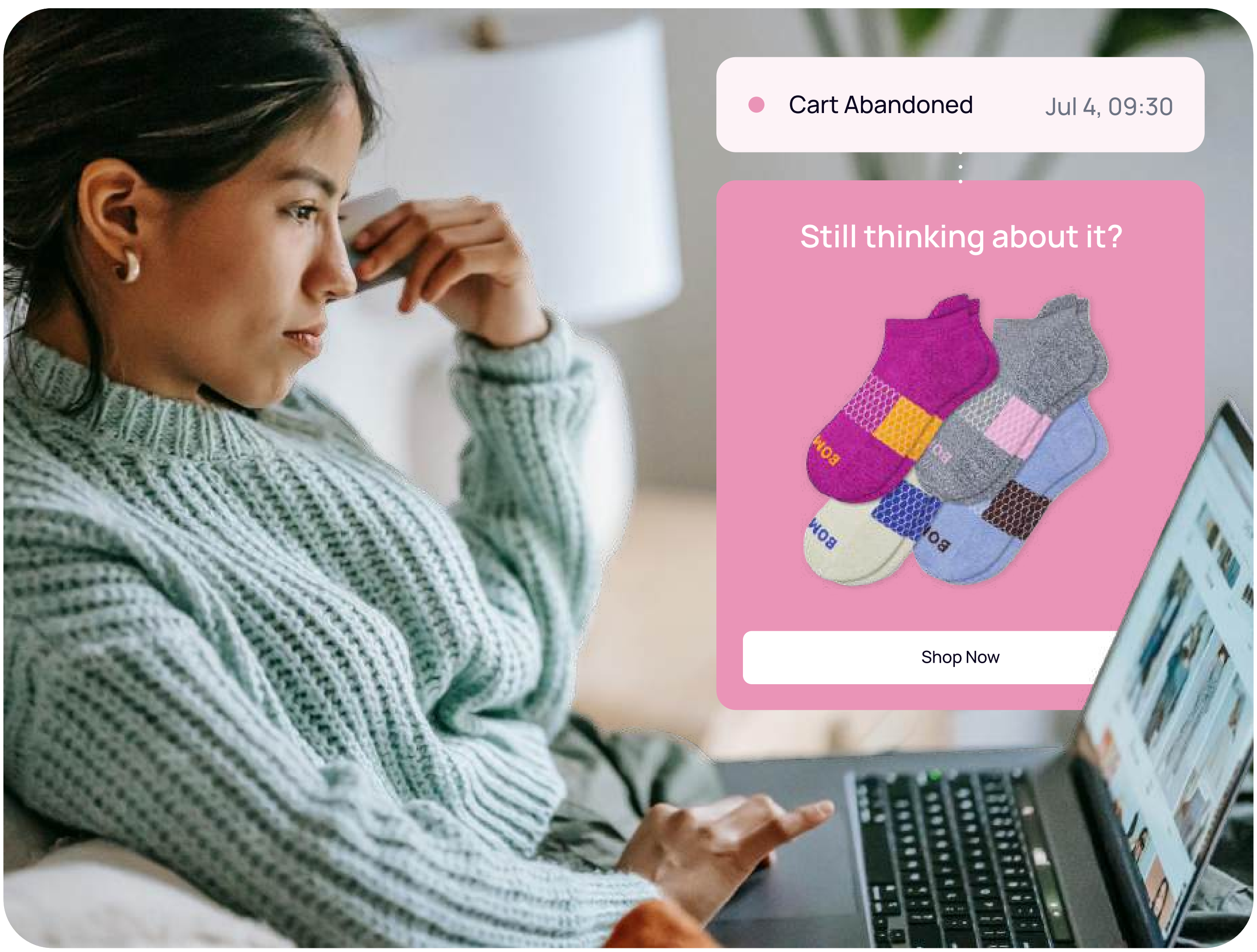
Simon

Overcoming Your [Ecommerce] Abandonment Issues



Introduction

Today's marketers can access new technologies - CDPs and cross-channel engagement platforms - that make creating and delivering abandonment messages to critical customers easier than ever. These newer entrants in marketing technology promise to stretch messaging possibilities to create complex, fluid experiences.

This can be both empowering and overwhelming. If harnessed appropriately, this technology can make a world of difference to the core metrics that define success for both marketing and the broader brand.

To get those results, it won't be enough just to launch and hope for the best. This is a perfect recipe for overworked teams that lack control and a clear picture of their impact.

As teams look to deploy a high-return abandonment strategy, they should approach it methodically, following the critical steps that should be taken:

Step 1: Plan + Prioritize

Think critically about what you're trying to do, why you're trying to do it, and who you are trying to reach so you can narrow down your efforts moving forward.

Step 2: Prepare

Take steps to make sure you're collecting the right data and coordinating cross-functionally to be as effective as possible.

Step 3: Activate

Begin actioning on the things you need for your plan to be successful.

Step 4: Deliver

Craft communications with the customer in mind to ensure they resonate and have as much impact on their behaviors as possible.

Step 5: Measure + Iterate

Track your progress against your goals to communicate successes and inform any adjustments to optimize the approach.

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Step 1: Plan + Prioritize

Before launching any new initiative, set aside a reasonable amount of time to think through the effect you want to drive in both qualitative and quantitative terms and all of the possible options to achieve those goals.

The best teams gather a set of cross-functional peers to benchmark the current state, set objectives for the future state, and approach initiative ideation as a problem-solving exercise.

When kicking off, the following questions are critical thought-starters. If the questions aren't properly answered, you should reconsider moving forward until that changes.

1. **What are you trying to achieve and how does it tie into our broader marketing and brand objectives?**
2. **Who are you trying to reach?**
3. **Why is it happening in the first place?**
4. **Why haven't you been able to make it happen?**

Together, these questions help your marketing team hone in on the specific message and action they need to be successful.

Know What You're Trying to Do

Answering the "what" is absolutely critical.

Marketers need to define abandonment in the context of their broader objectives. By taking a step back and asking (at a minimum) those few questions, teams give themselves the power to set bumper rails for what's not only worth doing but what needs doing.

Second, you can't execute effectively without a clear idea of what needs to be done. Sometimes marketers just put something out there — the "spray and pray" or "ready, fire, aim" methods — because they feel pressure to deliver or it's the way things have just always been done — then hope for the best.

