

# The Importance of UX in eCommerce 2019



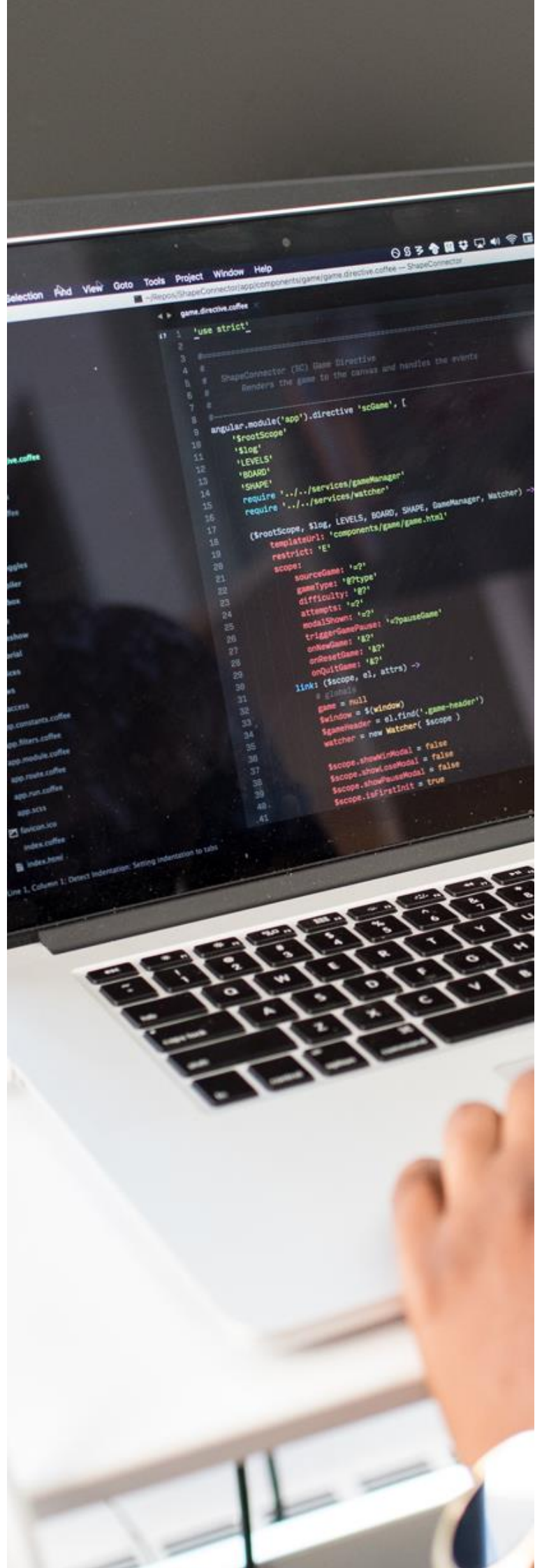
**FULL-SERVICE ECOMMERCE AGENCY**

Helping brands with online growth and  
digital transformation for over 20 years



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## Introduction



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### **Question: can an online store ever be as welcoming as a physical one?**

You can't touch or feel the products, navigation can be complex and intimidating and there is no personal touch from an experienced shop assistant. Although the number of online shoppers is increasing at an unprecedented rate, the online experience for visitors of many eCommerce stores can be below par. But just like they would have it in a brick and mortar store, when customers visit your eCommerce store, they want an effortless journey with phases A-Z connected seamlessly.

From aesthetics and "feel" to functionality and usability, your website's User Experience (UX) is critical to your online success. If your goal as an online retailer is to attract and retain more and more customers, it is crucial that you take a good look at your site's UX – the journey from home page to checkout that your average customer would take, as well as any other important user journeys through the site.

To help you benefit from the convenience of online selling while still providing an easy, comprehensive and personalised experience for your customers, we have created this White Paper to break down UX and provide advice and suggestions.

# The 4 Pillars

As the number of online merchants and eCommerce stores increases, fierce online competition is a given and it is becoming harder to stand out. To separate yourself from the crowd, you must remember one key fact: customers want convenience above all. From designing your homepage layout to deciding on your checkout process, remember that flexibility and ease-of-use are imperative.

