

Experience-based and personally tailored eCommerce marketing



What makes some marketing campaigns stand out among others? How are you supposed to factor in the potential consumers' experiences in your marketing tasks? In this chapter, we will explore types of eCommerce marketing that will aid you and your brand in designing a fundamental strategy built to last.

eCommerce is an ever-evolving industry that is projected to grow exponentially, even considering the (currently ongoing) market instabilities caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. More than ever, the eCommerce industry is interconnected between the different marketing practices contributing to one another, lending a hand to the way we design, structure, and appeal to different audiences and products with design, customer experience, and sales. With customers looking for new and attractive content that resonates with them, brands must look to a level of personalization that moves with the customer, throughout the different types of eCommerce marketing.

What is eCommerce marketing?

eCommerce Marketing is the process amongst online retailers to drive awareness and grow traffic in online sales and to customers to establish loyalty. Moreover, eCommerce marketers are likely to apply traditional marketing principles such as advertisements, SEO, social media, influencer, affiliate, and referral marketing, email marketing, and/or content marketing through a multichannel or omnichannel

approach with the main goal of bringing in more visitors, site traffic, awareness and thus, more online purchases.

eCommerce marketing strategy & planning

When looking at building your eCommerce Marketing strategy, the prerequisites point towards defining who you are as a brand from your value proposition, your goals, and objectives, and simply KPIs your brand would like to reach. Here are some points to consider when structuring your eCommerce Marketing strategy:

- **Consider your goals, objectives, and KPIs:** This can include specific metrics such as the goal to 'increase sales by x%' or 'increase conversion rate by X%' during a specific period of time or an activity
- **Define your target audience, market, and personas:** A simple way to break this down is through knowing their age group, gender demographics, geographical location, and purchasing habits/powers
- **Assess your current situation:** This step is essential to better understand the steps that need to be taken from where you are as a brand, keeping the customer and market in mind, to best reach your target goals and KPIs
- **Take time to understand your product's lifecycle:** This helps to not only understand how the product fits into your customer's journey but also the overall distribution needed for the product to determine the most appropriate pricing

Types of eCommerce marketing

There is no rule of thumb on what is the best eCommerce marketing strategy, but rather what fits and resonates best with your brand's audience, industry, and products.

1. Search engine marketing

When we talk about "Search Engine Marketing" (SEM), this includes both Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and paid advertising (also known as Search Engine Advertising or SEA). SEO lends to the ranking of your site in Google searches to optimize your content or a certain landing page, whereas SEM involves elements such as a pay-per-click campaign (PPC), product-search ad campaigns that may show up in Google Shopping, or display campaigns, all in which are done through paying and bidding to reach the highest ranks in search engine results.

eCommerce stores and marketers can benefit from such campaigns as it puts your storefront's landing page at the top of search results. Thus, increasing the likelihood that a customer browsing will most likely click-through and purchase something in your store.



What is PPC? It's an advertising model where brands (or advertisers) pay a few each time one of their advertisements is clicked on. Imagine searching for a specific product on Google, and the first results you see are 'Sponsored' or 'Ad'. Through a brand's bidding for advertising placement in Google, this shows up as a way for brands to buy visits to their site through ranking first in search results rather than doing so organically.



2. Email marketing

Email marketing could be considered as the diamond in the rough of eCommerce marketing. Why? It can be fully automated at the touch of your fingertips - meaning your brand can set up a drip campaign based on different points of the customer user journey to remind, communicate and build a relationship with your customer base. Email marketing is regarded as one of the top methods of communication amongst consumers, contributing to a median ROI of 122%.¹ Yet with every campaign launched, matters of privacy and data privacy must be kept in consideration for every eCommerce brand looking into email marketing, through a level of trust and transparency that must be upheld between brand and customer.



A drip campaign is a method used in marketing to drive awareness and new or existing customers (usually email or newsletter subscribers) through lead nurturing in the form of emails over a period of time, or through specific trigger points within the customer user journey and marketing/sales funnel.

Elements of email marketing coincide with the way a customer thinks and behaves as cued by the overall customer experience and journey. Some ways use email marketing along the customer journey are:

- **Post-purchase emails**

Within the customer journey, once they purchase a product from your website and have agreed in receiving emails from you, most likely in the checkout process, make sure to send a follow-up email after their product is delivered.

This allows the conversation to continue between you and your customer to inform them of their purchase, incentives, and promotions while being a prime platform to do some brand storytelling.

