# HOW TO SELL MORE IN 2019 WITH A KILLER MARKETING PLAN FOR ECOMMERCE

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# IMPORTANCE OF A MARKETING PLAN

When you're building a foundation for your ecommerce marketing, there are three questions you should be able to answer:

Who is my customer?

What does my customer want?

What channels do I need to use to reach my customers?

If you happen to be someone who frequents the online world, you would know how you are bombarded with messages left, right and center urging you to buy some product or service. Such fierce is today's consumer-driven world. Amidst all this noise, the retailer you pay attention to over everyone else wins. Hence, it would be an understatement to say that online retailers are constantly fighting with each other to get customers to hit the "shop" or "buy" buttons on different marketing channels.

A marketing plan helps businesses define key objectives, identify opportunities, avoid surprises and threats, and leverage core competencies.

According to a study, 51% of Americans prefer to shop online, and 96% have made an online purchase in their life. Now isn't that overwhelming?! So, as an eCommerce store owner how do you actually get a customer to come to you amongst thousands of other online retailers selling same or similar products as you? Thus, comes the role of a robust marketing plan. Irrespective of the size of your online business, increasing online sales and optimizing customer retention are the two most important goals you must focus on. And both these things are what your marketing plan should be aligned with.

Before starting an eCommerce business, always have a checklist to ensure everything goes according to plan.

# IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD MARKETING PLAN FOR ECOMMERCE

Marketing plans help businesses define key objectives, identify opportunities, avoid surprises and threats, and leverage core competencies. These plans provide a basis to set the marketing in action and organizes focused efforts, which ultimately impacts your bottom line sales. Apart from that, a robust marketing plan for eCommerce business:

1- Aligns the organization's vision with the brand:

All businesses have a mission statement and a vision. These must flow naturally from the executive team to all stakeholders
(both internal and external). Marketing plan for businesses are particularly useful in aligning the vision with the brand.
It ensures that what is communicated to potential customers is meaningful and accurate when it comes to the core target market.

2- Provides Data:

Marketing plan for businesses are often based on extensive research of the target market – including consumer behavior, needs, threats and opportunities. This means sitting on piles of data. This data can be later used for crafting different targeted marketing campaigns and promotions.

3- Helps with brand building:

By associating the organization's competitive advantages with the target market's need, the company can build a brand from scratch.

4- Mitigates risks:

Planning is always a great tool for avoiding risks. The simplest way to avoid making a mistake in nearly all contexts is to consider all potential options and weighing the opportunity costs, and subsequently selecting the most viable option.
An eCommerce strategic marketing plan allows you to consider the risks and returns of various segments – thus enabling the organization to mitigate risks and capture opportunities.
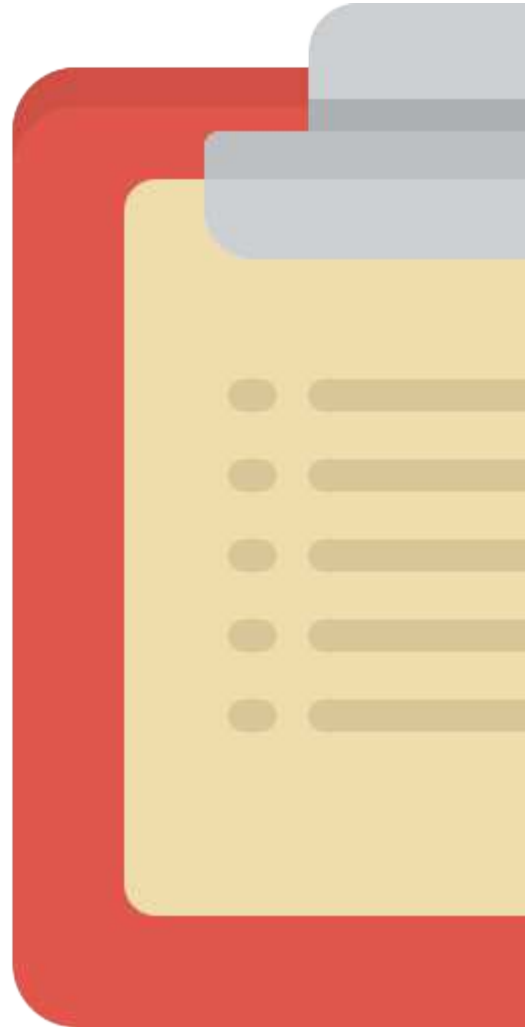
# ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ECOMMERCE MARKETING PLAN

A successful ecommerce marketing plan consists of several components that come together in order to increase your sales. From creating an awareness through advertising, increasing the digital footprint on your website to gaining new followers on social media, every action you take should have a positive and measurable impact on your sales; and all of this should be outlined in your marketing plan.

Let's look at some of the essential elements of a good eCommerce marketing plan:

## - Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The content on your website (both written and imagery) have a role to play in determining how well your eCommerce store will rank on the SERP. Although search engines can't "read" images, you can make your images understandable to the search engines by incorporating keywords in the image alt tags. And then there are the product names, copies, and product description – all of which should be relevant, fresh, and keyword-rich for search engine optimization. So, your marketing plan should have a lot of focus on SEO.

## - Pay-per-click Advertising (PPC)

PPC is another very crucial aspect of any eCommerce marketing plan. PPC allows you to create and set up small text ads that appear alongside search results. Although these ads can cost as little as a few cents a day, they can be targeted to appear for a wide variety of keywords or phrases. Sometimes in case of a new eCommerce store, competition is so high that it may be difficult to organically draw traffic. In those cases, PPC can help bring in new visitors and increase sales in the interim. PPC has its own benefits.  One study found that more than 64% of Google searchers who wanted to make a purchase clicked on a PPC ad first.

## - Email Marketing

Email marketing continues to drive a fairly high amount of clicks, traffic, and purchases on eCommerce stores. Email marketing is not only one of the most effective ways to drive sales, it also establishes and increases brand loyalty. Email lists can be created in a variety of ways. In most cases people sign up to an eCommerce store to make their purchases, and enter their email addresses. Some others add a "subscribe to our email" check box, which is an easy way to ensure returning customers. Through email marketing, you can send personalized offers and discounts, advertise new products or bestselling products, offer free shipping, or even hold contests. The options to bond with your customers are unlimited with email marketing, and it must hold a place in your marketing plan.