Whilst you cannot personally greet customers and ask if they need help, with a suitable design and theme, websites can provide an incredible amount of personalised content for every user, sometimes even surpassing what's possible in a physical store. Homepages can become more interactive, engaging customers more than ever before. Personalising the user journey for each customer can influence their perception of your brand positively and make your website stand out.

Improving your SEO (search engine optimisation) will also go a long way in increasing your visibility online. If your site is well-indexed by search engines, over half your traffic will be coming straight into your category and product pages.

In order to successfully increase the UX of your eCommerce store, you must build it on a foundation of 4 pillars:

- 1. Flexibility**
- 2. Ease-of-Use**
- 3. Engagement**
- 4. Personalisation**

Let's delve deeper.



# Flexibility

Whether they're just about to access your site from a mobile device or they've already reached the checkout, customers expect you to offer them flexibility and sensible choices every step of the way.

Consider a responsive design for your website, a variety of payment methods and multiple delivery options, amongst other things.

## 1. Responsive Design

Responsive design is now common place and if you don't already have a responsive site, you need to get one - fast. There are a lot of factors to take into account when moving from a large desktop view to a mobile view, and vice versa, so here are some key design tips to create a great overall user experience:

- **Reduce the effort users have to put in to get what they want**

With every view you design for, the website should support a single action of real value to the person using it. Design each screen for one thing and one thing only, with no more than 1 CTA (Call-To-Action). This makes it easier to learn, easier to use and easier to add to or build on when necessary.

- **Invisible User Interface**

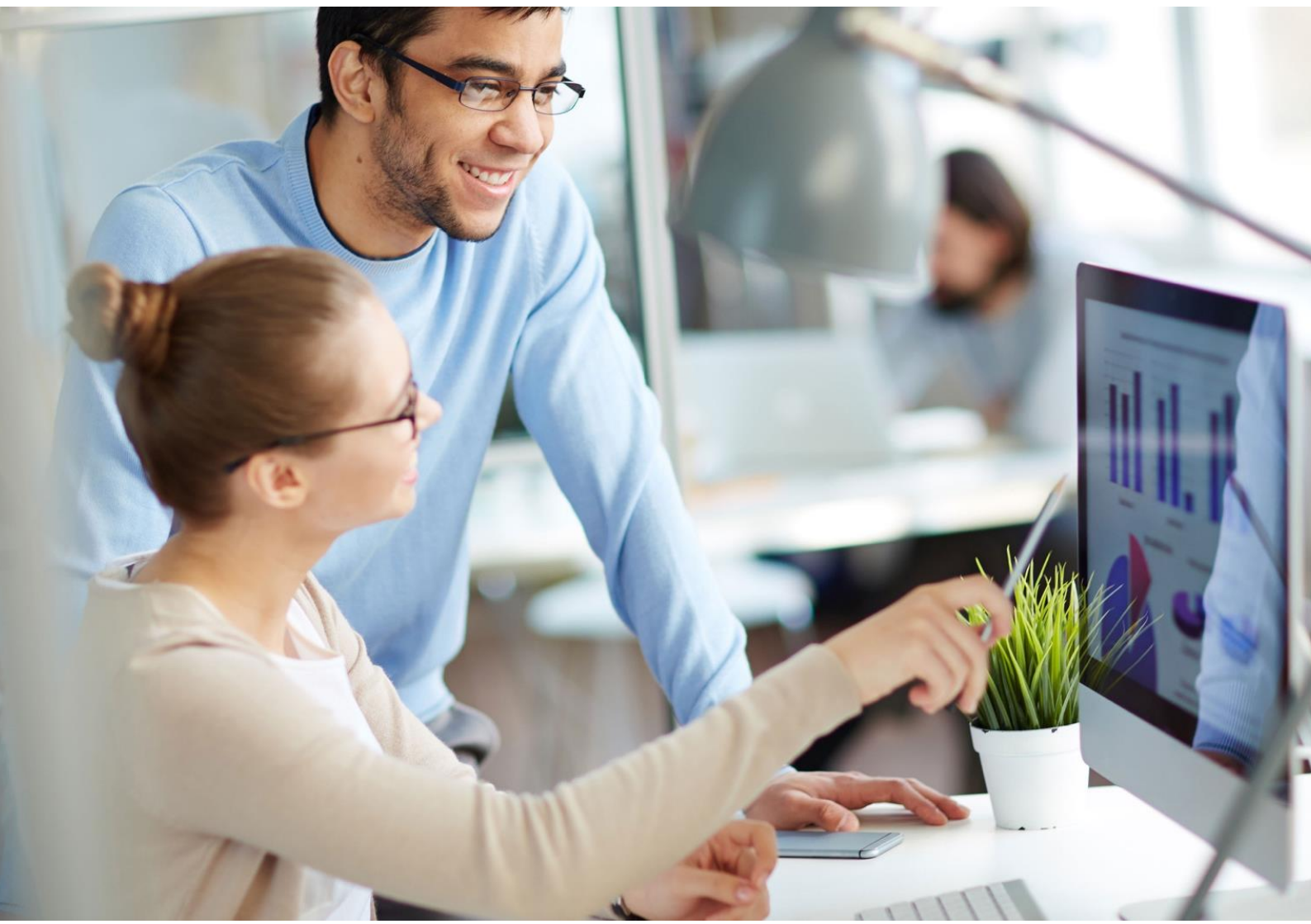
Focus on the content and remove unnecessary elements that do not support user tasks. The average user has a very limited attention span so they should be guided to the content they're looking for quickly.

