Find, Discover, Convert:

Where the Path to Purchase Really Starts

searchspring

A division of **Athos Commerce**

search

🔍 backpack

customer

Jose R.
Style: Outdoors Hiking Camping

Colors:

email

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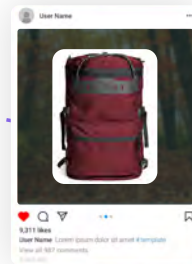
website

NEW LIFE PROJECT X OUTERKNOWN BACKPACK
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Introduction

The path to purchase is paved with brands' and retailers' best intentions. Every touchpoint, from the first moment of discovery to the final checkout, shapes how a shopper engages with your store—and ultimately converts. However, retailers and brands need to balance nailing those touchpoints with their available time, focus, and resources. That's why it's vital to understand your shoppers and show up where it matters most to them.

Developing that understanding of your ideal customers must also go beyond profiling and analytics. After all, as Twilio's research in its **State of Customer Engagement Report** shows, 81% of brands say they have a deep understanding of their customers; however, less than half (46%) of global customers agree. As we'll explore further in this eBook, customer journey mapping is an essential tool for identifying how your shoppers interact and engage with you.

Shoppers don't think in terms of "channels." They think in terms of convenience, trust, and relevance. They might start a product search well before landing on your site through Google, Amazon, social media, and other channels. Once they arrive on-site, their experience should feel as intuitive and personalized as the journey that led them there. So, every interaction, whether off-site, on-site, or post-purchase, must work together to remove friction, build confidence, and keep customers engaged.

For ecommerce stores, this means refining the entire shopping experience, not just individual touchpoints. How well does your off-site presence match what shoppers expect when they click through to your site? Is your product discovery process intuitive? Are you delivering hyper-personalized journeys that make customers feel valued?

Ecommerce success is no longer about just selling. It's about creating an end-to-end experience that helps shoppers find, discover, and convert at each step. In this eBook, we'll explore how brands and retailers can refine their strategies across off-site discovery, on-site engagement, and post-purchase personalization to turn casual shoppers into loyal customers.
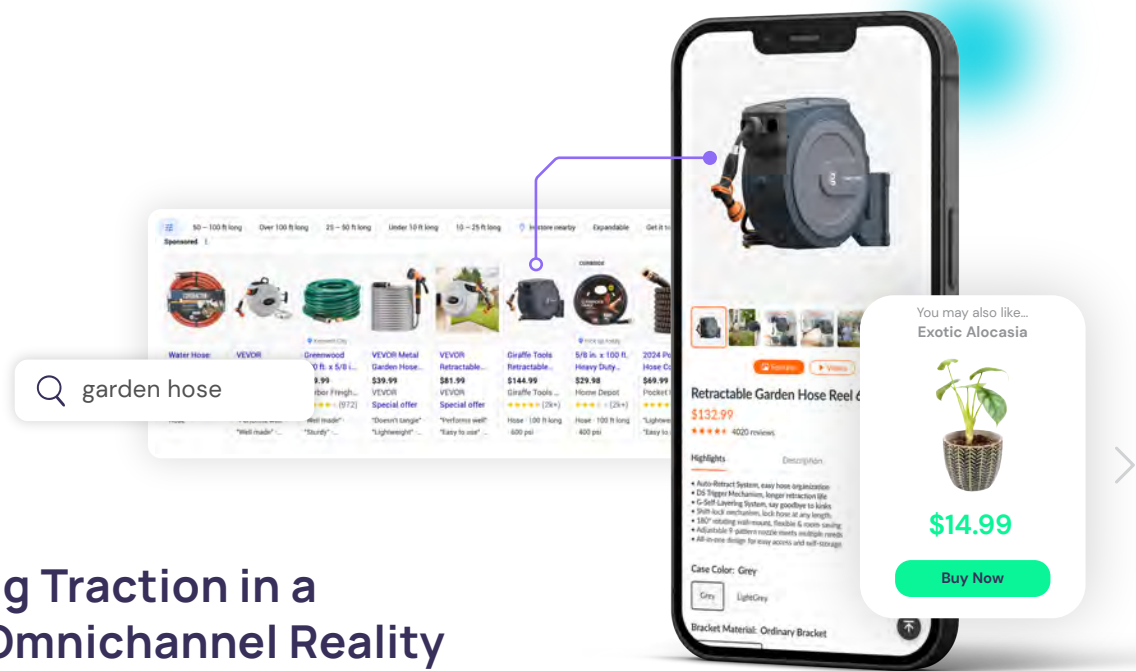
Gaining Traction in a Post-Omnichannel Reality

