

Blueprints for Deep Personalization



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Blueprints for Deep Personalization

When Netflix first started welcoming users by their name and suggesting movies and shows, many were stunned. The suggestions seemed perfectly tailored to each user.

It seemed too good to be true. Almost as if Netflix was watching us and showing us exactly what we wanted to watch.

But if you let someone else borrow your Netflix account, and that someone starts watching things you might not be as interested in, suddenly Netflix doesn't know you at all. The data is skewed; it becomes a mishmash of more than one person.

The fact that these slight changes are so noticeable tells us how far personalization efforts have come in the world we live in today. And it's not just Netflix, brands of all types are personalizing content and information for their audiences.

In fact, personalization is now expected.

You can forget about the cookie-cutter approach to personalization, too. This isn't a one size fits all scenario. Customers expect brands to tailor experiences specifically to them and their needs.

But what exactly is personalization and why is it important?



The Value of Personalization

Personalization is the concept of creating and delivering experiences for users or customers that are tailored to their specific needs, based on data collected about the customer.

What makes personalization so effective is the ability to target individuals and improve the likelihood that they will engage with your brand and ultimately convert into a sale.

Focusing on the customer's specific likes and preferences shows that brands have garnered an interest in the customer and this interest is likely to be reciprocated if done right.

Sales are the byproduct of happy customers who are willing to support brands that pitch to them in an appealing way.

For everyone other than marketers, advertising can sometimes seem like an intrusion. But with personalization, customers are more likely to be receptive as long as the ads and information delivered to them are relevant.

Starting a Personalization Journey

To have success with personalization or any personalized marketing strategy, brands must first gather information about their customers so that they can understand them better.

In 2020, there's a wealth of customer data available, so much data that it can feel like almost overflowing. Customers are happy to provide brands with this information as long as the information they receive in return is deemed relevant and valuable.

Once [data about customer behaviour and interests](#) is collected, the real process begins.

A personalization strategy requires marketers to identify the data that is most important to them and their prospective campaigns. With selected data, they can begin to segment users, interact with them and move onto personalizing and customizing offerings to meet their needs.

But personalization doesn't happen without overcoming some challenges.

Embracing the Challenges of Personalization

Privacy

The major challenge that marketers face when trying to implement personalization is privacy.

Data is thought of by many as the new oil. That's how valuable it can be to companies who know how to properly leverage it. That's also what makes privacy such an important issue.

As a result of multiple data breaches around the world, various governing bodies began to implement more stringent regulations around what information brands can gather using forms, cookies and other means.

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is an example of legislation that marketers need to comply with and adapt to.

However, as long as brands continue to provide relevant information to consumers, and customers can choose what information they want to share, privacy issues become less of a problem.

Brands still need to be wary that they don't try to over-personalize on an individual level. While some customers will be happy to know that a brand has taken time to get to know them, there is a fine line between what's relevant and what constitutes an invasion of privacy or harassment.

Scalability

The other major problem to overcome on a journey towards personalization for brands is how to create unique experiences for thousands or sometimes millions of customers. Will you have enough content? How much work is involved? Curating the right content for one person is challenging enough. How do you do it for a thousand individuals? Scaling up is problematic.

To help brands with their personalization strategies we provide five personalization blueprints. The blueprints lay the foundation for marketers and developers to collaborate and build personalized experiences.

Blueprint #1: Send Personalized Promotion Emails

Tracking user behaviour is a key component in any effective personalization campaign.

There are several instances where brands may begin to run campaigns to help promote new product launches or sales that a customer may find interesting.

Promotional emails are a good place to start. Brands can focus primarily on highlighting their offerings and selling something to a customer, but they still need to be careful about how they go about doing it.

The key is to begin by offering value. Promotional emails are the main focus when it comes to getting value out of email marketing. In fact, studies have shown that [email marketing can have a ROI of almost \\$50](#) for every dollar spent on a campaign when done correctly.

Customers that are already on your email list have shown interest in your brand and the products you offer. Through personalization, you can begin to convert them by providing more relevant information and assisting the customers with recommendations for products they might be more interested in.

In this blueprint we show how you can try to convert an interested customer, turning them from a window shopper into a buyer.

