



INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO

WEB PERSONALIZATION

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Introduction

WHY SHOULD I READ THIS INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO WEB PERSONALIZATION?

Today's buyers aren't looking for a one-size-fits-all customer experience; they want to feel like their needs are being seen and heard.

Chances are, you're already sending different emails to different segments of your customer database. That's great, but it isn't enough. Your website—the hub of your marketing activities—should also offer different content to those segments. If you're not speaking to your website visitors as individuals, you're failing to utilize your website in the most effective way possible.

So, how do you create a website that accelerates engagement, conversion, and retention for your prospects and customers, and creates a more relevant, personalized experience for your buyers? *The Introductory Guide to Web Personalization* will give you the information you need to get started.



WHAT IS WEB PERSONALIZATION?

Marketers who use web personalization create a dynamically personalized, highly relevant website experience for prospects and buyers based on their behavior, location, profile, and other attributes. This means understanding and meeting your buyers' interests, tailoring your website to fit their profile, and ultimately providing the best message, content, or offer—one that is specifically relevant to them.

Your website is the main channel of interaction between your company and your customers. That's why web personalization is a critical marketing activity—it creates a more meaningful experience for your customers, generates better business results, and drives conversions. According to the 2018 B2B Buyers Survey Report, 76% of buyers expect a website to offer relevant content that speaks directly to their company.

Think about visiting a website that forces you to comb through menus and pages before you find what you need, versus a website that immediately displays what you are looking for. Which experience would you prefer? Which one would get your business?



WHY IS WEB PERSONALIZATION IMPORTANT?

Today's B2B and B2C customers expect personalization on the web and across channels—so businesses that want to win their attention must listen and respond to them and their activities with personal, relevant messages.

After all, your website visitors aren't just looking for products; they want a customer experience that feels like it was designed just for them. It's not enough for your business to simply differentiate itself with great products and competitive prices—you must also stand out to prospects and buyers by offering memorable, personalized experiences every time.

According to research from BRP's 2018 Digital Commerce Benchmarking Survey, 51% of consumers say that it's important to get a personalized experience across all digital channels. In

fact, according to Marketo data, visitors presented with personalized content convert five times more than the average visitor.

The consequences of being impersonal? Your visitors will be less engaged and you may lose them to your competitors. According to Segment's 2017 State of Personalization Report, 71% of online consumers get frustrated with websites when content appears to have nothing to do with their interests.



MARKETING BENEFITS OF WEB PERSONALIZATION

Web personalization enables marketers to deliver a continuous, personal experience to individual visitors or target audiences at scale. Personalized experiences result in higher engagement rates, increased brand preference and loyalty, improved conversion rates, and an uplift in sales. To truly engage your buyers, you must capture their attention in a meaningful way.

Let's explore some of the benefits of web personalization:

Engaging more people: Nearly every company has thousands of visitors on their website every month—a critical opportunity to efficiently engage and convert. But most visitors bounce if they don't immediately find the information they're looking for—or if the content doesn't speak to their needs. Capturing just a few more visitors with a personalized message translates to real dollars.

Delivering the right message: If you don't personalize your website, your visitors won't see the best value you deliver to them and may not spend

the time to find it. Web personalization enables you to create meaningful, real-time interactions with your audience by dynamically engaging them with the most relevant offer, content, and imagery that you have.

Building brand preference: You can use web personalization to strengthen how a visitor feels about you online and offline. For example, you can use what you learned about an individual from their interaction with your website to tailor the messages you send on other channels and create content that resonates with them.

Converting more qualified visitors: Web personalization supports account-based marketing (ABM) by distinguishing between target accounts and anonymous visitors based on IP addresses or known visitors of email domains and offering them a personalized experience, resulting in increased engagement and conversion.

Nurturing and engaging prospects: Web personalization allows you to nurture customers on the web by continuing the conversation with them through targeted, relevant offers, content, and calls-to-action (CTAs).

