Complete Guide

TO THE ULTIMATE POST PURCHASE EXPERIENCE FOR SHOPIFY BRANDS

It's no secret that the post purchase experience is vital to the success of Shopify brands. Whether you're new to the world of post purchase or are looking for new ways to fill out your current strategy, you've come to the right place. Everything you need to know is right here in the next three sections.

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Why the post purchase experience actually matters

Once your customer has clicked the "buy now" button, the customer experience is far from over. Post purchase includes every touchpoint beyond the checkout process and directly affects customer retention rates, customer churn, and customer lifetime value (yeah, it's that important).

Why the post purchase experience actually matters

You spend a lot of money to acquire customers and get them to buy your product, but what happens after they push the buy button? Do you carefully plan out what your customers' post purchase experience is or do you give up control? Are you thinking about every transactional email and tracking page or do you send them to a shipping carrier's page? What if something goes wrong and you're not the one controlling the messaging? There is a laundry list of things that could go wrong with your post purchase experience and 84% of consumers won't come back after just one bad shipping experience.

Read that again: 84% of consumers won't return after one bad shipping experience. All it takes is one bad encounter to lose a customer forever. That's why focusing on the post purchase experience is vital to your brand's success.

But what exactly is the post purchase experience? It's any interaction you have with a customer after the checkout process. That could mean emails, personalized tracking pages, product recommendations, customer service tickets, or loyalty and rewards programs. All of these things are typically part of a larger retention strategy.

After consumers make a purchase, they are super excited about getting their order and tend to be really engaged with these communications. They are so excited that they check tracking information an average of 4.6 times per order! Don't waste the opportunity to interact with them.

When you focus on post purchase, you're not only focusing on customer retention, but you're also securing data points that are vital for your marketing strategies going forward. How many times are customers checking their tracking link? Are they interested in browsing more products while they wait? Do they check out your social media channels? With data privacy changes making it even more difficult to reach consumers, you need as much first party and zero party data as possible to continue to create relationships with customers

84%

of consumers won't come back after just one bad shipping experience.

Post purchase = customer retention = higher LTV

More often than not, brands are so focused on acquiring customers and growing their customer base that they can lose sight of the customers they have already. Customer retention and customer acquisition efforts can and should live in harmony with each other. While having a lot of customers is great, if they all make one time purchase, you're not creating brand loyalty.

Acquiring a new customer is actually up to 20 times more expensive than retaining an existing one. That's why we focus so much on retention efforts. Growing your customer base is incredibly important—you can't grow if you just have the same set of customers for forever—but finding a balance between retention and acquisition efforts will be most cost-effective in the long run.

Think about it this way. The probability of selling to an existing customer is between 60% and 70% while the probability of selling to a new customer is only between 5% and 20%. If you had to choose, which would you pick? The answer is pretty obvious.

The main reason you should focus your post purchase efforts on customer retention is because it builds a strong relationship with your customers. When you create a strong foundation, customers become loyal brand advocates. When customers become brand advocates, their lifetime value increases. It's all connected in the post purchase experience.

> "
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> "
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3 things you need to care about when it comes to post purchase

While there is a laundry list of things you should concern yourself with when it comes to post purchase, there are 3 things that shouldn't be overlooked.

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There are 3 key areas your brand needs to be focused on when it comes to post purchase:

1. COMMUNICATION

Are you sending the right information, at the right time, in the right place? Post purchase emails can be powerful and provide information the customer is looking for. By being proactive and consistent with your communication, you're not only helping your customers, but your customer service team as well. Customer support tickets can swamp you and your support team leading to frustrated customers. But when customers are actively informed about the status of their order and product information, you can lighten the burden of WISMO and support tickets on your service team.

2. DATA CONTROL

If you're sending your customers to carrier pages, you receive practically no data through those interactions. How many times are your customers checking their order? How long do they stay on the page? The only way to convert and retain your customers is to understand who they are and what they need.

> "A branded post-purchase experience increases repeat order from customers who are waiting for their first order by 2-3%."

3. UP-SELLING AND CROSS SELLING

Did you know that by creating a branding tracking experience you can increase repeat purchases? We've seen brands who implemented a branded post purchase experience grow repeat orders from customers who are waiting for their first order by 2-3%. How does that work? When a customer checks the status of their order, you can use that as an opportunity to showcase other products they may be interested in based on their purchase via email or tracking page. Viola! You've successfully secured another order and you barely had to lift a finger.