A post-purchase follow-up also shows your customers that you as a brand care beyond their purchase, and are interested in the impact and significance of your product in their lives, such as inviting them for feedback towards their overall experience.

- **Follow-up on abandoned shopping carts**

More often than not, customers abandon their shopping carts for numerous reasons with roughly 60 - 80% of online shopping carts being abandoned before completing a purchase.² Whether that be because of poor loading speeds and site performance, poor UX/UI design, customer service, or simply that your customer has gotten lost within the whole customer purchasing journey - a simple way to redirect your customers back to their purchasing journey is to simply email them back.

Such an email can include offering assistance throughout their journey to redirect them back towards your eCommerce store.



3. Content marketing

Considering that everything you put on your site is 'content', they can in some ways be used and adapted to create content that supports your brand to capture your audience's attention, and bring them to your site. For eCommerce stores, the average conversion rate of those with some sort of content marketing is nearly 6 times (2.9%) more than sites without any content marketing (0.5%).³

eCommerce content marketing consists of various types of assets, such as blogs, product guides, and details, GIFs, videos, or images - it can be anything that serves its purpose to attract your customers, and thus, drives sales. When it comes to marketing your content, your brand does not need to explicitly sell your products to your customer, but rather take the opportunity to educate, explain, and raise your brand's awareness.

For example, if your eCommerce store is selling a line of new leggings, look into writing about the different features and highlights that the product line has rather than into the leggings itself. Hand-in-hand with Google searches, individuals are more likely to search for a type of leggings that could be related to a certain activity. For example, searching "*What kind of leggings are the best for running?*" or "*What kind of leggings are the best for yoga?*" - allows you to promote the features and benefits of your product through storytelling.

4. Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing, or referral marketing, is considered one of the most opportune eCommerce marketing strategies with your customers spreading the word to your brand through word-of-mouth and reviews. Most usually, affiliates or influencers to a business help sell your brand's products online for a commission, with the main goal of driving traffic to your product pages. According to 99 Firms statistics, 81% of brands use affiliate marketing whether that be through the use of social media influencers, affiliates, or traditional word-of-mouth.⁴

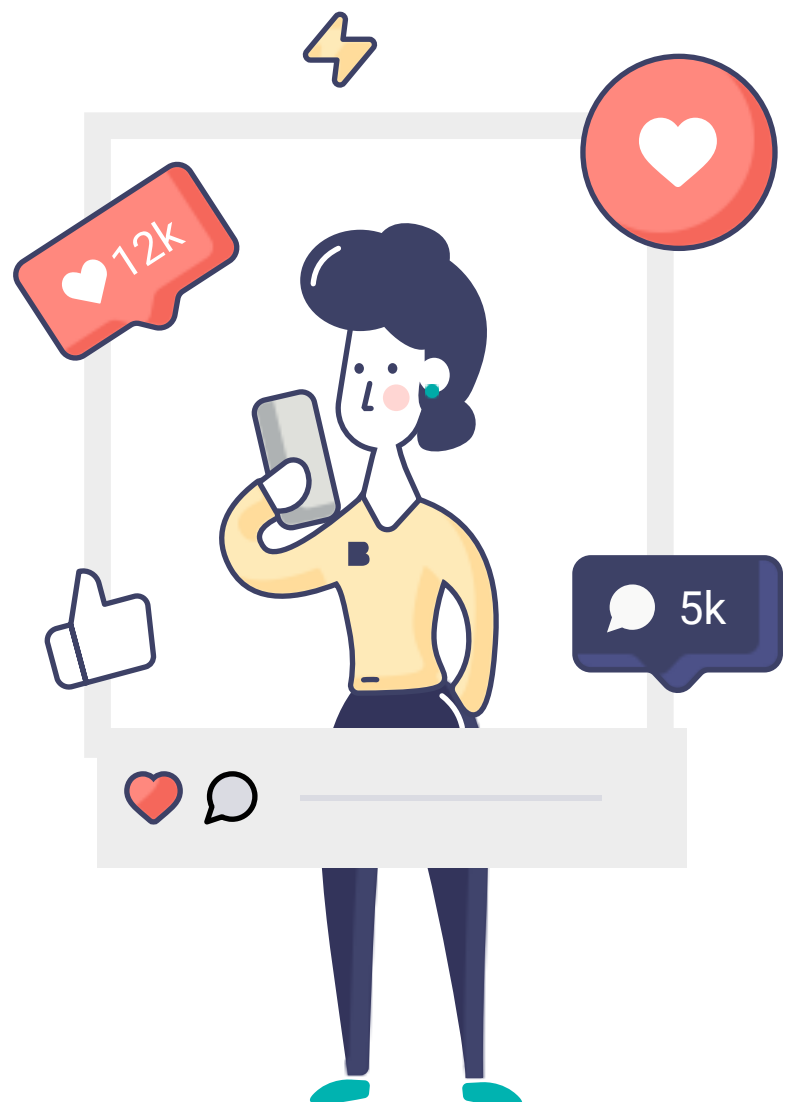
When using affiliate marketing, the customer is key in making sure that their overall experience was pleasant and therefore, is more likely to refer your brand and products to their family and friends. Not only will this leverage your customer base as 'happy customers' and boost your revenue, but also serves as an acquisition tool in bringing in new customers, while retaining your current customer base with incentives, discounts such as referral discounts or membership birthday discounts, or free shipping.

