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# 50 eCommerce Growth Ideas For 2017

From 17 eCommerce Experts



Featuring



Paul Rouke



Brian Massey



Talia Wolf



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&



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# Intro

*“Where will growth come from in 2017? It will probably come from this book.”*

*Brian Massey*

During the holidays, 17 eCommerce experts from 8 countries, invested 60 hours of their time to write this ebook with 50 fresh growth ideas for your eCommerce. Based on the knowledge experts gained throughout time and the ability to envision what's going to be the next big move, this **Ebook** comes as a **game-changer** in the world of **eCommerce in 2017**. E-commerce experts such as **Brian Massey, Paul Rouke, Talia Wolf, Karl Gilis** and many more are covering topics like “mobile marketing”, “omni-channel” or “automated marketing”, which will help you be one step ahead of your competitors. The main reason to read this till the end is that the normal education is made online, directly connected with the business world. The speed is so high, that the academic world can't keep up the pace. So, before diving into the tasks of 2017, make sure you have fresh ideas to chew on.

Enjoy the ride!

Valentin Radu

CEO Omniconvert

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**Brian Massey**

Conversion Scientist™, Conversion Sciences

For 2017, it is no longer going to be good enough to have a conversion optimization program or growth team. It is not enough to do onsite testing. We believe that 2017 is the year of Everyday Data Science. The price of collecting and reporting behavioral data has dropped sharply over the past five years. This means more and more questions can be answered without guessing.

While big businesses will be choking on big data initiatives in 2017, winners will be integrating a little data into their everyday decision making.

Data can no longer be relegated to slides monthly department reports. It will be part of each decision. Those who can do this will win in their marketplaces.

In 2017, intuition will be paired with information. This will result in greater creativity and higher conversion rates. Here are three recommendations for eCommerce companies that want to profit from these trends.

**1. Send your marketing team to statistics class.**

If your team is going to use data every day, they need to be able to roll it into many different forms. They should be able to confidently combine data, knead it, roll it out and shape it into something they can bake into their decisions.

Ignorance breeds fear. Fear breeds neglect. Most digital marketers came out of a communications or marketing program. They may not see themselves as “mathy”. If your eCommerce business is going to keep up in 2017, they must be mathy.

Marketers must be discerning data consumers. They need to know when data is inconclusive and when it isn't. Marketing teams need to know how to collect data that gives reliable answers. They must be able to uncover data, correlate results and avoid bad decisions.

Enroll them in a course on Excel. Invite someone in to teach them eCommerce analytics. Hire an agency to work beside them and teach them the ropes.

## **2. Invite your Data Scientists to the Design Team meetings.**

Digital designers work solo too often. They work alone, as part of a small team, or are informed by small focus groups. Their decisions are made on small sample sizes, which means they are poorly informed.

A Data Scientist comes to a meeting with data on tens of thousands of actual prospects and customers. For almost any question, he can “ask” these visitors what they think.

Want to know how prominent should our site search be in a page design? He can tell you what percentage of visitors search and if they buy more.

Trying to decide between a brooding design or a light and airy look? Your Data Scientist can put both in front of thousands of visitors to answer that question.

Want to know which hero image to use on each category page? Your Data Scientist will help you pick the one that increases sales.

For almost every design decision you can imagine, there is some data available to help make the best decision. Let your Data Scientist and all of his friends help you out.

## **3. Become Good at Collecting Questions**

The best businesses steal from competitors and other websites with similar challenges. This is natural.

Every executive that has ever owned a computer believes he has great ideas about how the company website should look. This is unavoidable.

The fastest growing businesses don’t deal in ideas, though. They deal in questions. Ideas are cheap, but answers are precious. And we don’t get answers without asking good questions.

“We should feature our high-profit products at the top of the home page!” exclaims the executive. He may be right. The best eCommerce company will turn this into a question.

“If we feature our high-profit products at the top of the home page, will the website generate more profit?” This is a question that can be answered by a competent Data Scientist. She knows that highlighting high-profit items may cannibalize sales of other products. The result could be higher sales of these profitable products, but a lower overall profit for the business.

Become a collector of questions. Convert every idea into a question and determine if you can answer it with evidence. Start with analytics. If the answer isn't there, consider asking a panel. Run an eye-tracking study, five-second test or do a quick survey. If you still don't have an answer, consider an AB test to find out once and for all.

There are no bad ideas. There are bad questions. Curate and collect questions that you can answer and for which the answers could lead to growth.



**Chloë Thomas**

Author & Podcast Host, eCommerce MasterPlan

#### **4. Listen to your customers**

In every way possible and use that to determine what you do. That means looking at their actions (your stats) to see what does and doesn't work. Regularly reading customer service correspondence and reviews and acting on what you learn to make the systems and products better. If you can get the customer experience right you will grow.

The icing on the cake with this is to survey your email database (without an incentive) and include an open-ended question like “Why do you like {insert product category here e.g. ‘chocolate’, ‘holidays in France’}”. Hopefully, your customers will give you long answers, then take all that text and put into a word cloud tool where the more a word is used, the bigger it is. This will give you a visual representation of what's important to your customers. Then use this in your copywriting AND to pick the subjects for your marketing – for blogs, emails etc.

## 5. Chase the money

Work out what brings in the orders, and focus on making it even better. That might mean looking into your marketing activity – what works? Can you do more with it? That might mean looking at your products – which are the best sellers? Can you get more of that sort of product? Is it always in stock? Are there products you should stop selling? That might mean looking at your website – which pages are helping generate sales? Which widgets and plugins are driving sales? That might mean looking at your sales channels – which marketplaces are working for us? Which international marketplaces are working? Does mobile work for us?

In each case look for the glimmer of success and see how you can make more of it. This also means you need to be quick to identify what is not working, and stop doing it – otherwise your budget and time are spread too thinly.

## 6. Do Email Better

Given we now have the knowledge, and technology that makes it affordable – it is depressing how many businesses still just send one message to the whole list and that is all they do. Not even a welcome email.

Customers are craving more relevant communications – so taking a few steps to make your email communications more relevant in 2017 will help you grow and beat the competition.

The first thing to do is to make sure you have the most basic sequences in place – Abandoned Baskets and Welcome Sequence.

Next take a look at your broadcast plans – are you putting the right messages in those emails? Can you improve it?

Finally – decide what sort of broadcast segmentation you want to do – it can be as simple or as complicated as you want, maybe:

1. Every week you send two broadcasts, one to buyers of women's clothes, one to buyers of men's.
2. Everyone gets everything apart from once a month when we send an email about that niche product category – then only people interested in that category get the email, the rest get a rest.
3. Everyone gets the same broadcast, but we've inserted a section which dynamically updates with products they're more likely to be interested in.





**Casey Armstrong**

Director of Marketing BigCommerce

## 7. Omnichannel

The companies that can sell seamlessly on their eCommerce website, different marketplaces and social sites (e.g. Amazon, eBay, Google Shopping, Facebook), and possibly to their customers in person with POS devices like Square are going to separate themselves from their competition.

The technology has finally caught up to the demand from those who run eCommerce shops now that you can manage inventory and fulfillment and marketing efforts across all aforementioned channels from your branded storefront for a true omni experience.

Imagine publishing items across Amazon and eBay and Facebook with the same or modified products, images, descriptions, and prices. These capabilities have never existed until recently. It was arguably our #1 priority at BigCommerce in 2016. Customers want to be able to shop anywhere on any device at any time. It is your job to provide them with that opportunity, which in turn will bring you loyal customers and more revenue.

## 8. Mobile

Last year, mobile search query volume finally surpassed desktop query volume. This is a big deal. A complaint from many across the web was mobile traffic converted poorly. E-commerce sites must now embrace this change and view it as an opportunity. Mobile is not going anywhere, but up. Store owners can now utilize products like PayPal Express and Apple Pay to optimize their checkout flow from “fat fingering” their name and address and credit card number to a simple 1-click checkout. It’s honestly amazing to see the speed of checkout with these.

