

The Amazon Pay logo, featuring the word "amazon" in white lowercase letters with a yellow curved arrow underneath it, and the word "pay" in white lowercase letters to its right. The background is a dark, dimly lit cafe with people at the counter and plants on shelves.

amazon pay

# Customer obsession 101: 8 ways to keep your customers coming back



With more than 1.6 billion people worldwide shopping online,<sup>1</sup> the competition for Internet sales is growing ever more fierce. To be successful, you need to gear everything you do towards the customer. As Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has said: "If you make customers unhappy in the physical world, they might each tell six friends. If you make customers unhappy on the Internet, they can each tell 6,000 friends."

While great online service may sound like a no-brainer, not everyone is doing it—and that creates a competitive advantage for those who do. Making the customer experience your North Star will guide your brand in the right direction as e-commerce continues to evolve, propelling your business ahead of your competitors.

So what should you consider as you strive to improve customer engagement? Here are eight ways to boost shopper loyalty—and keep your customers coming back.

<sup>1</sup> Statista Ecommerce worldwide – stats and statistics. 2018.



## #1 Establish your identity

One key to increasing customer loyalty is to make your brand likeable. In fact, 63% of global consumers prefer to spend money with companies that stand for a purpose that reflects their own values and beliefs, and will avoid companies that don't.<sup>2</sup> The personality of your brand counts, so take the time to discover your unique value proposition—and then share it with clarity and finesse.

In a sea of sameness, whatever makes your brand unique will help it stand out. It may be that you have a proprietary product. Or perhaps you're doing social or environmental good. Or it could be that you have a compelling story. You need to figure out what makes your company original, and

then make it known to the world. Giving people something to connect with on an emotional level—something they love—makes your company matter and gives customers a reason to choose your products and services over those of your competitors.

As the bestselling author Simon Sinek put it, "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it." Having a unique identity will help you stand out across a landscape driven by price and product. So hone in on your brand's competitive advantage—and shine it like a beacon. And remember that whatever makes your brand unique is the key to winning the hearts and minds of your customers.

<sup>2</sup> "From Me to We: The Rise of the Purpose-Led Brand" Accenture, 2018.

## #2 Build trust

As you establish your e-commerce site, trust can be an issue. In fact, nearly 1 in 5 shoppers abandon at least one checkout experience per quarter because of concerns that the site won't protect their payment information.<sup>3</sup> By offering customers a trustworthy experience, you make them feel comfortable shopping on your site while increasing the likelihood that they'll return.

Building trust requires doing everything you can to reassure your customers—and then making sure you live up to your promises. One way to increase trust is to display well-known security brands such as Norton on your site. Another way is to include explanations next to each form field as to why you're requesting personal information such as gender, birth dates, and phone numbers—or to simply make these fields optional. Most importantly, avoid data vulnerabilities by implementing a

payment option that can protect you from fraud and security issues.

In addition to security, consider boosting consumer confidence through online reviews. Interestingly, 85% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation.<sup>4</sup> Give customers a place on your site where they can leave testimonials and reviews. And know that even bad reviews establish trust. Negative reviews only stop 40% of consumers from wanting to use a business, as negative reviews help assure some consumers that the reviews are real.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, avoid unexpected costs. Nearly 1 in 4 customers abandon carts when they can't see or calculate the total cost up-front.<sup>6</sup> You can go a long way toward establishing trust by being transparent about taxes, fees, and other costs during the checkout process.

<sup>3</sup> Baymard Institute, Checkout Optimization Research Report, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> BrightLocal, Local Consumer Review Survey, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> BrightLocal, Local Consumer Review Survey, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Baymard Institute, Checkout Optimization Research Report, 2017.

### #3 Communicate thoughtfully

Consumers are increasingly tuned in to the transparency and believability of brand messaging. After fake news and data scandals largely shook Americans' trust in online media, digital trust has become a global epidemic, with brands working extra hard to earn and keep their customers' trust.

58 percent of adults don't trust a brand until they have seen 'real world proof' that it has kept its promises. Issues customers are concerned with range from working conditions, sustainability efforts, pricing promises,<sup>7</sup> and transparency surrounding data collection.

Consumers are more likely to stay loyal to brands that profess integrity, make them feel included in big chances or decisions, and indicate that their requests and pain points matter.

73 percent of consumers consider transparency more important than price,<sup>8</sup> and 40 percent say they would switch from their preferred brand to one that offered more transparency. This doesn't mean that companies need to be forthcoming about every piece of information—think quality, not quantity. Letting consumers in on the points that matter most to them, like where their data will end up and why prices have increased, is key to maintaining their loyalty.