## - Content Marketing

Content marketing comes to your rescue when your target audience needs a little bit more convincing in order to trust you – especially if your products belong to a particular niche and aren't impulse buy. Content marketing like blogging is also a great channel for engaging with your customers if your product descriptions don't give you the scope to use a lot of keywords. Blog is a powerful way to convince prospective buyers to trust you. Blogs show that you know what you are doing and have a lot to say about your business and industry. Blogs have also been known to bring in repeat customers and create a dedicated brand following.

## - Social Media Marketing

An eCommerce marketing plan is incomplete without social media. Having a presence on popular channels like Facebook or Instagram is not only the need of the hour, but also crucial for your exposure to potential and existing customers. Social media is extremely important to a brand's online presence, and a consistent presence and engagement with target audience can get remarkable results for your eCommerce store in terms of brand loyalty, awareness and repeat customers.

## - Link Building

What a lot of people are not aware of is that search engines rely on links to decide how popular – and rank-worthy any website is. Coming to think of it, the logic is pretty simple – if a website has only one inbound link, probably only one person thinks it's worth visiting. But on the contrary, if it has several links, well, you can do the simple math! As an eCommerce owner or marketer, you are likely to receive a decent number of links without any manual intervention. However, if you are competing on some popular keywords, you might have to make a few nudges to get links, especially in the beginning. Nonetheless, it is all worth it. There are hundreds of ways to build links to your website, but remain aware of bad links.

# SOME KILLER MARKETING STRATEGIES TO SELL MORE

Given below are some of the eCommerce marketing tips to boost sales and woo your customers in 2019.

## 1- Real-Time Personalization

Ads, promotions and offers which are not relevant tend to annoy customers. If you want to win and retain your customers, you need to provide your customers with a shopping experience that's personalized to what they're looking for. The more relevant products and offers you are able to present to your shoppers, the higher will be the chances of purchase.  Here is a list of good examples of real-time personalization:

**- Personalization on automated emails:**

Make use of AI-powered email personalization solutions like the one we have here at Perzonalization. It offers real-time automated emails for your eCommerce stores and uses your customers' browsing history, preferences and interests to send them targeted personalized marketing messages and product recommendations.

**- Homepage personalization:**

If you are a female shopper, ASOS's homepage automatically redirects you to the women's section because that's where they know you have looked before.
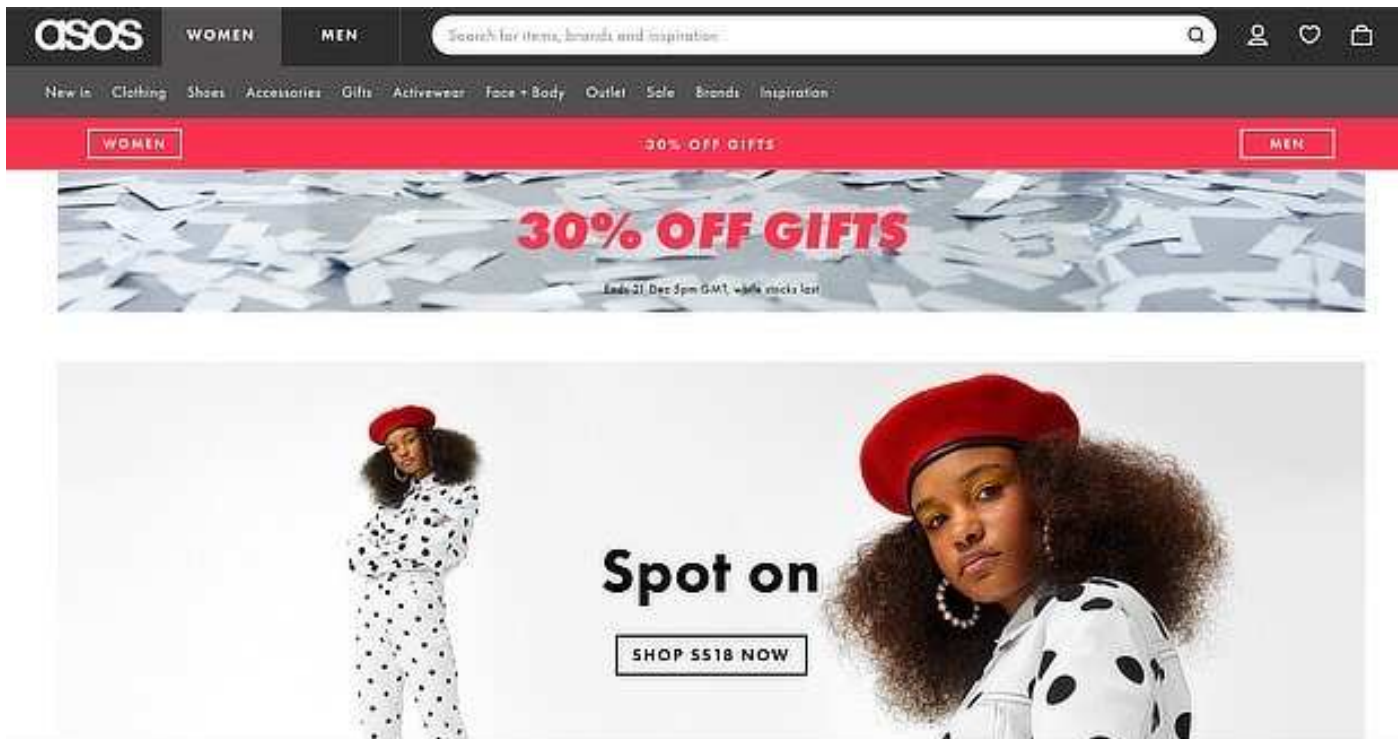


**- Full-fledged online personalization:**

Amazon has all the ingredients of a personalized shopping experience. When you visit Amazon, and log in, you can see product recommendations based on your search history and browsing behavior – and they are quite accurate. According to a report in Business Insider, this kind of personalization can increase your sales by 10%.

## - Product recommendations:

Pura Vida bracelets – A Shopify merchant, has created two recommendation categories on their product page.



