News & Insights

8 Post-Purchase Experience Tips to Convert & Retain Customers

August 17, 2023



Australian consumers took one giant leap during the pandemic, rapidly adapting to a "digital first" mindset. McKinsey research indicates that customer interactions through digital channels in 2020 advanced by 4 years across the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.

Fast forward to 2023, and digital purchasing habits have become cemented in consumer behaviour.

9.4 million households (up 6.7% YoY) made an online purchase in the 2022-2023 financial year, representing around 82% of the total Australian population, according to the Australia Post Inside Australian Online Shopping Quarterly eCommerce update.

However, both online and in-store retail have seen a softening of consumer spending so far this year. As cost-of-living pressures continue tightening wallets, shoppers are becoming more deliberate and strategic about how they spend their hard-earned dollars.

The same Australia Post report shows that delivery and returns are significant factors in purchasing decisions as shoppers look to save where they can. 69% of shoppers say that free delivery will "become a more important part of my online shopping", while 73% expect free returns.

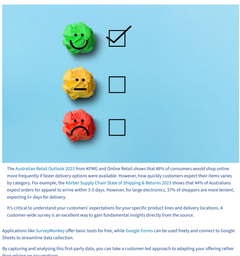
Shoppers are also ready to abandon their carts when aspects of the post-purchase experience don't meet expectations. Statista research reveals that the two leading causes of cart abandonment are when shipping is too expensive (at 65%) and when delivery time is too great (at 44%). A further 13% noted it was due to unclear returns policies.

Retailers must now focus on adding value to grab a greater share of shoppers' more considered purchases. And strangely enough, the end is the perfect place to start.

The post-purchase experience is becoming a crucial differentiator in helping shoppers checkout with confidence and come back again.

In this article, we're bringing you 8 actionable post-purchase experience tips to help you convert and retain more customers.

1. Understand Your Customers' Expectations



The Australian Retail Outlook 2023 from KPMG and Online Retail shows that 40% of consumers would shop online more frequently if faster delivery options were available. However, how quickly customers expect their items varies by category. For example, the Kitchen Supply Chain State of Shipping & Returns 2023 shows that 44% of Australians expect orders for apparel to arrive within 3-5 days. However, for large electronics, 37% of shoppers are more lenient, expecting 10 days for delivery.

It's critical to understand your customers' expectations for your specific product lines and delivery locations. A customer-wide survey is an excellent way to gain fundamental insights directly from the source.

Applications like SurveyMonkey offer quick solutions for free, while Google Forms can be used freely and connect to Google Sheets to streamline data collection.

By capturing and analysing this first-party data, you can take a customer-led approach to adapting your offering rather than relying on assumptions.

2. Offer a Range of Delivery Options

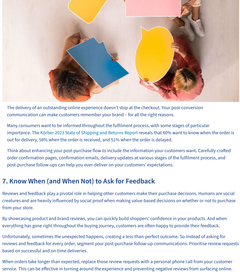
Online shoppers love convenience – and are willing to pay for it. While many now look for free shipping to minimise costs, others still want extended delivery options to suit their needs.

The BigCommerce 2023 Online Shopping Report 442 respondents that 41% of shoppers are willing to pay an additional $10 for same-day or less than three-hour shipping services. 18% will also pay that amount for same-for weekend, 6pm-, or specific 1-2 hour delivery window options.

Consider which delivery options will help convince your customers to check out so you can capture a larger share of wallet.

A 3rd-Party Logistics (3PL) partner such as NPFulfilment can also help you meet the most demanding delivery expectations without needing to invest in a complex fulfilment infrastructure.

3. Make Your T&Cs Clear



Many consumers have held out for sales events this year due to more strategic spending. And despite low consumer confidence in the second quarter of 2023, EOFY sales events resulted in a 7.3% increase in online shopping activity.

The steps you take to prepare for such sales events can substantially impact the post-purchase experience. For example, when shoppers find out sale items are non-returnable after delivery, it can be a source of friction.

To avoid losing repeat sales due to frustrated customers, clearly communicate T&Cs (terms and conditions) for sale items, promos, and anything different from your standard sale conditions and returns processes.

4. Confirm the Detail

You never know when your customer will want to check their order details to confirm delivery methods, times, details, or other information.

Make it easy for shoppers to access the information they might need. This approach drives a better post-purchase experience – and reduces calls and emails to your customer service team.

