



Amazon and Fexy Media have made recipes shoppable on SimplyRecipes.com, where visitors can order, through Prime Now ultra-fast delivery, all ingredients for select recipes with just the click of a button.

Clear and Captivating

GROCCERS DESIRING REPEAT ECOMMERCE CUSTOMERS MUST PROVIDE CONTENT THAT IS ACCURATE AND MAKES SHOPPING MORE CONVENIENT AND PERSONALIZED.

By Randy Hofbauer

As food retailers continue their advance into ecommerce, a focus on clear, complete information is key to winning sales. Yet nearly all shoppers have jumped ship before making a purchase online, because they found content to be lacking, research from Irvine, Calif.-based digital commerce solutions provider Episerver shows.

According to the March report, "Reimagining Commerce," 98 percent of consumers have been dissuaded from such purchases due to incomplete or incorrect content, with nearly one-third (32 percent) of consumers being deterred every time. Further, more than one-third (35 percent) feel that brands do a poor or very poor job giving the online shopping experience a customized feel, showing that a large number of consumers today aren't finding the content they value when ordering online.

"Just as a poorly designed storefront or cluttered displays can deter shoppers from a physical store, a website or mobile app with lackluster content can turn off consumers and, in many cases, discourage them from making a purchase," said Ed Kennedy, senior director of commerce at Episerver, in March. "Our study shows consumers really care about content when shopping online, not only the quality and accuracy, but also how it's delivered to them. Complete and accurate content is now table stakes, and brands looking to go above and beyond must consider personalization."

To create a more consumer-friendly, personalized experience on their ecommerce sites, grocers should consider providing:

1 An exploration-focused landing page: While some shoppers head to a grocer's site knowing what they want to purchase, others are there to

browse, knowing what they want when they find it. Peter Leech, partner and director of digital and ecommerce at The Partnering Group Inc. (TPG), based in Cincinnati, says that landing pages for these shoppers should explain, at a glance, two to five types of products, using light copy and clickable images that provide deeper subcontent upon shopper request. Expert finders also could allow the shopper to answer key questions that will lead to a recommended product list subset.

2 Shoppable recipes: From Amazon's recent partnership with Fexy Media to eMeals teaming with Walmart and Kroger, a growing number of food retailers are offering consumers the opportunity to find a recipe they like and fill their virtual cart with all of the ingredients needed to prepare that recipe, with a single click. Even Safeway, Leech says, produces quality digital recipes whose ingredients can be purchased easily with the click of a button — seamless from idea to buy. Such solutions might not be meal kits, but could compete against meal-kit programs without the problems that come from portioning and preparing ingredients for immediate use in the kitchen.

"Studies suggest that 80 percent of us have no idea what we will be doing for dinner at 3:30 p.m. that same afternoon. Imagine if a retailer could make three dinner 'suggestions' personalized to their



individual consumer a couple times a week," muses food industry expert Matt Gutermuth, former president and CEO of Safeway.com, and founder of empower-positive.net. "If you expand a consumer's menu and make it easy and fun to do so, you give people less of a reason to eat out — the easy answer to the question, 'What do you want to do for dinner tonight?'"

3 Nutritional data and ingredients: In an age when consumers are more health-conscious than ever, understanding what's in a

product is a paramount issue for many consumers. Prem Balwani, founder and CEO of Miramar, Fla.-based ecommerce platform iGrab.it, notes that 72 percent of customers on his platform research nutritional data and review ingredient information, which is what drove him to change the user interface to start highlighting total carbohydrates on product listings, giving customers easy-to-see information on the spot. In addition, customers want to make sure ingredients used are from fresh sources, and to look up ingredients. He suggests that grocers adopt modern nutrition labeling of items to make it easier for shoppers to read and even understand the information.

Raley's has done something like this with its Shelf Guide labels, which, developed independently, include descriptions such as Minimally Processed, Nutrient Dense and No Added Sugar. The program was developed after the West Sacramento, Calif.-based grocer realized that even though recognizing ingredients is the No. 1 influencer of consumers' decisions to purchase a food or beverage, 59 percent of grocery shoppers experience difficulty understanding nutrition facts on product packaging.

4 Ecommerce-optimized photos: While many grocers have ecommerce programs in place, not all present ecommerce-ready content, notes Courtney Acuff, VP of product and marketing with Chicago-based ecommerce service ItemMaster. For example, scale images and ecommerce-

specific product descriptions help capture attention when viewing items "on the shelf" and examining product details before making the purchase.

"If you look across ecommerce sites today, you'll see widely different takes on consumer experience — the content exists, but is often not yet utilized," she says.

TPG's Leech adds that ecommerce leaders today are testing product images that are zoomed in to show a consumer using a mobile phone what they need to see at a glance without the need to manually zoom, which can blur the image. They're also



In a listing on Jet.com for Keurig's The Original Donut Shop brand of K-Cups, a closeup of a foil top displays as the main image, clearly showing visitors the exact type of coffee that they're viewing.

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using content featuring key callouts, such as flavor in the main image section, to make the product easier to understand. For instance, in a listing on Jet.com for Keurig's The Original Donut Shop brand of K-Cups, a closeup of a foil top displays as the main image, clearly showing the flavor currently being viewed.

5 Personalized suggestions: Consumers hate seeing ads completely unrelated to what they're trying to purchase, meaning that grocers that place banner ads that aren't applicable to the specific customer run the risk of turning that person off. However, Jeremy Neren, founder and CEO of Madison, Wis.-based GrocerKey, recommends that grocers make sure that they use data specific to shoppers to plan personalized ad campaigns for products that may appeal to them, based on purchase history.

"So, for instance, if you see a customer's buying a high rate of organic items, when they're searching the floor, put things like a digital end cap or some sort of engaging ad campaign in front of them to advertise other organic products' relevance to that search," he advises.

6 Guest checkout: Ecommerce is all about convenience, so giving site visitors the ability to shop without registering can be a critical way of providing quick and easy purchases while reducing cart abandonment, recommends Anush Viswanathan, account manager at New York-based data analytics firm Ugam.

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Moreover, when grocers prompt customers to register, they generally request personal information to use down the road.

However, many consumers don't want their inboxes filled with promotions, discounts and company news. First-time customers especially want to take the site for a test drive without committing to additional communication. **PG**