When was the last time you only visited a store or a retailer's website once before making a purchase? The buyer journey is now a complex web of online discovery, in-store tactility, social influence, digital community, and more. However, blindly selling across every available channel can lead to wasted effort (and wasted conversion opportunities).
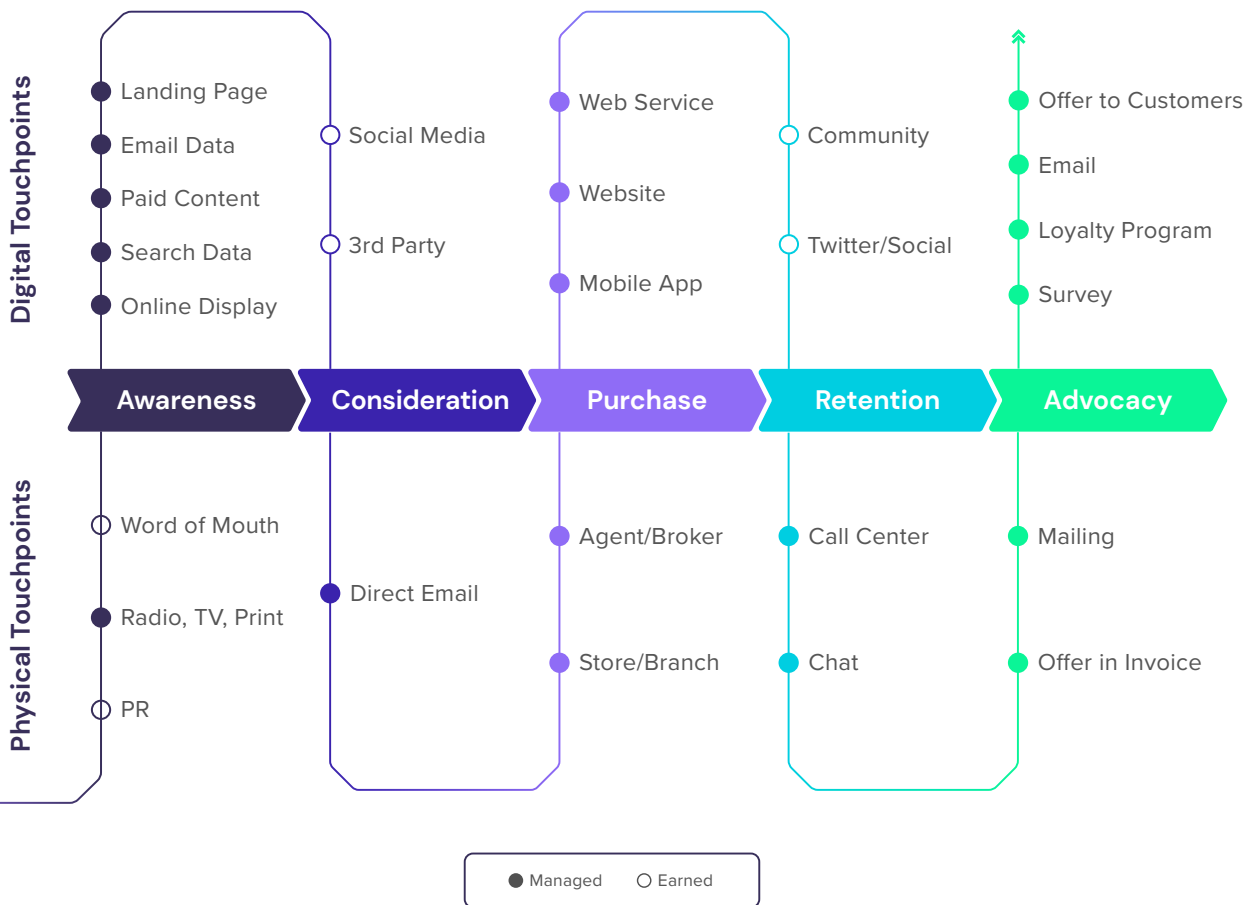
As **McKinsey** suggests, "Rather than rushing blindly into the space, or haphazardly approaching it, organizations should step back and think about underlying business value drivers. Excelling in omnichannel depends on a laser focus on value creation, looking at both strategic and customer priorities."

