

THE EMAIL PERSONALISATION COOKBOOK FOR TRAVEL



Introduction

Welcome to the email personalisation cookbook for travel.

When I started in email marketing way back in the early 2000s, personalisation was usually nothing more than merging the customer's name into the body of the email.

Since then, we have seen personalisation evolve from creating several variants of 'dynamic content' tailored to different customer types through to seeing more of what is termed 'individualisation' – where each element of the email is chosen specifically for the individual recipient.

The growth of email personalisation has been driven largely by the results it has proven to generate time and again, with research suggesting that it can generate 6x the revenue than 'batch and blast' messaging.

Yet there is a shortage of email personalisation best practice material that helps marketers overcome the pitfalls, come up with fresh ideas, or simply to separate the buzz words from the realities.

This is the reason I decided to write this book and share our decades of experience in email personalisation.

When I ran my first email personalisation campaigns, we seemed to be breaking new ground not covered by other email marketers. Harder still, there wasn't any 'best practices' or experts to fall back on either. As a result, we took many wrong turns along the way.

With this book, we hope to put you and your business on the right track from the start of your email personalisation projects by:

- Understanding the unique requirements of email for personalisation
- Planning your email personalisation projects and where to start
- Fresh ideas of what is possible with email personalisation

We hope you enjoy the cookbook and wish you all the success in your email personalisation projects.

Sean Duffy
Founder & CEO Reignite

How to use the cookbook

The primary purpose of the cookbook is to help email marketers with the planning of email personalisation strategies as well as provide you with concepts, inspiration, an idea of the data and technology required, along with an understanding of how to make basic forecasts of potential returns, aiding prioritisation.

When we talk about personalisation in this cookbook, we primarily refer to the selection of what product content to display to each individual customer. However, we also cover tailoring promotions, additional customer touchpoints, using contextual data such as location and weather, and how to retain creativity while adding personalisation.

Who is this cookbook for?

If you send a lot of marketing emails and are looking for fresh ideas and inspiration, or you are struggling with personalisation projects, or simply unsure of where to start, then this cookbook is a great starting point.

While we provide recipes to follow, this is not a technical guide. Rather, it will assist you with thinking about what to prioritise, the standards you should be aiming for, and the logic behind the personalisation.

Using the cookbook with Reignite

Reignite is our email personalisation solution that integrates with every email-sending solution. The recipes within this cookbook are easily implemented within Reignite using the 'Recipe Builder' to create bespoke personalisation algorithms to meet the requirements of the campaign. Additionally, they will help you to overcome many specific challenges of personalisation for email including: creating your own merchandising rules; ensuring you inspire customers with a diverse set of products; controlling how often customers see the same items, and; seeing in advance what the product listings will look like for different customers.

If you would like to see how Reignite can help improve your email personalisation, visit our website (www.reignitehq.com) to request a demo.

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Why Personalisation?

I doubt there are many of you reading this who don't believe that personalisation is a good thing, especially for email marketing. That said, it's worth spending a few minutes restating why it's so important.

First of all, consumers are starting to demand it. Here is just a small portion of the statistics that back this up:

55% Unsubscribe because of irrelevant information

In the same report consumers were asked to describe what they like about brands that do emails well. Here is the word cloud:



35% want content related to items they purchased in the past

31% want content based upon their location
(Email Addiction Research Report 2019, zettasphere/emailmonday²)

62% of consumers feel “happy” and “excited” to respond to a personalised message from a retailer
(Dynamic Yield Research³)

And finally, from my lived experience as a marketer, here is a typical comment I heard when talking to consumers:

“I always open <retailer name> emails because there is always something of interest to me”

- Emailcenter, UK Consumer Views on Email Marketing

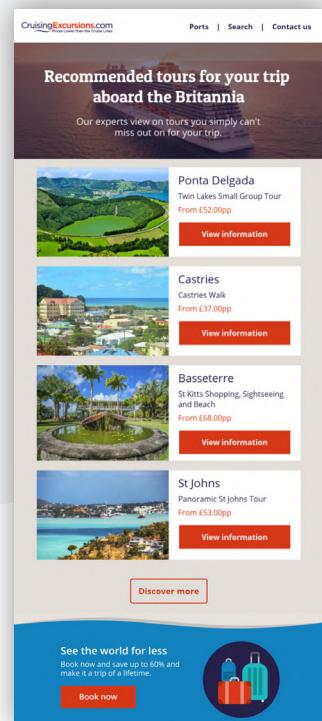
Along with the demand from consumers, we also know marketers see a greater performance when using personalised campaigns. Here are some statistics to support that:

- 74% of marketers say targeted personalisation increases customer engagement (Econsultancy Quarterly Digital Intelligence Briefing⁴)
- Personalised emails drive 6x transaction rates (Experian Email Marketing Study⁵)
- Segmented & targeted emails generate 58% of all revenue (DMA National Email Client Report⁶)
- Marketers see an average increase of 20% in sales when using personalised experiences (Monetate⁷)

Real-life email personalisation results

CruisingExcursions.com
Prices Lower than the Cruise Lines

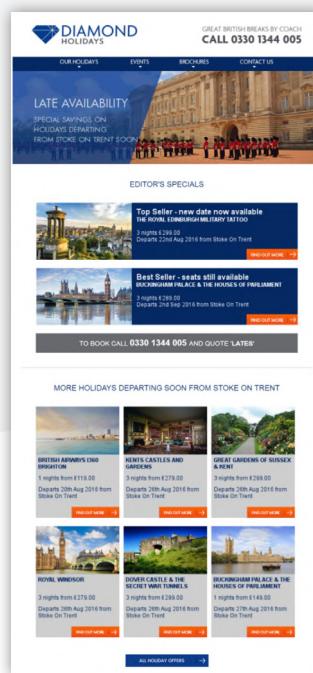
£1.92 revenue per email sent from the personalised upsell email that recommended excursions for their upcoming cruise.



DIAMOND HOLIDAYS

A 312% increase in revenue per email from personalised late availability campaigns.

Coach tours are personalised to pickup points within 10 miles of the customer's home



PetsPyjamas

Where Passionate Pet Lovers Go

Generated 98% increase in enquiry & booking rates with a personalised postcard showing recommended holidays for their next trip

PetsPyjamas Post

Hi Django, Toby and Iggi

I'm on a fabulous dog friendly holiday thanks to PetsPyjamas! I've been enjoying lots of walks and PetsPyjamas even sent me a very special travel kit!

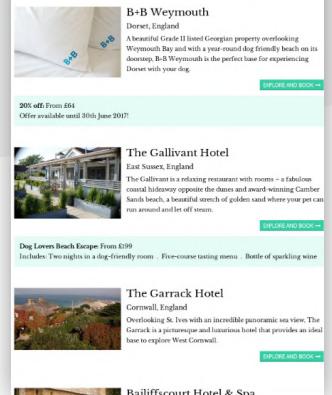
You should definitely book your own doggie break. Just give their free expert Pet Concierge team a call on 0203 642 3162. Best of all, we go free!

Bow-wow for now!

Monty

TAKE A PEEK

We think you'll love these DOG-FRIENDLY DESTINATIONS



Why are so few email marketers pursuing personalisation?

73% of marketers say less than half of their emails contain any personalisation.

A study by Pure360 and Holistic Email Marketing⁸ showed that even when personalisation was used, it was of a basic form, with few emails achieving a 1:1 level of personalisation. Some could argue that much of this isn't actually personalisation, but rather segmentation.

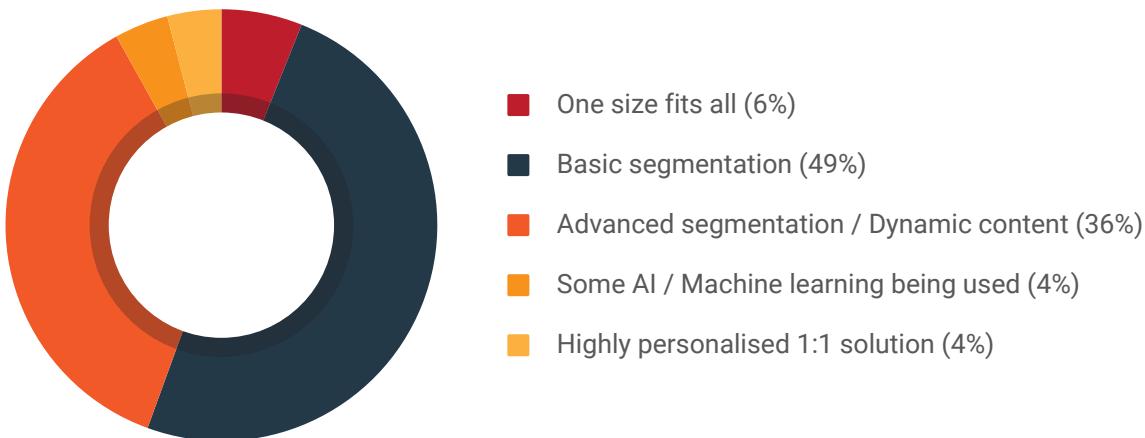


Figure 10: Select your current ability to personalise within email

The same research also highlights some of the reasons for this:

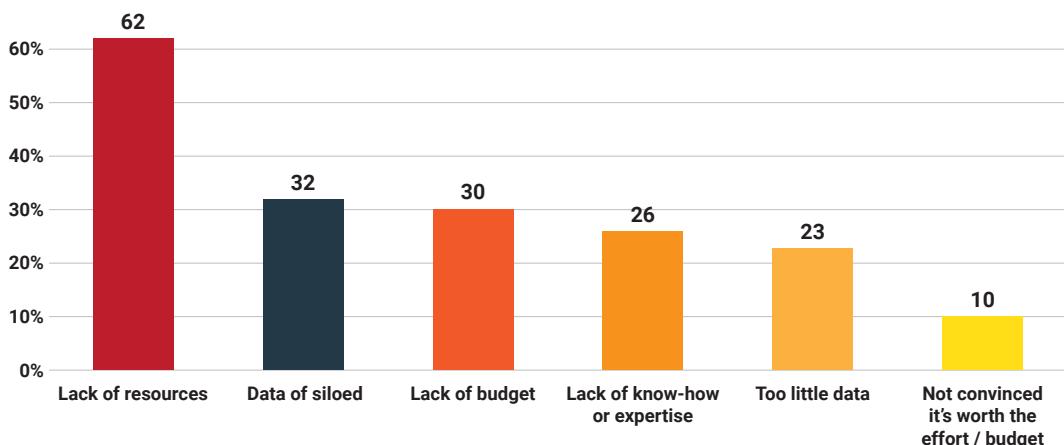


Figure 12: What is preventing you from delivering a more advanced personalisation strategy? (select as many as applicable)

62% state a lack of resources. This is something most email marketers can resonate with as they are so busy fulfilling their current schedule of emails. We liken it to a hamster pedalling on a wheel - no matter how fast you pedal, you stay in the same place.

Adding personalisation does take a lot of effort, however, this is something we believe is changing and our own technology and client experience show it can actually reduce manual production tasks, thus saving time.

The other key reason that isn't generally borne out of research studies, but can be observed wherever you look, is the need for businesses to control what holiday content goes into the email and what specific promotions are shown, with what frequency in order to meet short-term commercial goals.

Too many personalisation activities are side-lined when a brand has to change focus on simply getting more promotional emails out to the masses.

Email will always be the main push channel that allows fast delivery of short-term revenue gains and to support key business initiatives, whether that is pushing certain destinations, supporting supplier partnerships, or late availability. While we can dream of a world where all messages are completely customer-centric, the hard, cold, commercial reality is that won't happen.

Instead, to ensure personalisation works, we have to embrace this commercial reality; something that, as you read through the recipes, will become apparent.

Some examples of merging commercial reality with personalisation includes:

- ✓ Late availability campaigns tailored to the customers local airports
- ✓ Ability to prioritise 'own brand' or high margin holidays in personalised listings
- ✓ Support commercial partnerships by targeting their holidays to those customers with the closest preferences rather than 'blast' the whole database

What do we mean by personalisation in email marketing?



With the demand for personalisation from email marketers being so high, it's inevitable that every technological solution under the sun claims to be a personalisation solution when, in reality, it's anything but.

So, we all know that 'Hi <Firstname>' isn't a type of personalisation that is meaningful in the context of this cookbook. But we also see solutions that claim to offer personalised holiday content to every recipient that are also not. Best sellers and new or 'trending' holidays are simplistic algorithms that are often claimed to be recommendation flavours but will show the same to all.

My personal take on what true personalisation really is, is that it's about content that is tailored to each individual's tastes and preferences. It is here that the performance of personalisation can be observed at scale. The following is an example of an email that takes that individualised approach:

The image displays two versions of a travel agency's email newsletter, 'MYTRAVEL', side-by-side. Both versions feature a circular profile picture of a woman at the top. The left version shows deals for Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Montenegro, and India. The right version shows deals for Malta, Sri Lanka, Greece, Lanzarote, and Thailand. Both versions include a 'START YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE' header, a 'SAVE UP TO 30% IN OUR NEW YEAR SALE' banner, and a 'BOOK NOW' button. The deals are presented in a grid format with images, destination names, discount percentages, activity descriptions, star ratings, and price details. At the bottom of each email is a 'SEARCH ALL DEALS' button.

Both customers get the same email, but the products are tailored to their different tastes based upon past purchase and browsing activity

How you get to this level of personalisation often takes several steps. Think of an imaginary staircase with each step generating additional benefits, but takes additional thought and resources to achieve:



Let's go through each of these steps, and discuss the pro's and con's of each approach.

► **Segmentation**

Strictly speaking, this isn't personalisation but we include it here because so many refer to this as such. Segmentation, in the context of email, is sending different emails to different groups of customers based upon a series of rules.

This could be a destination-specific promotion to those that previously travelled to the destination. The obvious problem with this approach is that it requires a lot of manual creation of email content; something that most email teams don't have the resource for.

Revenue per email will be much higher than 'batch and blast' but it's much harder to reach the same volumes of emails sent to realise this increase.

The other area we might see segmented campaigns is triggered messaging, such as booking abandonment or welcome emails. These are, in reality, a segmented email with the criteria simply being 'abandoned booking today'.

Pro's:

- ✓ Easy & quick to get started
- ✓ Ideal for test cases proving personalisation delivers additional revenue

Cons:

- ✓ Requires significant additional production resources
- ✓ Content still tends to be fairly generic rather than personalised to individuals taste

► **Dynamic Content**

A step up from segmentation is Dynamic Content. This is where a single email is sent to the whole audience, but the content is varied within the message based upon rules.

If we take the destination promotion further, you might have a rule for those whose last holiday was to Spain, another for Portugal and so on.

While an improvement from segmentation, it still lacks scalability as you are limited by the amount of time you have to both create the content for each variation, and the number of rules you can write.

Pro's:

- ✓ Potential for more personalised combinations than segmentation
 - ✓ Easy to keep evolving and adding to
-

Cons:

- ✓ Personalisation is limited to the number of rules and associated content you have time to produce
- ✓ Can require advanced coding skills to implement in many email marketing systems

► **Content Personalisation Algorithms**

In a small number of email platforms, there is an option to create your own basic algorithms for pulling content in. Rather than writing a rule for each variation, these will pull content based upon data in a customer field.

For example, if we again use the destination example, the algorithm will fetch products that match the customer's 'last destination' field in the platform. This means you can cater for many more variants and not have to manually build each variant. You can do a one-time setup and use it for any campaigns going forward without extra effort.

However, these options tend to prevent marketers from having granular control over what is shown. You might be able to display the holidays in order of popularity, but very little control after that. This includes the problem of showing the same holidays in every personalised email you send, so the list of products quickly becomes stale and less effective.

There is also the issue of what data is available for the algorithm to generate results. You might know the destination a customer visited previously, but they may have only ever purchased it once. Therefore, they can only be used to recommend more of the same than assist with breadth.

Pro's:

- ✓ Can generate content per individual for less effort than manual personalisation rules
- ✓ Setup once, low ongoing maintenance required

Cons:

- ✓ Often lack granular merchandising control over the results shown or repeat the same items each time
- ✓ Only uses known or past behaviour to personalise, leading to a cycle or recommending more of what they have just bought

► Artificial Intelligence (AI) Product Recommendations

With the content algorithms, we discussed a weakness that they only return items based upon known past purchases or preferences.

AI Recommendations try to overcome this by using the past purchase data to find similar customers who also bought the same items and then look at what those individuals also bought. It's the same principle you see on Amazon with 'customers who bought this product also bought these items'.

These recommendation systems promise a lot. For little effort beyond dropping a few tags into your template, they enable you to add fresh product content that is tailored to your customer's specific tastes. Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Not all solutions are created equal.

The quality of the results delivered by any AI is down to two factors:

1. The quality of the algorithm
2. The quality and breadth of the data used

Many of these recommendation products are generic black-box algorithms, where the nature of how the algorithm works is hidden in mystery. The exact same algorithm and data inputs are expected to work equally well for every type of business - from luxury fashion retailers to online travel agencies and discount stores. It is absurd to suggest this can work optimally for every business.

The lack of control over results can create practical issues, too. Will the recommendations show the same items in every email the customer opens? How do you stop the results from being filled with one type of holiday? Can you control what gets shown with merchandising rules? There is no point in sending a late deals promo with products recommended that are no longer available.

Then there are those AI Recommendations that aren't really personalisation solutions at all, but offer flavours like 'Best Sellers' or 'New Products' - they are simply generic lists of products that everyone will see.

You might at this point be thinking why is this at the top of the email personalisation ladder if there are so many issues? We have highlighted the potential pitfalls because there is such a range of hyped solutions being offered to email marketers in this area that it's vital to separate the good from not-so-good.

The better solutions give the marketer greater control over the nature of the algorithm and the results are shown to provide the ultimate level of personalisation (all while saving them significant email production time).

Pro's:

- ✓ The greatest potential for matching product content to customer tastes
- ✓ Can assist with promoting a breadth of relevant items, even when a customer has purchased only one or two items previously

Cons:

- ✓ Buyer beware: AI solutions are only as good as the algorithm and the data that is used in the algorithm
- ✓ Solutions often lack the granular level of control to use at scale across a range of email campaigns

► **A Note on 'Real-time Email' Solutions**

Growing in popularity are real-time email content solutions. These work by inserting image tags in the email that adapt the moment they are opened. This allows the content to be personalised based upon contextual factors such as the current time, weather in the location, or the customer's proximity to their nearest store.

Critics would argue that without additional data and logic to make decisions on the right content for each individual, their value is limited.

