

Succeed with Subscriptions

A guide to getting the most out of recurring payments

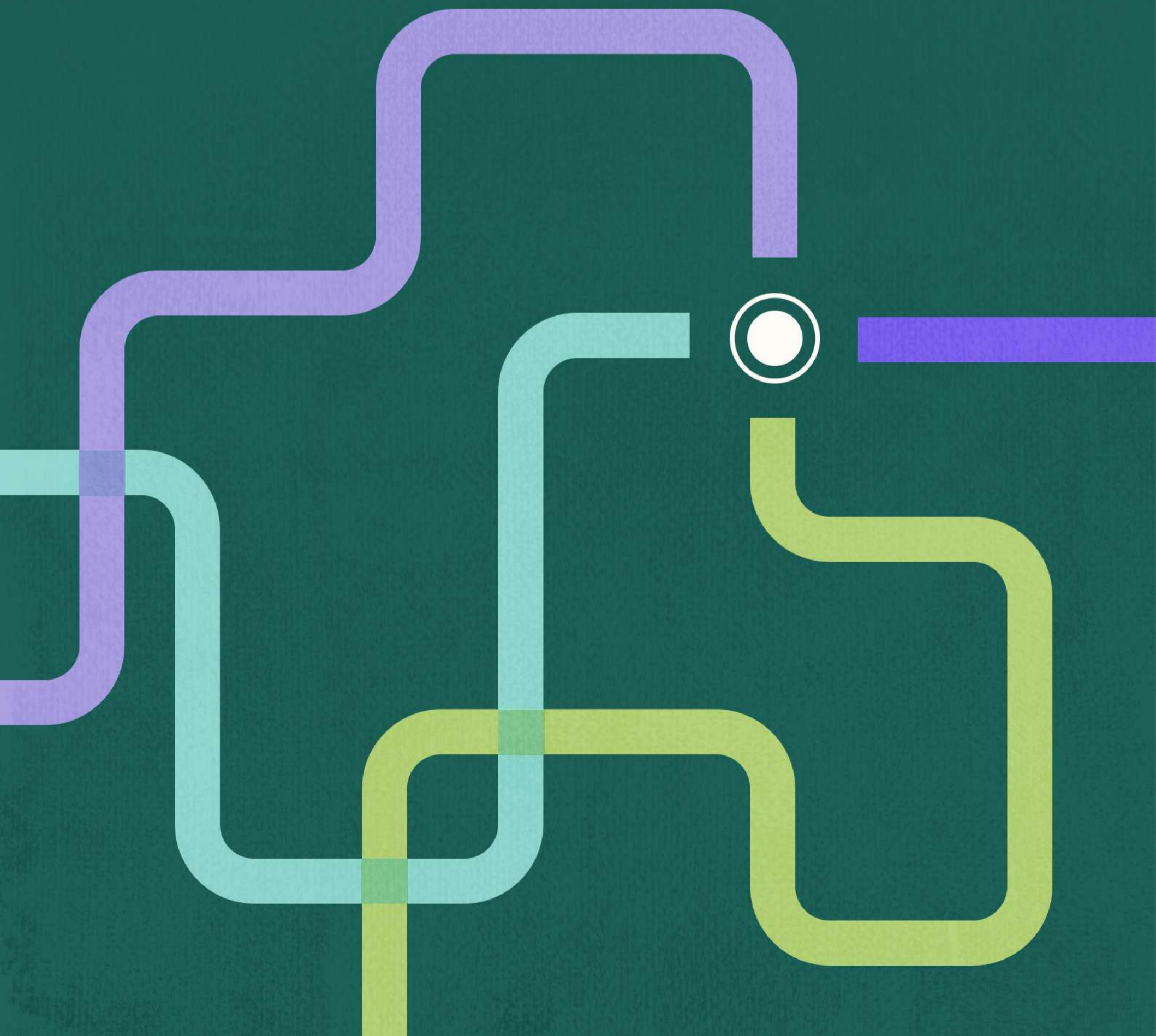


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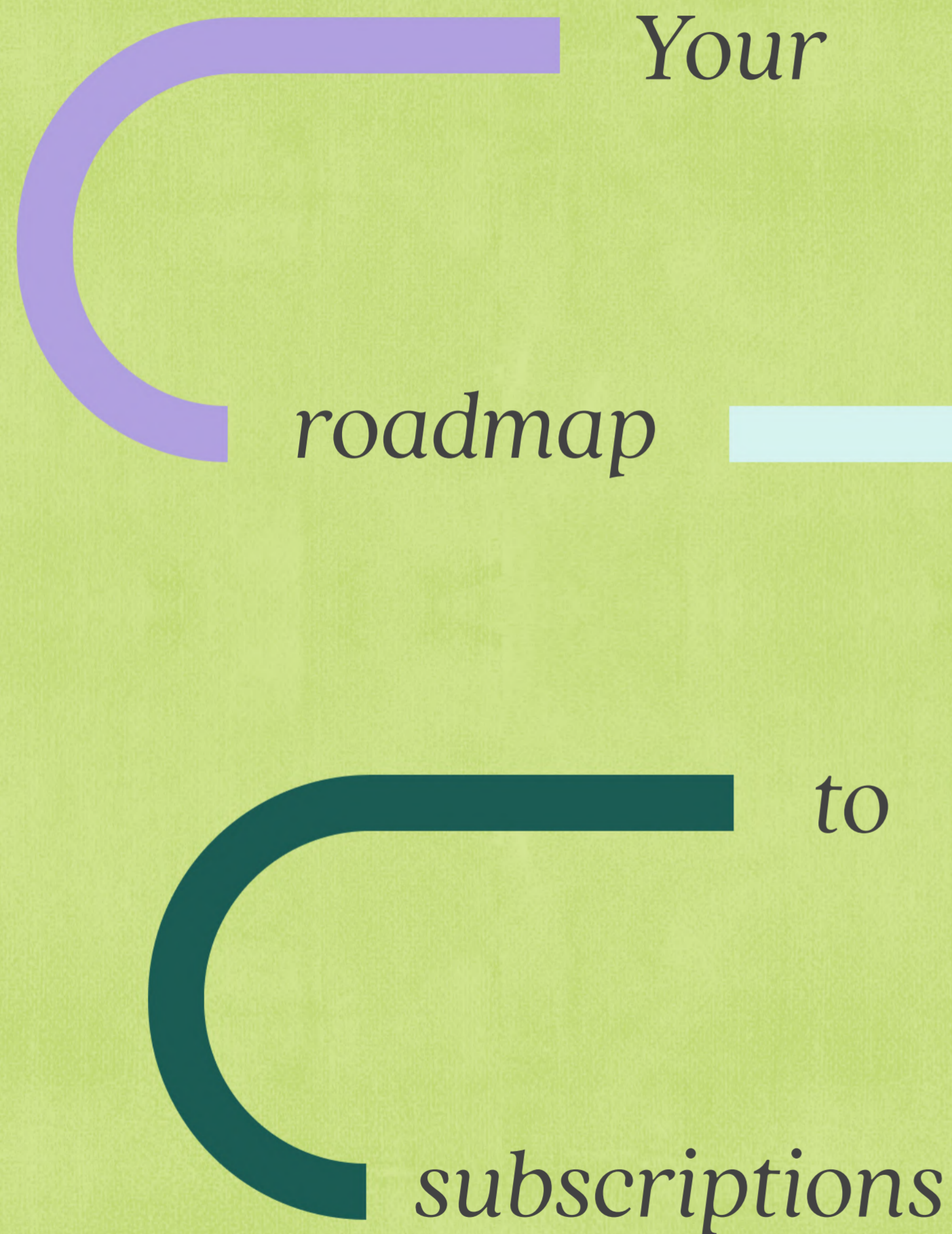
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Lasting subscriber relationships



Your
roadmap
to
subscriptions

INTRODUCTION

The power of subscriptions

More and more, subscriptions are becoming an expected and trusted part of consumers' regular routines: The global subscription ecommerce market is projected to reach \$2.64 trillion by 2028, according to UnivDatos Market Insights.¹

For subscribers, recurring deliveries—be they boxes of household essentials or curated assortments of novelty items—offer enormous convenience, stability, and value.