In addition, with items like AMP, Google is signaling hard the importance of mobile speed and the mobile user experience. Regardless of your thoughts on AMP or implementing AMP, you must focus on the experience your customers have when navigating your website on mobile. As painful as it might be, test all purchase funnels from your phone to find spots to improve CRO.

**Guy English**

CRO &amp; Analytics Director McCann Connected

## 9. A fresh set of eyes is often the key to unlocking your potential

Simply put, repetition breeds familiarity.

The more that we do something or, the more time we spend somewhere the more familiar we become with our journey or surroundings.

Chances are if you are reading this, you spend a large percentage of your day in front of a computer, you'll have a smartphone in your pocket, and in the evening you're probably not far from a tablet. We are always connected, and born out of this we have a constantly evolving technical skillset.

Through our online and connected lifestyle, we learn how to navigate through websites, what the latest design trends are, what icons represent, where to expect particular information, etc. However, this is not representative of the population. One of the easiest traps to fall into is to not recognize your set of skills, experience and familiarity with something, and project this same knowledge base onto others – in our case, the customer or end user.

Something we see time and time again is a big brand decide they want to redesign a website or online experience. Their rationale may be solid – they may have pored over web analytics data and identified conversion blockers and opportunities to optimize. Nevertheless, more often than not the go-to point for the solution is to take the problem to their designers and developers (who perhaps created the initial 'problem') and ask for a solution.

Make no mistake. This can work – but is it an optimal solution? Not really, and for a couple of different reasons.

1. Your day-to-day designers are likely to know your website like the back of their hands and could get from A to B with their eyes closed. But also, it's human instinct to work within your comfort zone, so in this instance, the solution is likely to be one that fits within current preferences and capabilities, and one that is known to be easy to produce and implement

2. While there are often budget limitations with all activity - the potential rewards should be weighed up alongside this. Understand what is going on by looking at analytics data, but work to understand the why by talking to your consumers. It's quite simple. Optimize your website based on the problems your consumers are encountering – and design a solution based on resolving the issue.

More often than not, the biggest opportunities are staring you in the face.

While there are often budget limitations with all activity - the potential rewards should be weighed up alongside this. Understand what is going on by looking at analytics data, but work to understand the why by talking to your consumers. It's quite simple. Optimize your website based on the problems your consumers are encountering – and design a solution based on resolving the issue.

But just as importantly, try and avoid having the solution designed by those who will work on implementation. Focus on the UX. Otherwise, you will likely just implement a design change that doesn't even tackle the original problem.

Subject matter experts combined with real end users give a truly holistic viewpoint of a site's performance and opportunities and should sit central to your planning for 2017.

## **10. Don't treat marketing channels as individual silos**

The digital landscape is constantly evolving.

The 90's and early 00's were very much driven by Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), and since then we have seen bid-based Pay Per Click (PPC), Social Media, Mobile and now Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) evolve and become an essential part of a multi-channel strategy.

Each channel has grown and drawn prominence at different times and many brands have individual budgets for each activity. While historically this has ensured that there was a strong focus on each channel and each singularly measured by its own ROI; channel synergies are growing and as such it might be time for you to look at joining up each of the activities as part of an overarching strategy.

At McCann, we are finding with growing success that working with one budget and one common goal of increasing revenue means we can apply a flexible and fluid approach allowing us to dial up or down activity dependent on the short to medium term strategic needs.

Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) activity can work in some ways and can be fully scalable – but it is also a perfect way of uniting services. If you're not doing so already, look at how you can closely align any acquisition activity with CRO.

With Search (in particular PPC), we can see the search phrases that are driving traffic to the site – and we can interpret the intent behind these. It's not a case of one size fits all, and if we can determine a particular search phrase is transactional in its nature ("buy XYZ") then shouldn't we serve a different page to those with less intent? CRO activity delivers the insights and ultimately should deliver the optimized high performing page.

Unite both acquisition and conversion, and in doing so (if done correctly) you can optimize pages for higher spend acquisition campaigns – meaning you can increase your conversion rate, increase your ROI, and reduce your Cost of Sale (COS).

We are working with one brand in particular at the moment where we have one budget to cover both SEO and CRO. Both activities should be always-on, but naturally, there will always be peaks and troughs in what can be done due to other on-going activity. From an SEO point of view we invest more time building out content aligned to the wider marketing calendar and seasonality, while with CRO we go through a Discover; Design; Test/Validate cycle. By the nature of the activity, each month has a different level of required investment in time and money.

Having isolated budgets for isolated services can often mean you are investing in tasks and running activity that isn't always relevant just for the sake of justifying a role or a budget. Working with one budget and developing a strategy based on your exact needs means that you will work a lot more efficiently. In 2017 you could find by joining up your budgets, you could spend less, while delivering an awful lot more.

## 11. Pleasing the few can be a distraction for the many

Sometimes the biggest rewards can come from taking the boldest decisions.

It could seem reasonable to assume that the more options and choice that we give our visitors to engage, then the better our opportunities to capture and convert.

However, more often than not – the cleaner an experience, and the fewer number of distractions then the more likely it is we can get a conversion. One we see quite often – which can take a lot of convincing to try otherwise, is the prominence of promo code boxes.

“Have you got a promotional code?”

Unsurprisingly when we look at the web analytics for these sites, we see a large exit rate from the checkout page where this field is presented. It's not uncommon for us to see these fields with big bold labeling alongside the strongest CTA on the page.

Of course, if as a retailer you ever issue these codes then you need to have an easy way for the consumer to use them. However, if you give it a very prominent position, then you are giving a very easy reason for the consumer to stop and think.

“Should I have a promo code?”

“I don't have one, but perhaps I should go and look.”

If I have a promo code, I'll look for where I enter it. If I don't have a code then you don't have to shout in my face that I should have one!

It's not all doom and gloom – some visitors will go off-site and then return with a code, and complete the transaction. Some visitors will go off-site, not find a code but still return and complete the transaction. But there will be those who don't find a code and will not return as they no longer want to pay the full price, and there will be those who go looking but get hooked by a competitor.

The solution is not to remove the use of promo codes. They can be great for driving traffic, for persuading a transaction, and for retaining the consumer – but we need to look at alternative ways of utilizing them. As an added dimension,

nowadays the go-to place for promo codes is the voucher code sites – affiliates who receive a commission from a transaction.

Without careful management and tracking setup, you could end up losing out on a reduced sales value and the affiliate commission for a consumer who had already displayed a generous amount of intent to convert on your site already before you asked them if they had a code.

One of your biggest opportunities for 2017 could be from exploring an alternative approach to promo codes.

- It could be as simple as reducing the prominence of the field
- It could be that you have a list of promo codes on your site
- It could be that you introduce behavioral targeting, so you capture those abandoning the site
- It could be that you have customized and personalized checkout pages based on what you know about the consumer.

Or perhaps, each of the above. Promo codes have their place, but if you nail the execution, then you can win in two ways. By boosting your profit margins through higher sales values, and by reducing the commission you're paying out for consumers, you already had acquired.

### **Closing thoughts**

The web is awash with alternative points of view littered with confusing terminology, and with the digital world continuing to grow at a fast pace it could be easy not to know which direction to turn next. However, sometimes we just need to slow down and remember the basics.

- Base your online decisions entirely around your consumer and their needs
- Ask if you can spend your money more efficiently
- And just because someone else is doing it, it doesn't mean it's right



**Karl Gilis**

The G in AGConsult, Optimizer since 2001

## 12. Be unique

Can you pinpoint what it is that makes you unique in comparison with your competitors? And why your customers need to buy from you and not from your competitors? You can't? If you don't even know, why should other people care about you? Why should they buy from you? Just because you happen to have a web shop, like a million other companies? That's not how it works.

