



Ecommerce Q&A Episode 6 - Michael Keith Perhac discuss what store owners can do to optimize conversions.

Michael: Well, hello folks and welcome to episode six of e-Commerce QA. This is the podcast where we keep it fast and fun, talking about the questions on the street about e-Commerce. Practical stuff for you as a store owner, store manager, director of e-Commerce. And I'm very privileged today to be joined by my colleague and friend, Keith Perhac, who hails all the way from Japan!

Keith: Hi! How's it going? Thanks for having me on the show.

Michael: Absolutely. We really appreciate you being our first ever guest on the show.

Keith: I'm number one?

Michael: Yeah!

Keith: [laughs]

Michael: So, Keith and I, we go a long way back. Actually, we only go a year back. But I feel like I've known Keith for a long time because he's been so helpful to me.

Keith: It feels like much longer than a year.

Michael: I know, because, when was that, a week ago? Two weeks ago?

Keith: Yeah, two weeks ago.

Michael: So I moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, almost a year ago. You know, there's not a whole lot of e-Commerce going on out here, and I was just talking about that fact to another friend, mutual friend of Keith's and mine, like a month ago. And he said "Oh hey! Keith's in

Fort Collins, you guys should hook up.” Which was amazing, ‘cause Keith’s literally from the other side of the world.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, I had forgotten completely that you were in Fort Collins, otherwise I would’ve looked you up earlier. But it’s just like—

Michael: Yeah!

Keith: I was like, “Who else is gonna be in Fort Collins? There’s gonna be no one in Fort Collins.”

Michael: I know!

Keith: And, it worked out great, so...

Michael: Totally. Well, Keith is a conversion rate optimization expert, and Keith and I, we met together a couple weeks ago. We talked for about, I don’t know, an hour, two hours about conversion rate optimization. And I got super stoked because I think a lot of the things we talked about, and maybe some new ones, would be highly relevant to our audience of store owners, people looking to maximize the revenue and conversion out of their stores. So, Keith, can I ask you to wax eloquent on what’s some things that store owners can do, between now and the end of the year, to maximize conversions.

Keith: Alright, we talked about two things, uh, kinda on the pre-show. And, what I want to give is just a quickie, this will help raise your conversions, and then we’ll go into a bigger strategy one that I think is more valuable, but requires a little more time to set up. Quickie one that I would totally recommend, is if you are doing some sort of holiday sale, or a sale on a product, or something like that, have an exit intent modal pop-up. So, you can google for “exit intent modal” um, I think “ouibounce”, is a good one to use. I’m sure there are other ones out there. What it essentially is, is when someone has looked at your product, and is about to leave, they move that mouse towards the close button, a little modal pops up that says “Hey wait! There’s more!”, right? And these are not those spammy ones that stop you from leaving the page and stuff, and require you to press OK or Cancel, they’re just a regular pop-up.

Michael: Yeah, those ones always drive me crazy, because it's usually like "Click here to give me all of your information" or else the only other option is "No, I'm stupid, I don't want to save money." You know?

Keith: Yup, yup. And you should not use those ones that block people, that they have to click on, because Google and Yahoo will actually punish you for that.

Michael: Oh, they do that?

Keith: Yeah, the SEO will punish you for that, or they'll punish you through SEO, and then also you can't run ads to any page that has that. If they find it they'll just cancel your ad, and Facebook will sometimes cancel your account, so...

Michael: Wow.

Keith: Yeah, don't use the blocking models. So, these exit intents are slightly different, where they don't block people from leaving, it's just an extra piece of information right as they're about to leave, to try and save that sale.

Michael: Nice.

Keith: And, what you should have on these exit intent models, is "Hey wait! There's only X number of days left on this sale. Give me your phone number or email address, whichever one you want to do, and I will send you a text the day before the sale closes, so you don't miss out on this special offer." Okay? First time we tried this, we thought no one, no one ever is going to put their phone number or email address, or anything in there. Who would actually put in their email address in order to get an advertisement telling them they still have a chance to buy? This is why I constantly say you are not your customer. Because I think we had 20% of our viewers, of the people visiting that page, put in their email address, and 90% of them actually purchased later.

Michael: That's insane.

Keith: That's a huge number! That's—it's just mind-blowing insane.

Michael: And what was the—what type of a company was it, was there a site?

Keith: Um, I can't actually say.

Michael: Okay.

Keith: But it was, um, people selling things online.

Michael: [Laughs] you can't say what type of stuff? Okay.