<sup>7</sup> eConsultancy, Trust, Transparency and Brand Safety Report, April 2018

<sup>8</sup> Label Insights, Transparency Study, 2018





## #4 Streamline the experience

Today, 73% of consumers exit a poorly designed mobile site and move to a higher-quality mobile site that makes buying easier.<sup>9</sup> Consider the ways your customers want to shop, and greet them with a presence wherever they look. Using social media, search channels, and data aggregators can make your products easier to find and boost your SEO ranking.

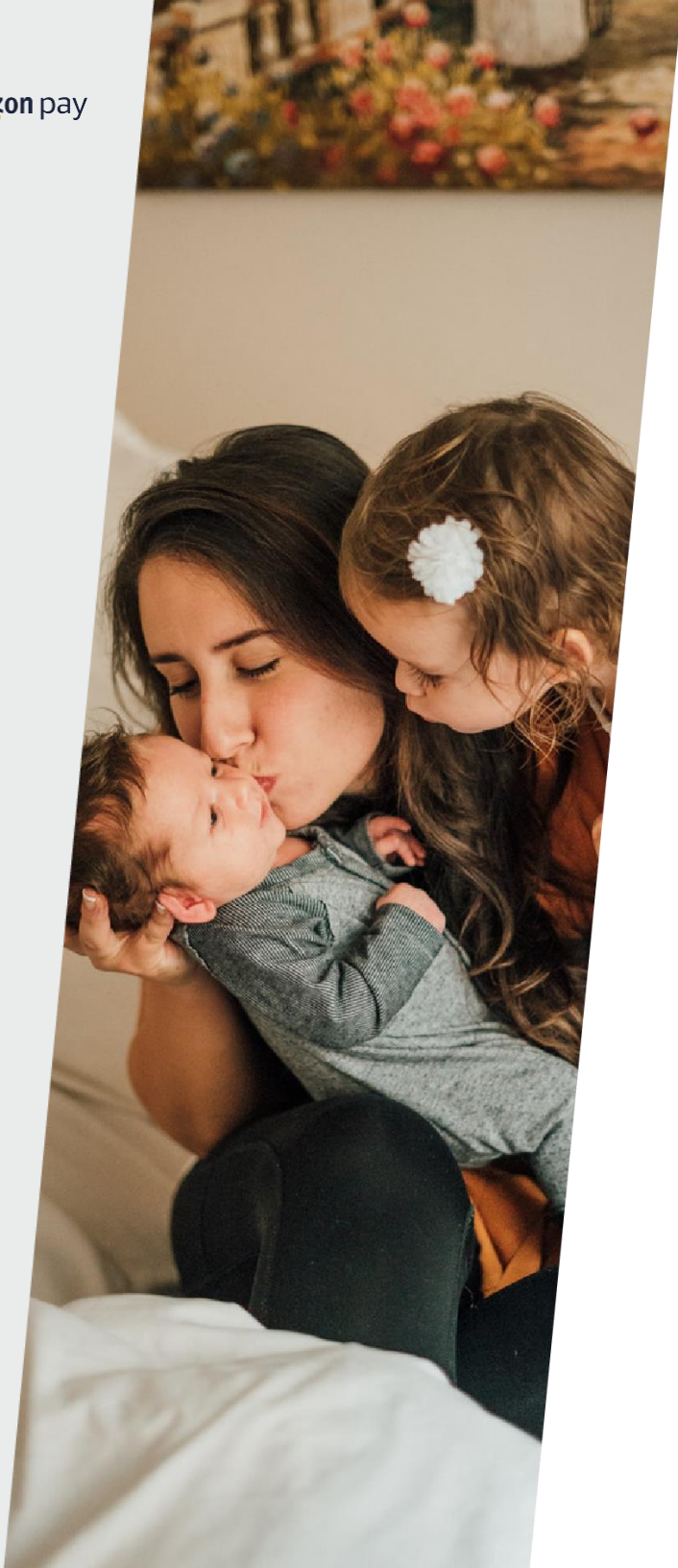
In addition to selling seamlessly across sites and devices, if you own brick-and-mortar stores, be sure to integrate them with your online presence. Omni-channel consumers are determined shoppers who spend on average 4% more in-store and 10% more online compared to single-channel customers.<sup>10</sup>

Starbucks is a great example of a company that delivers a seamless omni-channel user experience. To increase customer loyalty, the company offers a Starbucks App that rewards high-spending customers with free food and drinks. Customers can check and reload their card balance using their phone, in-store, on the Starbucks website, or via the app itself. What's more, any account changes that take place are immediately reflected across all proprietary channels.<sup>11</sup> That's the kind of streamlined experience today's shoppers have come to expect.

