



DRIVING REPEAT BUSINESS

A Guide to Building a Loyal Band of Customers

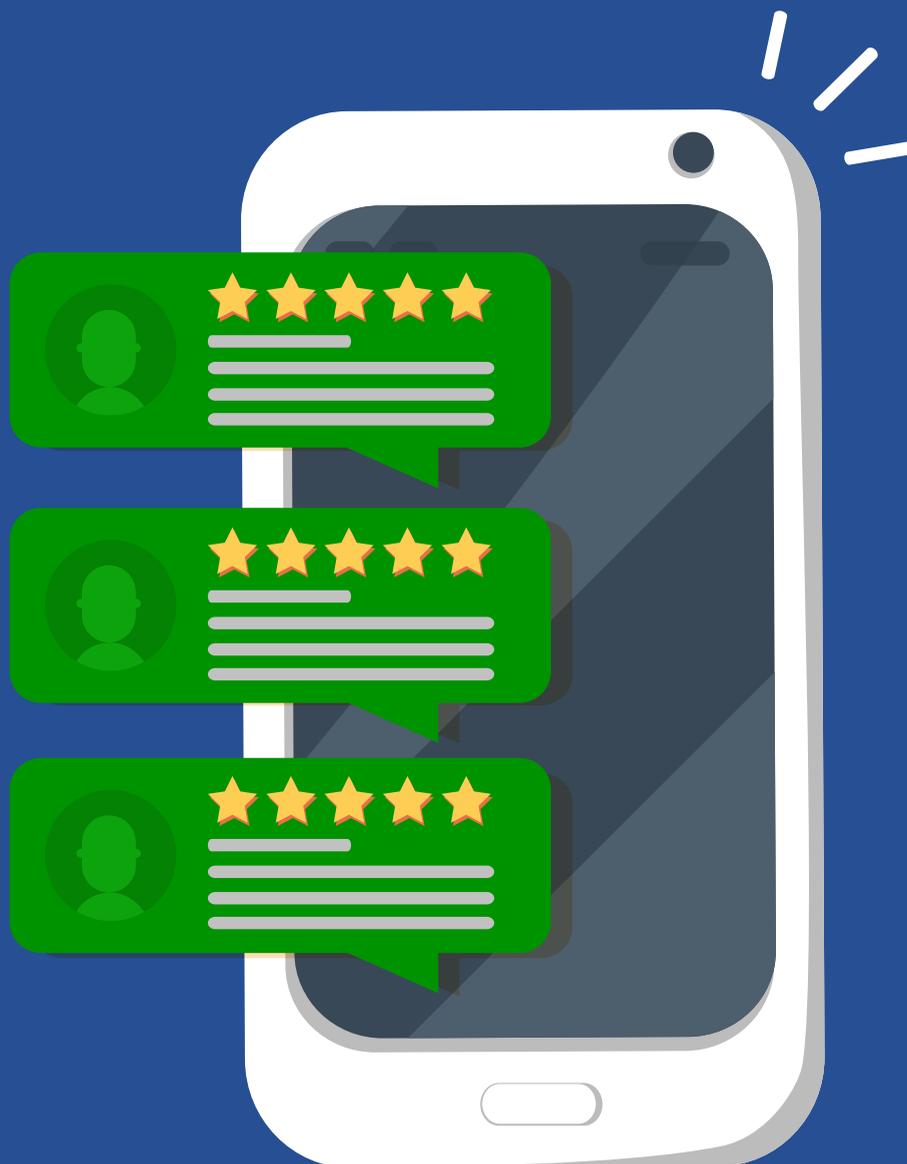


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Introduction

It's no secret that growing a small business is tough – especially when the entire operation can be defined as a “one-person shop.” You're already involved in every step of the process—from creating your products to shipping them, and everything in between.

For the majority of small business owners, doing it all is a massive challenge. More than half report that they are too busy getting work done to focus on selling their products. ([FreshBooks](#))

That's a major dilemma. How can any business expect to see revenue growth without a solid marketing strategy in place? In today's world, targeted marketing is more important than ever. Consumers are “always on” and stumble across millions of pieces of content each day. In order to see growth, it's crucial that business owners make their products stand out.

But, what do you do when you don't have the resources to build out an extensive marketing operation?

You focus on the customers you already have. That's right. Driving repeat business from your existing customers is a fundamental key to growing your business.

