



# Progress in *personalization.*

*How B2B brands are keeping up with rising demands for personalization.*

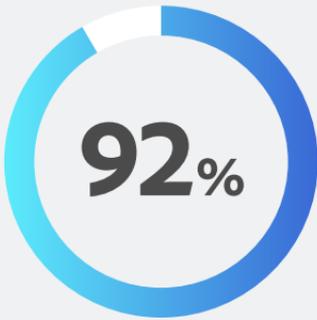
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## How to meet B2C expectations in the *B2B world*.

**A** Amazing customer experiences are like magic—they make us feel uniquely understood and important, and they often happen when we least expect them. Once the domain of B2C brands, B2B brands are becoming Experience Makers, too. As study after study has shown, the consumer experiences of everyday life are now becoming the standard by which B2B experiences are judged.

That includes personalization. We've come to expect Amazon-like personalized recommendations, even when we're purchasing industrial supplies or cloud services. And we increasingly assume our B2B experiences will adjust to our specific needs, at every moment. We have that with our banks and airlines, so why wouldn't we have it with the organizations we engage with in our business lives?



92% of B2B marketers say **personalization is a must.**



91% of senior decision makers say their companies **need to improve personalization capabilities.**

Many B2B brands get this, and a select few are ahead of the curve in realizing personalization at scale. They're doing the hard work of integrating the many kinds of customer data mandatory for true customer understanding. To make personalization immediate and meaningful, they're transforming how their content is created, managed, and delivered. Change is widespread inside these forward-looking B2B brands, from executive mindsets to day-to-day processes.

That change is paying off. B2B brands that achieve deeper levels of personalization are seeing big returns. Not just slight bumps, but jaw-dropping returns—like SAP achieving a 900 percent CTR lift on their homepage using account-based personalization. In this report, we'll look at some of these B2B personalization successes, including our own here

at Adobe. Just as importantly, we'll dig into how these brands are optimizing their experiences and increasing their personalization capabilities.

**In other words, we'll peek behind the curtain and see how they're making the magic happen.**

## SAP CASE STUDY

# Success step by *step*.

**S**uccess with personalization doesn't come in quantum leaps. Instead, it's achieved with well-planned, incremental progress toward personalization maturity. So when SAP began targeting key account GE with account-based personalization, they approached it in waves.

Their first wave started literally at the top. The homepage's hero banner delivered account-specific messaging to users coming from GE, who were identified through an IP lookup. This delivered huge returns—a 900 percent increase in click-throughs, a 35 percent increase in page views, and 1.2x greater engagement.

The goal of the second wave was to build off that success, adding in routing to key solutions and a callout to an individual sales representative. Results were mixed. But as every organization doing personalization knows, it's a

matter of test and learn. Not everything succeeds, but everything is a learning opportunity.

With wave two learnings in hand, SAP moved onto their third wave. This time, they used Adobe Analytics to deeply research which pages, communities, blog posts, and assets the GE users visited most. They also collaborated with internal teams to better understand the GE relationship and their business needs.

With that insight, SAP built a highly personalized landing page experience in Adobe Experience Manager. This landing page became now rich in highly relevant content and resources—examples of collaboration between GE and SAP, training information, and links to the most relevant SAP solutions. This new page achieved its objective of driving greater engagement and page views.

SAP will undoubtedly continue to expand its personalization capabilities. Although they've achieved impressive results already, there's the potential for much more ahead. Every successful personalization program relies on continuous improvement, with an ongoing focus on increasing relevancy and effectiveness.



# Charting your course to *personalization* maturity.

Here are dimensions required for personalization, as well as examples of where an organization might be on their path to personalization— from just starting to leading the way.

	Nascent	Emerging	Cutting-Edge
Data and Analytics 	Organization has stale data and no segments.	Data captured and integrated across channels and unified to a unique customer ID.	Organization has microsegments continuously updated using artificial intelligence.
Creative and Content Management 	Workflow managed offline without clear process.	Seamless handoffs, with most assets manually tagged with required metadata.	Content blocks created once and applied across all channels, which can be automatically assembled for dynamic content.
Optimization and Decisioning 	Siloed campaign strategy by channel.	Assets stored in a single enterprise digital asset management location (DAM).	DAM uses machine learning to auto-tag content, while all content blocks are automatically assembled in real time.
Organization and Operation Model 	No common data or tools across channels.	Teams somewhat able to execute cross-channel campaigns.	Personalization strategies have buy-in at the executive level, with org-wide alignment around performance metrics.