In what Shopify President Harley Finkelstein recently coined as the "post-omnichannel" reality, he suggests that "The old world was about being everywhere for the sake of selling everywhere; the new world is about being exactly where your customer needs you, exactly when they need you, in a way that feels completely organic."

The imperative for brands and retailers is no longer to be "everywhere" for customers. It's now about knowing your customer and meeting them where they spend their time. For example, if your ideal customer heavily engages with your brand on Instagram but rarely uses X, spending time customizing social posts to the shorter character count of X could add up to a lot of wasted effort.
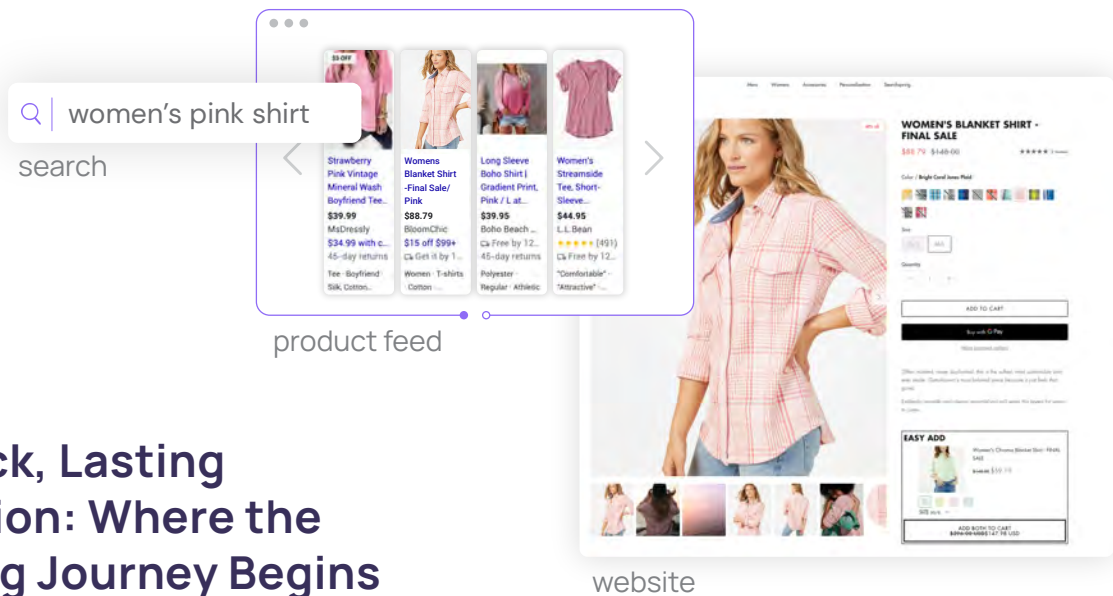
Begin your post-omnichannel strategy by mapping out the customer journey. How do they become aware of your store? Which channels do they use before and after visiting that store? What retains their attention in the post-purchase stage?

See our diagram below for inspiration. While this is not an exhaustive model, it provides a quick overview of touchpoints you may need to consider. Also, see Shopify's excellent article, "**Ecommerce Customer Journey Maps 101**," for a more detailed look at setting up the perfect customer journey map.

Digital Touchpoints

- Landing Page
- Email Data
- Paid Content
- Search Data
- Online Display

○ Social Media

○ 3rd Party

- Web Service
- Website
- Mobile App

○ Community

○ Twitter/Social

- Offer to Customers
- Email
- Loyalty Program
- Survey

| Awareness | Consideration | Purchase | Retention | Advocacy |

Physical Touchpoints

○ Word of Mouth

- Radio, TV, Print

○ PR

- Direct Email

- Agent/Broker
- Store/Branch

- Call Center
- Chat

- Mailing
- Offer in Invoice

● Managed   ○ Earned

Image Source

search

product feed

website

# First Click, Lasting Impression: Where the Shopping Journey Begins

Where did your last search for a new pair of shoes or a coffee table begin? Are you like the 42% of consumers beginning their product search on a search engine like Google, according to **eMarketer**? Or perhaps you're among the 56% starting their journey on the Amazon marketplace.

Your customer's buying journey can start well before arriving at your site. That's why giving every product the best chance of being found by your shoppers is critical.

Every one of your products has a digital identity. Like a passport or driver's license, this digital identity contains information and attributes about each product. And just like a passport or driver's license, that data needs to be accurate and up to date. Why?