HERE'S WHY:



Acquiring a new customer is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining the ones you already have. ([HBR](#))



Repeat customers spend more. The typical online store gets 43% of its revenue from repeat customers. ([BigCommerce](#))



The content they'll create on your behalf will inspire new customers to take action: User-generated content (reviews, social posts, recommendations) officially outranks other forms of marketing. Nine out of 10 consumers trust what other consumers say when making their own purchase decisions. ([TurnTo](#))

Building a loyal following will drive more purchases, generate higher order values, and inspire new customers to join your community.

This guide will analyze the four core principles that drive loyalty, explain how to leverage existing data to build personalization, and illustrate key marketing strategies you can start implementing today.

Let's face it: Amazon has completely transformed the way we shop for products, and our expectations from a customer service standpoint. The brand has become somewhat of the golden standard for customer loyalty. Amazon has built such a faithful following that 71% of shoppers purchase at least one product per month on the site. ([PowerReviews](#))

While Amazon has a unique advantage as a "one-stop shop," that's not the only reason why consumers keep going back. These four aspects also play a role:



Personalization. The products featured in the "Recommended for you" and "Frequently bought together" sections of the site are curated extremely well. In fact, Amazon makes a whopping 35% of its revenue off personalized recommendations.



Relevancy. Whether we're in the dog days of summer or getting ready for Thanksgiving, the content the brand serves to us is highly relevant. We never have to search too hard for products we need at a specific moment in time.



Transparency. Product reviews have become an essential part of the online shopping process. Amazon understands that, and publishes every review – the good, the bad and everything in between. Nothing builds trust like putting it all out there.



Timeliness. Amazon has completely transformed how consumers think about shipping. These days, online shoppers expect fast and low-cost shipping. Imagine landing at a checkout page only to discover you have to pay \$12 for standard shipping and that your items will take five to 10 business days to arrive. People want to support small businesses, but in many cases, these shipping woes will turn customers away and drive them back to Amazon.

In order to remain competitive in today's market, you cannot rely on the traditional way of doing things. It is not enough to plop your inventory up on a website and just ship products out to customers whenever they decide to order. Your brand must exhibit personalization, relevancy, transparency and timeliness. That's how to keep customers coming back.

The next few pages of this guide will highlight strategies that you can implement today to create a loyal band of customers.

2

Leverage your customer insights

The main reason why Amazon is able to deliver such outstanding personalization, relevancy and transparency is due to all of the consumer insights they collect. They put everything they know about their customers to work and it results in a delightful experience for them.

Believe it or not, you can put these insights to work too – even if you're working on a team of one.

Every time someone orders from your business, you collect valuable data. You know where they live, a bit about their interests, if they transact with coupons, and so much more. Then, every time a customer visits your site, you collect behavioral insights. Does it take them three days to actually complete a purchase? Do they only shop items under a certain price point?

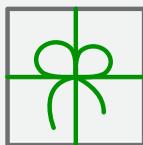
Combining customer data and behavioral insights to connect with customers is the golden ticket. By leveraging those insights in the right way, your customers will feel more connected to your products and your brand.



Takes advantage of a summer sale coupon



Puts items in cart but abandons



Places holiday order last minute



Opens majority of emails but only clicks on 25% of them

Pro tips to leverage your customer insights

1

Tap into marketing automation. Marketing automation software is the most effective and authentic way to connect with your customers. You can set up your processes to reach out to customers based on their behaviors. If a customer opened a particular email you sent but didn't take action, the system can automatically send them a follow-up email a few days later. This is a great way to avoid sending the same generic messages to all of your subscribers who might not be interested in the same topics.

2

Be helpful; not creepy. When you use customer data to connect with shoppers, it's not what you say – it's how you say it. Reaching out to someone who abandoned their cart with a 10% off coupon would come across as helpful. Meanwhile, it would be intrusive to reach out to that same person with "We noticed you browsed that product page for 24 minutes, and put several items in your cart. Did you change your mind?"

3

Track your results. As with every good marketing strategy, it's important to measure your results. By measuring your results, you can fine-tune your messaging to build a more loyal following. You might learn that males between 18 and 34 living in the midwest are likelier to spend more with your brand, or that expectant mothers are most likely to shop with coupons. If you're armed with this knowledge, you can create highly targeted messaging that will drive more sales.



WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

Ann from Cleveland has made three separate purchases from your small business in the past. Each time, the order total was less than \$50. Ann hasn't made a purchase in a while, but she does visit your site from time to time. After several months, she fills her cart with \$170 worth of products ... but Ann doesn't follow through with the order. She leaves everything in her cart. Two days pass, and it's still there waiting in her cart. All of these behaviors trigger an automation tool to send Ann a coupon for 15% off. She receives it in her inbox, and happily completes her order.

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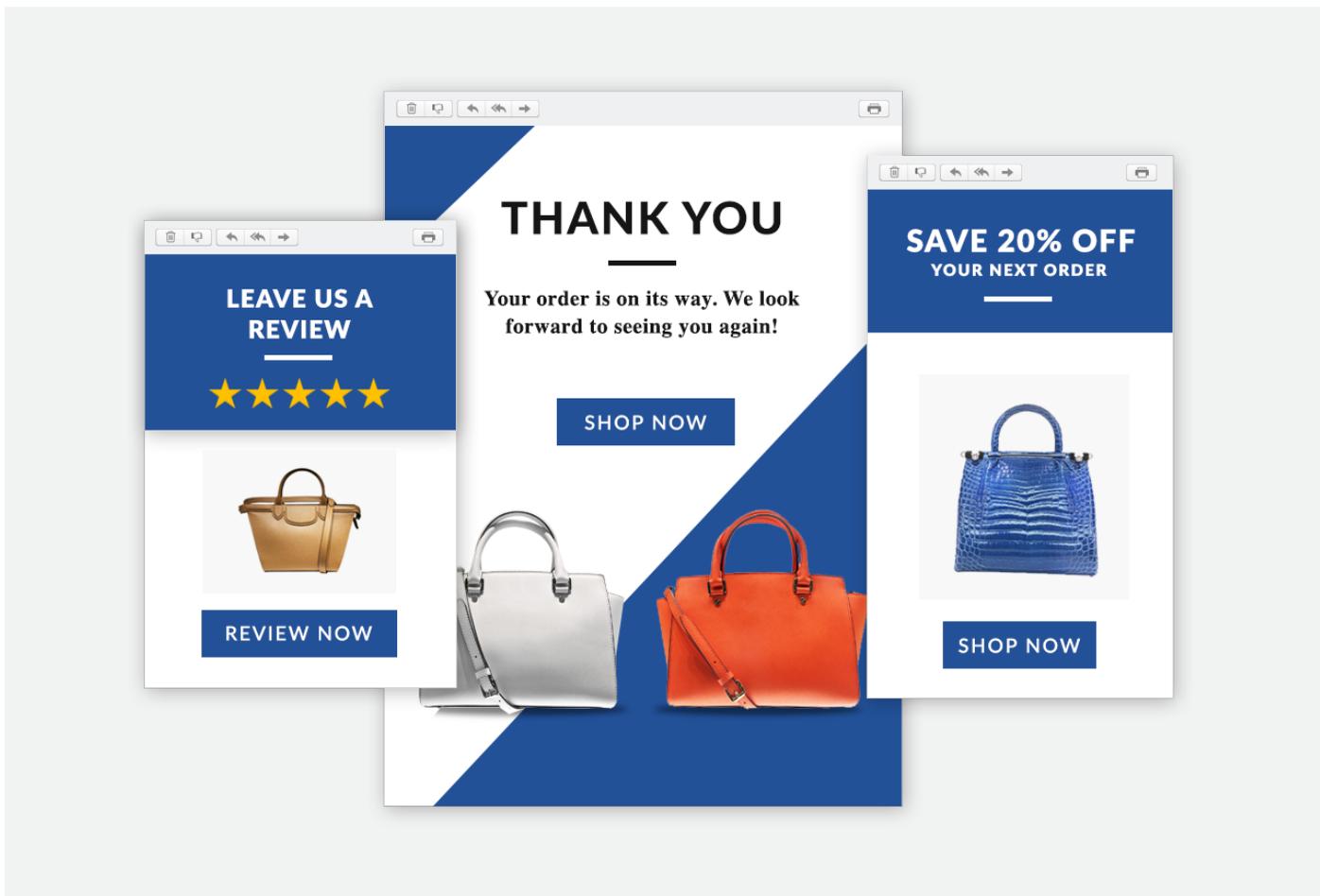
You've got mail: build relevancy via email

Out of every marketing channel out there, email generates one of the highest returns on investment. It's a super low-cost way to send relevant and personalized messages to your customers.