## - Search personalization:

Some online retailers also use their customers' previous online behavior to show the most relevant search results on their site, like in this example from MyStore:
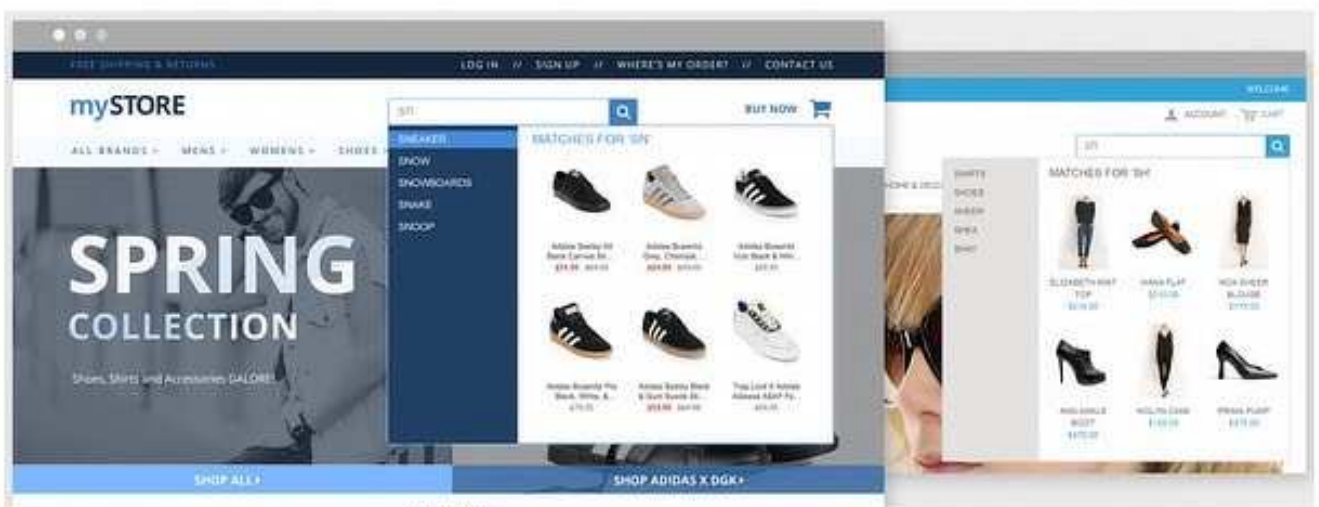
**- Campaign email personalization**:

One other way to use personalization is in your email marketing campaigns. This is known as off-site personalization. Personalized email marketing guarantees that you continue to market your store long after your customers have left the site. Sending follow-up emails, personalized newsletters, special offers and discounts on special occasions – are all different ways in which you can lure your customers back to your store. Use transactional emails to expand engagement Look at the below email from Amazon.

You can also use email retargeting to send customers personalized offers that they can access when they re-visit your site. You may display specific campaigns for specific product categories by using page-level targeting.

Given below are some of the other ways you could personalize your eCommerce store:
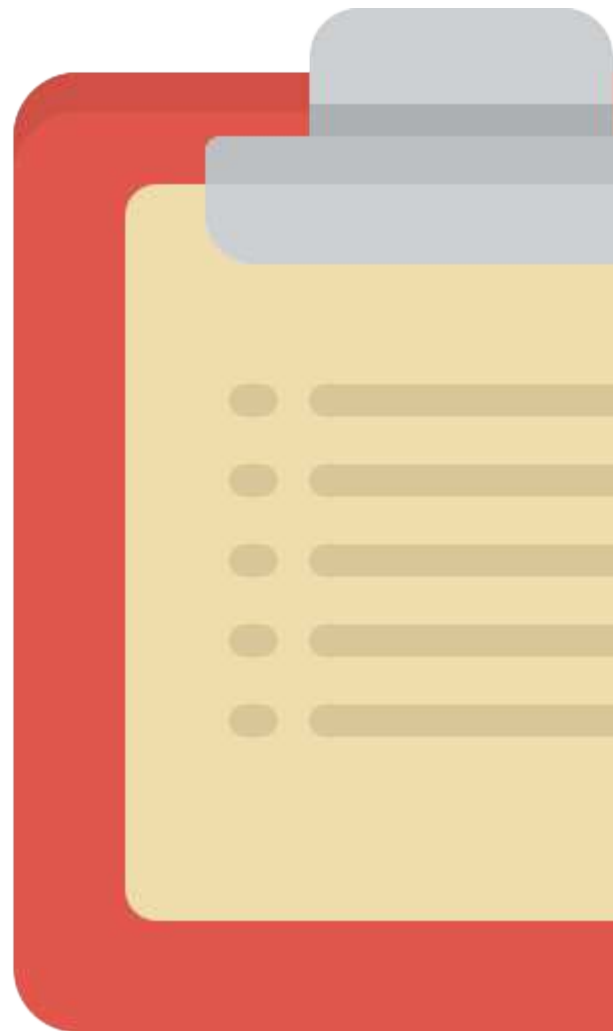
- Geo-location Targeting:

Personalizing the store by redirecting the customers to the right store.

- Category Specific Discounts and Offers:

Creating discount coupons more relevant by categories your visitors have browsed in the past.

- Complementary Products:

Showing related products to boost your sales.

- Upsell and Cross-Sell:

Upselling and cross-selling to make your website visitors realize few other things they might like – thus increasing your sales.

- Offering Personalized Reminders:

Reminding shoppers of the products they have earlier viewed and purchased. Look at the following example from Shoeline.

- Use a Style Finder:

Asking customers what they want as a good way of personalizing. Swarovski Crystals gives you few options to choose from on their homepage.

SELECT YOUR SHINING MOMENT

THE TIMELESS          THE ROMANTIC          THE ROCK CHIC          THE GLAM

- Continuous Shopping for Returning Customers:

By allowing your returning customers to pick up where they left to not only save them time and effort but also to demonstrate a keenness to make their lives a little easier.

## 2- Website Optimization

When it comes to eCommerce, conversion is critical. It is as simple and as complex as that. And when it is eCommerce site optimization, your starting point should be SEO. Off-page optimization such as transparent URLs (so that people know what they are getting when clicking on a link) and the right target keyword to help your products/ store show up when people look online.