One vital reason is the **approval processes** of platforms like Google Shopping, which state, "Individual products submitted via data feeds are regularly reviewed. If the data you provide doesn't match the product information on your website or doesn't comply with the product data specification, these products may be disapproved and stop showing on Shopping ads and free listings. Review the disapproved products, make corrections to the product data, and upload them again."

When your products cross the digital border from your internal systems to ecommerce channels like Google Shopping, Meta platforms, or Amazon, shoppers want to find your products quickly and easily. By delivering a positive off-site experience, right from the start of your shoppers' journeys, you can quickly build their expectations of the on-site experience and attract more clicks.
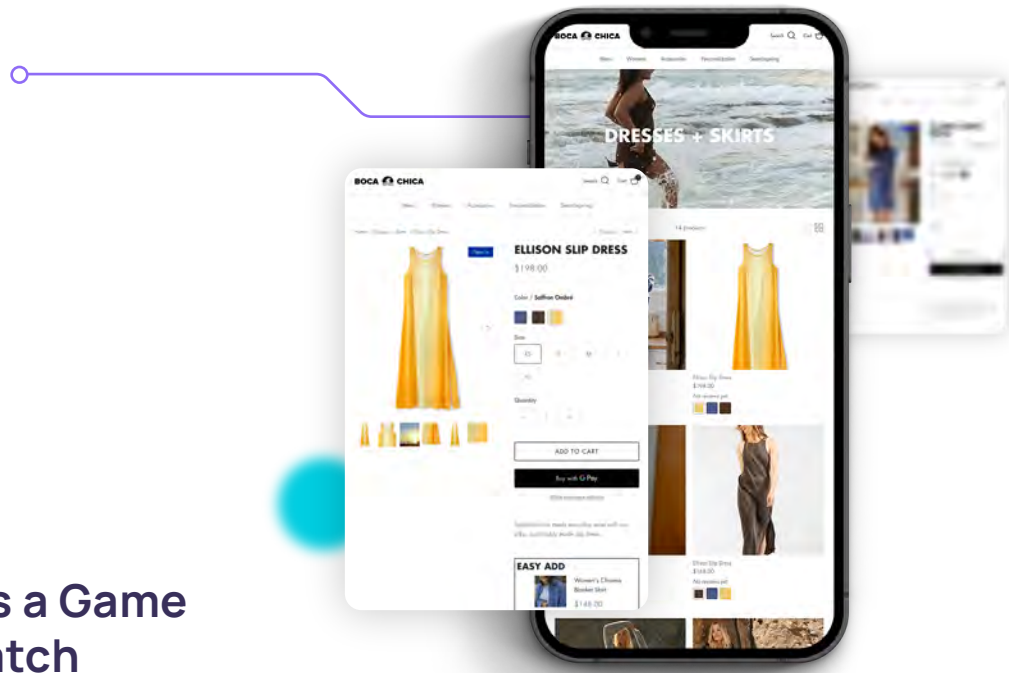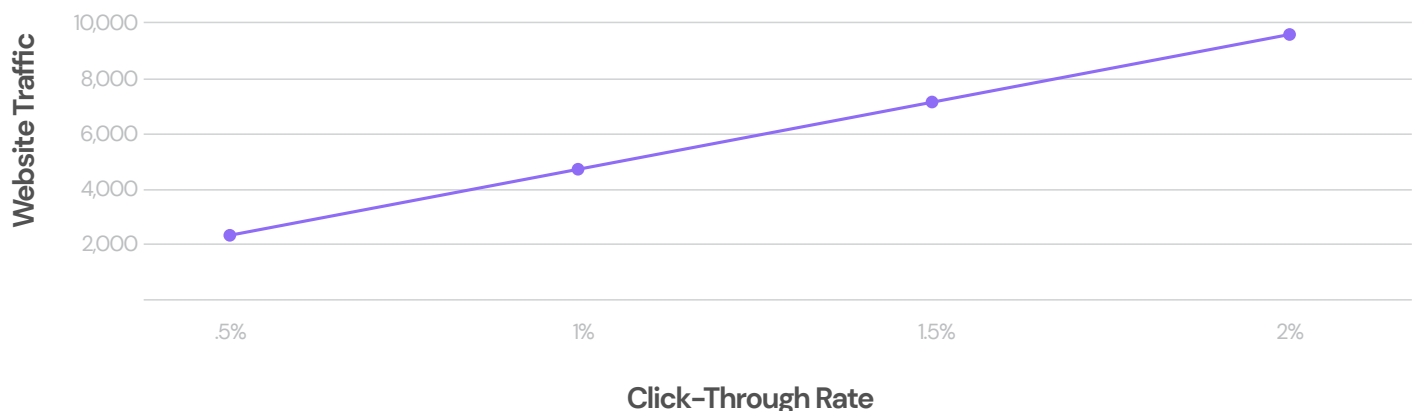
Conversion Is a Game of Perfect Match

