Hyperpersonalisation:
the future of print is personal

Personalisation is standard today and hyperpersonalisation is becoming the measure of all things. "Advertising for everyone" is increasingly becoming "advertising for me". It is therefore not surprising that brochures and catalogues are being discontinued in many places: not because print is outdated, but because mass mailings without targeted recipients are seen as the format of the "old world".

The "new world" of print advertising is digital. It is data-driven and automated and requires neither CSV files nor FTP servers. Modern companies use formats such as self-mailers and letters, integrate them into their cross-channel customer journeys and personalise them to such an extent that they reach recipients in their individual environments.

When personalisation becomes hyperpersonalisation

The simplest form of personalisation is to address customers by their first name and/or surname. Voucher codes are also already personalised in many places, as they are otherwise distributed randomly on the internet. All of this is standard and meets the expectations of people who have become accustomed to a certain degree of personalisation.

Personalisation according to customer segments

The widespread segmentation by gender or customer lifetime value (CLV) is also nothing new. With this type of personalisation, you segment customers with similar interests or comparable purchasing behaviour so that they receive exactly the sentiment images, visuals or price benefits that are most relevant to them. For example, you can grant exclusive benefits to VIP customers with a high CLV to increase their loyalty to your brand.

True hyperpersonalisation

As soon as you don't just address one customer segment, but target print mailings to the individual customer, you are talking about hyperpersonalisation. This includes personalisation elements such as 1:1 image personalisation (e.g. for product recommendations), text modules, validity periods or languages. The print file then often resembles a blank sheet of paper, as the fields are only filled during data exchange based on the design specifications.

Smart print campaigns

As part of such hyperpersonalisation, you can also bundle several use cases in the same format in one campaign (keyword: "use case bundling"). This not only allows you to address your recipients in a more targeted manner, but also reduces expenditure, as you benefit from the postage advantage for large print runs despite the high degree of personalisation.

A print mailing campaign for a fictitious fashion company could look like this:

- **Use case bundling:** same format (e.g. letter), different use cases (e.g. second order push & reactivation)
- **1:1 image personalisation:** product recommendation based on recent purchases
- **Voucher value:** based on the customer lifecycle or CLV
- **Various redemption options:** Online shop (voucher code), store (barcode), app (QR code)
- **International dispatch:** texts in different languages depending on the target market
- **Content elements:** Incentive to register for the loyalty programme in a second order push case, background information or other incentives for reactivation

Checklist:
Getting started with hyperpersonalisation

Download

Laying the foundations

"The journey is the destination."

And this journey for hyperpersonalisation begins with customer data. Let's take our example of the fictitious fashion company. It has a diverse product range and a large, heterogeneous customer base. In order for this company to be able to target its customers, we need valid customer data and have to use it sensibly.

However, the data volumes are far too large for manual processing. The solution: a personal and relevant 1:1 approach via hyperpersonalisation. And for this, the customer data must be available centrally in a marketing cloud or on a customer data platform.

optilyz

Absender

Michaela Mai
Musterstraße 5
55555 Musterort
Deutschland

25%
Gutschein*

Wir vermissen dich!

Es ist schon eine Weile her, dass du uns besucht hat. Wir dachten, unsere neue nachhaltige Bademoden-Kollektion könnte dir gefallen.

*Dein Gutscheincode: 1M2U3S4T5E6R7

Entdecke jetzt unsere neuen Badeanzüge und Bikinis aus nachhaltigem Stoff in sommerlichen Farben und vielen Größen!

Entdecke unseren neuen Öko-Stoff!

Sender

Jane Foster
16 Xample Street
Xample City AA00 0AA
Great Britain

15%
discount*

Brandnew denim collection

Just arrived: our new organic cotton jeans. They'd go great with your current styles, wouldn't they?

*Your voucher code: 2U4M6L7G3H9K0

Our new jeans fit perfectly with any basic shirt and are available in different cuts and many sizes. Curious?

Scan & join our loyalty programme!