Think about whether your order confirmations contain the following details:

- An order reference number in case shoppers have follow-up questions or need to contact your customer service team.
- Full delivery and contact details so customers know they have entered the correct details.
- Your company's contact information so customers can quickly get in touch if they need to make changes.
- Product information that contains detailed descriptions, pricing, and discounts.
- Confirmation of all costs involved in the final purchase amount, including any additional shipping charges or landed costs.
- Any links to helpful information such as FAQs, return policies, order tracking, etc. A well-placed link can proactively answer a customer's query and save a follow-up email or call.
- A "thank you" message to leave a positive post-purchase impression. This message could be short, "Thank you for ordering with us, we hope you had a fantastic ordering experience", or something more creative that reflects your brand's personality.
- Additional information to help customers continue their buying journeys, such as linked social media icons, other products they may also like, or even a loyalty discount to encourage re-conversion with future orders.

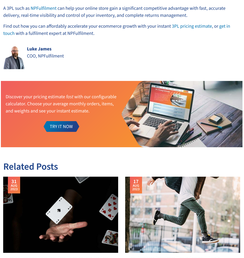
5. Add the Human Touch to Post-Purchase Queries

No matter how many facets of the digital journey you get right, the human factor can make or break the experience. When shoppers have queries after the sale, fast, friendly service can leave a lasting impression and boost customer retention.

Your customer service team should be easily accessible via various phone, email, social messaging, and live chat channels.

For live chat queries, automated chatbots can do the heavy lifting and reduce the resources needed to answer simple questions. However, offering a human touch for more complex queries is still essential. Plan out how to use chatbots for handling low-level support while identifying the right hand-off points from automated to personal assistance when it's needed.

6. Over-Communicate to Over-Deliver on the Experience



The delivery of an outstanding online experience doesn't stop at the checkout. Your post-conversion communication can make customers remember your brand - for all the right reasons.

Many consumers want to be informed throughout the fulfilment process, with some stages of particular importance. The Kitchen 2023 State of Shipping and Returns Report reveals that 60% want to know when the order is out for delivery, 58% when the order is received, and 53% when the order is delayed.

Think about enhancing your post-purchase flow to include the information your customers want. Carefully crafted order confirmation pages, confirmation emails, delivery updates at various stages of the fulfilment process, and post-purchase follow-up emails can help you over-deliver on your customers' expectations.

7. Know When (and When Not) to Ask for Feedback

Reviews and feedback play a pivotal role in helping other customers make their purchase decisions. Humans are social creatures and are heavily influenced by social proof when making value-based decisions on whether or not to purchase from your store.

By showcasing product and brand reviews, you can quickly build shoppers' confidence in your products. And when everything has gone right throughout the buying journey, customers are often happy to provide their feedback.

Unfortunately, sometimes the unexpected happens, creating a less-than-perfect outcome. So instead of asking for reviews and feedback for every order, segment your post-purchase follow-up communications. Prioritise review requests based on successful and on-time deliveries.

When orders take longer than expected, replace those review requests with a personal phone call from your customer service. This can be effective in turning around the experience and preventing negative reviews from surfacing online.

8. Make Returns a Reason to Return



78% of shoppers in the the BigCommerce 2023 Online Shopping Report said they are "likely" or "very likely" to abandon their cart due to poor returns processes. That represents a significant opportunity to improve the post-purchase experience and win more sales.

Robust returns can also drive re-conversion. 76% of first-time customers with an "easy" or "very easy" returns experience say they would shop with that retailer again, according to Narvar research.

Offer easy-to-initiate returns processes, such as self-service pages, to help your customers complete their online returns quickly (and get back to shopping).

Is it Time to Make the Post-Purchase Experience Your Point of Difference?

The biggest challenge online retailers face, as cited by 56% of respondents in the Inside Retail Australia Retail Outlook report, is consumer confidence. Shoppers are making more considered purchases in 2023, and while price is a factor, they are also influenced by overall value offered by online retailers.

When handled the right way, the post-purchase experience is a key differentiator that can help your shoppers checkout with confidence and come back again.

A 3PL such as NPFulfilment can help your online store gain a significant competitive advantage with fast, accurate delivery, real-time visibility and control of your inventory, and complete returns management.

Find out how you can affordably accelerate your ecommerce growth with your instant 3PL pricing estimate, or get in touch with a fulfilment expert at NPFulfilment.

Luke James
COO, NPFulfilment

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