double opt-in for email and SMS, limiting growth potential but ensuring compliance.

Australia/New Zealand, Norway, UAE/Dubai: Require single opt-in for email and SMS, limiting growth potential but ensuring compliance.

Importantly, as checkout opt-in rates increase using a “dynamic consent” approach, key performance metrics such as open rates and click-through rates remain stable. This is because the list grows from high-intent customers who expect to hear from the brand.



The revenue impact: A real-world *example*

How does this look in practice?

Consider Benchmade, a US sporting goods brand processing roughly 17,000 orders per month:

- Its standard pre-ticked opt-in box yielded a ~60% opt-in rate
- After compliance verification, its true compliant opt-in rate was 81%
- Implementing dynamic consent increased this to 97%

With non-subscribed customers having a CLV of £240 versus £328 for subscribed customers, each subscriber conversion added £88 in lifetime value. The implementation unlocked approximately 1,600 additional subscribers monthly, generating £1.3m in incremental LTV over 12 months, with about £820,000 forecasted as realised revenue.

Most importantly, all of this happened without any negative impact on other marketing metrics. Open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates remained stable because these new subscribers were already high-intent customers who had just completed a purchase.

This dramatic impact demonstrates how optimising checkout consent strategies can transform both compliance and growth outcomes while actually improving customer experience.

5 key *action* points

1. Review your current checkout consent configuration and identify areas for optimisation.
2. Measure your baseline email and SMS opt-in rates at checkout.
3. Compare repurchase rates between subscribed versus non-subscribed customers.
4. Calculate the LTV gap using order volume, AOV, and repeat purchase rates.
5. Implement region-specific consent strategies to drive higher opt-in rates.



Matt Gottron is Director of Marketing at Dataships, which drives incremental revenue for brands by compliantly increasing marketing opt-ins at checkout. On average, they see rates at 89% for email and 6% for SMS, far above industry averages. Connect with Matt if you have any questions!

datashipsdataships

Section

05.3

Responsible *AI*

Why ethics is retail's oldest, newest frontier



Barrett Ahern

Technical eCommerce Consultant at Vervaunt

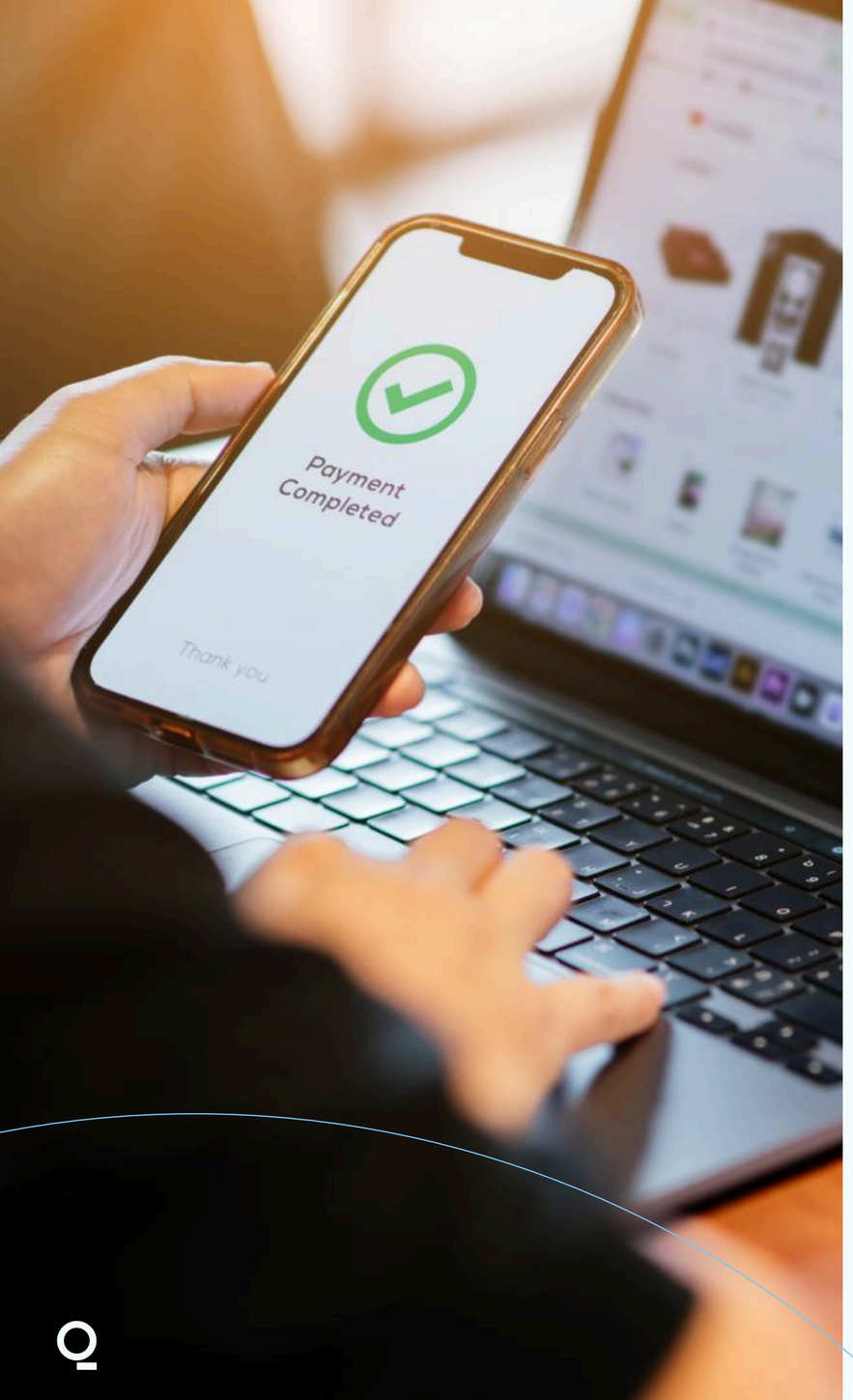
From Quaker-era fixed pricing to 20th-century “truth in advertising,” retail has always run on trust. AI-driven commerce makes the game more technical, but the rule is unchanged: treat customers fairly or lose them.

