gorgias

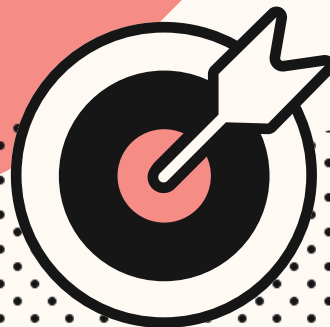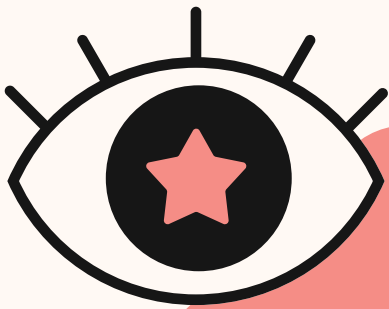# Personalization Strategies Built for Scale

Grow your ecommerce business without losing your human touch

www.gorgias.com

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Chapter 1

The Human
Way To Grow

Consumers still crave personalized experiences

Creating an individual journey for each and every customer isn't an easy task — in fact, it's one of the biggest challenges ecommerce brands face.

Compare shopping online, where you can anonymously browse pages and pages of products and leave without buying a thing, to an in-store experience. There, a sales assistant is on hand to answer customer questions, provide an element of human interaction, and present an experience that matches each shopper's wants and needs.

During an in-store experience, a customer might ask the assistant if they stock a particular product, inquire about different sizes, and ask for recommendations based on the products in their (real-life) basket. Each response will be geared towards their specific needs, giving them information they want quickly and allowing them to make an informed decision on the spot.

With online shopping the face-to-face element is removed completely. Instead, brands have to rely on customer data and tracking pixels to create an experience that's even remotely on the same level as shopping in-store.

But with a whole host of tools available today, it's becoming increasingly common to see ecommerce brands making their customer experiences unique. The struggle is creating personalized experiences while maintaining that all-important human touch.

Why personalization is important

Consumers today actually expect brands to create personalized experiences for them. One report by Accenture revealed that 91% of consumers are more likely to buy from companies that remember them and provide relevant offers. It's a bit like going into a store and having the staff welcome you back by name.

83%

of customers willing to hand over their data in exchange for a buyer's journey that's unique to them

In fact, shoppers today are so eager for a personalized experience that the same report found that 83% are willing to hand over their data in exchange for a buyer's journey that's unique to them.

Personalization doesn't just provide customers with their own individual experience, it comes with a range of other benefits too.

Generate more sales

A recent report shows that clothes retailers that have implemented personalization strategies see sales gains of 10% or more. Even an incremental increase in sales can make a huge difference to your bottom line. On top of this, customer-focused companies — that is, brands that make the experience all about the customer — are 60% more profitable than those that aren't.

With the sheer amount of choice available right now, it's so easy for shoppers to take their custom elsewhere if their needs aren't being met.
By putting the customer first, you'll stand out and gain a competitive edge.

Increase customer retention rates

Personalization creates a deeper connection with customers because they feel like you "get" them. As a result, they're more likely to be loyal to you (again riffing off the in-store experience where a shopper is likely to return and buy more when store staff welcome them back by name). This increases customer retention rates and helps you grow a large and loyal customer base.

Improve KPIs

Serving customer personalized product suggestions and upselling them relevant items boosts AOV and LTV. This means you'll be better positioned for growth without having to make too many changes to your business or put in tons of extra effort.

What Do
Shoppers Want?

Creating a balance between growth and customer needs

The "human touch" is why consumers often still choose to shop in-person rather than online. In the digital age, where most activities are carried out behind the veil of a screen, they crave connection with real people. The challenge is converting the human and connective in-person experience into an enjoyable online experience.

52%

of consumers often decide not to make a purchase because they can't get help from a real person

Human relationships are undervalued in the online world, but the facts don't lie: one study shows that 52% of consumers often decide not to make a purchase because they can't get help from a real person. Another report reveals that over half of shoppers miss the one-to-one experience that they get buying from a real person in-store.

But, while consumers crave personalization and human experiences from the brands they buy from, they're also increasingly protective over their data and what it's used for. For ecommerce brands, finding the balance between these two

needs is vital for growth. This is where the struggle lies.

Plenty of consumers choose to shop online for ease and convenience, but nothing is quite as powerful as real-person interactions. People are persuaded by people, and a large number of ecommerce brands find themselves falling short of creating a personalized experience in favor of a quick sale.