The overall design and user experience (UX) on your eCommerce website should be one of your key focus areas including page load speed. A slow loading site is money lost; it's a simple equation. You just have about two seconds to impress your visitors, and for every second after that you will lose 10% of your visitors. As far as site navigation is concerned, products should appear in their logical place. Always remember –"*If they can't find what they are looking for, they won't buy it.*" When planning your site navigation, think like your customers in terms of how they would look for your products. Wolfermans like to believe that their customers know exactly what they want.

Their navigation makes it easy to find what you need, no matter which type of buyer you are:

Need Help? ▼   Email Sign Up ▼   Your Gift History →   Track your order →   Sign In   🛒 Cart: 1

Wolferman's®
Deliciously Harry and David

Keyword   🔍

Shop by Category   Shop by Holiday   Shop by Occasion   Shop by Price

Cart (1)   View Favorites List

While you are on your website optimization, ensure that you improve the shopping experience for your customers, which will in turn impact your conversions.

First, ensure that your store is working towards improving your branding, enhancing customer loyalty, and increasing conversions and sales. Pay attention to product description, related products, shipping charges, delivery times, return policies etc. Make all these information easily accessible and visible.

Second, make your product descriptions interesting by avoiding generic information. Your product description should identify the problem the product solves for the reader. Warby Parker does an amazing job of writing product descriptions that go very well with their target audience:



KARLIE • KLOSS × WARBY PARKER

WHEN WE GOT TOGETHER WITH OUR FRIEND KARLIE, we both had the exact same thing in mind from the start: fresh and flattering sunglasses that are lively and graceful—with a nice helping of personality.

$145 each, featuring ultra-strong and lightweight Japanese titanium

Another thing to ensure in eCommerce site optimization is mobile friendliness. Although the widespread assumption that smartphone will gradually take over the use of PC is a little overstated, we can't deny the fact that smartphone does give people easy internet access anytime anywhere. So optimize your site for mobile phones and tablets. Mobile site visits are increasing steadily and consistently just as sale of PC are declining. An uninterrupted flow of mobile will help you secure a major part of your e-commerce business.

## 3- Free Shipping

There are many benefits of offering free shipping in eCommerce businesses. Online shoppers are more likely to buy from a site offering free shipping because they don't like to pay for shipping.

So if your business does not offer a free shipping option, you might want to consider one now. In a survey, 70 percent of respondents have expressed that they think highly of brands, which offer free shipping and delivery.

Free shipping eliminates the barrier of completing the checkout process.

So why should you promote the free shipping options on your eCommerce store?

- To make your visitors aware that they can save money.

- To give your shoppers the confidence that there won't be any surprises at checkout.

- To convert more visitors into buyers and increase customers' spend.

- To increase your AOV
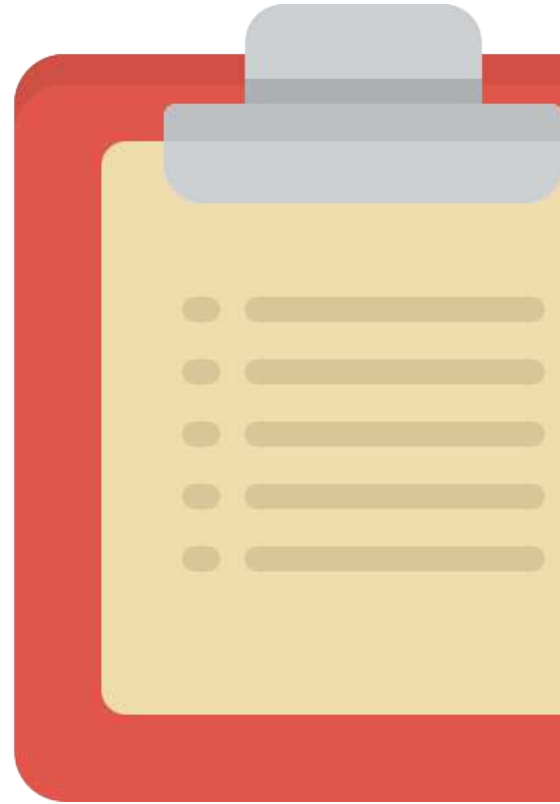
- To expand your target market.

In order to promote free shipping on your online store, you could do any of the following:

- Build an email list and send free shipping offers as part of your email marketing campaign.

- Add a banner on your ecommerce website homepage promoting free shipping.

- Announce your free shipping promotion to your social media followers.

- Run paid advertisements to promote free shipping.

Free shipping eliminates the barrier of completing the checkout process. But there also must be something in it for you. Below are some of the ways in which you can offer free shipping while making some money out of it:

- Decide if shipping cost is a marketing expense or cost of goods sold.
- Offer free shipping to limited regions.
- Calculate your monthly shipping expenses.
- Charge for expedited deliveries.
- Use shipping as a promotion.
- Clearly show delivery time to customers.
- Install a shipping solution.
- Offer free shipping only after conditions are met.