- **Breathing Space**

White space or "negative space", which refers to the empty space between and around elements of a design or page layout, is often overlooked and neglected. White space is an essential element in mobile design and should be regarded as an active element, not a passive background.

- **Navigation Made Simple**

Helping users navigate should be a high priority for every website. Mobile navigation must be discoverable, accessible and take up little screen space when not in use.



However, making navigation accessible is a challenge on mobile due to the limitations of the small screen and the need to prioritise the content.

- **One Hand Operation**

With the release of modern smartphones, it has become clear that screen sizes are expanding. In fact, 85% of observed users working with their phones only used one hand. The following heat map shows the sorts of thumb zones applied to every iPhone display size since 2007. You can see that the bigger the display, the less easily-accessible the zone is. It's necessary to adapt a design to improve the user experience so try to make sure that your mobile site or app can be easily (and fully) used on a large screen with one hand.



## 2. Payment Choice

Customers want to be able to use their payment method of choice, so consider adopting a number of different payment options to suit your customers such as: Amazon Pay, Android Pay, Apple Pay and PayPal alongside your normal payment gateway. Don't just assume that shoppers will use the most common payment methods in your market.

You can easily find out what devices your customers are using to browse your site, where they are located and what age and gender they are. This information is readily available in Google Analytics so use it to inform your choices about what payment options to offer.

Consider working with a payment gateway that supports multiple payment methods, such as **Adyen** and **Klarna**, as this will give you the flexibility you need to quickly address your customers' needs.

**adyen**

**Klarna®**





### 3. Delivery

Nowadays, consumers expect convenient and flexible delivery options from their online retailers. Knowing that they are likely to abandon their basket if the checkout and delivery options are unsatisfactory, it's worth examining what options you offer. Do you have variety? Next day delivery? Nominated date and time delivery? What's your cost structure? Is your courier reliable? Do they offer real-time tracking?

Consider working with multiple carriers and platforms like Collect+ and HubBox, which allow customers more choice regarding where they have their packages delivered to. Complicated delivery options do come with their logistical challenges so consider using platforms like **ShipperHQ** and **ShipStation** to help you manage these.



**ShipStation**<sup>®</sup>



# Ease-of-Use

Regardless of location or query, your customer should not have to struggle to get the information they need in order to make a purchase.

