The Retailer's Guide to Holiday Shopping

12 Ways to Steal Christmas 2015

Insider

INTRODUCTION

It is that time of the year again and Christmas decorations are already starting to show up on the shelves. What does it mean? The biggest shopping season of the year is knocking our doors and it is the most crucial milestone for retailers, which can account for as much as 30 per cent of a retailer's annual sales[1].

According to National Retailer Federation, holiday sales will increase 3.7 per cent to $630.5 billion in 2015 with $105 billion coming from online sales. That means online retailers will experience a substantial growth this holiday season with an expected increase between 6 and 8 per cent.

These estimations mean e-commerce retailers must be armed with the best practices to make a profit on this once-in-a-year opportunity.

In this guide you can find some practical ways to build a competitive strategy that is personalized and that allows you to act on real-time. In an age of choices, expectations of consumers are getting higher every day. Communicating with your customers individually and in the way they prefer is the key to success. Without it, retailers will risk losing out to their competitors in a highly competitive environment.

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[1]National Retail Federation, derived from Bureau of Labor Statistics data

Jingle and personalize all the way!

During the Christmas period, you will have a more varied range of customers, expecting personalized discounts and exclusive offers. Everyone is looking for presents; parents for their kids, girlfriends for their boyfriends, employees for their bosses or colleagues and so on. What you need to do is treating all this people differently. The only way to engage and convert holiday traffic is to communicate the right message, to the right person, at the right time.

1 **Optimize your landing pages** utilizing the power of predictive marketing. Analyzing users' behavior, demographics, interests, preferred product attributes, offer relevant and engaging experiences to your customers and maximize their likelihood to purchase.
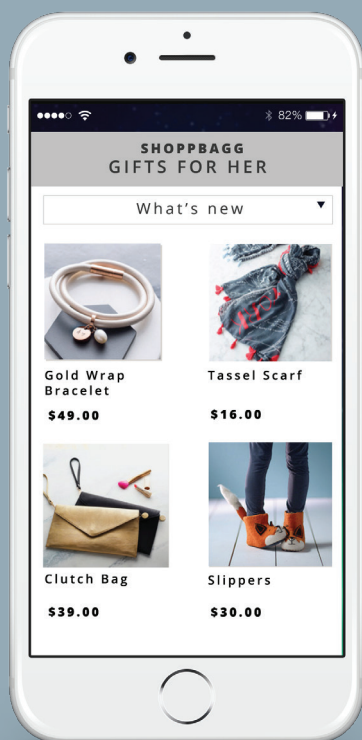

Anonymous user,
default sorting order
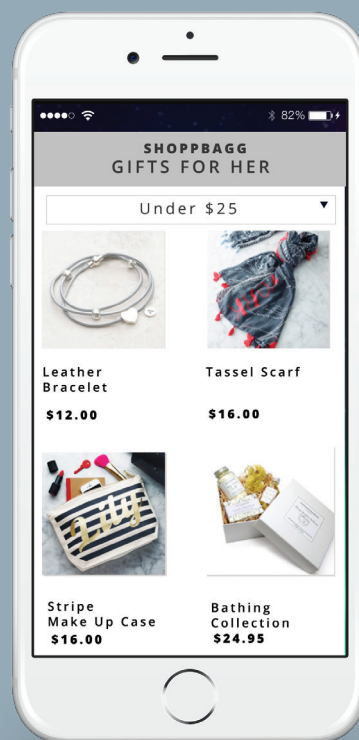
Price sensitive user,
looking for gifts