By taking a step back and mastering the planning process, marketers can ensure that all the hard work done in building those initiatives pays off because they were built with a clear end goal in mind.

Third, if teams move forward without setting objectives or are unable to align their initiatives to broader business objectives clearly, marketing loses the ability to demonstrate its direct contributions to the brand's success.

This can have huge implications (especially after a period of significant investment in new technologies) on your executive team's faith in marketing to increase budgets or allocate funds to new investments.

To avoid these pitfalls when looking to optimize abandonment initiatives, you should formalize the planning process to consider the goals, audience, and calls-to-action you seek to enable and encourage.

Marketing can start this planning process by first considering core objectives and how they break down into marketing. Determine your content's specific role in making those things happen and encourage the team to be more specific.

This process allows the team to align their objectives to broader corporate-level objectives and to be clearer about the precise outcomes that content needs to drive, especially in the context of abandonment initiatives.

Key Questions for Defining Marketing- and Content-Level Objectives

Business-Level Objectives

What would mean success to our organization?

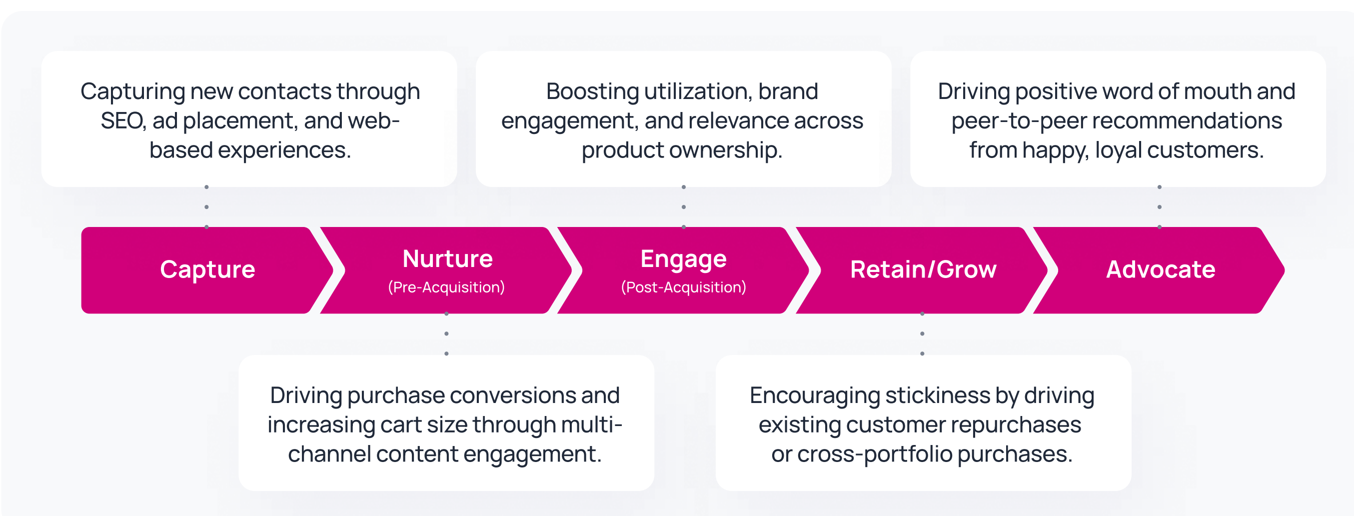
Marketing-Level Objectives

What levers can Marketing pull to make business-level objectives happen?

Content-Level Objectives

What content types and channels can help us meet that marketing objective?

These questions orient marketing strategy and the downstream resultant content toward the north star of business or brand-level objectives. The answers to these questions also lay the foundation for segmenting audiences, giving us a better direction around which customers to reach.



Who Are You Trying to Reach?

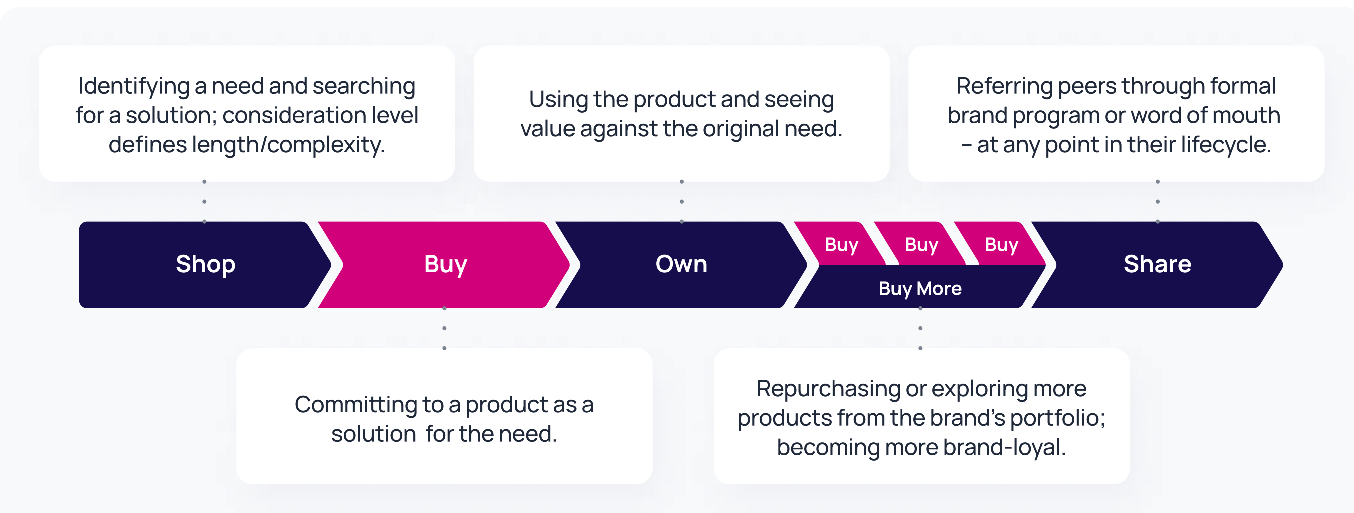
In the context of abandonment, it might seem obvious that you're just trying to reach anyone who has left the site or cart. While this might be true at a basic level, to do abandonment well, you need to think more specifically.