## Moving to next-gen *ABM*.

In B2B, account-based marketing (ABM) has long been a priority. It still is. According to a recent report from Ovum, more high-tech B2B marketers ranked ABM as their number one digital marketing priority than any other option—even above buzz-heavy items like mobile, content marketing, and campaign management.

But leaders in B2B are stepping up the possibilities of ABM—so that it's cross-channel and cross-functional, with orchestration across sales, marketing, customer success, and advertising. It goes beyond the account to the individual, with personalization based on dimensions such as role and current customer stage.

## GRAINGER CASE STUDY

# Industrial-strength e-commerce *personalization.*

**E**-commerce isn't merely a retail consumer thing. Grainger demonstrates that. Along with being a Fortune 500 company that's been around for more than 90 years, Grainger is a leading e-commerce company that just happens to be in the B2B space. In fact, "leading" is underplaying their e-commerce. They're ranked the 10th largest e-retailer in North America—of any type, B2C or B2B—by Internet Retailer.

Even though they sell well over a million industrial SKUs, ranging from hydraulic hoses to HVAC units, they too must live up to the expectations set by consumer experiences. And since it's e-commerce, personalization isn't a nice-to-have. It's a necessity.

*"How do we in B2B do what Coca-Cola has done in B2C?  
How do you build that **extreme loyalty** to the point  
where your customers turn into your brand advocates?"*

— **Justine BaMaung**, Optimization Manager, Grainger

Authentication via sign-in is one way to improve personalization. That's especially true for Grainger customers, with factors such as contracted pricing and relevant offers. Despite that, 70 percent of users who visited the homepage were anonymous. So Grainger tested a more prominent placement of the sign-in, and the result was a 7 percent increase in overall sign-in rate—and, as an added bonus, a 17 percent increase in registration completion rate.

They personalized for anonymous users too. Using the visitor's IP address and third-party data, they were able to identify the visitor's industry, which they used to serve up industry-relevant content and categories. They also made the user's home page dynamic for based on a number of inputs—where they're coming from, for example, or what their past browsing behavior looked like.

### **AI-powered optimization.**

No surprise that Grainger is also all about optimization, since personalization and optimization are two sides of the same coin. And Adobe Target is a key component in both their optimization and personalization efforts.

Through Target, they're tapping into the artificial intelligence and machine learning power of Adobe Sensei. For example, it helped them discover that using "recently viewed" algorithms on the homepage outperformed a "top-selling products" feature by 12 percent—and actually doubled the revenue generation coming from that homepage real estate.



## VMWARE CASE STUDY

# Personalizing the long journey to *purchase*.

In B2B, the customer journey can go on for months, even years. And over that time, potential customer needs and expectations shift. VMware understands that this long and winding journey is a dimension for personalization. So on their web experience, they've tested a number of ways to make slight but critical nudges across various stages of the customer journey.

In one test, VMware featured an asset based on the visitor's previously expressed interest in a given product. In other words, they made it easy for visitors pick up where they left off—and provided an asset related to the path they had already been exploring. This approach delivered up to a 26 percent increase in asset clicks.

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## Experiences that fit the *moment*.

**C**ontextual relevance—the ability to deliver an experience tailored to an individual at this very moment and place, no matter what screen or platform—is becoming central to personalization. And users are increasingly expecting these fluid experiences, as they're often called, in both their B2C and B2B experiences. Real-time updates on specific interests, location-specific information, help delivered automatically based on current need—these are just a few examples.

Fluid experiences can be the epitome of simple for the user. But they require substantial behind-the-scenes effort to make them possible. Here are two primary considerations:

- **Real-time data.** Fluid experiences demand a real-time understanding of the customer—and that comes from data. As much as possible, that data needs to be holistic, inclusive of everything relevant, and completely current. And B2B has its unique set of possible data sources. In addition to site behavioural data, Sales interactions in CRM, second-party data from distributors, and product service data through IoT are also important to include.