It can be tempting to focus on getting as many buyers as possible and churning

Dig into data to better understand your customers

The first step in creating truly personalized experiences imbued with a human touch is to really get to know your customers. After all, how are you going to give people what they want if you don't know what that is?

For this, it's important to create customer personas by digging deep into customer data, surveys, and speaking to the people who buy from you the most. When you can get an understanding of the deep needs of your buyers and what exactly they're looking for from a brand, you can create solutions that are laser-focused to their needs.

The data you have at your fingertips is a goldmine for uncovering customer needs. And, as well as using it to personalize experiences, you can leverage it to improve your products and continue to create great shopping experiences time and time again.

create great shopping experiences time and time again.

Here are some key ways you can use data to create a more human touch with your buyers:experiences that will attract similar, high-value customers.

Create offers for your most valued customers

Use key information like LTV to identify your best and most loyal customers. Once you've identified them, you can create offers and discounts especially for them. This will make them feel valued and develop a more personal relationship than a typical buyer-seller one.

Improve products

Customer support is one of your most valuable assets as an ecommerce brand. It gives you access to all of your customers' needs, wants, hopes, dreams, frustrations, and fears. Dig deep into commonly asked questions and repetitive tickets and use the information there to fuel product development. If you sell blue, green, and yellow umbrellas and you get a ton of tickets asking why there isn't a red option, consider creating one.

Find out who your best customers are

Your most valuable customers are the ones that regularly buy from you and keep coming back for more. They often spend more with you than most customers and they make pretty frequent purchases.

Delve into the journeys these customers go through from start to finish and pick out the key touchpoints. This will give you the ammunition you need to create slicker experiences that will attract similar, high-value customers.
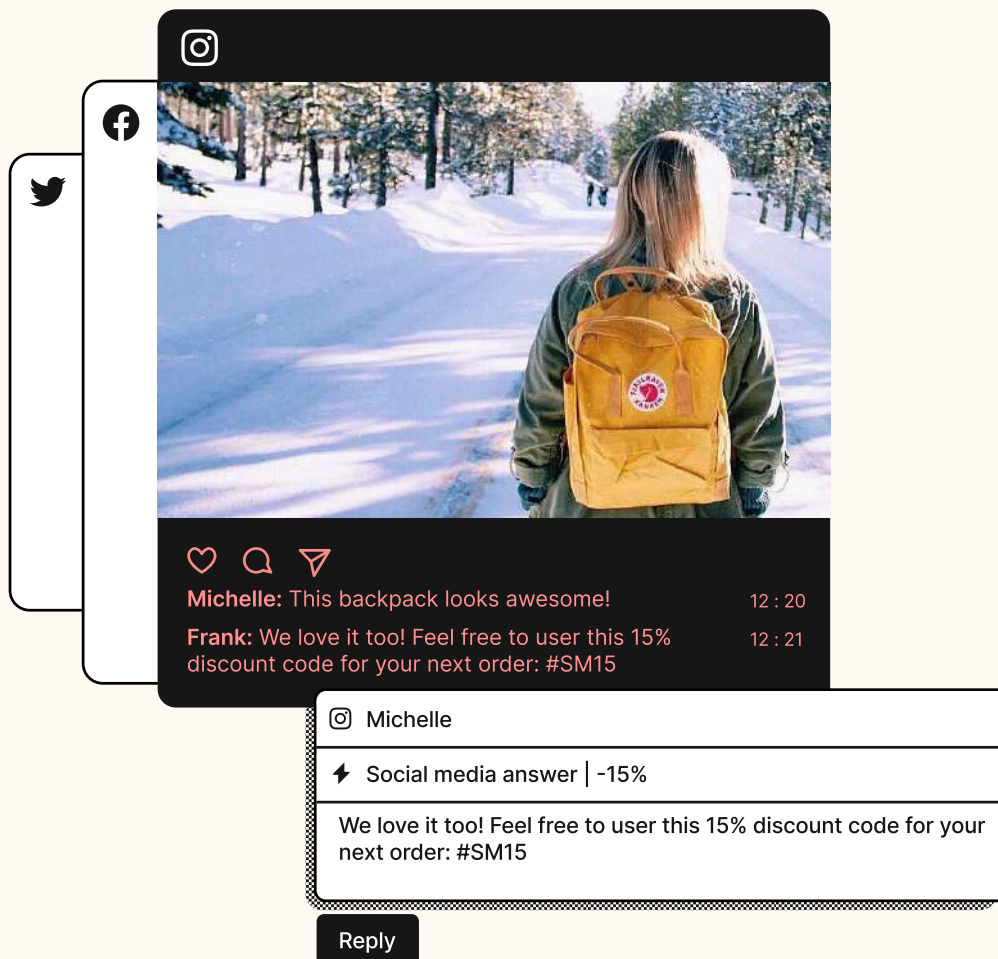
How to tap into your customer needs during the sales cycle