2 **Retarget your customers** with holiday-themed personalizations. Identifying your cart abandoners, offer them highly relevant promotions on products they sparked an interest in. Exclusive discounts and personalized messages help retailers win back customers and influence them to complete their purchases.
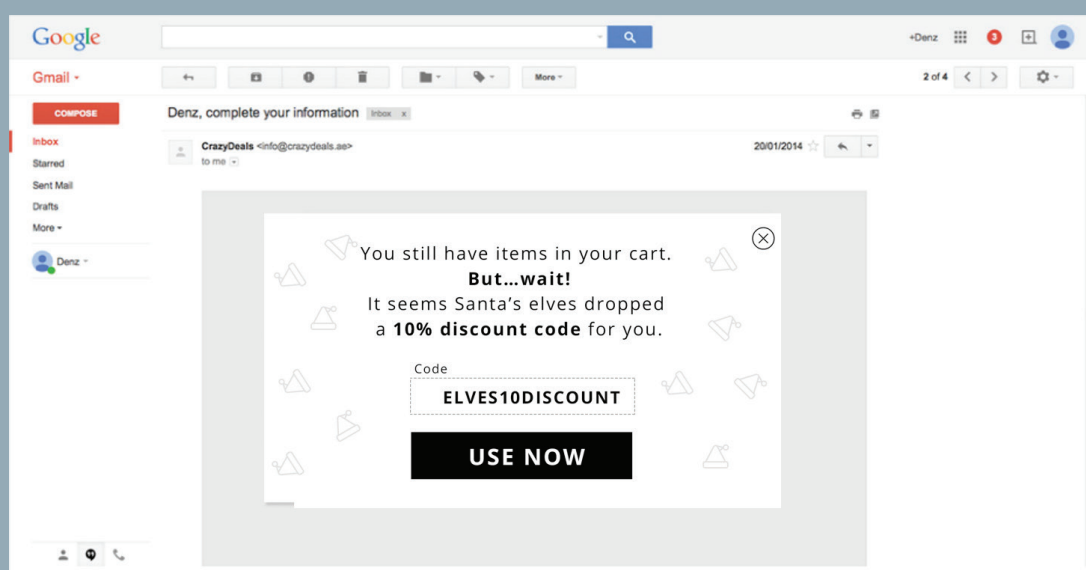
Retarget your cart abandoners with personalized offers.

Dress up for the occasion!

Staying dull and irrelevant while striving for preparing your customers for festive season? This is unacceptable. Ensure your visitors are able to notice the spirit of joy and celebration the moment they land on your online store. Make your website/application look festive and joyous just like all those decorated shopping malls and stores in the season.

3 **Christmas-specific imagery and language** have an indisputable effect on pulling in conversions. Customizing your messaging based on traffic sources, search terms and purchase history is a proven strategy to introduce your brand to new shoppers. Plus, make sure that your marketing message echoes across channels to bolster your marketing efforts (email, affiliate, keyword etc.).

Christmas-specific imagery and language attract more visitors and increase your conversions.