Another way to conduct affiliate marketing to your eCommerce business is through establishing a loyalty program either through collecting points per purchase (that would lead to a certain free product, free shipping, or discount), as well as a referral program based on the same principle but through points per referral.

Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing could be considered a branch of affiliate marketing, yet focuses more on influencing your brand's target marketing. According to a 2019 study, 93% of surveyed marketers use influencers for their business on various social media platforms, in addition to 57% of marketers contributing influencer-generated content outperforming their own brand content.⁵

Influencers are key to building audience communities that like, trust, and know them, making it an opportunity for your brand to collaborate your online product and brand through the means of a recommendation or "sponsored post" through social media.



5. Instagram marketing

More than ever, eCommerce stores have their horizons set on social media. Most specifically, towards visual content and branding that can help spur the customers from social media platforms towards their store, and even, with certain social media platforms that already have a built-in-store feature available.

One of these platforms that recurrently performs best is Instagram, with statistics by the platform (acquired by Facebook) quoting:⁶

- 83% of users use Instagram to discover new products and services on the platform
- 81% of users use the platform to research products or services
- 80% use Instagram as a decision-making factor on whether to buy a product or service
- 80% of all shared-content on Instagram is shared via Instagram Stories, versus Instagram Posts making up only 20% of shared content (in German-speaking countries/DACH)⁷

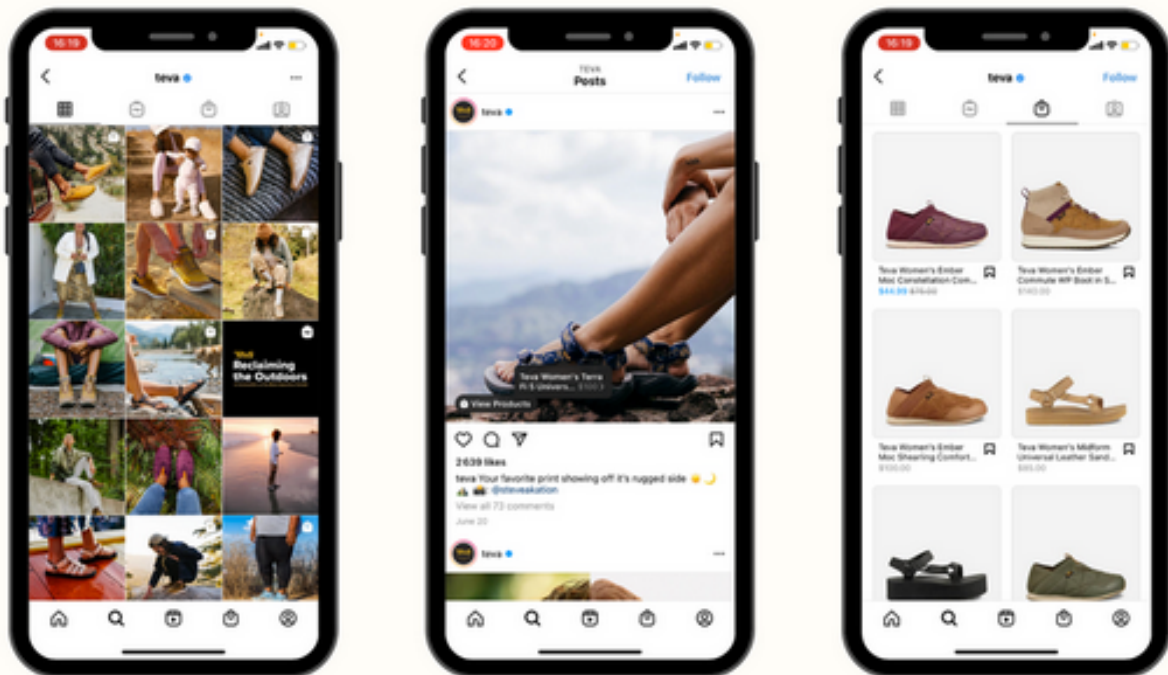
With this in mind and Instagram's Shopping feature, users can now search for a specific product from a brand as well as use product tags, add it to their in-app shopping cart, and checkout. When marketing and creating brand content through Instagram, make sure to keep these best practices as told by Omnisend⁸ in mind:



- **Post with a consistent content schedule:** According to Sprout Social,⁹ the best times to engage and post-retail and consumer goods are Tuesday through Friday from 11 am to 3 pm. On top of that, the ultimate best time and day to post-consumer goods on Instagram is noted to be Wednesdays at 3 pm, whereas the worst day is Sunday
- **Branding 101 - Your color scheme and theme:** From a visual standpoint, customers look for a profile that keeps a clean and clear layout to story-tell through your photo grid accordingly. One way to do that is by keeping a general color scheme/palette and theme throughout the profile.
- **Relevant hashtags:** Instagram is one of the platforms that heavily rely on the use of hashtags. Consider using hashtags relevant to your brand, your product, and the audience - the more the merrier!

- **Update your biography:** So your customers have made it to your Instagram, but how do they get from your profile to your actual store? Don't forget to put your eCommerce store's link in the bio and refer to it in your posts to make sure your potential customers know where to go
- **Engage with your customers and content creators:** If a customer comments or engages with your content, interact with them. Not only does it break down the communication barriers between brand and customer, but also acts as an opportunity to get to know your customers and find a way to personalize their experiences to your brand.

A great example of a brand that takes on the following best practices is sandal brand, [Teva](#):





Key Takeaway

The crème de la crème of eCommerce marketing points to personalization and omnichannel tactics. It is no secret that companies that incorporate a level of personalization to their marketing, see revenue increases ranging from 6-10%.¹⁰ On top of that according to this study, omnichannel personalization specifically sees an engagement lift of 4.3 times higher than the industry benchmark.¹¹

This means that consumers are more than likely to engage with a brand's content if it is personalized to them (such towards their interests or persona type) across various channels and devices.

It is essential for marketers and sales managers alike in looking forwards and upwards as our ways of spending and consuming gradually evolve. eCommerce marketing in itself arguably will no longer be structured around short-term strategies of virality and niche marketing to generate quick sales, but rather towards a marketing strategy that will go the distance.



Endnotes

1. Instapage, What is Ecommerce Marketing and How Do Brands Use These Proven Strategies? Jan. 2020, <https://instapage.com/blog/e-commerce-marketing>
2. Shopify, 13 Amazing Abandoned Cart Emails (and What You Can Learn from Them). Feb. 2014, <https://www.shopify.com/blog/abandoned-cart-emails>
3. Niel Patel, E-Commerce Content Marketing: 15 Ways to Get Started ASAP. <https://neilpatel.com/blog/b2c-ecommerce-content-marketing>
4. 99 Firms, Affiliate Marketing Statistics. <https://99firms.com/blog/affiliate-marketing-statistics/#gref>
5. Streamline, 25 Shocking Influencer Marketing Stats for 2020. Jan. 2020, <https://streamline-marketing.com/influencer-marketing-statistics/>
6. Facebook for Business, How Instagram Boosts Brands and Drives Sales. Feb. 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/insights/how-instagram-boosts-brands-and-drives-sales>
7. Storyclash, 2 Millionen Instagram Stories enthüllt – darüber spricht Deutschland. <https://blog.storyclash.com/instagram-stories-deutschland/>
8. Omnisend, 5 Most Important Marketing Channels for Every Ecommerce Business. Jan. 2021, <https://www.omnisend.com/blog/e-commerce-marketing/>
9. Sprout Social, The Best Times to Post on Social Media in 2020. Aug. 2020, <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-social-media/>
10. BCG, Profiting from Personalization. May 2017, <https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2017/retail-marketing-sales-profiting-personalization>
11. Jivox, Omni-channel Personalization Benchmark Report. 2018. <https://www.jivox.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Omni-channel-Personalization-Benchmark-Report.pdf>