



Reflektion

BUYCOSTUMES

COSTUME EXPRESS

Costumes Are the Pinnacle of Individuality

BuySeasons, Inc. is the parent company to two costume brands, BuyCostumes.com and CostumeExpress.com, and together, they specialize first and foremost in Halloween.

With a catalog of more than one million customizable costume and accessory combinations, the sites offer something for everyone (and literally, their dogs). Naturally they have a tremendous amount of traffic during a relatively short mad rush season leading up to late October.

Which costume to wear is a bold and deeply personal decision and has everything to do with individuality. So how does a retailer, with such a huge assortment of distinct products, merchandise to the individuality of millions of unique costume buyers? After trying several different tactics, the team realized capturing and responding to each individual's real-time shopping intent proved the most effective.



In BuySeason's previous experiences with other forms of personalization, they discovered product-based recommendations and segmentation-based personalization did not work. Why? Not all suburban moms want to dress like bunnies. And most urban hipsters wouldn't be caught dead wearing something not wildly unique.

Segmentation-based tools took months to learn how to present products to different segments. For a site like BuyCostumes.com, which receives a tremendous amount of traffic in a short period of time just before Halloween, waiting months before beginning to define segments is paralyzing. Any intelligence they gained from old school solutions couldn't be put to use until the following year, which is of little help because each season varies greatly in terms of inventory and interests.

Site Wide Conversion Rates increased by

20%

Revenue Per Visit increased by

21%

reflektion.com

BuySeasons took a step back and evaluated the most important priorities that would impact their business. They came up with the following objectives:

1

Accelerate the path to product

2

Generate a higher ROI for paid traffic

3

Replace underperforming segmentation tools

The team quickly discovered that the only way to accomplish these goals was to adjust their strategy in a way that focused on individuals, rather than segments. Just as important, the team decided that given the nature of how people engage with their site during their short season, they needed to respond to shopper interests in real time, rather than be dependant on yesterday's data.



BuySeasons Picked Reflektion To Replace Old School Personalization Attempts

With the realization they needed a radically different solution to meet their new strategic objectives, BuySeasons did a thorough evaluation of the market and ultimately decided to go with Reflektion. They were drawn to the benefits of Reflektion's core approach, which is built around capturing and responding to each individual shopper's intent in real time (something that did not hold true with the other options they evaluated). Reflektion demonstrated an ability to raise conversion rates and revenue per visit in the double digits - a caliber of results the sites had not seen with any other solution.

Intelligent Merchandising by Capturing and Responding to Real-Time Individual Intent

The BuySeasons sites capture and respond to every shopper's intent in real time by paying close attention to each individual visitor's clicks, site searches, and the amount of dwell time spent on product pages. Shoppers begin to reveal their preferences as they engage with products and content that share common attributes such as color, style, size, gender, character, category, etc. For example, based on her behavior, a shopper reveals an interest in dark colored, female items. Reflektion helps the websites recognize these patterns - for each shopper - and enables them to intelligently merchandise accordingly. The shopper's individual preferences dictate how merchandise is presented to her and how her site search results are prioritized.

Product Recommendations

BuySeasons leverages several opportunities across their sites to merchandise items to each individual shopper. The "just for you" section on their homepage reflects the visitor's affinity toward certain attributes in which they have shown interest throughout current and past sessions. It also serves as a guide for exploring new ideas in line with what that individual has in mind for their costume. These intelligent product recommendations, which also appear across Product Detail Pages and on the mobile site, speed up the path to purchase and relieve the shopper from having to sort through thousands of products that get in the way of finding the perfect item.

Site Search

For sites with a vast catalog like BuyCostumes.com, it can be seriously challenging for shoppers to find what they're looking for. For example, there could be more than 400 items that match the search term "animal costume." By understanding the shopper at the individual level, the site can prioritize items around their preferences for specific attributes. For example, a woman sees female focused merchandise and search results exclude less relevant men's and kids products. Additionally, the site starts to combine elements like her preferred colors along with her interest in animals. Without ever needing to ask her what she prefers, the site intuitively presents merchandise that's spot on for her preferences.

With Reflektion's individual-shopper focused approach and visual previews of merchandise that instantly appear while the the user is typing, the search bar is transformed from a clunky text-based dictionary lookup tool into a merchandising solution that resembles a personal shopper.

Results

Site Wide Conversion Rates

↑ 20%

Revenue Per Visit

↑ 21%

When BuySeasons' sites started taking into account the real-time individual intent of their shoppers, an important shift occurred. The shopper's interests, rather than the eCommerce team's best guesses, started to directly dictate the presentation of products and content. Shoppers more quickly discovered the items that expressed their individuality for themselves and their families. As a result, engagement rates increased, with conversion quickly following. And it only got better with time. Curating shopping experiences based on the individual's unique profile has proven to be not only highly effective from the moment someone lands on the site, but also improves over time as the shopper clicks and searches within each session and subsequent visits.

The results of BuySeason's new approach to digital commerce are dramatic and far exceeded their expectations. Overall, across all devices, Conversion Rates jumped 20% and Revenue per Visit increased 21%.