## 1. International

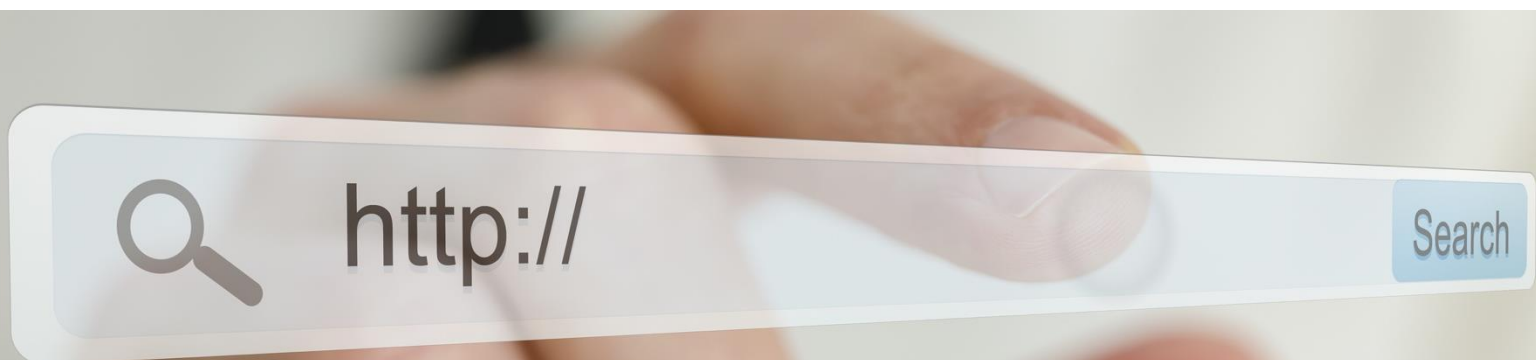
Do you have customers all over the world or do you want to achieve a global reach? You can cater to all your customers by creating one multi-lingual site or a separate domain for each language you need. Although it may seem like a long process, if being more globally relevant is in your strategy, then you need to consider the most effective options to get the solution you need.

Your checkout should also cater to different currencies. Platform providers like eShopWorld and GlobalE can help you manage international fulfilment and returns as well as assist with your multicurrency requirements.

## 2. Search



Search-query autocomplete and a strong error tolerance are essential if you want your customers to have an uninterrupted online journey. With AI and personalisation platforms, you could even personalise search suggestions to pre-empt your customer's request. According to **Klevu**, shoppers are 3-5 times more likely to convert with on-site search. Search is an important avenue for the retailer to understand the intent and the demand of the shopper. Klevu recently analysed \$1.4B of total business from 869 online stores over 7 months and recorded 27% (\$360M) of revenue directly attributed to on-site search.



### 3. Expertise

Ensure they are able to receive the same expertise they could get in a physical store – have a comprehensive FAQ section and, if possible, a live chat functionality through which a customer service representative can answer their questions with immediacy.

As Mark Wheatley said in *The Conversation Engine*: “A brand is the look and feel of a company, right down to how the team talks and interacts with its customers.” Having helpful team members available will go a long way to increase your customers’ satisfaction and if your brand message and feel has been consistent, brand perception will be positively impacted.

### 4. Uncluttered

Effective navigation means that a user should know where he or she is on the website at any given time, as well as be able to leave that page knowing that they can return to it at any time. Go for consistent and intuitive product categorisation and pages that are not visually-overwhelming but still provide the necessary information. Make using your website feel comfortable, allow visitors to get lost browsing your products, not your site.





## **5. Safe, secure and easy-to-use when checking out**

When it comes to sharing sensitive information like card details, customers should feel safe and comfortable. Along with a secure checkout, a fast one should be the second highest priority on your list. The ideal situation would be to have a one-click checkout, or an automated checkout process, so aim for this.

However, you can involve other elements such as guest accounts, which are shown to improve the amount of purchases on a site. Make sure the process is transparent to increase brand trust and your credibility.

Don't spend too much time thinking about the number of steps in the process, however; instead, think about what, how and why you are asking them to do each one in order to complete their purchase and remove as many barriers as possible.



# Engagement

## 1. User Generated Content (UGC)

The plethora of stories your customers tell about your brand is one of your most valuable assets. UGC (user generated content) is highly shareable, very engaging and, most importantly, new visitors trust the social proof.

Does your website feature any testimonials/reviews? If not, how are you going to build credibility with your customers? Do your products have star ratings? If not, how are your customers going to see which items are the best? Consider solutions like **Yotpo**, a one-stop shop for reviews, UGC and Loyalty Programmes. If this is too daunting a challenge to start with, consider more specialist platforms like **Mention Me** for easy referrals and **Photoslurp** for UGC.

Finally, consider making your product information available where the customer is looking. Do you have a lot of interaction with your brand on Instagram or Facebook? If you do, set your website up so that your customers can tag your products with links through to your website to make it as easy as possible for your customers to do your advertising for you.

With the right platform, you can link the UGC directly to the relevant product page on your site, increasing the likelihood of a sale.



