

Where to Start with Content Targeting

Greater Data Means More Choices

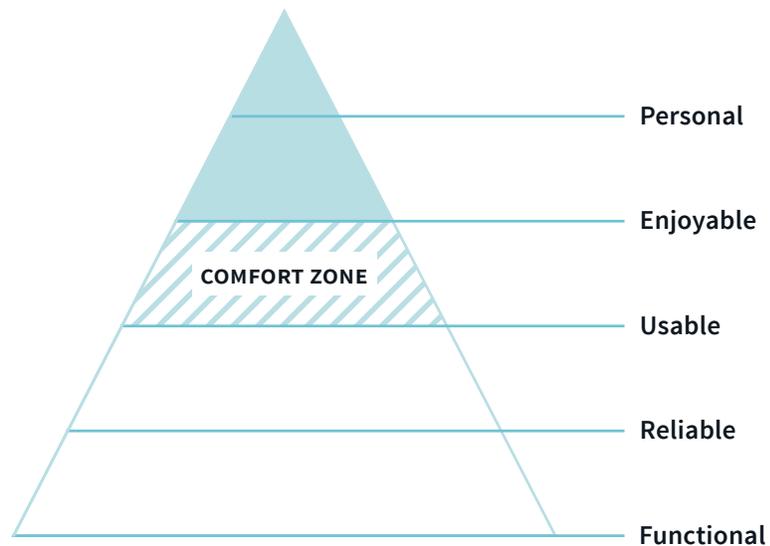
Data is flooding our Internet. It seems like every item around us or action that we perform is generating some sort of number. These numbers are then gathered, analyzed and dissected by intricate systems. So whether it comes to purchasing the latest device or looking for the perfect restaurant or even finding the right spouse, there are algorithms to determine the best potential match.

With the deluge of information, however, comes the inevitability of choices. As the amount of data increases, we are faced with more potential outcomes, which leads to consumers becoming more selective. As an organization vying for every customer in a crowded marketplace, how do you stand out above the rest?

It's no secret that customers are demanding more personalized, relevant communications based on their own preferences. Because of this, today's marketing efforts must be concentrated on getting to know customers more personally.



How to Define “Personalization”



Many websites sit between usable and enjoyable, but to take your web experience to the next level, you need to add personalization.

Companies like Amazon and Netflix were some of the first companies to help define the personalized user experience (though the concept itself has been around nearly as long as the Internet). These companies had no other choice. For Amazon, how do shoppers discover relevant items in a catalog that already features millions of products? For Netflix, how do you keep movie watchers engaged so that they continue with their subscription? Both companies had to realize the power of tailoring the product offering in order to win loyal, long-term customers. These examples serve as a fitting commentary of our current experience with technology, which might involve feelings of being lost or overwhelmed. With so much data available at our fingertips, it's impossible for us to simply browse for information. We must know what to look for or where to start. This is where the concept of personalization becomes vital. Personalization connects users to the right information at the right time. By personalizing and targeting, you can present the proper content to your users in the context they are currently operating and help them discover things in line with their interests.

According to Forrester¹, more than 70% of the executives they interviewed believed that personalization was an important part of their business strategy. Like in any human relationship, trust and loyalty are gained when there is a sense of familiarity. For many companies looking to take that next step, a personal touch can go a long way.

How to Personalize UX: Content Targeting

In order to create a personalized web experience, many organizations are turning to content targeting. At its root, content targeting is taking into account a visitor's historical data to present new content to the returning visitor. It is applying the concept of personalization by adapting the user's experience according to their location, browsing history, social profile, device version and other preferences. "Personalization efforts today are often limited and fail to fully capitalize on — or even ignore — proximity and current customer sentiment," according to B2Bmarketinginsider². Before refining your content, you should ask a few questions:

- Who is the audience you're trying to engage?
- What information is important to them?
- Are they receiving effective content according to the data?

You can either gather user data explicitly through what they choose to communicate via their user profile or submitted forms, or implicitly from software that tracks their web visits, viewed products, forum contributions and more. The key is to leverage their existing data to offer more informed content to entice the viewer.

Content targeting will improve the user's experience by offering more relevant content and making it more personal. This should result in higher audience engagement and increases in the quantity and quality of leads. Call-to-action items would also be more effective because you would have a better picture of what stage the user is along the sales journey.

