

## TO BOUNCE-PROOF YOUR MARKETING

The Powerful Secrets of Micro-Conversions

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### INTRODUCTION

More than half of web visitors stay on a website for 15 seconds or less.

So why do so many e-commerce companies spend 90% of their time and efforts on attracting website visitors instead of converting them?

This article will help you learn how to bounce-proof your marketing once and for all.

We'll show you the psychology behind customer intent on your site, offer responsive messaging strategies you can implement today, explain why context is crucial for bounce-proofing and demonstrate how one retail leader created contextual emails to skyrocket their click-through rates and build true relationships with their customers and prospects.

Also, we'll show you the power of micro-conversions and how they can increase revenue one step at a time.



DON'T DO TOO MUCH TOO SOON.

## If you're still reading, you're in the minority. (And you'll soon have a leg up on the majority.)

Quite simply, we have too many choices today.

Too many white papers. Too many emails. Too many puppy dog videos on YouTube.

The Paradox of Choice is a compelling argument by author Barry Schwartz that states that too much choice leads to paralysis and unhappiness. He cites the now-famous jam study by psychologists Mark Lepper and Sheena Iyengar, where 30% of people exposed to a small array of jams (6) bought a jar compared to only 3% of people exposed to 24 varieties of jam. Too many choices!

How this applies to you: Do not confuse your website visitors, especially on your homepage.

Take a quick look at the homepage on the next page. (Warning: This may hurt your eyes.)

Imagine you're the visitor who is seeing this site for the very first time and has never purchased anything from this site.

Let's count the issues.



#### 1. Everything is On Sale.

Extra 20% off. Extra 15% off. Save 30-65%. PROMO CODES. Is this bingo or a retail website?



#### 2. Buy Online, Pick Up In-Store, Find Out More

Whoa, whoa, whoa. I just want to find something to wear. After I find it, then let me know.



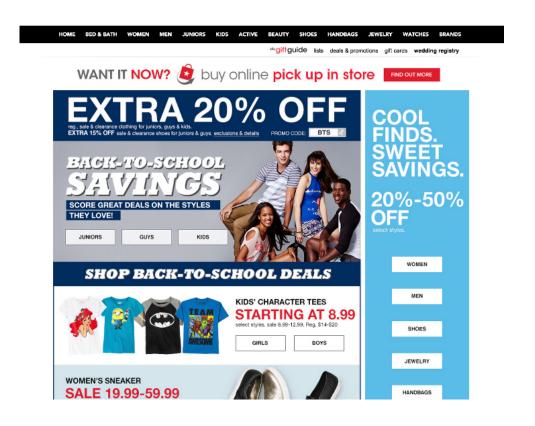
#### 3. Attack of the Buttons

What do they want me to do? If you scroll down just a bit, you'll be attacked by approximately 25 buttons.



#### 4. Back to School Deals.

Wow, that's a novel concept. Inviting you to shop the clothing that matches their main visual. However, the visual isn't clickable. And the deals are the very last button.



How this applies to you: Ask yourself this question about your homepage: What do you want the visitor to do? Simplify that. Then simply it again. Then fix it. (Hint: 25 buttons does not equal simplification. It's confusing. Remember the "jam study.")



### Not all visitors are created equally.

### Respond Accordingly.

A new customer is not the same as a returning customer. A visitor who leaves five items in her cart is not the same as a visitor who spends five seconds on your homepage.

Be sure you respond accordingly. Here's how: Introducing the world's most basic cohort analysis.



To improve conversions, you must stray from the Google Analytics norm of new visitors versus previous visitors. Cookies can only get you so far. For example, if you break down returning visitors by people on your email list, Google Analytics will think that a good percentage of people coming from email are not new. Bad data. So don't simply take Google Analytics at face value.

You need to break traffic into two buckets: prospects and customers. You'll find that these cohorts have drastically different conversion rates, thus drastically different goals.

## 4 hacks to differentiate real customers versus prospects:

01

Are they logged in?

02

Have they visited the returns page?

03

Have they been to the shipping information page?

04

Are you using advanced segmentation tracking?

For example, a utm\_medium tag can track an email campaign (or most any source of a visitor). If you send an email campaign specifically to customers, you can track their visits and differentiate them easily. The number one goal of existing customers is, of course, to get them to buy more stuff. This improves their lifetime value and allows your company to implement loyalty programs and customer referral programs, request product reviews and introduce credit card financing, to name a few powerful techniques.