- **Are they first-time shoppers or repeat customers?**
- **Have they abandoned for the first time?**
- **Where in their shopping journey did they abandon?**

Asking these questions (and more questions like these) gets to the heart of whom we're working with, which allows us to better identify how we should be approaching them.

In the case of abandonment, we know that customers can abandon for a variety of reasons, but the more we know about them, the better we will be at crafting a message that not only resonates but also drives them closer to a purchase.

The Customer Lifecycle



Understanding the customer and their purchase journey allows us better insight into the customer's context so that you can dive into the next piece, in which you figure out why abandonment is happening in the first place.

Why Is It Happening in the First Place?

In a previous section, we discussed how abandonment is a symptom of greater customer barriers. However, for each brand, the barriers might differ. The best thing marketing can do is take the initiative to understand where those barriers surface and what can be mitigated.

Having data at our fingertips could help us assess trends across experience barriers that might block customers from checkout. With it, you could also use what you know about customers — quantitative and qualitative — to understand the attitudinal or behavioral barriers that might keep them from moving forward with the purchase. Some of these attitude barriers are resolvable by pre-emptive messaging and design, others through post-abandonment messaging. Figure out what the biggest drivers are for the brand and its best customers and use that understanding as a tool to prioritize the work that should be done first to keep customers from leaving. Then, get those that slipped through to come back.

Step 2: Prepare

Now that you've defined clear objectives, set expectations for customer targets, and taken the time to better understand abandonment triggers, you can set your abandonment initiative into motion.

If you want to consistently drive positive post-abandonment behaviors, you need to understand customers on a more personal level. To do so, consider what data is critical to segmentation, creating content, and getting customers excited about the brand and product.

Consider some of the data that could be used to show a full picture of your customer's journey:

Key Question	Data Points
Who is in this segment?	• Contact + unified profile info (age, gender, loyalty status, etc.) • Third-party party data • Last site visited • Time since abandonment • Quiz/form selections
What is it they've been shopping for?	• Search terms • Product page visits • Time on site • Inventory data • Quiz/form selections
Why are they shopping for it?	• Time of year • Geography • Search terms • Form fill
Where are they doing their shopping?	• Channel used • "Find a location"
How did they come to shop for it?	• Ad reference source info • Referral code • Coupon Code • Search terms

Make Your Data Count

Abandonment is time-sensitive. Make sure Marketing has unhindered access to quick queries by leveraging denormalized data tables.

There are many places that you can collect data from, for example:

1. **Directly from our customers** (form fields, surveys)
2. **Pulled from our website** (cookies, pixels, tags, search terms, cart adds)
3. **Third-party data** (weather, tv viewership, household income)

Volunteered Customer Data

Don't be afraid to set up a welcome or interactive experience that allows your customers to offer information about themselves in exchange for a more personalized engagement with your brand. Well-crafted quizlets can overcome customer barriers to purchase, such as targeted offerings to keep them from feeling overwhelmed, simplifying the purchase, and increasing confidence in their choices. It's also a useful way to capture contact info without handing over a coupon code or waiting for them to feel like subscribing to emails.

Behavioral Customer Data

In the world of customer abandonment, behavioral customer data is critical. Behavioral customer data will tell us what the customer did (their 'events'), where they've been on the site, what they're interested in, and whether or not they've completed the actions that you've laid out for them—in the past, present, and future.

To capture this customer data most effectively, you should ensure you are primarily setting up and relying on your own tracking, even from multiple sources. This will help you avoid future GDPR/CCPA complications but also allow you to capture the complete picture of a consumer's identity.

Many customers take several actions on a website in advance of signing up or offering any sort of means of connecting their behaviors to a unique identity so that you can tailor and personalize messaging. This data should never be lost just because it happened before capture — having access to a robust identity resolution process that stitches retroactive actions into a holistic picture of that customer is what can make or break the most innovative abandonment initiatives.

With regard to customer behavior tracking, you should consider your capability to:

1. **Embed pixels strategically on your site**
2. **Integrate behavioral data from analytics vendors into the unique identity**
3. **Send and activate on real-time behavioral data, as needed**
4. **Hydrate the event data with information from the customer profile**

The real-time behavioral data that is collected is absolutely critical to efficient and effective segmentation and messaging. It is, however, information that should be used responsibly, as it often factors into the 'creepiness' factor of the messages that customers receive.

Third-Party Data

There's a wide world of information out there that consumers are forfeiting every day. While third-party cookies are becoming a thing of the past, that doesn't mean external data sources are completely irrelevant.

There are several providers that collect and distribute third-party customer data that can be pulled into existing data fields and add additional color to customers who have abandoned and improve our segmentation.

There are companies like Narrative that stream this kind of data to brands. Making sure that you have the means to ingest and package this data is critical to ensuring that it's worth the investment and that the data enables a better, more relevant experience (instead of creepy) for those customers you're trying to re-engage.

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

In order to accomplish this, you need to make sure that you've established formal and informal relationships across cross-functional stakeholders in analytics, customer service, market insights, UX, product, legal, and anyone else who can help us operationalize data collection and the shoppers' digital experience. Their contributions are critical to marketing's ability to quickly roll these out and deliver an experience that can prevent an abandoned customer in the first place.

Use your relationships with your internal partners and various analytics teams to pinpoint exactly where people most often drop off and consider the logical reasons for why that might be. Some teams prefer to coordinate live UX user testing and customer interviews to uncover the data in a more qualitative way.

While time-consuming, it can be well worth it in the end. Think of it like being in a boat that has a hole in it – if you don't plug the hole or at least shrink it, the water will come in faster than you can use your bucket to get it out. Abandonment initiatives can never be complete without an effort to reduce the abandonment rate in the first place.

Setting Up for Success

In order to take and use data across the three abandonment categories effectively and efficiently, you need to make sure that the following capabilities are an inherent part of your martech stack:

- Ingest and manage from complex data tables
- Manage and address complex audiences
- Low-latency event triggers
- Create personalized content
- Seamless multi-channel campaign orchestration and integration
- Iterative experimentation

These are going to be the critical components to bridging the gap between your strategic plan and seeing your abandonment initiatives in action. Without them, it will be difficult to best leverage the data you have across your brand and get the results you're aiming for. Take the time to cross-check your stack's capabilities by connecting with your data, technology, and channel specialists both internally and externally.

Step 3: Activate

The most effective abandonment initiatives don't blast or spray; they target and tailor.