However, these play a welcome part in email personalisation and can have other benefits. One such way includes having a simplified and agile approach to integrating personalised content into the email without having to worry about the restrictions of the email-sending platform's personalisation suite.

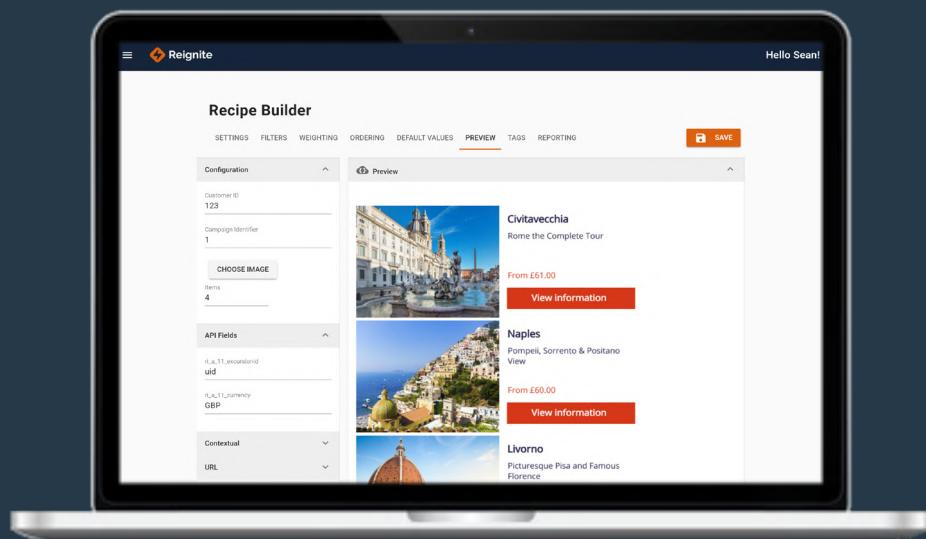
Some of the more innovative creative emails over the last few years have been developed with real-time email content platforms due to the ability to produce personalised images with no restrictions on styles or fonts like traditional HTML emails suffer from.



The Email Personalisation Platform

Reignite is an industry-first email personalisation platform that works with **every** email marketing sending service.

Designed for the specific challenges of email personalisation, Reignite can both create new revenue opportunities for brands while helping email teams reduce email production time with content automation.



- ✓ Unique 'Recipe Builder' for crafting personalised content
- ✓ Create your own AI Product Recommendations
- ✓ Real-time email content & dynamic content tools with Photoshop like editor
- ✓ Expert team of personalisation specialists support you at every stage

Learn more and request a demo at

www.reignitehq.com

Personalisation and the specific needs of email

We've discussed the different levels of personalisation, from manually created segments and dynamic content rules through to 1-2-1 personalisation.

Yet what are the specific considerations for the email channel in particular?

► Email's Role is to Inspire The Next Purchase

Most personalisation outside of email, such as on-site recommendations, work by calculating what the customers intent is in their current browsing session through the searches and product pages they have viewed. The objective here is to attempt to convert the customer to buy those items right now.

Email is different - the customer hasn't visited our site; it's us who have chosen to send them a message. Some of these customers might not have visited your site in over a year and are not currently in booking mode. Our email is there to inspire that next booking; to encourage them to click to visit and find something to book.

Instead of trying to be as close as possible to their last intent, you need to show a variety of holidays across different categories.

► Shop Window

In a similar vein to inspiration, it's useful to think about email as your shop window. I was once told the merchandising strategy for the footwear retailer I worked for. They would only buy a very small amount of more colourful shoes. I'd get frustrated as we had wonderful photography of these items, but we would never have enough stock to push them in email.

The reason I was given is they are used for dressing the shop window; to attract people knowing that they will all end up buying the black or brown version of the shoe!

Visual merchandising of the shop window needs to intrigue customers, but also create the entire ambience for the store. The goal is to attract attention quickly inside 3 seconds and hold it long enough to encourage them to walk through the door.

While this is a retail centric example, the exact same rules apply to your email campaigns in travel. If you were to look at what people booked or enquired about after they clicked on your email, it's always surprising how many people book about something different to what they click on. And we know most people will open the message only for a few seconds.

Personalisation for email isn't about predicting exactly what specific holiday someone will buy, but rather about delivering them a variety of trips that are within their taste in a format that captures and holds that attention. This means upweighting more attractive or intriguing trips in the results. The best example of this is work I was involved in with a UK cottage holidays operator. In their emails they insisted on picking the lowest price cottages to promote but that meant imagery of unattractive shacks, or a huge arrow pointing to where the tiny part of the building that is a holiday rental.

► **Freshness**

With most brands sending several email campaigns a week to their lists, marketers who choose product content generally ensure they don't pick the same items each time. If you're using an automated solution to personalise, there is a danger that you can fatigue your database if the results are always the same. Therefore, once a holiday is seen by an individual in an email, you need to ideally hide the item from further emails for several days.

► **Campaign Themes**

Every campaign calendar will have a variety of themes to follow. Some of them will be key calendar events like Half-term breaks, others will be product-centric around destination or holiday types and more again will be tied to specific promotions.

Email has the challenge of matching personalisation to each of these themes. There is no point in including items outside of the theme, so control is needed on what gets selected each time.

► **Business Priorities**

As previously discussed, email is used as a means of delivering short-term sales uplifts as it's the only channel that can deliver the scale of sales for the cost.

This also means personalisation has to adapt to these requirements with the ability to include late availability that needs to be shifted, higher-margin holidays, or supporting commercial relationships from key partners who have perhaps paid for added exposure.

That is not to say personalisation should be moved to one side, but we need to layer in these requirements. For example, if you are pushing late availability, we can still highlight the late deals trips within each individual's taste such as destination or departing airport.

Or maybe it's simply having a merchandising rule within your recommendations that pushes trips higher in the results if they generate a better margin.

The Ingredients of Email Personalisation

Before we move into the recipes within this cookbook, we need to talk a little about the 'ingredients' you'll be using.

► Planning & Analysis

What does effective personalisation look like for your brand? You can probably take an educated stab at what means you would choose different holidays for different customers. But a better way is simply to look at the existing data you have.

A great starting point for this is to look at those customers who have made it to two bookings. What are the patterns between the first and second bookings? Is there a strong correlation between destination, departure airport, property features or cruise ship?

Focussing just on first to second booking cuts out a lot of the noise from your very best customers that are more likely to buy across many holiday types, while still giving you a significant volume of data without the bias of seasonal influences.

This will then give you a starting point to base your first few initiatives from with confidence these patterns already exist, and, therefore, you can help accelerate them.

Yes, over time you'll want to look way beyond the second booking as you encourage breadth of spending across multiple holiday types, perhaps pushing more short-breaks to those customers who always book the traditional 2 weeks in the sun every summer. But it's always better to start simple and build upon these learnings.

Here is an example showing the cruise ship of the first booking versus the cruise ship from the second booking (we have hidden ship names to protect the identity of the brand). The percentage shown in each cell is the proportion from the first booking ship that book the ship on their 2nd booking.

2nd Ship Booked

1st Ship Booked	% of Bookings	Ship 1	Ship 2	Ship 3	Ship 4	Ship 5	Ship 6
Ship 1	22%	36.55%	10.52%	30.65%	9.42%	4.74%	2.40%
Ship 2	2%	28.79%	5.05%	38.89%	17.68%	2.53%	2.53%
Ship 3	27%	21.51%	7.30%	57.34%	5.18%	3.41%	1.85%
Ship 4	38%	7.07%	8.08%	19.19%	42.42%	0.00%	5.05%
Ship 5	7%	19.90%	10.20%	18.37%	22.45%	17.35%	2.04%
Ship 6	4%	26.75%	13.38%	28.03%	13.38%	10.19%	3.82%

What the table also shows is over 87% of the bookings are for ships 1, 3 and 4. There are so few cruises available for the other ships by the very nature anyone who rebooks is unlikely to book on the same ship again.

But we can see there is a clear pattern that the customers choose to rebook on the same ship over others.

The initial thought is perhaps this is related to going to the same destinations. When we look at first booking versus second booking at region level we can see the same patterns don't follow:

2nd Region Booked

1st Region Booked	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5
Region 1	29.93%	19.73%	1.70%	7.82%	30.61%
Region 2	11.72%	18.80%	5.54%	11.44%	48.86%
Region 3	17.37%	25.77%	5.88%	7.56%	40.90%
Region 4	18.18%	27.53%	5.30%	5.56%	40.91%
Region 5	19.62%	24.75%	7.31%	8.80%	36.08%

Region 5 followed by region 2 are the dominant regions for cruises (again we have protected the commercial sensitivity of the data by amorphising the regions) but the least likely to book region 2 on the 2nd booking is those who booked region 2 the first time around.

If we were to drill down into the regions further you would see even where the same region is booked there is very minimal customers returning to the same destinations.

Customers tend to follow the same ship more and prefer different experiences each time and this is useful to underpin your personalisation strategy by making ship the anchor of messaging, and actively using past destinations visited to promote others.

This is fine for targeting existing travellers but a big part of our email campaign activity is focussed on those yet to book. Therefore we repeated similar analysis based upon prospects and the first region they searched for online, and the region they ultimately booked:

2nd Product View

1st Product View	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
Area 1	43%	49%	6%	1%	1%
Area 2	17%	70%	11%	1%	1%
Area 3	7%	26%	65%	1%	1%
Area 4	8%	17%	11%	49%	15%
Area 5	6%	13%	12%	1%	68%

As you would expect there is a strong correlation between what they search for and where they book. But this highlights the need to not treat all customers with the same personalisation strategies.