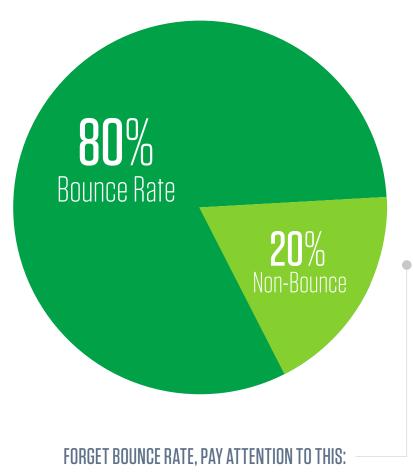
Your emails can be personalized and your website can be tailored to meet the needs of your returning customers (as opposed to one-size-fits-all).

Now, about those prospects. You need them to convert. Small steps. We suggest asking for their email address to get them in the "hopper."



IGNORE BOUNCE RATE.
FOCUS ON NON-BOUNCE RATE

Bounce Rate is one of the most misunderstood analytics in the digital marketing world.



These visitors didn't bounce, yet they failed to convert. Find out why immediately.

If 100% of your visitors are bouncing off the homepage, yes, that is an issue. But the weight of your attention should not be on your bounce rate. It should be on the percentage of people who DO NOT bounce yet still don't convert.

Let's dig and find out why.

#### Example:

100% = Visitors 80% = Bounce Rate 20% = Non-Bounce

What are the 20% Non-Bouncers doing and what percentage of them are not converting? These are the people you need to focus on. You have their attention, yet they aren't converting. They are infinitely more important that those people who bounce.

Customer intent is more important than bounce rate. It's the prospects (and customers) who are very interested and still don't convert that should keep you up at night.



### On your product page, you must eliminate distractions at all costs.

### Remember, paralysis by analysis.

If you're an e-commerce company, you want the visitor to make a purchase. *This* is the end goal.

To do so, you need to dismiss all distractions and set the stage for conversion. You need to light the candles, turn on some Marvin Gaye and hold the prospect's hand.

Visitors want to see your products on your product page. This seems simple, but so many websites are doing it wrong. Kill the distractions; kill the clickable "outs."

The most successful product pages have *large*, *clear images*. People hate to read. They love big images. So make your product the hero. Where is the cart, the social media channels, the sub navigation? Who cares. This is your product page. No one will tweet your product page, ever.

A moment of silence for social proof on product pages.

The 15 social media channel buttons are distracting yes, but they're also hurting your business via negative social proof. 7 tweets, 5 Facebook likes and 2 Google Plus likes tell the user that hey, not many people like this product.

You also need a *simple call to action*. Make the next step painfully obvious, devoid of speed bumps or barriers to conversion.

What about product recommendations, the matching shoes, the wish list? They kill sales. We know. We test every day with millions of impressions. Keep the user focused on the one thing you want them to do.

What about product reviews?

Make sure you garner enough reviews for a product to be relevant. Ten reviews won't cut it. Feel free to ask users for their reviews separately *after* they purchase a product, but so many retailers today ask for a product review before purchase. That's crazy. And if you're going to dedicate a substantial portion of a product page to product reviews, be sure you have enough reviews so you don't waste precious real estate.

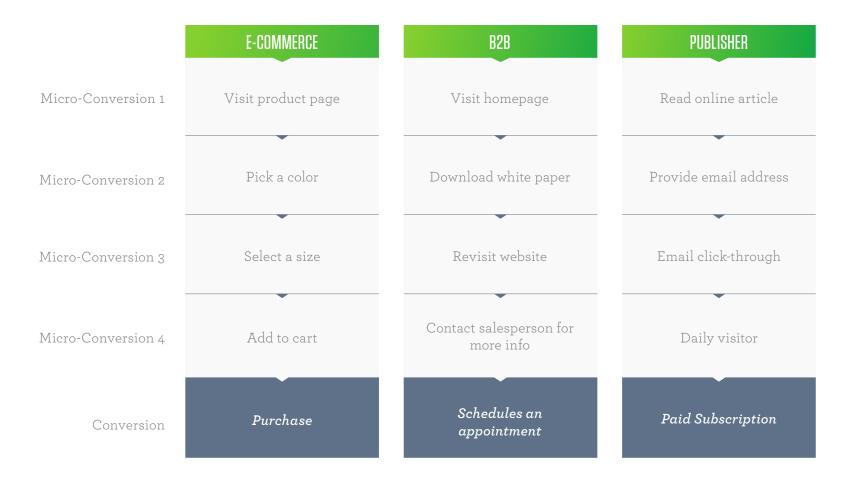


FOCUS ON MICRO-CONVERSIONS

#### You can't hit a home run every time.

If a prospect doesn't buy, subscribe or schedule an appointment, the next-best thing is a micro-conversion. It provides an accurate picture of your conversion funnel, so you can see where the drop-offs are, where the roadblocks are and where you can improve.

