

# E-business and Personalization

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From corner diners to media conglomerates, success in business depends on forging strong relationships. As the surging popularity of e-business pushes the challenge of relationship building into cyberspace, it begs the question: How does a business build a personal relationship without personal interaction? The answer might be found in a new breed of website that adjusts automatically to treat visitors as individuals. It's called Personalization, and it's rapidly changing the way business is done on-line.

The Basics

Need for Speed

E-commerce - they're buying; you're selling. Your customers want the convenience that comes from doing business online. You want to give your customers the information they need to make an informed purchase decision, while respecting the value of their time. By tracking your visitors' movements through your site, Personalization can speed their decision process by giving them all the info they need quickly and efficiently.

Mary, Don't Ya Know Me?

What's more, Personalization makes frequent customers and visitors feel appreciated through personal recognition, while building loyalty with specifically tailored value-added content. It even encourages return visits by suggesting material relevant to each visitor's unique interests.

The Good Stuff

A Home Away from Home

The first step in Personalizing your website is to create a special home page just for return visitors. An alternate home page allows you to acknowledge frequent patrons and to offer them customized information. A unique listing of featured links, special deals, new products and innovations, and press releases can be customized based on your guest's previous visits and posted on a unique home page.

Motion is the Potion

Step two is creating a dynamic site that modifies itself during the course of a visitor's session. A dynamic site is programmed to analyze a visitor's area of interest and/or purchase habits during a session and then tailor the content of the site based on that data. Dynamic sites are capable of suggesting links to pertinent literature and/or products and rearranging web pages to prominently display the most relevant information, while weeding out less appropriate material. The result is an

expedited sales process, resulting in a more educated customer and a more complete sale.

### The Method

#### Suggested Reading

One way to Personalize your site is to use bookmarks. The first step is to create a homepage that is different from the homepage visitors see when they enter your site. Visitors that choose to return to your homepage at some point during their visit are brought to the alternate homepage, where they are prompted to bookmark your site for future reference. Then, when a visitor uses this bookmark to return to your site, they will arrive at a homepage that already acknowledges them as a past visitor - and a little recognition goes a long way in building a relationship.

#### Got Cookies?

Cookies store a record of a visitor's last trip to your website - the pages they visited, the time they spent on each page, and the purchases they made. When they return, your site will use where they've been to offer suggestions on where they might want to go next. This is a great way to pitch specific products or to share new information specifically tailored to their interests. Case studies, application info, specs, new product releases, new component releases, new press releases - the sky's the limit!

### The Bottom Line

Personalization makes visits more targeted, shortening your customers decision process and creating a more complete purchase by proffering a myriad of related info with minimal effort on the part of your visitor.

Personalization makes return visits more fruitful, shortening your visitor's surf time by highlighting pertinent unviewed pages, which in-turn encourages more return visits.

Personalization makes customers feel special, acknowledging their loyalty and patronage with special attention, just like you would do in person.

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