Blueprint For Promotion Emails

1. A potential customer visits 2+ pages in the 'Men's Fashion' category
2. The potential customer doesn't add any products to the basket.
3. They leave the website and don't return.
4. After 24 hours, the marketing automation system sends email to that customer including featured Men's Fashion product information from the product information management (PIM) system, the customer's name, and a personalized message similar to the following:

"Hi [First Name], we noticed that you didn't find what you were looking for in our Men's Fashion section yesterday. Check out our recommendations below. Looking for something specific? Reply to this email and we'll get right back to you!"

If the customer didn't find what they were looking for, this blueprint provides value by pointing them in the right direction.

Blueprint #2: Adjust Content for Repeat Customers

Personalization is a crucial component for boosting customer loyalty and it allows brands to work with repeat customers.

When a customer makes a purchase from your website or in-store that might have been thought of as a mission accomplished in the past. However, that is no longer the case.

After you've had one successful interaction with a customer it's the ideal time to turn them from a casual shopper into a loyal customer who continues to return.

Keep in mind that customer retention is more important than customer conversion because it makes a brand's job much easier.

Rather than trying to convert new customers into buyers, focusing on retention has been shown to provide just as much if not more value, with up to 65% of a company's business coming from previous customers.

Repeat customers may be seen as loyal but the true advantage is that they can go from simply being customers to active promoters of your brand.

Blueprint For Customer Retention

1. A customer makes a second order via your website or visits the website on 3+ occasions.
2. The order confirmation page displays "Thanks for placing your order. That's your second order with us, we hope to serve you again soon!" or in the case of repeat visits, the homepage displays "Welcome back, [First Name]"
3. A pop-up message displays "As a regular customer/visitor, we're offering you X"
4. The marketing automation platform sends an email automatically upon the second order or third visit:

"Hi [First Name], you've now trusted us with two orders. Thank you! Here's a discount code to show our appreciation."

or

"Hi [First Name], we noticed you visited our website a few times recently. Here's a free guide to X that we thought you might enjoy."

Blueprint #3: Personalize Cart Abandonment Messages

E-commerce is a necessity. Without an online shop a retail brand will struggle to reach a broad enough customer base. For any brand with something to sell, it's a must to make products available online.

But, e-commerce doesn't come without pitfalls. Probably the most troublesome example is the high amount of cart abandonment, with the average rate across all industries hovering around 70%.

Many brands assume that when a customer abandons the cart it means that there is a problem with their offering or how they positioned the product.

The truth is that customers abandon carts for a variety of reasons, from unexpected shipping costs to lack of coupons for discounts, a lack of payment security options or a confusing checkout process.

Personalization offers a way out by helping brands pinpoint what reasons the customer has for abandoning their cart and may still convert to a sale.

Blueprint For Cart Abandonment Messages

1. A potential customer visits 2+ pages in the 'Clothing Accessories' category.
2. The potential customer adds products to the cart.
3. They leave the website and don't return, with the product still in the cart.
4. After 24 hours, the marketing automation system sends an email to the customer using featured clothing accessories product information from the product information management (PIM) system, the customer's name, and a personalized message such as the following:

"Hi [First Name], we noticed that you left this item from our 'Clothing Accessories' category in your checkout cart. Did you have problems checking out or did you change your mind? Take a look at our recommendations below for some other options in case you didn't find what you were looking for. Reply to this email and we'll get right back to you!"

Blueprint #4: A Welcoming Program for New Members

Digital environment is spread across omnichannel marketing and hundreds of potential touchpoints. Not every interaction leads to a sustained relationship, in fact only a few do. So when a customer shows genuine interest in your brand, seize the opportunity to make them feel special.

One way of fostering a digital connection is by creating a community or rewards program. Such a community can provide relevant information to customers no matter where they choose to interact. It can also help boost customer loyalty and engagement by strengthening the relationship. Personalization offers a way to make new members of your digital community feel welcome.

Blueprint For A Welcoming Program

1. A visitor comes to your website. After downloading some gated content they opt in to receive news and updates about your company and its products.
2. A thank you email is sent immediately including the downloadable content and a reminder that future news and updates will follow.
3. A follow-up welcome email is sent a few days later to confirm that the visitor received all the information they were looking for and an offer to join an exclusive mailing list.

“Hi [First Name], thanks for downloading [Gated Content]. We know that you opted to receive news and updates about [Our Industry] and we hope you find what you’re looking for on our website. We’d like to let you know that we’re also launching [Welcome Program] where you can get more exclusive information about [Our Industry] that you can’t find anywhere else. Would you like to join?”

