

Unboxing Must-Have Marketing Campaigns: Upsell and Cross-Sell



Do brands treat their customers with empathy and respect?

At Iterable, we [define empathy](#) as adhering to the four following tenets:

1. **Acknowledging perspective**
2. **Staying out of judgment**
3. **Recognizing emotion**
4. **Communicating understanding**

However, it's easier to say than it is to act upon it when B2C marketers are laser-focused on meeting their company's growth goals.

That's why for this next edition of Unboxing Must-Have Marketing Campaigns we'll focus on [driving growth with good](#) by adding upsell and cross-sell opportunities to your existing marketing campaigns.

We're going to cover:

- **How upsells and cross-sells show empathy to your customer**
- **4 ways to add upsells and cross-sells into your existing email campaigns**
- **Advanced tactics to up your cross-channel messaging game**

Let's get started.

How to Show Empathy to Your Customers with Upsells and Cross-Sells

It's a no brainer for businesses to offer an upsell or a cross-sell to customers—more revenue, an increase in customer lifetime value and the higher potential for brand loyalty.

But does it benefit the customer as well? It can, if you believe the following:

“[Customers] don't buy products and services, they buy end results.”

- **Jay Abraham**, consultant and author of *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got*

Meaning?

The hamburger someone purchases from a [fast food restaurant](#) isn't just a hamburger—it's a way for someone to get a satisfying meal if they're in a hurry.

So why not offer them a way to make sure they're well-fed, like an **upsell** of an extra beef patty or a **cross-sell** of some fries and a soft drink?

Sounds pretty empathetic if a customer is super hungry that day.

Abraham goes on to explain why it's so important for a business to upsell and cross-sell:

You can't allow a client to just select what they want to buy until and unless they've been educated to know how much more or better is possible.

However, Abraham published his book in 2000. So his examples for adding upsells and cross-sells to increase purchase amounts on VCRs and curtains aren't as relevant for the way customers purchase products and services online today.

So we have to rethink how to incorporate an upsell/cross-sell strategy into the e-commerce world.

4 Ways to Add Upsells and Cross-Sells Into Your Existing Email Campaigns

While you can add upsells and cross-sells to marketing assets like product pages and checkout flows, we at Iterable are going to focus on ways to add them to the email campaigns you may already have running.

Campaigns like:

1. **Cart abandonment**
2. **Reactivation and re-engagement**
3. **Order and shipping confirmations**
4. **Welcome and onboarding**



We'll break them down, one by one.

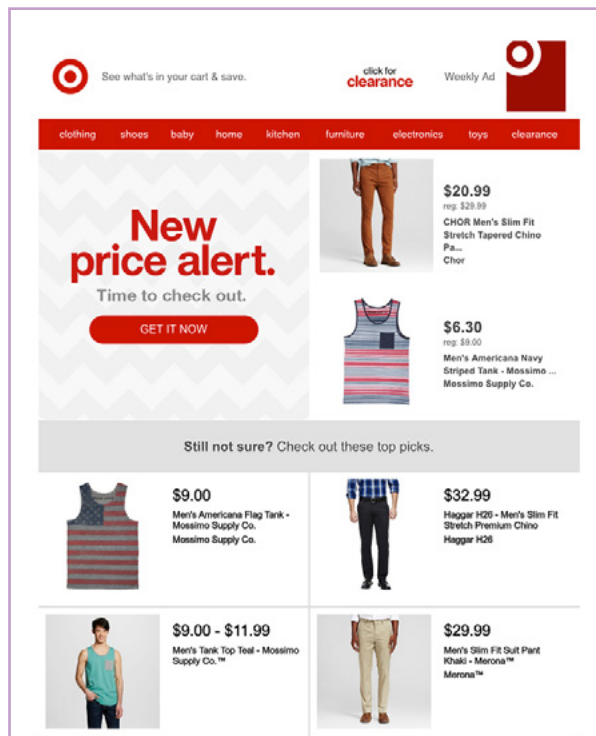
1. Cart abandonment

It's a lot easier to abandon an online "shopping cart" vs. a physical one in-store, so [cart abandonment campaigns](#) are designed to remind the customer of their intent to purchase.

But there are a variety of reasons customers may be hesitant to finish the checkout process. Maybe they don't have an immediate need for the item, a lack of funds or a lack of trust in the brand.

Which is why a relevant upsell or cross-sell can work in a cart abandonment email. It gives the customer new items to consider purchasing, in addition to their original intent to purchase.

For instance, let's look at the cart abandonment email from big-box retailer Target.