If you've never heard the term "micro-moments" before, get acquainted with it. Get very well acquainted, because they will become your new best friends. They refer to specific points throughout the sales cycle where there is an opportunity to interact on a human level with your customers.

Remember, online sales cycles are far from linear, and these tiny, almost-invisible moments can make or break the customer experience.

If a potential buyer takes a detour during the buying process and hits a metaphorical brick wall where they can't find the information they need, there's a high chance they're going to hotfoot it to the nearest competitor. If you can anticipate where these moments will take place and what information customers need when they get there, you're one step ahead of the majority of online stores.

The most important thing is to inject a human element into these interactions, whether it's personalized recommendations or customer service automation features, like an on-site pop up. This will make sure customers are getting what they want when they want it, which will ultimately nudge them towards making a purchase.

Michelle: This backpack looks awesome! 12 : 20

Frank: We love it too! Feel free to user this 15% discount code for your next order: #SM15 12 : 21

Michelle

Social media answer | -15%

We love it too! Feel free to user this 15% discount code for your next order: #SM15

Reply

Personalisation Strategies Built For Scale

Use cookies to create personalized homepages

It's impossible to rearrange a brick-and-mortar store to accommodate the interests of every customer that walks through the door. But it is possible online. Create a personalized homepage for each potential buyer by using customer data, including past purchases and visit behavior to fuel the content they see when they land on your site.

For example, you can track the items a shopper is interested in (for example men's versus women's clothes) or log the country they're browsing from and serve them a version of the site in that language and currency.

What would this look like in action? Say an American man and a woman from France both end up on your site. The first time they visit, they might see the same homepage, which includes links to men's clothes, women's clothes, sale items and accessories. While they're browsing the site, you're automatically collecting data on the pages they visit, the products they're most interested in, and where they're based.

This means that the next time they visit your site, the American man can be served links to men's clothes in a dollar price format and the French woman can be served links to the women's categories she expressed interest in on her last visit, with pricing shown in euros.

European clothing brand Boozt does exactly this. All new customers are served the same homepage but, when they return to the site for the second, third, and tenth time, they are greeted by a homepage that's been personalized to match their browsing history.

44%

of consumers say a personalized homepage is very useful

This is a particularly popular strategy in the online apparel world. In fact, research shows that 44% of consumers say a personalized homepage is very useful, especially when shopping for clothes, but only 23% of shoppers have experienced it in action. If you can address this need, you instantly jump ahead of your competitors that don't personalize their homepages based on individual consumer preferences.

It also helps recognize and reward returning customers, who are far more valuable than new buyers.

A personalized homepage helps customers find what they want quickly and easily and encourages them to feel like you "get" them. Why would they go somewhere else where they have to navigate through multiple different pages

to get where they want, over a website that serves them everything they need right on the homepage?

Think about Amazon, the personalization pioneer, and what happens when a return visitor lands on their homepage. They're:

- greeted with a personal "Hello"

- able to see their Wish List and add products to it

- redirected to a location-relevant homepage

- served a list of products they looked at last time they were on site

- recommended products that they might be interested in based on their past purchases and browsing behavior

Leverage your transactional emails

Transactional emails are a core part of running an ecommerce business. They let your customers know that you've received their order, when their item has been dispatched, and what they can expect when they receive their goods.

The problem is a lot of ecommerce companies do the bare minimum with their transactional emails. They create clinical templates that convey the most basic information. As a result, they miss out on a huge opportunity to share their brand personality and to inject a human touch into the buying process.

Think about it: transactional emails land directly in your customers' sacred inboxes, and making the most of the space you have will help create deeper connections with customers and show that you understand their individual wants and needs.

Injecting brand personality into your transactional emails is easy. Here are some effective ways to do it:

Upsell Relevant Products

Use the extra space you have in order confirmation emails to offer upsell options to buyers. They have already shown that they trust you enough to buy from you and you now have key data on the products they like. Use this to upsell products, deepen customer connections, and increase AOV. For example, if someone has just bought a cart full of tea bags from you, why not recommend they buy a teapot as well?