This is a core problem many websites are struggling with: they don't have a clear identity. Many sites are just mimicking stuff that already exists. They're nothing more than an unimaginative copy of another website.

But that's not the way to go. It is pointless to try to be another copy of Amazon, Booking.com, Zalando or another famous eCommerce player. Those websites already exist.

You need to develop your own identity.

- Are you the cheapest?
- Do you deliver the best service?
- Are you the shop that is the most helpful to guide visitors to make the best choice?
- Are you the only one in your niche who sells ecological products?
- Or the only one to sell only locally produced goods?
- Do you specialize in handmade products?
- Are you the shop that tests every product so that you can provide your visitors with real hands-on experience and advice?
- Or do you stand out because you have really funny product pictures on your website?

Integrate the thing that makes you stand out from the crowd in every step of the customer journey. From your blog posts to your product pages. In every step of your ordering process, your sales conditions and even your packaging.

In short: it should be everywhere.

Believe me. Uniqueness will become a crucial factor if you want your business to survive. Especially in highly competitive sectors.

### **13. Know why people buy your product or service**

The better you know the reasons why people are buying a product or service, the more you'll be able to sell that product or service in the future.

If you use that knowledge wisely, that is. Unfortunately, that's precisely where it goes belly up most of the time. Most companies or web shops haven't got a clue why people buy something. Do you know? Or you sure? Or do you only think you know it? That makes all the difference.

We once worked for an air conditioner manufacturer. In their brochures and on-line communication, the company focused on titanium air filters, superior insulation and more of those highly technical specifications.

Then we asked their customers why they bought an air conditioning installation of that particular brand. Their main reasons for buying? It's the quietest air conditioner on the market, and the design makes it blend into the background so you can hardly see it.

Not one client mentioned the titanium air filter or any of the other fancy tech stuff.

So there you are.

- You need to find out what your customers' intention and motivation is.
- What are the conscious and unconscious criteria that influence their decisions?
- What do they want to achieve by buying your product?
- Which problems do they want to solve?
- What are their concerns about your product?



Finding the answers to these questions is the key to success. How do you find them? Well, that's easy: by asking your customers!

Some questions you might ask them:

- What convinced you the most to buy this product from us?
- What's the one thing that nearly stopped you from buying from us?
- What would you miss most if X broke down / if we took away X?

Use your customers' answers in the copy on your web pages. I guarantee you will sell more, because your customer will realize that you know what his problems are. His fears. His dreams. His hope. Understanding your visitors builds trust. And trust is what makes people buy from you. Another example?

One of our clients sells carports. This company also put technical features in the spotlight. The materials, the way those materials were treated, how durable the carports are, etc.

Then we asked their customers what they would miss most if we tore down their carport. They told us things like:

- That I can unload my groceries without getting wet.
- That I don't need to de-ice my car windshield when it's freezing.
- I would need to go to the carwash more often.

We replaced the technical features on our client's new landing pages with exactly those fears:

- Not looking forward to scraping the ice off your windshield this winter?
- Tired of unloading your groceries in the pouring rain?
- Do you hate having to go to the carwash every two weeks?

What happens then is: your visitor start nodding yes. "Yes, this website gets me. Yes, this website understands my problems." The result for our carport client? Requests for offer went up 73%. Not with changing the design of the page. But by meeting the dreams and fears of your target audience.

## 14. Pick the right color for your call-to-action!

As we all know: the best color is fuchsia. Or wait a second. You thought it was green? Orange, maybe? You're quite naive if you believe that there are fixed rules that tell you exactly what works on a website. That would mean there is a secret recipe to turn every website in the world into a conversion machine. There is no such recipe.

You need to find out what works best for your website, your product range and your target audience. Based on universal principles, but applied to your specific situation. So what is the universal principle for button colors?

You need to make sure your call-to-action buttons stand out. Don't use the same color that is omnipresent on your site because it's the fundament of your corporate identity. Pick a color that's unique and eye-catching. But the most important thing is: take my two previous tips to heart.

Because the color of your call-to-actions won't matter one damn bit if you don't have a real identity. Or if you're clueless about your target audience's implicit and explicit motivations. Because nobody will want to buy from if you don't care about visitor intent.

Good luck!



**Keith Hagen**

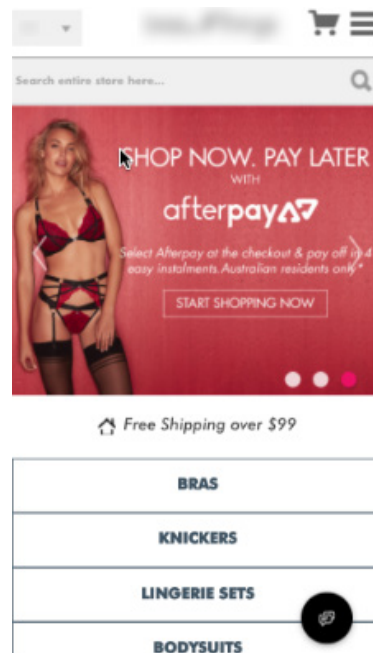
VP of Conversion Services

## 15. Free Your Mobile Menu

Don't hide your navigation behind a Mobile menu. If you do, people will never know what the navigation is unless they click the menu, and I guarantee, most people will try to navigate via the page they landed on (i.e. Homepage), and FAIL before they even try the Menu button.

So, there are two things you can do to facilitate (aka Relieve) navigation on Mobile Phones, or any device really:

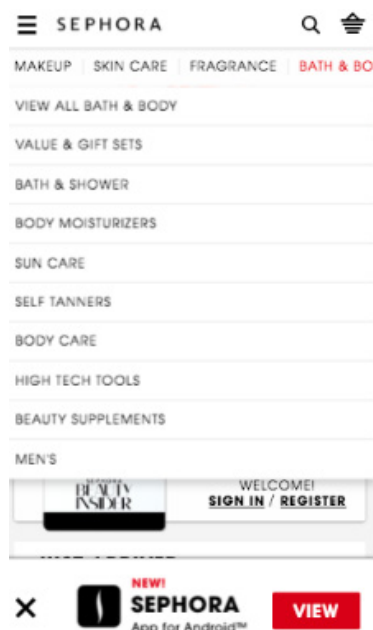
1. Place navigation on the homepage that reflects the menu navigation. Go ahead and promote those special special all day long, but leave prime real estate on the homepage so people can navigate.



2. Test giving your mobile site the same top navigation and Mega Menu style as your Desktop site. That is right. You read it. Just to be clear, let me say it again: “Test giving your mobile site the same top navigation and Mega Menu style as your Desktop site.”

Look, navigating on Mobile sucks, and the menu thing was figured out years and years ago on Desktop, so why re-invent the wheel here. I know, I know, you are saying “But Keith, Mobile is different, it’s smaller than Desktop. I don’t have the room!” To this I say “it’s 2017, you have the room” and here is how:

Take a look at Sephora’s Mobile site, and how it uses both a top nav menu and drop- down mega-ish menus. All it does to make “room” for mobile browsers is allow users to scroll to the right.



We have tested this type of navigation and it rocks. In fact, you may be able to eventually lose the “hamburger” menu entirely.

## 16. Appify your Site

It's been abundantly clear for years that eCommerce site apps (not brick & clicks specific) were going to go away in favor of better websites. In fact, for a while, an eCommerce app's only purpose was to push notifications to users because it was possible.

Now, with a few mobile-first strategies, an eCommerce site can appify itself so most of the benefits of having an app are there (Psst, it's all about getting them back to your site).

### 1. Homescreen your site (Mobile & Tablet)

Instead of promoting an app download at the top or bottom of your mobile eCommerce site, simply change the wording to “Add Us to Your Phone” with a button “Add Now”. When a user clicks, your site's Favicon will be added to the phone's home screen as if they instantly installed an app from the app store.