<sup>9</sup> Forrester, 2018 Retail Best Practices: Mobile Web, 2018

<sup>10</sup> Harvard Business Review, A Study of 46,000 Shoppers Shows That Omnichannel Retailing Works, 2017

<sup>11</sup> HubSpot "11 Examples of Brands With Brilliant Omni-Channel Experiences," 2019



## #5 Make it personal

Have no doubt: personalized customer service is a powerful tool. Retailers that offer highly personalized services retain customers, improve their bottom line, and sail past the competition. Indeed, an astonishing 74% of marketers believe personalization has a “strong” or “extreme” impact on advancing customer relationships.<sup>12</sup>

Every time consumers touch their device, they’re seeking to know, go, do, buy, or see—and consumers are turning to their devices a lot. On average, American consumers now check their smartphones an average of

52 times each day.<sup>13</sup> E-commerce retailers can capitalize on these micro-moments by giving mobile users something they care about. Local searches lead 50% of mobile users to visit stores within one day.<sup>14</sup>

To determine your customers’ preferences, consider using a predictive analytics platform to track shopping behavior, measure data, and uncover patterns. With these insights, you can make it clear you value your customers’ business by precisely delivering what they desire.

<sup>12</sup> Everage “2018 Trends in Personalization,” 2018

<sup>13</sup> Deloitte, 2018 Global Mobile Consumer Survey, 2018

<sup>14</sup> Hubspot, “The Ultimate List of Marketing Statistics for 2018,” 2018

## #6 Keep it simple

Why do people shop online? Because it's efficient and saves them time. Yet e-commerce retailers need to capitalize on this advantage by offering a streamlined experience.

E-commerce sites with complicated user journeys lose customers. Indeed, a lengthy checkout process accounts for 28% of online cart abandonments.<sup>15</sup> By contrast, a simple, seamless user journey is often the mark of a successful e-commerce brand. In other words, the easier and more fun it is to shop on your site, the more irresistible you make it for visitors to return.

One way to eliminate obstacles is to implement a payment option with one step and autofill functionality. Make sign-in and registration optional. On average, 26% of online shoppers will abandon an order if the checkout process is too long or complicated.<sup>16</sup>

Requiring customers to sign in can cost you sales, especially for customers who've forgotten their password and don't want to spend the time recovering it.

You can also keep it simple by offering a user-friendly mobile commerce experience. The prevalence of search makes extensive menus unnecessary, especially on a small screen. Small adjustments like highlighting your search bar and slimming your navigation menu can make a big difference.

Finally, simplify the entire navigation experience. For instance, if your customers reach checkout only to realize they've forgotten something, make it easy to continue shopping without jeopardizing what they've done so far. A simple "return to cart" button will do the trick.

<sup>15</sup> Baymard Institute, Checkout Optimization Research Report, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Baymard Institute, 40 Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics, 2018.