For brands, subscriptions offer a source of recurring revenue that allows for increased customer lifetime value ([LTV](#)) through reduced [customer churn](#). This in turn helps offset ever-rising customer acquisition costs.

But the value doesn't stop there. Due to its recurring nature and built-in customer touchpoints, the subscription business model provides opportunities to foster long-term customer relationships.

Our research shows that subscription brands retain up to 42% of their customers after 1 year; ecommerce brands in general retain an average of 1% of their customers after 1 month.² So, how can you get the most out of your subscriptions and ensure you're maximizing the benefits of the business model?

New to subscriptions? Haven't yet gotten started with a [subscription management](#) solution? Take a step back and read our [Merchant's Guide to Subscription Management](#) to learn about the benefits of these tools and assess the best provider for your business.

If you're already set up with a subscription management solution, use this guide to implement key tactics and features so you can grow and scale to your fullest potential. The bottom line on your business means increasing your acquisition and sales, improving your customer experience, and reducing your churn.

[1] [Subscription E-Commerce Market: Current Analysis and Forecast \(UnivDatos Market Insights\)](#)

[2] [2022 State of Subscription Commerce report \(Recharge Payments\)](#)

Glossary

AOV

Average order value; a key metric representing the average amount of money a customer spends in a single transaction with a merchant

Cross-selling

A marketing and sales tactic where customers are shown related products or services they can add on to their original purchase

Customer churn

When customers stop using a business's products or services over a given period of time

Customer portal

A secure hub that gives your customers easy access to all relevant information about their business with you

DTC

Direct-to-consumer; an ecommerce business model where a merchant produces their own products or services and sells them directly to consumers

LTV

Lifetime value; a key metric representing the profit a single customer brings in throughout their customer lifetime with a merchant

Merchant portal

An internal hub only viewable to you as a merchant that allows you to manage multiple aspects of your store, including analytics, product details, discounts, and more

Product detail page

A webpage on your site detailing key information about a specific product and options to purchase that product

Promotional SMS

A business strategy where merchants open up a line of communication with their customers via text message for marketing and advertising purposes

SEO

Search engine optimization; the process of improving key areas of your web content in order to achieve higher ranking on search engines

Subscription landing page

A dedicated webpage on your site detailing the unique value of your subscriptions and explaining how they work

Subscription management

The process of handling all aspects of your customers' subscriptions, including the ways you empower them to manage their own subscriptions

Transactional SMS

A business strategy where merchants open up a line of communication with their customers via text message about their purchases

Upselling

A marketing and sales tactic where customers are shown more premium, higher-priced products or services they can buy instead of their original intended purchase

Value proposition

A statement of promise to your customers of your brand's unique value—not only in your products or services, but also in your brand and what you stand for

Types of subscriptions



REPLENISHMENT

Replenishment subscriptions, also referred to as subscribe-and-save offerings, provide the same consumable products in each delivery (e.g. shipments of essential household cleaners).



CURATION

Curation subscriptions provide collections of products—typically chosen by the merchant, but at times selected by customers—that are organized around a certain theme (e.g. a monthly beauty subscription box).



ACCESS

Access subscriptions, which include memberships, grant exclusive access to discounts, early releases, content, and more (e.g. a subscription streaming service).

Navigating this guide

In this guide, we outline how to set your subscription business up for success in four distinct areas:

- Attracting and converting subscribers
- Growing your subscription sales
- Improving the customer experience
- Tackling subscriber churn

Within each section, we outline key steps you can take to optimize your business. We also provide resources you can take back to your team, including PDFs, thought leadership and expert insights, and step-by-step instructions on how to leverage different types of features to get the most out of your subscriptions.

Depending on your unique business needs, you can work through each section chronologically to methodically audit your subscriptions or select only the sections most applicable to your store.

Key symbols explained

THE ESSENTIALS

Dive into the fundamentals of ecommerce and subscriptions



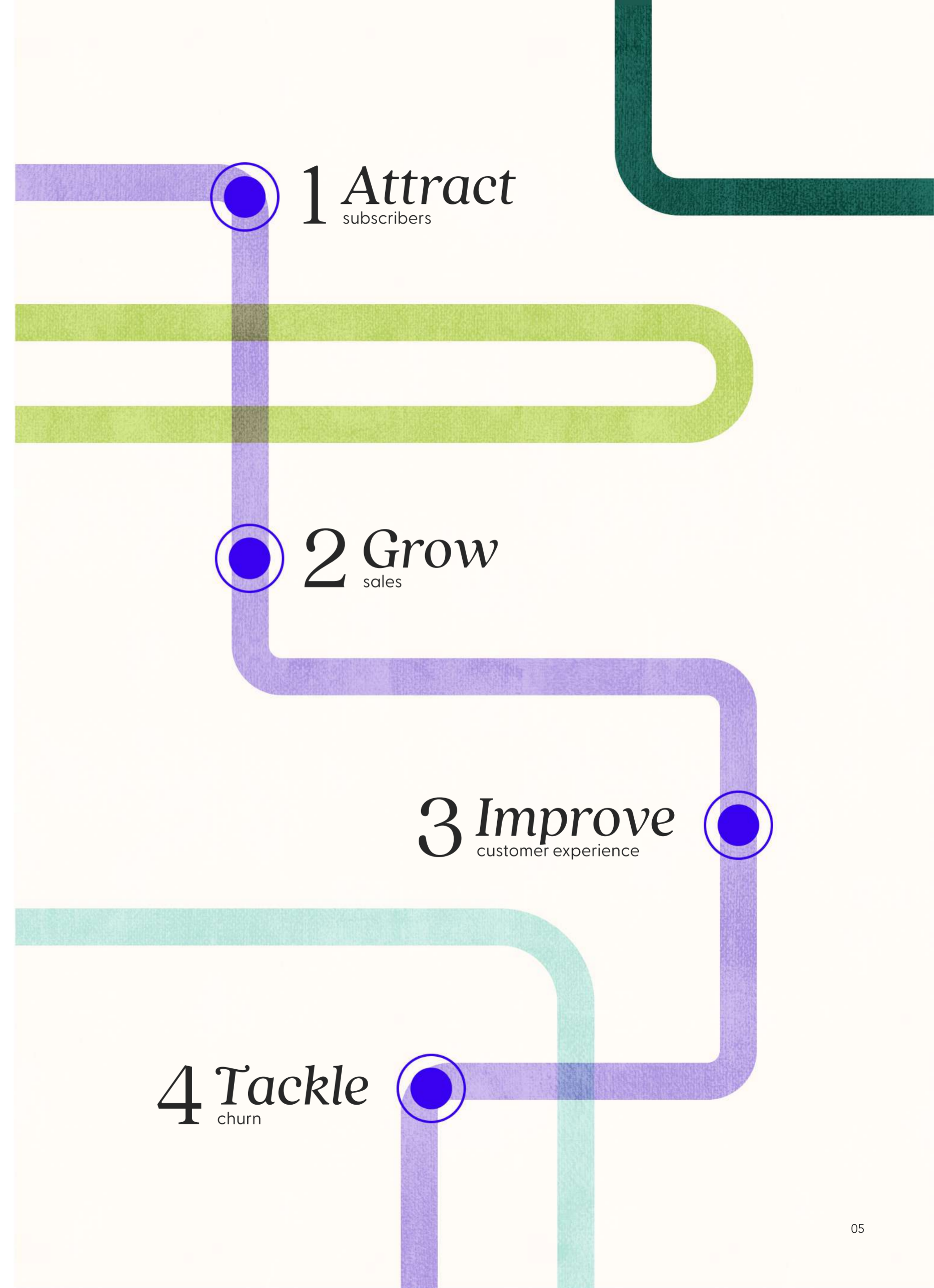
RECHARGE FEATURE

See features available on Recharge to help accomplish your goals



Explore related tactics at different points in the guide

Definition Indicates an industry term that is defined in the glossary of this guide



SECTION I

How to attract & convert subscribers

So, you've launched a subscription offering on your ecommerce store. Now, how can you gain a core group of loyal subscribers? A subscription offering allows your brand to cultivate a core group of loyal customers who return to your

business again and again. The first step after launching your subscriptions: finding those prospects and attracting them to your business so you can start building valuable, long-term customer relationships.