When you carry your branding all the way through the post purchase experience, your brand is constantly on the customers mind. It immerses them into a memorable experience that they're going to want to tell their friends about.

What goes wrong when you don't control the post purchase experience

When you don't have a good handle on the post purchase experience, things tend to go downhill. When the post purchase experience is neglected, we most often see:

1. Increased "where's my order" support tickets.

2. Missed opportunities to sell more products to your most engaged customers.

3. Increased confusion, especially on delayed shipments. When customers expect their package and it doesn't arrive with no communication of the delay, panic ensues.

4. Lost opportunity to engage and excite customers.

5. Sloppy communication—like when an "order has shipped" email goes out when it hasn't really shipped and just a label was just created

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10 tips to create the ultimate post purchase experience

Now that you've learned why the post purchase experience is so important and what exactly you should be focusing on, we've compiled 10 tips you can use to fill out your strategy. Implement 1, 2, or all 10!

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#1: Personalize the delivery experience

The key to the post purchase experience and shipment marketing is personalization. Personalizing the post purchase experience will be at the heart of your retention marketing strategy. It strengthens your relationship with your customers and helps create a positive experience that they will remember. Not sure where to start? You'd be surprised how many areas there are to put that special touch on! Here are some key areas you can personalize the customer experience:

Custom emails and texts with order status

You need to send order confirmation anyways, why not make it fully branded with some personal touches? Post purchase emails have both significantly higher open rates and click-through rates than any other type of emails because consumers are so excited to receive their products.

Beautiful, on-brand transactional shipping emails
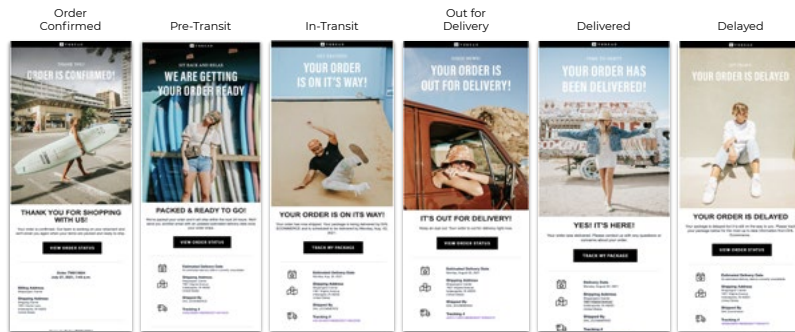
Customers like to be informed about where their package is and when they will receive it. Communication is essential to manage customer expectations. Whether by email or text or both, your post purchase communications should include:

Order confirmation - This is the first chance you get to thank the customer for their purchase and let them know that you received their order.

Shipping confirmation - Place the tracking number front and center and let them know when they can expect their package to arrive. This is a great opportunity to cross-sell and upsell other products they may enjoy. Perhaps a water bottle for their hiking adventure with their new shoes or SPF to go with their moisturizer—whatever makes the most sense for your brand.

Any delays or exceptions - There's nothing more frustrating to a customer than when a package gets delayed and they don't get notified of it. Whether it's the holidays or a major storm front, delays happen, but you need to let your customer know. Aside from apologizing for the delay, include the expected delivery date, where it currently is, and how to get in touch with customer service.

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Out for delivery - Cue in happy dancing! Let the customer know that their package is en route and what time of day they can expect it.

Arrived - Arguably the most exciting email to receive! Aside from letting the customer know that their amazing package has arrived, let them know that you have a special offer just for them or give them other product recommendations.Every one of these emails or texts should be professional looking and fit your brand's aesthetic. So much so that if you removed your brand's logo, the customer would still know that it came from your brand. Optimized post purchase emails and texts are one of the most effective ways to improve the customer experience.

## Custom tracking page with dynamic content

Branding tracking pages are kind of our bread and butter here at Malomo. Your customers are checking their tracking pages multiple times, so the engagement is already there. You just need to leverage it. A custom tracking page should include a few different items:

Latest tracking updates: This may seem a little obvious, but your branded tracking page needs to include the latest shipment updates including any delays and when a customer can expect their package to arrive. Reassure consumers with tentative timelines.