This has a lot of benefits:

- Your brand just got put on something that a prospective customer looks at 40 times a day, reminding them that your exist.
- It gives them instant access to get back to the store without having to open a mobile browser and retype your site's URL.
- You will get "cool points" for doing it when no other site can.
- You can use it strategically on Product pages as a bookmark.
- You can give the return URL tracking code to see how much revenue it can be associated with (and skinny down the inflated Direct channel in Google Analytics).

## 2. Push Notifications via Chrome & Firefox (All Devices)

More than half of mobile users have Chrome as their main browser, and a few use Firefox Mobile. This means you can notify them using Push notification tools like PushCrew from Wingify. Tools like this not only solve a problem on Mobile, but they also work brilliantly on Desktop and Tablet as well, allowing you to notify more people than ever... without having to build and maintain mobile apps.

## 3. Bookmarklets (Desktop & Tablet)

Bookmarks are back, and they convert really freak'n well. Unlike the old days (think 1999) when "Bookmark this page" links were needed to help users learn how to be online, today's generation of bookmarks are there to assist online shoppers weed out the stuff they might want from the stuff they don't want.

Below is a simple button I use for eCommerce product pages.



This has a lot of benefits:

- Your site's favicon get's put on the user's desktop and mobile browser bar, staying front center for weeks, perhaps months and years to come so users can remember and get back to YOUR product on YOUR site easier.
- Its cool to drag and use.
- You can track it with Analytics so you can see its impact (it will be significant if your product factors high for consideration time).

## 17. Add PayPal Already

I don't want to tell you to get PayPal. I don't want to tell you that adding it as a payment method is important, or that it makes people feel safe, or it is highly appreciated for its convenience. So, I won't. I will just tell you how to do it right so your attempt to implement it does not go down the tubes as a wasted and expensive effort.

I want you to implement PayPal like everyone else, THEN cover these two bases:

1. Leverage the PayPal App - If someone has it installed on their phone, ensure the app is used to checkout and don't force them through an online experience. The App converts higher.
2. When the user comes back to the site from PayPal, let them know that their PayPal payment has been applied.



**Michael Stricker**

Lead Consultant MSDesign

## 18. Win the World One Location at a Time

78% of Local Mobile Searches result in a Purchase – most in a few hours (73% of those occur in-store) ~ comScore 2016

Search Queries of Commercial Intent via smartphone (now the U.S. majority) are interpreted as having Local Intent. Mobile-dominant positions are awarded to Etailers of Local Authority. Boost organic visibility, using:

- Citations - NAP, hours, directions, URL. Reviewers should cite their own name, address.
- Google My Business data - DIY. Get FREE help: Google Local Guides help claim, verify and optimize your GMB account.
- Google Knowledge Graph Panels
- On-Site Local Expertise, Authority, Trustworthiness - Enhance text content. Be considerate of shopper's time... driving directions, major thoroughfares, where to park, nearby food.
- Local links - Demonstrate local connectedness (per Google Pigeon). Link out to transit, maps. Seek inbound links from local resources, guides, event calendars, chambers, sports, entertainment, real estate, education and training facilities.

- Reviews and Ratings - Original. Trustworthy. In GMB and directories. Use Schema on-site.

55% of teens and 41% of adults use voice search on a daily basis. <https://googleblog.blogspot.com/2014/10/omg-mobile-voice-survey-reveals-teens.html> ~ Google 2014

- Keywords

"Near me" search queries set new records. Answer "5 W's" questions.

Cite relevant location(s), neighborhoods, landmarks, highways.

Use regional dialect for products e.g. athletic shoes, or sneakers?

- Targeting

Target age, gender, income in on-page text, design and writing style. Use consistent voice. Target day/time to get lunch crowds or weekends. Tout major highways and public transit convenience.

## 19. GMB FTW

88% smartphone users conduct local searches, dominated by queries about hours, directions/address, and product availability. ~ Ipsos Survey 2014

In a Mobile-First world, Google displays Maps and Google Shopping PLAs first and foremost for product-oriented searches. This buries AdWords and hides organic listings.

Google My Business unlocks Paid Search Optimization. GMB enables Business Owners to manage their Verified listing, and that unlocks:

Local SEO Maps Optimization

- AdWords Local Extensions
- Link your GMB account to AdWords to gain access to present:

address

phone

hours

ratings

- Google Local Search Ads on Maps
- Paid "Search items at this store" snippet in Local Knowledge Panel
- Google Promoted Pins on Maps
- Google Shopping with Local Inventory

Enhancements

- Targeting

Paid Ads can target age, gender, (Facebook can target race, now), income, days of the week, time of day, location, even dynamically, by weather or prior purchases.

- Trusted Geo-Local Data - Tweak Google, Bing and Apple Map Markers... boost likelihood of Voice Search mentions via Google Now, Apple Siri.
- Ratings and Review Ad Extensions & Snippets - Paid Sitelinks Extensions can point to on-site Reviews.
- Social geo-relevance > Rich Cards in Carousels - Optimize social network profiles for location. Incorporate local media links, news, place name references. Promote into local Groups.
- PLA Local Inventory - Ecommerce Product Listing Ads dominate shopping query results. Local Inventory ads help shoppers decide where to go and buy. Google prefers their natural relevance.

## 20. The Need for Speed

Users must stay, to pay. Even beautiful 100% mobile-friendly responsive designs can still be so slow that:

- bounces deplete visitors
- abandonment reduces conversions.

Mobile Speed goes beyond Mobile Friendliness to ensure good User Experience. Conduct a Conversion-minded MOBILE SPEED test of your major page types...

- Home
- Trust
- Category/Sub-Category
- Product/Service
- Conversion funnel order and forms pages

Test Ad Landing Pages especially, because repelling traffic you've paid for is a waste of ad budget. Analyze that Speed and Mobile report with thorough knowledge of where the best ROI lies.

Free Test Tools:

Think with Google Mobile-Friendly and Speed Test

<https://testmysite.thinkwithgoogle.com/>

WebPageTest.org

<https://www.webpagetest.org/>





**Michal Leszczynski**

Content Marketing Manager GetResponse

## **21. Automate and personalize your communication**

If you want to scale your business quickly, but at the same time maintain the personal feel of a brick-and-mortar store, you'll need to integrate personalization with marketing automation.

With a growing customer base, it's impossible for a human being to keep up with their individual preferences and needs, monitor their behavior, and react to it with valuable content. If on the other hand, you use automation workflows and dynamic content, you'll be able to serve the right information to the right people, as frequently as they want to receive it.

Start small with welcome emails, onboarding cycles, birthday emails, or topic campaigns. Learn from those, observe the results, and use them to set up more advanced scenarios that will allow you to deliver valuable information to a much larger audience.

This should leave you enough time to focus on producing even more useful content and product offering. At the same time, automation can shorten your sales cycles and help you qualify your leads better, so that the sales team can reach out to prospects with a well-tailored offer.

## **22. Think content**

Barriers to entering an eCommerce business tend to be relatively low these days. With the existence of dropshipping services and SaaS eCommerce platforms, you can get started in almost no time. At the same time, joining the price competition makes sense only if you have enough scale to live off low-profit margins.

That's why if you want to be in the game for longer than just a few seasons, you'll want to build a strong brand and attract as many visitors to your site as possible.

Paid advertising will certainly be useful for acquiring new leads, but at the same time, you should focus on factors that will work for you without having to keep investing money in them.

Creating valuable content that your customers crave is the best way to go. It will get you loyal visitors, brand advocates, and engaged customers that will be happy to interact with you in social media.

People buy from people; they buy from brands that appear human to them. That have a story to tell, not just products to sell. Consider what your customers want to hear and how they want it to be served, then do so, analyze, and evaluate. And always keep delivering an even better experience.

