CASE STUDY

BookPeople.co.uk

PRODUCT

Recommend™

Engage™

RETAIL SEGMENT

Books

CHALLENGE

With one of the largest direct competitors, Amazon, plus a large inventory and a high number of gift browsers, Book People needed a solution to give them the ability to wow their customers through highly personalised experiences.

RESULTS

- Increase of **£7** per basket through Recommend
- **70%** increase in conversion through Engage

"Both Engage and Recommend have given us not only the opportunity but also the confidence to be sure that that we are showing the right content and product to the right customer at the right time."

- Richard Stone
Online Merchandising Executive, Book People

Founded in 1988, Book People is an online bookstore with over 7 million users. Book People has a large inventory of over 200,000 books which it sells via its ecommerce site bookpeople.co.uk. Book People has one of the largest direct competitors in Amazon therefore remaining competitive against such a heavy weight is a constant challenge. With the book sector dominated by gift browsers rather than shoppers purchasing for themselves, it is often difficult to second-guess shoppers interests and to grab their attention quickly, especially given their large catalogue of books.

Book People sought to create innovative, engaging and personalised customer experiences to improve conversion rates and remain competitive without presenting the customer with too much product choice.

With an increasing volume of mobile traffic browsing books, but with conversions happening via their desktop site, Book People needed a solution which would work seamlessly across all their touch points – website, mobile and tablet.

In June 2014, Book People started using Recommend™ to increase customer conversion and accuracy of the product recommendations displayed on bookpeople.co.uk. Recommendations are dynamically curated for customers through the RichRelevance sophisticated personalisation engine based on 140+ algorithms.

Richard Stone, Online Merchandising Executive at Book People explains how Recommend works: "Recommend ensures Book People always gives customers products they will enjoy, whether that's books by the same author, price range or genre. The engine also powers "often bought together" products where two products are offered as a bundle, ensuring value and simplicity for our customers."

Recommend enables Book People to analyse the whole customer journey across all touch points rather than on individual sales channels. This means they can secure an order when it's right for the customer rather than push a conversion when the customer isn't ready. All the data gathered via user IDs is in the personalisation engine, so will improve and further personalise the customer experience when visitors decide to browse next or purchase. Recommend also provides Book People with the ability to identify shoppers across multiple channels, therefore pick up the journey where the customer left to improve the experience for the customers.

Richard went on to share some of the results Book People are seeing from Recommend. "The results speak for themselves, customers who interact with personalised recommendations on bookpeople.co.uk spend an additional £7, that's the equivalent of an additional item in each order."

The majority of customers coming to Book People's website are for children's books, where value is a known sales driver. However while Book People want to secure a sale they don't want to give away deals to everyone and forfeit overall revenues. In order to identify the shoppers own interests, Book People needed to build shopper profiles based on previous purchasing history, coupled with analysing against other similar users in order to understand what would resonate with individual shoppers. To help them achieve this, in January 2015 Book People added an additional layer of personalisation for their customers through RichRelevance Engage™.

Engage creates highly relevant content experiences to captivate every customer. RichRelevance maps individual shopper behaviour against its advanced shopper segmentation and targeting tools to work out exactly what content will resonate best with customers, all with precision and minimum effort for Book People, yet helping to get shoppers to the products and offers they want faster. The content powers the whole website, excluding informational pages such as FAQs and Help Pages.

Since implementing Engage, Book People has been able to reduce the time absorbed by merchandisers on what they should feature on the website by handing over content decisions to the personalisation engine, entrusting what's displayed to the power of data rather than second-guessing what customers want. Effectively the power of the experience lies with the customer and they get a personalised experience as they would in any traditional bookstore.

Lauren de Bray, Online Merchandising Manager explains the impact of Engage to Book People. "Engage is probably one of the most important tools we are using to drive the online business forward and master the brave new world of personalisation. It enables us to prioritise our customers needs and ensure that we are fulfilling their desire for value and engaging them with a relevant, hand-picked range of product and promotions, precisely and consistently"

After introducing Engage, Book People saw an immediate spike in engagement with the content on their site. The customers who engage with personalised content are 70% more likely to make a purchase than those who aren't exposed to personalised content. Customers who click through on personalised content spend nearly 5% more per order than those who only viewed the personalised content.

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