Personalize Transactional Emails

Incorporating a customer's name into a transactional email is one of the most basic ways you can personalize the process, but it can make such a big difference. Calling customers out by their name shows you value them and, most importantly, know them. You can also inject a touch of human-ness into these emails by using your brand voice and letting your personality shine through in the wording you use.

Gorgias allows you to create branded transactional emails that are personalized based on the customer's experience with you and lets you incorporate your brand personality to create a deeper connection with buyers.

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Service sells: automate customer service the right way

You know that customer service is a crucial part of the buying process. Shoppers are likely to have objections and questions before they make a purchase, and answering these in real time can mean the difference between making a sale and losing a potential lifelong customer.

This is a vital touchpoint where you can add a human element. Consumers want answers from real people and feel much safer parting with their cash if they've had a human connection with someone from your brand, even if it is via email or an online chat system.

The thing is, answering every single question every single customer has before buying can be time-consuming and draining. Luckily, you'll notice there tends to be a pattern to the questions that are asked, with some popping up more than others.

This gives you ample information to set up customer service support automation features, for responses that aren't robotic in nature but are instead packed full of brand personality and tone. Even if the responses aren't coming directly from a person (for growing brands, answering potentially hundreds of pre-purchase questions a day just isn't possible), it will feel like a connection is there if the customer is

getting a response that feels like it's from a human.

Setting up automated responses to the most commonly asked questions comes with a number of benefits:

- You can generate more on-the-spot sales by answering objections while customers are in buy mode.

- You can turn your customer helpdesk into a profit center by making more sales from support into a profit center by making more sales from support.

- You can free up the time of customer service staff so they can deal with more intricate and complicated queries.

- You can convert more customers pre-purchase.

- You can get to know your customers so you can personalize information for them further down the line.

Supplement provider Campus Protein employs this strategy with great results. They use Gorgias to bring together all their customer support channels — including chat, email, phone, and social media customer service — in one place. When a prospect asks a question, they can immediately see whether it is a previous

customer or a new buyer and adapt their responses accordingly.

They use this in tandem with Gorgias' powerful macros and templated responses to send out personality-filled stock answers with a single click. This has saved the customer support team a huge amount of time and has allowed them to build an incredibly loyal consumer base. responses to send out personality-filled stock answers with a single click. This has saved the customer support team a huge amount of time and has allowed them to build an incredibly loyal consumer base. Gorgias has a collection of features that specifically inject a human touch into the customer service experience.

Variables allow you to personalize and insert a human touch using macros, and you can set up rules to trigger macros to create a quick, automated experience that still has a human element to it.

Personalized customer service shouldn't be limited to the top of the sales funnel either. You can also create branded templates to send out during purchase and post-purchase. Remember, customers want to feel cared about and valued — this is the human touch they want to see transferred from the in-store experience. By showing up for them at every stage of the cycle, you'll stay front of mind and maintain consistent communication.

Integrate customer generated content

If your team is churning out fresh content day in, day out — pause right now. You may be overlooking an untapped well of powerful content in the form of customer-generated content such as reviews, product photos and videos shared on social media, and customer stories.

Seeing content from fellow shoppers helps potential customers feel "seen" by a brand and encourages a sense of community, and plays an invaluable role in the buying process.

One of the biggest problems consumers face with online shopping is the inability to see products in-person before buying. Often, there are well-edited photos used to show off the products in their best (and often not the most realistic) light.

But employing UGC makes things feel more real and more human.

Photos and videos in particular help give customers a more realistic insight into what they're buying, especially if they resonate with the customers sharing their stories. The stats prove it: studies show that using UGC in ads generates a higher clickthrough rate and a lower ad spend.

But while customer-generated content isn't necessarily a direct form of personalization, it can be woven into key strategies to encourage customers to feel like they're part of a community.

Here are some ways you can use customer-generated content to create a human touch:

Send relevant UGC to list segments

Group together like-minded shoppers and share relevant customer-generated content with them. For example, you might have a segmented list of jewelry enthusiasts. Whenever you receive a customer photo that includes a piece of jewelry — whether that's via social media, a hashtag, a review, or through a submission form on your website — send it to your list of jewelry lovers.

This will help them feel like you know their interests, and the content created by their fellow shoppers will encourage them to make a purchase.