Here's an example of successful micro-conversions:



If only every visitor to your site clicked on a product page, picked his or her size, added to cart and checked out. Dream on. We need to nudge your visitors down the conversion funnel.

The micro-conversion on the Toms page below is to get the visitor to add this product to their shopping cart. They want to look at the product image, of course, but we have created a page that makes the natural shopping progression easy.

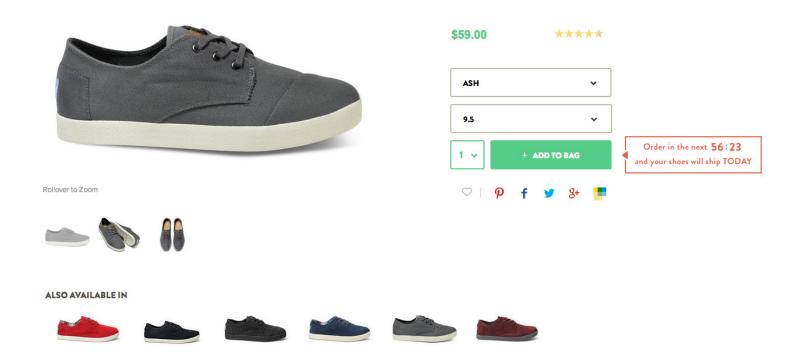
Choose the product ▶ Choose the color ▶ Choose the size

Then—BOOM—notice the annotation to the right side of the screen. On most e-commerce sites, an annotation connotes something negative. Here, we're nudging.

"If I place my order soon I'll get my shoes sooner! Holy crap!"

Now, the visitors must make a decision. We can set up value propositions to help further nudge the visitor.

For example, Tom's has free shipping on all orders over \$25. So after a product is selected that is \$25 or more, we remind the user about the free shipping. (Nudge.) If a product has four-star reviews, that shows up (nudge). If not, it doesn't. Based upon certain behaviors of the visitor, you can bounce-proof your pages to gently (and not-so-gently) nudge your visitors down the funnel.





# DEMOGRAPHICS & PSYCHOGRAPHICS VS CUSTOMER INTENT

## You've no doubt heard of behavioral marketing, but there's an even more powerful subset called behavioral automation.

In short, you can create an automational website (or pages within a website) that improves conversions based upon people's behaviors on that site (or those pages).

You can look at all your website's data, and all the information on your visitors, and then see what they do on your site. And based upon what they do, you can react to their actions and create automation around each person. The goals are the same as mentioned above: move them down the conversion funnel one step at a time, or, if they're prospects, get their email address to continue the conversation.

The days of demographics and psychographics are now being replaced by customer intent. Every visitor's actions are unique. And when you start walking each visitor down the most efficient conversion funnel possible, your conversions will skyrocket.

On Bounce Exchange's website, we decided to let the customer lead and then engage in three ways.

## **EXIT INTENT™ TECHNOLOGY**

## Meet our first behavioral invention.

Find out how we turn abandoning visitors into valuable customers.

Here's a little backstory. The first digital behavior we sought out to detect was predicting a visitor's "exit-intent". Our technology needed to know when a visitor became disengaged with your website and then was intending on bouncing, possibly to never return.

After hundreds of prototypes and iterations, we finally achieved success and were able to accurately predict on any device when a visitor was going to leave before they actually left.

Armed with the power of knowing when visitors were going to abandon your site, we had the opportunity to try everything we thought would increase conversions. We ultimately ran over 30,000 individual A/B tests across over 3 billion impressions. To find out what we learned from these tests, apply for a personal demo below.

After we unlocked "exit-intent", we started looking at what other behaviors we could detect from users and how their browsing experiences could be enhanced for maximum conversion revenue.