## #7 Be flexible

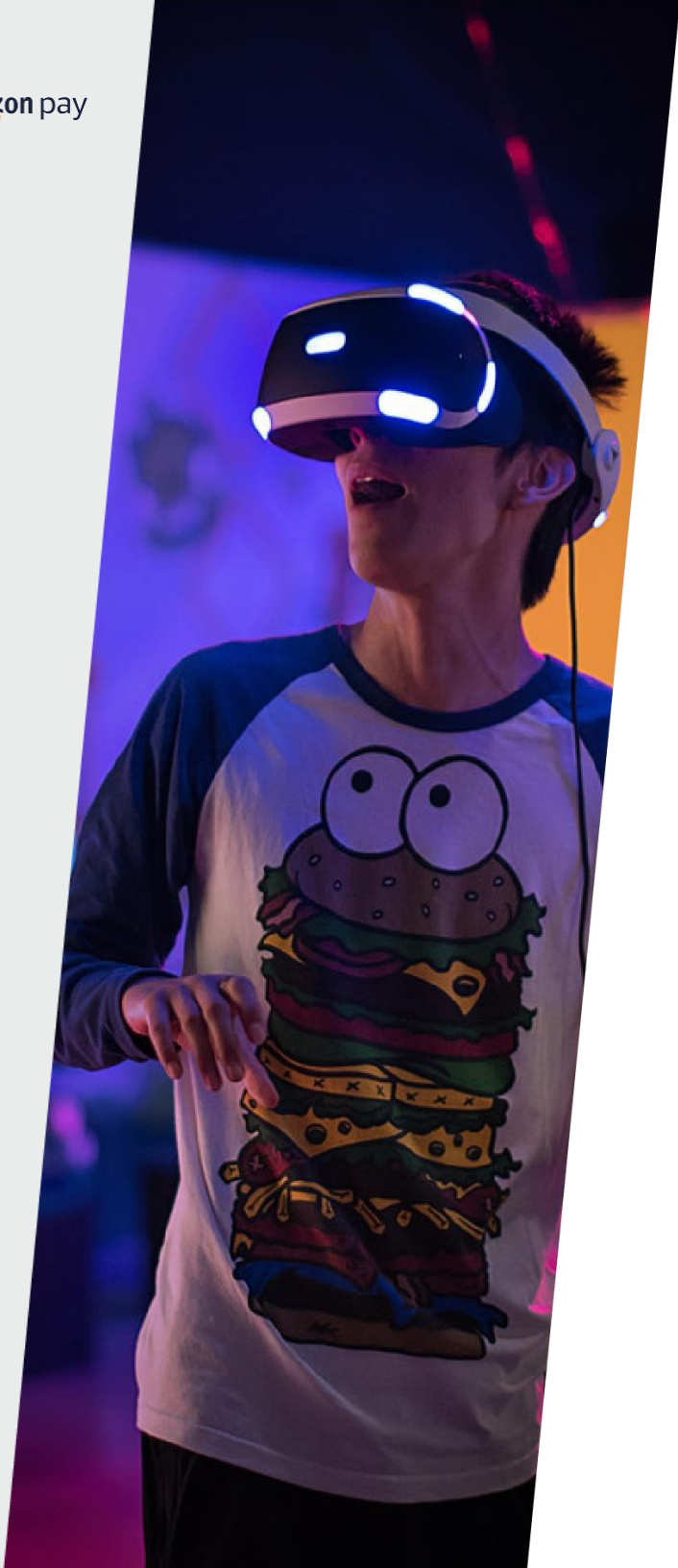
Another way to keep customers coming back is by providing them more than one option at the moment of purchase. Since consumers gravitate to what's comfortable, offering a variety of payment options can optimize conversion rates, and thus overall sales. This is the last step in your checkout experience, so it's important to make it count.

Not only do payment preferences differ from person to person, but they vary across the globe. By ensuring your payment methods support the preferences and currencies of all your

target markets, you can reduce cart abandonments and boost sales. In the US, for example, credit cards are currently the preferred method of payment, eWallets are expected to become the leading eCommerce payment method globally within five years.<sup>17</sup> In Europe, payment preferences differ from to country to country, and payment systems aren't harmonized across borders.<sup>18</sup> By giving your customers choice, you can make sure you address the needs of all your customers.

<sup>17</sup> World Pay, Global Payments Report, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> eCommerce News, Top 3 of payment methods per European country, 2018



## #8 Innovate

E-commerce is experiencing exponential growth. As online shopping continues to develop, it's important to stay curious and informed—and continue to innovate. Clayton Christensen, Harvard Business School professor and disruptive innovation expert, explains why: “If you defer investing your time and energy until you see that you need to, chances are it will already be too late.”

To stay ahead of the curve, you need to anticipate upcoming trends in online shopping—and then get there just when your customers are ready to adopt new habits. A great example is voice-assisted commerce. According to David Low, Principal Evangelist at Alexa Skills, “Voice represents the next big disruption in technology.” In fact, 7% of touchless interface owners have used them to buy something online, and that percentage is expected to grow as technology improves.<sup>19</sup>

As voice-assisted commerce takes off, it will influence your SEO standing. Since voice search is three times more likely to be localized, you need to optimize your e-commerce for local SEO to be voice-commerce ready.<sup>20</sup> You should also take natural language into account—including more long-tail keywords and question-friendly results. E-commerce SEO best practices evolve along with shopping technology advancements.

Other innovations such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are finding their way into the e-commerce world as well. In fact, worldwide revenue for the augmented reality and virtual reality market is forecast to increase by 100% or more over each of the next four years.<sup>21</sup> As technologies such as these enter the world of e-commerce, it's critical that you anticipate how they can improve the shopping experience, and then meet your customers there.

<sup>19</sup> Code Computer Love, Let's Talk Voice Assistants, 2018

<sup>20</sup> Mary Meeker, 2017 Internet Trends Report, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> IDC, Worldwide Semiannual Augmented and Virtual Reality Spending Guide, 2018.



It's an exciting time to be in e-commerce. Online shopping continues to experience double-digit growth, and advances in technology are opening new doors for engaging with consumers. As e-commerce continues to evolve, the brands that offer the personal, effective shopping experience customers crave are the ones that will keep them coming back. As Tony Hsieh, founder of Zappos, has said: "Customer service shouldn't be a department; it should be the entire company."

[Learn how adding Amazon Pay can help you win hearts and wallets at pay.amazon.com.](https://pay.amazon.com)