Using the core objectives, target audience, and required data that we defined during Steps 1 and 2, you can set the appropriate triggers, segments, and channel integrations to make the dream a reality.

Triggers

The trigger you choose depends on how you define abandonment for a given objective. Triggers are the first line defining your segment, but they are worth considering in isolation before adding additional criteria to a particular audience.

The timing of the message is more important than the triggering action. You can set triggers at any latency, either in combined batches or as event-triggered flows, depending on the event itself.

> **Our research shows that brands that use event-triggered journeys for their abandonment campaigns convert at an average rate of 55% higher than those that use standard triggered flows.**

Event-triggered journeys don't necessarily need to launch immediately. In fact, with abandonment, it's often better to wait. The customer's shopping context is critical when considering the latency of sending your messages.

Simon Data's CDP is automatically set to measure abandonment events at one-hour latency, but that could be adjusted depending on your customers and products. For instance, a mattress or high-priced clothing item would get a longer latency period than a lower-ticket item.

In moving forward with defining event-triggered segments, you should, at a minimum, consider some of the following:

Consideration	Key Question	Sample
Action	What event will mark a customer as eligible to receive the message?	• Site search • Item placed in cart • Product browse • Dormant browser window • Closed out of browser
Timing	How long after the action do you want the message to send?	• T+0 mins • T+30 mins • T+1 hour • T+1 day

Get Super Specific with Your Audience

Beyond the setup of the initial abandonment event trigger, you have the opportunity to refine audiences through sub-segmentation. Getting specific with audiences will allow you to get the right message to the right person. While it is certainly easier to send a blanket, “Hey, you forgot something!” email to all abandoned carts, it won’t be effective in a world of endless generic outreach.

Here is where you preemptively decide who gets differentiated messages based on what you know about them and in a way that supports business goals.

Here are some ways you can segment your audiences:

- Loyalty status (e.g., new customer, disloyal customer, frequent customer)
- Customer lifetime value (i.e.., how much they’ve spent so far, projected spend)
- Abandoned product type (e.g., men’s vs. women’s products, sale item vs. full price)
- Channel preference (e.g., email, SMS, push notification)
- Form/quiz data (e.g., stated preference for hair products vs skin)

Identify the segments where you want to differentiate your targeting upfront; this will allow for better focus when creating tailored content. While the above bullets offer critical perspectives for including new groups, you should also focus on the segments you want to exclude.

When you introduce customers to a new messaging flow, consider what messaging should be paused or reduced. A refined approach to segmented messaging is just as much about suppressing messages as it is about sending messages. This is especially important in the walking-on-eggshells territory of nudging customers to complete a purchase.

If a customer is eligible for multiple campaigns, managing the underlying prioritization logic — and throttling the total number of campaigns sent — is of the utmost importance. Otherwise, your customers face messaging collisions, i.e., too many messages that might be conflicting, overlapping, contradictory, or annoying.

Don’t put customers in a situation where they receive:

- “Abandoned cart” messages after purchasing an item
- A message calling them back to a sold-out item
- A discount on an item they’ve already purchased at full price, or
- Multiple messages within a few hours, all with different/disconnected calls-to-action

Any of the above will be a negative experience for customers. Such experiences create distrust. Over-messaging will quickly get your brand mentally filed along with other insidious spam that is just a part of daily life. In other words, distrust, irritation, and message fatigue will damage an already fragile customer connection. For this reason, it’s critical to consider the exclusion criteria and campaign prioritization for this abandonment-focused flow and across any and all others.

Tapping into Channels

When it comes to abandonment, we need to make sure we’re getting to the right customer at the right time and in the right place.

Meeting a customer where they are will find them when they’re most receptive to your message. When considering the channels to include across your abandonment initiatives, take these things into account:

1. **What channel was the customer on when they abandoned?**
2. **Where across their purchase did they abandon?**
3. **What are the customer’s channel preferences?**
4. **Where across the abandonment series is the communication?**

Consider experimenting across channels to see where and when each channel is most effective. If you can quickly orchestrate across channels, you stand a better chance of meeting each customer with a consistent, timely, and relevant message.

Single- vs. Multi-Step Customer Messaging

Some shoppers respond to one abandonment message. For most, it takes a while to make that final decision.

> **According to our research, journey-based abandonment-sends convert 3.2x higher on average than any other sends.**

Also, journeys with three touchpoints show higher engagement, higher CTRs, and even **41%** higher conversion rates over single abandonment sends.

Even with the right tools, our data shows only about **21%** of abandonment sends are part of a journey. This tells us there is much more opportunity to understand customer shopping journeys and to align abandonment messaging to it.

When it comes to planning a customer's abandonment journey, the marketing team needs the right tools to create, manage, and optimize complex journeys. The right tools — properly integrated into a holistic martech ecosystem — make all the difference in making sure the right messages get to the right people at the right time.

To build the best possible journey, the following several sections will walk through how to:

1. **Create high-impact content**
2. **Experiment for optimization, and**
3. **Measure success**

