

Stay Ahead of the Marketplace by Keeping People at the Heart of Your Virtual Shopping Experience

It's no secret that the last decade or so has seen a huge shift towards online shopping. The introduction of large-scale services like Amazon and eBay has given customers a taste of ease and convenience. From the start, though, there's always something missing from these big-box online stores - a human touch.

Sure, you don't always need personal recommendations when buying simple everyday essentials. But there are many occasions when a shopper feels lost and even abandoned by these robotic online platforms.

This presents an excellent opportunity for smaller brands to create a more personalized virtual shopping experience - and retain more customers in the long run.

The Importance of Building Customer Relationships

It may be tempting to zero in on targeted marketing campaigns and push for sales. This very well may produce an immediate cash infusion if your ads get to the right people. But, this is short-term thinking and it won't serve you in the long run.

It's been proven time and time again that it's much cheaper to keep a current customer than attract a new one. It's up to [25 times cheaper](#), in fact. The numbers vary based on industry, but it's also around [60% more likely](#) you'll sell to an existing customer than a new one.

This is true for a few reasons:

- They already know your brand and what you offer
- They were satisfied with their previous experience
- They were and are still satisfied with their purchase
- They trust you and your products/recommendations

When you build trust and rapport with a customer, they'll keep coming back - there's no doubt about it. This doesn't mean you should never try to gain new customers. It just means you should place greater or at least equal focus on retention as you do on lead generation.

How to Add a Human Touch

How do you create a personalized experience in such a digitally driven world? It's not always easy when you're not face to face. But, with the right strategies and [retailing solutions](#), the customer will feel like they're not only in the store but getting the VIP treatment.

Strategies vary depending on your industry, but there are many ways you can go about nurturing the customer experience:

Advice and Consultation

For industries with highly personalized products like fashion, jewelry, or beauty, a consultation sets the perfect tone. A new customer may feel overwhelmed by a broad selection of products, and not know what they need or want.

This is where offering a consultation makes the difference. With no guidance available, your new lead may simply move on to the next company.

If they see you offer free advice, they're likely to take advantage. Once you've helped them determine their needs more specifically, they can shop with confidence.

Personalized Home Pages

When a customer is brand new, you have no idea what they're interested in. Once they've spent some time on your site, however, you can keep track of what they're looking at. As data on the customer grows, you can offer a personalized home page.

This means that instead of your generic, default homepage, they'll see a personal, curated list of products. This helps them narrow down their search and saves them time looking all over the place.

Offer Live Chat Customer Service

In light of the world's growing demand for maximum convenience and instant service, you're smart to offer live online chat. Many e-commerce platforms have useful AI chatbots. These bots help customers navigate the site or troubleshoot common issues.

This is a great first step, but you can take it to the next level by offering chat services from *real people*. This offers a much more meaningful experience. Customers get specific and personalized answers rather than canned responses to keywords.

Gone are the days of 24-hour email wait times. While you should still offer an email should someone prefer this medium, many opt for instant solutions via live interactions.

Personalized Email Campaigns

Email marketing is often seen as the crux of any digital business, and yet it's fiercely competitive. How many newsletters do you sign up for, only to ignore the emails as they funnel in? Getting that all-important opening click is essential.

The best way to stand out from the rest is to keep it personal and inviting. While it's smart to offer deals, coupons, and promotions, you don't want to always push sales on people. Focus on the experience and the sales will come.

Email campaigns can be as simple or as complex as you want. Whatever your strategy, here are some tips to keep it personal:

- Always use the customer's name. This makes them feel seen right from the start.

- Segment your list. Separate your email list into groups based on demographics. Track things like age, gender, geographical location, etc. Different demographics respond to different things.
- Use their activity on your site to send personalized product recommendations.
- Be friendly, personal, and casual, regardless of industry. Don't be afraid to crack a joke sometimes and avoid jargon.
- Create triggers in your email campaign that send personalized messages based on actions. Sign-ups, purchases, abandoned cart etc.
- Send emails from a person. Whether an employee is typing the email or it's part of an automated campaign, make the sign-off personal. [Research shows](#) that customers respond better to messages from an individual rather than the company.

Finding the Perfect Retail Solutions

Creating such focused personalization for each customer may feel overwhelming. It's a lot of work to keep the attention of just one person! In the end, though, it's worth every moment. And, it doesn't always have to be endless, tiring work.

Creating personal experiences requires some initial legwork. For things to go smoothly, it's imperative you find the right software, hardware, and training programs.

We offer a comprehensive solution to all your needs, be it in-store or online, and keeps things consistent across both avenues.

Offer top-notch training and equip your employees to create the best possible customer experience, both physically and virtually. When your customers feel seen, valued, and appreciated, they'll stick around.