Christmas themed personalized push notifications help you convert more users.
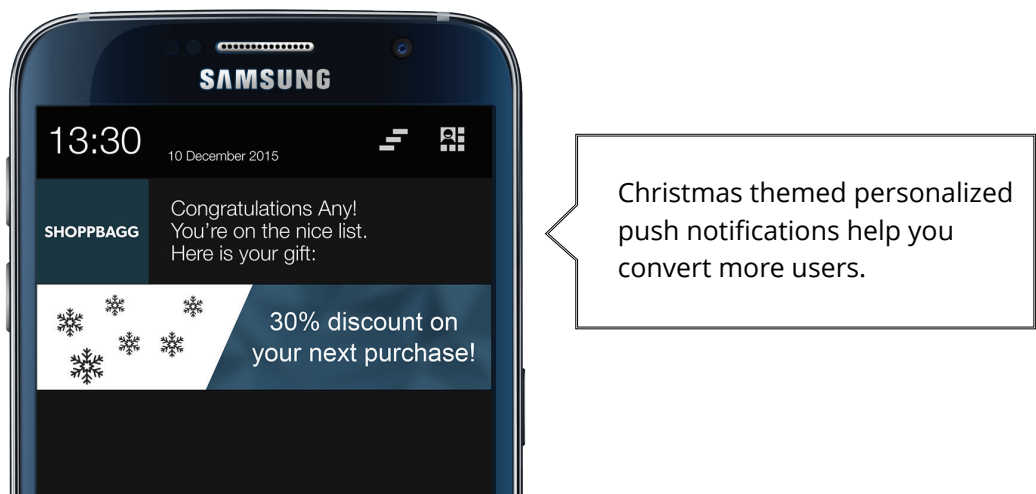
4 **It is time for a little New Year's clean & declutter.** Remove out-of-date offers and help your visitors find the holiday specials they are looking for, promoting new and seasonal website areas. You may think of creating "For Her" and "For Him" pages, as it is a simple yet efficient way of organizing relevant products under genderized categories. This helps you personalize shopping experiences by identifying women, shopping for men and vice versa.
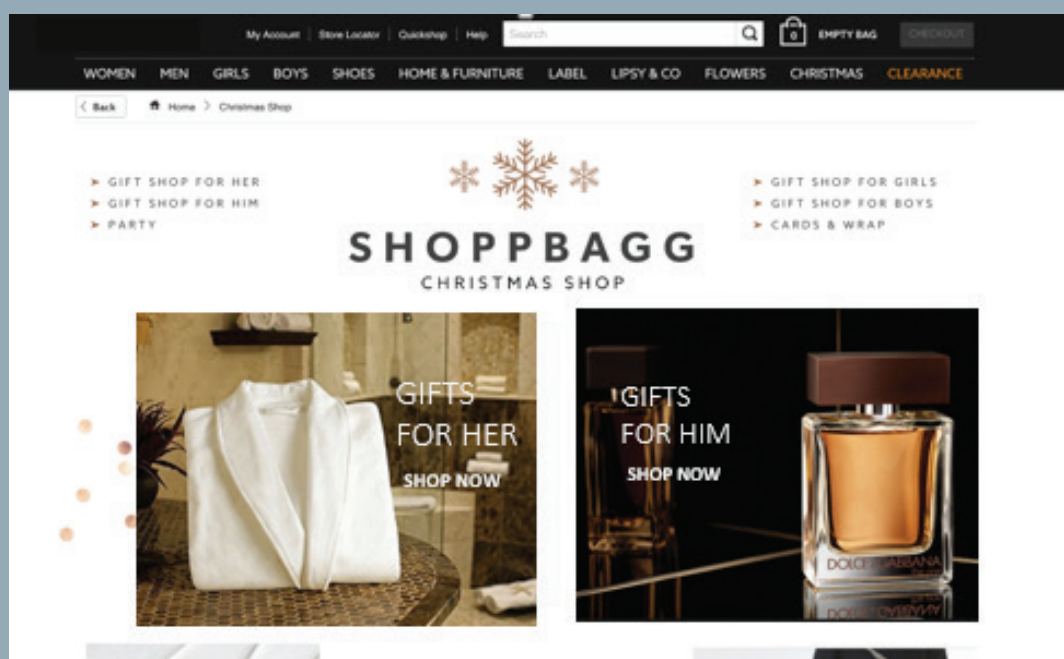

Create seasonal website areas to enable easier navigation on your site.

Award your loyal customers!

There's no better time than Christmas to show your gratitude to your most valuable customers. Your holiday offers to year-round, loyal customers shouldn't be the same as the offers to seasonal shoppers. Examining customers' previous purchases and browsing history, predictive analytics clusters visitors in different groups depending on where they are on their user journey and helps you identify your most loyal customers.

5 **Make them feel extra special** for being in this exclusive group with offers made just for them. Offering a gift voucher or a "gift with purchase" is a great way to engage and award your most valuable customers. This way you will make them feel valued and encourage repeat purchases.
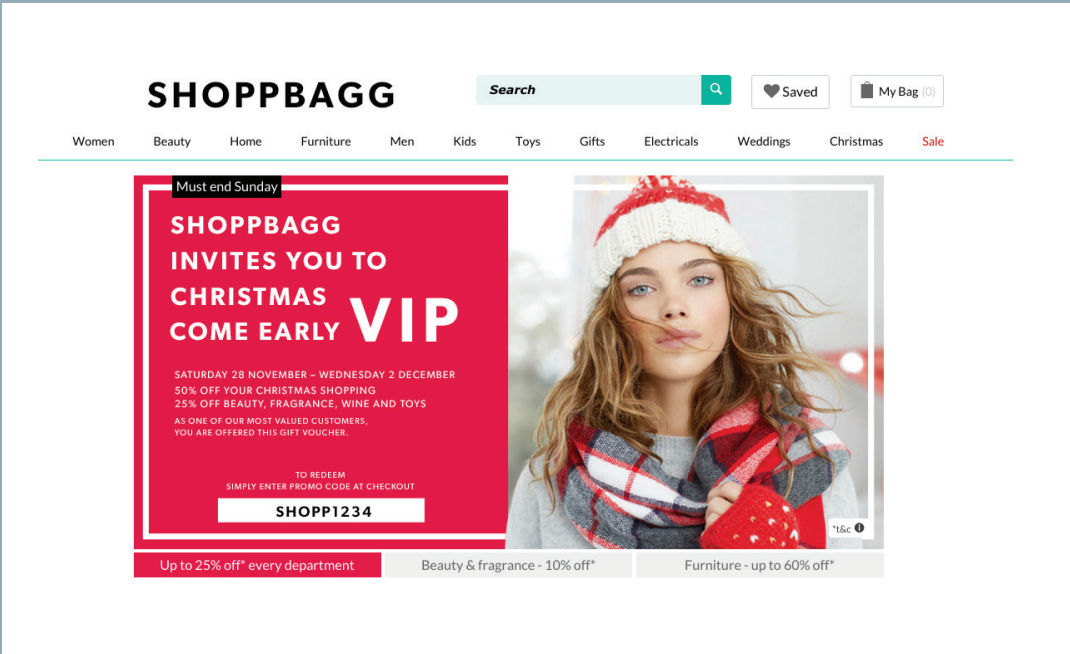

