



EBOOK

The Big Book of Personalization

See how 10 visionary companies hit the jackpot, using personalization to create powerful 1:1 experiences that engage people, make them loyal, and deliver big, big results.

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Introduction

Personalization? Everyone's talking about it — and for good reason. Because those smart cookie companies who get it right have a habit of achieving higher revenue growth, faster.

In fact, brands that excel at personalization generate 40% more revenue than those than those who just churn out... meh... the average. A nice gem from Mckinsey there. And here are a few more proof points you can use to impress your colleagues:



76%
of consumers say personalized communications makes them more likely to consider purchasing from brands. And 78% say personalization makes them more likely to repurchase. (Mckinsey)

84%
of consumers say being treated like a person, not a number is very important to winning their business. (Salesforce)

89%
of business leaders believe that personalization is essential to success. (Twilio)

That's why personalization is no longer a definitely-worth-considering-when-we-have-time-to-get-around-to-it type thing. It's a transformational top-of-the-list priority. It's what customers want. It's what they expect. And if you don't give it to them, they're going to go somewhere else and find it.



But let's forget the what and the why of personalization. We're going to show you the who, the why, and the how.

This **Big Book of Personalization** isn't about why you need personalization or why it works or why you should use Optimizely Personalization to harness its true power (although you should).

Instead, it features 10 real-world examples that demonstrate exactly how companies are successfully harnessing the power of personalization to achieve big, big results. So, forget the theory. Let's dive right into the practice...

Helping buyers feel right at home

How personalization enhances the homebuyer's experience

Meet Zoopla

Zoopla is a leading British property website founded in 2008. Mission: to help customers find their perfect home by offering a range of services such as property listings, financial advice, and property guides.

What were the challenges?

- Creating the personalized brand experiences customers expect
- Keeping hold of more customers for longer
- Reducing customer acquisition costs

How did Zoopla solve them?

Zoopla created a new blueprint for their personalization strategy focusing on four key pillars:



Big data

Prioritize first-party data collection and transparent usage



Journey mapping

Identify critical touchpoints for personalization



Experimentation

Follow a test-and-learn approach



Automated interactions

Connect customer intelligence across digital channels

ZOOPLA



Product managers and designers can experiment using Optimizely and Contentsquare without needing support from data analysts. They're able to self-serve; if they have an idea, they can test it themselves."

Veronica Saha
Head of Analytics / Zoopla

How they made it happen

- **Gain insight:** Contentsquare Customer Journey Analysis brings understanding of user behavior and segment customers
- **Unify data:** Seamless platform integrations deliver fast access to deep insights
- **Create culture:** Build a culture of experimentation around data-based hypothesis testing and optimization

Huh? **Hypothesis testing** basically means testing out a new idea, concept, feature, or assumption.

What next?

Zoopla plans to:



Expand personalization across all digital platforms



Take data analysis to the next level with AI



Scale personalization to incorporate proprietary data such as postcode information

The key takeaway

With fast and easy access to data insights, digital teams can deliver tailored digital experiences. At the same time, they're working more efficiently, freeing up time to focus on more strategic activities.

Big results

- + Intuitive and seamless user experiences across Zoopla's digital properties
- + More efficient digital team allows more strategic activities
- + Ability to tailor experiences based on where users are in their homebuying journey

The scoop on driving growth and innovation

How personalization helped increase subscriptions by 39%

Meet News UK

News UK is a leading media organization and owner of household titles such as The Times, The Sun, and Virgin Radio. They use Optimizely Web and Feature Experimentation to enhance their digital offerings and drive business growth.

What were the challenges?

- Lighting the touchpaper under subscription rates
- Engaging users more deeply
- Making the most of personalization
- Establishing a culture of experimentation

How did News UK solve them?

Simple. In 2019, News UK began using Optimizely Web and Feature Experimentation as both a standalone solution and as part of a larger martech stack to streamline testing.

News UK



A big topic for us is experimenting with personalized content recommendations. Increasing page use is really important, so having a solution that helps us try a lot of different things is really essential.”