Step 4: Deliver the Right Message

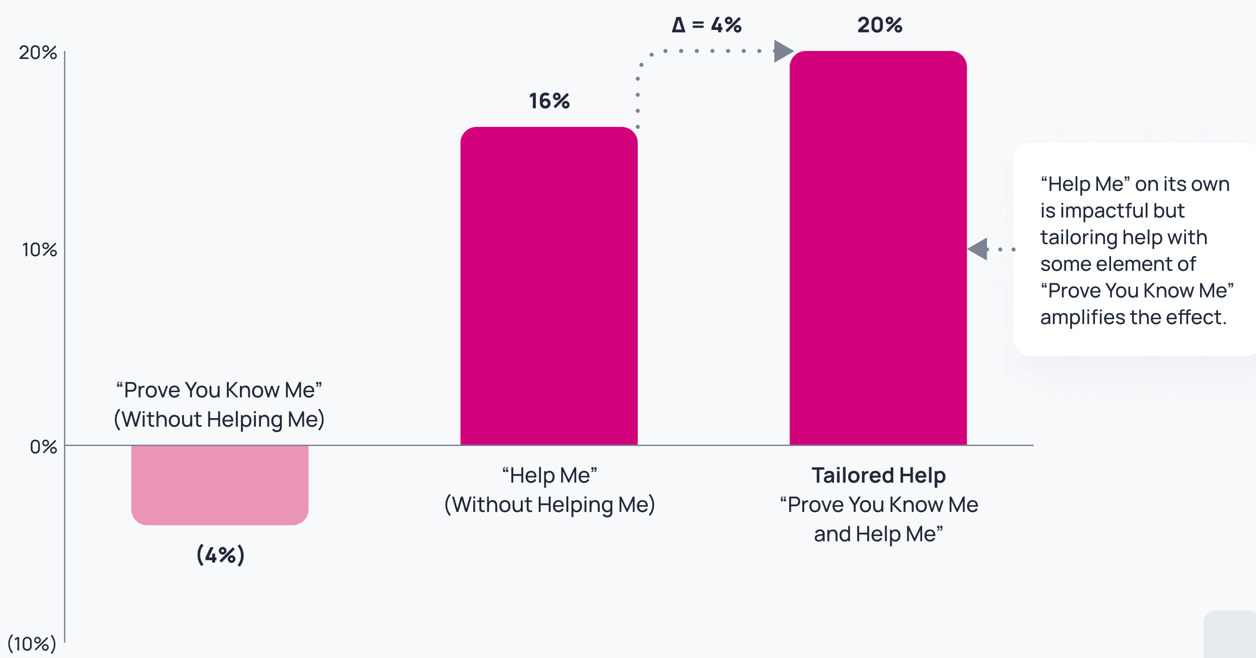
The last step is simple, really: deliver a resonant message that spurs customers to complete the purchase journey. Do this personally and at scale. Easy, right?

Marketing communications are tools you give to customers to empower them in their decision-making. Customers can smell a self-serving sales email from a mile away.

A study by Gartner looked at consumers' perceptions of varying levels of personalization and how those perceptions impact commercial performance or benefit (in this context being brand intent, purchase, re-purchase, and/or increased cart size).

Predicted Impact of Factors

Change in Commercial Benefit Index, When Going From Bottom to Top Quartile



n = 2,585 consumers.
Source: CEB 2018 Consumer Personalization Panel.

In that study, the researchers found that messages that were simply "personalized" using data points and had no other value to the customer actually reduced the likelihood of commercial benefit by **-4%**.

Content that was considered merely "helpful" increased the likelihood of commercial benefit by **+16%**.

Customers who then saw content that not only had utility but felt like it was for them — referred to by Gartner as "tailored help" — saw a **+20%** lift in the likelihood of commercial benefit.

Put succinctly, your abandonment messages must be thoughtful and purposeful, not just cart reminders.

In this section, we'll explore how content that inspires confidence can help customers overcome their biggest emotional barriers.

Boosting Confidence

We've all been there. We added something to our cart but weren't ready for the commitment. So we left it... until later... probably.

Perhaps we weren't sure that it was worth the price. Maybe it was a new brand we didn't yet trust. Maybe we weren't sure the product would help us do what we needed it to do. So, we waited it out.

As humans, we seek reassurance and validation that we're making good decisions. As consumers, that means feeling confident that we won't regret our impending purchase. Brands have the opportunity to offer customers that reassurance with the content and communications they send after their initial lapse of confidence.

To build confidence, your communications can reassure, teach customers something new, and drive urgency to emotionally prepare them to complete the purchase.

Brands can do this through both on-site and off-site messaging:

Confidence Builder	Tactic	Approach	Considerations
Reassure	Reviews	Brand Reviews: for new customers who might not yet trust the brand	• Consider both review scores and open-ended reviews • Avoid quantitative reviews below 4 stars • Put reviews in order of recency
		Product Reviews: customer feedback for the highest-priced items in their cart	
	Community	Happy Customer Snapshots	• Pull reviews from similar customer profiles • Put a face to a name (if you can)
		Number of Purchases or Customers	• Strategically select the products you highlight
	Surety	"Find It in Store"	• Give an option for customers to locate the item in doubt to see/feel in person
Teach Something New	Customer Coaching	Product Use Ideas	• Show how easy the product is to use • Demonstrate less obvious ways to use the product
		Value-Driver Highlight	• Demonstrate cost/benefit analysis
Spark Desire	Urgency Driver	Sale Reminder	• Avoid sales fatigue with too many "last call" discounts
		Inventory Notification	• Use product popularity as a driver • Don't notify for an already sold-out item

Creating Ease

Confidence is skittish and easily shaken, so you need to create a frictionless experience to reduce opportunities for doubt.

When addressing points of friction, here are a few solutions to enable the customer with a personalized touch:

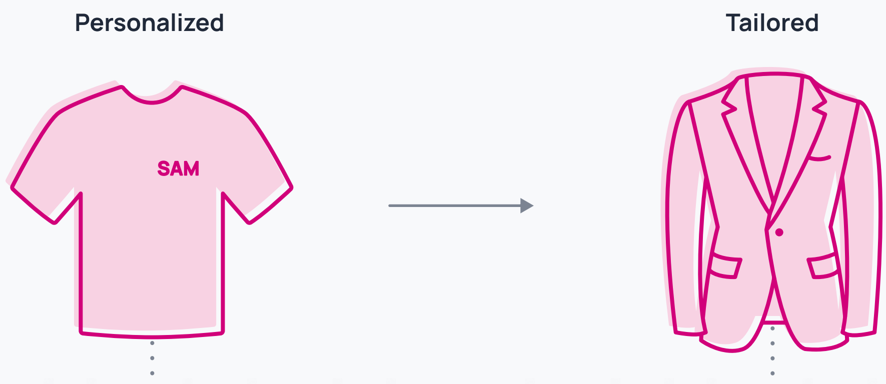
Easiness Enabler	Tactic	Approach	Considerations
Decision Simplifier	Reviews	Curated Collection	• Give customers an opportunity to figure out what/if the product is right for them • Drive engagement with interactive tools giving you a unique data-collection opportunity • Keep it simple to make decision-making easy
		"You might also like…"	• Upsell only when you have upgraded options on the same product. • Cross-sell with complementary products so as not to overwhelm
	Reminder	Full Cart Recap	• Put the customer's full cart as a reminder in the email to re-excite them to come back
		Multi-Channel Notification	• Use multiple channels to remind customers to come back — for example, start with email, then follow up with push
Barrier Removal	Shortcut	Direct-to-Cart Link	• Make your call-to-action a direct link back to the cart to remove the likelihood of them abandoning it before finding it again
		Cart Auto-Fill Suggestions	• Create a dynamic cart experience where recommended or frequently co-purchased products are already on the checkout page and easy to add

Creating Tailored Experiences

Personalized doesn't mean, "Hi [first_name], you left something in your cart!"