1 *Attract* subscribers

5 tactics for subscriber acquisition

1. Optimizing your website for sales
2. Launching a compelling subscription landing page
3. Offering both one-time purchase and subscription offerings
4. Creating enticing discounts
5. Developing an acquisition-based marketing plan

1 Optimize your website for sales

It's crucial to ensure your website is optimized for the sale of recurring offerings in addition to any of your one-time purchase options. By focusing on the key building blocks of your website, you can create an easy, convenient, and engaging shopping experience that makes a positive first impression and attracts high-value subscribers.

Optimization best practices

Optimize your website for mobile shopping

Google prioritizes mobile-friendly websites in search results, making this strategy especially important for ecommerce brands.

Key features to take the mobile shopping experience to the next level: prominent, easy-to-click buttons, clear add-to-cart functionality, one-page checkouts, and the ability to accept payments from digital wallets.

Make it easy for customers to navigate & search your site

You only have a moment of your site visitors' time to help them find the exact product they need—so make it count.

Ensure your search bar is present and visible on every page, and make your site navigation as clear as possible.

Prioritize page load times over flashy designs

According to Google, 53% of visits are abandoned if a mobile site takes longer than three seconds to load.³

While beautiful product imagery and other design aspects are important, always consider how these elements may impact your site speed, and therefore, the shopping experience.

THE ESSENTIALS

Test & benchmark your site speed

Google Lighthouse can measure your site's speed and accessibility for specific pages, while Google Search Console can flag pages that are loading more slowly than others.

Many SEO tools, such as Ahrefs, can also check your site speed as part of an overall site audit.

187.5 MILLION

consumers are predicted to shop via their smartphone by 2024, according to Statista.⁴

[3] [Mobile Site Load Time Statistics \(Think with Google\)](#)

[4] [Number of mobile buyers in the United States from 2020 to 2024 \(Statista\)](#)

2 Launch a compelling subscription landing page

Though more and more shoppers today are buying into subscriptions, many customers still don't yet understand the value of these offerings. By creating a dedicated [subscription landing page](#)—distinct from your [product detail pages](#)—you can help dispel any misconceptions about

subscriptions, explain how your offerings work, and highlight their unique value to entice people to sign up. Not only can a subscription landing page be a valuable acquisition tool—it can also help set expectations so there are no areas of confusion around your subscriptions.

Subscription landing page best practices

Consistently showcase your brand's unique value

Prospective subscribers should be able to quickly and easily understand what you're offering and why they should purchase it on subscription.

Clearly communicate any timelines & benefits

Potential subscribers have lots of questions for your brand: How often will they receive their orders? Will they receive a discount for subscribing? Are they able to adjust or cancel their order at any time?

Make sure you answer all of these on your subscription landing page so your prospects know what they're signing up for.

Leverage social proof & user-generated content

When making decisions, people often look to their peers for guidance. Facilitate that decision-making process by including positive reviews, testimonials, or influencer highlights on your landing page to instill trust in your offerings and entice people to sign up.

Provide strong CTAs

Make buttons visually compelling and easy to click, and use action-driven language to guide shoppers toward signup.

THE ANATOMY OF A

Subscription landing page

Product photography

Showcase your products with well-lit, high-quality imagery

Branded moments

Use branded elements like illustrations and icons to support your brand voice and tone

Reviews and testimonials

Leverage user-generated content and reviews to show your products' benefits

FAQs

Utilize a frequently asked questions section to respond to common questions

The landing page for 'COFFEE BEAN CO.' features a dark green header with the brand name. Below is a hero section with a coffee bag image on the left and the headline 'Fresh-roasted coffee on repeat' on the right. The headline is followed by three bullet points: 'Sustainably sourced.', 'Delivered straight to your door.', and 'Customized to fit your taste.' Below this is a 'Sign up now' button with a right-pointing arrow. The next section, 'Benefits of a subscription', is highlighted in light teal and contains four dark green circular icons with corresponding text: 'Free shipping and returns', '10% off all your orders', 'Early access to new products', and 'Easily skip or swap a delivery'. Below this is a reviews section with three purple square placeholders, each with five green stars underneath. The final section is an FAQ with two questions: 'How often will my subscription arrive?' and 'Can I cancel at any time?', each followed by a downward-pointing chevron icon.

COFFEE BEAN CO.

Fresh-roasted coffee on repeat

Sustainably sourced.
Delivered straight to your door.
Customized to fit your taste.

[Sign up now →](#)

Benefits of a subscription

- Free shipping and returns
- 10% off all your orders
- Early access to new products
- Easily skip or swap a delivery



How often will my subscription arrive? ▾

Can I cancel at any time? ▾

Value proposition

Explain the "why" behind your products

CTAs

Clear, direct CTAs to drive your customers to purchase

Subscription benefits

Clearly communicate the unique perks of your subscription offering

Subscription timeline

Explain any relevant details about the timing of your shipping and billing

3 Offer both one-time & subscription purchase options

Customers may be hesitant to sign up for a subscription with you if they've never tried your products or services. Offering both one-time and subscription purchase options can be a powerful way to get their foot in the door and make them more likely to commit to a subscription. Once a shopper has purchased a one-time product, utilize your communication channels and set up a program to follow up with them. Then, you can offer them targeted recommendations for their future orders, encouraging them to purchase again or sign up for a subscription.

Emphasize your subscription option

Once you have both one-time purchase and subscription options in place, be sure to emphasize the subscription option. This should be done on any relevant [product detail pages](#) as well as your checkout page.

On your checkout page

When customers are on their way to making a one-time purchase that is also available as a subscription, provide them with an option to upgrade to the subscription with just one click.

On your product detail page

List your subscription option before the one-time purchase option to prioritize it for your customers.



[Offer multiple purchase options on Recharge](#)



To learn more about offering both one-time purchase and subscription purchase options, head to [Optimize your subscription catalog](#) in Section II →

4 Create enticing discounts

Discounts are a popular customer acquisition and loyalty tool for subscriptions, particularly for [replenishment subscriptions](#). By offering either one-time or recurring discounts, your brand can lower the barrier to entry for subscriptions and increase the value of your offerings for your customers. And, due to the increased retention rates of subscriptions, merchants generally make up the difference from any discounts over time through repeated purchases.

Test & analyze discount performance

When discounting, be sure to test your strategies and analyze their impact on not only your acquisition, but also your customer retention. Over-incentivizing, particularly on the first purchase, can lead to increased risk of customer churn. However, when applied strategically and selectively, a discount can be just the right incentive to encourage signup.

Goal	Discount tactic
Entice new customers	First purchase discounts (e.g. 10% off your first box)
Increase AOV	Order minimum discounts (e.g. \$50 off your purchase of \$200 or more)
Increase sales and brand awareness	Event or seasonal discounts (e.g. 15% off during Cyber Week)
Increase brand loyalty	Customer-specific discounts (e.g. an anniversary discount)



[Create and manage discounts on Recharge](#)



Looking for more information on how to reward loyal subscribers with discounts? Head to [Provide perks for your most loyal customers](#) in Section III →

5 Develop an acquisition-based marketing plan

Attracting new subscribers isn't a one-and-done action—it's a strategic, ongoing process. A major tool in mapping out and documenting this effort lies in your marketing plan. This will help you identify key areas of focus for raising awareness about your brand and gaining qualified leads.

Focus on SEO

SEO is one of the most important tools you can use to acquire new customers and raise awareness about your brand. In fact, according to a study by BrightEdge, over 50% of traffic to a website comes from organic search.⁵ By focusing on SEO to finesse your site, you can boost your rankings in search engines, increasing the likelihood that more of the right people find your products or services.