Sabone Kejlava
Experimentation Manager / News UK

How they made it happen



Test for best

A/B testing on critical website features including checkout, paywall, and content recommendations



Personalization-powered

AI-driven content recommendations and tailored user cross-platform experiences



Culture cultures

Onboard and train a community of over 200 Optimizely users to create a strong testing culture

A positive impact on business processes

- ✓ **Streamlined development**
Faster testing and implementation of new features
- ✓ **Data-driven decision making**
Rapid validation of ideas based on user data
- ✓ **Continuous optimization**
Ongoing improvement of user experiences across platforms

What next?

News UK plans to:



Refine personalization strategies even further



Expand experimentation across more areas of the business



Continuously improve user experiences and drive subscription growth

Big results

+ **39%**

increase in subscriptions through optimized checkout and paywall strategies

+ **Accelerated development lifecycle** for new features and experiments

+ **Better user engagement** through personalized content recommendations and experiences

+ **A culture of experimentation** now exists across the organization

The key takeaway

News UK transformed its approach to product development and user engagement, experimenting in a much leaner fashion to gain a greater understanding of customers, test new features more quickly, and personalize content recommendations. The results speak for themselves.



Get with the schedule

How to personalize experiences for
20 million users

Meet Calendly

Calendly is a popular scheduling automation platform with over 20 million users worldwide. They partnered with Optimizely to add some pep to their user experiences through data-driven experimentation and personalization.

What were the challenges?

- Creating better user experiences across the entire platform
- Personalizing messaging for different user segments
- Making better decisions and making them fast
- Raising a smile at the very mention of conversion rates, revenue, and engagement

How did Calendly solve them?

Calendly went all in, using Optimizely Web and Optimizely Feature Experimentation to change the game for their business, and for their users.

How they made it happen



Optimize everything

Seamless experimentation across marketing and product channels



Personalization for everyone

Communications tailored to different user segments



Experiment at speed

Faster testing and implementation of user experience improvements



Experimentation for all

Democratizes experimentation across the various teams



Every personalization campaign we run through Optimizely has resulted in significant improvements in conversion rate. And we have much higher levels of engagement, because we have an experience that's relevant to what you're doing and the stage you're at as a customer."

Darren Chait
Head of Growth Marketing / Calendly

A positive impact on business processes

-  **Teamwork works**
 Cross-team collaboration is essential for better customer experiences
-  **Decisive decisions**
 Good decisions are made superfast because they're based on experimental results
-  **Experimentation mindset**
 A company-wide culture of continuous improvement through experimentation

What next?

Calendly plans to:



Continue to **fine tune**
user experiences



Expand personalization
 wherever possible



Rely on ongoing experimentation
 to **power innovation**

Big results



+ **Conversion rates**

+ **Revenue conversion**

+ **User engagement metrics**



The key takeaway

Calendly has gone way beyond improving key business metrics. By transforming its approach to product development and user engagement, they are setting the stage for continued growth and innovation.

Creating a memorable destination for holidaymakers

How experimentation and personalization revolutionized the digital experience

Meet Outrigger

OUTRIGGER Resorts & Hotels has long been an innovator of tourism development. The company teamed up with Optimizely to do the same for its digital presence — and capitalize on the increase in online traffic following COVID-19.

What were the challenges?

- Moving away from a fragmented user experience, with multiple microsites leading to difficult navigation and dropped traffic
- Joining up customer data and create a unified view of customer preferences to support personalization
- Fixing a Sitecore-based website that was inadequate for leveraging online engagement opportunities

How did Outrigger solve them?

Outrigger went with Optimizely One to centralize data, simplify content delivery, and master the art of personalization — all in less than a year.

OUTRIGGER

Big results

+ 77%
increase in bookings

+ 63%
boost in revenue
year-over-year

+ 6X
faster content updates
across the site

**+ Improved campaign
performance**

**+ Increased customer
engagement**

How they made it happen



Content, unified

Improves content delivery and simplifies the booking process



Data, centralized

Allows for truly personalized experiences



Experimentation, strategized*

Real-time segmentation and targeted content personalization

*Er – is strategized a real word?



We went from ground zero to a fully functioning program powered by CDP, real-time segments, experimentation, all within a five-month period. The program is scaling, our velocity is awesome, and we're excited about the future."