### **23. Offer seamless experience across all channels**

Every year we hear that mobile is changing the way we consume and share information. If you look into your own metrics, you'll notice that it's not just an empty phrase that marketers like to repeat on conferences. That's why if you want to grow your business quickly, you'll want to make sure that the way people experience your brand is seamless across all channels.

Think of all the steps your audience has to go through before they can make a purchase. Entering your site, checking the product categories, signing up for a newsletter to get a discount, following you on social media, clicking on your re-targeting ad on another website, trying to find the opening hours of the nearest brick-and-mortar store – you'll notice that your users are likely to cross the different channels a number of times before they make their final decision.

You've already invested in getting them inside of your funnel so you won't like it when they fall out. That's why you have to make sure that their experience is perfect throughout the entire journey.

Don't make them re-enter a long password on their mobile phone, or provide X number of answers in your sign-up form. Keep the product browsing and check-out process as simple as possible, so they'll keep coming back for more.

**Paul Rouke**

Founder &amp; CEO PRWD

## **24. Focus on the four pillars of conversion optimization to drive digital transformation**

Retailers looking to grow should focus on the four pillars of conversion optimization: strategy & culture, tools & technology, people & skills, process & methodology. Investing in each of these areas collectively and connecting them together will provide brands with the foundations to drive digital transformation. From developing a growth mindset and moving from product-led to customer-led thinking, to developing an intelligent methodology for optimization (to drive consistent and significant improvements to the user experience), retailers will need to understand and appreciate the importance of building the right foundations before chasing growth.

To help retailers get a start on building their foundations, PRWD's Conversion Optimisation Maturity Audit™ self-assessment tool at [www.CROmaturityaudit.com](http://www.CROmaturityaudit.com) provides retailers with a 10-minute assessment across these four pillars.

- Businesses and decision makers need to understand that A/B testing (and experimentation in all forms) isn't just something you need to do (because everyone else is), or just a marketing box that needs to be ticked. It's so much more than that. There are five levels of maturity in conversion optimization, which highlights the vast opportunity for businesses to improve their approach to conversion optimization:
- Beginner level - Your business strategy is starting to move towards conversion optimization, and you want to know how to build an effective process
- Aspiring level - Your business has established the foundations for using intelligent conversion optimization to become a customer-centric brand.
- Progressive level - Your business understands that intelligent conversion optimization is at the core of business growth, and you are already feeling its impact
- Strategic level - Your business is using intelligent conversion optimization to both optimize and deliver strategic enhancements to your online user experience, leading to noticeable business growth
- Transformative level - Your business is in the elite field: intelligent, data-driven conversion optimization is central to your growth plans, you are definitely customer-centric, and you are outperforming your competition.

Most businesses have a fixed mindset; as in they continue doing things the way they always have; investing in the same way, growing their business the same way and focusing on short-term activities. In my experience, hardly any businesses have a [growth mindset](#), which is defined by embracing change, acknowledging unpredictability in the marketplace, accepting and learning from failure and planning for long-term sustainable success.

The combination of bringing more humility into businesses, becoming truly customer-centric, developing a test and learn culture and running A/B tests across the full spectrum of testing (iterative, innovative, strategic), will all play a part in helping to change the mindset of the business.

## **25. Focus more on your customers**

As more businesses invest A/B testing built upon research and the understanding of user behaviour, they will begin to evolve from being what they have always been (product-led), to becoming a more customer-led business. In retail especially, the old rules of promoting the product you want your customers to buy are dead. The role has reversed; in order to stay competitive (and ultimately, grow), retailers need to understand what their customers want and meet that expectation. Brand loyalty doesn't exist anymore and all bets are off. Those retailers that focus on their customers will win the Lion's share. Those that stick to the 'old way' will soon die out. For the long-term health of retailers, now really is the time to becoming customer-centric. It perplexes me how user research is still the most undervalued (and underutilized) technique brands consider using to understand their customers.

From the intelligent use of online user research tools (such as HotJar), to investing in remote and moderated user research, retailers need to start doing what high growth brands do: listen to their customers. With the cost of many research tools being so low, there is simply no excuse for businesses to not open themselves up to invaluable user behavior insights

In my experience, businesses who don't listen to (and value) the ideas and opinions of their internal team are highly likely to not value the importance of listening to the ideas and opinions of their customers. Therefore, businesses need to first to establish more open-mindedness and humility within their business, providing their team with opportunities to share their very best (often hidden ideas), on how the business can improve its customer experience. Business cultures will evolve and embrace more experimentation, more people should harness the re-invented HIPPO: Humility, Integrity, Passion, Positivity and Open-mindedness.

## 26. How to evolve from simple A/B testing to strategic conversion optimization

In my book, 'The Growth Strategy That's Being Ignored', I asked 16 industry thought leaders one question: "What is holding companies back from growing through conversion optimization?" Starting with Bryan Eisenberg's quote, "CRO should not be seen as a tactic – it needs to be embedded in the culture", through to Craig Sullivan talking about how little impact conversion optimisation is having within businesses, "I think that there is a Gartner Hype Cycle for A/B testing and that many companies end up stuck in the unproductive part, doing testing that doesn't shift the needle or more significantly, isn't teaching you anything for the effort", it is clear that, globally, brands aren't taking conversion optimisation seriously enough.

As we head into 2017, one of the biggest misconceptions people still have about A/B testing is that it's simply about testing different buttons, headlines, copy and images. These types of tests (defined as 'iterative tests') are at the start of what I call the full spectrum of A/B testing. Moving beyond iterative testing, there is innovative testing (which involves more comprehensive and bolder UX changes to enhance the customer experience) and at the top end of the spectrum is strategic testing; these typically involve UX changes which have been designed to transform brand perception, brand proposition and most importantly, support long-term growth aspirations.

It is essential that the development team is engaged in conversion optimization. A/B testing isn't about giving them a few lines of JavaScript to get the testing tool setup on your website (then leaving them to get on with their day job). No, conversion optimization is a business-wide opportunity that everyone should be engaged in. The reality is that as soon as you want to start embracing the full spectrum of A/B testing, you need your back-end developers to assist in building these more complex tests.

Retailers need to start embracing the full spectrum of A/B testing by becoming bolder. They will need to begin utilizing more in-depth user insight and rethink how they typically go about redesigning their online experience, which will ultimately help to shape the strategic direction of their business (from being product-led, to customer-led).

**Polly Flinch**

Director of Marketing Windsor Circle

## **27. Predictive Marketing**

Beyond just generally saying retailers need to be doing predictive marketing, what I really mean is retailers need to figure out how to layer predictive data into their already existing marketing strategies to better connect with their consumer base.

Retailers who take the initial steps to add in dynamic product recommendations or optimize campaigns based on data points, such as predicted order date or replenishment date, if you're a seller of consumable goods, are going to start winning in the retail space.

In fact, according to the 2016 Predictive Marketing Report, retailers who are incorporating predictive marketing into their existing strategy are seeing, anecdotally, increases across the board from sales to conversions to the ability to better manage inventory based on predictive data.

## **28. Data Validation: Go Beyond Just Email Verification**

Going hand and hand with predictive marketing is the, not as exciting, but still just as important, job of making sure your data is accurate and clean. When and if you decided to work with a technology solution to get access to your data, it's imperative to ensure your data is hooked up correctly and that the data you're receiving is, in fact, valid.

Retailers have many different tools and solutions that they plug data from their eCommerce site into every day. To be clear, I don't mean whether or not your email list is correct or shipping information is valid, although these are important as well, I'm talking about the way a retailer sets up their pages on the back end. This can have a profound effect on the health and clarity of the data that is being received by any one of a retailer's many solutions.

Clean data leads to precise analytics and precise analytics leads to better predictive modeling capabilities, which in turn leads to more relevant and personalized marketing on a mass scale, which leads to higher conversions and repeat sales.