SEO best practices

- **Identifying valuable keywords** to use strategically in your headlines, subheads, and meta descriptions
- **Ensuring your web pages contain relevant links**—both internal, to other pages on your site, and external, to other reputable sites with supplemental content

- **Avoiding “keyword stuffing,”** or overcrowding the copy on your site with the same keywords again and again
- **Investing in short-form content channels,** such as a company blog, where you can educate readers about topics beyond just your products and services while targeting valuable keyword phrases

Prioritize your values, brand voice & the user experience

While SEO is used to help brands perform more favorably in search results and build awareness, it's crucial to also prioritize the user experience.

After readers land on your site, they need engaging copy, product imagery, and design that helps them quickly understand your unique value as a brand.

Areas of your site to focus on

- Readable, engaging copy and design
- Captivating site imagery that provides clarity about your offerings
- Your unique values, brand voice, and tone
- A strong About page that clearly showcases your brand's greater purpose

By ensuring these elements are in place, you can increase the likelihood of converting your site visitors into subscribers.



Looking for guidance on how to create a strong value proposition? Head to [Create a compelling value proposition](#) in Section IV→

THE ESSENTIALS

What is SEO, and why does it matter?

SEO (search engine optimization) is the process of improving key areas of your web content in order to achieve higher ranking on search engines.

When carried out effectively, an SEO strategy can allow you to improve both the quality and quantity of your site visitors, which can result in increased customer acquisition.

[5] Organic Channel Share Expands to 53.3% of Traffic (BrightEdge)

Hone your omnichannel marketing strategy

To effectively market to your target audience, you need to meet customers where they are across a variety of mediums—also known as omnichannel marketing. While email marketing remains a crucial tactic, be sure to balance this with other channels as communication habits adapt and evolve over time.

So, how can you determine your ideal channels of focus? While these all depend on your brand's unique base of potential customers, channels to start with include:

Email marketing

The most impactful email marketing campaigns use targeted segmentation—grouping customers by like characteristics—to send tailored messages to an audience. To start, identify a few key segments, such as customers who made their first purchase in the last six months. Send them targeted communication via email, then gauge performance and adjust accordingly.

Social media

Your social channels are an extension of your brand and a valuable tool for boosting your content, engaging with your audience, and showing the human side of your brand. As you build out your social media strategy, you should be sure to customize your messaging to suit the nuances of each individual platform. For example, Twitter can be a prime area to showcase your brand's quirky side, while Instagram can be used to encourage user-generated content.

SMS

When it comes to convenience, SMS marketing is hard to beat. After all, more and more, customers are making purchases straight from their mobile devices. However, it's crucial to strike the right balance between [promotional](#) and [transactional SMS](#). Message too much, and you risk pushing your customers away; too little, and you miss out on a valuable opportunity to engage.

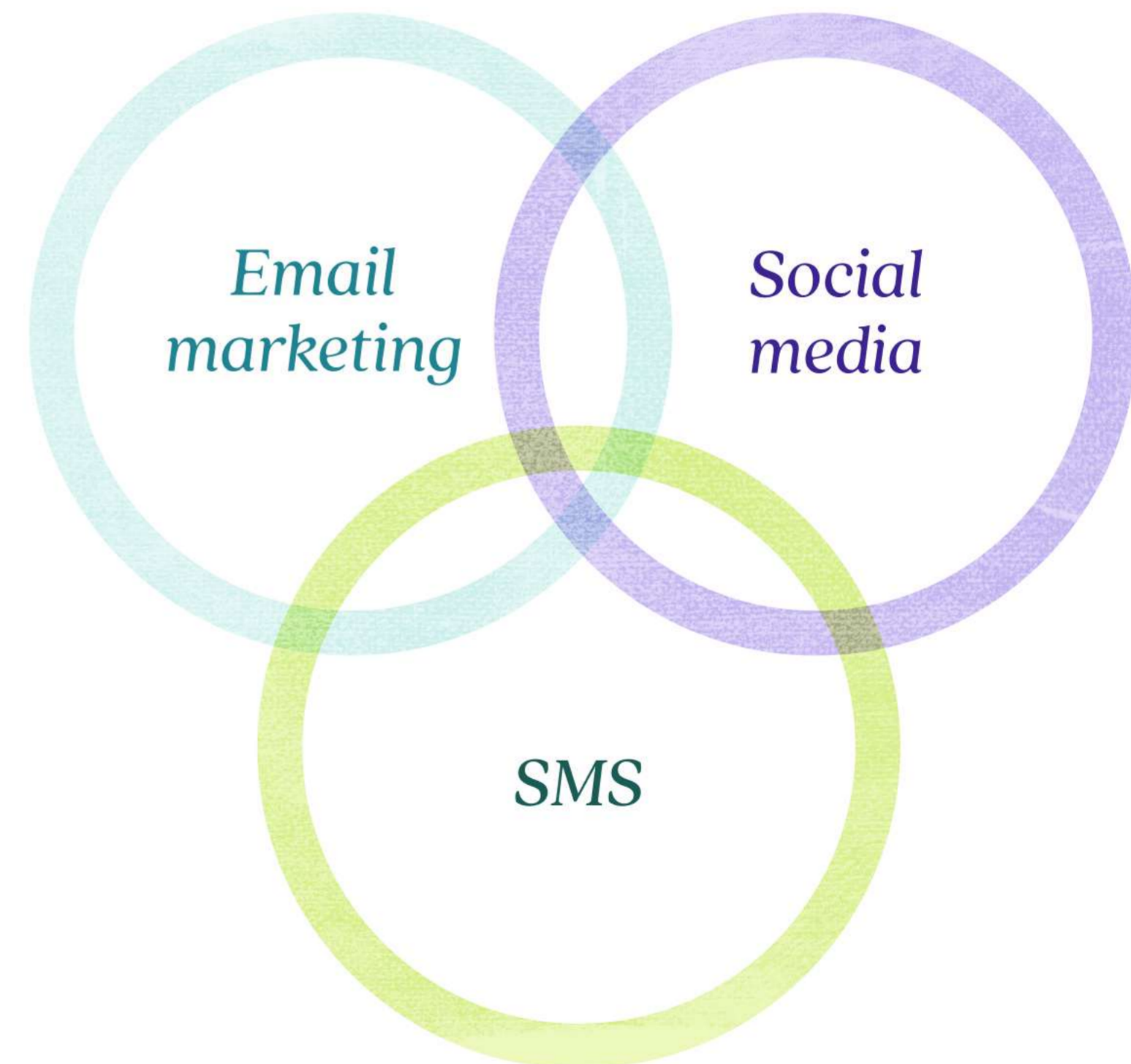


[Transactional SMS on Recharge](#)

100% OF MERCHANTS

with more than \$5 million in annual GMV utilized email marketing integrations in 2021, and 80% utilized SMS integrations.⁶

[6] 2022 State of Subscription Commerce report (Recharge Payments)



Your various marketing channels may have some overlap while also holding their own unique focuses.

Marketing communications

Email marketing

COFFEE BEAN CO.

Save 15% on all blends

Spring into subscriptions!

We're ushering in spring with an extra discount. Save 15% when you subscribe to any of our seasonal coffee blends—today through June 1.

Order now

Light roast coffee Dark roast coffee Decaf coffee

Shop now Shop now Shop now

Instagram Twitter Facebook

[Privacy](#) [Account](#) [Unsubscribe](#)

Timely product feature

Provides a clear visual to grab attention and show any offers

Actionable heading

Explains the benefits of the offer and encourages action

Clear CTA

Gives concise direction on next steps

Direct links to your store

Routes shoppers to their purchase with just one click

Paid ad

Coffee Bean Co. Sponsored

Subscribe today and get 10% off your favorite coffee blends, delivered straight to your door—no waiting in line required.

Be your own favorite barista.