Two exemplary use cases that you could implement within a print campaign: reactivation (left) and second order push (right). Thanks to the identical format (letter) and uniform design, you can tailor personalisation fields (such as voucher value, language, product recommendations) to your use cases and customer groups.

Centralise data

In order to recognise the needs of your customers and address them in a targeted manner, you need certain information about each individual. Ideally, this information flows together as part of centralised data management across all touchpoints in a customer data platform (CDP) or marketing cloud.

The customer data collected and synchronised in this way forms the basis for all your marketing activities and enables you not only to send hyperpersonalised print mailings, but also personalised and automated marketing across all channels.
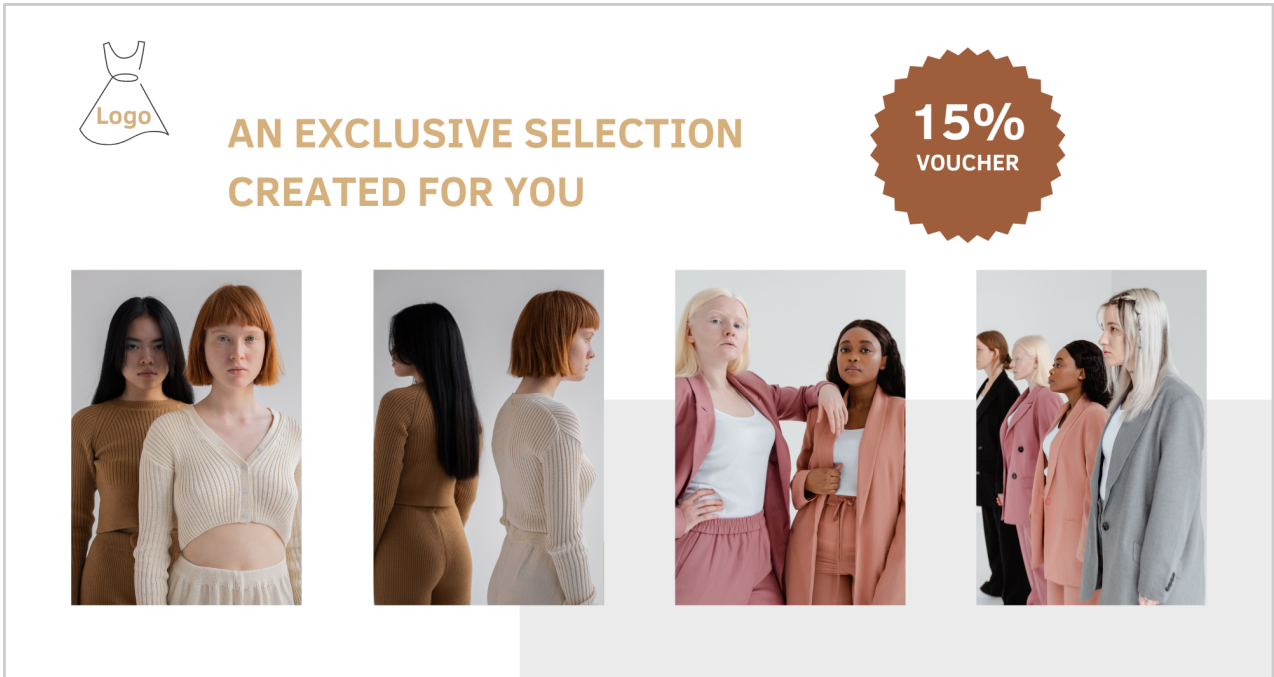
Collect first-party data

At every touchpoint – whether online shop, store, app, newsletter or loyalty programme – you can find out something about your most important treasure: the behaviour and interests of your customers. This creates valuable first-party data, i.e. valid first-hand data that you can ideally use in real time.

After all, with the GDPR, the elimination of third-party cookies and the loss of trust that third-party data in general has suffered, first-party data is increasingly becoming the centrepiece of any central data management system.