Blueprint #5: Personalized Newsletter Subscription

In a time where paid ad spend is diminishing and brands are searching for new ways to get in front of customers, a personalized newsletter can provide the answers. For example, Vox's newsletter readers stay three times longer on the website than visitors who come from social media.

Just like a rewards program, being part of a newsletter helps customers feel closer to your brand. Again, the key is to provide relevant information that appeals to customers and makes them feel as if they are part of a community.

One of the reasons why email marketing continues to thrive and why having a brand newsletter is so valuable is that email allows you to customize your messaging like no other marketing channel.

A recurring newsletter is also a great way to stay on a customer's radar without overwhelming them compared to other channels. For instance, social media platforms have feeds and timelines that are constantly being refreshed by the user. Paid ads may sometimes feel as if they are following a targeted user around the web, but once the browser is closed the interaction is lost.

Email creates an opportunity for brands to get in touch with their customers and gives them more license to personalize their messaging.

Blueprint For Newsletter Subscriptions

1. A visitor comes to your brand website after seeing a blog article shared on social media.
2. The visitor likes the content and visits 2+ more pages to learn more about your brand.
3. The visitor signs up for a mailing list and opts in to receive a weekly newsletter.
4. A marketing automation system sends the visitor a personalized email detailing what content they can continue to expect in the newsletter.
5. The visitor doesn't check your brand website or social media channels for a week.
6. They receive the next edition of the weekly newsletter with more information about the industry and products they were initially interested in, including a personalized message:

"Hi [First Name], here's the latest edition of our weekly newsletter. We understand you might not have had the time to catch up with everything we published on our blog recently so we prepared this summary just for you."

How to Create Personalization-ready Content

Hyper personalization or deep personalization allows brands to capitalize on the vast amount of data that they gather through marketing efforts. While this data helps brands understand who their customers are, it also puts pressure on content production. Marketers need to create more content so that it is relevant to each new segment and persona. More content, smaller content items, more variations.

It helps to think of deep personalization as a match-making exercise. Marketers need to choose or produce the right content and contextualize it to serve the needs of target customers. Understanding which data is most important and how to economize your content production efforts is the key to creating personalization-ready content.

Here is some guidance for marketers:

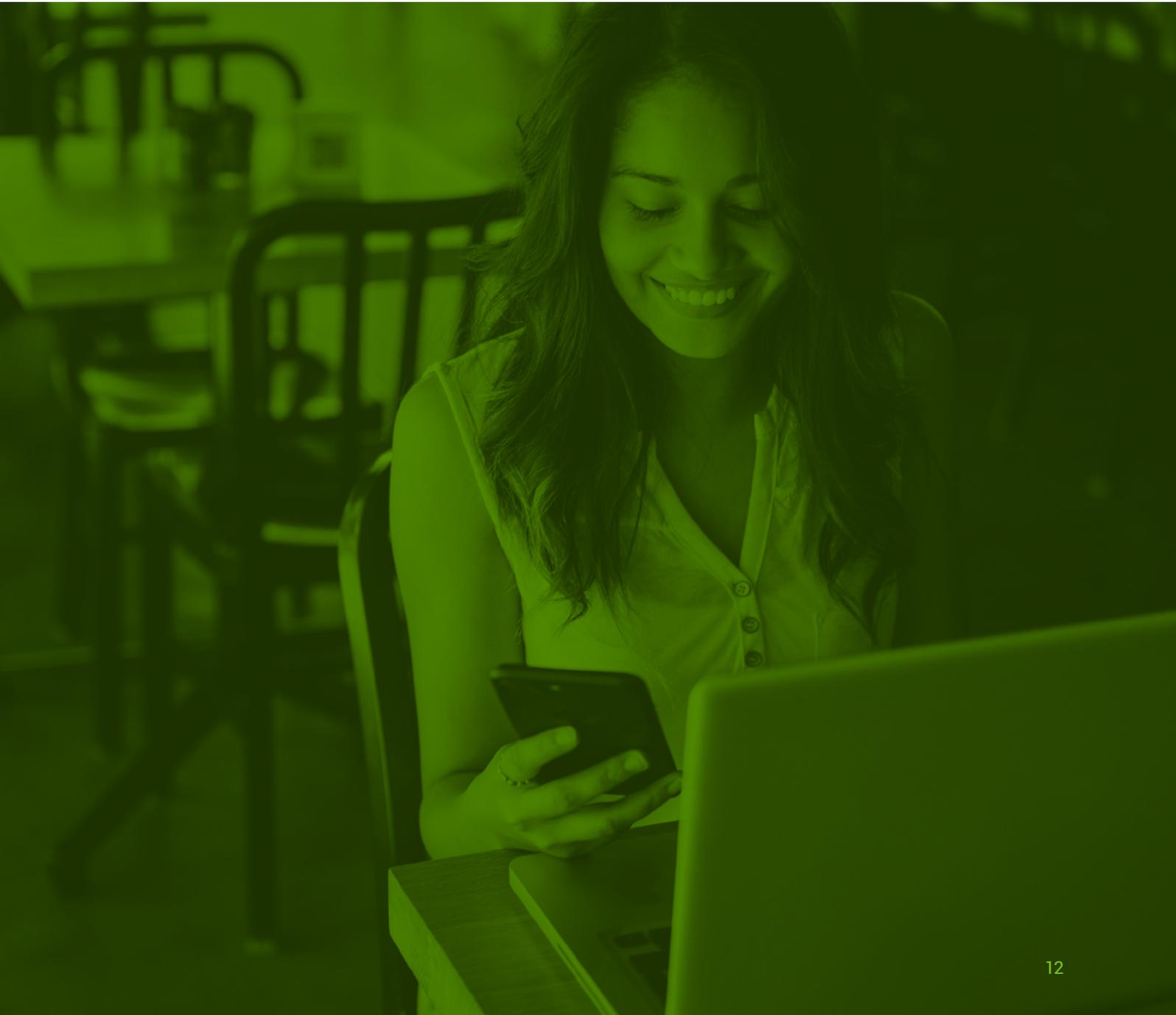
- **Create region-specific content**
Different regions of the world are sensitive to different words and subjects. What is appealing to one location may not be appealing to another due to cultural differences. You can avoid those sensitivities and use local culture and language in your content to appeal to each region individually.
- **Create persona-specific content**
Not every visitor who comes to your website or interacts with your brand is going to be the same. Each customer will have their own unique needs and interests. Marketers can create customer personas based on data they have from existing customers, or conduct user research to gather more information if they don't have the necessary data. Segment your audience based on the personas and deliver relevant content for each persona.
- **Create content for all parts of the customer journey**
Customers will have multiple interactions with your brand over time. Each interaction is part of a journey as the relationship evolves. Customers who are just becoming aware of your brand have different questions than a sales qualified lead who is ready to purchase. You will need to offer different information for each. You need to be able to create content for each stage of the journey so that it can be personalized appropriately. This becomes much easier once customer journey mapping is done.

- **Align your team**

Once you have mapped out what kind of content needs to be created for each region, persona and part of the customer journey, you can allocate a team to each level of your content creation workflow. Aligning your team and placing them in appropriate areas helps narrow the focus and break up deep personalization efforts into manageable pieces.

- **Deploy a headless CMS**

Finally, managing hyper-personalized content isn't going to be easy without the right tools. You need a system that can integrate and interact with your CRM, PIM and marketing automation platform to bring your blueprints to life.



It's Time to Get Truly Personal with a Modern CMS

A headless CMS can be the ideal companion for creating hyper-personalized experiences. Traditional CMS platforms tend to place limitations on developers that need to build omnichannel experiences, and the marketers that create the content for those experiences. On the other hand, a modern [headless CMS](#) serves the needs of both marketers and developers.

Marketers can sometimes get handicapped during content creation when working with a pure headless CMS. Yet, developers don't have the flexibility to connect to multiple front ends when working with a traditional CMS.

A [hybrid headless CMS](#) can provide the platform for both departments and help you to personalize content across all of your platforms. Also, as the central piece of your brand's MarTech puzzle, it can integrate with your marketing automation and CRM as well as analytics to gather customer data for improving personalization efforts.