Look at how John Lewis promotes their free shipping:
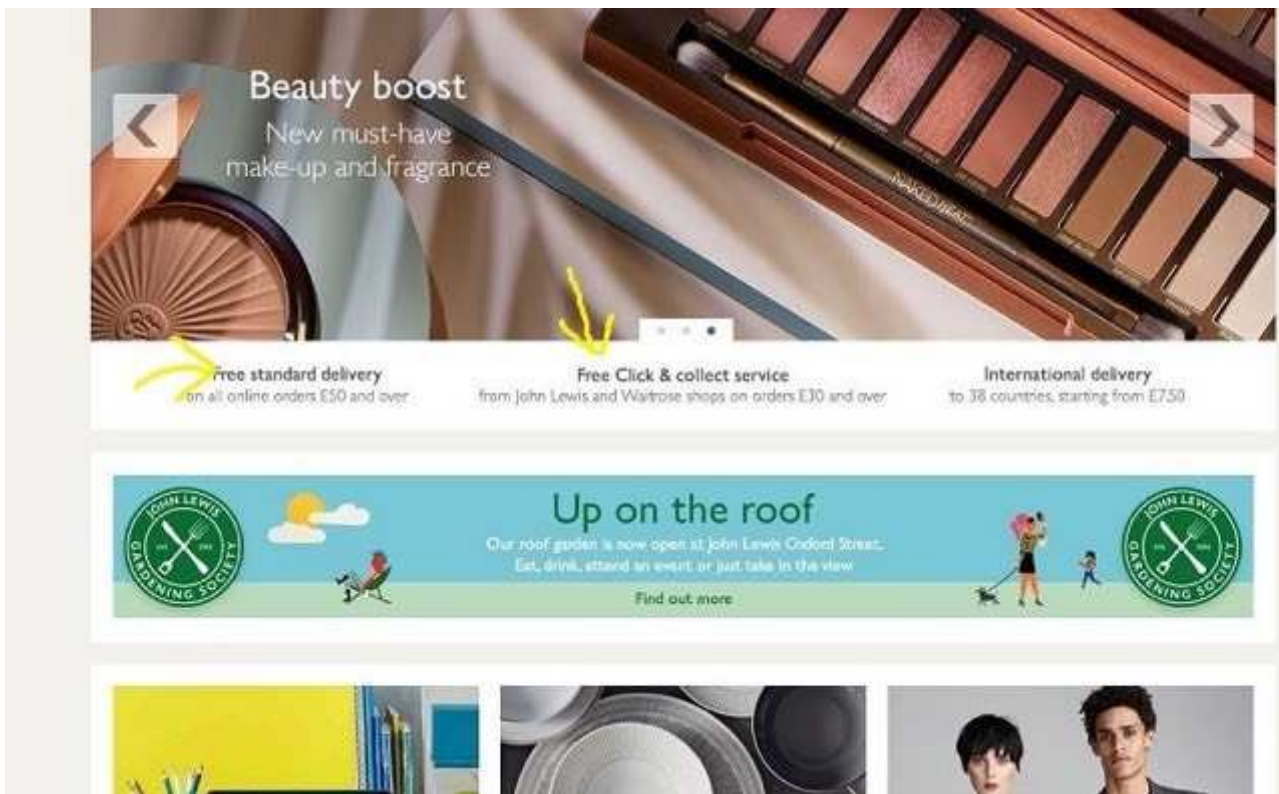
River Island often uses free delivery promotions to increase their online conversions.
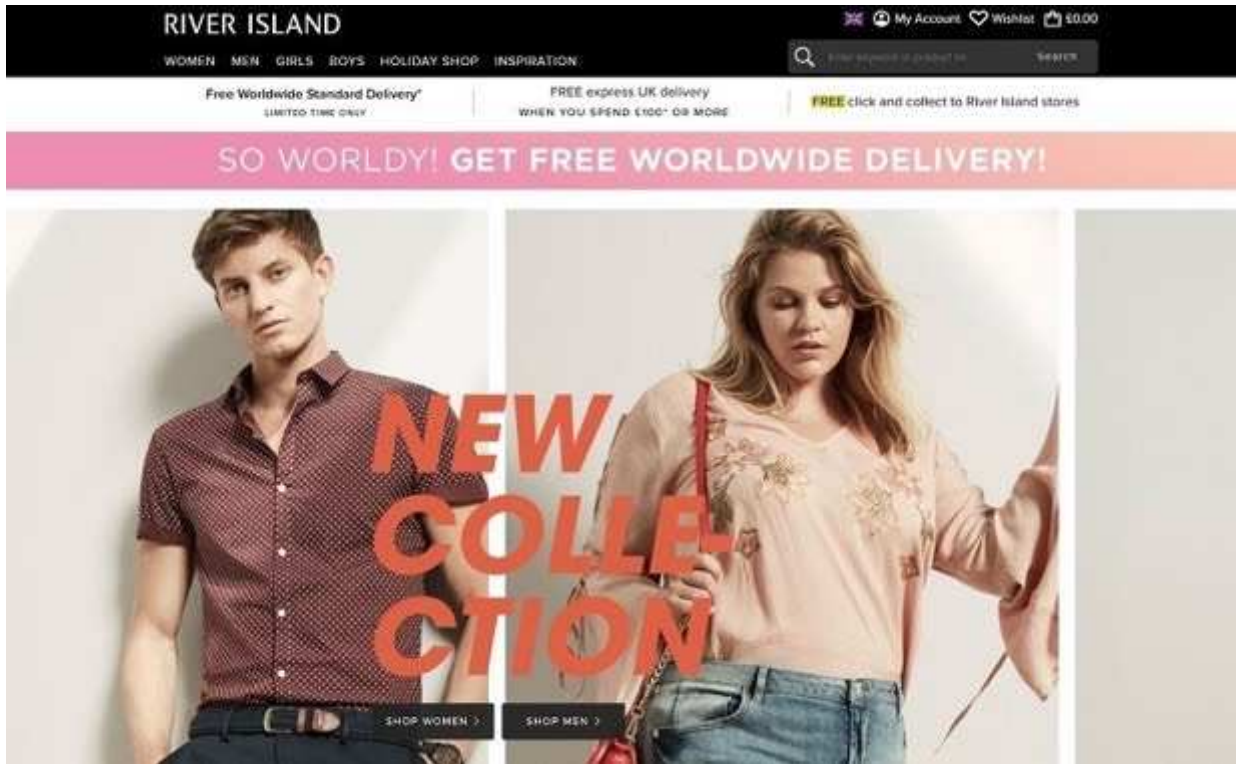