To show how relevant first-party data is in hyperpersonalisation, let's return to our fictitious fashion company and pick two customers from the "female" customer segment as an example:
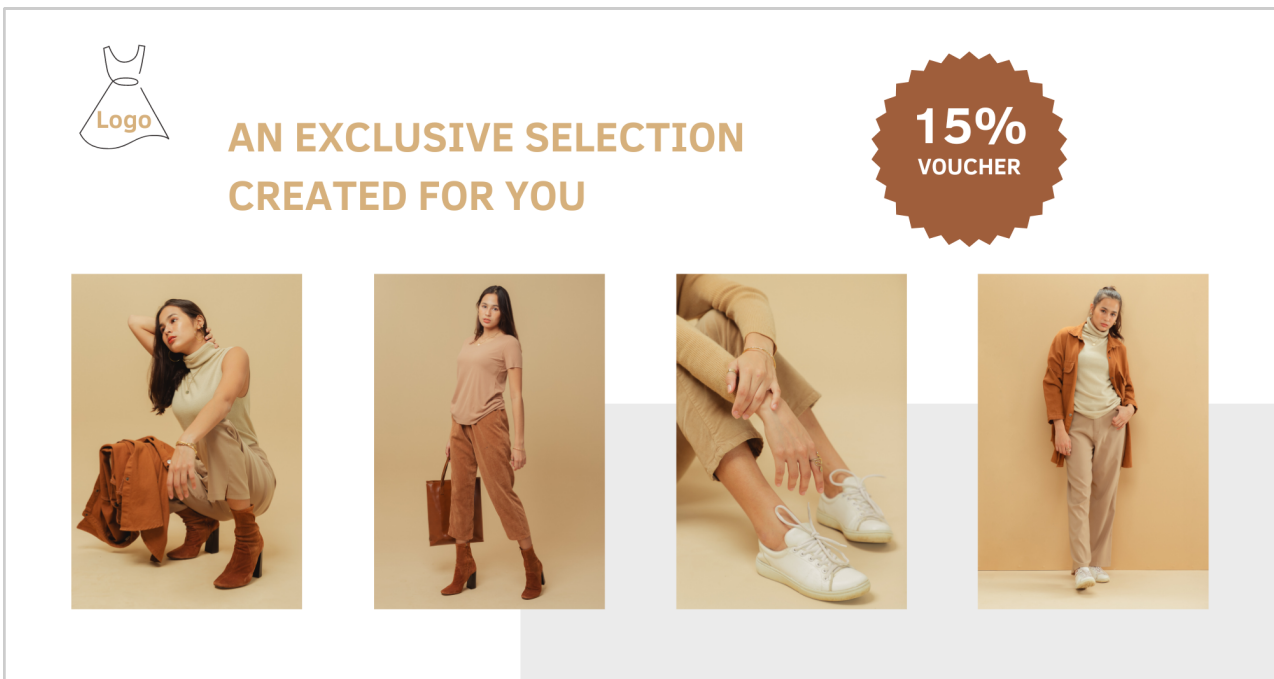
	Is interested in…	Usually buys…	Recommendation in print mailing
Customer 1	…tops in different colours	…exclusively tops	Different coloured tops from several collections
Customer 2	…tops in a specific colour	…different product categories	Products from different categories in your favourite colour

Simplified examples of hyperpersonalised maxi postcards for customer 1 (above) and 2 (below) with the recommendations matching the data of the two customers.

First-party data strategy:
3 things you can do right now

Read more

Intelligent Tools: Recommendation Engines

High-quality, first-hand customer data gives you another advantage: You can use it to look into the future and make predictions. This is made possible by sophisticated, highly complex systems called recommendation engines.

Recognising preferences and interests

Recommendation engines are based on artificial intelligence and calculate probabilities using large amounts of customer data. Using instructions that are manually programmed with rules in advance, these engines learn to recognise which connections between data points are relevant. Based on data from the past, they calculate predictions for the future – like a kind of weather forecast, only for product recommendations, preferences and interests.

The market for recommendation engines is currently developing rapidly and you are spoilt for choice: you can use solutions from specialised providers such as CrossEngage and connect them directly to your systems or you can use the integrated or suggested recommendation engine from your marketing cloud provider. Which solution is best depends heavily on your product range and your customer structure. It is important that you connect the recommendation engine to your marketing cloud or CDP so that it can access data from all channels and touchpoints.