#### Customer clicked on images and icons

We noticed that many visitors were clicking on images that weren't clickable. Well, who are we to think these shouldn't be clickable? So...we make the most popular icons and images clickable as a "surprise" to the visitor, and then walked them down the conversion funnel. These were 100% more conversions than we were getting previously when they clicked around, found nothing, and bounced.



## **BEHAVIORAL AUTOMATION.**

Your visitors all behave differently Why treat them all the same? WANT THE SECRET CONVERSION GUIDE?



#### Enterprise Segmentation Engine

The segmentation engine stacks complex cohort rules and hyper-targets each visitor into strategic buckets. Our technology marries the visitor's first party data with their actual on-site behavior to serve the perfect conversion-inducing campaigns.



#### White Glove Marketing Automation

Our world-class creative team, cutting-edge developer team, and expert conversion specialists combine talents from many practices to move the needle for your business. Our campaigns never stop learning, and you never have to lift a finger.



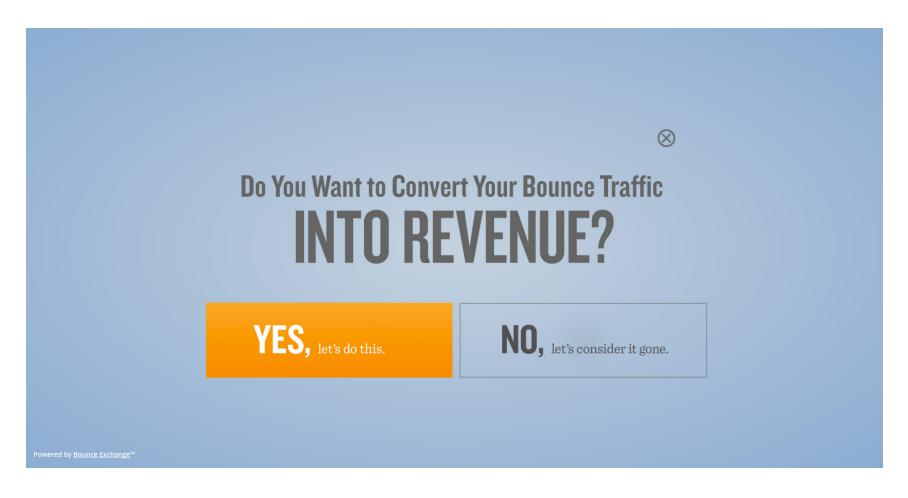
#### Patented Conversion Technology

The behavioral automation technology reads your visitors' digital body language, targets them in real-time, and then deploys campaigns to power conversions. Find out which digital behaviors our technology looks for by applying for a personal demo.



#### Customer "hovered" on certain parts of the website

When a customer hovered over certain content boxes that had no obvious next-step, we decided to offer a next step, such as requesting a demo. There was no apparent reason to hover over these boxes, yet the user choose to do so. And we choose to interact with them.





#### Customer scrolled, then bolted

If someone scrolls partially on your web page, they're hunting for something. They're interested, maybe only mildly, but there's a dance being played. We choose to offer them an exit intent overlay (see example below) when someone moved their mouse to exit the website. Our overlay asked the user a simple, engaging question: one many have a hard time ignoring. This turns abandoning prospects into (quite often) paying customers.

Based upon a visitor's intent, your website should increase the real estate of the next step: download the free guide, see product images, add to bag/cart, product reviews, etc. Let the user show you where he or she wants to go, then grab their hand and walk together.



USE BEST PRACTICES TO CAPTURE EMAIL

## Email marketing remains the single best way to retain and engage your audience.

Yes, it's 1995 technology. But the smartest marketers trust email to create, curate and build their audience. (Hint: social media is not converting. Email is.) Here's proof:

- ▶ Email marketing was ranked as the best channel in terms of ROI in 2014 by marketers, with 68% of companies rating the channel as "good" or "excellent."¹
- ▶ 73% of marketers agree that email marketing is core to their business. ²
- ▶ 60% of marketers claim that email is a critical enabler of products and services, versus 42% of marketers in 2014.²

Before you dive head-first into email marketing, here are 4 tips that can help you turn your emails into conversion machines.

- ▶ Think "W.I.I.F.M."?
- ▶ Use the Power of Exit Intent Overlays
- ▶ Customize Your Opt-ins
- ▶ Sometimes, It Pays to be Aggressive

To best capture email, you need to offer your prospects value. Never forget WIIFM: What's In It For Me?

