Pull away *from the pack.*

Six steps IT can take to lead with personalisation.

"There is some fatigue around big brush digital transformation and there is a need for tech leaders and e-business leaders to make it smaller."

ALLEN BONDE, FORRESTER RESEARCH ANALYST

Digital transformation is a tall order. And it's one many IT organisations have a hard time getting right. According to an IDC Survey, 56 percent of IT executives believe IT is either neutral or even hinders the digital transformation of their company.

But those who are taking the lead—specifically in customer experience and content-related initiatives like personalisation—are seeing results:

98%
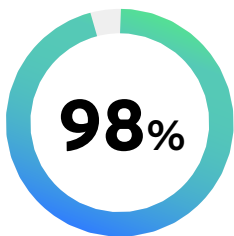
98% of marketers say website personalisation is quite or highly valuable for increasing conversion rates.

Source: Econsultancy

10-30%

Companies using personalisation have increased revenue and retention by 10 to 30%.

Source: McKinsey & Company

As an IT leader, these "smaller" yet impactful initiatives like personalisation are your chance to not only hit those growth targets handed down by your CEO but set your company apart from the competition.

"The opportunity to personalise is an invitation for IT teams to be involved and drive the strategy for how they can properly balance the personalisation of the marketing group with the rigour, security, and performance constraints of IT," says John Tehero, senior product manager for Adobe Target.

But to get there, you need to move past disconnected systems and data, break down ever-present team silos, and keep up with the growing number of surfaces and screens. A personalisation engine can help. Here's how.
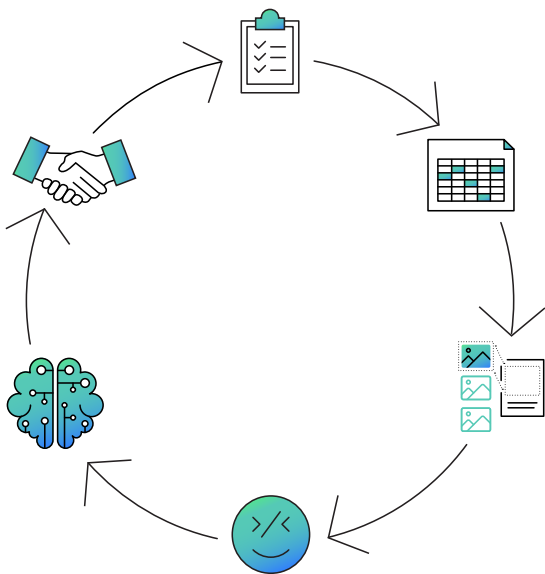
Six steps to <u>jumpstart</u> your *personalisation efforts*.

Reaching more of your customers on a personal level means not only presenting them with recommendations and offers, but doing it without the extra work. Here are six ways you can make it happen.

1. Clarify the requirements.

Personalisation means different things to different teams, so it's important to get specific requirements for personalisation initiatives up front. This means working closely with marketers to understand exactly what they want to accomplish when they make the request to "Personalise our mobile app over the next year."

Discuss the scope of the project and plan of action, including KPIs like customer satisfaction, revenue, or retention. Specify which elements should be personalised and how marketers expect the process to work.

Knowing how any new technology initiative will affect performance and security is a given. It's only when you think outside the single metric of page load performance that you can move your business forward.

2. Design your data layer.

Making sure you have the right data in the right place to accomplish your business requirements is a constant challenge. Take William. He's a frequent traveler and loyalty member of a major hospitality chain. The brand knows which properties he prefers, his loyalty status, and how many points he collected during his last stay. This data lives in the company's CRM.

The next time William visits their app to book that trip to Hawaii, or if he calls to ask a question, they'll collect even more data to help with behavioural targeting. These are all disconnected events, performed in different ways. And they're all generating data for different tools like email, website, mobile app, or in-store kiosk. Without a strategy in place, the company could end up moving large amounts of data from one place to another, even if there's no need. And your team could be at risk of doing the same.

That's why, as the information comes in, it's important to understand how it will be used, as well as the timing constraints and SLAs for that data. Say you're capturing data in your CRM and you want to pass it on to another system for online targeting and personalisation. One important thing to consider is the maximum acceptable latency required to get the data from one point to another. Whether it's 30 minutes or 24 hours, details like these should be defined up front.

Getting the data right.

The data layer assembles all of your data in a centralised place so it can be passed on to different systems and moved back and forth. Suppose you want to provide recommendations on your website based on a specific product. It's important to ensure that the data associated with the user, page, product, or content is available high enough up on the page so that it can be sent to a personalisation tool.

That way, the tool can use the data to come back with a decision on which content to display on the page—all before the human eye can detect that there's any kind of delay. If the information weren't available within the data layer, you would have to scrape the page to look for the SKU, and your visitors would end up staring at a spinning wheel or a loading bar.

"This is a good time for a conversation with marketing and IT about what information needed for personalisation should fire at the top of the page versus what information is okay to fire later on down the page and captured, for example, with an analytics tool."
JOHN TEHERO, SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER, ADOBE TARGET

3. Connect your content layer.

Imagine a global brand that wants to personalise experiences based on their customers' geography. With clients in 200 countries, they would need 200 different pieces of content to be integrated into their personalisation tool. And, with multiple market segments, a single person could qualify for 50 different experiences, making the content challenge even more complex.

That's why it's important to use the content you develop as efficiently and as flexibly as possible. This means creating reusable content snippets and layouts that marketers can easily find using metatagging and that can quickly adapt to any surface, screen, customer, or experience.

"Delivering a connected customer experience across the many digital touch-points that make up a customer journey requires both a data layer and a content layer, and both must be rich enough to allow for data-driven personalisation in the future (at least for enterprise buyers)."