Consumers today are paying attention to how companies deploy AI. They want the convenience and personalisation AI promises, but not at the expense of ethics or privacy. In one US retail survey, 90% of shoppers said retailers should be transparent about how AI is using their data. Over 80% want explicit consent before their data is used for AI purposes. Clearly, transparency can translate into trust.

Regulators are listening. In the EU, the AI Act and GDPR Article 22 require transparency for chatbots, synthetic media, and automated decisions, threatening fines of up to 7% of global turnover for misuse of high-risk AI.

‘Good enough’ is no longer enough; ethical, transparent AI is now a license to operate.





Your first move: build an AI *ethics framework*

Start by writing a company-wide rule book for how you build, buy, and deploy algorithms. Anchor it in three universal principles – fairness, transparency, privacy – then borrow proven templates:

- The EU's Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI
- The IEEE's Ethically Aligned Design
- Vendor playbooks from Shopify, Google, Microsoft, and Salesforce

Turn the framework into daily guardrails: bias-testing checklists, human-in-the-loop reviews, and a cross-functional ethics board empowered to green-light or veto new ideas. With that compass, you can tackle the three biggest pressure points: bias, transparency and privacy.

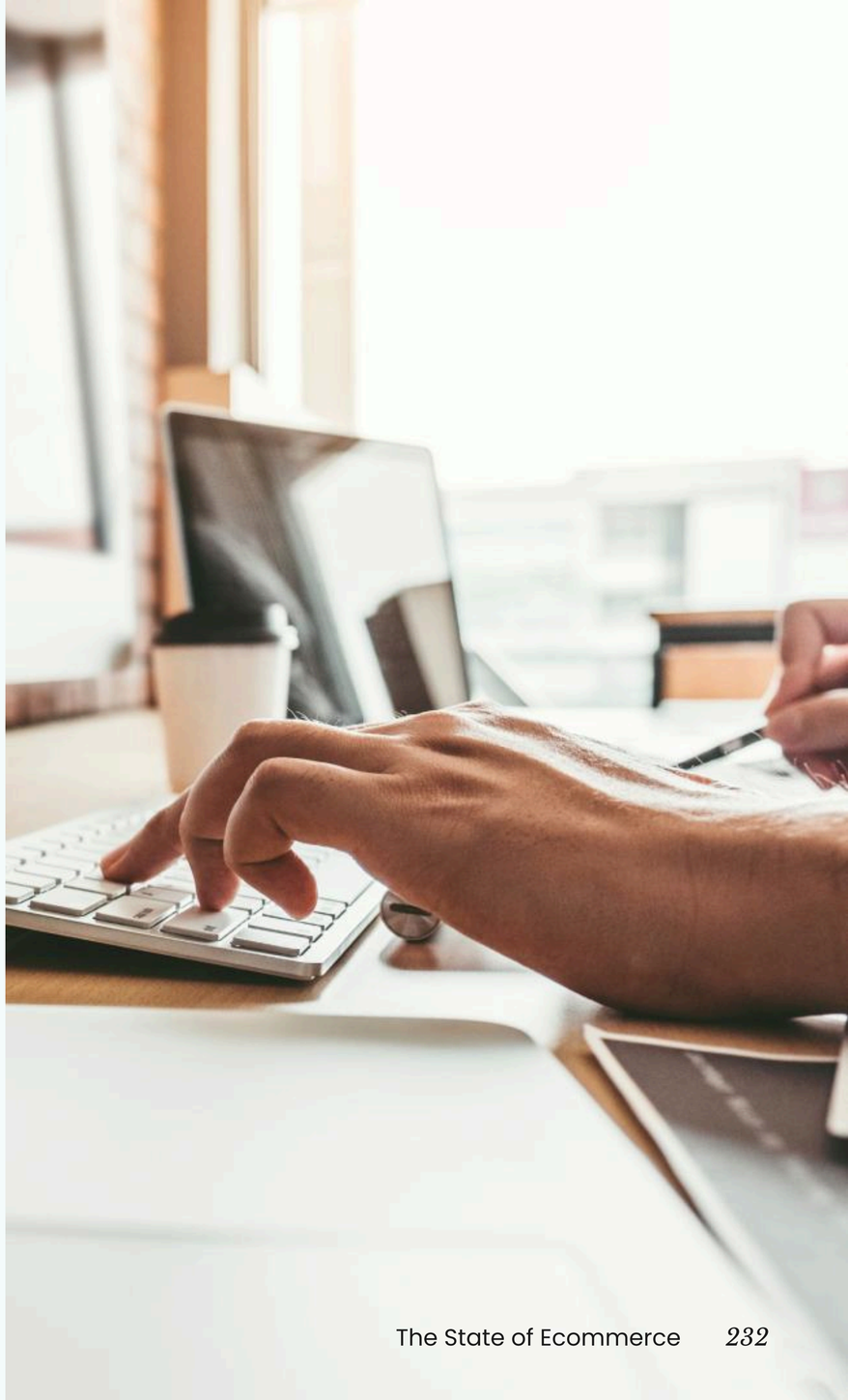
Fairness: detecting *bias*

One of the thorniest ethical issues in AI is bias. AI systems learn from data and if that data reflects historical biases or imbalances, the AI can amplify those biases in its decisions.