Cross-selling and upselling: Marketing doesn't end with a sale. If you have customers who have already purchased from you, you can sell them more by segmenting them to receive offers on complementary products based on their past purchases.

Increasing revenue: When you better understand your online visitors, buyers, prospects, and decision makers, you improve your ability to drive revenue across the entire customer lifecycle.

INTEGRATING WEB PERSONALIZATION INTO YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

You know your marketing goals, and you probably already have existing segments that you're marketing to across channels. So, how does web personalization fit into your overall marketing strategy? To figure that out, it's crucial to understand your marketing objectives first—then you'll be better equipped to define how web personalization can support those goals.

Whatever your goals may be, you should map your supporting campaigns to your customer journey, so that your marketing activities and messages are more relevant. Marketing activities are typically focused on five stages, and it's important to know which message and content matter to your buyer at each stage. You'll need to develop strategies for how you can use personalization in each of these areas:

- **Awareness**
- **Engagement**
- **Conversion**
- **Retention and cross-sell/upsell**
- **Advocacy**

After you understand your web personalization goals, get familiar with the different types of web personalization, and include strategies in your plan for using these types of segmentation:

Geolocation	Country/state/city, language, postal codes, and so forth
Behavior	Pages per visit, number of visits, specific pages visited, search terms, referrals, browser, device, product interest, customer journey stage
Contact data	Firmographics, demographics, product interest, buyer stage, campaign group, lead or account or engagement score, title, business role persona
Vertical	Industry segment
Account	By target account
Predictive content, driven by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning	Automatic discovery of all of the content on your site, correlation of types of content consumed by types of visitors, dynamic content recommendations based upon algorithms

INCLUDING CROSS-CHANNEL MARKETING INTO YOUR WEB PERSONALIZATION STRATEGY

Because your customers expect a personal experience wherever they interact with your brand, your web personalization efforts need to be attuned to your customers' activities across the customer lifecycle and every channel.

In other words, don't personalize in a silo. The average buyer doesn't just visit one channel before they decide to purchase; they're often self-educating long before you ever know about them. Each customer has a unique way of learning that might include website visits, blogs, email, social media, and/or digital advertising.

To more easily and effectively listen and respond to customers across channels and create a personal and consistent experience for them, use a marketing automation program that includes a web personalization app. This will give you a single view of your customers

and the activities directed toward them, enabling you to give them a seamless cross-channel experience.

A marketing automation program can help you:

- Listen closely to buyer behavior across all channels
- Learn about all of your buyer's digital behavior for a better understanding of who they are
- Manage, personalize, and act on conversations with buyers across all channels
- Measure which activities are working and which are not

Be sure to take advantage of the opportunity to personalize across channels, including your website, mobile, digital advertising, retargeting, social media, email marketing, and offline marketing.



CONTENT STRATEGY TO MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF PERSONALIZATION

A successful web personalization campaign requires quality content. Create a messaging framework to determine the right messages to deliver to each persona at each stage of their buyer's journey. For each persona, you will need content to move them from the top of the funnel all the way to acquisition and advocacy.

Take an inventory of your existing content to see at which touchpoints it can be used. Once your content strategy has been developed and the content is made available, it's important to measure results and iterate. Your content strategy should be modified based on the data. Existing content may need to be modified or deleted based on how it performs, and new content might need to be created to fill new gaps.

Also, consider using a web personalization solution that uses AI and machine learning to search for content across your entire website. This

will help you learn about all the content you have available, including its current consumption patterns and lead-gen performance, without the manual work of listing and evaluating it.

For each type of personalization (pop-ups, inner page, etc.), bite-sized pieces of content will need to be created to fit the application.



LEVERAGING AI AND MACHINE LEARNING TO PROVIDE PERSONALIZED WEB CONTENT

In the previous section, we mentioned that AI-powered tools like predictive content recommendation engines (CREs) can find all of the content on your website—blogs, videos, downloads, and more. But CREs do more than that—they're able to combine the speed of real-time targeting and personalization with the insights of machine learning and predictive analytics.