Timely product offer

Clearly states the benefits to purchasing

Enticing photography

Provides an eye-catching visual that encourages shoppers to pause

Catchy copy quips

Demonstrates your brand voice while grabbing the reader's attention

Transactional SMS

Hi Erin, hope you're having a great day! Your next shipment of dark roast coffee beans will be processing in 3 days for \$12.99. To make any changes, reply to this message with "modify order."

Personalization

Provides a human touch while demonstrating your knowledge of the customer

Customization

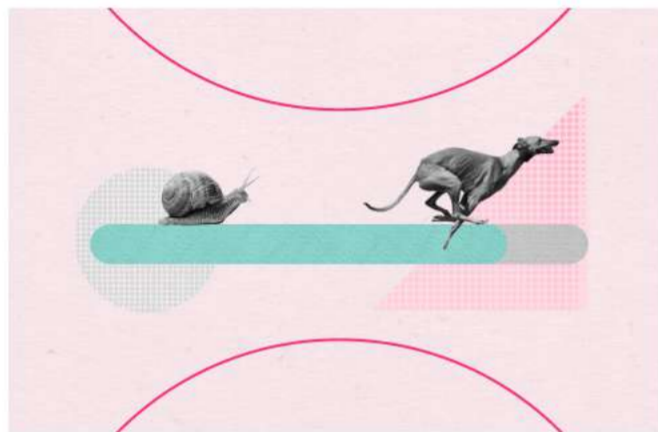
Instead of directing to a website, this allows Erin to reply to the text to manage her order

Provide context

Illustrates your familiarity with this customer's specific order history

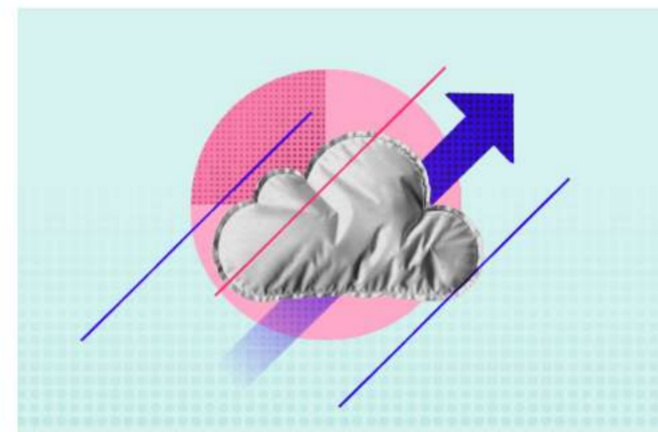
How to attract & convert subscribers

Thought leadership & expert tips



6 ecommerce website UX design best practices to supercharge your sales

[Read now →](#)



Meet customers where they are with omnichannel marketing

[Read now →](#)



Social media and ecommerce: How to create an engaging social presence

[Read now →](#)



How to write the best subscription landing page

[Read now →](#)



5 ways to get started with discounts

[Read now →](#)

[Connect with an agency partner →](#)

Looking for additional assistance with your customer acquisition efforts? These agency partners can provide you with the expertise you need to grow and scale your business.

[Browse top tech partners →](#)

For expert integrations to help you increase conversions, browse the directory of technology partners in the ecommerce industry.

SECTION II

How to grow your subscription sales

You've already attracted a core group of subscribers. Now, learn how to maximize their value by increasing your AOV and LTV. Subscriptions are a commitment for both merchants and subscribers, and one that lays

the groundwork for highly valuable customer relationships. By continually adding value for your subscribers in strategic ways, you can simultaneously increase AOV and LTV for your business to grow your sales.

5 tactics for growing your subscription sales

1. Considering cross-sell & upsell opportunities
2. Optimizing your subscription catalog
3. Giving your subscribers flexibility
4. Providing benefits after a minimum spend
5. Creating product bundles



2 *Grow*
sales

1 Consider cross-sell & upsell opportunities

[Cross-selling](#) and [upselling](#) are two separate but related forms of targeted product recommendations that allow you to increase the value of each transaction while transforming your relationship with your customers from that of a seller to a trusted friend.

Depending on your unique needs, you may find one or both strategies to be a fit for your business. 91% of consumers are more likely to shop with brands who recognize, remember, and provide relevant offers and recommendations, according to Accenture.⁷

Cross-selling best practices

- **Personalize, personalize, personalize.**
Present customers with options based on their purchase history, or leverage an integration partner that allows you to conduct product recommendations quizzes to solicit additional context for tailoring your suggestions.
- **Segment your customer base.**
You can not only personalize your recommendations based on what is in your customers' carts, but also by certain common customer traits, such as geography or age group.
- **Consider discounts for add-on purchases.**
This can incentivize your subscribers to try new products at a lower risk to them while increasing your AOV.

- **Make your cross-sells accessible.**
Make it easy for your customers to add on products from their customer portal, the checkout page, or [transactional SMS](#). Additionally, enable them to take advantage of cross-sells from their computer or mobile device. You can even consider integrations that allow you to make post-purchase recommendations.

Upselling best practices

- **Offer upgrades within reason.** Make sure any jumps—be they in price or quantity—are reasonable steps up from the customer's original purchase. For example, if a customer is ordering a set of three juices, upselling them to a pack of six juices for a slightly higher price will most likely be more effective than upselling them a set of thirty juices.

- **Showcase any cost savings for the customer.** Whether you're offering a more generous discount for your upsells or providing free shipping for higher-value plans, be sure to clearly communicate these advantages to the customer. If you're upselling a subscription offering, be sure to make this option prominent, displaying it beyond just the product page to increase the likelihood that customers will purchase it.

- **Strategically limit options.**
Present your customers with too many upgrade choices, and they may abandon the shopping process altogether. Instead, present just a few options, focusing on products that already sell well and are personalized to suit your customer base.

THE ESSENTIALS

What are cross-selling & upselling?

Cross-selling

Cross-selling is providing your customers with product recommendations to add on to what is already in their cart, increasing the value of that transaction.

If you've ever purchased additional products after being recommended them via "other products you may like" or "frequently bought together" sections, that's ecommerce cross-selling in action.

Upselling


Upselling is the art of presenting your customers with a larger or more premium version of a product they're interested in for a higher price—in essence, an upgrade.

Rather than adding on to a customer's original purchase, an upsell replaces the original purchase while still increasing the value of the transaction.

Cross-sell & upsell opportunities




Checkout page

Review order

 **Medium roast coffee** \$30
Rich, deep, roasty, sweet Monthly

Tax	\$2.48
Shipping	Free
Total	\$32.48

Customers who got this item also bought

-  **Light roast coffee**
Quick add - \$30
-  **Dark roast coffee**
Quick add - \$30
-  **Decaf coffee**
Quick add - \$30

Looking for something else? [Shop all](#)

Proceed to checkout

Add-on product menu

Provides easy cross-selling options without having to leave the checkout page

Easy “add to cart” functionality

Prominent buttons and concise CTAs let customers add products to their order with just a click

Product detail page

Medium roast
\$30

One-time purchase
 Subscribe

Deliver every **4 weeks** ▼

Add to cart **Upsize & save!**


Clear upgrade buttons

Place upsells alongside the regular purchase option for convenience and ease



Customer portal

Hello, Erin!

Edit your upcoming order

 **Medium roast coffee** \$30
Rich, deep, roasty, sweet Monthly

Want to add something extra?

-  **Decaf coffee** \$30 (+)
-  **Light roast coffee** \$30 (+)

Add-on product menu

Provides easy cross-selling options without having to leave the customer portal

2 Optimize your subscription catalog

In order to increase the amount your customers spend per transaction, make sure your subscription catalog is set up in a way that is intuitive and convenient to navigate.

Offer multiple products on subscription

Each item must then have the proper purchase options for that product type. For example, if you offer several frequently used replenishable products as one-time purchase options, make sure you're also offering them on subscription.

Make any relevant subscriptions giftable

Even if you offer the most appealing subscription gift box on your site, your customers need to be able to actually gift it to their friends or family at checkout to complete the purchase. For example, consider offering pre-paid subscription options at checkout, with choices for a three month, six month, or one year subscription.