Dynamic product recommendations: Never pass up on the opportunity to showcase your other products. Well timed cross sells and upsells mold perfectly into tracking pages and result in high conversion rates.

Showcase happy buyers: Are your twitter mentions bursting at the seam with positive product reviews? Or do you have a few glowing testimonials or case studies handy? This is a great place to bake those positive reviews in. It not only assures the customer that they made the right decision but, it also can encourage them to make another purchase.

Engage excited customers: As they eagerly anticipate their package's arrival, customers are more likely to engage in educational content. Provide FAQs, how-to videos, and product care tips so they have everything they need to know when they receive their product. After it arrives, ask for feedback and ensure that they are happy with their product.

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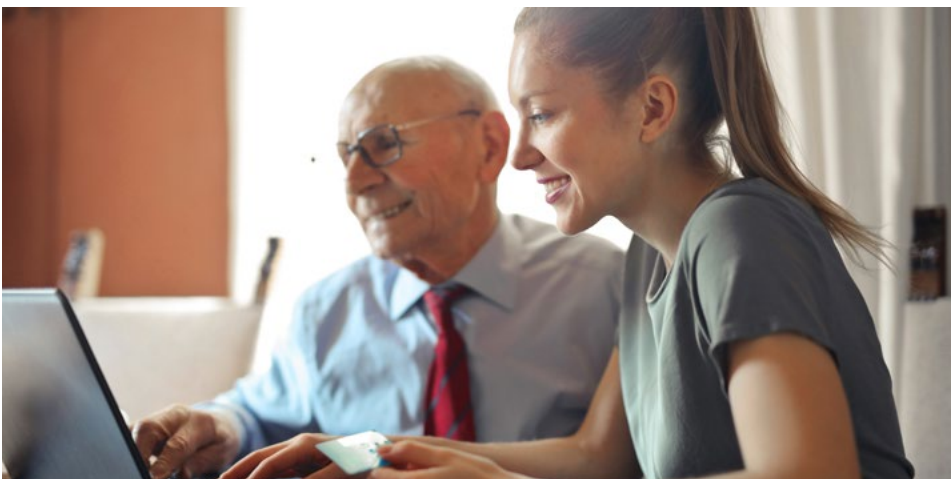
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#2: The unboxing experience

Why is the unboxing experience so important? Put yourself in the customer's shoes. Would you rather receive a product in a generic cardboard box or in a beautifully branded package? You'd probably choose the latter.

With either option, the product within the packaging is exactly the same, but adding a little something extra will make the customer feel more valued. A branded package shows that you care about how your product is presented and highlights attention to detail and a stellar customer service experience.

If your ecommerce brand utilizes influencer marketing, then the unboxing experience is practically a necessity. When an influencer opens your package on a live feed, you want the audience to be wow'd. It's not just a few people who watch unboxing videos—35% of online shoppers have watched a video of someone unboxing a new product. It's the first impression a lot of people will have on your brand, you want to make it count.

Amount of online shoppers who have watched a video of someone opening and unboxing a new product.

35%

The unboxing experience isn't just about a branded package, it's about what's inside it. Some great options to include in your packages are:

- Free samples
- Thank you note
- Special promo or discount to use on their next purchase
- Hashtag for customers to share on social media
- Stickers
- Product FAQs or how-to content"

You also have to consider the presentation of your product. Don't just throw everything in there! Utilize packing material or dividers to keep your products in place to not only impress the customer, but avoid any potential damages.

With online shopping, you have less touchpoints to connect with your customers. The unboxing experience is another way to maintain that connection.

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#3: Replenishment or reorder emails and texts

There's nothing more frustrating than reaching for a product that you use daily only to discover that it's empty. From skin care products to office supplies to snacks, this happens more often than we realize. That's why having automatic reorder communications is so important for consumable products.

Replenishment emails are sent automatically to customers when it's around the time to reorder their products. These emails have a 53.6% click-to-open rate, which is one of the highest across ecommerce communications.

Why are replenishment and reorder emails so effective?

Timing.

These emails are sent at the right time to the right customer. Now they won't have to scramble for a replacement product and possibly pay expedited shipping. You've made the process easy!