CREs help marketers:

- Auto-discover and map content assets
- Learn which content works best and for whom
- Recommend relevant content to known and unknown web visitors
- Increase content consumption and on-site engagement and conversions

AI and machine learning tools also allow you to put relevant content in front of each person across your web, mobile, and email channels. Boost results and return on investment (ROI) with predictive content recommendations, and learn what's working (and what isn't) with content measurements and analytics.

According to QuanticMind, 97% of marketing influencers believe that the future of digital marketing will involve human marketers working alongside machine learning-based tools.

Types of personalized web content:

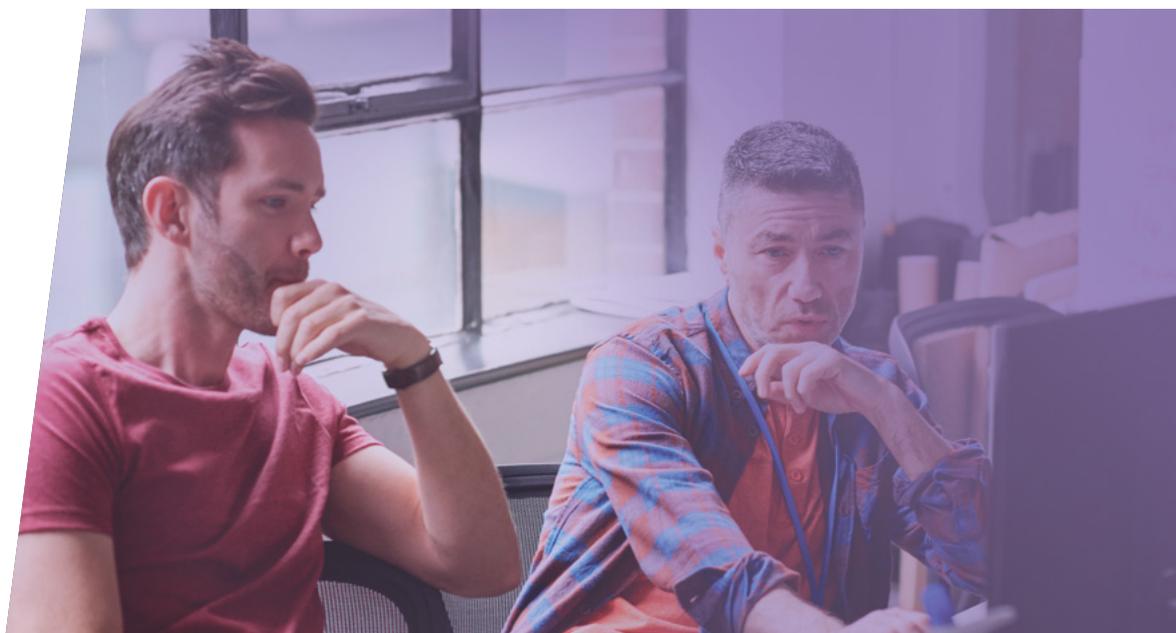
Pop-ups

In-line content inserted dynamically within the content on pages

Information bars across the top or bottom of pages

In-line edits that replace existing content on pages

Survey questions



WHERE TO USE WEB PERSONALIZATION

Choosing the right place to deliver your personalized content can be tricky—and where and when you place it in front of your target audience will have an impact on its overall effectiveness.

There are many places to offer personalization on your website. Let's look at some of the most common spots:

Homepage: Capture your visitors' attention right away when they first land on your website.

Inner pages: Place personalized content on your site's subpages to give visitors unique content based on how invested in your website they get. Keep in mind that they might land on an internal page, so personalize those pages, too.

Landing pages: Delivering a targeted ad or email that drives your visitors to a generic page can make them feel disconnected. A page that can continue the conversation will convert at a higher rate.