The takeaway from this is not to replicate the learnings from the above – you might well see customers with a same destination or even same hotel in the same month rebook year after year, but to understand both repeat booking and prospect tastes to form foundations for how you might create personalised campaign themes to support this.

Beyond specific taste, it's also important to think about when customers will book. So many marketers we come across have fixed ideas of when it's OK to talk to a customer about their next booking. Perhaps it's at least 3 months they returned home, for fear of bothering them or because they deem that the time someone becomes lapsed.

Instead, look at the actual data. 9 times out of 10, you'll probably find that the patterns differ to what you assume.

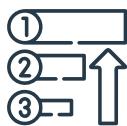
Here is the same cruise company who looked at after returning home, how quickly did customer's rebook:

Speed to Rebook	% of Repeat Bookings	Cumulative Repeat Bookings
Within 30 days	32.85%	32.85%
Within 6 months	19.85%	52.70%
Within 1 year	14.13%	66.83%
Within 2 years	8.05%	74.88%
Over 2 years	25.12%	100.00%

This shows that 1/3 of those that go onto rebook do so within the first 30 days, and only 1/3 of those that rebook take more than 1 year. If you don't get the booking in the first year you are unlikely to get it.

These timings always surprise marketers but it's crucial to understand as leaving either repeat purchase activity or lapsed campaigns for too long can dramatically lessen the chances of bringing customers back. Knowing this allows you to plan what additional campaigns need to be in place to target these customers and when incentivisation might be appropriate.

These examples are just a flavour of what data to investigate but hopefully provide inspiration of where to start with planning personalisation.



Where to prioritise?

First of all, you'll see there are more than 10 'recipes' in this book and this list isn't exhaustive. Not all of these will apply to your brand but you need to decide where to start. To do this, it's a case of what is going to give you the biggest bang for the lowest amount of effort.

Again, there isn't an exact science to this. You need to use your judgement and experience to estimate what sort of uplift in performance each campaign could give you.

In our sister book focussing on retail email personalisation we give examples of this 'back of an envelope' maths against each recipe. Yet with travel there are so many more variables across click rates, conversion rates, margin, booking frequency and more. Trying to provide a method of forecasting that would work for all travel brands didn't make any sense so we have removed this from our recipes in this edition.

Instead we provide some guidance here on how you might begin to forecast the potential uplift from various email personalisation strategies.

Enhancing existing campaigns

If you are adding personalisation to existing campaigns then a straight estimate of a percentage uplift in revenue is easy to apply. At a minimum replacing existing generic holiday selections with personalised options should deliver 10%, but often between 30-60%.

Additional Frequency

For recipes where they simply provide you with the option of increasing your send frequency you would expect to see roughly a pro-rata uplift. That being if you are manually sending 2 emails a week, but add a 3rd automated this should increase revenue by around 50%. There will be some diminishing returns of the increased frequency, but this is offset by the higher response rate of personalised content.

Strategic Wins

Many of these recipes will represent additional automated campaigns that are sent. With no prior email benchmark we recommend looking at the KPI you are trying to influence, and estimate a realistic incremental uplift that could be achieved as a result of extra email activity.

For example, if you plan on adding a rebooking campaign and you manage 50,000 departures per annum, but only 15% of these rebook this gives you 7,500 existing return travellers. If you think it's realistic that an personalised email campaign might increase this by 5% this gives you 375 additional bookings. At an average booking value of £750 this equates to £281,250 incremental revenue per annum.

Adding Scale

There is a danger with personalisation that revenues fall short of expectation because the amount of effort involved in setting up a campaign cannot be repeated without the same effort again. This is why you should explore how a one-off campaign could be easily adapted to be sent monthly for perhaps 10% of the effort each time, multiplying your return by 12 for the year.

All of these methods of forecasting are not designed to present targets but simply to find a quick way of comparing the options to have some semblance of a priority order to tackle the easiest wins that deliver the biggest returns first.



Measurement

As personalisation attempts often start with fairly engaged, active customers, they can automatically look successful as open, click, and conversion rates are far higher than your weekly 'blast' sends. That is as much the nature of the audience as your personalisation, who will be way above average in terms of engagement rates.

So, to judge your personalisation effectiveness you have two main options.

Firstly, you can compare the same audience's performance of one of your recent non-personalised campaigns versus the personalised email. This will give you a reasonable level of confidence if you see an uplift in the proportion of those who got both emails responding more to the personalised version.

But by far the best approach is to keep a hold-out group of a random percentage of those who qualify for the email from receiving it and ideally send a generic message instead. Comparing the revenue activity of both groups then enables you to confidently judge if there was an incremental uplift from personalisation, or if it simply would have occurred anyway.

► **Data**

It goes without saying that data and how that data is transformed is a key ingredient. Don't despair though - most of this data you probably already have, or certainly can easily access.



Product data

There is a strong likelihood that you already have a product catalogue for the purposes of Google Shopping Ads and similar types of campaigns. You can then use this as your source for populating your email with recommended products.

Yet in travel as with most things it's never quite that simple. Compared to retail brands there are multi-layers around a 'product'. At one level a product might be a package holiday. Yet that can be broken down into each departure date, from each airport, with differing durations and board and accommodation levels. Each has a different price, and each has differing availability. The most retail ever have to think about is if something is in stock in shoe size 7.

For this reason travel normally needs a variety of product feeds to support different personalisation use cases, and a means of handling the complex question of 'Is this holiday available'.

The richness of these feeds helps with what can be achieved - the more data you have against the products in the file, the more you can achieve both in the filtering of what is shown (perhaps by destination or airport and, of course, future availability) or by ranking (such as best sellers, most viewed or top-rated).



Customer data

Under this, we can count booking history, browsing behaviour, enquiries and preference data. Handily, much of this data is often available in your email marketing platform already. Having this data in aggregate form is particularly useful for making personalisation decisions. For example, last destination, favourite airport, or a field with a list of all holiday IDs booked are examples of this.

► Logic

Once you have the data, the next key ingredient is logic to make sense of it and filter what is shown to customers.



Filters

These can be generic such as 'Holiday is available', 'Destination = Spain', but to tailor products to specific customer tastes, this might also have rules such as 'Destination = [favourite destination]' where the destination could be different for each customer or perhaps 'Tour ID NOT IN [Past tours booked]'.



Diversity

This logic ensures the results have some variety in them, whether that is a variety of destinations or holiday types. Without this, an email can become uninspiring with certain holiday types dominating all the slots in the email.



Sleep Rules

When manually selecting products to show in email campaigns, marketers typically ensure they don't pick the same ones time and again. When leaving the decision of what to select to an algorithm, there is a danger that the algorithm will pick the same ones over and over again. A simple solution is to have what we call 'sleep rules' where you prevent the same items from being shown to the same person in any given time period, such as 7 days.



Ranking

How you choose to prioritise what to show can be handled by ranking rules. Here are some of the options

— Product Recommendations Algorithms

Typically generated by Artificial Intelligence, these models will rank each product in priority order for each customer. The nature and quality of these algorithms can vary considerably but these predictions have the advantage of surfacing unique products to each individual with minimal maintenance.

— Product Popularity & Recency

At the simplest level, ranking can be achieved just by showing the most popular based upon sales, or recency based upon the date they became available. On their own, this ranking won't generate particularly effective results, but combining with other rules, such as filtering based upon

the customers favourite destination, gives a simple method for adding personalised products.

— **Weightings**

Rather than have a fixed ordering approach, an alternative is to use weightings to push certain holidays higher or lower in the returned results. There are a few reasons for doing this. Perhaps as a business, you need to give more prominence to packages in a promotion. Or maybe you want to boost more tours with a higher margin or large amounts of unsold availability. Or perhaps you simply want to boost a product's chances of appearing if it's in the customer's favourite category or destination. Weightings give you more control over the personalisation shown than basic ranking.

► Tools & Technology

The obvious starting point for email personalisation functionality should be the email marketing platform you are using. However, nearly all email platforms have limited functionality in this area. For example, they might be able to store endless information about your customers, but product data has nowhere to go and no means of building logic other than handwritten dynamic content rules.

You will see some platforms offer features like Product Recommendations, but these tend to be of limited scope and often lack the ability to control the logic of how the personalised content is shown.

This is why there are so many personalisation solutions that integrate with the email marketing platforms, either by providing an API that pulls the results into the email at the point of send or more commonly, by providing standard HTML tags to add to the email that fetches the personalised content at the moment of open by each recipient.

Designing Effective Product Layouts for Email



A key part of all personalised campaigns is the products shown. This can be a challenge when personalising as you want to avoid them looking like a dull, uninspiring grid.

Here are our top tips for creating effective product layouts for email personalisation:

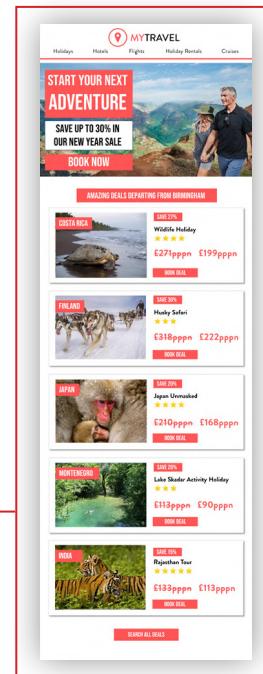


Variety of product

Critical to the feel of the email is the actual products themselves.