Share customer-generated content on product pages

Studies have shown that sharing customer content on product pages increases conversions. Customers are able to see the product in a more realistic context and it provides proof that the purchase will be worth it. This might be in the form of review carousels (which provide social proof) or customer-created images and videos.

You can take it one step further and share customer-generated content on the product pages of recommended products to create a more personalized experience for each customer.

Share reviews and images in transactional emails

Transactional emails provide the perfect backdrop for customer-generated content. You can use them to carry out a two-pronged approach: personalization and social proof from fellow buyers. This will cement your buyer relationships, build a community, and generate trust amongst your loyal customers. Start by sprinkling customer-generated photos into upsell emails, or include reviews in order confirmation emails.

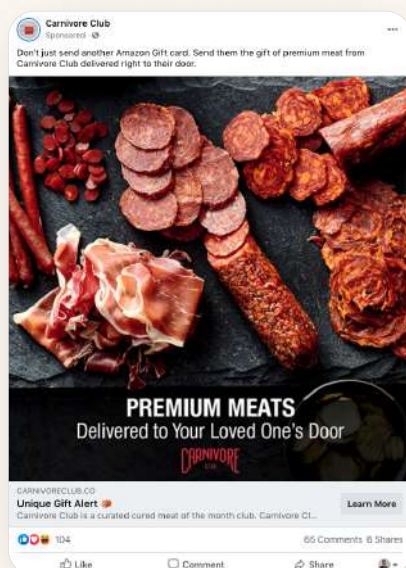# Target prospects with personalized ads and retargeting campaigns

The average cart abandonment rate is 69.57%, meaning the majority of shoppers who add items to their cart don't actually end up buying them. As a result, ecommerce brands have to work harder than ever to nudge customers to the finish line.

This is where personalized ads and retargeting campaigns can help. They target customers that have already visited your site and serve them individualized ads showing the products in their carts or products they have been browsing onsite. Tools like the Facebook Pixel allow advertising platforms to track your users and determine the product pages they have visited. This gives you ample intelligence to create relevant ads that are hyper-focused on your visitors' interests and browsing behavior.
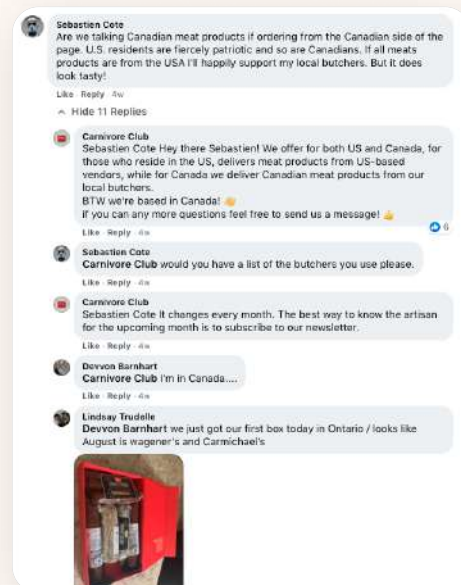
As well as creating personalized ad campaigns, you can also email customers to remind them about the products they have sitting in their cart. This method is limited to customers you have email addresses for and who are logged in on your site when they are browsing.

Brands use this strategy to convert more customers.

It serves up personalized ads based on a shopper's browsing history and their cart, and even throws in a little incentive to make the offer more enticing. You can try offering free shipping, or you might provide a discount code alongside the ad to give consumers a gentle nudge towards the checkout.

Carnivore Club retargets visitors and uses Gorgias to engage with them in the comments

Gorgias being used to drive sales and answer questions

Finding The Balance Between Growth and Human Touch

Growth is key for ecommerce merchants that want to increase revenue

Merchants want to reach wider markets, and cultivate brand loyalty, but so is maintaining a human touch. This is especially true today when there is so much competition available. If you're not giving customers what they want, when they want it, it's easier than ever for them to find someone else who does do that.

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> **Returning customers are 5-10x cheaper to convert than new buyers.**

Cultivating a human touch and showcasing brand personality increases loyalty. As a result, you attract more returning customers .

As a result, you attract more returning customers who — let's not forget — are 5-10x cheaper to convert than new buyers.

In fact, personalization is so important today that customers actually expect it. They want to buy from brands they can connect with and build a relationship with. They want to shop with brands that understand them and treat them as an individual rather than en masse.

The challenge is in creating personalized experiences at scale, but the strategies we've covered in this ebook provide a solid starting point for growing your ecommerce business without losing the all-important human touch.