There is no WIIFTC: What's In It For the Corporation? It starts, and ends, with your visitors' wants and needs. Give prospects a reason to care, and show them your expertise while you're at it. Free reports, free whitepapers, free coupons spur action.



Your free report is ready to download

21

ROCK-SOLID

DIVIDEND

PAYERS

FREE

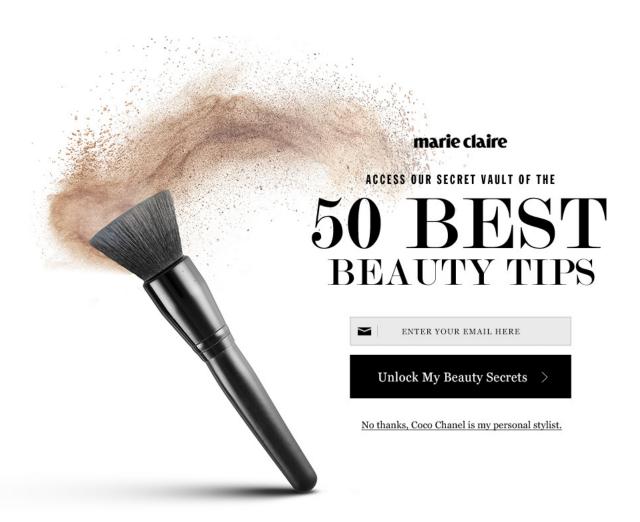
Download My Free Report Now

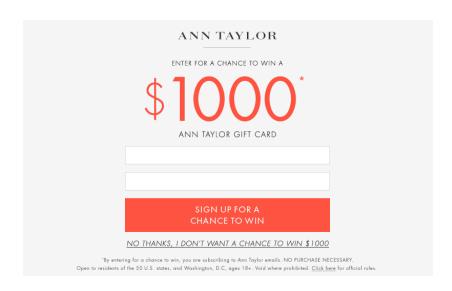
Conversion Tip: Multiple-step opt-ins convert more than one-step opt-ins. Trust us, we have millions of impressions.

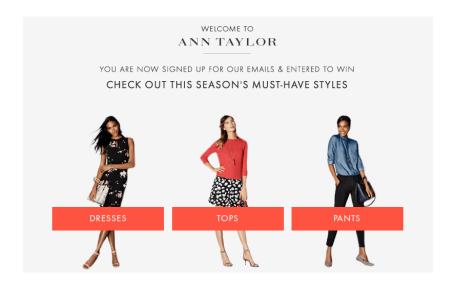
We've also found that sharing values is highly successful. Don't just say, "Join our email list." Make a connection. Here's one success story:

| TOMS                              |
|-----------------------------------|
| SO DO WE                          |
|                                   |
| WITH EVERY PRODUCT                |
| YOU PURCHASE, TOMS                |
| WILL HELP A PERSON                |
| IN NEED. ONE FOR ONE®             |
|                                   |
| FOR UPDATES AND EXCLUSIVE OFFERS, |
| ENTER TOUR EMAIL BELOW.           |
|                                   |
|                                   |
|                                   |
| JOIN THE MOVEMENT                 |
| JOHN HIL MOVEMENT                 |
|                                   |

Exit intent overlays are powerful tools to grab a reader's intention, but use them wisely. And never during the buying process. Don't bombard a first-time visitor with an overlay after the homepage. Let them browse one or two or even three product pages and then show disengagement before asking for their email. Once someone has browsed this far into your site, they are much more likely to share their email address.







Why not give a prospect an incentive for a first-time purchase? You may not want to offer this to everyone on your site—especially frequent customers—so segmenting your audience is a must. And you don't want fly-by-night visitors, so think about setting a high minimum of purchase to gain valuable customers. (Be sure to A/B test to see what works for your brand.)

Conversion Tip: Percentage offers convert more than moneyoff offers and increases order values. Again, millions of people have spoken.

Kill the email sign-up in your header and footer. Sorry, it's not working and it's distracting.

Here's how to do it right: Ann Taylor currently uses a sweepstakes to entice new visitors for their email. Yours could be content, a brand promises, whatever. That's not the important part. This important part is that Ann Taylor never shows this email sign up to current subscribers.

Most retailers keep their opt-in in their headers and footers no matter what visitor is on the site. For Ann Taylor, Bounce Exchange created new real estate we call "Agility Zone" that only shows the opt-in to new visitors. Why would current subscribers need to see this? It's distracting! Paid impressions can be a different kind of beast. Yes, these can be motivated shoppers, but you do not motivate them. So why not crank up the heat?