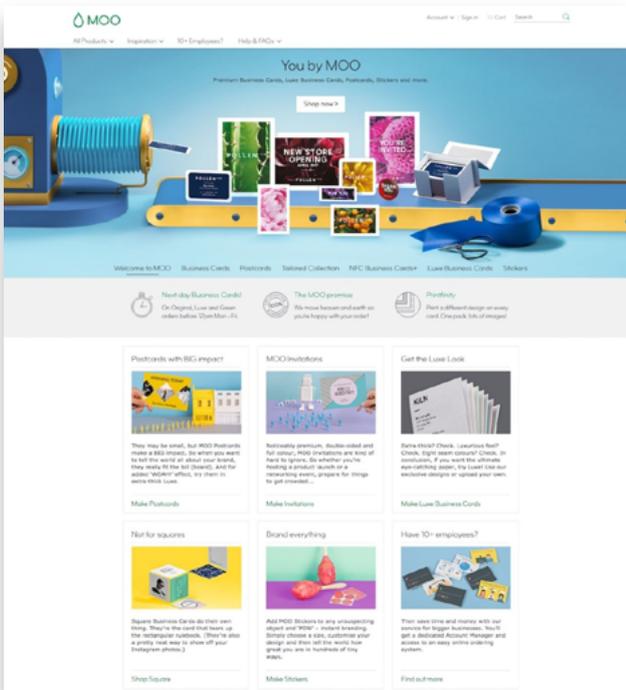
Magnolia's [personalization features](#) extend beyond simple data aggregation. They also include:

Segmentation and personas that help tailor the individual experience. The ability to create variants of existing content. Alternative content can be delivered to website visitors once they meet certain personalization criteria. Marketers can tailor the content to suit the intended audience. Capabilities to help you leverage both explicit and implicit data to create in-depth profiles of your target audience.

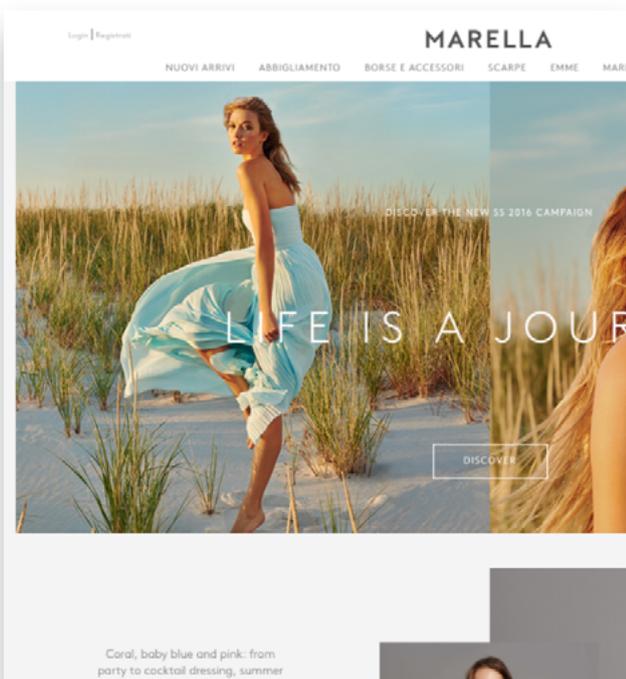
Scoring models that track user behaviour as they interact on a brand website. Marketers can identify which areas of the website are the key conversion points and improve the content at those areas to capture user attention. This keeps your visitors engaged through the funnel as content gets recommended based on real-time insights from the user journey.

Create Personalization Workflows with Magnolia

In order to create effective hyper-personalized content, brands need to have optimized personalization workflows.