MELISSA WEBSTER, PROGRAM VP, CONTENT AND DIGITAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES, IDC

4. Open up your integration.

The digital analytics team at DER Touristik wanted to use their data expertise to empower business users to experiment and personalise their own content experiences. They also wanted to improve the customer experience by providing recommendations without the flickering that can occur with a client-side implementation of a personalisation solution. To achieve their goals, they started with the open APIs in their personalisation tool.

Using a server-side delivery API, they were able to use their content management system to deliver the entire experience. This meant no more flickering, and a smoother personalised experience.

"With the server-side approach, the recommendation campaign is put together on the server, and the campaign is delivered in the same moment as the rest of the page, so it's seamlessly embedded."
MIRIAM EITEL, DIGITAL ANALYST, DER TOURISTIK ONLINE GMBH

Because not all data, content, and measurement systems sit in one place, personalisation at scale can only happen if you have an open ecosystem that allows these systems to talk to each other. An architecture that supports personalisation in the client and server simultaneously, as the one used by DER Touristik, can help you adapt content and functionality for multiple screens and surfaces without the extra effort.

In addition to making it easier to deliver targeted experiences to IoT devices like connected TVs or in-store digital screens, server-side delivery can happen in real time, in batch, or even in a "pre-fetch" mode—a method that gathers all possible interaction points up front in a single request.

Imagine you've fired up an app on your smart phone just before your plane takes off, and you receive a personalised offer. Because you have to turn off your phone, the app can no longer make calls to the personalisation engine. So once you reconnect, your offer might change, leaving you with a poor experience. With a batch "pre-fetch" option, everything is loaded up front—even if you temporarily lose latency. In that scenario, when you reconnect in the air, any actions you took in the app can be sent back to the personalisation engine for tracking, and your experience isn't interrupted.

With so many options, you'll need to plan with marketing which experiences should happen in real time, where batch delivery makes sense, and where pre-fetch might work best to improve performance and the user experience.

5. Automate with AI.

With 78 million travelers and eight different web properties, personalising the web experiences of Heathrow Airport visitors was beyond what the airport's analytics team could handle alone. They just didn't have the capacity to monitor and adjust performance for a high-volume area like the airport's home page. With the help of AI and automated personalisation, they can now customise the content featured on the airport's home page based on user preferences and behavioural data.

"We use the power of Adobe Sensei to intelligently automate our processes and achieve better results than our team can accomplish alone. We're delivering more relevant offers to each customer, which improves conversions and revenue."

STUART IRVINE, ANALYTICS AND OPTIMIZATION LEAD, HEATHROW AIRPORT

AI can help extend your personalisation initiatives and improve the customer experience without requiring you to hire an entire team of data scientists—no matter how many customer segments you have. After all, rules manually created by analysts can only take you so far. But automated

personalisation uses machine learning to create its own rules and deliver the best offers and experiences for each visitor, every time.

Consider this scenario. Using a personalisation tool, you can observe a set of users who performed a desired action like opening up an auto loan. The tool can then choose the appropriate machine-learning model to put visitors with similar customer profiles on the same path. This automation helps you personalise your interactions just as easily for the 500th visitor as you can for the first.

Leave the lifting to Adobe Sensei.

Adobe Sensei provides the power of AI to help you deliver personalised experiences to more of your most valuable customers. Here's how.

Auto-allocate winning experiences. Use A/B testing algorithms to automatically push the highest-performing experiences to the right marketing segments.

Personalise with one click. Learn over time which experiences customers prefer, and deliver the most relevant one each time they visit.

Automate just-right offers and recommendations. Give each visitor personalised offers and suggestions based on Jaccard similarity, popularity, item-based collaborative filtering, or recency and frequency.

6. Unite your organisation.

Making personalisation work means getting everyone in your organisation on board, starting with your own team. While some might view a personalisation tool as yet another piece of technology to implement, or another database to build, the right one will make it easy for you to connect to existing systems without sacrificing current protocols and processes — regardless of whether you have one or several teams working on your app, website, and other screens.

In addition, you should work closely with other business functions to implement personalisation across the organisation, so it's done in a secure way that won't risk your data, your customers' data, or your brand.

Pull ahead with personalisation.

The road to digital transformation stretches on—along with many chances for IT to lead the way. Personalisation is one of those opportunities. With the right engine to propel you forward, you can keep the customer experience humming and your KPIs on target—all the while helping your entire organisation pull ahead of the pack.

Adobe can help.

Adobe Target provides the energy to move your personalisation initiatives forward, seamlessly exchanging data with Adobe Analytics and incorporating the power of AI from Adobe Sensei. Adobe Experience Manager helps deliver those personalised experiences beautifully to any surface or screen.

Adobe Target can help you meet your company goals and leave the competition in the dust.

Sources

Clint Boulton, "5 digital transformation trends for 2019," CIO.com, November 7, 2018.

"Conversion Rate Optimization Report 2017," Econsultancy, in association with RedEye, October 2017.

"DER Touristik's Revolution: Democratizing optimization to increase revenue using Adobe Target," Adobe Summit 2018.

John Tehero, Personal interview, Adobe, November 14, 2018.

Joseph Pucciarelli, Suya Xiong, Marc Strohlein, and Martha Rounds, "A CIO Communication Framework in the Digital Era," IDC, June 2018.

Julien Boudet and Kai Vollhardt, "Personalization at Scale: First Steps in a Profitable Journey to Growth," McKinsey & Company, August 2018.

Melissa Webster, "Worldwide Persuasive Content Management Software Market Shares, 2017: Digital Experience Drives Growth," July 2018.

"Personal Experiences for 78 Million Travelers," Adobe customer story, London Heathrow Airport, October 2018.

Adobe