For Eloquii we tried asking the visitor a question upon arrival. Who doesn't like free shipping?

(You can probably guess this was a success. We wouldn't be bragging about it, otherwise.)

Eloquii established a relationship instantly upon meeting a new visitor from paid media, who otherwise would have likely bounced lickety-split.



Conversion Tip: Aggressive email opt-ins should only be utilized from traffic with low conversion rates. A good rule of thumb is that if the rate is predicted to be 1/3 of your normal conversion rate, be aggressive.

Another way we've helped clients engage visitors through paid media is to have a completely new page before they reach the website. Here, Blue Cream is inviting the user to join their Short List. And if the user opts-in, great. If they don't, then Blue Cream invites them again later in the user's journey through the website.

Sometimes you have to remind people. It's why you see the same TV ad 1,000 times.





UTILIZE CONTEXTUAL MARKETING IN EMAIL

### Segment your customers. Your emails must be contextual to be successful.

We've preached segmentation on your homepage, and your product pages and in your opt-in strategies. So you can guess where this is going.

Mass media has jaded the consumer, and these sobering statistics are proof:

- > 55% of visitors spend 15 seconds or fewer on brand websites.
- ▶ 1,700 The number of banner ads the average Internet visitor sees a month.
- ▶ 0.1% The average click-through rate on a banner ad.
- ▶ 78% of customers don't trust emails from companies.
- ▶ 87% of customers don't trust ads on websites.
- ▶ 67% of customers don't trust ads in any channel.

To bounce-proof your marketing, you first have to re-establish trust. To re-establish trust, you have to establish relevance through contextual marketing.

Great, another buzzword: contextual marketing.

But hang with us, because you've worked so hard to gather email address—now you need to turn those email addresses into revenue.

Email marketing should not be a gimmick or a one-off. Quite the opposite, as Allen Edmonds can attest, as they have recently tripled their SKUs and accelerated their ecommerce offerings.



Email marketing is the cornerstone of our communication with our customers.

Email marketing allows us immediacy of communication including new styles, sales, close outs and most importantly storytelling; both product and brand."

Kat Johnson, Marketing Manager, Allen Edmonds



OFFER RELEVANT CONTENT IN EMAIL

## Your customer has an interest in your brand or industry. That's a given.

So keep your content relevant to their wants and needs to build a strong relationship. The more relevant, the stronger the trust, the stronger the relationship.

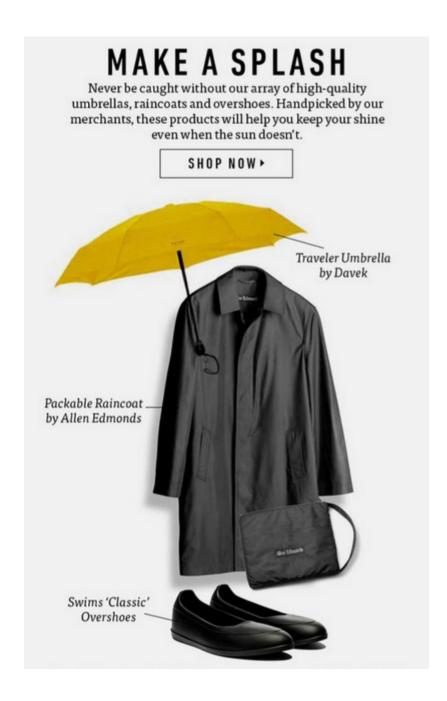
Measure all emails against the question: would I want this if I were the recipient?

If it's not relevant, it's SPAM. And you've wasted a unique opportunity to engage the recipient, communicate and build your brand.

The more contextually relevant your email is, the more likely the recipient is to click on your email and shop on your site. Email is still personal communication. Treat it as such.

Relevance comes in many forms. Here are four tips to make sure you've got your bases covered.

- ▶ Weather-Related Relevance
- ▶ Geo-Targeted Relevance
- ▶ Real-Time A/B Testing
- ▶ Time-of-Open Relevance



Allen Edmonds has a strong customer-base in the north east, but not so strong that they wanted to alienate their entire audience with one weather-specific email. That's the easy way out. (And the least effective.)