## 29. Take Your Data On The Road: Go Omni-Channel

Now that you have clean data and you're delving into the realm of predictive marketing, you have a unique opportunity to use key data points to create an omni-channel strategy.

After you've amped up your email marketing strategy, take all the data you've gathered and use it to create retargeting ads for your browse abandoners, look-a-like campaigns based on your biggest spenders or best customers, geographically aligned advertisements based on your best selling products in certain regions, etc.

The theme across all three of the opportunities I believe retailers have in 2017 is data, with access to data and a solid predictive model, you have the ability to create campaigns that will resonate with macro and micro segments of your consumer database to turn more of your customers into repeat purchasers, and, ultimately, evangelists.



**Sunir Shah**

CMO Olark live chat

## 30. Reflect on 2016 to plan for 2017

It's tempting to take a vacation and leave after the busy holiday shopping season, and you should. But first take an hour with your team to reflect on the holiday shopping season, and the year as a whole to prepare for 2017.

At Olark we use a template for project reflection, which asks 3 basic questions:

1. What went well? – List the positives: people who excelled, processes that worked, etc. It could be meta (We were exhilarated with all the sales!) or very specific (The new checkout page successfully reduced shipping questions).
2. What did not go so well? – List the negatives. Here, be critical and honest, but remember not to make it personal. Criticize the work, not the people.
3. What should we do differently next time? Now's the chance to make an improvement. If a great idea dawned during the project, capture it now!

Then prioritize what immediate action items you can achieve next. These aren't big projects, but specific tactical things you can do to create momentum for change.

### **31. Delight customers**

Customers are people too. And what people want even more than affordable, quality products are human relationships. Whether you're selling something that is transactional or you're trying to build long-term retention with your customers, the intention is the same. Delighting customers after the sale with something human helps customers think of you as a company of people and not just a credit card transaction.

- Saying "Thank you" is a good start. A simply personalized 'thank you' email is a good start. You can go further. In the email, include a heartfelt "thank you" video, showing your human side. The holidays are a great time to do this. If you donate to charity, you may want to tell customers why their sale helps support a worthy cause.
- Surprise and delight. The most likely time you'll get referrals is after customers receive their package. An amazing unboxing experience moves mountains. So, add a surprise gift during fulfillment that shows your personality, like stickers or branded socks or candy. Everyone loves getting free things, especially if they are fun, and it's memorable and remarkable.
- Build a members club. Your best customers will want to stay in the loop and get rewarded for loyalty. Fortunately, creating your own loyalty program is much easier than you think now that you can buy a high-quality loyalty and rewards program service like Sweettooth off the shelf.

### **32. Get sales people in front of your online customers**

Consumers are very comfortable now thinking of your website as the actual store and they expect the full retail experience. That means they expect sales agents available directly on your website. They do not want to phone in or wait for an email response.

Customer demand for live chat is growing.

- 44% of online consumers rate live chat as one of the most important website features. (Forrester. Making Proactive Chat Work)
- 63% of customers were more likely to return to a website that offers live chat. (Emarketer. How Helpful Is Live Chat?)



And results are easy to demonstrate:

- “Olark increased our conversion rate by 4.5% within a 95% degree of confidence.” (Tzvi Balbin, Userlicious)
- Ez-texting saw a 31% increase in sign ups just by putting live chat on the page.

However, in 2017, live chat is changing in 2 big ways.

1. Be direct. You will see more companies showcase their sales team by putting a call to action to talk to chat agents directly in the product listings, just like Apple:

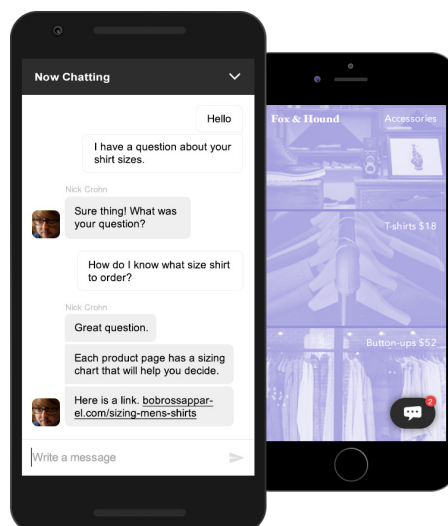


11-inch MacBook Air

 Need help? Chat live now

2. Mobile-friendly live chat. Mobile browsing has tipped over. comScore gleefully announced that all digital growth is now coming from mobile. When it comes to browsing by device, mobile now outstrips desktop 2 to 1.

Consider that bounce rates on mobile are 10-20% higher than desktop. This is why there is a big push to get sales agents on your mobile sites. That's why 2017 is the year to implement mobile-friendly live chat like the new Olark mobile-friendly live chat, called Hummingbird.



Olark's new mobile-friendly live chat, Hummingbird

Sunir Shah is the CMO of [Olark live chat](#). He wins markets through engineering and bad dancing. Olark helps you get in front of customers to answer their questions and guide the sale while they are still on your website.



**Susannah Morris**

Ecommerce Marketing Manager HubSpot

### **33. Personalization**

In 2017, personalization will be table stakes for eCommerce companies. Gone are the days when personalization only meant being a first name basis with your customers over email. Customers expect a hyper-personalized eCommerce experience across channels that is tailored to both their interests and where they are in the buying cycle.

If you're taking a one-size-fits-all approach to your email marketing strategy, you're likely to see declining open and clickthrough rates, which will impact your sales. Instead, you should be leveraging marketing automation to help you provide these individualized buyer experiences at scale. You can set up emails that are targeted to each shopper's behavior and interests, which ultimately will help you drive more revenue as they engage with your contextual communications.

2017 is also your opportunity to take a step beyond email personalization. Now is the time to invest in developing a dynamic onsite experience that shows relevant and timely products and offers to each and every buyer. Next level personalization and automation need to be a core part of your growth strategy in 2017.

### **34. Develop a Pre-Transactional Conversion Strategy**

The majority of first-time website visitors are not ready to purchase. But eCommerce companies still focus most of their marketing efforts on visitors who are ready to buy immediately – and don't take advantage of the bulk of their website traffic.

In 2017, it will be even more critical to provide conversion opportunities before the checkout to capture the information of the buyers who aren't yet ready to make a purchase. By capturing the contact information of these undecided buyers, you can subsequently nurture them into a sale by providing them with a personalized and relevant experience.

A conversion before the checkout (or “pre-transactional” conversion) is any conversion opportunity on your website before the purchase – the most common ones are signing up for email updates or subscribing to a blog. By providing something that your visitor finds valuable, like helpful content, they’re willing to share information you find valuable, like contact and preference information. Placing these conversion opportunities on highly trafficked pages on your website will help you grow a database of contacts to continue to engage with through email and automation, to eventually nurture into a purchase.

### **35. Focus on Customer Lifetime Value**

In 2017, completing checkout is only the beginning. Instead of tunnel vision on acquisition, you should expand your ecommerce focus to include customer retention. After all, if they’ve purchased from you once, they’re likely to purchase from you again – as long as they were happy the first time!

The first step of a strong retention strategy is keeping an eye on customer experience throughout your buyer’s journey. Are you slamming them with emails that aren’t relevant to their interests? Is shipping information impossible to find on your website? Does your customer service email go into a black hole where no one ever responds? All these little things add up to a less than stellar experience, which means those shoppers won’t be back.

Next, you need to follow up post-purchase to stay top of mind for your buyers. While it may be too soon to be showing them the next product they might want to purchase, engage with them in other ways. Share a user guide or fitting guide so they can start seeing value from your products right away. Ask for a review or to share user-generated content on social media. When the time comes to make another purchase, your company will be ahead of the rest.

**Talia Wolf**

Conversion Optimization Expert

### 36. Changing your perception of CRO

In order to truly grow your business and make the most of the CRO process, in 2017 businesses have to stop treating conversion optimization as a bunch of tactics that improve one single KPI. Conversion optimization is not about getting more newsletter subscriptions or downloads.