Clarks on the other hand, offers a special code for free delivery.
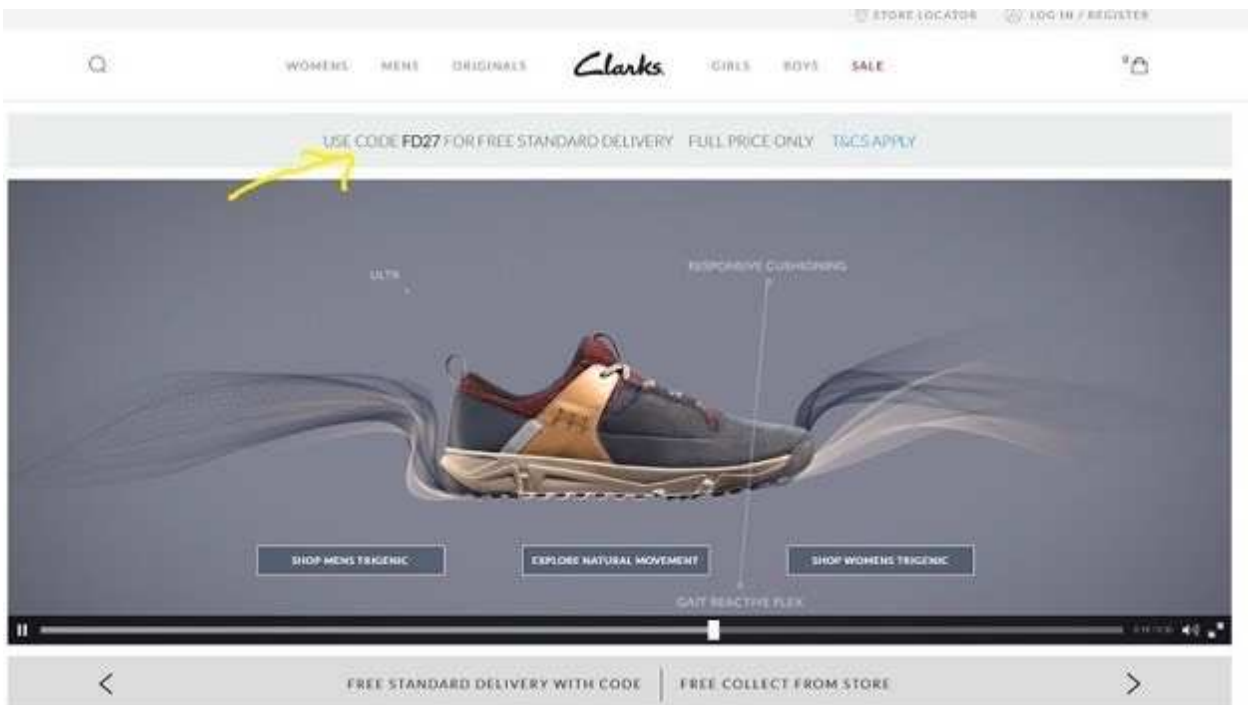
## 4- Google Shopping Campaigns

With over 3.5 billion searches on Google each day, there are no brownie points to guess that people use Google to shop. From searching for product reviews and stores, the most powerful search engine has now become a digital shopping tour guide for users. And that is the reason you should capitalize on this powerful search giant for your shopping campaigns. Google shopping campaigns allow retailers to sell their products directly through the SERPs. Here are some strategies to capitalize on your SERP sales.

**a) Organize your shopping campaigns by best-sellers**:

While configuring your Shopping campaigns, ensure that your products with similar value are grouped together allowing you to easily allocate and adjust budgets in a logical way. Grouping together your best sellers will help you capitalize on online sales.

**b) Quality of Ad images:**

The quality of your Ad images is also something you mustn't overlook. Your ad images is your first chance to grab potential buyers. An image with little grain, showing fine detail, and a simple white background are what makes a good Ad image. You also need to follow Google's guidelines when configuring your images.

## c) Utilize merchant promotions:

You can add tags like "Special offer" to your shopping ads when you utilize merchant promotions. Set-up requires a few steps like filling out the merchant promotions interest form and using the +PROMOTION tool or setting up a promotion feed.

## d) Use product ratings & reviews:

If you have good reviews for your products, show off on the ad. Reviews drive purchases. Some even compare online reviews to personal recommendations.



Magic Bullet 11 Piece Blender Set, Silver

$39.99 from 50+ stores   Also available nearby

★★★★★ 2,596 product reviews   #1 in Blenders

The personal, versatile counter top magician that works like magic. With it you can chop, mix, blend, whip, grind, and more ...

Magic Bullet · Blender · Countertop Blender · Silver

Other style options:  Green ($40)  Red ($37)

## 5- Reduce Shopping Cart Abandonment

Cart abandonment remains one of the primary concerns of all eCommerce stores – big and small. Shopping cart abandonment happens when potential customers add products in the cart, but exit without completing the purchase. There can be different reasons why these visitors abandon their carts.

Following are some of the smart ways to reduce shopping cart abandonment:
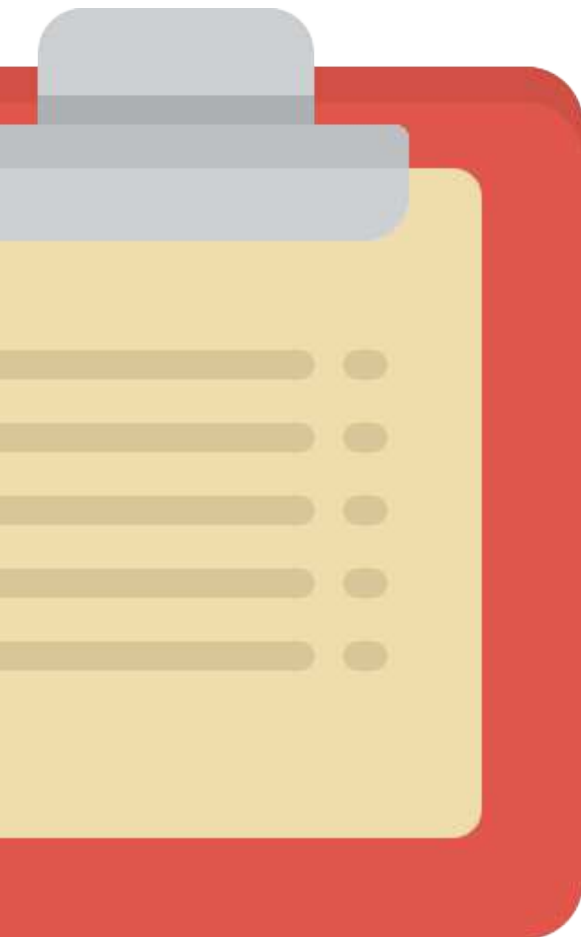
- User-friendly interface with simple navigation and checkout process.

- Send shopping cart abandonment emails.

- Valid SSL certificate or trust symbols.

- Offering price match guarantee.

- Guest checkout option.

Reasons of cart abandonment can be any/all of the following:

- Unexpected Shipping Costs.

- Having to create a user account/ absence of guest login option.