Regardless of where your shoppers' journeys start, you'll want to remove any hesitation from shoppers making their way from Google Shopping, Meta, or a marketplace to make that click and come through to your website (rather than a competitor's site).

Wordstream research reveals the average click-through rate for Google Shopping ads (across all industries) is just 0.86%. That's a staggering 99.14% of shoppers searching for products they want who won't go through to your website. Now, consider what a 1% lift in click-through could mean for your online store. Ubersuggest shows the estimated search volume for a term like "running shoes" is around 300,000 per month in the US, 110,000 in the UK, and 40,000 in Australia. By moving that click-through needle by just 1%, a brand or retailer operating across these regions could potentially increase traffic arriving at their site by a massive 116%, from 3,870 to 8,370 per month, based on that one search term.

Click-Through Impact on Web Traffic
(based on a 450k search volume)

Website Traffic vs. Click-Through Rate — line chart with data points at .5% (~2,300), 1% (~4,700), 1.5% (~7,200), 2% (~9,600)

From off-site (e.g., Google Shopping) to on-site (e.g., your website) touchpoints, conversion is a game of perfect match. The chance that shoppers will convert once they reach your site is heavily impacted by the quality of traffic arriving at your site. Why? Intent.

When your shoppers' intent off-site matches what they see on-site, it's that perfect match they expect. For example, a shopper searching for "gel track running shoes" is trying to solve a specific problem and fit a specific scenario. They may have existing sporting injuries and have researched that a gel rearfoot can soften running impact and reduce further stress. They're also likely to run on the rubberized surface of a track versus a harder road surface or more uneven trail surface. Let's say they click on a listing with this intent in mind but arrive at a product display page (PDP) describing the shoe with light cushioning and high traction on a range of surfaces. With a mismatch in intent, that shopping journey may come to an abrupt end.

Put your best foot forward with every off-site product listing by using clean, accurate product data. Test image and product description variants to understand what hits home with shoppers looking to solve specific problems or fulfill particular needs.

Intelligent Reach is a cutting-edge data feed optimization, experimentation, and marketplace solution that helps retailers and brands get their products found off-site. Intelligent Reach takes your detailed product information, such as style, material, color, imagery, category, RRP), and more, and automatically runs experiments to help your products sell across marketplaces, search engines, Google Shopping, and social commerce platforms.

Learn More

On-Site Experiences that Drive Conversion

Once shoppers have made that click from off-site channels to your website, it's vital to continue building trust and keeping a focus on conversion. According to Baymard Institute's analysis of 49 separate studies, the average cart abandonment rate across online stores is 70.19%. What's causing that sky-high abandonment rate? The BigCommerce 2024 Online Shopping Report shows that across Australia and New Zealand, 93% of shoppers abandon carts because they don't trust the site's security—followed by difficulty with the checkout process, at 89%, and poor returns processes, at 78%.

Basic measures like ensuring SSL certificates (provided by many ecommerce platforms such as Shopify and BigCommerce by default), familiar payment options at checkout, and trust badges can quickly build that sense of trust, particularly for new shoppers arriving at your store.

Social proof is another powerful way to build trust with shoppers. People are social creatures who look to each other for cues and confidence about what to expect. When we engage with user-generated content (UGC) like online reviews, we're again seeking social proof and evaluating cues that help us form opinions about the suitability of products—and that engagement leads to conversion.

Data from Statista shows that consumers scrolling to a point where they encountered UGC on a website had an increased likelihood of conversion by an average of 3.8%. Even more significantly, when those consumers interacted with UGC, they experienced a 102.4% increase in conversion.

Searchspring's Generative Discovery is an advanced AI-driven approach to on-site search and product discovery. Unlike traditional search and recommendation engines that rely on structured product catalogs and keyword matches, Generative Discovery uses natural language processing (NLP) and observed preferences and shopping behaviors to understand intent at a deeper, more personalized level.