The risk

If the data is skewed, your AI will be too. In retail, that shows up as:

- A recommendation engine that only showcases one body type
- A chatbot that misreads regional dialects
- A fraud model that red-lines minority postcodes
- Generative images that perpetuate bias or stereotypes





The fallout

Reputational damage, discrimination lawsuits, and regulatory scrutiny. Remember Amazon's résumé screener that penalised the word "women's"? It was scrapped amid global headlines about "sexist AI."

Best practice

- Use balanced data sets and fairness toolkits (IBM AIF360, Google What-If)
- Keep a human review step for credit, pricing, and personalisation decisions
- Publish a short "fairness statement" so customers and regulators see that you audit for disparate impact

Transparency: show your *work*

Transparency is a cornerstone of responsible AI. For eCommerce brands, transparency translates into communicating clearly with customers about any AI-driven interaction that affects them. In practice, this might mean labelling AI-generated content, providing explanations for automated decisions, or simply being upfront in your privacy policy and customer FAQs about where and why you use AI.

The opportunity

Clear disclosure lifts trust:

- 90% of shoppers think retailers should reveal how data fuels AI
- 73% of shoppers' trust increased when ads were labelled

How to deliver

- Label it: Every chatbot, virtual stylist, or AI image gets an “AI-powered” tag
- Explain it: Quick reasons (‘Because you bought X’) plus deeper logic on request for declines and fraud flags
- Offer a human escape hatch: -A ‘Talk to a person’ button, every time
- Publish an “AI & You” page: List systems, data used, and safeguards

These tactics satisfy GDPR/AI-Act disclosure rules and turn opacity into a brand asset.

Security and privacy: lock them *down*

AI not only poses ethical dilemmas; it also introduces security risks that ecommerce leaders must manage. AI systems often rely on large volumes of customer data, which makes them attractive targets for cyberattacks. Unified commerce unifies risk: algorithms drink in browsing, purchase, and loyalty data – prime hacker bait.

One survey found 63% of consumers are concerned about AI compromising their privacy. Another reported that only 28% of shoppers today are confident that retailers have proper security measures in place for the AI data being used.

That's a trust gap that needs closing.

Action plan

- Data-minimise by default: Strip unnecessary PII, cut shadow sharing (see Sephora's $1.2m CCPA fine)
- Vendor-vet: Insist on tight data-processing clauses and software bills of materials for any AI model you licence
- Monitor live dashboards: Check for anomaly spikes, plus kill switches to roll back rogue models
- Follow H&M's lead: Appoint a Head of Responsible AI to balance profit and principle

Ethical AI isn't a brake; it's the fast lane to durable loyalty. Codify your framework, test for bias, communicate openly and lock data down. Governance beats hindsight, and early transparency prevents backlash. Use the frameworks already on the shelf and start today.

Four trends to put on your *roadmap*

1 Ethical-AI badges:

Think of them as ‘fair-trade’ labels for algorithms. Early adopters will win trust when shoppers start scanning for proof that models meet fairness and privacy benchmarks.

2 Customer AI dashboards:

Let users inspect, edit, and mute personalisation data.

3 AI metrics in ESG reports:

Bias-audit coverage, explainability scores, incident response times.

4 AI for sustainability:

Privacy-enhancing tech (federated learning, differential privacy) coupled with AI-driven demand forecasting cuts overstock and waste, aligning data ethics with climate goals.

5 key *action* points

1. Assign a dedicated governance lead to oversee AI across departments and ensure decisions reflect your brand's values and regulatory obligations.

2. Build a company-wide AI ethics framework with internal guardrails based on fairness, transparency, and privacy using proven standards.

3. Publish a dedicated 'AI & You' page explaining how AI is used across your customer experience, from product recommendations to chatbots and personalisation.

4. Update vendor checks to include transparency around model training, data use, and AI explainability.

5. Leverage AI to support sustainability, reduce waste, and protect customer data privacy.



Barrett Ahern is Technical Ecommerce Consultant at Vervaunt, a forward-thinking ecommerce consultancy and marketing agency, collaborating with the most ambitious and pioneering brands in the industry across full funnel performance and brand marketing, technology change, CRO & UX, and growth strategy. Connect with Barrett if you have any questions!

Vervaunt:

Section

05.4

Digital *accessibility*

Inclusion is innovation:
Delivering digital journeys everyone can take



Alexandra Eade
Marketing Manager at Footprint Digital

Living partly online is now the norm for most people, but the harsh reality is that many are still excluded. This is because brands and retailers fail to consider the diverse needs of everyone who uses their websites and platforms.

Digital accessibility is a legal requirement and a moral obligation. It is also a strategic advantage. Making your website and other marketing channels fully inclusive and usable for everyone unlocks new audiences, builds trust, and drives better business outcomes.

So, why are so many businesses still treating accessibility as an afterthought?