Personalized does mean delivering maximally relevant context to prove that you know the customer (but not in a creepy way).

[First_name] personalization is like a team or event t-shirt with your name on it. No one considered your opinion of the shirt — they merely gave you the shirt. On the other hand, a custom suit or dress doesn't have your name on it, and yet it's a far more personalized item.



Just because a shirt has someone's name on it doesn't mean it will fit. Just adding a name or data point doesn't necessarily show you know the customer or guarantee that the message will resonate with them – in fact, it can creep them out.

Like a custom suit, a truly well-fitting piece of content shouldn't need someone's name on it to feel like it was made just for them. Messages should respond to the behaviors, attitudes, and preferences of the customer, in a way that feels just right and not creepy.

We know from proprietary research that triggered abandonment campaigns with dynamic content drive a +108% in click-throughs and a +86% in conversions versus those without dynamic content.

When it comes to deploying dynamic content, there are several different types of data you can use in an abandonment initiative, including event, historical, and identity. Here's an example of the type of data and how it can be used:

Data Type	Source	Example
Event Data	"Hey, you left [these shoes] in your basket."	"Hey, you left [these shoes] in your basket."
Historical Data	Any data associated with past interactions or behaviors.	"Hey, you left these shoes in your basket, but we think they'll go great with [that sweater] you bought [last week]"
Identity Data	Any data assigned to the customer themselves either gleaned from behaviors / volunteered information or third-party data sources.	"Hey, you left these shoes in your basket, but they're perfect for the [Chicago] [winter season] coming up."

None of these data sources necessarily need to be used explicitly; they can be used implicitly by creating context by association.

For example, the above example might include a purposeful visualization of the abandoned shoes with a full outfit containing previously purchased pieces. Or you might include pictures of the Chicago winter in the background of the email. It's all about creating a tailored experience that resonates and encourages the behavior you want.

Step 5: Experiment!

Now that marketers have such a vast wealth of data, lamenting the difficulties of knowing what's effective means nothing more than, "I don't know how to turn data into insight."

When creating content, you can start from a great place if you just set a plan in motion, listen to the data, and apply known best practices. But don't expect your content or delivery to be perfect from the get-go. The hard reality is that it will take some work to make your content as effective as possible by taking deliberate baby steps, testing, learning, and steadily pacing toward optimal results.

When it comes to abandonment, you have an evergreen, rolling customer behavior to test, learn and optimize for years to come. Before launching into any experiment, consider the unofficial commandments of marketing experimentation:

The 10 Commandments of Marketing Experimentation

1. Have a hypothesis
2. Set a goal
3. Stick to a process
4. Test one thing at a time
5. Randomize your groups
6. Have a reasonable test population
7. Set an end date
8. Don't leave them hanging
9. Don't be afraid of the results
10. Celebrate failure

Have a hypothesis

1

Before any experiment, teams should align on a What & Why Strategy.

The What is a statement of what you and your team believe; it's what you're interrogating with your planned experiment. These testable beliefs can (and probably should) come from the work your team has done to understand the customer, their journey, and the barriers they face.

A solid Why will make prioritization easier: simply phrase the purpose of all experiments in terms of expecting ROI (or other KPI) and pick the one with the greatest leverage. It could be complicated by mismatched metrics across Why's (like say you have 10 experiments you'd like to run, but each channel or initiative cannot be measured that same way). In these cases, default to the one metric that will prove the greatest overall business impact.

You need total clarity on what you expect to be true. If it's too vague, you won't be able to design an effective experiment that will return clean data.

For example:

"We want to test subject lines to see which gets the better open rate for this week's send."

Versus

"We believe that our emails are seeing a low open rate because our subject lines are too generic, and so if we test emojis at or near the beginning of a subject line, we can demonstrate a lift on our current average open rate by at least 10%."

Now you try with your most pressing testable belief with broader business effects:

"We believe that [current state] and so if we [planned action] we will be able to see [measurable outcome]."

Set a goal

2

Setting a specific objective allows us to challenge ourselves and set a minimum threshold for what you'll accept as success. This target metric can be as high or low as makes sense for the team, but all goals should demonstrate impact on a larger brand-level objective. Otherwise, what's the point.

Stick to a process

3

As a team, commit to a process to identify, define, and deploy the experiments in question. Use this guide as a tool and checklist to get you started. Regardless of how you run it, make sure you can support a purposeful, measurable experiment design and conclusion with data. To do this, you must be purposeful about measuring outcomes.

Test one thing at a time

4

You can't trust the results of a rushed experiment that doesn't isolate variables. When you create the content for your investigation, be sure to maintain consistency, so there are no confounding factors.

If you're doing multivariate testing, you'll either need a large audience or patience to focus on optimizing one variable at a time.

That being said, even in multivariate experimentation (MVE), you should be planning test groups for baselines for each of the single variables so you can truly get a full picture of the impact of each variable against the variables together.

Some variants to test:

- Latency
- Frequency
- Subject line
- Content copy
- Content visuals
- Call-to-action
- Channel
- Journeys

5

Randomize your groups

If you are testing content variables, test groups should be equally randomized.

This doesn't mean you can't target specific segments for your messaging (e.g., experimenting with different types of content in your abandonment email on your most loyal customers). It means that all members across each group should look (at least statistically) the same.

The best way to get that is through randomized groupings of people within that broader population. To save time, effort, and avoid bias, teams should make sure they can automatically allocate experiment groups.

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Have a reasonable test population

It is almost always better to run your experiments on a relatively small subsegment of the total addressable population.

If you A/B test two messages against the total population and one is accidentally offensive, you have just offended a full half of all of your customers. On the other hand, if you A/B test two messages against the total population and one is AMAZING, you've then wasted the chance at sending the most amazing marketing message ever to everyone you can.

Statistical significance refers to the necessary population size for getting around the natural variations in group behavior that you could observe in an A/B test.

While populations all have to be of a reasonable size, they don't all have to be the same size. You can create a smaller holdout group, and if you're running multivariate experiments (MVEs), then perhaps you dedicate fewer population sizes to the single-variable baselines than the larger MVE groups.