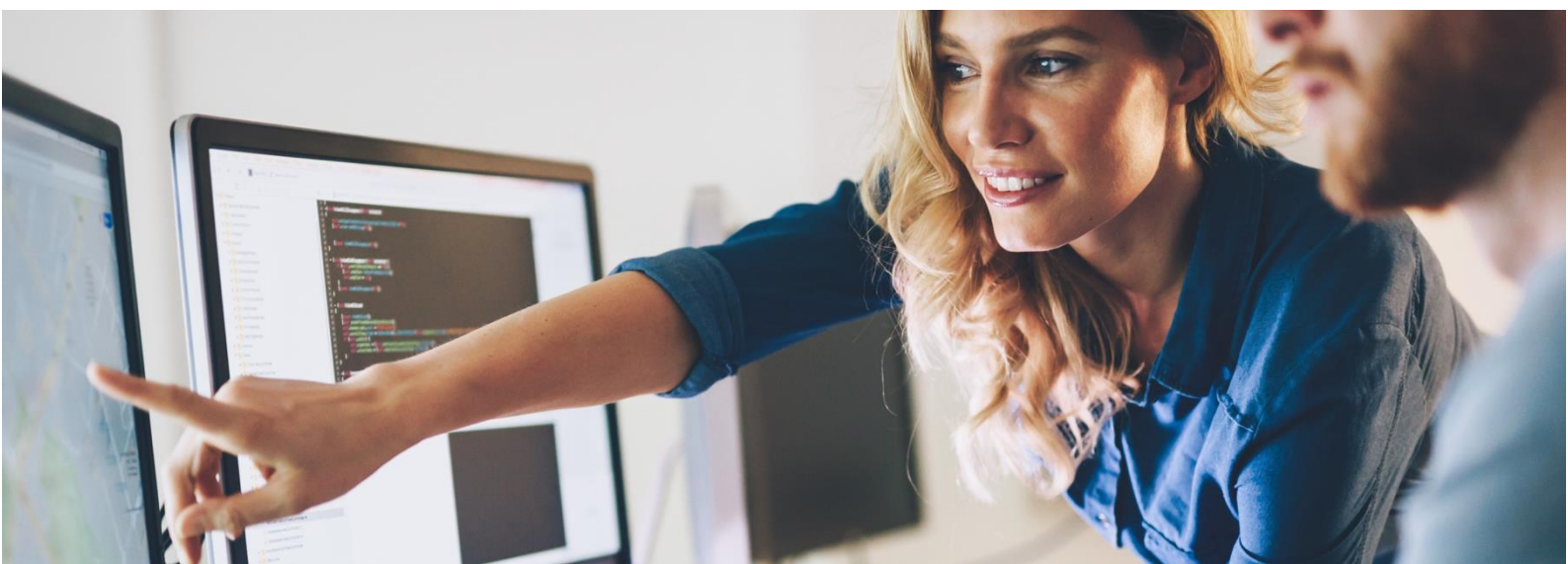
## 2. Personality

Your website may be the first impression consumers are going to have of your brand, so why not make sure you demonstrate the characteristics you want to be associated with? From your choice of eCommerce platform and theme to the page layout and content you produce, customers want to see how you are different and why they should choose you.

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, and videos contain hundreds of frames, we can infer that videos are worth thousands of words – so use them! Consider using images and video content to showcase your brand history and products, or go as far as curating regular blog posts to keep your followers updated on company activities. Even if you think your products are dull, try to make shopping on your website an engaging sensory experience. Customers want to see dozens of photos, from close-ups of jacket buttons to a lifestyle image of someone wearing the product.

Use high-quality and high-resolution images, as they further close the sensory gap between walking into a store and shopping online. Be careful, however, to consider site speed when uploading your images and make sure that they are properly optimised or they could counter-productively cause a poor user experience.

The gap between the experience of physical vs online shopping could be closing even more with the increased use of Augmented Reality (AR) in online stores. By superimposing images, sound and videos and making the virtual touch and feel of a product possible, AR could decrease the interaction cost associated with your products and lower the cognitive load of using your website to shop.