Keith: [Laughs] Yeah, it was direct sales, um, online. Alright? So, this was on an actual product page, they had the little buy button, and they just never clicked the buy button. So that was getting them to click that buy button, come back later for the end of the sale.

Michael: Nice. That's insane, so you got, what was that, a 90% conversion rate almost on that?

Keith: For people who put in their email address, yes.

Michael: That's amazing.

Keith: That was a huge number. It was absolutely amazing. Um, so that is something I do recommend; make sure it looks nice, make sure it's not tacky, but that's definitely something that can highly affect your conversion rate there.

Michael: Okay, and I just looked that up, that's ouibounce if you're googling that. I'll also include that in the show notes. What's the second thing?

Keith: So, the second thing is more strategic. And the more strategic one is— so, as a smaller e-Commerce owner you have a distinct branding advantage over companies like Amazon, or Google, or Apple, right? And that is, that a communication from you or someone on your team does not seem out of place. A direct communication from you does not seem out of place. If you buy something from Amazon, for example, and Jeff Bezos sends you an email that says "Hey! I hope you liked the book!" you're gonna instantly say this is not real. There is no way that Jeff just saw my purchase and decided to write me a friendly email. However, you as a smaller e-Commerce store owner, can completely do that and have it feel legitimate. And that's one thing I highly recommend doing. So, as we prepare for the holiday

season, there would be two strategies I would really look at. First is, putting that in your existing products, right? So let's say you're a bookseller and there's certain books that sell well, um, that are good repeat purchases, etcetera. I would go into that email sequence, after someone purchases, and set up an email maybe a week or two weeks later and write, no template, no nothing, it looks like an email from Gmail, that says "Hey, so-and-so, I saw you bought this book Illusions. I really like this book too. Blah blah blah blah blah, I just wanted to hear back. I just wanted to say thank you for buying it, and ask if you had any questions about the book, see how you like the book." Right? And you're not trying to sell anything, all you're trying to do is create an emotional connection to this person, so next time they want to buy a book or whatever you sell, they think of you more than they think of anyone else. So you're changing your relationship with your customer from a price-driven, "I'm the cheapest" or "I'm the only person who sells floozles in this color", to an emotional connection of "Oh yeah, I really like Michael. I wanna buy more stuff from him."

Michael: That's fantastic.

Keith: It's very important and it's very effective.

Michael: Now, I mean, how big of a company do you think you could realistically pull that off?

Keith: The problem is not how big the company actually is, but how big it is perceived to be. Right? If you have a very polished, like, "Hi, we're FooCorp Incorporated 9097", and you have this very— you don't have a name behind it. If you're very very professional. And, I say "professional" in the enterprise-y way, right? If there is no face to your company, if there is no anything, if there's no craftsmanship, if it's very obvious that you are a big box store online, right? You're just selling stuff that you get from your supplier, in bulk, blah blah blah. Then you're probably not going to be doing it. But I think most of the people listening to this podcast are not in that bucket, right? I think 99% of people listening to this podcast have a brand that they've worked hard on. Maybe they're not the front face, but if you were to send an email to someone that felt legitimate, no one would think "oh, this is automated", right?

Michael: Do you think for a slightly larger company they could have it come not from the CEO but from the, you know, some other person in the company?

Keith: So I'm of two minds about this. I see that happen a lot, and sometimes it works very well, sometimes it does not. It depends; who the person is, and what their connection is. As soon as they are, like, customer support, it just goes out the window.

Michael: Oh, yeah.

Keith: You want someone, just like when you do deals with a large consulting agency or a law firm or something, everyone's a junior associate, or an associate. Like, I think it was Goldman Sachs, they don't have anyone below the VP of associate level. Or VP associate.

Michael: For this purpose, because they want, any time those people contact you, you to take it seriously, right?

Keith: Exactly. The first day you're hired— and, I believe this is Goldman Sachs, correct me if I'm wrong—even if this is your first day on the job, you're an associate VP. Because no one wants to deal with anyone lower than that. So, if you're sending out these emails, you need to make sure that they are from someone of position in the company. Right? And that's what turns it from an automated— in people's perception—an automated virtual assistant sending out an email, to “this person is really contacting me”. And that's what's important, is creating that feeling of yes, I am a real person, yes I am someone who has...I'm reaching out to you on a one-to-one basis. This is not automated, this is not a marketing campaign. I'm just interested in what you're doing.