Let’s break it down. What does digital accessibility really mean? How do you embed it in your brand’s digital ecosystem, and why does it pay off for businesses (and humans)?

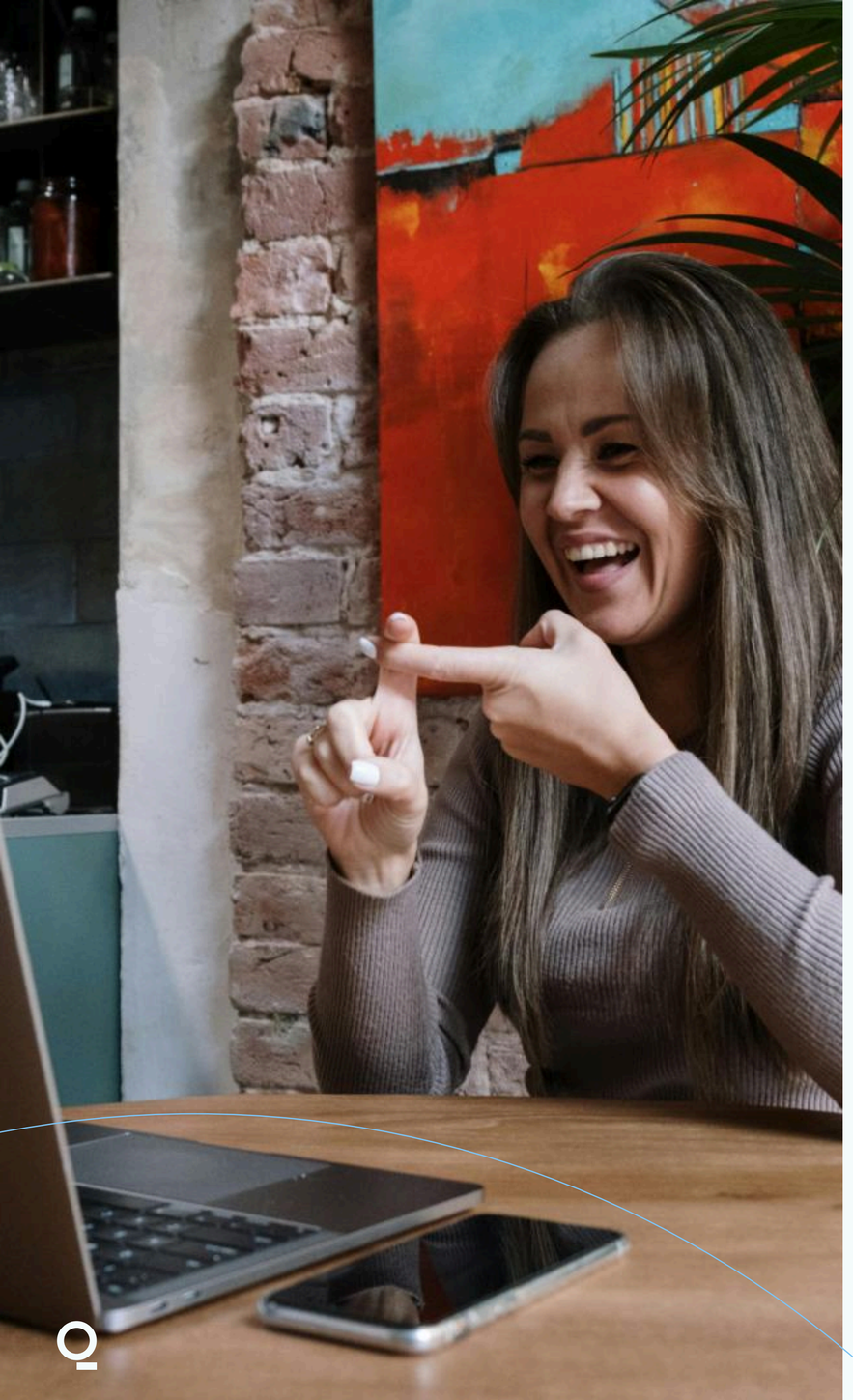


What is digital *accessibility?*

Digital accessibility means designing websites, apps, and digital communications that everyone can use. This includes users who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, neurodivergent, or those who use assistive technology like screen readers or voice commands.

Globally, over 1.3bn people live with some form of disability. That’s around one in six of us, which represents a vast and diverse group with significant spending power. Yet many digital experiences still exclude them through poor design, complex navigation, unreadable content, or incompatible tech.





Know the *standards*

The gold standard for accessible web content is the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). These guidelines outline how to make digital content perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

To keep things practical:

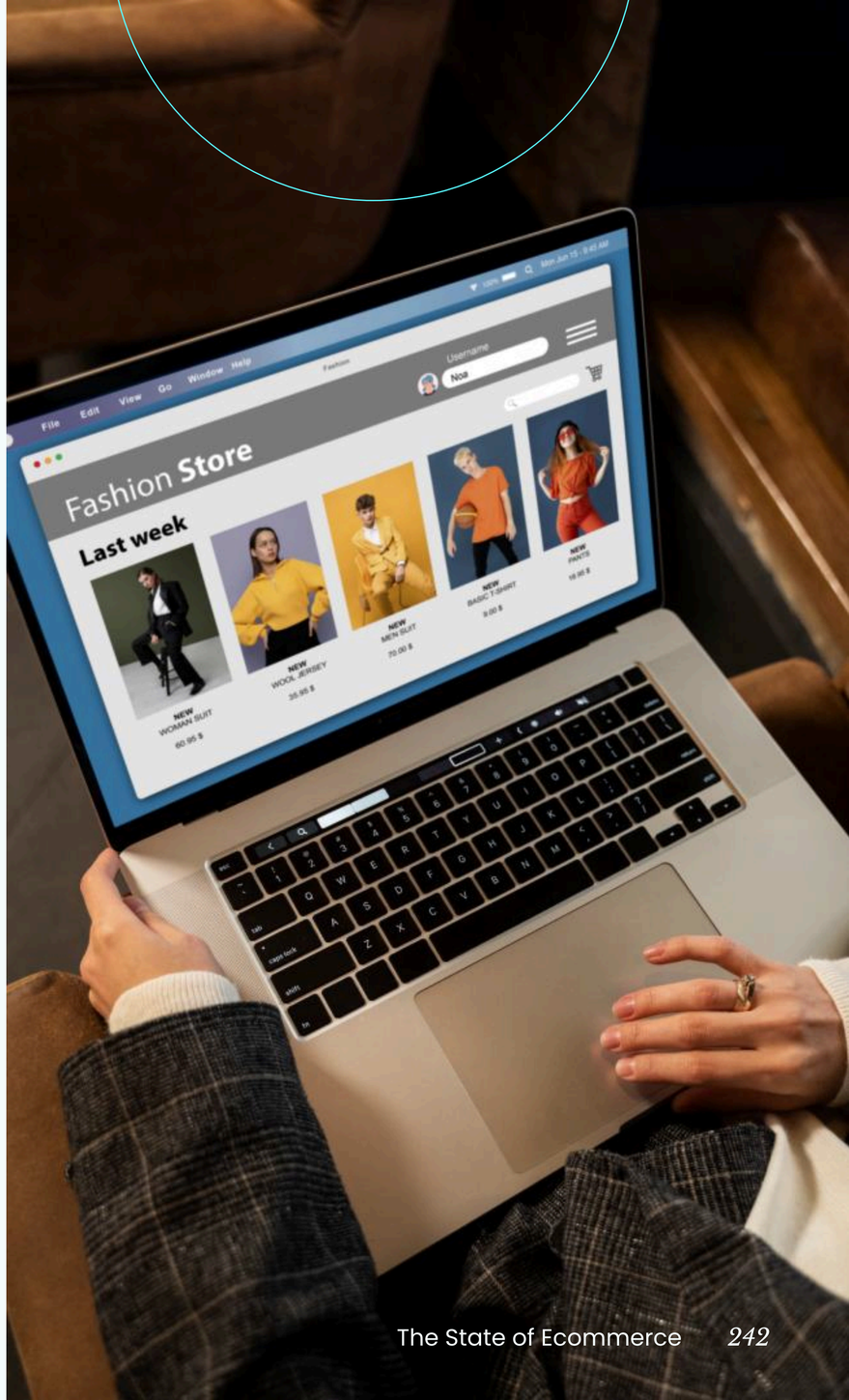
- Use alt text for images
- Ensure good colour contrast between text and backgrounds
- Design for keyboard-only navigation
- Provide transcripts or captions for audio/video content
- Structure content using proper headings

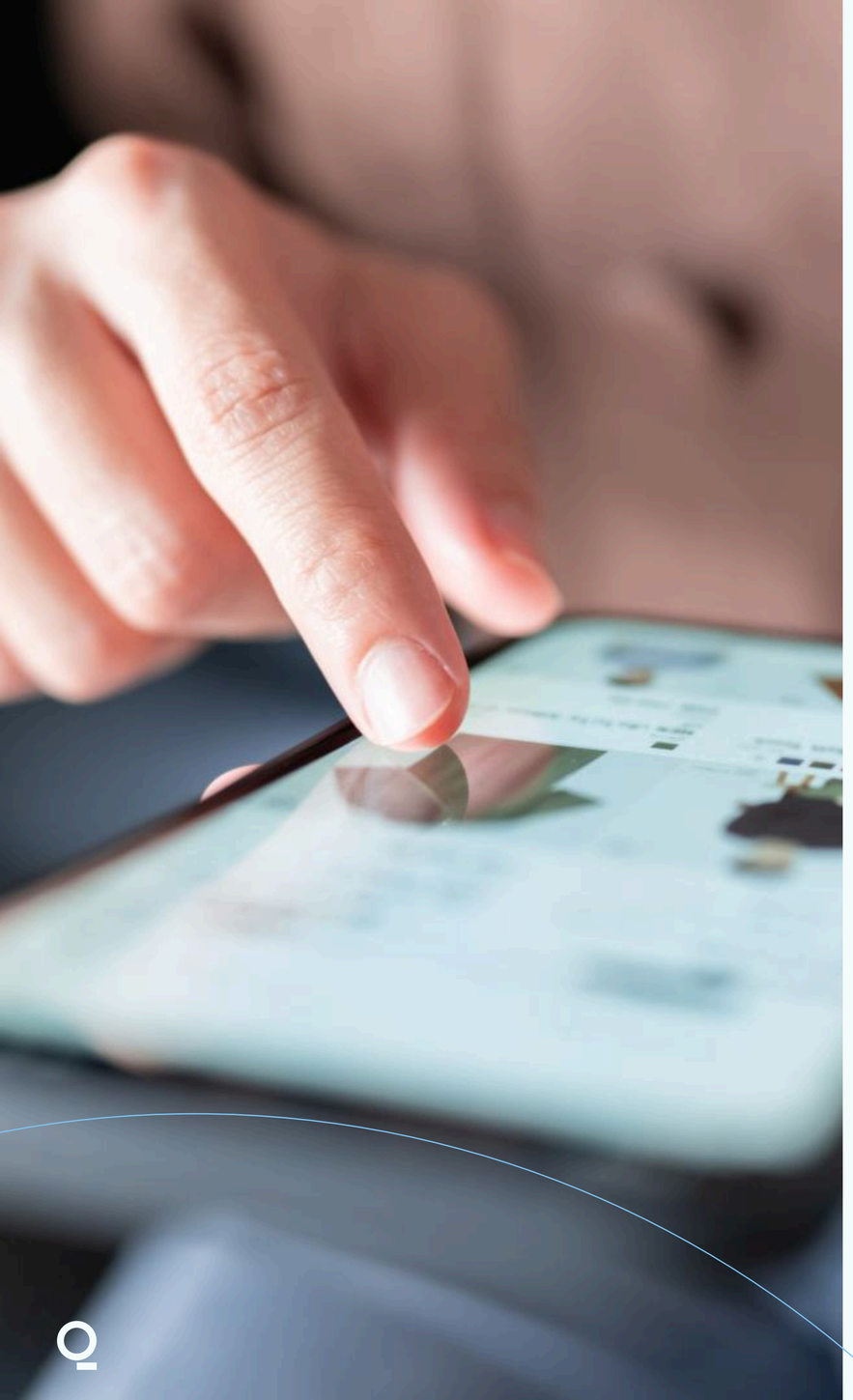
We'd recommend aiming for WCAG Level AA compliance. This is widely recognised as the industry minimum. In some markets, such as the UK and EU, accessibility is already mandated by law for public sector websites, and the private sector is catching up quickly.

