

CASE STUDY

**N BROWN
GROUP PLC**

Where fashion fits!

SECTOR

Pureplay department store

SOLUTION

Recommend & Consultancy
Services across web, mobile
and contact center

CHALLENGE

N Brown Group was looking to free up time and resources from manual recommendations and implement a more dynamic and scientific solution that would enable quicker reactions to customer behavior. As the business underwent a transformational program from traditional catalog retailer to digital first, online retailer, N Brown Group needed more insight into its customer base to deliver a more personalized experience.

RESULTS

- **30%** increase in sales

N Brown Group is one of the UK's leading online retailers with a specialism in fashion that fits and flatters, offering customers an extensive range of products in clothing, footwear and homewares. The Group's three power brands include JD Williams, Simply Be and Jacamo.

Back in 2013, N Brown Group was struggling with manual product recommendations on its ecommerce sites, which was proving both time-consuming and costly. Frustrated by their inability to react quickly to customer behavior and transactions, the business decided it needed a more dynamic and scientific solution, which was based on customer insight rather than someone's personal opinion.

N Brown Group turned to the RichRelevance personalization platform as a data driven engine that made decisions quickly and dynamically with the ability to react to a mix of transactional and browsing data when making recommendations for individual customers. The fact it was mobile friendly was an additional advantage.

"The ease of integration with our existing systems and an attractive commercial model, made the decision to move to RichRelevance easy." Explained David Jennings, Head of Development and Customer Experience for N Brown Group.

Since these early days back in 2013, N Brown Group has undertaken a number of projects to improve its understanding of the ever-changing customer and increase the sophistication of personalization initiatives across all sales channels.

Ann Steer, Chief Customer Officer, commented, "Personalization and the ability to deliver, individual relevant experiences are the single most important thing that will help us deliver business success."

To support more traditional product recommendation capabilities, N Brown Group introduced RichRelevance's Advanced Merchandising solution in 2016. Advanced Merchandising has enabled N Brown Group to put more relevant products in front of online shoppers that appeal directly to individuals' tastes and preferences. For example 'complete the look' products or recommending products that take into account customers purchasing history or current basket items.

Data-driven Advanced Merchandising has freed up merchandisers' time so rather than manually creating outfits for display on the sites, they can focus on building merchandising rules that support wider site trading objectives and the needs of their customers. These merchandising rules work in partnership with RichRelevance's algorithms, combining the expertise of merchandisers with the power of machine learning. Reporting on the performance of Advanced Merchandising is provided by RichRelevance and allows merchandisers to see which rules are attracting the most customer engagement and driving the most attributable revenues.

Another personalization initiative has seen N Brown Group bring recommendations into the contact center, which is often overlooked as a retail sales channel especially when it comes to creating a personalized, relevant experience for customers. However,

N Brown Group realised its potential and implemented RichRelevance recommendations in the contact center, training 950 UK-based contact center agents in the RichRelevance recommendations engine and rolling out the personalization solution within the contact center system’s computers.

“Before we introduced data-driven recommendations into the contact center, staff would only offer the five products we had on sale, so it wasn’t personalized for the customer at all. Now, our customer service agents can advise customers on an increased product range using the power of the online recommendations engine. This real-time solution helps agents answer product queries, upsell and cross-sell products, or recommend alternative items that will resonate with the customer. We’ve effectively created another sales channel and improved the customer experience at the same time.” Said Jennings

Having Recommend™ live in the contact centers has had the added benefit of drastically reducing the time spent doing manual merchandising for the contact center.

By 2016, N Brown Group’s customer touch-points had diversified as it transformed itself from a catalog to online retailer. As a result N Brown Group sought to better understand its new breed of customer and maximize the opportunity online shopping presents to deliver a more personalized customer experience.

To gain this customer insight, N Brown Group commissioned RichRelevance to undertake an insights campaign to map the online shopping experience and explore what levels of personalization were right for N Brown Group’s customers to create a superior customer experience.

The project involved extensive user experience and personalization tests which the N Brown Group will use over the next year to guide the personalization implementation across all channels to enhance the customer experience.

“We see investment into understanding the customer as the most valuable data in terms of driving business and personalization forward in next few years.” concluded David Jennings.

Measures of Success

As a result of their work together, the RichRelevance personalization engine has grown sales by 30% in 2016. This means recommendation-driven sales now account for 7% of all N Brown Group sales.

Furthermore, the result of the extraordinarily dedicated customer analysis is that N Brown Group is poised to exceed the £5m+ sales lift that its personalization initiatives already delivered in 2016.

Overall the data-driven product recommendations are now supporting the ecommerce site and, unusually, contact center staff, benefitting customer service and supporting an overall 12% year on year increase in sales for the group.