- Simply browsing without an intention to purchase.

- Concerns about payment security.

- Cumbersome checkout process.

- No coupon codes.

- Website crashes.

- Inadequate/lack of return policy.

- Little or no customer support.

Ways in which you can combat some of these barriers are:

- By including a progress indicator on checkout pages.

- By including thumbnail images of products throughout the purchasing phase.

- Putting a payment security guarantee sticker.

- Seamless navigation between cart and store.

- Multiple payment options.

- Including a CTA on checkout page.

WARBY PARKER    OPTICAL    SUNWEAR    HOME TRY-ON    LOCATIONS    OUR STORY                                    SIGN IN

**You have 1 item in your cart**
Free standard shipping and free returns on all orders

**Checkout**

**Crane**
*Atlantic Blue*
Single-Vision                                                    ⊗ Remove                    $95.00
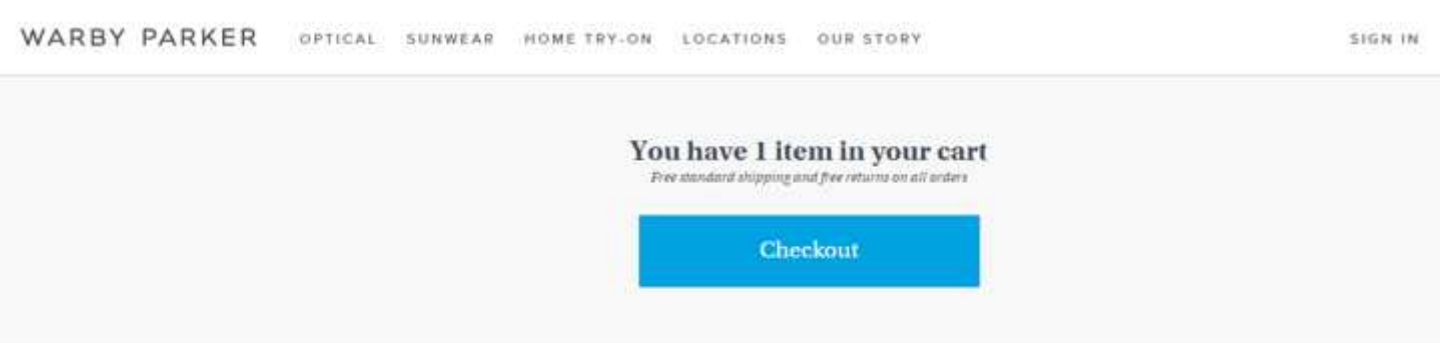
- Making saving carts effortless.

- Offering guest checkout options.

- Being transparent about all costs.

- Optimizing page load times and preventing crashes.

## 6- Automate Email Marketing

Automation of email marketing is essential to improving this game. Automating your entire email marketing strategy based on pre-set triggers will ensure that you send relevant and timely messages, delighting your customers. For instance, if a customer abandons his cart, an email can be triggered as per pre-defined conditions that will remind him about his cart and encourage him to go back to the site and complete the purchase. Perzonalization can do this for you. Once you automate your email marketing, an email automatically goes out as soon as someone trips the online trigger.

Such triggers can be any/all of the following:

- Welcome and onboarding.
- User activation.
- Shopping cart abandonment.
- Information and updates.
- Other helpful content.
- Renewal of subscription.
- Payment failure.
- Feedback and ratings.
- Offers based on Browsing behavior.
- Discounts on special occasions.
- Order confirmation.
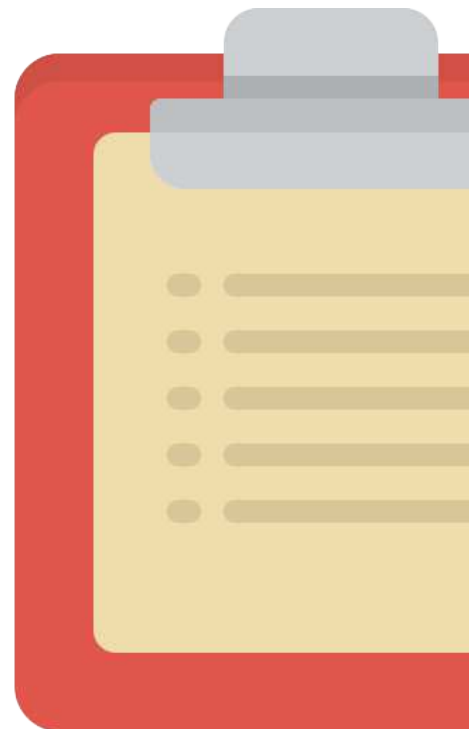
eCommerce stores worldwide have been rocking their sales with amazing email marketing campaigns.  Look at how One Kings Lane sends their subscribers an excerpt from their Style Guide:



Huckberry promotes their best selling products in their emails:

Bombass is a very good example of asking for referrals through their emails:

HERE'S WHAT WE THINK YOU SHOULD DO:

1. Refer Bombas to people you know
2. Those people place orders
3. Those people get a discount on their first order
4. You get free socks*
5. Every time, as many times as you want

No catch. Just people helping people discover the most comfortable socks in the history of feet.

HIGH FIVE!