Bake *accessibility* into design and development

Accessibility shouldn’t be retrofitted. It needs to be embedded into your website from the start. Your UX designers, developers, and content teams need to work together from day one to ensure every element works for all users, and crucially, you need to convince other stakeholders that accessibility is a vital part of a website, especially if they’re paying for it.

Use semantic HTML, design with screen readers and responsive layouts in mind, and avoid using mouse-only interactions. Test early and often, and build accessibility into your quality assurance process.





Getting user testing *right*

Want to know if your website is *really* accessible? Don't assume.

Ask the people who use it!

User testing with disabled users is the most effective way to identify barriers and improve usability. Partner with accessibility consultants or community groups to include a wide range of perspectives: screen reader users, people with motor impairments, neurodivergent testers, and more. These insights will often benefit all users by removing friction and simplifying journeys.

It's not just about compliance; it's about creating intuitive, delightful, human experiences for real people.

The business case for *accessibility*

Accessibility isn't just the right thing to do. It's good business.

According to the UK's Purple Pound – the term for the spending power of disabled people and their households – disabled consumers and their families have a spending power of £274bn per year, but 73% of them have been unable to use at least a quarter of the websites they have visited. That's a lot of lost revenue.

Therefore, making your digital touchpoints inclusive helps the bottom line by increasing conversions, reducing bounce rates, and saving future development costs. Not only that, but ensuring your platforms are inclusive also improves customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Additionally, because accessible sites are more indexable and readable by search engines, SEO performance will be boosted.

When accessibility is part of your workplace culture, it attracts top talent, shows ethical leadership, and futureproofs your brand.

Tools and tech that can *help*

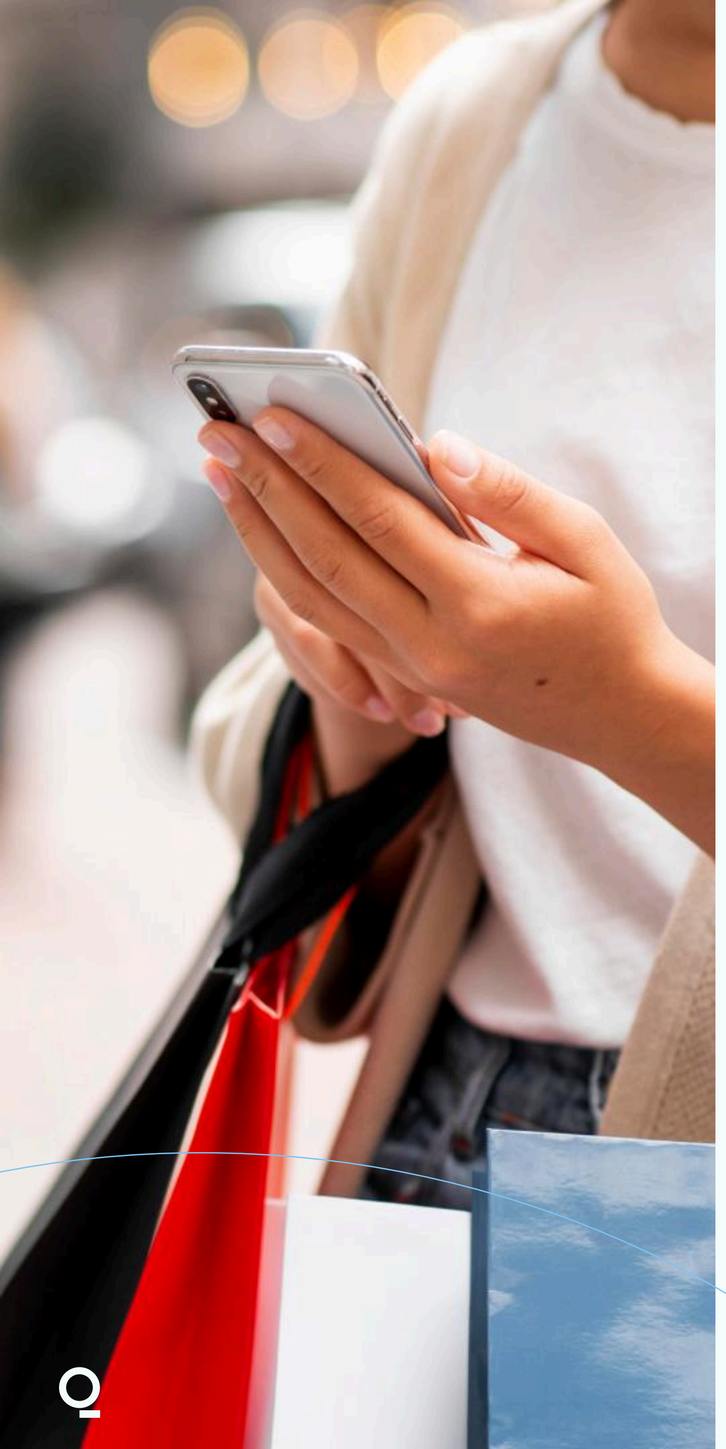
Emerging technologies are making digital accessibility easier to implement and maintain.