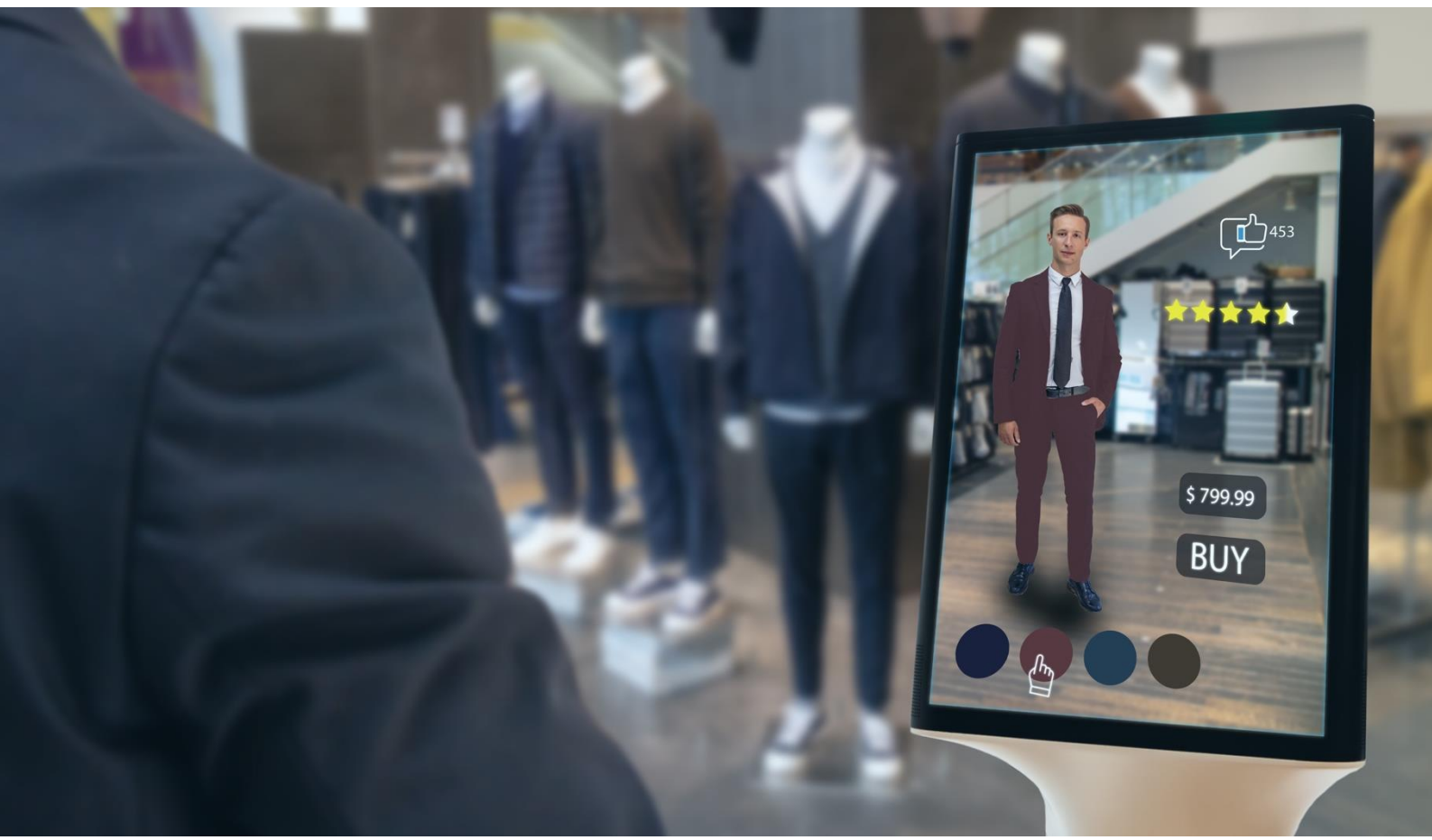
# Personalisation

## 1. Build a relationship: Loyalty & Rewards

Amazon Prime is the most successful loyalty programme in the world and has changed the way customers think about online shopping. They are no longer buying on price but on convenience. We do not all have the infrastructure in place to provide that level of service so consider other ways to reward your customers for shopping with you. Platforms like Yotpo, **LoyaltyLion** and Mention Me can help you engage and reward your customers in very cost effective ways.