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Set an end date

Experiments can go on forever, but in a test-and-learn environment, you want to make sure that you are rapidly iterating and demonstrating improvement against our objectives. This is especially true with rolling abandonment initiatives based on customer triggers. You can't expect to do a massive send to all abandoned carts at once; instead, you have to wait for a sufficient population to pass through in their own time.

When it comes to setting a reasonable timeline, you can learn from historical data how long it takes a certain number of shoppers on average to abandon their cart and/or take the action you are trying to drive. That will help identify when you want to look at the results.

If you wait too long, you have either missed an opportunity to deploy a new approach to a wider audience or have missed a period of time you could have been testing for something better. If you pull up too soon, you might be missing out on the full picture, throwing out a potentially high-impact approach.

Don't leave them hanging

8

Abandonment shouldn't be a one-and-done communication. While single-event-triggered communications can certainly be effective (and easy to test), there's an even bigger opportunity in testing across journeys.

In testing these journeys, you can experiment with things like frequency, story order, channel impact, micro-conversion, calls-to-action, and more.

Pulling these all together into one story allows you to find out what the highest-impact, cohesive conversation might be to capture attention, engage, and inspire abandoned customers back to the target goal.

Don't be afraid of the results

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"Business as usual" content can be the last thing some marketing teams want to test. Testing your upcoming holiday campaign has much lower emotional stakes than testing that big-lift welcome series your team built three years ago and very much forgot about. Deep down, it's scary to find out they've been wasting time or money or both.

Be comforted, however, just because it is not effective now, doesn't mean that has always been the case. Times and customer expectations have changed, and you need to be vigilant about keeping up and serving them the best experience now, not a year ago. Embrace the change.

Celebrate failure

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No team wants to fail. However, when it comes to making the most out of experimentation, failure should not just be anticipated but celebrated. Why? Failure means you tried something, learned something, and got a not-so-great idea out of the way.

The most innovative brands understand that marketing is driven by many factors both within and outside of their control. The only way to navigate the complex waters of customer behaviors and preferences (especially when it comes to abandonment) is to throw yourself in and try things out.

As a marketing leader, with buy-in from the top, you have an opportunity to create a culture of experimentation. Celebrating failures and successes tells your team that they are supported to take calculated risks and not fear for their jobs if something doesn't work.

The excitement and frustration of trial and error build a sense of intellectual (and emotional!) novelty that will create a stronger team bond. Some marketing leaders go so far as to give awards to the biggest "failed" experiment. Others have created a "Wall of Shame" (tongue-in-cheek, of course!) to highlight what didn't work, thus ingraining the lesson into the community of the marketing team, beyond just institutional knowledge.

Step 6: Measurement

Once your marketing initiatives are released into the wild, it's time to track progress. Actively measuring your abandonment initiatives across time lets us pinpoint what's working or not.

There's no shortage of motivating factors when it comes to marketers hoping to prove their impact. But attribution is still a difficult and fraught activity. Even the most advanced attribution models struggle to truly demonstrate that marketing was — or wasn't — responsible for the conversion.

After all, as a consumer, how often was that last click anywhere near the point when you decided to make a purchase?

Even the most advanced multi-touch attribution models available today are hardly foolproof because there are so often blind spots from incomplete data availability or integrations. Not many marketers have access to their out-of-home marketing data.

The best current solution is to be purposeful and consistent in our tracking and reporting. Being clear about what you are measuring and why will give space for our marketing initiatives to speak for themselves regarding the value they deliver.

For abandonment, those clear and consistent metrics will measure campaign engagement and conversion. This means having easy access to a detailed view that shows:

- **How end-customers engage with each individual marketing initiative, broken down by message delivery, opens, and clicks**
- **How those message actions tie together with on-site actions.**

When measuring conversions from abandonment initiatives, you should first set a reasonable attribution trigger and window. Attribution triggers and windows are well worth testing and learning from to get the most accurate understanding of what's working or not. For instance, there will always be organic conversions regardless of what you send; sometimes consumers really do just need to hop off the bus before finishing a purchase.

Attribution windows can be hard to pin. The time it can take for a customer to make a decision can vary on high- versus low-consideration items. Give thought to when in the shopper's journey the abandonment communication is going out. You can also test attribution windows and compare them against other flows and organic populations to see where and when marketing attribution can most reliably be measured.

Boost abandonment revenue with Simon Data

Simon Data's Identity+ matches anonymous website activity to known customer profiles. This means you can reach more customers with high-converting abandonment messages, and dramatically increase your revenue.

Send high-converting content to more customers

Abandonment campaigns are incredibly effective but have the lowest reach. With ID+, you can recognize more customers on your site and send targeted abandonment messages.