Instead of running meaningless AB tests on your call to action buttons, headlines or bullet points, your goal should be to use AB testing and conversion optimization to:

1. Understand your customer's intent and current challenges
2. Build a better customer experience ( e.g. - product pages or shopping carts) that address those needs
3. Test them and constantly learn through CRO how you can further optimize the process for your customers to help them achieve their goals (which will help you achieve your own → sell more).

Done well (as mapped out above), conversion optimization can drive true scalable growth within a company that is worth a 1000X more than another minor uplift in sales.

This change in perception of CRO can provide a powerful process for completely transforming your business and optimizing everything from the ad that your visitor sees to the landing page, product page, thank you page and most importantly your retention process.

### 37. Optimize for your customer, not yourself

Finding the leak in the funnel is easy - addressing it is something else. Once you define what needs to be fixed, you need to then understand why and how to fix it.

In order to truly optimize your site, fix those leaks for the long run and grow your sales you need to optimize your entire online strategy and make it about the customer.

Every customer that arrives on your site is there to solve a challenge they have. Whether if it's to find something to wear, buy car insurance, or purchase a heavy SAAS product for their team - every visitor that comes to your site is expecting you to solve that challenge. Only once you help your visitors achieve their goals, find the solution to their problem and remove that friction within your customer journey, will you achieve your own goals and convert more. In order to solve your customer's challenges, you need to make sure every single element on the page or funnel focuses on them.

Every piece of content, image, color, testimonial or other element in your customer journey should immediately show the customer:

- What's in it for them.
- How this will solve their challenge

Remember, it's not about you, your product or your amazing prices - it's about your customer. A true optimization process transforms the online business into a customer driven one.

### **38. Retention is the name of the game**

Most marketers believe that a high converting funnel consists of three main parts: Driving traffic to your site, analyzing the results and optimizing it for conversion (signups or purchases for example). Once a purchase is made (that "buy" button is clicked), conversion is achieved and done with... time to move on to finding more leaks in that funnel and optimizing it.

Well, this is a HUGE mistake made by the vast majority of marketers. In order to truly excel in CRO and drive meaningful growth for your business, you must NOT neglect that "last" piece of the puzzle → Retention.

It's simple really, it is 5 times more cost effective to retain a customer than acquire a new one and if you're not working on optimizing, testing and doing actual CRO work on your converted customers you're simply caught in the hamster wheel of optimization and will never be able to truly see the results you want. Optimizing your retention process will ensure your customers keep coming back, recommend you and continue purchasing.

Three ways to increase conversions for retention:

1. Don't just sell, build a relationship. Treat your entire funnel from top to bottom as a way of connecting to your customer, creating trust and forming a community.
2. Use your thank you and confirmation pages as more than just an information point for customers, for example: increase trust by highlighting testimonials, make a connection by introducing your team, assisting people with their next steps and perhaps even collecting more information about them with a survey.
3. Optimize your email marketing campaigns. Use email as a way of communicating with your customers, addressing their needs, chatting to them, supplying them with tutorials, information and guides.



**William Harris**

Ecommerce Consultant Elumynt

There are lots of great ideas for growing eCommerce. Content marketing is great and personalization has been all the rage. Conversion rate optimization has its place, but I often find that companies are missing out on doing a great job at the basics; paid ads, SEO, and email.

### **39. Paid acquisition**

Paid acquisition is still going to be one of the easiest ways to grow. If you have the budget to get started, you really need to find the time to focus on this. Google Shopping makes it VERY easy to get started by selling your products to people that are actively searching for you online. The next step is setting up some basic retargeting. I'm a huge fan of Facebook Dynamic Product ads for a simple, effective way to get into retargeting. You could probably set both of these up on your own for not much time, but a professional team will help you be much more competitive and efficient with your ad spend.

## 40. On-page SEO

On-page SEO is something that I find lacking in almost every eCommerce store. Too often companies let the dev team “handle” the SEO which means little more than a few product redirects during the website migration. What this means is that you’re leaving a ton of information behind, and sometimes even sending Google the wrong information about a product, making it very hard to rank organically for search terms that you should own.

## 41. Email marketing

Email marketing should be refocused in 2017. A lot of companies are doing a great job of putting up annoying pop-ups all over their store to collect emails addresses, but they are doing a poor job of capitalizing on those emails. I think a lot of this comes down to not taking the time to know and develop customer personas. You need to figure out what makes your potential buyers make a purchase, what makes them want to share, what makes them want to open your emails and click. 1:1 personalization is great, but most businesses are still struggling to figure that out on a macro level, let alone a micro level. In 2017, your transactional emails need to not suck, and your campaigns need to be refined and refocused.



**Elle Morgan**

Content Marketer and Evangelist Woopra, Inc.

## 42. eCommerce Companies Must Unify Customer Data in 2017

Unifying customer data in 2017 will be the key to understanding and engaging with customers. According to [a study by KPMG Capital](#), 85 percent of executives struggle to accurately analyze and interpret their existing data. But, they know that this challenge must be solved.

Consumers have come to expect personalized, relevant messaging. But, to truly automate messaging that reaches the right consumer, at the right time, brands need to understand not only who their customers are, but what their customers are doing, across all touch points, in real-time. Today, eCommerce brands are leveraging chat, text, email, phone, video and more to communicate throughout the customer journey. They also collect essential information such as transactional history, behavioral and demographic data. Yet, the majority of the data collected by these tools is segregated and siloed, leaving an incomplete view of the customer experience.

Without being able to visualize the entire customer journey, departments are left to rely only on the pieces that they can see. For example, Customer Support may be able to see the phone calls or live chat messages, but are unable to see how that user navigated through the site prior to making a purchase. The marketing department may be able to see the click-through-rate of a campaign, but can they tie those results to purchases, support calls or behavioral activity over time?

These siloed departmental processes and metrics obscure the full customer experience. This results in an inability to see the human being on the other side of the transaction. With a unified view of the customer, brands are empowered with real-time data and actionable insights, allowing them to reach a hyper-relevant audience at a global scale.

### **43. Consolidated Data Drives Hyper-Relevant Personalization**

At [Woopra](#), we've designed a customer intelligence platform that enables companies to bridge the siloed data gap. One such company, [Mayvenn](#), is an eCommerce brand that enables hair stylists to sell natural hair extension products without the upfront costs and burdens of having inventory.

Mayvenn stylists and clients interact mostly through text and email. As the Mayvenn community grew, the team wanted a solution to power all email and text communication with targeted messaging that was intuitive and personalized.

Ryan Stevens, the Product Manager at Mayvenn, knew they needed more than just another eCommerce marketing solution. They needed the ability to integrate with the various technologies they were already using and trigger messaging based on customer activity over time. After exploring options, he reached out to the Woopra team.

Using Woopra, Mayvenn segmented users dynamically, in real-time, allowing their marketing team to respond to users based on behaviors and triggers. "The consolidation of our data has also bolstered productivity for both our sales and marketing teams and alleviated requests of engineering," said Ryan Stevens. By creating a single source of truth for their customer data, Mayvenn was able to provide an unparalleled customer experience.

According to Fox Business, [80 percent of executives believe](#) companies that fail to embrace Big Data will soon lose their competitive advantages and possibly face extinction. The eCommerce brands that succeed in 2017, will take a consolidated approach to data. To make sense of such rich customer information, they will integrate disparate data points within a single platform, giving them a complete customer profile that includes every touchpoint throughout the customer lifecycle.



These companies will challenge the status quo by moving beyond solving a piece of the puzzle, to serving a person, breaking cross-departmental barriers and optimizing every point in the customer journey.