Some tools and tech that we'd recommend you explore are:

- WAVE, Axe, and Lighthouse: Run audits and flag accessibility issues in your code
- Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA): Add semantic context for assistive technologies
- Voice interfaces and AI: Enable hands-free browsing and interaction
- Real-time captioning tools: Use AI to transcribe webinars or video content

Remember that while tools are helpful, they are not foolproof. Use them as part of a broader, human-centred strategy.





Some brands getting it *right*

Some retailers are already leading the way in accessible online shopping:

- Patagonia's website has strong colour contrast and scalable text, keyboard navigability, and alt text used on images.
- Ben & Jerry's site includes logical heading structure, descriptive link text, high-contrast visuals and readable fonts, and easy navigation with screen readers.
- Allbirds' site has semantic HTML for screen readers, text alternatives for non-text content, and a simple, clean UI design.

The big takeaway?

Accessible design is innovative design. It pushes creativity, sparks new thinking, and makes your brand stand out for all the right reasons. When you design for inclusion, you design better for everyone. Accessible eCommerce isn't about doing the bare minimum, it's about unlocking maximum potential.

Ask yourself:

Are your digital journeys built for all?

5 key *action* points

1. Build accessibility into your design system from day one.
2. Conduct regular accessibility audits using tools like Axe or Lighthouse.
3. Involve disabled users in testing your digital journeys.
4. Add alt text, transcripts, and good colour contrast to all content.
5. Treat accessibility as a performance metric, not a checkbox.



Alexandra Eade is Marketing Manager at Footprint Digital, a certified B Corp digital marketing agency that uses education and technical expertise to empower its clients and help them make better marketing decisions. It primarily focuses on SEO, paid media, conversion, and auditing, offering bespoke audits in digital sustainability and accessibility. Feel free to reach out to Alexandra with any questions!

FOOTPRINT DIGITAL

Conclusion: What we've *learned*

The future of ecommerce is now

So, what does ecommerce *look like in 2025?*

For several years, our industry has been promising that the digital retail world should revolve around what consumers actually want and what they actually need. Finally, we can say ecommerce brands are very much on the right path towards achieving this. But there is still work to be done.

Collectively, our gallery of experts, trailblazers, and thought leaders who have contributed to this whitepaper have made it clear that ecommerce is much more sophisticated, intuitive, and customer-focused than it ever has been. Powered by smart technology that (more often than not) works, in 2025 ecommerce is innovative and forward-looking, and robustly equipped to deal with the ongoing economic challenges our industry – and your customers – face on a daily basis.





Why can we say this so confidently? Because this whitepaper has demonstrated that ecommerce brands and retailers know and care about their customers better than ever. So, let's break down what we've learned.