Curate key collections of products

This makes it easier for your customers to find the items they're looking for and creates a more engaging, intuitive online shopping experience. For example, you might set up a collection of similar, related products, or a collection of complementary products that are frequently purchased together.



[Create product collections on Recharge](#)



For more information on offering both one-time purchase and subscription purchase options for a product, head to [Offer both one-time & subscription purchase options](#) in Section I →

3 Give your subscribers flexibility

Your customers don't want to be locked in to subscriptions they can't customize. The more you can put them in the driver's seat with changes to their orders, the more you can increase trust in your brand, grow your LTV, and foster long-term customer relationships.

Areas of opportunity

Product swaps

To mitigate subscription fatigue, give your customers the option to change versions of a product (e.g. flavors) in their subscription rather than canceling their order.

Delivery schedules

Especially for replenishment subscriptions, it's crucial to offer a variety of shipment options so customers can get the exact amount of product they need on their schedule. Additionally, allow your customers to edit their delivery cadence when possible.

Options for skipping or delaying shipments

Making it easy for your customers to skip or delay a shipment when they need a break actually makes them less likely to cancel, increasing LTV and trust in your brand.

Subscription management

Your customers want to be able to edit their orders and make changes to their account at any time. Facilitate these actions with strategies like optimizing the customer portal and leveraging transactional SMS to easily customize their subscriptions. In-depth information on both of these tactics can be found in Section III.

4 Provide benefits after a minimum spend

To incentivize customers to purchase more products in a single transaction, consider offering benefits once a minimum dollar amount is met.

Potential benefits to offer

- Free shipping
- Discounts for a fixed dollar amount or percentage
- Gift cards that can be spent at a later date
- Complimentary upgrades to a more premium subscription plan

Any benefits you offer should be communicated as clearly and efficiently as possible to customers. Make it immediately clear what they need to do to take advantage of these benefits, and consider adding quick cross-sells at checkout to help interested customers reach the threshold.

Potential channels for communication

- Website banners
- Website popups
- Paid media
- Email campaigns

5 Create product bundles

A key strategy for adding value for both your subscribers and your business: creating product bundles. These assortments of items are packaged and sold together, often at a discount to the customer to incentivize them to purchase. One of the major benefits of product bundling is that it encourages customers to purchase more items in a single transaction, increasing AOV. But at its most effective, bundling offers even greater value, increasing customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and LTV.

Pre-bundled products

Pre-bundled products are a group of items that are curated by the merchant, then packaged and sold together. Because they cannot be edited by the customer, pre-bundled products are ideal for packaging your bestsellers or moving low-performing inventory.

Types of bundles



Bestsellers

Bundle together an assortment of your bestsellers at a discounted rate, encouraging customers to try out items with proven success that they may be more likely to purchase again.



Variety pack

Create a bundle with multiple versions or flavors of the same product so your customers can find their perfect match. This strategy is better suited for certain brands than others, and is especially popular in the Food & Beverage vertical.



2+ bestsellers & 1 less popular product

Package two or more of your bestsellers with a less popular product at a discounted rate to incentivize your customers to purchase low-performing inventory.



2+ bestsellers & 1 new product

Package two or more of your bestsellers with a new product at a discounted rate so your customers are incentivized to try something new before committing to a subscription.



[Create and sell pre-bundled products on Recharge](#)

SECTION II RESOURCES

How to grow your subscription sales

Thought leadership & expert tips



Product bundling: Make it a combo

[Read now →](#)



Gain lifelong customers with these cross-selling tactics

[Read now →](#)



5 upselling strategies to boost your subscription business

[Read now →](#)



The importance of cross-selling & upselling for subscription brands

[Read now →](#)



Your subscribers want flexibility. Here's how to offer it.

[Read now →](#)

[Connect with an agency partner →](#)

Looking for additional assistance on cross-selling, upselling, and more? These agency partners can provide you with the expertise you need to grow and scale your business.

[Browse top tech partners →](#)

For expert integrations to help you increase sales, browse the directory of technology partners in the ecommerce industry.

SECTION III

How to improve the customer experience

These days, the customer experience is a make-or-break it factor for DTC brands. Unpack how to get it right and keep your subscribers coming back. Today, businesses are increasingly having to compete with each other on the quality of their customer experience versus factors like product offerings and price.

In fact, according to PWC's customer experience report, 59% of US customers will walk away after several bad experiences, and 17% will walk away after only one bad experience.⁸ But when done effectively, optimizing your customer experience has the power to create lasting customer relationships that stand the test of time.

[8] Experience is everything: Here's how to get it right (PWC)

6 tactics for optimizing your brand's customer experience

1. Clearly communicating updates with your customers
2. Empowering your subscribers with a customized customer portal
3. Providing perks for your most loyal customers
4. Offering paid memberships
5. Making your subscriptions easy to customize
6. Improving returns and exchanges



3 Improve
customer experience

1 Clearly communicate updates with your customers

All relationships benefit from effective communication, and the subscriber relationship is no different. Arguably your most important customer experience tool, clear and on-brand communication allows you to set expectations and empower your subscribers by keeping them in the loop. Due to their recurring nature, subscriptions offer your brand built-in opportunities to communicate with your customers. Via email, transactional SMS, or a combination, consider establishing programs to automate customer alerts for key events.

When to notify your customers

- Updates made to a customer's subscription (e.g. shipping or delivery dates)
- Issues around processing an order (e.g. an expired credit card)
- Notifications that it's time to select their order items (e.g. choosing their meals for a meal kit service)
- Notifications that their order is about to process, with options for product swaps (e.g. a last call to change flavors before shipment)
- More widespread changes to your subscription terms (e.g. increased pricing)



2 Empower your subscribers with a customized customer portal

A [customer portal](#) is a hub where your customers can log on and manage their orders with your business. It's one of the main places where your customers will go to interact with your brand, and a key area for empowering your subscribers throughout their customer journey. By allowing them to quickly manage their own orders, you can reduce friction and decrease the need for customers to engage your support team.

Ways customers can manage their orders via the portal

- Updating their shipping address
- Managing their payment information
- Skipping or canceling an order
- Swapping or adding on products to an order
- Viewing their purchase history

Advanced customer portal functionalities

- Loyalty programs
- [Cross-selling](#) and [upselling](#) opportunities
- Bundling opportunities

Other branding opportunities across your site

Customization doesn't just end at the functionalities on your customer portal. Your subscribers should have a cohesive, user-friendly experience with your brand across all platforms.

Therefore, it's crucial that your customer portal is personalized to match the branded experience on the rest of your site—in the voice and tone of your copy, the styling of your design elements and imagery, etc.

THE ANATOMY OF AN

Optimized customer portal

Customized greeting

A personalized touch that connects your brand with the customer

Subscription overview

Make it easy for customers to view their subscription details and update future orders

Skip or cancel

Allow customers intuitive options to skip a single order or cancel their subscription

Hooray! Spring bundles are now available to purchase

COFFEE BEAN CO.

Welcome back, Erin!

You are 50 points away from your next reward!

0 100 200

NEXT SHIPMENT
May 20

DELIVER EVERY
4 weeks

PRODUCT
Medium roast coffee
Qty: 1
\$30.00

SHIPPING ADDRESS
Erin French
123 Java Way
Coffee Creek, CA 96091

PAYMENT METHOD
Visa ending in 1234
Expires 2/24

EMAIL ADDRESS
erin.french@gmail.com

SKIP UPCOMING SHIPMENT

CANCEL YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Announcement banner

Communicate new or time-sensitive offerings at the top of the page

Loyalty & rewards

Showcase any unique perks of your subscription offering, such as points earned in a membership

Easy subscription management

Provide clear options to edit shipping address, payment information, and other account details

3 Provide perks for your most loyal customers

Your subscribers are the MVPs of your customer base, driving higher [LTV](#) than one-time purchasers and providing a steady stream of recurring revenue. To elevate the customer experience and encourage subscribers to continue their purchasing behavior, it's important to express your appreciation for their actions.

