



## Customer Case Study: Backcountry.com

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— David Richards, Senior Marketing Manager, Backcountry.com

With a mission of connecting people to their passions, Backcountry.com and its family of online specialty stores sell a wide array of high-end outdoor, action sports and bike gear. The company serves people who are as intense about their gear as they are about their adventures and carries nearly 1,000 brands and 50,000 products that are expertly curated for those discerning customers.



**backcountry.com**

### Retail Segment

Outdoor Specialty Retailer

### Challenge

Foster community and engagement with Backcountry customer by adding personalized online experience via recommendations

### Solution

RichRecs® personalized product recommendations implemented site-wide on Backcountry.com



### *Touching the Consumer Throughout the Shopping Cycle*

- To encourage additional navigation and repeat visits, Backcountry also employs recommendations in its promotional and transactional emails.
- With an average clickthrough rate of 18%, this additional customer touchpoint represent a solid baseline from which Backcountry.com intends to build its retention marketing efforts.

## Fostering Community Engagement and Relationships

Since day one, Backcountry has fostered strong relationships with its customers, and has earned widespread recognition for its on-site customer Community. The Community features gear-focused, user-generated content in the form of reviews, Q+A, photos, and videos. Personalized recommendations not only complement this focus on customer engagement, but are also a critical site element.

Delivering uniquely personalized online experiences for customers is paramount for Backcountry. Having previously partnered with another provider in the personalization space, Backcountry switched over to RichRelevance for its superior technology and partnership approach.

Dave Richards, Sr. Marketing Manager at Backcountry.com explains:

“Recommendations have always been a big piece of our site—presenting a cross-sell, upsell and merchandising opportunity for us. But with our previous recommendation vendor, we had a hard time finding resources to keep tabs on this on a daily or weekly basis. Management was needed to merchandise products and tweak algorithms. Moving to RichRelevance obviated the need for this daily monitoring. We didn’t have to get into the UI and could just have it do its thing.”

The dynamic personalization delivered by the enRICH Personalization Engine is the first commercial application of Ensemble Learning. The engine facilitates competition among 60 independent algorithms—each making use of different kinds of user behavior and catalog data—and decides in real time which algorithm is best matched to a particular customer’s needs at a specific place and time. In contrast, most recommendation systems leverage one highly complex algorithm for use across the entire customer base.

## Every Detail Matters when Community Members are Involved

RichRelevance’s personalized recommendations display the right products to the right customer at the right time, but they also do so in a way that is highly transparent and customizable. Recommendation messages always explain why a product is being recommended (i.e. “People Who Viewed This Ultimately Purchased...”), and retail partners have the option to customize messaging in a way that resonates with their target shoppers.

“We are driven by what customers are doing on our site, and will always emphasize community in the recommendation strategies we use. Therefore, we take all the standard strategies and use language unique to each brand’s site,” says Richards.

For example, Backcountry.com’s outdoor customer sees the recommendation message: “Community members who viewed XXX also viewed...,” whereas WhiskeyMilitia.com’s action sports customers see: “Other Peeps Peeped...”

## Recommendations Help Create a New Path for Site Navigation

Recommendations also helped forge an online customer path that meets another important business goal for Backcountry.

“Engagement and conversion are two important metrics we consider when it comes to personalization. We monitor click-through rates on recommendations, especially throughout different seasons. If CTR is high, we know we’re intriguing the customer and creating another navigation path for the online experience,” says Richards.

## Laser-Focused Partnership Drives Seamless Integration

When Backcountry sought to switch personalization vendors, it wanted a true partnership team comprised of ecommerce professionals it could count on. With a team of industry veterans who collectively have more than 30 years of experience in personalization, online commerce, data analysis and web products, RichRelevance fit the bill.

As Richards explains, “our project team was so great at managing the project and status, pushing through and keeping us on our toes. We had confidence that any implementation issues would always be addressed and moved forward. This, combined with a weekly call, ensured that key players on both sides were involved, and very little time elapsed before we were communicating again. It felt like a true partnership.”

The result? RichRelevance was live on nine Backcountry stores after a ten-week integration period. A sample of sites implemented include: Backcountry.com, DepartmentofGoods.com, SteepandCheap.com, and WhiskeyMilitia.com. Today, RichRelevance’s personalized recommendations comprise a critical element of Backcountry’s community engagement, providing the personalized interaction that the brand is known for.

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**Learn More**



[www.richrelevance.com](http://www.richrelevance.com)

[info@richrelevance.com](mailto:info@richrelevance.com)

415.956.1947