Picture Generative Discovery in the scenario of walking into a bar where everybody knows your name versus stumbling upon a just-opened watering hole filled with complete strangers. In the more "cheerful" scenario, Generative Discovery is like the bartender who knows you, what you like, and what you dislike. It knows how to connect you with exactly what you want—whether that's an Old Fashioned or a zero-alcohol pale ale.

When a shopper returns to your store and searches using natural language like "a blue dress for a dinner next week," Generative Discovery knows the underlying context, like formality, season, and occasion, and serves individually tailored results and recommendations. These personalized, hyper-relevant on-site experiences are a powerful way to remind shoppers you understand them, gain their trust, and connect them with the products they want and need.

Turning One-Time Shoppers into Repeat Customers

Imagine walking past a storefront each day and seeing the same items in the same layout for weeks or months on end. After some time, that storefront may become a blind spot. You begin to stop noticing it altogether. And there's a scientific reason for this: habituation.

Habituation is the tendency to have a decreased response to a stimulus after each exposure to it. It's the same way we stop noticing the hum of an air conditioning unit or stop smelling the cologne or perfume we wear each day. While it helps us focus on the important things in life, for ecommerce stores, habituation can see your store fade into the background of shoppers' minds.

Shoppers should be excited whenever they return to your store, eager to see new arrivals, trending items, or restocked best-sellers. However, manually adjusting product displays to keep things dynamic can be extremely time-consuming.

Automated merchandising efficiently lets you move items to the top (promotion) or bottom (demotion) of collection, category, and search results pages depending on the criteria you specify. For example, you may want certain collections to promote your highest-margin items while keeping out-of-stock products out of sight. Think of automated merchandising as the ecommerce manager's best friend—always curating, always optimizing, and always working to keep your website feeling fresh without adding to the workload.

> When we got our hands on Searchspring, we quickly began making use of boost rules to automatically promote products based on best sellers, high margin items, stock levels and shopper segmentation logic. This meant much less manual merchandising work—and more time for us to spend on strategic initiatives.

Daniel McLean
Ecommerce Manager
Rip Curl

Particularly during sales events, items with high stock availability or healthy product margins can accelerate sales and preserve gross profit. Keeping these items at your shoppers' eye level gives your customers what they want—without merchandising teams constantly monitoring sales and manually changing placements.

Additionally, product badges like "Trending," "Back in Stock," or "Almost Gone" inject urgency and excitement into the shopping experience. Shoppers subconsciously take cues from these visual indicators, encouraging them to explore further, engage with products, and ultimately convert. Think about how you can deliver newness with each visit and keep your shoppers wanting to come back, time and again.

Even when your customer has completed their purchase, it doesn't mean their journey is over. By showing shoppers more of what they'll love at key points after their purchase, you can help them to keep discovering.

Klaviyo's **Email Benchmark Report** shows that post-purchase flow emails see a jaw-dropping 61.68% open rate—much higher than the overall 52.04% open rate for all flows. Think about the opportunity within emails that are opened by more than six in ten shoppers.

Now, consider what's more likely to hit home: serving all shoppers with the same generic content or including personalized product recommendations specific to each individual shopper. Consider the impact of giving customers hyper-relevant suggestions that encourage them to come back on-site.