But, there's so much room for improvement. **Only 5% of consumers say that all marketing emails they receive are relevant.** That does not bode well for building a loyal following.

So, what's the key to building relevancy? Automated emails. When businesses send emails that are triggered based off customer insights and behavior, they see a **165% higher click-through rate than when they send standard emails.** ([Epsilon](#))

This tells us that customers will take action when messages are targeted to them. It's up to business owners to effectively connect with them.



Pro tips to send more relevant email

1

Write captivating subject lines. This is your chance to catch people's attention, so make it good. Studies show that subject lines that include the recipient's name tend to receive more opens. Subject lines that evoke a sense of urgency also perform well (for example: Hurry! Only 2 days left to grab 25% off knitted sweaters.) Think hard about what would make your audience want to open your emails.

2

Integrate your brand colors and delightful graphics. Part of building a loyal following is building your brand into something that's instantly recognizable. Make sure to include your brand colors and your beautiful product images in every email you send.

3

Include clear calls-to-action. How can your followers take action if they don't know what you want them to do? Every email should have a clear call-to-action that directs them back to your page. Whether it's "Shop sale items now!" or "Browse these products!" – provide your followers with some direction on what to do next.



WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

Andrew has browsed sweaters in your online shop in the past. He's even gone as far as to put them in his cart, but he abandons the purchase each time. Meanwhile, he continues to purchase t-shirts from your brand. Your marketing automation tool catches on to the fact that Andrew might really want a sweater but is on the price-sensitive side. During your next sale, you automate an email to Andrew with the subject line, "Hurry! Only 2 days left to grab 25% off knitted sweaters." He opens the email, sees the coupon code and immediately jumps at the chance to get his sweater.

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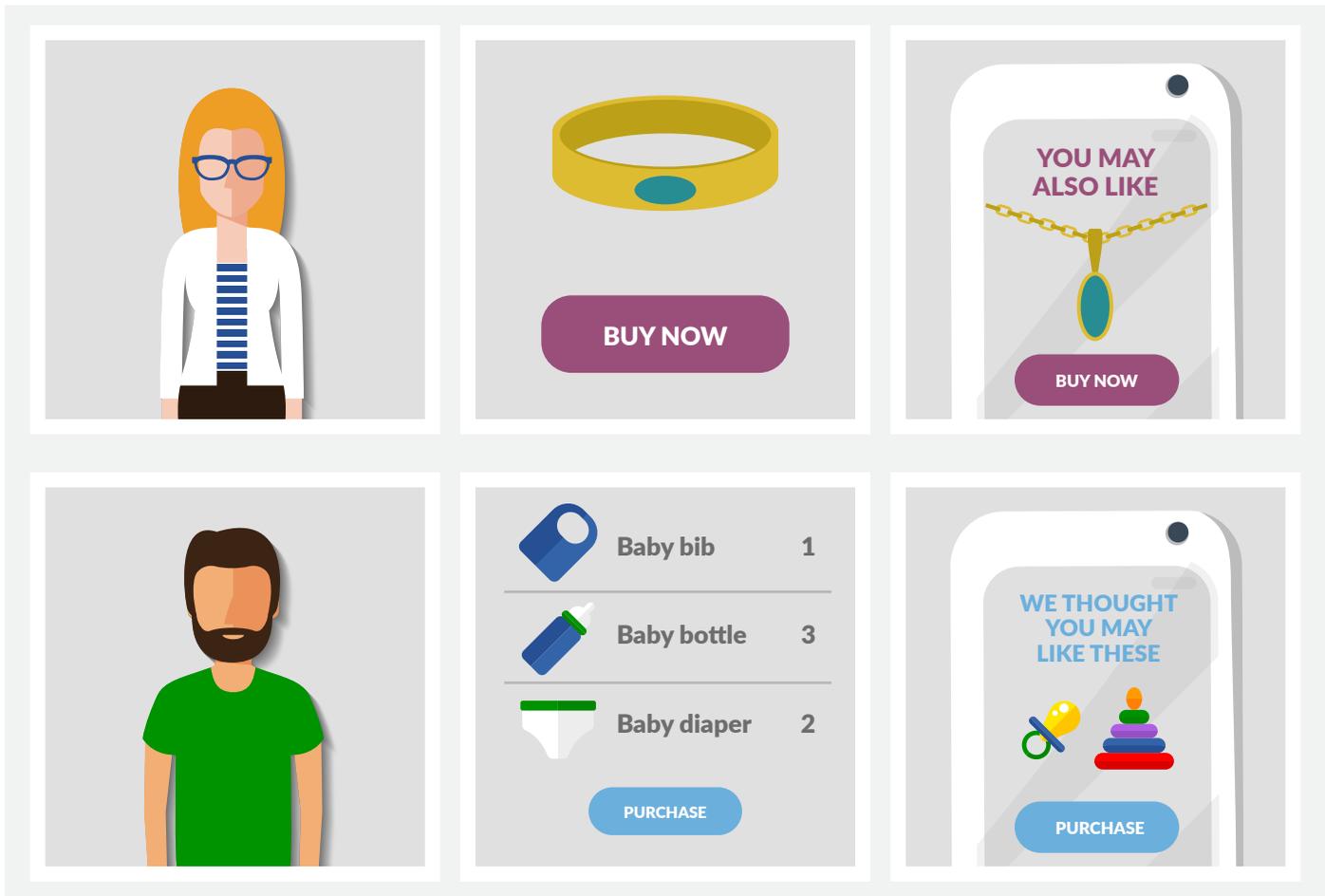
Just for you: personalize product recommendations