REFER A FRIEND HERE

*FREE PAIR VALUED AT $11.00

## 7- Social Media Advertising

That your eCommerce store will have some social media presence is a given. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram make it very easy to find and get in touch with the people most likely to buy your products. With detailed targeting on these platforms you can be rest assured that you will reach the right audience. Apart from publishing relevant posts on your eCommerce social media pages and engaging with your fans and followers, social media advertising can prove useful because of the simple fact that it makes for targeted marketing.
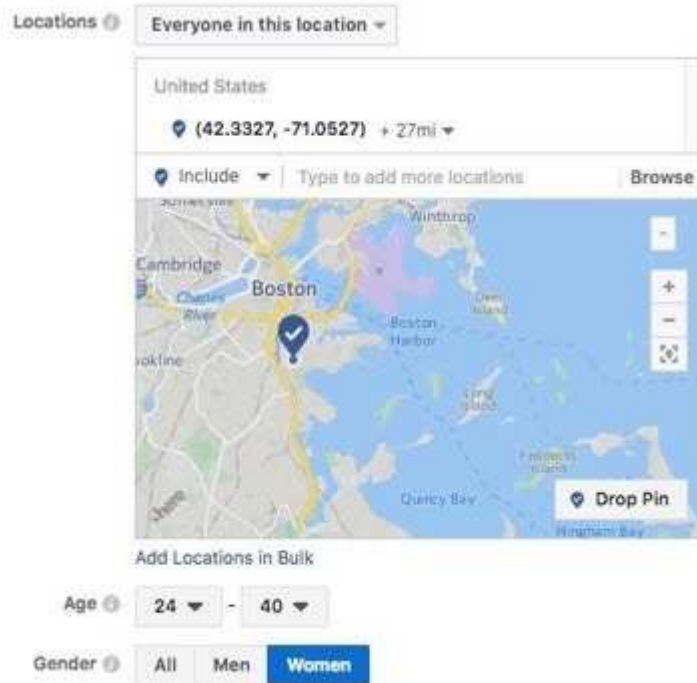
Remember to fill your ad copy and images with a local appeal – for example, taking product shots in local parks or even selling local products for that matter. Below is an example from a design and décor shop in Southie called *Neatly Nested*. They designed a Southie mug for locals to enjoy, and the ad was such a hit that they had to order more!
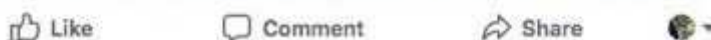
Few things which you need to remember in terms of social media marketing are:

- Optimize your social media posts.
- Use only relevant platforms.
- Share the right content at the right time and do that consistently.
- Publish positive customer reviews.
- Announce special discounts and offers.
- Use visual content as much as you can.
- Engage with followers.
- Use hashtags.

Facebook and Instagram now allows you to set shops on their platforms so that customers don't have to visit the website to buy what they like. So, using those shops can be useful for you. In today's world it's all about convenience for the customer. And social media platforms give them just that.

You can create a campaign based on demographics and interests. You can also instill loyalty with your existing customers by engaging with them. This helps building relationships with your audience. You can also use social media to reach your customers in real-time when they need you the most.

## 8- Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence is no longer an alien concept for eCommerce owners or businesses. Today business decision making has become all about data and there is an ever-increasing demand for measurable metrics. Conversion rate, bounce rate, engagement rate, website traffic etc. are all extremely important factors for online marketers; and this is where AI tools can be of considerable help. They enable you to not only gather, but also investigate data in real-time and track the way customers interact with your brand. AI facilitates better efficiency and competence. With the help of AI enabled tools, eCommerce owners can almost read the customers' minds which helps them to give their customers a memorable shopping experience.

An important weapon for eCommerce businesses, and very much a part of AI, chatbots go a long way in enhancing customer experience. You can use chatbots to communicate with customers in real-time and resolve their issues on multiple platforms.
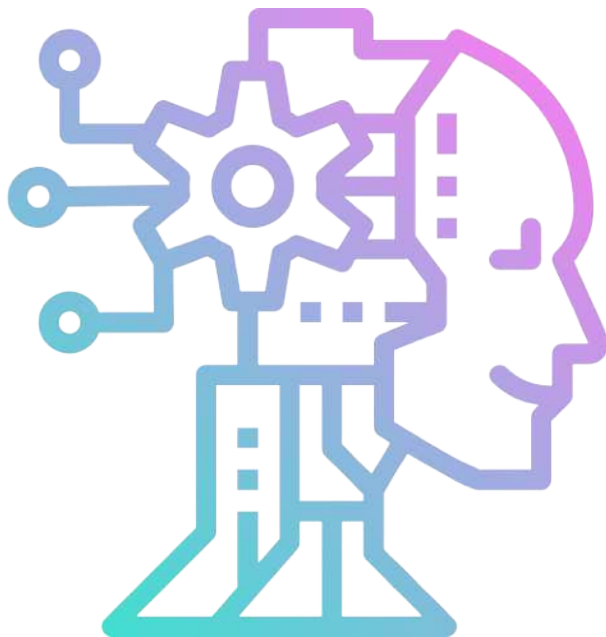
# THESE LESSER KNOWN MARKETING STRATEGIES

## Scarcity Marketing

Scarcity marketing is a marketing strategy that relies heavily on creating hype around your brand by emphasizing on the scarcity of a product/s. Creating a sense of urgency leads your customers to FOMO (fear of missing out). This uncertainty makes your brand to appear exclusive, and luxury brands with products of a higher price point often stand to gain from this because customers rush to make a purchase making them less concerned about the markup.

## Viral Marketing

As the name suggests, viral marketing is a product that becomes widespread (often accidentally — or, at least, it appears to be so). This increases the popularity of the product and it becomes a temporary trend as buyers continually refer it in their networks. One thing to remember here is although this can produce stellar sales results, the success is only temporary— unless you're a whizz at developing viral products continuously. Success in viral marketing is also often encouraged through celebrity endorsements; and this is where scarcity marketing and viral marketing sometimes overlap.

## Event Marketing

There is no better way to market your product than to grab your customer's attention by giving them an unforgettable experience? Event marketing is a method of either sponsoring, hosting or crashing an event to promote your brand. Event marketing is a smart way to build associative messages about your brand. You basically let your customers know what it feels like to interact with your brand.

## CONCLUSION

The e-commerce landscape is evolving. This means that the industry will get bigger and better in the coming years and new technological trends will make it more seamless. While keeping a track of emerging eCommerce technologies, avoiding SEO mistakes by employing the right tools, and optimizing your homepage and product pages are some of the things you can do to ensure that your customers have a good shopping experience. The above marketing strategies will hopefully provide a better value to you and make your business more successful in 2019 and beyond.
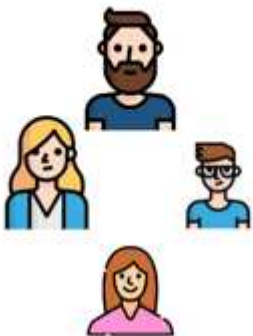
Are you a small online business owner?
Or a professional eCommerce manager?

It doesn't matter!

Get Perzonalization and start uplifting your profits!

START YOUR TRIAL NOW

# THANK YOU

Want more content on
eCommerce?

# DISCOVER

# PERZONALIZATION