Build up the relationship with your customers by rewarding them for choosing you; Keep customer satisfaction high by offering benefits: early access to sales, selected discounts or offer diverse levels of reward campaigns for different levels of customer loyalty.

Acquire high-value customers at low costs with attractive referral programmes - 'Invite a friend and you each get £x or x% off your next purchase' and similar offers can go a long way to increase your reach and customer base.

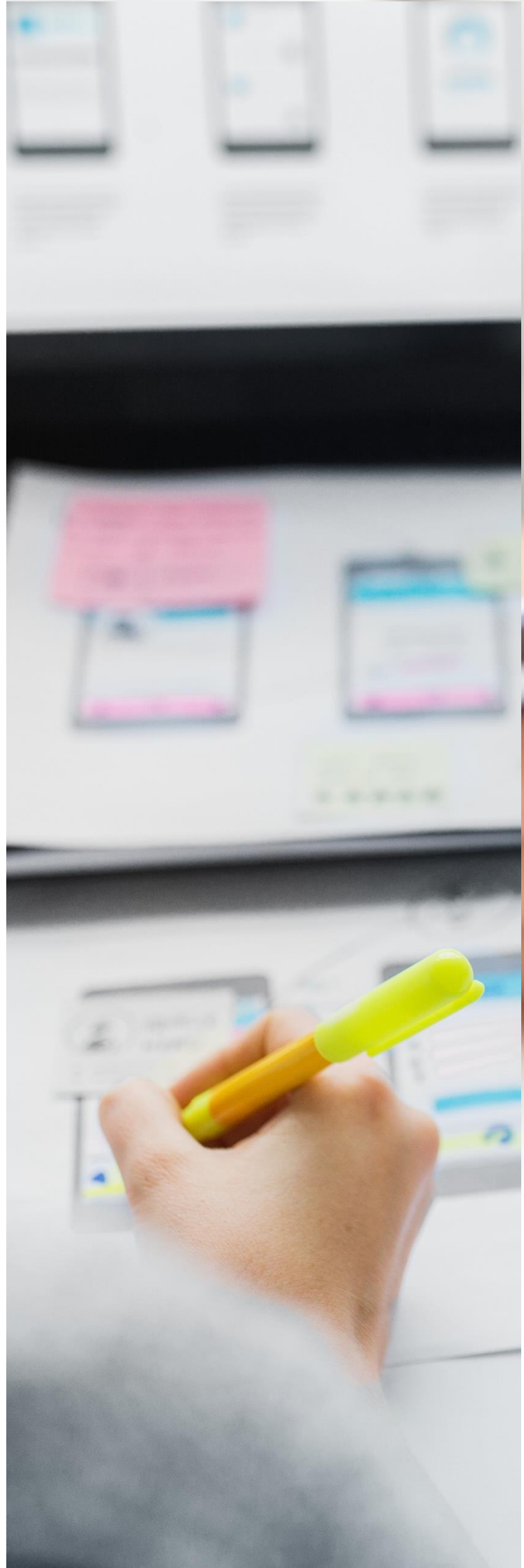


## 2. Life after purchase

With the data that your customers provide you, you can tailor the content they are exposed to, which can have a significant impact on their experience - particularly on your homepage, landing pages and email marketing. Personalising according to age, gender, location, preferences and other characteristics can go a long way towards providing a more wholesome and pleasant experience for your customers every time they interact with your brand.

They don't want to see 500 dresses and 300 pairs of shoes, they want you to know what they like and make suggestions to them. Personalisation platforms like Nosto and Emarsys automate this process for you.

In addition, make sure your email and online marketing programmes are segmented and personalised as well. Platforms like Dotdigital are perfect for this.





# Checklist

How does your website's UX measure up?

Use the checklist below to find out:

FEATURE	YES	NO
Responsive design		
Varied payment options		
Varied delivery options		
International website		
Effective search bar		
Live chat		
FAQ page		
User-generated content		
Brand personality		
Personalisation		
Loyalty Programme		
Referral Programme		
One-click checkout		
Intuitive navigation		

From the initial first impression to stunning product images, the most important parts of UX for eCommerce are sometimes complex, while other times easy.

We recommend thorough research so as to find the right agency, platform and approach for your company.

If you think Screen Pages can be of assistance, please call us on **01932 359 160** or email us at **[info@screenpages.com](mailto:info@screenpages.com)**



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