Where appropriate, a variety of holiday types should be displayed. In Reignite, we have a 'diversity' feature that allows you to specify what product data point you want (such as destination, airport, or category) to ensure there is a variety. Without this type of logic, there is a danger that personalised products are dominated by one type.

Recipe shows one item per style with eye catching colours pushed higher in results

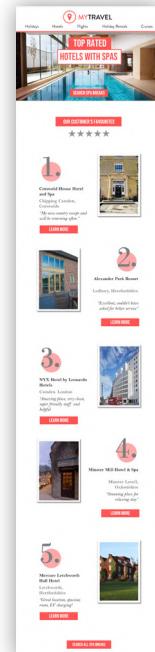


Non-rigid layouts

While scanning the email, the human eye will be looking for visual cues on where to focus. To aid this scanning, and encourage scrolling, it's best to avoid lots of straight horizontal breakpoints.

Instead, consider designing layouts that are less grid-like and use mixed patterns. Perhaps alternate between left and right alignment of product images and overlapping sections.

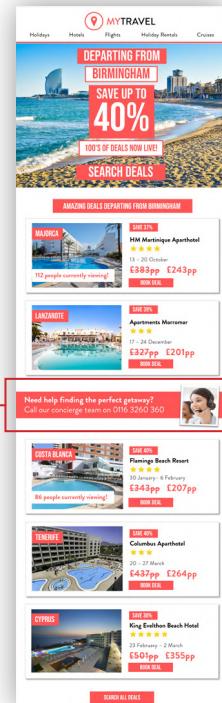
A basic rigid layout can make the personalised holidays look like they are picked by a machine when you should be aiming for a tailored look and feel where possible





Break it up

Interrupting the list of products with alternative content is another way of aiding scanning and scrolling of the email. This can be achieved with some simple banners.



Simple use of a next-day delivery banner breaks up the grid and aids scrolling down the email



Fresh Layouts

Email content that is repeated time and again can become like wallpaper to recipients, so keep rotating through designs and layouts, even if it's just a colour wave change.



Mobile Friendly

Typically, 80% of opens are on mobile devices, so it goes without saying that any layout needs to work on both larger screens (desktop and tablet) and on smaller phones.

Template coders can sometimes be guilty of choosing to stack everything though and overstating the requirements to cater for the smaller screen. Mobile phone resolutions are very high, so don't rule out a two-column structure as this is usually large enough to see and click, and benefits from the recipient not needing to scroll as much.



Product Badges

There are additional opportunities for highlighting products and influencing recipients with the use of product badges where appropriate.

Product badges, also known as stickers or labels, are often seen on website product listings pages where they are overlaid on product images with a relevant piece of information, such as limited availability, or if the product is a best seller.

These can invoke psychological triggers with your recipients as they can use scarcity, urgency, and social proof-influencing techniques.

Here are some examples to consider:



Social Proof

Add Ratings & Reviews stars or how many sold today or even how many are looking at this holiday right now.



Product Attributes

Add labels such as Top Rated, Most Wanted, New or Award winning to highlight key products.



Urgency

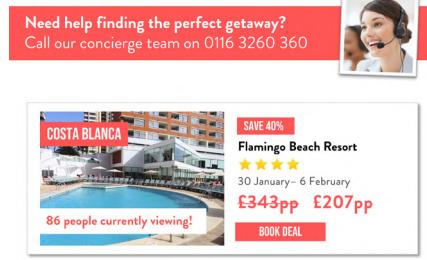
'Limited spaces remain' or similar messages on items where availability is low will help drive immediate action.



Savings

For products on offer, highlight the savings in a prominent badge.

Example email layout using a variety of badges overlaid on the product images



The Recipes

Unlike a traditional cookbook these recipes don't give you step-by-step instructions, rather they are designed to:

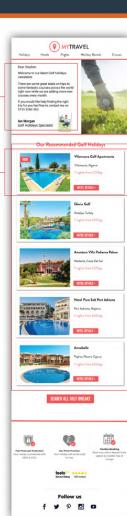
- Inspire new ideas that translate to your brand
- Highlight the workings of the recipe, helping you plan data and merchandising requirements, whether you are using a platform like the Reignite Recipe Builder, or working with internal tech teams

Recipe Format

Each recipe has 3 sections:

1. The visual design showing one version of the personalised email, including layout, hierarchy and other merchandising considerations
2. A rational behind how this recipe can solve key business challenges
3. The description of the recipe and the logic that is used to determine what is shown for each individual recipient

Underserved Segments



1

Underserved segments in marketing are usually referred to as 'market niches' where there are very few – if any – suppliers serving their specific needs. In CRM though, we use the term to describe segments within your database that are valuable with a strong lifetime value, have fairly specific needs that differ from the customer profile. These segments are typically fairly small, so there usually isn't a specialist treatment for them as there aren't enough resources in the team. Examples in travel include solo travellers, which, while booking the same trips as families, have different needs and requirements. They may also have specific interests, such as an activity like walking, golf or scuba diving. So, if these are small segments, why are we even bothering to do anything extra? Well, that's because, per segment member, they are above average in value and usually easier to retain and get spending more as there is less competition. We can also serve these segments using semi-automated emails, meaning they can receive an email every week, month, or however often you choose, with little, if any, extra effort on your part. By doing so, you are effectively adding additional revenue you would otherwise not achieve.

2

For a specialist email, it makes sense to again utilise a personal approach by introducing the email from a real person, giving the email greater authority. This heading is fairly simple text with a straightforward image, thus can be created very quickly each time. The time-consuming part of including products is handled automatically by the personalisation algorithm. This fetches hotels based on (and refined by) the recommendation algorithm of similar travellers. It draws upon destination choices, browsing data, and enquiries that closely matches our target customer. In this case, only hotels with a golf course are included while prior destinations the traveller have stayed at have been excluded to ensure they are compelled to try a new hotel. To give the golf team more control over the selection, anything they specify can be added to the top of the results. In this instance, a new hotel they wish to highlight is included.

3

40

41

Rebooking Campaign

Hero featuring a large image of the prior property

Rebook call-to-action

The properties selected are a similar size, in the same region, with a similar price point.

Cross-sell to alternative destinations they are most likely to book

Many of us are creatures of habit – once we have found a holiday destination we love, we like to return every year. Indeed, for most travel brands, if you were to look at the most probable holiday to book next, it will be the exact same one again.

For one UK cottage brand, we found that, of those that booked again, a staggering 85% reserved the exact same property as their next booking.

Clearly, not all travel brands will see the same patterns – perhaps those that deal in special experiences won't see the same rebooking patterns. But there will be a pattern – perhaps it is the same cruise ship, but a different destination. Maybe it is the same special interest, like a cycling holiday.

Whatever is that link, it can be found in the data. Then it is the role of the email marketing programme to amplify those patterns with personalised campaigns.



Recipe

In this email for a traveller, who has returned home from a holiday, we are using the property name to capture their attention, both in the subject line and as the main hero. A common objection to this is, 'What if they didn't like it?'. The simple answer to this is that it is fairly unlikely, but beyond that, the purpose here is to capture attention, which is what the familiar name and image do in a crowded inbox.

We include two call-to-actions above the fold – one to rebook and one to search for something new.

Below this, we are pulling recommended alternative items. We filter based upon the same region and then prioritise properties that are at the same price point and have the capacity for the same number of travellers as the last booking.

Further ranking could be handled by a recommendation model which will predict based upon what others who have stayed at the property have also stayed at. However, to make this usable, website browsing data needs to be included otherwise there simply won't be enough results.

An alternative method is to boost properties that have the same attributes as the last property, such as if there was a private pool, barbecue available, a golf course on-site, if it's close to a beach or part of a resort. Each match of this criteria ranks the properties higher in the results and finds the closest match.

Finally, as the traveller may wish to choose a new destination, we cross-sell the most likely destinations they are likely to choose taken from patterns tracked by a recommendation algorithm of people who visit this region also visit these other regions.

Personalised Newsletters

The hero uses the local departure airport to capture attention

If the yield team has critical deals they need to push these can be boosted to the top of the results

Using a live number of people viewing the holiday drives urgency

Maximum of 1 destination per email to force a broad selection of holidays

Deals are filtered by the customers local departure airport and ranked by a recommendation model for closest match to the customers taste

Email personalisation projects rarely fail in the sense they don't deliver an uplift, yet there can be disillusionment at the effort versus reward ratio. This tends to happen when personalisation is focussed on very specific audiences only – perhaps pre-departure and return home.

Even widely successful personalisation here might only reach a few thousand people per annum, so there isn't the opportunity for scale.

Therefore, to get the greatest ROI for the effort of implementing email personalisation, we need to look at where there is the opportunity to scale. Primarily, this means your sends to the main subscriber database as these will account for 99% of all email volume per annum.

One way of doing this is finding a personalisation angle to customise your 'bulk' sends with. In our recipe example here, we are using the customer's local airport but this could also be holiday type, destination, or another variable that customers tend to stick with.



Recipe

This specific email is promoting the 100's of current deals available.

We make sure we highlight in the subject line and hero these deals to fly from the person's local airport. This sample shows someone who normally flies from Birmingham, but there are dynamic versions for all departure airports.