- **Dynamic content.** To adapt experiences to the moment requires intelligent and automated content and robust asset management. It also requires advanced meta tagging, ideally performed with labor-saving technology that uses AI or machine learning. Technology plays a key role in this, but it also demands organizations to consider content differently. For example, instead of looking at content creation as something channel specific, organizations must have a “create once, publish everywhere” mindset.

#### ADOBE CASE STUDY

## Walking the personalization *talk.*

**A**t Adobe, we're doing our own work around B2B personalization and optimization. We too are looking to connect with the right people inside in an organization, whether that's a CMO or CIO, a visionary or a practitioner—and deliver each one the right experience, at this moment in time.

For us, personalization isn't only about marketing, and we're big proponents of next-gen ABM bridging across marketing, sales,

advertising, and services. And we see three key building blocks to achieving this: cross-functional team alignment, unlocking customer data, and activating personalization.

- **Cross-functional team alignment.** It's critical for marketing and sales to work hand-in-hand across the entire customer journey—and to be aligned in their objectives. Among the key steps to achieving this are executive sponsorship, investment in team enablement, and a singular methodology around the approach to accounts. And we've done that at Adobe.
- **Unlocking customer data.** We start with connecting all the data we have, from sales CRM, customer service CRM, web, and so on. At that point, third-party data augments what we already know. Just as critical as gathering and connecting all that data is interpreting it effectively—understanding interests and intent, for example.
- **Activating personalization.** We approach account-based personalization one use case at a time. We pilot approaches, and then scale those that succeed. We use our own technology to execute these approaches, but also to test and learn from them.

### **Our own technology in action on us.**

It's no surprise that Adobe Experience Cloud is key to our personalization. For example, to demonstrate the effectiveness of personalization early on, we used Adobe Target for company and industry targeting. And we did see impact—a 26 percent increase in form submission rate and a 95 percent increase in industry visit rate, as measured using Adobe Analytics. These

days we're pushing our personalization outside our properties, delivering account-based advertising using third-party data, Audience Manager, and Advertising Cloud to reach key accounts.

We've seen big impact from our efforts, with as much as a 40 percent increase in win rate. And we're not done. We're continuously iterating our personalization and optimizing our experiences. That's because personalization and optimization aren't trends. They're at the very center of the customer experience—and always will be.

Don't just match B2C expectations. *Exceed them.*

**A**s a B2B organization, you simply can't follow the leaders. You must become an experience maker—and a marketing leader. In fact, we believe organizations that lead in B2B personalization moving forward will go beyond simply matching B2C expectations. Instead, they'll create experiences that address all the complexity their customers face. These forward-looking companies will have a truly holistic understanding of their customers—not only to better market and sell to them, but to find common ground with them, connect with them, and create meaningful and lasting relationships.

# Adobe can help.

With the personalization capabilities in Adobe Experience Cloud, you can deliver consistent, personalized experiences everywhere B2B customers go.

- **Adobe Target.** Create better, contextually relevant experiences and improve conversion by testing and optimizing for each audience, during every phase of their journey.
- **Adobe Campaign.** Understand customer journeys from start to finish, then execute and automate personalized campaigns across online and offline channels.
- **Adobe Experience Manager.** Manage, access, and share content from a single place for consistent messaging in your cross-channel campaigns.
- **Adobe Advertising Cloud.** Tie one-to-one campaign management to programmatic ad management to broaden the view of the customer and retarget on search or display channels.
- **Adobe Analytics.** Measure the effectiveness of campaigns across multiple touchpoints from anonymous to authenticated customers.
- **Adobe Commerce Cloud.** Deliver B2B buying so simple and intuitive it feels like B2C, complete with personalized catalogs and price lists.
- **Marketo Engage.** Identify, engage, and nurture your key audiences with automated campaigns and account-based experiences.

Discover how you can personalize and optimize experiences for your B2B environment.

[Learn more](#)

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