Here's the thing: people can't fall in love with your products if they don't know they exist.

So, keep them coming back for more with personalized recommendations. **During Q2 2015, personalized product recommendations drove 11.5% of the revenue on ecommerce sites.** ([MarketingSherpa](#))

Did Samantha buy a gorgeous handmade bracelet featuring a turquoise gem? There's a good chance she wants to see a necklace made of turquoise, too. Show it to her.

Has Tom been buying a lot of baby products recently? There's a possibility he or someone close to him just welcomed a baby. Keep Tom engaged with a roundup of baby products he hasn't yet browsed.



Pro tips to deliver better recommendations

1

Tap into different types of recommendations. Keep in mind that there are so many different ways to recommend products to your customers. Give your subscribers insight into best-selling items, popular gift ideas, helpful tools and more.

2

Use inspiring product images. In the realm of online shopping, stunning product shots are everything. No one is going to want to buy an item that's depicted in a blurry, low-resolution photo. Standard photos of items in a plain, white background aren't going to cut it either. Think about your audience and the types of images that would inspire them to make a purchase. Use those inspiring photos to deliver product recommendations.

3

Provide accurate information. How many times have you browsed a product list only to click for more information and find that a particular item is out of stock? Or that the product recommended just doesn't apply to you? Don't disappoint your customers. Before sending emails with product recommendations, make sure your information is accurate and resonates with your subscriber base.



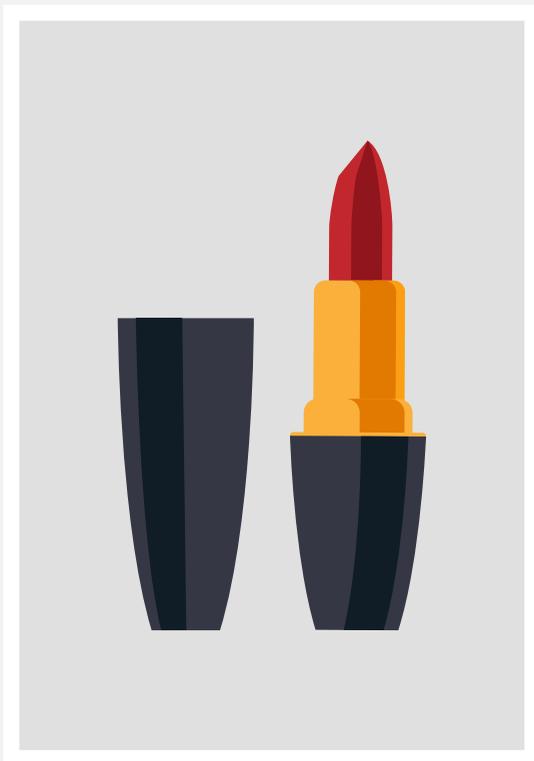
WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

It's the dead of winter, and you have some amazing new winter gloves in stock. A large percentage of your customer base would benefit from seeing those gloves. So, you decide to send an email. You soon realize that while Janice in New York City would benefit from browsing your winter items, it would be an epic fail to prompt David in Los Angeles to shop them too. You set up the [ShippingEasy Customer Marketing tool](#) to send an email to everyone who lives in an area where temperatures are likely below 32 degrees. Voila!