Bryan Hopkins

Technical Marketing Strategist / Outrigger

A positive impact on business processes

- ✓ **Next-level personalization**
Tailored travel experiences based on comprehensive guest data
- ✓ **Streamlined marketing**
Improved agility in responding to customer needs
- ✓ **Great data, good decisions**
Cutting edge analytics allow the team to prioritize interventions and improvements

What next?

Outrigger plans to:



Implement over 100 segments and events



Launch a new branded app focusing on CRM, cart abandonment, and retargeting emails



Integrate CRM and guest loyalty programs

The key takeaway

Outrigger transformed its digital presence, significantly boosting key business metrics while simultaneously aligning with its core values of HOST + GUEST + PLACE.



The story behind the headline figures

How personalization helped boost digital subscriptions by 35%

Meet Star Tribune

Star Tribune, based in Minnesota, has been a leading news organization for over 150 years. Looking to the future, it sought to expand its digital reach in a competitive marketplace.

What were the challenges?

- Reversing the slowdown in digital subscription sales
- Balancing advertising revenue with subscription growth
- Understanding the practical impact of data

How did Star Tribune solve them?

Star Tribune chose Optimizely Web Experimentation to start testing their paywall strategy.

How they made it happen



Testing three variations of their paywall:



1. **Current offer:** 10 free articles before subscription required
2. **7 free articles**
3. **5 free articles**



I firmly believe that gaining the ability to quickly make changes, see the impacts, and then move on to the next idea was essential to our success this past year.”

Patrick Johnston
Sr. Director, Digital Experience Optimization / Star Tribune

A positive impact on business processes

-  **Great data, great decisions**
 Moved from debating hunches to testing ideas on a small percentage of traffic
-  **Motivated teams**
 Team members felt more involved and seeing the impact of their ideas is pretty motivating
-  **More reward, less risk**
 Experimentation seriously brought down the risk of making changes

What next?

Star Tribune plans to:



Focus on building stronger, more fruitful customer relationships



Improve the conversion funnel for non-subscribers



Personalize customer experiences based on their preferences

The key takeaway

For Star Tribune, balancing subscription and advertising revenue is utterly crucial for maximum overall revenue. Experimentation helps to get that balance right. At the same time, it leads to surprising results that often turn initial assumptions upside down.

Big results

+ **35%**

year-over-year increase in subscriptions

Side note: Just in case you're curious, the 7-article variation performed best delivering a 37% lift in subscription revenue with just a 6% decrease in ad revenue. That equals a 20 % lift in overall revenue.



Unique insight

Don't be intimidated by experimentation. Sure, it might seem daunting at first. But as Star Tribune shows, it mitigates the risk of making changes and really can deliver measurable improvements in business performance.

Making sales a whole lot smarter

How personalized recommendations now make up 12.5% of all orders

Meet Motal

Motal is a Finnish wholesaler specializing in vehicle and transport-related products, with turnover exceeding €70 million. Motal wanted to sharpen its competitive edge through an efficient online store offering a personalized shopping experience.

What were the challenges?

- Simplifying a complex, customer-specific B2B pricing system
- Reconciling a 25,000 product-strong catalog with a diverse customer base of 9,000+ businesses
- Personalizing content for different user groups
- Handling 100 million pricing combinations. Yep. 100 million

How did Motal solve them?

Motal decided to go with Optimizely's customer-first Digital Experience Platform to streamline and personalize its entire online sales operation.

How they made it happen



Personalized front pages

Tailored content for different customer groups



Customer-specific pricing

Daily updates of 100 million price lines



AI-driven product recommendations

Based on customer behavior and purchase history



Automated email campaigns

AI-generated emails based on predefined strategies



Optimizely Personalization began to produce results for us on the very first day — we immediately noticed that there was amazing potential here.”

Henri Ström
Development Manager / Motal

A positive impact on business processes

✓ Know your audience

AI and analytics provide the business insights you dream of, supporting good decisions and the efficient targeting of diverse customer groups.

✓ Smart sales

Equipped with targeted customer lists, field sales team now work more efficiently and waste less time on random calls.

What next?

Motoral plans to:



Extend the use of AI across all sales channels



Fine tune personalization strategies



Comprehensively **analyze AI-driven sales impact** across all channels

The key takeaway

Personalization delivers a measurable impact on both online and offline sales processes. Plus, AI can help turbocharge B2B personalization and drive more effective marketing strategies — especially when combined with good old human expertise.