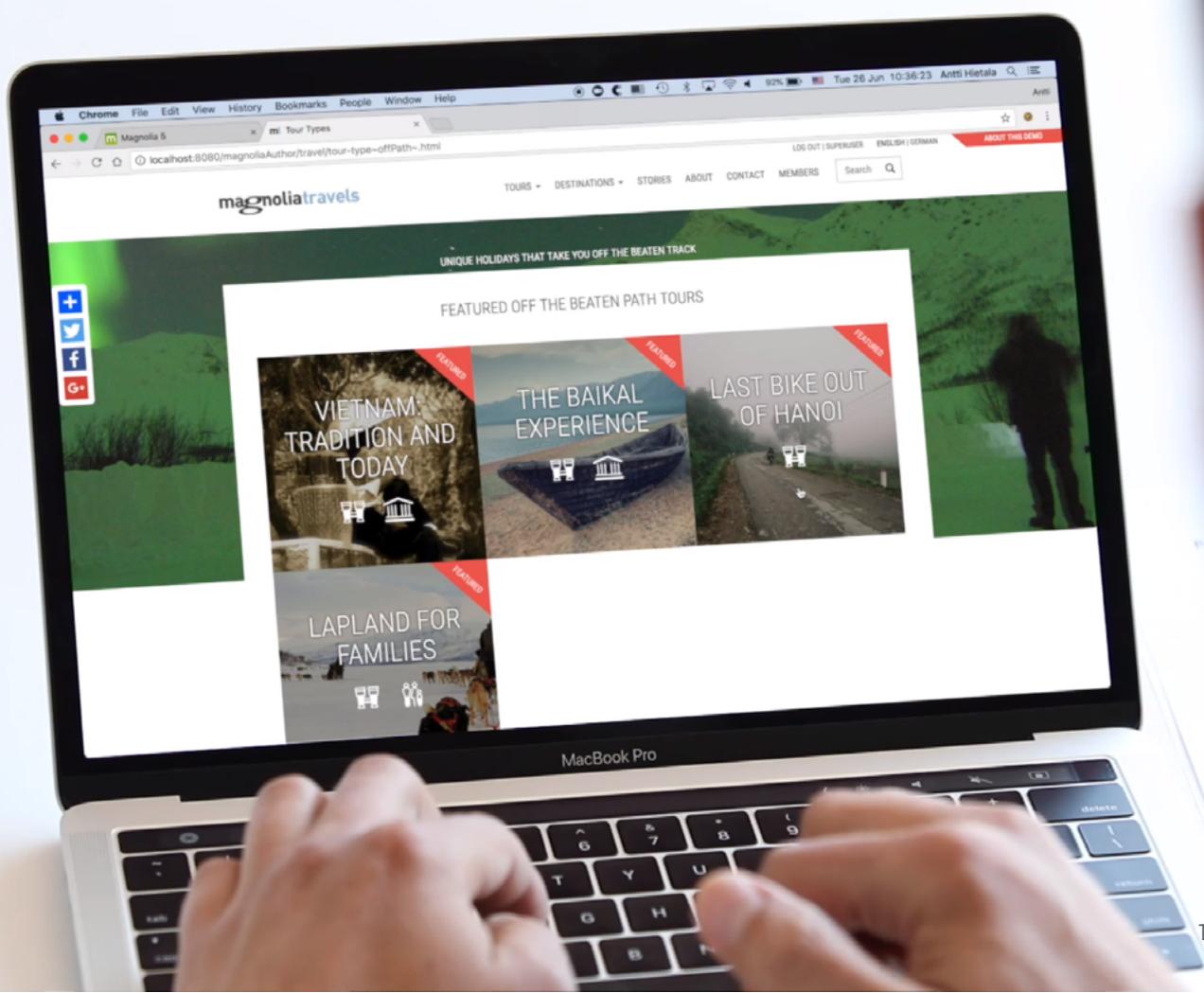
Award-winning online print and design company, MOO serves hundreds of thousands of customers in nearly 200 countries, providing print and business cards and promotional materials. Magnolia's user-friendly platform was a welcome change for MOO's editors and developers. Editors now have the freedom to create and update content independently of developers. [The platform has made the team more agile](#), enabling editors to test, iterate and deliver without clogging developer backlogs and sprint programs.



Italian fashion brand [Marella reshaped its entire multi-language e-commerce sites](#) with Magnolia, saving time and money while delivering consistent, seamless omnichannel experiences. Magnolia's multi-layered flexibility allowed Marella to devote less time and resources to manage the large quantity of content that a rich, consistent, seamless omnichannel customer experience requires.

This integrated approach lets brands seize the micro-moments that come with interacting across multiple devices and channels.

Creating [hyper-personalized content](#) is the way forward if brands want to capture the audience's attention. Minor personalization efforts won't cut it anymore. Brands need an understanding of how to personalize content in various scenarios. They also need a modern CMS capable of integrating with several automation tools, creating alignment across all of their technologies.





Magnolia is a leading digital experience software company. We help brands outsmart their competition through better customer experiences and faster DX projects. Get full headless flexibility and seamless workflows across best-of-breed digital experience stacks. Global leaders such as New York Times, JetBlue, Avis and Atlassian all rely on Magnolia for maximum reliability, high speed project implementation and exceptional omnichannel experiences.

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