The deals themselves are filtered by the departing airport, but the yield team can choose any they wish to force to the top of the results – perhaps where they have the most exposure to excess inventory or where commercial partnerships require them to increase the level of exposure.

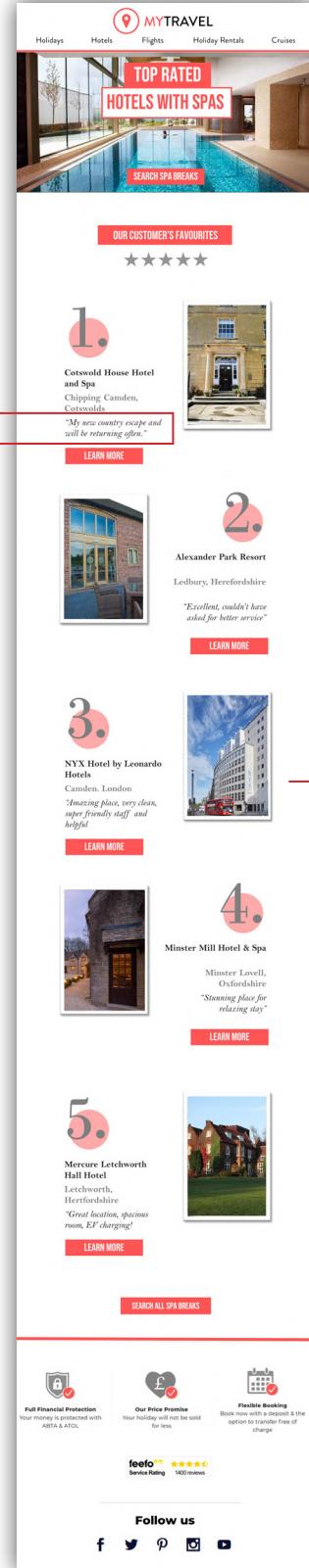
Beyond this, a recommendation model is used to rank the remaining slots in the email to ensure those closest to the customer's holiday taste are highlighted. A maximum of one destination per email is used to ensure a broad mix of holiday choices are available.

To drive urgency and social proof, we show, where applicable, how many customers have viewed the deal today.

As the promotion is likely to run across several emails over a period of weeks, a sleep filter is enabled to ensure no deal is shown again in 14 days. This takes into account whether an email was opened and seen by the customer before determining whether or not to exclude certain deals from future sends.

Themed Emails

Editorial layout using a one line review field



Venues filtered to match the Spa theme and filtered by minimum review rating of 4 stars, a maximum of 150 miles from the customers home and ranked by popularity

What is the simplest way to increase revenue from email marketing? The answer is to send more emails. One of the big myths a lot of marketers have is they are sending too many emails and that reduces email engagement.

There is plenty of evidence around to suggest this isn't the case. One of my favourite pieces of research is from Tim Watson of Zettasphere, which, based upon engagement data from millions of emails, was able to conclude the optimum email frequency is 6.7 emails per week.

To get exposure in busy inboxes that receive dozens of promotional emails per day, increasing the frequency (within sensible limits) is a means to counteract this. If you are sending two emails a week, adding an additional email could increase email marketing revenue by 50%.

The challenge then comes: how to create the number of emails required if they are manually produced? A method around this is to create simplified messaging that is automatically built by the personalisation algorithm, with the option of some minor custom content, such as the hero banner and subject lines.



Recipe

In this example, we've turned the email on the campaign calendar promoting spa hotels into one automatically created with just the hero banner created manually; an activity that a graphic designer can create in a matter of minutes.

The design of the automated property results doesn't look like your typical grid a personalisation system might throw out. Instead, we put the venue image inside a polaroid, use numbers to draw readers down the page, and offset between left and right layouts to make it less formulaic.

The content itself uses a one-line review that exists against each venue.

Ranking of the items is done by filtering hotels with a spa and a minimum 4-star review rating within 150 miles of the customer's home location. This is also accompanied by the availability across their likely booking periods. Then they are simply ranked by bookings in the last year.

Late Availability

Priority deals set by yield team are pushed to the top of the listings

LATE AVAILABILITY DEALS

SUNSHINE BREAKS FROM JUST £199PP

SEARCH DEALS

Late Availability Highlights

Majorca
Departing from Birmingham in April
£199pp

Antalya
Departing from East Midlands in May
£199pp

Lanzarote
Departing from East Midlands in April
£230pp

Costa Del Sol
Departing from Birmingham in April
£199pp

Egypt
Departing from East Midlands in May
£225pp

Algarve
Departing from Birmingham in April
£249pp

SEARCH LATE AVAILABILITY DEALS

Full Financial Protection
Your money is protected with ABTA & ATOL

Our Price Promise
Your holiday will not be sold for less

Flexible Booking
Book now with a deposit & the option to transfer free of charge

feefo   Service Rating 1400 reviews

Follow us

Filtered by the travellers local airports with favourite destinations upweighted

Compared to retail, the travel industry has the additional challenge of managing demand peaks and lows. If on certain dates a hotel room, self-catering property or flight isn't booked, that is lost revenue. You can't simply hold it until later in the year and try to sell it then like a retail business.

This is what makes late availability campaigns so important. These sales are arguably more valuable than others, as holidays, in greater demand, can be sold at any time. Getting yield right is what impacts the profitability of a business.

Email marketing can play a big role in supporting this activity with campaigns to push the late deals the business has. There are challenges and limitations, though.

Firstly, there are only so many slots in the email calendar that can be given over to late deals. Inevitably, therefore, generic email marketing campaigns can only touch a fraction of the late deals scope.

The second more obvious problem is only a fraction of the late deals appeals to a specific customer. They are neither in the market for a holiday nor interested in a lot of the destinations that need to be pushed.

An additional problem is most-late availability has limited space available. Building an email campaign only to find those final slots that are no longer available is a waste of energy and a terrible customer experience.

This is where personalised emails come in – marrying the taste profile of the customer with the deals the business needs to promote. In doing so, there is a more optimum promotion of each late deal, making sure it is shown to those with a greater affinity. This also means the breadth of late deals being promoted is increased.

By using a live availability feed, we can also ensure that the right deals are fetched as the email is opened. If a deal is no longer available, it is replaced with an alternative.



Recipe

In the example recipe, we have chosen a solus email but this content can work equally well as a 'widget' to be included in any other batch or triggered email.

It can be helpful here to give the yield team, or whoever manages late deals, the ability to specify deals that must have a priority promotion, where there is the most pressing need with the most capacity to still sell-through. The algorithm can then ensure these are pushed to the top.

Other deals are added based upon the customer's closest airports, their favourite destinations, and similar destinations to determine what locations are shown. A single destination per email is shown to ensure a variety.

'Local' Short Breaks

The customers home location is used to capture attention

The screenshot shows a mobile-optimized travel website for 'MYTRAVEL'. The top navigation bar includes 'Holidays', 'Hotels', 'Flights', 'Holiday Rentals', and 'Cruises'. A banner at the top reads 'WEEKENDS AWAY FROM LEICESTER' with the subtext 'FIND YOUR PERFECT BREAK FROM JUST £50 PPPN*'. Below the banner is a photo of beach huts. A red call-to-action button labeled 'SEARCH SHORT BREAKS' is visible. The main content area is titled 'RECOMMENDED BREAKS NEAR YOU' and displays four venue cards:

- NORFOLK:** The Hoste and The Vine House Hotels, Burnham Market. 4 stars. From £80pppn. [SEE AVAILABILITY >](#)
- COTSWOLDS:** The Horse & Groom, Stow on the Wold. 4 stars. From £69pppn. [SEE AVAILABILITY >](#)
- PEAK DISTRICT:** Stainsborough Hall Holiday Cottages, Wirksworth. 4 stars. From £82pppn. [SEE AVAILABILITY >](#)
- STRATFORD UPON AVON:** Mercure Shakespeare Hotel. 4 stars. From £52pppn. [SEE AVAILABILITY >](#)

At the bottom of the page are three trust seals: 'Full Financial Protection' (ABTA & ATOL), 'Our Price Promise' (holiday not sold for less), and 'Flexible Booking' (book with a deposit & transfer free of charge). A 'feefo' logo with a 5-star rating and '1400 reviews' is also present. Social media links for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and YouTube are at the bottom.

Venues are all within a 50-100 mile radius of the customers home, the ideal distance for a weekend break

Venues ranked by best match to the customers taste with this specific customer example showing venues that allow dogs

There are many ways to increase revenue in a business. One is to simply acquire new customers; another would be to improve repeat purchase rates. Here, we explore the idea of getting customers to spend more frequently.

The example we have shown is for a holiday company that, as well as capturing the main booking for 1 or 2 weeks in the summer, aims to add to this with shorter but more frequent breaks throughout the rest of the year.

This type of campaign should then be added to the mix of other templates, potentially sending 1-2 times per month to generate scale from this activity.



Recipe

In this scenario, we only want to promote holiday destinations that can be considered a short break. For this, we take the customer's home location (Leicester, in this sample) and find destinations between 50 and 125 miles away. Closer than this and it's hardly worth staying away; further than this and the travelling involved takes away the attractiveness of a short trip.

The venues are matched based upon attributes they have demonstrated before. Here, you will see all the venues accept pets as this customer has travelled with pets before. We might also exclude destinations they have attended in the past to ensure we show a mix of destinations with a diversity setting.