Offering a gift voucher to your most valuable customers, make them feel special.

Create urgency. It's the final countdown!

Time ticks away and Christmas Day is drawing closer. Customers are going to shop in a hurry to get all the presents in time for Christmas. They are looking for the best deals on the products they are interested in and have a limited time to make a decision. For retailers who want to make a double celebration during the New Year season, creating a sense of urgency when displaying holiday-themed promotions is a great way to drive up impulse buys.

6 **Motivate shoppers with FOMO** (Fear of Missing Out) campaigns. Using phrases like "3 Days Left", "Order Now for Guaranteed Delivery" is highly effective in urging people to act straight away. This will lead your customers to seize the opportunity by letting them know that they risk disappointment otherwise.
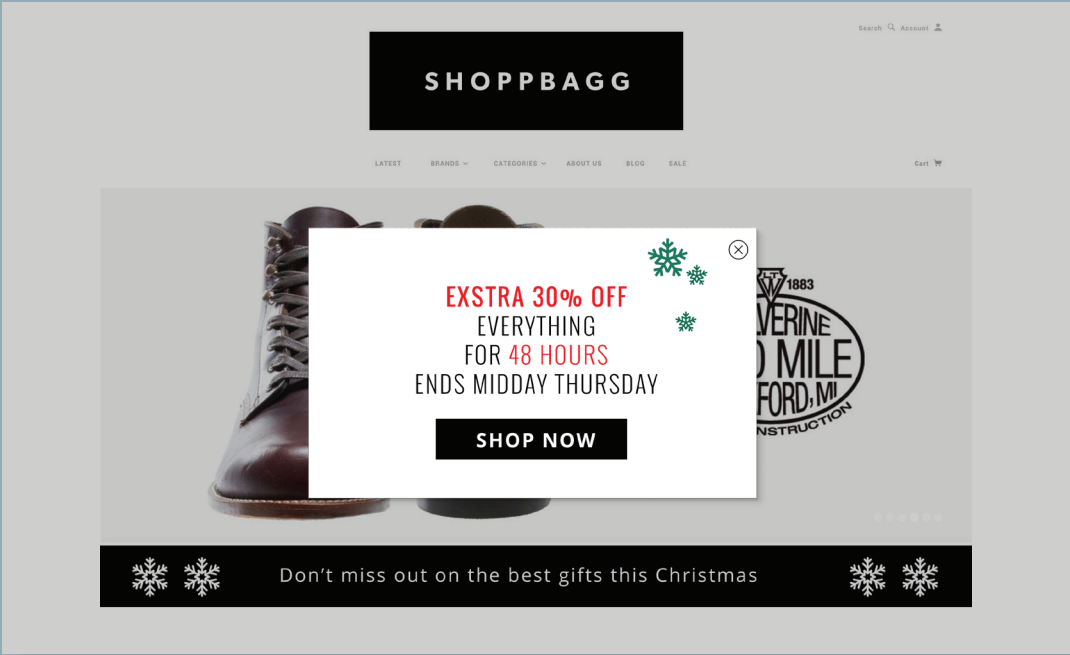
With urgency messaging encourage your customers to make a purchase.

7 **Add a countdown timer onto your site** to encourage your customers down the sales funnel.Ensure that your customers are well informed about your shipping capabilities before checkout to avoid last minute disappointments. You can personalize the countdown timer by leveraging Geotargeting technology, if your shipping capabilities change depending on the regions.

Countdown timers can be a great way to increase urgency.