Perks can include:

- Discounts that are exclusive to your subscribers
- Discounts or gifts associated with certain dates or milestones in the customer journey, such as a birthday or one-year anniversary with your brand
- Exclusive access for your subscribers to new products



Looking for more information on options for discounting?
Head to [Create enticing discounts](#) in Section I →



4 Offer paid membership programs

For businesses whose products don't offer natural use cases for subscriptions, membership programs are well-worth considering as a strategy to improve the customer experience. Here, your subscribers pay a recurring fee for access to exclusive benefits that complement your existing products or services.

Membership perks can include:

- Free shipping on every order
- Reward points for every dollar spent
- Exclusive discounts on certain products or services
- Exclusive access to new products or content
- Charitable donations in the customer's name
- Access to community forums
- In-person and virtual events

These programs have the power to not only increase LTV, but also deepen your subscriber relationships. Be sure to always tailor membership benefits to your unique customer base so that your subscribers can get more out of your products and services.

5 Make your subscriptions easy to customize

We touched on the importance of subscription flexibility in Section II as a crucial strategy for growing subscription sales. It doesn't stop there—flexibility is also essential for enhancing the customer experience.

To see the impact in action, let's walk through the cause and effect of certain flexible options on the customer experience:

Action	Effect
Flexible product swaps	Allow subscribers to adjust the exact items they want from order to order
Flexible delivery schedules	Allow subscribers to receive the exact amount of product they need
Flexible order skips and delays	Allow subscribers to adjust their shipment as needed to fit schedule or lifestyle changes
Flexible product bundling	Allows subscribers to benefit from bundling deals while still getting the exact items they want
Flexible subscription management	Allows subscribers to adjust their orders wherever they are, particularly through the customer portal and transactional SMS

Subscription management with transactional SMS

Transactional SMS allows you to empower your subscribers to manage their orders without having to log on to their customer portals. Not only does this streamline the customer experience—it also frees up time and resources for your support team.

Here, customization is key. Be sure to send texts in your store's voice and tone so messages look and feel like your brand.

Many transactional SMS tools provide your subscribers with multiple options to edit their orders via text, including:

- Updating the items in an order, such as versions of a product (e.g. flavors) or product amounts
- Adding items to an order, like one-time purchases
- Changing delivery dates, including skipping, delaying, or rescheduling an order

You can also use transactional SMS to stay transparent with your customers and send them order reminders via text. To learn more about the benefits of this strategy, read [The Ultimate Guide to Transactional SMS](#).



[Transactional SMS on Recharge](#)

6 Improve returns & exchanges

An easy and convenient returns process allows shoppers to find the best product for their needs while fostering trust and confidence in your brand.

In other words, if your customers don't have to jump through hoops to return a product with you, they'll be more likely to purchase from you again in the future and recommend you to others. The bottom line: Make sure you communicate your return and exchange policies clearly, succinctly, and upfront. By doing this, you can set customer expectations and make sure they don't miss any deadlines or other requirements.

You can also use the returns process to solicit feedback from your customers that can help you pivot your strategy, helping customers find the right product match more quickly in the future.



SECTION III RESOURCES

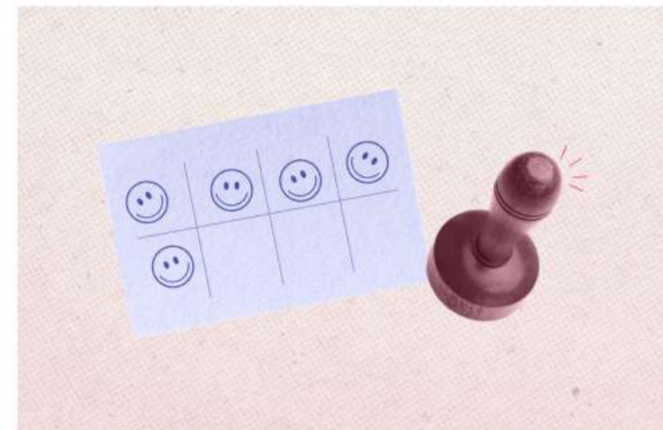
How to improve the customer experience

Thought leadership & expert tips



How to customize your customer portal

[Read now →](#)



The art of retention: How to keep customers coming back

[Read now →](#)



5 ways to get started with discounts

[Read now →](#)



How to add membership subscriptions to your subscription program

[Read now →](#)



The golden rule of customer experience

[Read now →](#)



The Ultimate Guide to Transactional SMS

[Read now →](#)

[Browse top tech partners →](#)

Looking for an expert partner to optimize your returns process? Browse the directory of technology partners in the ecommerce industry that specialize in the art of returns and exchanges.

[Connect with an agency partner →](#)

For agency expertise on customizing your customer portal and more, visit the agency partners page.

SECTION IV

How to tackle subscriber churn

Beyond optimizing your customer experience, don't miss the key technical tactics you can use to mitigate churn, learn from it, and win your subscribers back. Providing an exceptional customer experience and having a strong product-market fit are important strategies

for retaining your subscribers, but it doesn't end there. What more technical actions can your brand take to keep customers with your business? And when churn inevitably does happen, how can you learn from it to better your brand in the future—and win those subscribers back?

4 tactics to mitigate customer churn

1. Creating a compelling value proposition
2. Understanding passive churn
3. Using your cancellation reasons to address active churn
4. Implementing retention strategies

4 Tackle
churn

1 Create a compelling value proposition

Your [value proposition](#) doesn't just motivate new customers to sign up with your business—it also compels longtime customers to stay with your brand. When customers lose sight of your value, the risk that they may churn is greater. To prevent this, ensure you're weaving your value proposition into all aspects of your site, and that you're regularly reminding your subscribers of it.

Make sure your subscribers know

- How and why they should use your products
- What unique value your products bring them—be this in terms of money, time, quality, or something else
- Why they should stick with you over time—in other words, why continuing to be a customer with you is a positive investment for them



For more information on the benefits of a strong value proposition, head to [Develop an acquisition-based marketing plan](#) in Section I →

To create a cohesive brand experience, communicate your value proposition in the copy on your site, customer portal, and even merchandise.

THE ESSENTIALS

So, what's a value proposition?

A value proposition is a statement of promise to your customers of your brand's unique value. It gives your customers a reason to believe not only in your products or services, but also in your brand and what you stand for.

In many ways, your value proposition is the most valuable piece of copy on your website. Infuse the messages of your value proposition into your copy as a whole—from your product names to your email copy to your social posts—to create a cohesive brand experience.

2 Understand passive churn

The two types of churn

Active churn

is when customers voluntarily take action to stop their service with you. They might engage your Support team to cancel or take the action themselves from their [customer portal](#).

Passive churn

is when a customer's subscription is canceled without the customer taking the action. Their credit card might expire, their billing address might change, or there may be stock issues with your products that prevent them from reordering.

Tackling passive churn is a challenge, as no amount of optimizing the customer experience can prevent it. Of course, there are different types of passive churn, and each requires different strategies to prevent it.

20-40% OF MRR CHURN

can be attributed to failed credit cards, according to ProfitWell.⁹

[9] The Comprehensive Guide to Churn (Price Intelligently by ProfitWell)

How to tackle passive churn

Passive churn that is the result of a customer issue:

Ensure you have a program in place to alert customers to the issue—oftentimes, they are unaware. For example, if subscribers are at risk of churning due to an expired credit card, set up alerts to notify them about the problem so they can take immediate action.

Passive churn that is a result of a product stock issue:

Make sure to regularly review your charge errors to see what your most common sources of passive churn are.



[Create automated alerts for customer issues on Recharge](#)

COFFEE BEAN CO.