Depending on how availability is displayed in your product field, it is sensible to also filter out those with low to no availability in the coming weeks to maintain strong click-to-conversion rates.

Underserved Segments

A personal introduction assists with the community and specialist feel

New hotels are upweighted to rank high in the results

Recommendation algorithm suggests hotels based upon what other travellers have also booked, with prior hotels they have stayed at excluded

The screenshot shows a travel website with a red header bar. The main content area features a personalized message from 'Ian Morgan, Golf Holidays Specialist' and a photograph of a hand holding a golf ball on a tee. Below this, a section titled 'Our Recommended Golf Holidays' lists five hotel options with images, names, locations, and price information. At the bottom, there are sections for 'Full Financial Protection', 'Our Price Promise', and 'Flexible Booking', along with a 'feefo' service rating and social media links.

MYTRAVEL

Holidays Hotels Flights Holiday Rentals Cruises

Dear Stephen
Welcome to our latest Golf holidays newsletter.
There are some great deals on trips to some fantastic courses across the world right now while we are adding more new courses every month.
If you would like help finding the right trip for you feel free to contact me on 0116 3260 360.

Ian Morgan
Golf Holidays Specialist

Our Recommended Golf Holidays

Vilamoura Golf Apartments
Vilamoura, Algarve
7 nights from £228pp
[HOTEL DETAILS >](#)

Gloria Golf
Antalya, Turkey
7 nights from £650pp
[HOTEL DETAILS >](#)

Anantara Villa Padierna Palace
Marbella, Costa Del Sol
7 nights from £525pp
[HOTEL DETAILS >](#)

Hotel Pure Salt Port Adriano
Port Adriano, Majorca
7 nights from £400pp
[HOTEL DETAILS >](#)

Annabelle
Paphos Resort, Cyprus
7 nights from £450pp
[HOTEL DETAILS >](#)

[SEARCH ALL GOLF BREAKS](#)

Full Financial Protection
Your money is protected with ABTA & ATOL

Our Price Promise
Your holiday will not be sold for less

Flexible Booking
Book now with a deposit & the option to transfer free of charge

feefo  **Service Rating**  1400 reviews

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Examples in travel include solo travellers, which, while booking the same trips as couples and families, have specific pricing and requirements or perhaps special interests, such as an activity like walking, golf or scuba diving.

So, if these are small segments, why are we even bothering to do anything extra? Well, that's because, per segment member, they are above average in value and usually easier to retain and get spending more as there is less competition.

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For a specialist email, it makes sense to again utilise a personal approach by sending and introducing the email from a real person, giving the email greater authority.

This heading is fairly simple text with a straightforward image, thus can be created very quickly each time.

The time-consuming part of including products is handled automatically by the personalisation algorithm. This fetches hotels based on (and ranked by) the recommendation algorithm of similar travellers. It draws upon destination choices, browsing data, and enquiries that closely matches our target customer. In this case, only hotels with a golf course are included while prior destinations the traveller have stayed at have been excluded to ensure they are compelled to try a new hotel.

To give the golf team more control over the selection, anything they specify can be added to the top of the results. In this instance, a new hotel they wish to highlight is included.

Enquiry Chaser

Personal emails are more influential

MYTRAVEL

Holidays Hotels Flights Holiday Rentals Cruises

Dear Mrs Jones

Thanks for getting in touch recently. You'll find all the details of the property here.

We have also selected a few alternatives below for you to have a look at based on your requirements.

We're here to help you find your perfect holiday, and with over 4,000 high quality properties to choose from there is something for everyone.

If you would like help finding the right property, or to book feel free to contact me on 0116 3260 360.

Susan Smith
Reservations Team

YOUR ENQUIRY


No. 42
Nolton Haven, Pembrokeshire
Sleeps 4
★★★★★
7 nights from £700
BOOK NOW

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVES


Westerly
Nolton Haven, Pembrokeshire
Sleeps 6
★★★★★
7 nights from £850
VIEW PROPERTY


Driftwood
Little Haven, Pembrokeshire
Sleeps 5
★★★★★
7 nights from £725
VIEW PROPERTY


Court House
Solva, Pembrokeshire
Sleeps 4
★★★★★
7 nights from £625
VIEW PROPERTY


Headland Cottage
Solva, Pembrokeshire
Sleeps 5
★★★★★
7 nights from £725
VIEW PROPERTY

Got an area in mind?

We have cottages all over the UK and Ireland – so take your pick:

Yorkshire | Cornwall | Lake District | Devon | Dorset | Somerset | East Anglia
Norfolk | Northumberland | Peak District | Scotland | Ireland | Wales

Full Financial Protection
Your money is protected with ABTA & ATOL

Our Price Promise
Your holiday will not be sold for less

Flexible Booking
Book now with a deposit & the option to transfer free of charge

feefo ★★★★★ 1400 reviews

Follow us



The property enquired about is placed above the fold for impact

Recommended products based upon the closest match to the original enquiry, including a 10 mile proximity

Nearly all travel brands will have a stream of enquiries. These are a warm pot of leads that, if not proactively managed, are likely to book with a competitor.

Every travel brand will have a different consideration period where the customer makes initial soundings, whether that be simply searching online or making availability checks. This might be two weeks before they are ready to make a booking decision. You can be safe in the knowledge that during this time, they will be popping onto Google and checking out competitor options.

Therefore, it's vital to have a series of emails landing every few days in their inbox that is personalised to their original enquiry and work to keep your brand front of mind.

purchase has a high probability of being closely related to the first. This might be the same brand, style, or function - it will vary but the data gives us great insight into what happens next.



Recipe

As we want to stand out in the inbox, this email is designed to be sent with a personal From name. This will typically increase open and click rates by 20-25%.

The personal nature of the email continues with the use of the person within the intro. This bolsters authority and trustworthiness. With the complex world of travel, the need to ask questions and book via the phone with a real person is demanded.

For the personalised content, we are aiming to recommend properties as close to the original enquiry as possible. In the context of UK cottage holidays, this means location and property size. If additional information was captured at the moment of enquiry, such as the requirement for properties that take pets or those with a hot tub, then you would incorporate that into the content.

In this email, we are fetching properties within a 10-mile radius of the enquired property with a sleeping capacity of at least the stated passenger total in the enquiry. As the dates of travel are known, our recipe would use these to filter availability.

If there are not enough properties that meet the criteria, the gap widens. The properties are ranked by the recommendation model that determines 'people who look at this property ultimately book this'.

As this will be adapted to be a series of emails in a condensed period of time, we would also add our 'sleep' settings. This prevents the same property from being shown in a given number of days if they have seen it in another email. Using this ensures the email contains fresh properties that inspire each time.

Booking Abandonment

A picture of the specific cruise ship of the abandoned booking

MYTRAVEL

Holidays Hotels Flights Holiday Rentals Cruises

YOUR DREAM CRUISE AWAITS!

106 people viewing this cruise now!

P&O Iona Mediterranean Cruise

14 nights from 5 March 2022

★★★★★

Departing Southampton visiting 6 ports including Gibraltar, Vigo, Alicante, Barcelona, Cadiz & Lisbon

From £806pp

COMPLETE YOUR BOOKING

Full Financial Protection: Your money is protected with ABTA & ATOL

Our Price Promise: Your holiday will not be sold for less

Flexible Booking: Book now with a deposit & the option to transfer free of charge

feefo Service Rating 1400 reviews

NEED HELP CHOOSING THE PERFECT CRUISE?

Speak to our team of cruise experts who are here to answer any questions you have.
Call: 0116 3260 360

Follow us

f t p i y

Driving urgency with how many people are viewing the same cruise

Details of the cruise with review stars for social proof

Trust markers to give new customers the confidence to book

Industry research suggests the average abandonment of an online booking in the travel sector is just over 90%. Put simply, this creates a window of opportunity to convert some of those hot prospects into bookings.

Now, these numbers are often overstated, especially in travel where the complexity of the booking drives customers to go through the checkout to check availability before getting a final price. There is also a significant number of holiday types that have a myriad of options to choose from, making them easier to book over the phone for older and younger demographics alike.

What these 'abandoners' give us, though, is really strong indications of their holiday intent and interests. And with the number of these being so high, you only need to make a small conversion win here to make a huge difference to your bottom line.

For simplicity, if we assume that all bookings are made online, and there is a 90% abandonment rate, a 1%-point improvement in this to an 89% abandonment rate would lead to a 10% increase in bookings across the whole business.

The one word of caution with abandonment campaigns is around measurement. Many providers will claim anyone who has been sent an email, and subsequently booked, as a win for the abandonment email. In reality, the majority of these people would have booked anyway. What you are looking to measure is the incremental difference the campaign makes by keeping a control cell, of at least 10%, back from receiving these emails to judge if it creates a monetary difference.