¹ forbes.com/sites/sap/2014/03/12/personalization-the-secret-to-better-customer-experience/

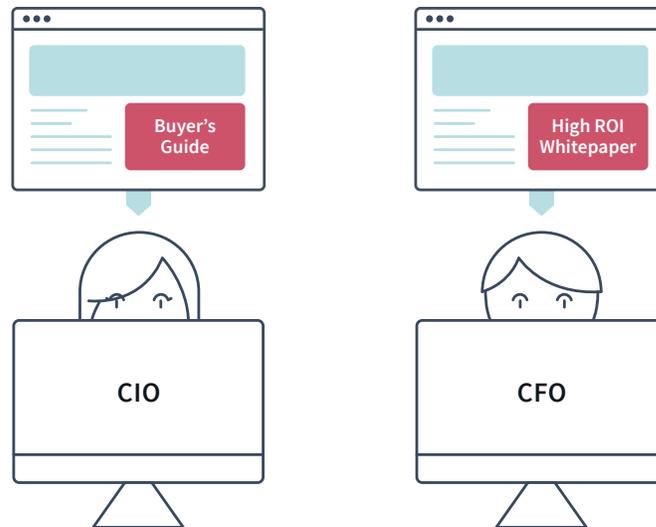
² b2bmarketinginsider.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/delivering-new-levels-of-personalization-in-consumer-engagement.pdf

How to Implement Content Targeting

Here at Liferay, we target users based on their location, industry and persona. (Personas are fictional representations of your prime customer segments based on data and research from your existing audience.) For location-based targeting, we focus on users from specific countries or regions. One particular example would be to feed them events within their local regions through ad banners on our site. For industry – based targeting, we focus on users from financial services, manufacturing and healthcare industries. Content would be displayed in relation to their respective industry.

If you don't have an automated system with content targeting capabilities, then start with manual, rules-based content targeting. This means setting up rules beforehand like demographics and location, which your system should be able to track. When users visit your site, a unique cookie ID will be assigned to them throughout their visit and the platform would determine what content should be displayed according to your settings. Then try to build your database by capturing user information through various forms on call-to-action items.