When was the last time you made an online purchase without browsing product reviews first?

These days, the vast majority of consumers don't buy anything online without crowdsourcing opinions first. In fact, **more than eight in 10 internet users say they generally trust online reviews as much as they trust personal recommendations.** ([eMarketer](#))

Show your existing customers that you're trustworthy by featuring product reviews – whether they're glowing or just so-so. That will show them that you stand behind your products and that your brand is authentic.



Qty

1

BUY NOW

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING



My new favorite!



Will definitely buy more.



Need more color options.

Pro tips to collect and shares stronger reviews

1

Ask insightful questions. Prompt your customers with creative questions instead of simply asking them, “Did you like this item? Please leave us a review.” Inspire them with questions like, “Did this item save you money?” or “How is this product changing your household routine?” Plant the seeds for people to create more insightful reviews.

2

Aggregate the best reviews and showcase them to prospective customers. Once you collect enough reviews on popular products, aggregate the best comments and present them to prospective customers. This can be done via email or social media ads targeted specifically to people who have shown interest in a particular product.

3

Respond to your customers’ feedback. Whether the reviews are good, bad, or something in between, it’s important to respond to as many as possible. It shows the customers you already have that you care about their feedback. And others are watching! Prospective shoppers will see that you take feedback into account and that your brand is customer-centric.



WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

Liz purchased some children’s toys from your site two weeks ago. That’s just enough time for her children to have played with them, and for Liz to have reached out if there were any issues. You’ve set your ShippingEasy Customer Marketing tool to automatically prompt her for a review at that time. Liz sees the message and logs in to leave an honest review of the items.

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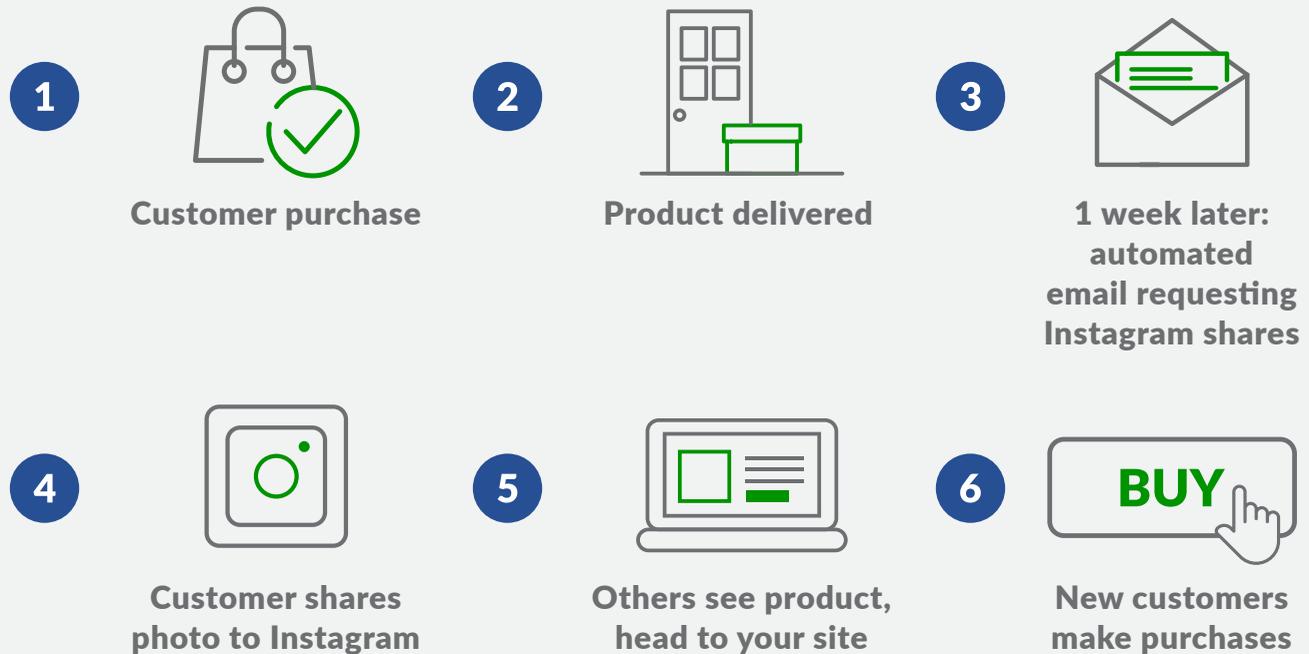
Give 'em more transparency via social channels

The idea of curating the perfect social channel sounds incredibly overwhelming. Who has time to stage the right products under the perfect lighting and post it with the right filter?