8 **Display the number of people who are interested in the same item** or how many people have bought. Using social proof may help indecisive shoppers to make up their mind, who are trying to find the perfect gift for their loved ones. Low stock indicators work the same way, making visitors feel that they need to buy before it is too late.
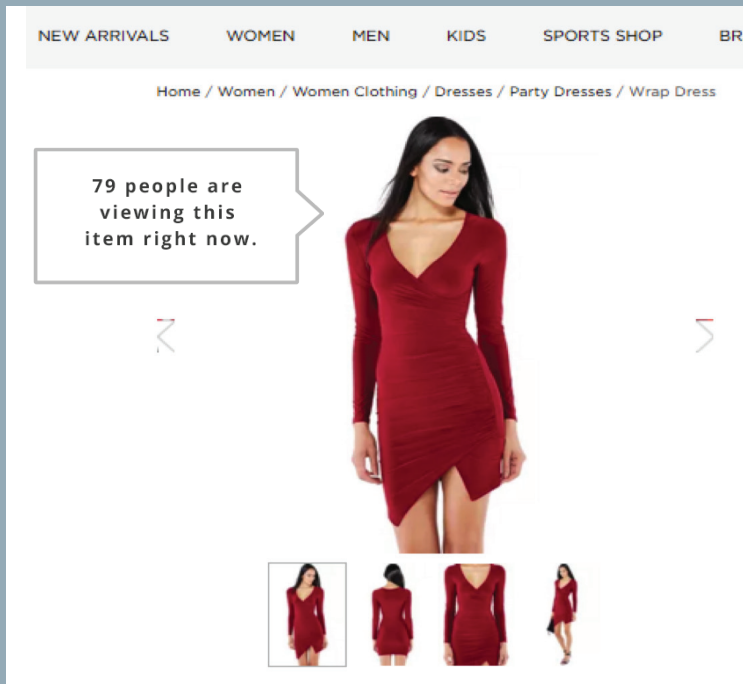
Creating social proof influences customers' purchase decision.

Align online and offline marketing!

There's no doubt that mobile e-commerce is on the rise, but there is still considerable amount of customers, who prefer doing their Christmas shopping in a brick and mortar store. According to a research conducted by Google, 84% of shoppers use smartphones in-store as shopping companions[2]. And one in three shoppers turn to their phones instead of asking an employee[3]. Now that's some good news. Since majority of customers are searching for products, looking for nearby stores, reading product reviews and comparing prices using their mobile devices, retailers can reach their users via mobile to drive in-store sales and enhance customer experience during Christmas season.

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[2]Google Shopper Marketing Council, Mobile In-Store Research, April 2013
[3]Google Shopper Marketing Council, Mobile In-Store Research, April 2013

9 ▶ **Use Geofence technology to target your customers** when they are where you want them to be. Creating contextual experiences based on your customers' location and device type, chances are, you will drive more footfall to your store and encourage your users to make a purchase.
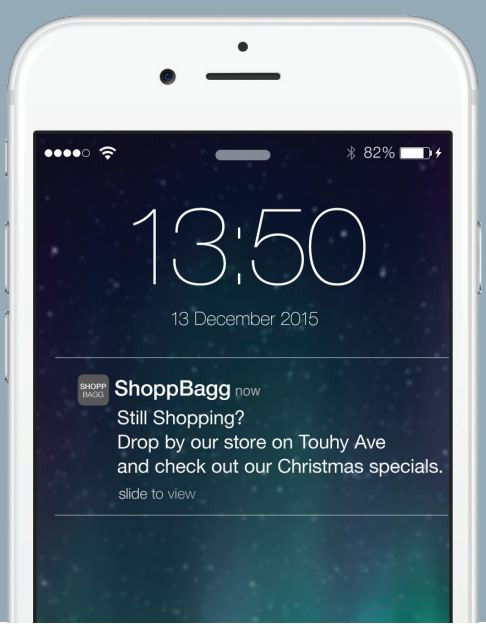
Using Geofence,
target your users at the
right time and at the right place.

10 **Deliver beacon offers to users with special incentives** to drive in-store purchases. Detecting customers who are using smartphones to search for products while in-store, enhance their shopping experiences. Determining the products shoppers are engaging with on their smartphones, offer them relevant promotions and coupon codes they can use in store.

Reach holiday shoppers
with beacon offers
while they are in store.

Optimize and see the light at the end of the funnel!