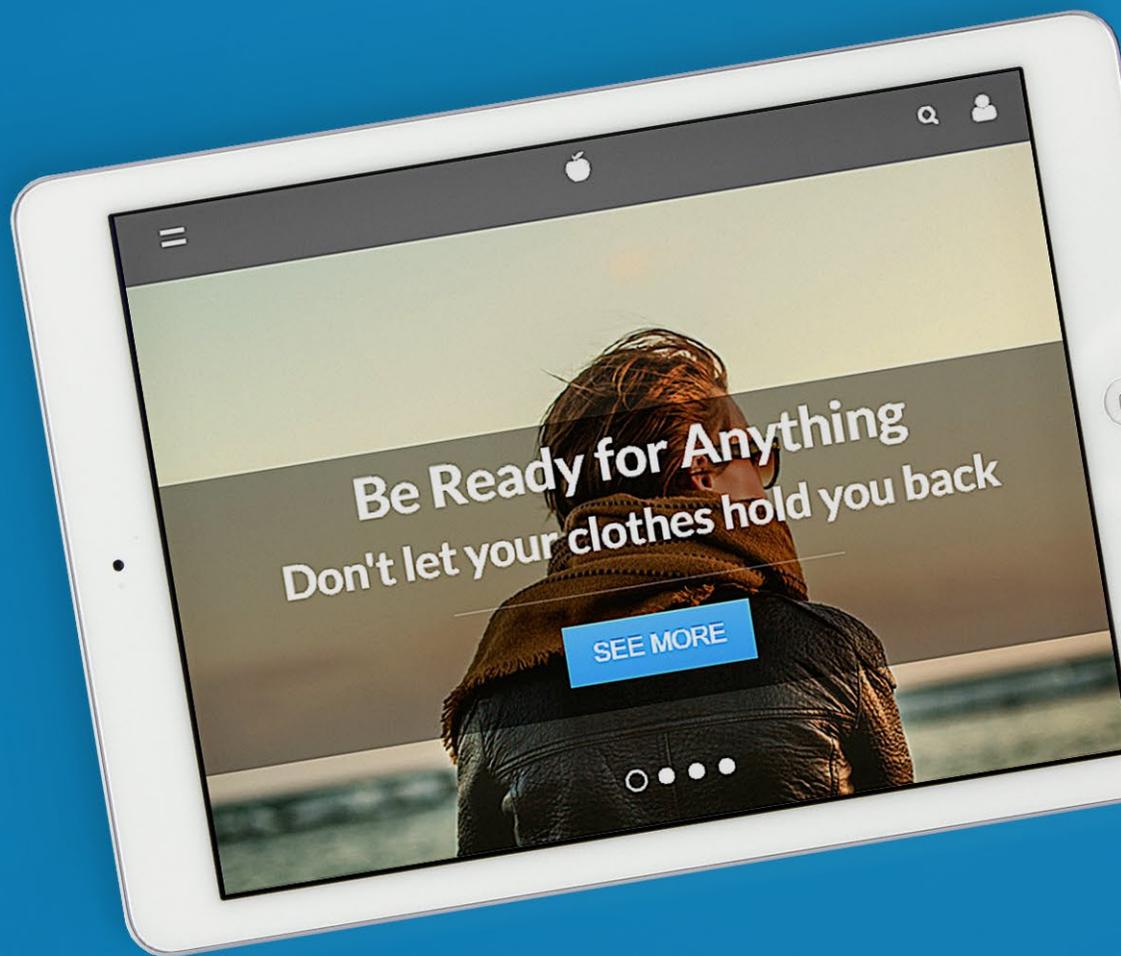
Persona-based Targeting in Action



When applying persona-based targeting, users will receive different CTAs based on their department and job roles.

Content Targeting Under the Hood

The following is an example of how content targeting would work for a fictional fashion brand using a content targeting app developed by Liferay. Liferay developed the Audience Targeting³ app to help companies better engage their customers with content. This app allows us to segment audiences, target specific content to different user segments, and create campaigns to target content to those user segments. We could track user actions and generate reports that provide insight into the effectiveness of our campaigns. For our customers, they can use the app to integrate the targeted content in relation to their enterprise data, whether this is customer order history, bank account details or support ticket history.



For this particular site, we start by dividing our visitors into “male” and “female” users. Based on their known gender, as identified on account creation, users will receive the particular type of content that we set within our “User Segment Content Display” configuration.

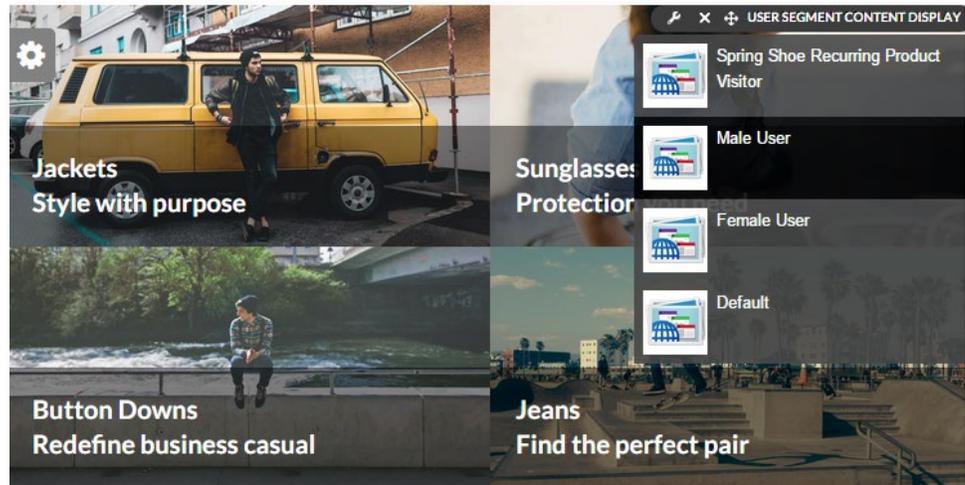


Fig. 1

For male users, we chose to present images and text that cater to menswear (Fig. 1). While for our female users, we share a respective set of tiles that would fit women’s apparel (Fig. 2).