Michael: So, let's get technical for just a moment. You know, ever since Gmail changed the thing so that you can actually, if it's not from the real send address, then it'll say “oh, this is from this person via this”. You know what I mean? Is there a way to make these automated emails from the CEO actually from that CEO's address?

Keith: Yes, on a technical level; so that “via”, and if you actually click the “via” in Gmail, it'll tell you how to get rid of that. And what it is, you set up your DKIM settings and your...I can never remember the second acronym.

Michael: The SPA or something, SPF.

Keith: Yeah, something like that.

Michael: Yeah, yeah. Ok, so that will fix that. See, okay so, and I guess that leads into the other technical question, what's your tool of choice for sending type of a time-lapse email?

Keith: It completely depends on what CRM you're using. Every CRM—

Michael: Let's just take something basic like Magento, or maybe Shopify.

Keith: Well, see, Shopify and Magento don't actually act as the CRM, do they?

Michael: No, but let's just pretend we were gonna use those. Like, could we just tie in something like Drip, or Mailchimp or something?

Keith: Yup, you can. So, Drip would be my choice, because it's cheaper than Infusionsoft and it's much more powerful than Mailchimp. Uh, GetDrip everyone, I love it! The Drip would be a great choice, so when someone purchases, send them into a campaign that is "Just Purchased", tag them as "just purchased book that I have", whatever book it is, right? So you have one campaign for each product you have this set up for, and then one week later or two weeks later, depending on the length of the book— you don't want to send the War & Peace email like two days later say "how did you like the book" because they're not going to have finished it. But you want to send that email "how did you like the book" one week, two weeks, whatever, after they purchase.

Michael: And the nice thing is you can also use this type of a time-lapse email, we were talking about this last week, to do other things too. Like, maybe a request review, or, you know, other types of engagement. We'll link back to that in the show notes. Keith, um, short and sweet here, what do you...what kind of closing thoughts would you have for a merchant that's going into the last part of Q4 here, and really wanting to squeeze out the most conversions they can get out of their traffic?

Keith: Besides those two, the one thing I would recommend that I also wanted to mention, is that, because that email is post-purchase you can also do it with people who purchased last year. And what I would highly recommend is crafting a simple email just for people who purchased last Christmas or who have purchased recently, or who have purchased anything with a gift option. And send them an email that says "Hey, I saw that you purchased this last Christmas, we're doing this special Christmas sale just for repeats, for repeat customers".

Michael: That's really brilliant.

Keith: And I changed that wording of repeat customer, loyal customers, loyal people, whatever. This is not going out to everyone. This is going specifically to you, because you purchased floo on floo date. And say, this is a special 10% off coupon or 5% off coupon, whatever you're comfortable with, no template, no images of products you can buy, just "hey, this is a special thank you for you", get them back on the site, and maybe segment them somewhat so you can say "since you bought this, you might like this one thing, or this category". Don't make it into this big— at the Christmas season, everyone is trying to sell so hard with all the images and everything, the main thing you can do for your marketing is cut through the crap that everyone else is doing and do something different.

Michael: Nice.

Keith: The number one thing that stands out for marketing is something different. Okay? That's what you need to do to be able to get through people's crap filter, into their inbox.

Michael: That's really good. I'm really glad you brought up that third point. So, to recap we have the idea of doing an exit model, which is a non-annoying way to catch people when they actually are about to leave and give them something of value which might be a coupon, or a special offer, or some motivation. Second of all, we have the idea of doing a message from the CEO, saying "Hey," just informally, "how did you like the book", make that as conversational as you can, so they'll think it's a real email. Because it is, right? You're the—you're setting this up in such a way that you're wanting to engage with them, and if they email you back you're going to email them with a real response. And then the third being to leverage your last year's customers, look at that purchase history, segment that list out in your Mailchimp, or whatever it is that you're using, and send something very targeted to that list. You could potentially even just base it off of individual products that were purchased last year, if you have some kind of segregated data. Keith, thank you so much. How can people take advantage of your wealth of knowledge?

Keith: Yeah, best way to get in touch with me is my website, www.keithperhac.com. And also you can go to that same website on www.developyourmarketing.com. That's the best way to get in touch with me, I have a newsletter that is fairly defunct, but I also have a contact form that you can get in touch with me if you have any questions and want to work together.

Michael: Keith, thank you again for joining us.

Keith: Thanks so much, man.

Michael: And, uh, have a great day everybody.

Resources:

[1]: <https://github.com/carlsednaoui/ouibounce>

[2]: <https://www.getdrip.com>

[3]: <https://www.keithperhac.com>