Big results

+ **12.5%**
of orders include
AI-recommended products

+ **4X**
increase in click-through
rates for AI-generated
email campaigns compared
to manual ones

+ **More efficient product**
offerings from a 25,000-
item catalog

+ **Targeted product lists**
provide more support for
the sales team

Stepping up customer service

How targeted optimization decreased return rates by 80%

Meet Brooks

Brooks Running is a leading running shoe and apparel company. The team wanted to improve customer satisfaction and lift revenue by reducing return rates...drastically.

What were the challenges?

Customers were ordering multiple sizes of the same shoe model, which led to:

- High costs of processing returns
- Reduced inventory
- Negative customer experience

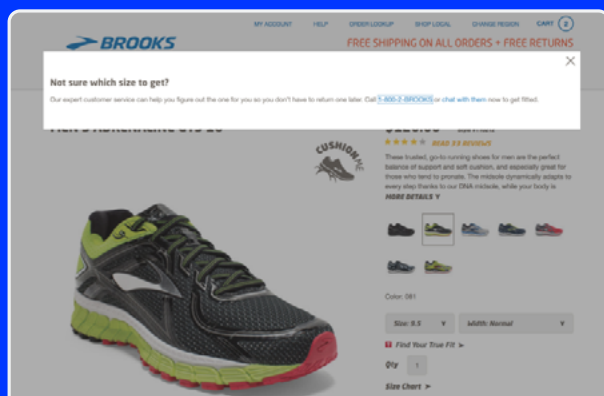
How did Brooks solve them?

The company adopted a targeted optimization strategy, using Optimizely Web Experimentation to identify high-risk orders (multiple sizes of the same shoe) and then provide proactive customer service to nip the problem in the bud.



Rather than accepting our return rates as a constant, we were able to challenge the widely accepted rate and reallocate the dollars budgeted towards returns to fund new programs and initiatives.”

David Kornfield
Marketing Manager overseeing optimization and analytics / Brooks Running



How they made it happen

A personalized pop-up message appears to any customer adding 2+ pairs of the same shoe in different sizes to their basket. The message offers expert sizing assistance via phone or chat.

A positive impact on business processes

- ✓ **Inventory management, sorted**
With fewer products sent out, more stock remains available for sale
- ✓ **Stepping up customer service**
Proactive assistance delivers a personalized feel and results in fewer returns
- ✓ **Freed up resources**
Resources previously budgeted for returns are now available for new initiatives

What next?

Brooks plans to:



Keep its **personalization strategy** running at full stride



Tie it into the **specific needs of different customer cohorts**



Make the shift from broad A/B testing to **targeted, behavioral-based interventions**

The key takeaway

First off, think about optimizing the entire end-to-end customer experience, rather than just focusing on clicks or conversions. And measure the impact beyond the traditional metrics like conversion rates or AOV — reducing the scale of returns for example.

By identifying the specific needs of meaningful customer segments, then meeting these needs with proactive, real-time personalization, you can achieve powerful results.

Big results

+ 80%
fewer returns for the targeted segment

+ 2%
increase in conversion rate

+ 88%
of customers liked the proactive advice

+ Decreased average order value (AOV) BUT increased add-on rate for additional products

+ At c.5 minutes each, customer service engagements were less costly than processing returns



Unique insight

Brooks successfully bridged the gap between online and in-store experiences by bringing personalized customer service to their e-commerce platform, demonstrating the value of human touch in digital retail.

Hats off to a successful transformation

How personalization powered a 60%+ year-on-year increase in revenues

Meet New Era Cap

New Era Cap Company is the world's leading headwear manufacturer. Known for its sports collaborations and urban style, New Era has expanded into apparel and new markets, becoming a staple accessory for younger crowds.

What were the challenges?

- Modernizing its digital presence in the EMEA region
- Creating a tailored, interactive online journey for each customer
- Increasing market share by attracting a wider, more diverse customer base
- Boosting conversion rates through personalized touchpoints
- Honing operational efficiency with smart ideas shaped by hard data

How did New Era solve them?