Revenue overview

TOTAL NET SALES

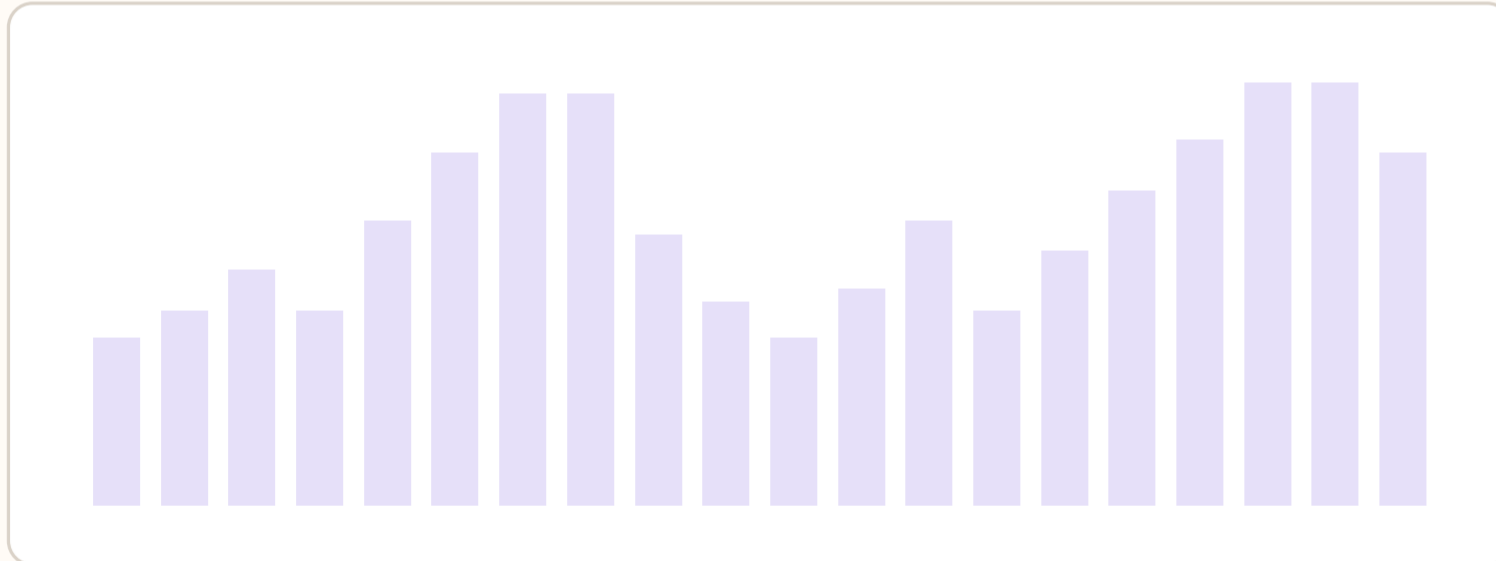
\$43,457

RECURRING SALES

90%

AVERAGE CHARGE VALUE

\$56.63



Analytics tracking is key for identifying patterns and outliers in your performance.

Note: This pared-down visualization of a revenue overview dashboard does not depict the actual Recharge interface.

The importance of analytics

To keep a pulse on your customer churn, as well as other key metrics for your business, it's important to invest in analytics tools and solutions. Once you identify any trends in your performance, you can pivot your strategies as needed.

Depending on the provider, you can leverage analytics features to:

- Track key performance indicators (KPIs), such as AOV, LTV, MRR, and more
- Assist with revenue planning
- See an overview of your customer base, which may include breakdowns of different customer cohorts and insights into your retention
- See how your store stacks up against industry benchmarks
- View a breakdown of your product SKUs and variants to facilitate more accurate and seamless inventory management
- Track customer actions to see how they're interacting with their subscriptions

 RECHARGE FEATURE

[View and track analytics on Recharge](#)

3 Use your cancellation reasons to address active churn

The first step in addressing active churn is to open the door for customer feedback around cancellations. You can begin the process by providing your customers with a list of reasons for cancellation.

Once you've provided your customers with cancellation reasons, you can track this feedback over time, then can tailor your strategy to suit the cancellation reason.

Cancellation reason	Churn-reduction tactic
Excess of product	Provide customers with options to swap products and skip or delay deliveries. You can do this via the customer portal, RechargeSMS, or a combination.
Needing orders sooner	Provide customers with additional delivery frequencies in closer intervals.
Pricing	Offer customers discounts to get them to stay, or create lower-priced plans with a smaller amount of product so they can stay on subscription with you.

RECHARGE FEATURE

[View and respond to cancellation reasons on Recharge](#)

5-25x GREATER

costs for acquiring a new customer than those of retaining an existing one, according to the Harvard Business Review.¹⁰

[10] The Value of Keeping the Right Customers (Harvard Business Review)

4 Implement retention strategies

Whenever possible, it's crucial to take preventative measures to avoid churn and retain your customers. Two major customer behaviors to keep an eye on: skipping an upcoming order and beginning the process of canceling a subscription.

Offer flexible subscription options

Provide your subscribers with options to tweak their subscription—for example, swapping a flavor rather than skipping a delivery, or delaying an order instead of canceling the subscription. By making it easy for your customers to take advantage of these options, you increase the likelihood that they stick with your business.

Consider a customer winback program

Some amount of customer churn is inevitable, regardless of the mitigation strategies you choose. When it does happen, you can set up automated outreach to try to get them to come back—also known as a customer winback program—in the form of emails, SMS messages, or a combination.

Strategically leverage integration partners

Depending on your tech stack and business needs, you may want to consider finding an integration partner who specializes in customer winbacks. Because these customers have found value in your brand in the past, these relationships are well-worth investing in—especially considering today's rising customer acquisition costs.

SECTION IV RESOURCES

How to tackle subscriber churn

Thought leadership & expert tips



How to mitigate dunning for your subscription business

[Read now →](#)



Why people cancel subscriptions and how to reduce customer churn

[Read now →](#)



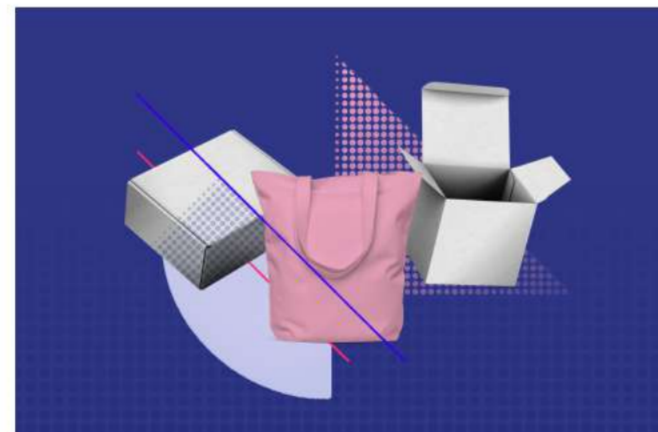
Writing a purpose-driven mission statement

[Read now →](#)



How to customize your cancellation flow

[Read now →](#)



Why churn reduction should be your biggest focus

[Read now →](#)

[Browse top tech partners →](#)

Looking for an integration to tackle passive churn mitigation, email marketing, and customer winbacks? Browse the directory of technology partners in the ecommerce industry to help you optimize your business and reduce churn.

[Connect with an agency partner →](#)

For agency expertise on customizing your customer portal and more, visit the agency partners page.

CONCLUSION

Lasting subscriber relationships

The work for getting the most out of your subscriptions is never truly done. To remain above the competition, make this optimization a recurring part of your business operations.

With the help of this guide and your own internal processes, you can audit your business regularly and make sure that your subscriptions are set up for success as your offerings change and your subscriber base grows.

After all, the world of ecommerce is constantly changing and evolving. The key is to be present for your customers and act as an advocate for their wants and needs.

By continually honing your approach, listening to feedback, and communicating effectively, you can pave the way for lasting subscriber relationships that stand the test of time.





We help you turn transactions into relationships.

Recharge is the leading subscription management solution, helping ecommerce merchants of all sizes launch and scale subscription offerings. Recharge's subscription billing and payment management solutions are designed to help merchants grow by increasing revenue and customer lifetime value while reducing operating costs and churn. Today, Recharge powers subscriptions for more than 50 million subscribers across 15,000 merchants.

rechargepayments.com