Dialog boxes: These overlay boxes come up in the middle, side, or corner of the page, while the rest of the page fades in the background. Use these for high-value offers, so the visitor doesn't bounce.

In-zone: An in-zone personalized experience happens when the personalized content replaces a specific area of the site. Many of these zones are identified by DIV tags, making it easy to choose different ones to swap for different cases.

Widgets: Widgets allow visitors to have an unobstructed view of the page while also seeing personalized content.

Redirect: Quickly identify segments that you want to see only specific content and take them to a page or mini-site built specifically for them.

Chatbots: Use intelligent chatbots instead of forms to give customers a more personalized, enhanced web experience.



MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

After you've established your goals, it's important to think about what success would look like for your organization. Set up a measurement and analytics tool before you implement your web personalization campaigns so that you can create a benchmark regarding engagement and conversion for your current target segments. This will allow you to establish baseline metrics and begin testing and iterating.

For a full lifecycle tracking experience, use web personalization tools that integrate with other analytics programs like Adobe Analytics, Bizible by Marketo (an Adobe company), digital advertising solutions, and your customer relationship management (CRM) system to get end-to-end reporting.

Selecting the right metrics to measure the success of your web personalization, like any marketing activity, is extremely important—not just for any campaign, but also for determining the ROI of the channel as a whole.

Based on the goals you set for your web personalization efforts, here are some examples of metrics to track, by stage:

- **Early-stage metrics:** Time on site, visitor frequency, content consumed, pages visited, volume of known visitors versus unknown, new versus returning visitors, time on page
- **Mid-stage metrics:** Actions taken, contact quality, lift in digital advertising ROI
- **Late-stage metrics:** Opportunities won or lost, revenue attribution



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A WEB PERSONALIZATION TOOL

A web personalization tool is necessary if you want to make web personalization a seamless part of your marketing programs. Implementing a web personalization tool allows you to spend time planning strategic campaigns, rather than assembling the right people and resources to execute all the technical details.

Wondering what to look for? An effective web personalization tool should:

Be part of or integrate with an engagement marketing solution

Work with any CRM system or content management system (CMS)

Be able to target by:

- Geolocation
- Behavior
- Contact data
- Firmographics
- Predictive models

Integrate with ad networks

Have predictive content capabilities that are powered by AI and machine learning to:

- Auto-detect existing content
- Make content recommendations based upon relevance to segments, personas, and stages

Include comprehensive analytics that can track the performance of content and campaigns across all channels. It's important that they integrate with the appropriate solutions to acquire the necessary data for a cohesive, end-to-end reporting structure.



CONCLUSION

Web personalization empowers you to provide more relevant experiences to your online visitors and speak to them with personalized messages at scale. It gives you the ability to reach them on your website and across all marketing channels with a consistent voice and user experience that builds trust, engagement, revenue, and loyalty.

Today's consumers and decision makers expect companies to know them well before they even engage with them. Web personalization is proven to be an effective way to offer personalized experiences.

It's valuable at every stage of the customer journey, and is no longer merely a marketing vision—thanks to modern technology, it's an attainable reality that is easy to implement and coordinate across channels.

In a digital marketing landscape that is becoming increasingly competitive, it's vital for your company to stand out. You can more effectively engage, convert, and retain customers by offering a customer experience that is personal, relevant, and timely. Not only will this help you differentiate yourself from competitors, but it will also show your customers that you hear them, and that you have the right products and services to meet their unique needs.



Marketo, an Adobe company, offers the solution of choice for lead management and B2B marketing professionals seeking to transform customer experiences by engaging across every stage of complex buying journeys. Natively supporting both lead and account-based marketing strategies, Marketo Engage, as part of Adobe Experience Cloud, brings together marketing and sales in a comprehensive solution designed to orchestrate personalized experiences, optimize content, and measure business impact across every channel, from consideration to conversion and beyond. To learn more about Marketo Engage, the vast community of passionate marketers in the Marketing Nation, and Marketo's robust partner ecosystem, **visit www.marketo.com**.