Some best practices for replenishment emails:

- Include a picture and description of the product
- State any promos or special offers (such as free shipping) that are currently running
- Utilize upsell or cross-sell opportunities towards the end of the email
- Link directly to the product page OR directly to their cart with their product added
- Give them enough time to receive the product! For example, if it's a 30-day supply, remind them 20 days after their purchase

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#4: Utilize discount codes for more purchases

Discount codes are codes that your customers enter during the checkout process to redeem on a specific order. When used at the right time offering discount codes or promo codes can be an effective tool for both customer acquisition and retention. Everyone likes a good deal and discount codes can help move products faster, build your email list, and incentivize customers to spend more.

While you may think that discount codes can lead to less profitable sales, you can combat this by including discounts on products that need more visibility or aren't gaining enough traction.

Some of the most common discounts ecommerce brands offer are:

- Percentage discount: This type of discount can be used for smaller incentives like 5% or 10% or upwards of 25% or 50% off.
- Dollar value discount: An example of this would be "Spend $150, get $15 off". Dollar based discounts are typically more cost effective on items over $100.
- Free shipping: This is pretty self explanatory, but 90% of consumers said they would shop online more often if given the option of free shipping (so it's an important one).

Do not underestimate the power of free shipping. Shipment costs are a major reason for cart abandonment. In fact, 49% of consumers abandon their shopping cart because extra costs at checkout are too high. You can't control extra fees like taxes, but you can control shipping costs.

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#5: Offer samples of new or trending products

Before you freak out about the idea of giving your product away for free, bear with us for a minute. Throughout the buying process, customers have to sift through a lot of products and different information to settle on just the right one for them. What if it wasn't perfect? Or what if another product could compliment the other and expedite results? That's the beauty of free samples.

Free product samples have 3 main advantages post purchase:

Build loyal customers: It's a great surprise to open up a package and see a few samples at the bottom. Paired with great customer service, offering some samples that the customer may be interested in can seal the deal for customer retention.

Educate customers on other products: If you have an extensive list of products, a customer is bound to overlook a few while they're making their purchase. Maybe they weren't even looking for a specific product because they didn't think that your brand carried it. Free samples are a great way to promote some of your products that don't get enough attention.

Promote repeat purchases: At the end of the day, this is probably the most coveted goal. One of the samples you include may become a staple product for a customer. So while free samples come as a cost initially to brands, they can generate more long-term revenue.

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#6: Celebrate birthdays

Picture this: You're scrolling through your inbox and you spot an email from one of your favorite companies. Odd—you didn't order anything and it's not their normal marketing email. You open it to find a personalized happy birthday message from the team!

It may feel like a simple gesture, but this sort of personalization and marketing message is a great way to fill out your retention plan. When you celebrate your customers, it's just another way to show how much you care and appreciate their business.

Want to take it to the next level? Carefully think about the contents of your email. Aside from wishing them a happy birthday and thanking them for being an awesome customer, consider adding a little gift such as a free gift or a personalized coupon code. It's a simple gesture that goes a long way.

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#7: Create an online community

The benefit of an online community is two fold. One, it helps your brand understand customer expectations and is a direct resource for product reviews and recommendations. On the other hand it's also a safe place for your customers to connect with other like-minded people and is a valuable resource for questions related to your brand's products or services.

What is an online community? It's a group of people who interact with each other on an online platform. It is not social media platforms like Facebook or Linkedin, but they can be private groups within those platforms. If Facebook and Linkedin groups aren't your cup of tea, you can explore branded communities. Branded communities require certain credentials—experience, interests, location—along with an email address and password to gain access.

Online communities aren't going away anytime soon. 64% of visitors to online communities said they were visiting the platform often and 75% of large companies had at least one online community in 2020.

There are numerous benefits for brands that come from online communities:

1. **Product feedback**: Within online communities, you have direct access to customer feedback on your products—what they like, dislike, and what they hope to see in the future.

2. **Less customer support time**: Online communities are a great opportunity for customers to pose questions and get answers on anything that they need. By monitoring the posts, you can see any recurring issues customers are having and fix them.

3. **Engagement boost**: Online communities strengthen the relationship you have with your customers, turning them into loyal brand advocates. You can host dynamic discussions, give them early access to exclusive content, run giveaways, ect.