Personalized email recommendations can help you more effectively upsell (e.g., "Just in: More styles in your favorite color") or cross-sell (e.g., "You loved this jacket—here's a perfect pair of boots to match"). Additionally, these recommendations don't just drive repeat visits—they build loyalty. Shoppers feel understood, valued, and more likely to return to your store rather than searching elsewhere.
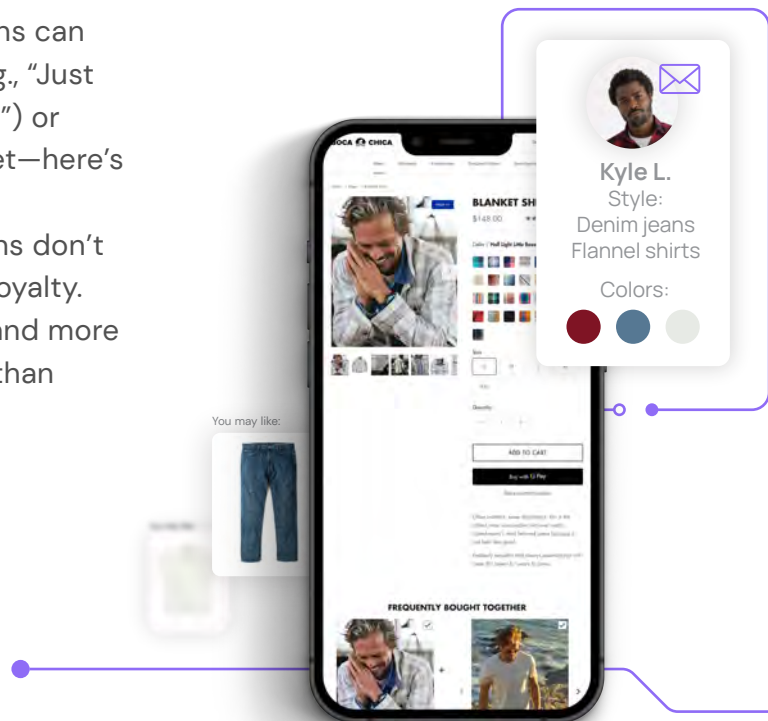
From First Click to Final Checkout

The path to purchase starts long before your shoppers look for products on-site. The most successful ecommerce stores aren't just selling products—they're delivering more relevant, personalized shopping experiences at all touchpoints from off-site to on-site that continuously delight shoppers.

To build a high-converting online retail strategy, look for ecommerce tech that allows you to connect with and engage shoppers at a deeper level. With Intelligent Reach and Searchspring in your tech stack, you can:

- Increase conversion—before shoppers have even landed on your site
- Match shoppers' off-site search intent with your on-site product offerings
- Consistently provide fresh shopping experiences with automated merchandising and product badges
- Stand out with Generative Discovery, personalized recommendations, and intuitive search
- Re-engage shoppers after checkout with AI-driven email recommendations

Is it time to make your end-to-end ecommerce experience so good that shoppers don't just return—they start and end their journey with you? Start your discovery journey now with how Intelligent Reach and Searchspring can help your shoppers find, discover, and convert more easily and frequently.

> With Intelligent Reach driving external visibility and Searchspring optimizing the onsite experience, we've built a smarter, more intuitive shopping journey that keeps customers engaged and coming back.

Airi Sutherland
Vice President, Ecommerce & Technology
Outcast Clothing

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IntelligentReach

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Searchspring is the #1 search, merchandising, and personalization platform built exclusively for ecommerce, enabling brands to get the right product, to the right person, at the right time.

With Seachspring's advanced features and intelligent automation, you can deliver the ultimate digital shopping experiences that turn browsers into buyers.

There are still more ways to increase conversion. To hear additional ideas, book your no-obligation chat with a trusted search, merchandising, personalization, and product bundling expert.

Intelligent Reach—a cutting-edge data feed optimisation and experiments solution—is now a Searchspring company.

Intelligent Reach takes your detailed product information, such as material or fabric, style, colour, imagery, category, RRP, and more, and makes your items shine (and sell!) across marketplaces, search engines, Google Shopping, and social commerce platforms.

It's a natural fit with the Searchspring product discovery suite, working together to help boost conversion and uncover new revenue opportunities.

Request Searchspring Demo

Request Intelligent Reach Demo
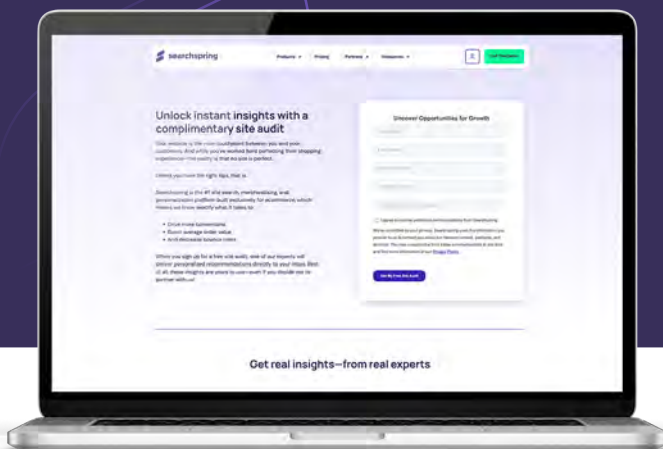
Special Site Audit Offer

With your tech stack audited, now is the time to audit your site. Have one of our ecommerce experts review your site and reach out with results.

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