Identify unknown devices

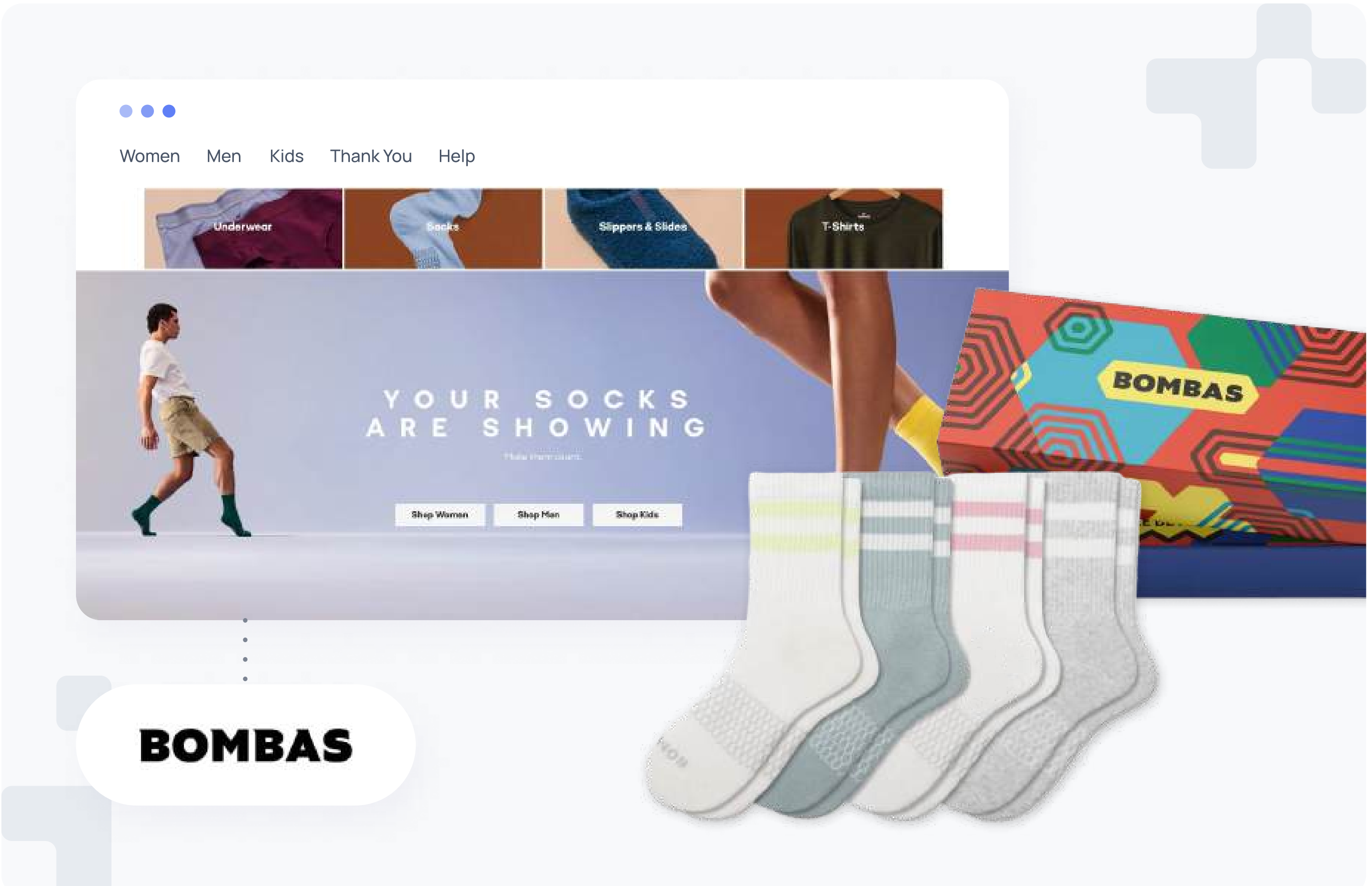
Most customers shop online using multiple devices, making it hard to tie those devices back to one person. With ID+, you can stitch the devices and activity to one customer profile and make the most of every messaging opportunity.

Capture the full customer picture

Every action a user takes on your website—what they're looking at, where they've clicked, what they've added and removed from their carts—gives you invaluable metadata. The more users you identify, the more fuel you'll have for future campaigns.

Learn more →

Success Story



Bombas used Simon Identity+ to match anonymous web traffic to known customers—expanding abandonment reach and unlocking new revenue.

+85%

abandoned browse email volume (MoM)

+19%

average revenue growth (MoM)

"It's not often that we introduce a technology to our marketing stack that delivers results overnight. With Identity+, we were able to take high-converting campaigns that we already had running and dramatically scale their reach, with a clear impact on top-line revenue."

Kate Huyett

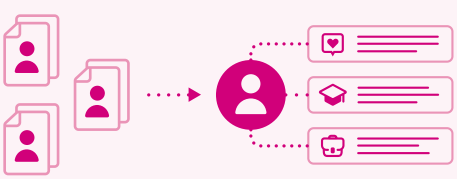
Chief Customer Officer at Bombas

Read the case study →

Uncover every customer with Simon Identity

Identity is the foundation of personalized, efficient marketing. Without it, you risk missed opportunities, wasted spend, and disjointed customer experiences.

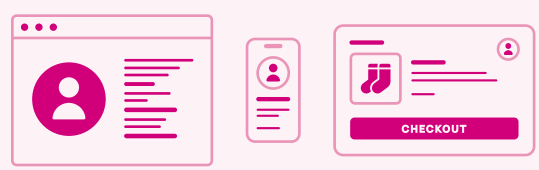
Simon's full-stack identity solution gives you everything you need to uncover every customer and build clean, accurate customer profiles that are ready for activation.



ENTITY RESOLUTION

Put messy data in its place

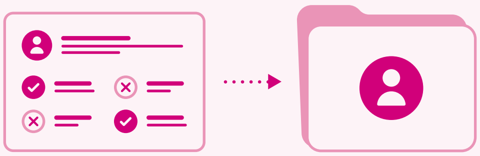
Organize customer data with powerful cleansing, normalization, and deduplication capabilities.



IDENTITY RESOLUTION

Get the full picture

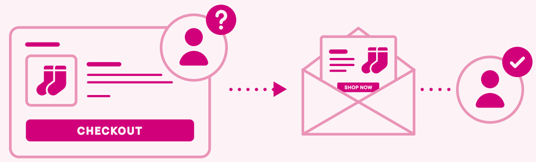
Connect every customer interaction (website, mobile app, etc.) to one, unified customer profile.



ADVANCED SURVIVORSHIP

Keep only the best data

Decide what information to keep when customer attributes don't match, using pre-set or custom rules.



IDENTITY+

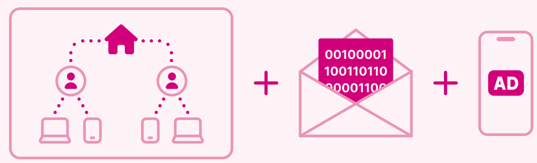
Identity anonymous visitors

Match anonymous website activity to known customer profiles so you can seize every opportunity to drive revenue.

MATCH+

Expand advertising reach

Uncover more customer identifiers to improve your reach across advertising channels and reduce wasted ad spend.



ENRICH+

Tap into 3rd-party data

Add valuable demographics like income, age, marriage and family status to customer profiles for enhanced segmentation.

Discover Simon Identity →

About Simon Data

Simon Data is more than a CDP—it's a complete solution that empowers marketers with the data, technology, and expert resources they need to stop guessing and start delivering what customers want. Leading brands like ASOS, Mattress Firm, and 1-800-Flowers, partner with Simon to build sustainable, revenue-driving customer marketing programs. From data readiness to campaign execution and beyond, Simon supports brands at every stage, ensuring they deliver personalized, 1:1 experiences across every customer interaction. Learn more at simondata.com.