New Era partnered with Optimizely and UNRVLD to develop a large-scale personalization strategy.



We have seen a 51% increase in product views, a 70% increase in add to basket and a 9% increase in returning users which is absolutely fantastic! We're over the moon with the outcome."

Michael Nong
Head of E-Commerce / NEW ERA

How they made it happen

Customized commerce

Multiple payment gateways and personalized checkout processes

Market-specific personalization

Website serving 40+ European markets in five languages, with country-based product visibility

Intelligent recommendations

Used on key pages including homepage, listing, and product pages

Personalized content

Delivers tailored content across 43 markets

Customer profiling

Captures unified customer profiles and segments them based on behavior and preferences

Data-powered experimentation

Optimizes page elements such as add-to-cart CTAs and product listing page sorting

What next?

New Era plans to:



Build a constantly evolving view of customer behavior and preferences



Increase personalization of web and email content



Continue expanding its social footprint and email database

A positive impact on UX

✓ Customer-shaped user journeys

Improved search and navigation allows customers to quickly find the products they're looking for

✓ Authentic local experiences

Refined language translation and localized market workflows create authentic local experiences

✓ Join the club

Publish The New Era Cap Fan Club, a personalized email newsletter, is gaining 3,000 new registrants every week

✓ Real data, real insights

An evolving view of customer behavior and preferences results in the effective personalization of web and email content

The key takeaway

By placing personalization at the core of its digital strategy, New Era Cap transformed its online presence, leading to substantial growth and way, way better customer engagement. This personalization-first approach earned New Era our “Most Innovative Digital Experience” award and clearly demonstrates the power of tailoring digital experiences to individual customer needs and preferences.



Big results

+ **60%+**
year-on-year revenue
increase

+ **51%**
rise in product views

+ **70%**
growth in add-to-cart
actions

+ **9%**
increase in returning users

+ **123%**
boost in Black Friday sales
(2021 vs. 2020)

The fast lane to digital innovation

How personalized experiences increased conversion rates by 30%

Meet Road Scholar

Road Scholar is a non-profit educational travel organization for adults. The company offers thousands of programs across the US and in nearly 100 other countries, serving almost 100,000 participants annually, primarily those aged 55 and older.

What were the challenges?

- Resuscitating low conversion rates, especially among new visitors
- Replacing inefficient manual content management
- Gaining more data insights and increase analytics capabilities
- Modernizing an outdated Content Management System (CMS)
- Transforming a complex, developer-dependent website update process, cumbersome project management and content approval workflows, AND an inadequate Web Experimentation platform. Ouch.

How did Road Scholar solve them?

Road Scholar showed they meant business with a comprehensive package of Optimizely products significantly enhancing the team's personalization and marketing.

ROAD SCHOLAR®



Knowing that the systems will advance together is a big advantage. For example, if something is developed for CMS, I know it will be integrated into CMP and Web Experimentation, ensuring everything moves forward in the same direction without one piece being left behind.”

Mark Fagiano
Senior e-Commerce Director
/ Road Scholar

How they made it happen

Streamlined content

Streamlining content creation and management and turbocharging teamwork for 75 users

Speedy platform

Secure, customizable platform accelerates website speed and flexibility, while simplifying content updates

Sophisticated testing

A/B and multivariate testing and complex experiments like multi-armed bandit checkout flow tests

Statistical insight

Integrate data from multiple sources for a complete customer view that enhances personalization and marketing

Smart recommendations

Personalized, relevant recommendations

Slick processes

Efficient workflow from testing to execution and reporting, with improved communications across geographically dispersed teams

A positive impact on processes

-  **CMS. Destressed.**
 Faster load times, easier content updates, and more options to deliver content
-  **Single. Seamless.**
 Plan, collaborate, and execute campaigns and content within a single integrated platform
-  **Knowledge. And power.**
 Measure the impact of their changes on key metrics and deliver personalized experiences to their diverse and growing audience
-  **Together-ness**
 Colleagues in different locations can work together as closely as if they were just in the same room.

What next?