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#8: Provide the best customer support

In a digital-first world, fast and helpful ecommerce customer support is a necessity for brands. It's not a nice-to-have, it's a need. Why? Because 47% of consumers have switched to a different brand due to bad customer service within the last year. That's a percentage you can't afford.

How can you provide the best customer service experience? Here are a few best practices:

Implement personalization strategies

If you haven't noticed, personalization is a key driver in creating the best post purchase experience. Some customers simply need quick and basic answers, but others are looking for more personalized advice. Brands need to utilize the data they capture about customers and put it to use when customers reach out for support. There's nothing more frustrating for a customer than being treated like a number versus a person (aside from waiting on hold).

Look into multichannel support options

Different channels have their own strengths, weaknesses, and customer preferences, so it's important to utilize multiple channels for customer support. There are many options including phone, email, live chat, online communities, and text messaging. Know where your customers are and communicate with them how you can help through different channels.

Offer self-service options

It may seem counterintuitive, but some customers prefer to find the answer on their own. By creating a help center that houses things like FAQs, how-to videos, return policies and more, your customer can solve their problem without the hassle of contacting customer service.

Outsource next-level technology

Sometimes, you can't do everything in house and that's okay! There are several helpdesk companies, like Gorgias and Zendesk, that can streamline your customer service efforts by managing customer inquiries faster and more efficiently.

At the end of the day, customer service and support can make or break the customer experience so it needs to be a top priority.

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#9: Create how-to guides or videos

How-to guides and videos are the perfect addition to your brand's help center. They are engaging and provide valuable information to your customers, which ultimately improves the customer experience.

Not only is how-to content valuable to your customers, it's extremely helpful to your support team. How-to guides and video cut down on phone calls and emails to customers so your customer service team can focus on other revenue-generating tasks.

A help center or FAQ box is not the only place that how-to content is valuable, they are also important pre-purchase. 73% of customers are more likely to buy products after watching how-to videos. So when customers are scrolling through reviews and product descriptions, an informative video can help seal the deal.

Do you have to choose between written guides and videos? We suggest both. While people generally prefer to watch videos than read blogs or guides, pairing them together creates an unstoppable force of information. It ensures that the customer has everything they need right at their fingertips.

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#10: Implement reward programs

Doesn't it feel great when you're rewarded for shopping at your favorite store? Whether it's a discount or a free item, rewards programs are a great way to thank your customers for their loyalty. There are two key rewards programs that you should consider implementing: loyalty and referral programs. Both are customer retention strategies, but there are some key differences to note.

Loyalty programs

Loyalty programs reward your most loyal customers as they continue to shop with your brand. Simply put, loyalty programs drive repeat sales from your existing customers. Think of a stamp card at a coffee shop, after a certain amount of purchases you may receive a free drink—that's a loyalty program!

Point-based loyalty programs make the most sense with items that don't cost a lot of money because they are used for repeat purchases. For example, you may buy coffee every week but you're not going to buy a new piece of furniture every week.

Loyalty programs don't always have to follow the point or punch system. Tiered loyalty programs allow customers to climb the ranks through the program as they spend more money. Higher tiers allow for VIP rewards and experiences, which entices customers to spend more to gain that status.

There are also other options that are easier to implement like perk loyalty programs. Perks are given to all members of the program on a regular basis. Rewards could be free shipping, exclusive discounts, birthday surprises, and more!

Referral programs

Referral programs reward customers for referring your brand to their friends and family (or anyone really). Essentially, they drive sales from both new and existing customers.

Referral programs combine acquisition and retention into one post purchase strategy because of their low customer acquisition cost and high customer lifetime value. How is that possible? When you acquire new customers through a referral program, they can have significantly higher LTV than those acquired through other marketing channels because referred customers tend to be more qualified. If your goal is to increase the word-of-mouth around your brand, a referral program could be an excellent addition to your marketing strategy.

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Build your brand with every customer interaction

There you have it: 10 ways to get your post purchase marketing back on track. If we didn't mention it before, the post purchase experience is pretty important within the customer journey. Customers are looking for brands that set themselves apart from the rest and by focusing on retention efforts, personalization, and convenience, your brand is on the right track.