Your customers do.

Prompt them to take photos after they receive their products and ask them to share these images to social channels. They'll feel incredibly special – especially if you ask permission to share the photos on your own channels. Now that's a way to develop brand admiration and loyalty.

As for prospective customers? This strategy will definitely pay off: **72% of Instagram users say they've made a fashion-related purchase after seeing that product on Instagram.** ([Dana Rebecca Designs](#))



Pro tips to boost engagement on your social channels

1

Include calls to action when you ship orders. Want to boost your social engagement? Include a little slip in each order prompting customers to share photos online. Make sure to include your social handles and a dedicated hashtag. It's simple to [automatically add this prompt](#) to both your shipment confirmation emails and packing slips in ShippingEasy.

2

Create a unique hashtag for easy browsing. If you don't have a dedicated hashtag, you're going to want to make one. Make sure that it's something one-of-a-kind. For example, if you sell lamps, you're not going to want use the hashtag #lovelamps. Thousands of people use that hashtag, and your brand will be non-existent in the conversation. Instead, include your brand name or another unique word to make sure you stand out.

3

Include user photos on product pages. Once your user-generated content starts flowing in, share it on product pages. This will show prospective customers how others are already using and loving your items. Just make sure to ask your customers for permission before you

WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

Liz left you a glowing review on the children's toys she purchased two weeks ago. This tells us that she's the perfect person to create authentically positive social content. Thankfully, you've set up a template in your Shipping Easy Customer Management tool, allowing you to quickly fire off emails to customers who have left you great reviews. Liz receives the email prompting her to share awesome photos on her Instagram page with your dedicated hashtag. She uploads her images and receives tons of love from her own followers, who are now aware of your products and brand.

Connecting with customers authentically is one thing, but there's one last piece of the puzzle to tie everything together. SHIPPING.

In a UPS survey, 44% of shoppers said they've abandoned a shopping cart because of delivery wait times.

Once a customer has placed an order, they've made the decision to start a relationship with your brand. They've already chosen your products and paid money for them. Your shipping strategy is your first opportunity to turn them into loyal, repeat customers.

Offer flat or free shipping for products, and ship items quickly. The consumers of today are seeking instant gratification, and businesses that can't deliver will not remain competitive.

PRO TIPS TO SHIP PRODUCTS QUICKLY AND AFFORDABLY

1

Leave manual shipping in the past. If you're still making daily trips to your local post office, it's time to stop. Think of all the time you could be spending on other important tasks. [ShippingEasy](#) is a simple way to automate, standardize, and predict all of your shipping rates across products and scenarios.

2

Make sure your inventory is up to date. If your stock levels aren't accurate, you'll ultimately end up selling products you don't have. Customers will be disappointed, and your brand will take a major hit. Poor inventory management is a sure way to guarantee your customers won't buy from you again, so keep your system up to date.

3

Call in some reinforcements. As a small business owner, you're accustomed to doing a lot of things on your own. But asking for a bit of help is never a bad thing. With ShippingEasy, help is always free and you always connect with a real, live human.

ShippingEasy Customer Marketing

ShippingEasy Customer Marketing allows you to organize and segment all of your customers' contact information and purchase history, then easily act on those insights. Set up one-time or repeated automated marketing emails to help generate reviews, automate product follow ups, get repeat customers, and drive more orders.

ShippingEasy Inventory Management

ShippingEasy Inventory Management allows you to automate your inventory across all channels, better manage suppliers, sell more through bundles and kits, and gain product performance insights. Inventory Management ensures you never run out of stock, helps you grow your product offerings, increases your average order value, and most importantly, saves you time.

Unlock the best shipping rates

ShippingEasy enables you to automate, standardize, and predict all shipping rates across a variety of products and scenarios. Use those standard rates to determine your margin-friendly flat shipping rates. ShippingEasy offers the lowest USPS rates and provides access to all other carrier discounts. Avoid cutting into your margins and unlock the ability to offer flat-rate or free shipping with all your savings.

Get started by reaching out to the ShippingEasy team at  sales@shippingeasy.com or  1-855-202-2275.

Already a ShippingEasy customer? Try the [Customer Marketing](#) add-on FREE for 30 days!