Road Scholar plans to:



Take experimentation capabilities even further



Focus on **feature testing**



Migrate more order calls to the website



Expand their service portal to reduce call center volume

Big results

+ **30%**

increase in conversion rates (March 2023 to March 2024)

+ **38%**

reduction in page load speed

+ **Dramatically reduced content creation and deployment time**

+ **Improved internal visibility, collaboration, and workflow management**

+ **Enhanced personalization capabilities**

The key takeaway

Road Scholar has seamlessly interconnected every aspect of its digital presence. In doing so, the company has streamlined operations, gained real world insights, and achieved the capability to deliver powerful, personalized experiences that have changed the game.



Adding a personal touch to humanitarian aid

How personalization helped increase revenue by 2800%

Meet Australian Red Cross

Founded in 1914, the Australian Red Cross is a non-profit organization providing humanitarian aid and community services across Australia and Asia Pacific.

What were the challenges?

- Creating a modern, joined up e-commerce experience to support fundraising
- Moving away from a legacy on-premise CMS to really engage customers
- Unifying data and use it to create truly personalized experiences

How did Australian Red Cross solve them?

Australian Red Cross combined a suite of Optimizely tools to achieve three initial goals:

1. Transform the commerce experience.
2. Seamlessly create, manage, and optimize digital content across multiple web properties.
3. Make the most of user data to personalize engagement.



Personalization at scale is the goal to enable data-driven experiences, automation of processes, data integrity and compliance, drive engagement and conversions, and create 'always on' marketing campaigns."

Brett Wilson
CIO / Australian Red Cross

How they made it happen

Unify data

360-degree view of customers supports personalized marketing automation campaigns and enhanced donor engagement

Personalize recommendations

Tailored product recommendations help optimize fundraising revenue

Simplify systems

Consolidate four e-commerce platforms into one single system for donations, retail, and other transactions

Update CMS

Cloud-based CMS enables efficient content creation and management across multiple web properties

Optimize results

Experimentation optimized conversion rates, increased revenue, and refined personalization



A positive impact on UX

✓ MyRedCross

A central unified platform allowing all stakeholders to interact with the website from one place.

✓ Suggested donations

Understanding customer behavior allows the organization to suggest relevant donation amounts.

✓ Advanced tech

A focus on predictive personalization using ODP, Visitor Groups, and custom Machine Learning delivers tailored product recommendations.

What next?

Australian Red Cross plans to:



Implement marketing automation
to diversify revenue generation



Continue **expanding**
personalization efforts



Further leverage Web
Experimentation to carry
on optimizing

The key takeaway

By combining different tools into a unified, powerful platform, Australian Red Cross successfully transformed its digital presence, streamlined operations, and improved user engagement and fundraising capabilities. The results speak for themselves (even we had to double check if those numbers were accurate).

Big results

+ **2800%**

increase in revenue
(no, that's not a typo)

+ **1300%**

increase in visitors
(nor is that)

+ **84%**

increase in
conversion rates

+ **37%**

increase in average
order value

+ All within just 6 months.

Feeling inspired?



Well, we've come to the end of our whistlestop tour through the world of personalization. You've seen just how powerful it can be in achieving big results across pretty much any sector and every size of company — from startups to international brands.

Sure, personalization can be a challenge. Siloed (or no) data, fragmented systems, outdated tech, zero insight... there's no shortage of obstacles. But putting off personalization only means falling further and further and further behind.

→ It doesn't have to be that way.

Optimizely makes it easy to implement and scale an effective personalization program. Our purpose-built platform combines customer data, powerful testing, and AI-rich optimization capabilities proven to help marketers create 1:1 experiences that engage users, supercharge revenues, and make a difference...a BIG difference...to their business.

Want to replicate the kind of personalization success you've just read about? We can help you make it happen.

Visit: optimizely.com/get-started

About Optimizely

Optimizely is on a mission to make the lives of marketers better with Optimizely One, the world's first operating system for marketing teams. Optimizely One combines industry-leading solutions across content management, content marketing, experimentation, commerce, and personalization, powering every stage of the marketing lifecycle through a single, AI-accelerated workflow.

With the flexibility of a fully composable platform, Optimizely is proudly helping global brands like H&M, Salesforce, Zoom, and Toyota create content with speed, launch experiments with confidence, and deliver experiences of the highest quality

Learn more at [Optimizely.com](https://www.optimizely.com)

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