Generate customer insights

Recommendation engines thrive on getting enough relevant and valid data. Such data is the fuel that makes extreme forms of hyperpersonalisation possible. Complex AI systems deliver the best results when you enrich them with large amounts of customer data from different types of information – and do so continuously. Where this data comes from depends on your channel and touchpoint mix.

The data from various touchpoints such as the online shop, loyalty programme, store, app and social media will tell you more about your customers' interests and behaviour. For data protection reasons and in accordance with the GDPR, you must obtain the customer's consent for every piece of information that you store and process about them. In doing so, you should always remain transparent and legally compliant so as not to jeopardise the trust of your customers.

According to Salesforce, only 27% of consumers fully understand how companies use their personal information and 86% want more transparency regarding the use of their personal data. At the same time, 52% expect offers to always be personalised.

Customers are therefore quite willing to share relevant data if they understand why and see the benefit for themselves. Against this backdrop, a dedicated loyalty programme appears to be an exciting and long-term element in the CRM strategy. Not only does it generate a lot of data points, but these also feed into each other and, above all, are mutually beneficial for your customers.

Define attractive use cases

You usually achieve the greatest success with direct mail campaigns within your existing customer marketing. The most suitable use cases depend on factors such as business model, product portfolio and customer structure.

For our fictitious fashion company with a heterogeneous product range and large, heterogeneous customer base, the following two use cases for hyperpersonalisation could be particularly attractive:

1. Use case „Second Order Push"

This use case can be wonderfully hyperpersonalised with product recommendations. Since the customer has already bought something once, all the basic information about the person is already available. However, you don't yet know much about their purchasing behaviour.

Based on the first order, however, you can recommend additional products, bestsellers or seasonal goods to the recipient using 1:1 image personalisation. For an even stronger incentive to buy, you can also include classic vouchers.

The aim is to collect additional customer data and retain customers in the long term. A "second order push" is also THE opportunity to get your loyalty programme moving and make the leap from first purchase to repeat purchase.

2. "Reactivation" use case

The "reactivation" use case also offers exciting opportunities for hyperpersonalisation. You want to use it to reactivate customers who were once active. You usually have a lot of information about them, but no up-to-date information. A classic example of this is the "We miss you" mailing. To make it more personalised and relevant, you can recommend new products or brands to the customer based on their purchase history, for example. You can use incentives such as the change of season or current topics such as sustainability as an occasion for reactivation.

Loyalty programmes are a megatrend

A loyalty programme offers you the widest range of design options for hyperpersonalised print mailings, as you have a lot of up-to-date data about the members of your loyalty programme. In addition to product recommendations with 1:1 image personalisation, personalised recommendation marketing is also an option here.

In addition to their own voucher code, customers with a certain loyalty status receive additional voucher codes to share with family and friends. You can also use the loyalty status to segment vouchers, gifts or exclusive benefits wonderfully.

Checklist:
5 steps to a successful loyalty programme

Herunterladen

Customer Centricity

For all use cases, you should first check the customer's level of knowledge. While first-time buyers usually know little about your company, your brand and your products, loyal customers with VIP status are well informed. They want to be the first to hear about news and have a greater interest in your brand.

A reactivation, on the other hand, should be short and concise but as relevant as possible, as the recipients have not been active for some time. In terms of customer centricity, it is therefore essential that you view use cases more from a customer perspective and less from a campaign perspective.

Make success measurable & track it

The most important performance indicator for the direct mail channel is the conversion rate. On average, this is between 4% and 10%, with hyperpersonalised print mailings always performing better than standardised ones. In order to calculate the conversion rate, you need to track the purchases resulting from the campaign and assign them to the recipient.

Voucher-, QR- & barcodes

In the print mailing sector, the most elegant way to measure success is a personalised voucher code. With the unique combination of numbers and letters, you can not only allocate the campaign precisely, but also clearly identify the recipients.