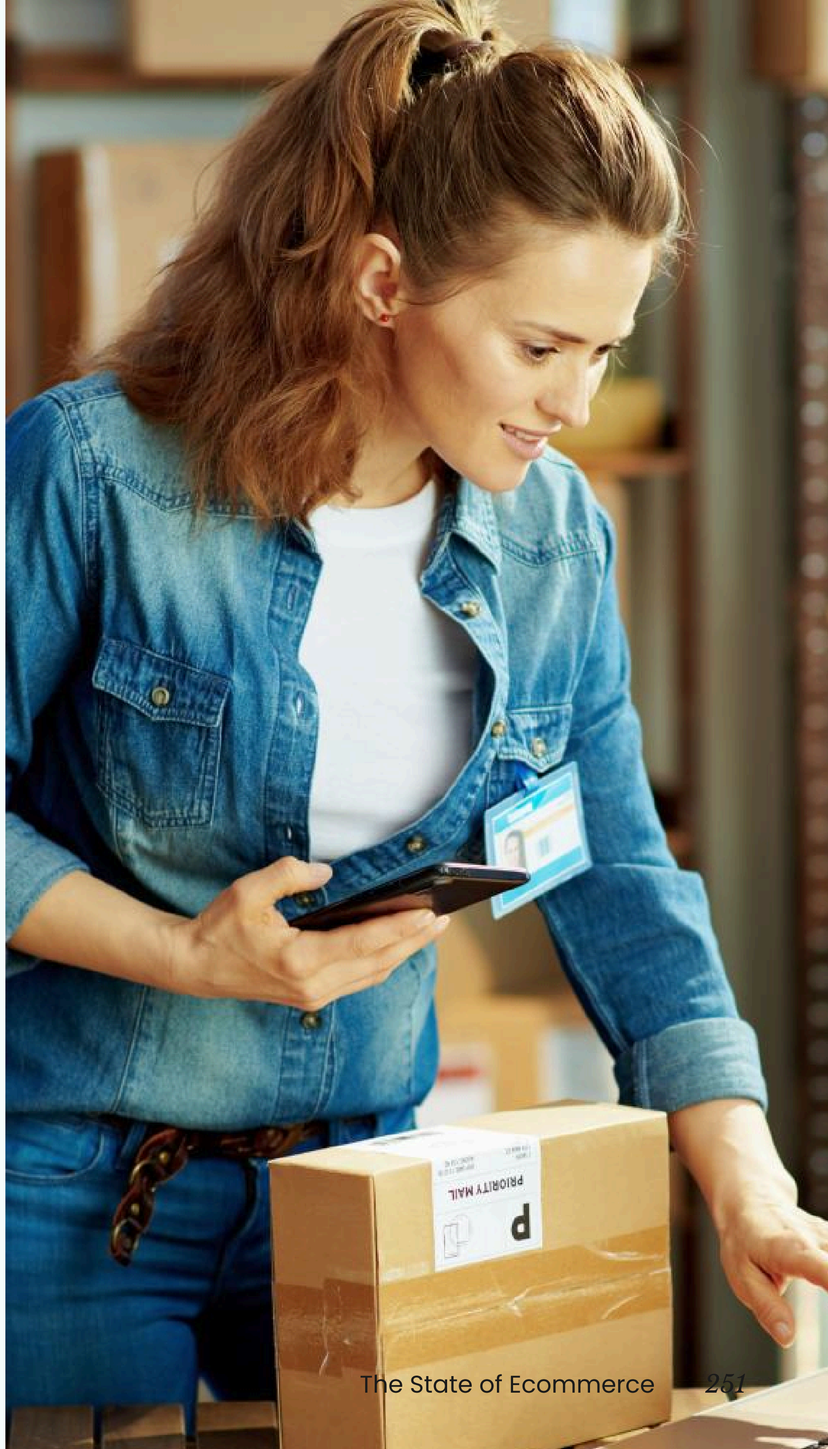
Want to *sell better?* Go all in on all of your channels. No more scattered and siloed systems where your website doesn't talk to your app, and your app doesn't have a clue what's happening in your stores. One unified system means happy customers and an efficient business.

Want to *drive engagement* that counts? Have personalised conversations with your customers when they need you. WhatsApp isn't just for chatting with friends; it's a powerful sales tool for reducing cart abandonment, while you can use our old pals email and SMS to create engaging and direct experiences that don't have to be intrusive or creepy.

Want to *build lifetime value?* Loyalty programmes and subscription services that offer real value aren't just nice-to-haves anymore. They're essential for keeping people coming back. And, don't forget: When someone buys from you, that's when the real work begins. Make smart logistics your superpower, build an active and engaged customer community, and place creative, personalised content across all touchpoints.

Want to use AI *more effectively?* Everyone's talking about AI, but too many brands and retailers are still doing it wrong. It's about using clean data to make smarter decisions. It's about finding the right tools for your business to help you automate the tasks that will help you scale. And, critically, it's about helping your human team be more effective, not trying to replace them.

Want to embrace *ethical ecommerce?* Of course you do. For the good of the planet, your customers, and your business. Be transparent about how you use AI, protect customer data like it's your own, ensure your website doesn't exclude people with disabilities, and make greener digital choices. These aren't just feel-good initiatives – they build trust and open up new markets.





However, we did say there's still work to be done. While our survey showed that brands are getting a lot of stuff right, there is still a disconnect between consumer and retailer when it comes to what customers really want. So, don't get entirely distracted by shiny new AI tools. Prioritise the holy trinity: simplify the check-out process, enhance trust, and improve support. Simply, that is what your customers want.

Over the next year and a half, the companies that win will be the ones that use technology in ways that actually make sense, and never forget that real people are on the other side of every transaction.

Stay flexible, authentic, and responsible, and *the future is yours*.

Quickfire

Take the next step toward *smarter growth*

You've seen the trends, the challenges, the opportunities. Now it's time to turn these insights into action. The message is clear: evolve with intention, stay authentic to your brand, and never stop pushing the boundaries of what ecommerce can achieve.

Growth isn't just about revenue, it's about creating experiences that inspire loyalty, build trust, and set you apart in a crowded market.

At Quickfire, we're committed to technical excellence. It's more than understanding the tech - it's about anticipating the challenges and making decisions based on evidence, not guesswork.

The tools are here. The insights are here. The opportunity is here. The future of ecommerce is yours to shape. Let's build it together.

Get in touch today.

If you're ready to scale, not settle. *Let's talk!*



Dan Walton

Head of Sales

Book a Discovery