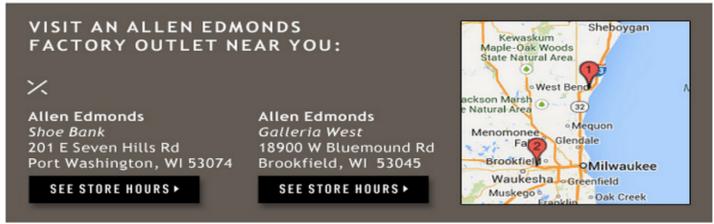
The most effective way? Allen Edmonds created weathertargeted emails that changed dynamically based upon the weather of that recipient. Better yet, the product changed dynamically depending upon the weather.

The results: a 300% increase in click-through rate.

Coupons are a gimme. But what if that coupon came with the two closest Allen Edmonds factory outlets closest to that recipient? That's relevant.

Interestingly enough, 40% of all clicks in this campaign came through the "map" section of the email, not the coupon section. (So not all people are coupon-worshipers when your brand starts connecting with your audience.)





### **TIP 3** REAL-TIME A/B TESTING

This is a fight most every marketing manager has daily: do you run a more straightforward sales piece of creative or one that builds a brand narrative?

Ah, the sales vs story battle.

Allen Edmonds had the same problem when it came time to launch their new apparel line. So they tested both approaches. One with 25% off. One with a brand narrative, handsome models and a deeper look into the apparel line.

The winner? The straightforward sales approach. Allen Edmonds, in real-time and after thorough testing, changed all creative to the A/B test winner and improved CRT by +114%.

Note: Every brand is unique. Test. Then test again to be sure.

### TIP 4 TIME-OF-OPEN RELEVANCE

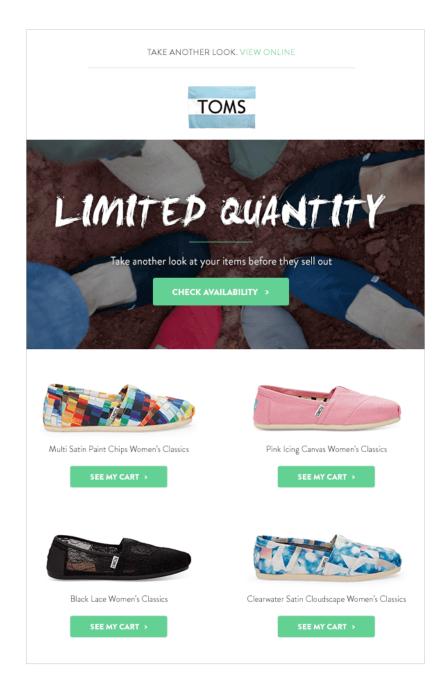
What if you could switch your campaign message while your email sits in a recipient's inbox?

Think how powerful your message could be.

Allen Edmonds did just this. They sent a daily email campaign with dynamic sales content that counted down the sale. And as the data started rolling in with the opened emails and CTRs, Allen Edmonds was able to switch out the content in unopened inboxes with the creative that received the highest CTRs.



### Offering one's email is the dating equivalent of a phone number.



Those aren't passed out wily-nily. (At least they shouldn't be unless it's \$1 Pitcher Night.)

In return for an email, your brand should offer the email recipient something of value. Something of utility.

Something they can use, learn, share or be engaged by.

Give, give, give.

This could include helpful tips (good), a straightforward sales coupon (kinda lazy), a guide to summer fashion (getting there) or the perfect pair of shoes to match that jacket the customer purchased one month ago (cha-ching).

Warning: Many marketers falter at this step. They want to shout to the masses about their latest environmental stewardship program, new services or product enhancement.

All in due time

You must first offer value--consistently and repeatedly-before you can earn the trust of your customers. Only then can you start each customer down the path of conversion.



## Your first 5 steps to convert more visitors:

01

Segment your website visitors

02

Set the stage for conversions.

03

Gather emails from new visitors.

04

Create relevant and valuable email content.

05

Repeat step 1.

More than likely, your marketing budget is heavily weighted to pulling customers to your website.

Shouldn't an equal amount of attention and budgeting go into converting these visitors?

This takes a shift in mindset. Nothing major, mind you, but it's a shift.

When you follow these steps, you're well on your way to bounce-proofing your marketing and increasing revenue.

Think "micro-conversions." Not "major website overhaul that will take 6 months."

You can't run a triathlon without training.

It all starts with one step.

Then two.

Then an increase in revenue.