At the same time, the voucher code motivates your customers to carry out the desired action – in most cases a purchase. Choose the value of the voucher, i.e. the discount or price advantage, in such a way that it is attractive enough for the customer but also makes economic sense for your company.

In many parts of Europe, customers enter their voucher codes manually when ordering in the online shop. However, you can also store the personal codes directly in the account of registered customers. Another technical variation is the QR code, which is becoming increasingly popular with us.

It is a good solution for tracking purchases because, unlike a simple barcode, it can contain a lot of personalised information about the recipient, the campaign and the voucher redeemed. What's more, nothing needs to be typed in manually online: A scan with a smartphone is all it takes. The customer can continue shopping without interruption by being forwarded directly to the online shop.

A/B tests for hyperpersonalised print mailings

Hyperpersonalisation does not mean that you design each print mailing individually for each customer. Rather, a set of rules defines in advance the logic according to which hyperpersonalisation takes place.

Should the recommendation engine determine random product recommendations or should it look specifically at the product category in which the customer has made the most purchases? You define such rules in advance for all recipients equally.

Your marketing or CRM teams then use an A/B test not to see which specific product converts best, but which logic performs better. As every customer is recommended different products, the analysis must take place at the meta level – with the defined rule sets:

In an A/B test, for example, you could define the rule that group A is only recommended products from one category, but across all price levels. For comparison group B, the rule is: recommend products across all categories, but only at the price level at which the customer has previously shopped. The products shown in the print mailing are then hyperpersonalised for each recipient. However, the logic behind this is the same for everyone.

The challenge is to define these rules and derive the best ones from the many possibilities. The best way to do this is to seek support from the experts at direct mail automation providers such as optilyz. They can contribute their experience and derive customised recommendations.

The challenges

Data-driven and therefore customer-centred marketing opens up many opportunities, but also brings new challenges. For example, if data management and quality are not mature enough in your company, hyperpersonalisation as a performance driver is hardly economically feasible.

Especially in the planing and scaling phase of hyperpersonalised print mailings, you need expertise from IT, CRM and marketing in equal measure. A lack of knowledge transfer or inefficient collaboration can cost important agility here.

Large companies with a heterogeneous product range and a large customer base are particularly in demand here, as interlocking work processes and breaking down silos are crucial for the performance of the digitalised print channel.

For more customer centricity, your company may also need a shift within management.

Maturity level of the data

Existing customer marketing in particular depends on the availability of relevant data about your customers' purchasing behaviour and loyalty. If this data is firmly anchored in your company, in your decision-making processes and in your departments, we speak of a high level of maturity.

But even if your company is not yet at this stage of development, you can still benefit from hyperpersonalisation. After all, the development step towards more personalisation acts like a modernisation engine for your entire company.

As soon as the necessary foundation – in the form of centralised data management, data collection and a recommendation engine – is in place, hyperpersonalisation can enrich your marketing across all channels and ensure real customer experiences.

Changed work processes

For data-driven marketing activities, all your departments need to work closely together and share their knowledge with each other. The boundaries between "technology" and "design" have become more fluid.

The hyperpersonalisation of print mailings combines digitalisation with the analogue world. In this respect, it has very technical components: from data handling to the configuration of campaigns in the software.

But there are also classic design components, because letters, self-mailers and postcards are something physical that ends up in the customer's letterbox. They therefore need to be visually and content-wise convincing.

For this to work via hyperpersonalisation, among other things, you need to abstract all the elements that you want to personalise in advance and incorporate them into the design process.

Conclusion

Hyperpersonalisation in print is possible today primarily because we can optimally combine direct mail automation software, smart data management and customer-centric marketing. For you and your company, this means that you can seamlessly integrate print mailings into your customer journey, measure success and increase sales. This makes print an attractive channel, especially for marketing to existing customers, which you can use to implement a wide range of use cases and impress your customers with relevant content and messages.

The refrigerator effect:
How to utilize the performance of print mailings

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Content Hub:
Your knowledge base
for full print power

Contact:
Turn print into a
performance channel!