How to Engage Your Anonymous Online Visitors through Personalization

Executive overview

It's estimated that on average, 98% of business website visitors stay anonymous, and it's an audience that can't be ignored from a marketing standpoint. According to SBI, 69% of the purchase decision is complete before a customer ever contacts the business. Today's buyers do a lot of research on their own, which means that those anonymous visitors may actually be quite far along in the buyer journey, and by the time a visitor actually contact you, the decision is practically made.

So how do you get the nameless 98% to consider you?

The answer is to woo the anonymous visitor with an engaging, personalized site experience. This paper lays out the whys and hows for engaging the largest audience on your website.

The gap in online marketing

Although the vast proportion of your web visitors will remain anonymous, most businesses are consumed with analyzing the 1-3% that convert to leads via download, sign-up or purchase, ignoring the enormous buying potential of the other 97-99%.

Content Marketing is used by over 90% of businesses, where the focus is on generating enough engaging content for the audience to help them educate themselves on the brand and its unique offerings. But conventional online and content marketing typically neglects the time between when your audience finds you and the time they become known to you – the entire mid-funnel. And there's a cost.

This is exactly where the 97-99% of your anonymous visitors gets lost. Without giving anonymous visitors the right content at the right time and context, you miss the opportunity to grab mindshare as they conduct their online research and before they contact you.

The question, of course, is how to nurture an audience when you don't know them or their interests? This is where Real Time Personalization comes in. There are numerous technologies available to help you understand and engage your anonymous audience and boost your chances of getting final consideration as they complete the buyer journey.

Leveraging Real Time Personalization and taking that extra step gives you the best possible chance to stay in the final consideration set with your audience as they move through their buyer journey. Then, once the potential buyer becomes known, you can use nurturing, marketing automation or a CRM to extend your relationship. But you must cross that anonymous chasm to get there.

Setting goals for anonymous visitor engagement

What can you expect from a [real-time personalization](#) strategy that targets anonymous visitors? Businesses typically have a mix of the following goals:

1. **Getting more leads from the same audience**
    By offering the most relevant content to your entire audience, you get higher conversion rates and make better use of your resources. Our experience shows that conversions can increase by up to 95%. This is a much more cost effective way to get more leads than simply driving more traffic.

2. **Delivering a personal experience**
    Imagine an interested visitor lands on one of your product pages. He or she reads the page, the brochure and a case study and then leaves for a meeting. The next day the same visitor comes back and sees exactly the same page he read yesterday. This would be a great moment to move him forward in the buyer journey by offering targeted but more advanced content such as a highly relevant Webinar.

3. **Understanding your anonymous audience**
    Real-time personalization offers content dynamically to each anonymous visitor based on individual behaviors and characteristics. Analyzing the dynamic content they choose offers insight into anonymous visitor behavior and the anonymous buyer journey vs. static websites that treat all visitors the same.

4. **Optimizing your content**
    Analyzing consumption patterns will give you insights into the best and least productive content on your site. For example, that old white paper that you don't showcase much anymore? Your real-time personalization engine may reveal that it is actually a hit with a certain audience.

5. **Drive better engagement and ROI**
    Matching content to visitors means more of them will actually read your content once they get to your website or blog. So the investment you make into your latest eBook or video will generate more views and downloads.

Why personalize?

Why show visitors the same experience if you can engage with each of them differently and according to their phase in the buyer journey?

Adobe's recent study on digital marketing tactics of US marketers reveals that 33% of respondents chose personalization as top priority, significantly outpacing big data (22%) and social (21%). A study by Econsultancy also supports the trend, showing that more than nine out of 10 business marketers believe that personalization of the web experience is vital to current and future success. The benefits of personalization are clear. According to HubSpot, calls-to-action targeted to the visitor performed 42% better than generic calls to action.

Before personalizing - considerations

There are different approaches to personalization. Some cater only to known visitors; some require manual inputs and rule setting; some require skilled resources while some are more automated. Here are some things to consider.

- **Your goals** – Are you looking for personalization to deliver more leads? Who do you want to benefit from the personalization effort – new/anonymous visitors or existing customers and leads, or both? Are you looking to provide a personal experience on your website only or across your blog and landing pages, too?

- **Your resources** – Can you afford to invest time and effort into personalization and if so how much? Are you looking at low touch or high touch solutions? What is the ongoing required effort to keep personalization up and running? What are the associated costs and personnel commitments? Do you need experts or can the solution of choice be managed by juniors?

- **Does it impact current infrastructure?** – Can you implement personalization with your existing infrastructure or would you need to upgrade software or tools?

- **Can you test it out?** –Is there a free trial available to assess if the larger project will be worthwhile? Does the solution considered land itself to a quick trial or does it require a longer learning curve?

- **Expected ROI** – Given your needs and goals, what is the expected ROI from this project given the different personalization alternatives, their costs and associated resources?

What to look for in personalization solutions

Among the diverse solutions available, there are key capabilities to look for.

1. **Individual profiling.** Some solutions target segments or common behaviors vs. individuals. More sophisticated offerings can target individuals and are more intelligent and comprehensive in their algorithm, tracking parameters such as visitor behavior, crowd behavior, content read or search engine keywords.

2. **Automated.** Setting and managing targeting rules or updating and loading content manually can become difficult to sustain over time, especially as your website and content evolves. Prefer solutions that can profile anonymous visitors automatically as well as discover your content automatically and monitor for content updates independently.

3. **Across the decision journey.** Make sure to engage your audience with the most compelling offers on all possible online engagement points – on your website, while conducting research in professional publications, on social networks or newsletters. For exiting visitors, there is always a second chance to engage your anonymous visitors, it's just a matter of offering the right content and discovering the exit-intent on time. Or, engaging them with their most relevant, personalized content when they visit social networks. You can even begin nurturing them with the right content upon conducting their research in professional publications, leading them to your site.

4. **Integration.** Consolidated reporting is vital so you can have a full picture of your buyer behaviors both before and after buyers become known to you.

5. **Analytics.** Anonymous visitors typically comprise 97-99% of your audience – a group for whom you don't typically have analytics. With the right a capabilities, you can tap into the buying patterns of this huge audience group and leverage that information to generate more leads.

Conclusion

Most businesses online marketing teams are focused on the Top Of Funnel (TOFU) and engaging with the right audience to generate traffic to their website as well as on the Bottom of the Funnel (BOFU) and maximizing revenue from the known buyers/leads.

In between is where the opportunity lies. There is a mass of audience that is finding out about your business every day and visiting your website, blog and landing pages. However on average 98% of these visitors leave, and you will never see them again.

Real Time Personalization presents an opportunity to engage with that middle segment, increase your conversion rate and to find out more about the largest audience group you have.

You just need to make the right choices that fit your specific goals when selecting a real time personalization solution. When done right, our experience is that this can boost your leads by 95%, reduce bounce and increase engagement.

Turn Your Anonymous Visitors Into Leads

"We use BrightInfo to drive deeper engagement into our vast content library. It has been a great investment"

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Serve personalized content recommendations automatically

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