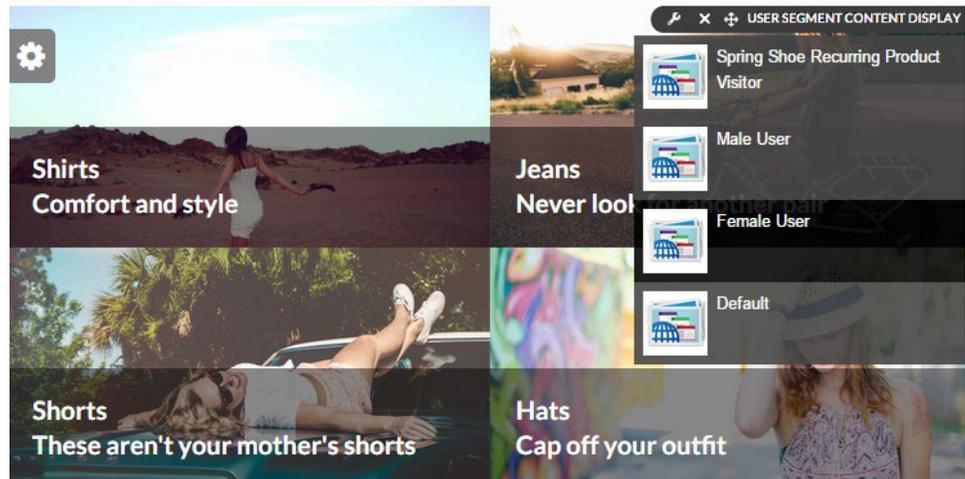


Fig. 2

The previous example shows segmentation based on user attributes. In Figure 3, we are able to further segment our audience based on their behavior. In this case, we can identify users who have clicked on our previously displayed shoe image tiles and gather them into a list called “Spring Shoe Recurring Product Visitor.” Upon returning to the site, these visitors would receive our “ShoeCentric” grid of images. This segment would serve as part of the brand’s remarketing efforts.

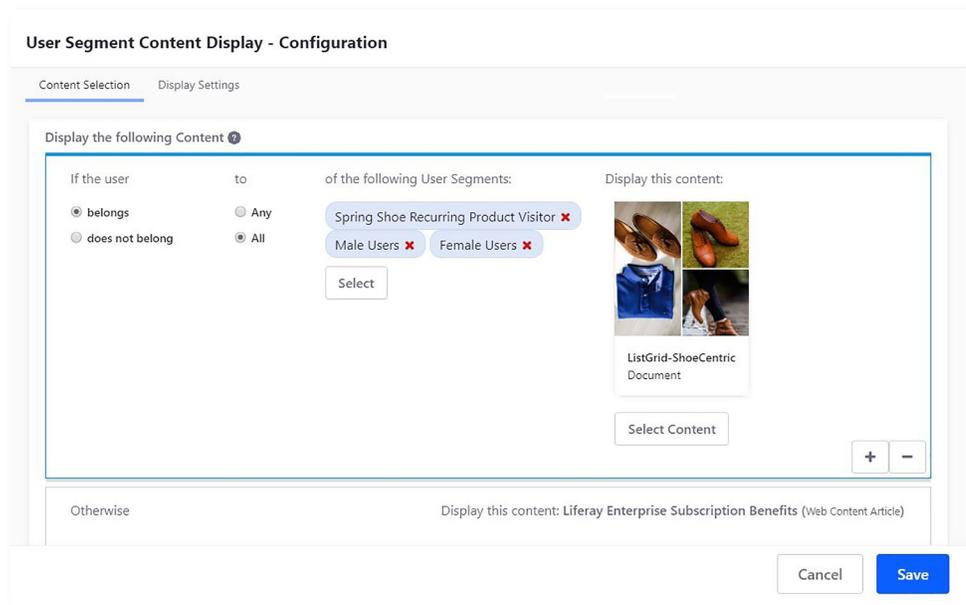


Fig. 3

Remember, content targeting isn’t so much a system as it is a strategy. Although having an automated system would contribute greatly in your efforts, you could go great lengths just by doing things manually.



It's In Your Control

Certainly, there are various aspects of a user's experience that you can't control (i.e., their font preferences or favorite colors). What you can influence is the ability to present relevant information in an effective manner that presents a better experience for your visitors.

Viewers are looking for a dynamic and personal experience with their brands. Content targeting is simply a means to achieving that end. The data is available — make the most of it and you will gain greater fans and customers.

What's Next?

Visit liferay.com/solutions/websites to learn more about how to connect to your audience with a personalized user experience.



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