Recipe

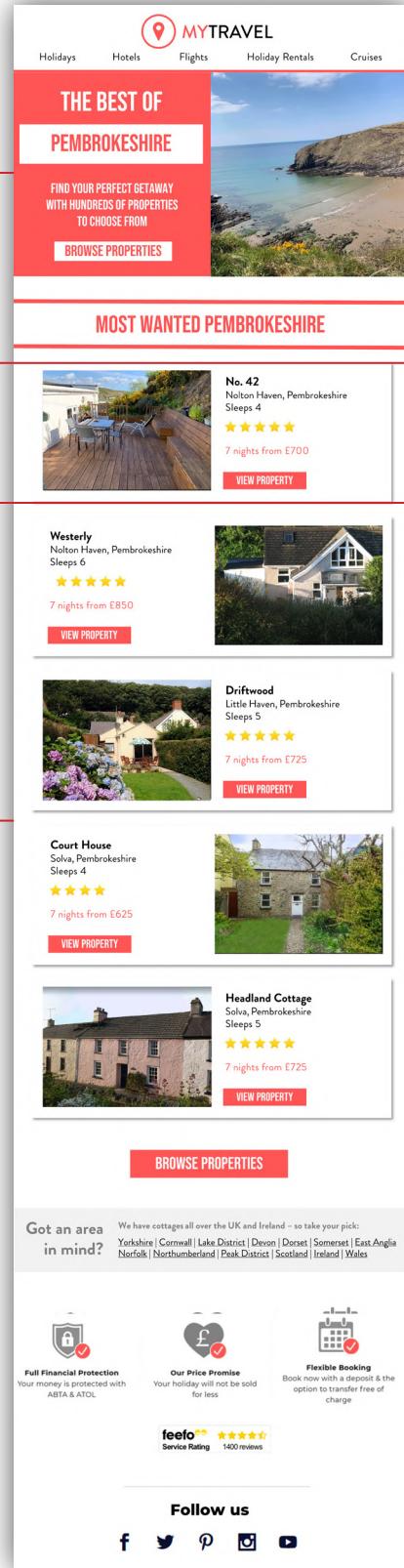
Many in the email marketing industry would suggest including alternatives in the abandonment email to the holiday they were originally browsing. Our preferred approach, though, is to minimise these distractions in the initial correspondence and only introduce them a few emails later.

Instead, the focus should be on:

- Information needed to complete the booking, such as a link back to the booking journey, the tour details, and how to speak to the call centre
- Trust markers, such as review ratings, booking guarantees, and membership of ABTA/ATOL
- Urgency messaging, such as how many are looking at the same cruise today

Browse Abandon

Email branded as 'Best of' the location they were browsing



The screenshot shows a travel website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Holidays', 'Hotels', 'Flights', 'Holiday Rentals', and 'Cruises'. A red banner titled 'THE BEST OF PEMBROKESHIRE' features a photo of a coastal beach and the text 'FIND YOUR PERFECT GETAWAY WITH HUNDREDS OF PROPERTIES TO CHOOSE FROM' and a 'BROWSE PROPERTIES' button. Below this, a section titled 'MOST WANTED PEMBROKESHIRE' displays five property cards. The first card, 'No. 42 Nolton Haven, Pembrokeshire Sleeps 4', is highlighted with a red box and a red dot, indicating a match with a previously viewed property. The other four cards are: 'Westerly Nolton Haven, Pembrokeshire Sleeps 6', 'Driftwood Little Haven, Pembrokeshire Sleeps 5', 'Court House Solva, Pembrokeshire Sleeps 4', and 'Headland Cottage Solva, Pembrokeshire Sleeps 5'. Each card includes a photo, a star rating, and a 'VIEW PROPERTY' button. At the bottom of the page is a 'BROWSE PROPERTIES' button and a footer section with icons for 'Full Financial Protection', 'Our Price Promise', and 'Flexible Booking', along with a 'feefo' logo and social media links.

Alternative properties shown are filtered by within 10 miles of the same area and ranked by a recommendation algorithm of 'people who look at this end up booking this'.

First property matches what they viewed on site

Before the global pandemic, travel websites still only converted 0.4% of visitors into a booking. Naturally, travel websites convert less than other sectors due to the longer purchase consideration phase, the role of phone transactions, and the breadth of travel options and sites available.

As with booking abandonment emails, though, only a small slither of this warm traffic needs to be converted to make a substantial difference to overall revenue. While there is an argument that the reason many abandoned their search is that they could not find anything of interest, a large proportion will have dropped off simply because they are not ready to book or are still comparing options on competing websites.

The key to a successful browse abandon campaign is the tracking mechanism for matching a visitor to an identifiable person. Clearly, the more visitors you can identify by building up a large cookie pool, the more emails you can send and the greater impact the programme will have.



Recipe

Our personal preference is not to be overt with the messaging. Sending things like, 'We see you've been looking at some holidays', can feel creepy and overbearing to some people.

Instead, we identify the customer intent and match the messaging to this. In this case, we have tailored the messaging based upon the location of the properties they were browsing to create a 'Best of <Location>' email.

Typically, the first item they have viewed is the strongest signal in terms of their intent. Depending on how visitors navigate your site, you might consider targeting based upon the searches they have made rather than here, where we are using the first property they viewed.

As the first property was in Pembrokeshire, we have dynamically personalised the hero banner to this, pulling in the location image to add extra impact.

The selection of properties is merchandised as 'Most wanted Pembrokeshire', with the first item they viewed at the top of the email and any other Pembrokeshire properties viewed after this. To fill the remaining slots, properties are filtered to within 10 miles of the viewed properties area and additionally ranked from a 'people who look at this also look/book this' recommendation logic.

In a 'search abandon' email, where you have specific dates, you would also typically filter the results by the departure date and duration parameters.

Pre-departure

Hero image of the booked property



MYTRAVEL

Holidays Hotels Flights Holiday Rentals Cruises

ARE YOU ALL SET FOR YOUR TRIP TO PROVENCE?

Villa du Midi
Salon de Provence in Provence

DEPARTING IN
03 DAYS 01 HOURS 43 MINUTES 23 SECS

UPCOMING WEATHER FOR PROVENCE

Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
21° 8°	19° 11°	20° 8°	21° 8°	22° 12°

LATEST CURRENCY RATES

£1 = €1.17

ORDER CURRENCY

DON'T FORGET THE ESSENTIALS

Travel Insurance
From only £5

Car Hire
Get a quote

Follow us

f t p e y

There is nothing like the excitement before we travel on holiday. For many, the chance to escape work, spend time with family in a warmer climate, and relax by the pool is spellbinding.

A personalised email can create an amazing customer experience, but also assist with commercial opportunities around those final upsells.



Recipe

Our email here is aimed at a villa rental customer but could equally apply to all types of holidays, flights, and alternative trips.

Firstly, we include a hero image of the property, which should get the customer excited, along with an animated countdown timer ticking down the seconds until the trip.

Next, we include a weather forecast for their holiday – hopefully, the customer will be getting the sunshine they desire.

From this point forward, we take the opportunity to remind customers about additional items. We start with a live currency exchange rate that is taking the latest rate via an API, with a call-to-action to shop currency.

For some brands, there is a wealth of cross-selling opportunities such as a range of excursions they can attend. In this instance, there aren't any excursions but rather opportunities around travel insurance, airport parking, car hire, airport lounges and more. We dynamically personalise what we show here to match the customer's specific travel arrangements and what they have already booked.

Live Voting

WHERE ARE YOU DREAMING OF THIS YEAR?

WITH THE COLD WEATHER OUTSIDE SUMMER CAN'T COME SOON ENOUGH. WHERE WILL YOU PLAN TO VISIT THIS YEAR TO CATCH SOME SUMMER SUN?

Destination	Percentage
Spain	25%
Balearics	18%
Portugal	12%
Canary Islands	8%
Turkey	16%
Greece	9%
Italy	6%
Croatia	6%

READY TO BOOK?

SEARCH HOLIDAYS

Full Financial Protection
Your money is protected with ABTA & ATOL

Our Price Promise
Your holiday will not be sold for less

Flexible Booking
Book now with a deposit & the option to transfer free of charge

feefoTM ★★★★☆ Service Rating 1400 reviews

Follow us

f t p i y

This one flavour of email is different to all others in the cookbook.

With customers usually thinking well in advance of booking a trip about where and when to go, it's useful to know what is in the customer's mind so that our messaging can be tailored accordingly.

Using 'Live Voting' in emails is one way of doing this. Unlike a formal survey, it requires only a single click and as customers can see what else is being voted for in real-time, it motivates them to provide an answer.



Recipe

In this example, we are asking about destinations they are planning to visit this year.

Each of the main destinations is listed with a supporting image and the percentage of votes is overlaid. These totals are refreshed each time the email is opened.

This data can then be collected in the email marketing platform and used to create personalised follow-up emails promoting holidays in that destination.



What next?

Congratulations on reaching the end of the book. I'll leave you with the following thoughts.

You might be feeling energised and ready to tackle email personalisation, or you might be daunted at the size of the task ahead of you.

But if there is one proven method for significantly increasing the performance of your email marketing, it is personalisation. The sooner you start on this journey, the sooner you'll realise the benefits.

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About the book

Personalisation is the number one priority for email marketers. With personalised emails generating up to 6x the revenue of generic campaigns it is easy to see why.

Yet there is currently very little written about the finer details to help guide marketers along their first steps in email personalisation.

With this book we hope to put you and your business on the right track from the start of your email personalisation projects by:

- ✓ Understanding the unique requirements of email for personalisation
- ✓ Planning your email personalisation projects and where to start
- ✓ Fresh ideas of what is possible with email personalisation with 11 'recipes' for travel marketers

About the author



Sean Duffy is a multi-award winning email marketing veteran with a specific specialism for all things personalisation.

With 20 years experience working for email marketing vendors, client-side and consultancy, he puts his experience into practice as founder of Segmentum, an eCRM Consultancy and Reignite, an email personalisation platform.



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