Attracting visitors to your online store. Check. Persuading them to make a purchase. Check. Losing them during the checkout process. No way! This would be the worst nightmare for any online retailer. Optimize your checkout funnel in order to cater to the needs of Christmas shoppers and increase conversions during the holiday season when the competition among brands is at its peak.

11 ▶ **Offer free shipping.** Researches show that delivery cost is one of the biggest barriers to conversion and free shipping offers act as a deciding factor in how much a customer will spend and whether or not to make a purchase. Eliminating this extra cost will help you stay competitive.

Offer free shipping during holiday season and make sure your last free delivery time is clear.
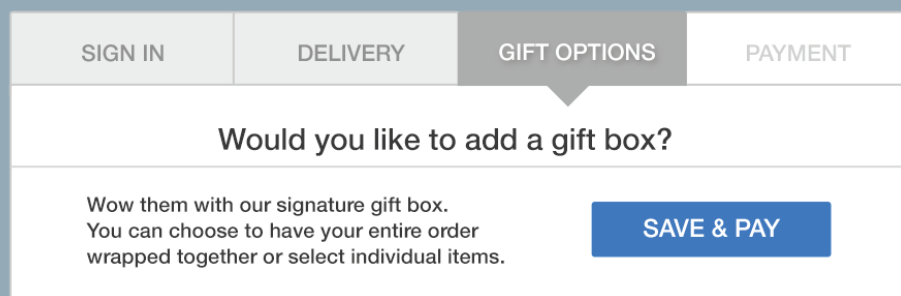
12 **Optimize your returns policy.** Christmas is the time when people are purchasing gifts for others rather than themselves and they are incredibly sensitive to returns information during this shopping period. Worrying about the hassle of returns is a common reason people hesitate to buy gifts online. Providing free or extended returns option allows your customers make a purchase with a peace of mind.
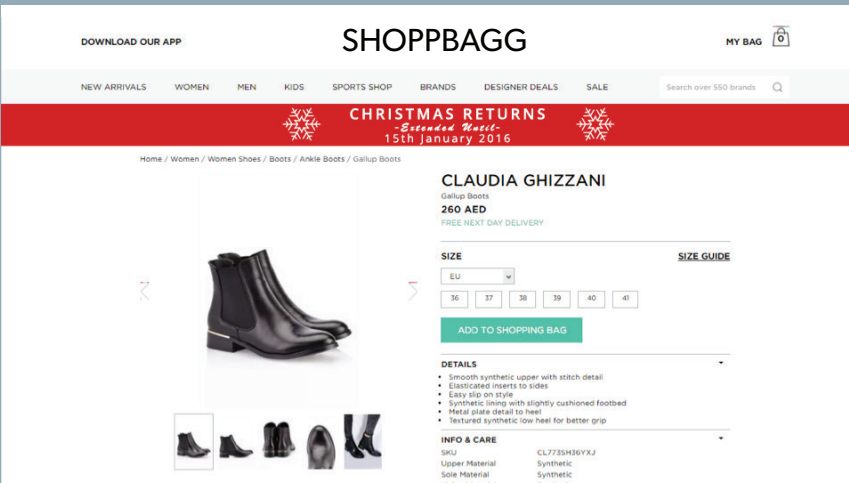
Offer free or extended returns during Christmas to persuade hesitant shoppers.

The finishing touch

Here is a bonus! You may not have a gift-wrap option available during checkout, but you better consider including it during this period. It can be a great time saver for people especially closer to Christmas.

Offer gift wrapping for all purchases during the checkout stage.

ABOUT INSIDER

Insider is a predictive marketing & real-time web and mobile personalization technology platform, having offices in London, Istanbul, Moscow, Dubai, Warsaw and Milan. Insider's predictive segmentation, dynamic A/B/n testing and behavioral targeting engine allows online businesses to increase sales conversion and ROI by defining highly targeted customer segments and present visitors with relevant personalized landing pages, messages, and product offers. When it comes to conversion rate uplift Insider has a proven track record. Tracking what people are doing on your site or in your application, Insider creates personalized experiences determined by customer habits and preferences, responds to their behavior in the moment to drive action, increases relevancy, resulting higher conversion rates. Helping the biggest brands of the world grow, Insider is trusted by companies such as Ebay, MasterCard, Mediamarkt, Avis, La Moda, Aramex, Carrefour and hundreds of others.