

Neiman Marcus Gets Personal with Online Shoppers

The multichannel retailer is working with Coherent Path to make its personalized emails more effective.



Neiman Marcus Group LLC Ltd. wants to offer a personalized shopping experience regardless of whether shoppers are buying online or in stores. That's increasingly important for the retailer given that e-commerce accounts for roughly 30% of the retailer's sales.

"We're known for our high-touch sales associates who help ensure that our customers have a good experience," says Jeff Rosenfeld, the retailer's vice president, customer insight and analytics. "We're trying as hard as we can to extend that high-touch experience to the digital world so that we can provide a personalized experience to shoppers, regardless of how they interact with us."

That includes in consumers' inboxes. The retailer recently began working

with personalization vendor Coherent Path Inc. to analyze the data it collects about its customers, including what they've browsed and purchased, to tailor its messages to customers.

The retailer has a triggered email program that reminds customers when they've left an item in their carts, as well as when they haven't made a purchase recently. Those messages also often include so-called outfit completion recommendations, so if a shopper buys a dress, the Coherent Path system can recommend a pair of shoes to go with it.

The vendor also helps Neiman Marcus determine what content it should put in specific consumers' emails. For example, if a new Gucci dress comes out at the same time as a new pair of ballet flats, Coherent Path's system draws on a shopper's previous behaviors, as well as the actions of shoppers who exhibit similar traits, to determine which product is relevant.

Those types of personalized messages are helping Neiman Marcus stand out from its competitors, Rosenfeld says.

Standing out is important because the amount of email consumers

receive keeps rising. In the second quarter, for example, retailers sent 14.6% more emails than they did during the same period a year earlier, according to the Experian Marketing Services "Quarterly benchmark report Q2 2016."

With more competition for consumers' attention, retailers have to find an edge. Personalizing a subject line in an email provided a 23.5% boost to retailers' open rates, the report finds.

Similarly, triggered shopping cart reminder emails provided a "very high" return, Rosenfeld says, declining to offer details.

"When we look at what emails produce the best returns, the shopping cart reminder emails perform best," he says. "Obviously they're more targeted than other emails, but even controlling for that, they're very high performing."

Neiman Marcus is No. 36 in the [Internet Retailer 2016 Top 500 Guide](#).



BY ZAK STAMBOR
Managing Editor