#### 44. Data Transparency Will Fuel Company-Wide Collaboration

The ability to seamlessly collaborate is essential in an increasingly global world. The popularity of tools such as [Slack](#) and [Trello](#), designed to increase communication and collaboration, speak to the need businesses have for tools supporting employee collaboration. But, very few organizations have mastered data collaboration, still relying on outdated spreadsheets riddled with limitations and inaccuracies.

In 2017, organizations should focus on liberating their data across the organization to fuel company-wide collaboration. Every employee should have the ability to access website or advertising data and compare that with transactional, demographic, product data and beyond. This will bring [a new form of transparency](#) to organizations, enabling every department to visualize the entire customer journey. In doing so, businesses will be prepared to optimize quickly, innovate faster and design data-driven customer experiences.



**Valentin Radu**

Founder & CEO Omniconvert

For more mature e-commerce companies, 2017 will be an year that will force them to listen & understand, build and nurture authentic relations with their customers. That's why, my ideas will be around the topic of building authentic relations with the audience.

#### 45. Do 1 on 1 real-time personalization based on the RFM model

It's crystal clear retention is the name of the game in eCommerce. After 2 years in business, 50% of the revenue from an eCommerce website comes from returning customers.

But retention rate can be high ONLY if you are able to build authentic relations. How can you do this without understanding who and why it buys from your website?

The RFM model allows you to get a clear vision about who are your best customers, based on 3 angles:

**Recency** - Clients with high recency are more willing to buy rather than those who haven't bought anything in a while;

**Frequency** - Clients that frequently buy are more willing to buy again rather than those who only bought once;

**Monetary value** - Clients that usually spend lots of money are more willing to buy again and generate revenues;

Here is a fine template to play with, in order to understand it's true power.

After implementing it, you will be able to:

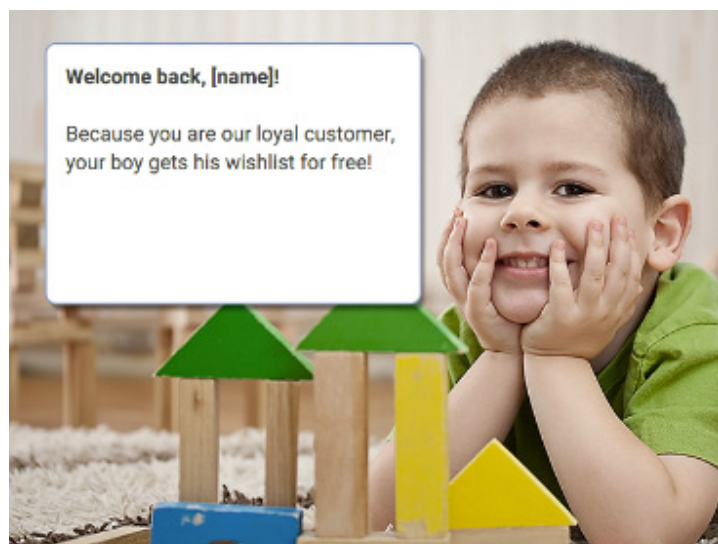
- Make a real research and understand who's your buyer persona. Age, location, buying patterns, etc. Which is the most important reason that makes them buy from you?
- Do real-time web personalization according to their RFM score.

Examples:

**VIP customers (RFM > 10)**

"Your best customers are VIPs. Half of all revenue comes from the top 15% of customers, with the top 1% of customers spending 30x as much as the average customers."

RJ Metrics Benchmark



**Potential lovers (F score = 3, RFM > 5)**



If you are interested to see more, [here](#) is the specially written ebook about how to effectively build an RFM model.

#### 46. Take a scientific approach to growth

It's tempting to always be chasing a "silver bullet" for growth.

The viral Facebook campaign or Youtube video, the great app, the press coverage or news or guerrilla marketing campaign which will propel you to success.

While these big wins can happen at points throughout your journey, they're usually impossible to predict. Top performing companies take a scientific approach to growth, rather than relying on chance.

That means:

- You're using a web analytics solution that delivers you 100% accurate data about your funnel, channels, events, products which are transforming into insights
- You never rely on your gut feeling
- You've built a mathematical model to identify the factors that will leverage the 10x growth
- You have at least an expert on your team that is taking growth really serious (or a pretty good agency to do this)
- You brainstorm from time to time with the category managers, head of customer support, marketing guys or CTO - synergy can provide you outstanding results
- have a backlog of growth ideas and prioritise them based on criteria such as: time to impact, ease, potential impact
- You have a growth calendar and you deploy at least one out of the box growth idea every quarter
- You have a clear reward for you and your team to celebrate the victories

## 47. Build a mathematical model to grow your eCommerce

“Find out all the factors that can leverage the growth of your eCommerce. If you can find out all the factors that can generate growth for your business, which ones would be?

Retention rate? Lifetime value? Customer Acquisition Cost? Average order value? Return rate? Traffic?

After that, play with those in an excel sheet, so that you link them all with your end goal: revenue or profit. If you will increase all of them by 10%, which one of them would generate the highest growth?

After that, brainstorm on strategic ideas, prioritize the actions based on the potential, resources and time to impact and make it happen!

It starts with a solid business model, continues with a great team and ends with an outstanding execution.

For playing a bit with such a model that allows you to understand when is the right time to start doing conversion rate optimization for your eCommerce, you can use this [calculator](#)>



**Daniel Brzezinski**

CMO GetResponse

## 48. Increasing customer loyalty and upselling

One of the major ecommerce challenges in 2017 will be increasing revenue and long-term customer value. The key to achieve projected growth in this area is to apply advanced customer loyalty programs. According to Facebook's latest research on customer loyalty, 77% of people said they would come back to a company and buy from it again, but out of these only 37% are considered brand loyalists. 40% respondents said they would come back to the same company but didn't consider themselves as loyal to any business.

Brands will have to figure out ways to drive customer loyalty and incorporate emotions in their marketing, rather than just fight their competitors by offering lower prices. This is where marketing automation and progressive profiling will be most useful: gaining knowledge and getting closer to customers by slowly learning more about them. Just like in building any other kind of relationship, really.

Armed with that knowledge, ecommerce businesses will get more opportunities to build loyalty programs and target their customers with the right upselling offers.

#### **49. Machine learning in PPC**

Ecommerce businesses use PPC advertising to get ahead of the competition – it's a requirement in today's competitive online business landscape. And for a good reason, because according to PowerTraffic, businesses using AdWords make \$3 in revenue for every \$1.60 spent.

Companies will have to use more advanced machine learning tools and make use of the knowledge they gain from them to apply highly targeted PPC campaigns. With scripts, automated bidding, autosuggested audiences and keywords, and advanced algorithms, any ecommerce business has now a unique chance to get better results while spending less time on campaign setup. Thanks to that automated pre-setup online businesses will have more time to analyze data and predict trends in their sales patterns.

#### **50. Local search and geolocation**

Another huge opportunity for ecommerce in 2017 is local search and geolocation. According to Business Insider, Google plans to get to \$5 billion in revenue from local search by 2020. What this means is putting more weight on local services and geolocation. This is the direction where ecommerce should be heading this year, too. Based on close monitoring of web traffic and search terms online business owners get enormous amount of data about what their customers need, depending on where they are in the world and what their current circumstances are.

We are all familiar with seasonal email campaigns sent by online stores, but what if we took a step further and targeted customers by monitoring their geolocation and using local search? For example, if someone opens our online clothing store in a rainy area, we encourage them to buy warm sweaters and then upsell them with umbrellas or rain boots, at the same time displaying summer dresses, sandals and sunglasses to someone who is based in a sunny area. This concept is not yet explored by many services, but whoever does it well first will get a huge share of the market.

# Take the quiz

Discover how well optimized is your eCommerce website is by completing this 10 minutes quiz.

Compare your results against the biggest players in eCommerce such as Amazon and Asos to see if you outscore them.

**TAKE THE QUIZ**