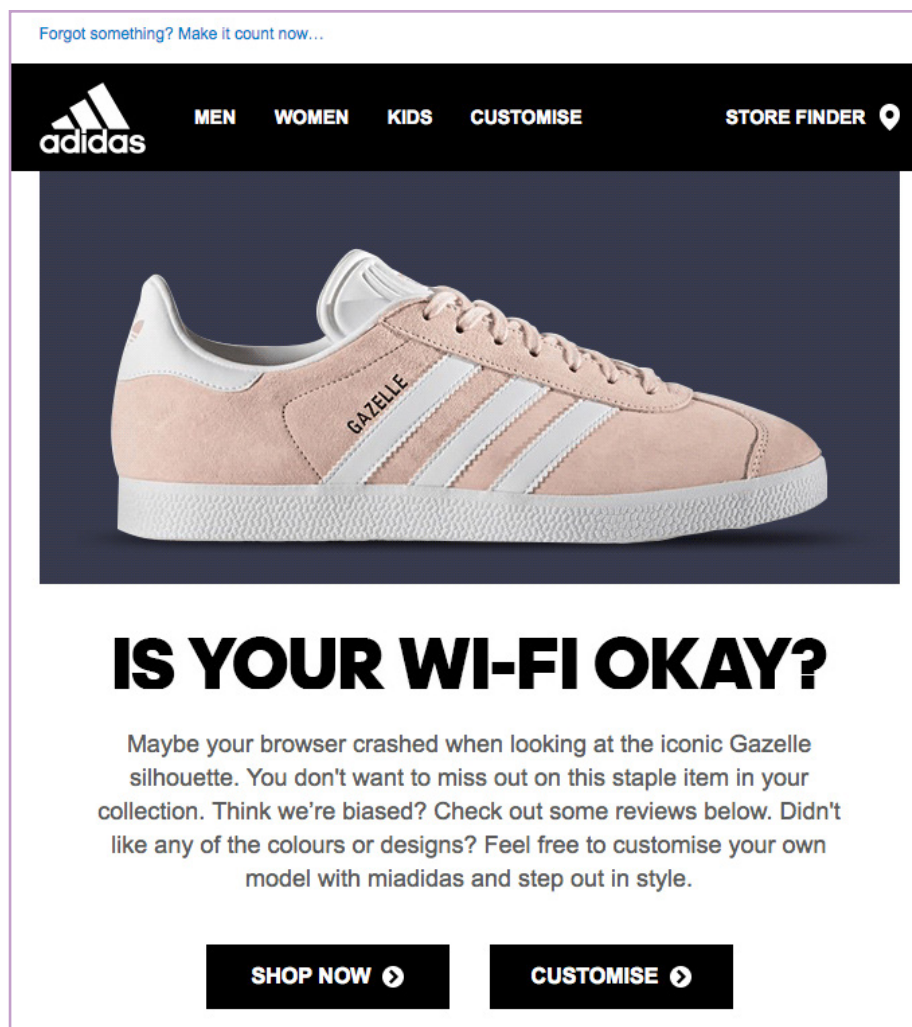


Big box retailer Target adds a cross-sell to their cart abandonment email.

Instead of the typical “Did you forget something?” [phrasing seen in most cart abandonment emails](#), Target alerts the customer of the reduced prices of their items, which reduces the “no money” objection with the added urgency to check out before the discount disappears.

But in the case that the customer may not want the men’s pants and tank top they originally selected, Target gives options to the buyer that there are other men’s pants and tank tops in different colors that they might prefer instead.

It’s not as common to implement something similar with an upsell, but athletic shoe company Adidas manages to pull it off with a customer who has a pair of sneakers in their cart.



The screenshot shows an email campaign for Adidas. At the top, it says "Forgot something? Make it count now...". Below that is the Adidas logo and navigation links: MEN, WOMEN, KIDS, CUSTOMISE, and STORE FINDER. The main image is a pair of Adidas Gazelle sneakers in a light brown color with white stripes and a white sole. Below the image, the text reads: "IS YOUR WI-FI OKAY?" followed by a paragraph: "Maybe your browser crashed when looking at the iconic Gazelle silhouette. You don't want to miss out on this staple item in your collection. Think we're biased? Check out some reviews below. Didn't like any of the colours or designs? Feel free to customise your own model with miadidas and step out in style." At the bottom, there are two buttons: "SHOP NOW" and "CUSTOMISE".

Athletic shoes company Adidas adds a shoe customization upsell to their cart abandonment email.

For Adidas, the “upsell” is not necessarily a higher dollar amount since the customization is free, but more a tactic to help close the sale.

2. Reactivation and re-engagement

We've talked before about the [common mistakes made in a re-engagement email campaign](#) so how do you do it in a way that captivates customers to retry your products and services?

Answer: By utilizing their past purchase and browsing history to offer them new products and services.



Take for instance, this email received from outdoor retailer Backcountry, tailored specifically for a female shopper who previously browsed or bought gear from premium lifestyle brand prAna.

It's a reasonable assumption that purchasers of prAna in the past may want additional items to complement what they already have in their wardrobe. In this case, Backcountry is using a re-engagement email to cross-sell four different items from the prAna's Fall collection.

The image shows a screenshot of an email campaign from Backcountry. At the top, it says "Clothing you'll reach for all autumn long | View Online »". Below that is the Backcountry logo and a banner for "Free 2-Day Shipping on Orders Over \$50". The main visual is a couple sitting on a wooden bench by a lake, with the prAna logo and tagline "CLOTHING FOR POSITIVE CHANGE" overlaid. Below the image, the headline reads "It's Feeling a Lot Like Fall". The text below the headline says: "We're living in fleece-lined jackets, vests, flannels, leggings, and denim this fall, so we appreciate versatile, quality pieces. These sustainably made closet staples from prAna are just that and will quickly make it on your list of clothing items you can't get through autumn without." Below this, there is a section titled "Women's Fall Essentials" featuring four product images with their names: prAna Permafrost Fleece Jacket - Women's, prAna Diva Vest - Women's, prAna Elsin Sweater Coat - Women's, and prAna Avita Sweater - Women's.

Outdoor retailer Backcountry re-engages with a cross-sell of prAna's new Fall arrivals collection.

But let's say a customer previously purchased your subscription service and then cancelled. You can utilize a reactivation email campaign to upsell the same service, just like guitar manufacturer Fender does below.



**Come back.
Save 50%.**

**We want you back,
so here's a special offer**

Restart your subscription and get 50% off
the price of our Annual Plan.*

Here's how:

- 1
Sign with your Fender Play
email address
- 2
Enter code **ht97g8bt** at
checkout

UNLOCK THIS OFFER

Guitar manufacturer Fender sends a reactivation email with an upsell to an Annual Plan for their online guitar lessons subscription.

The customer cancelled their monthly Fender Play subscription, so Fender uses a reactivation email to upsell their Annual Plan for 50% off.

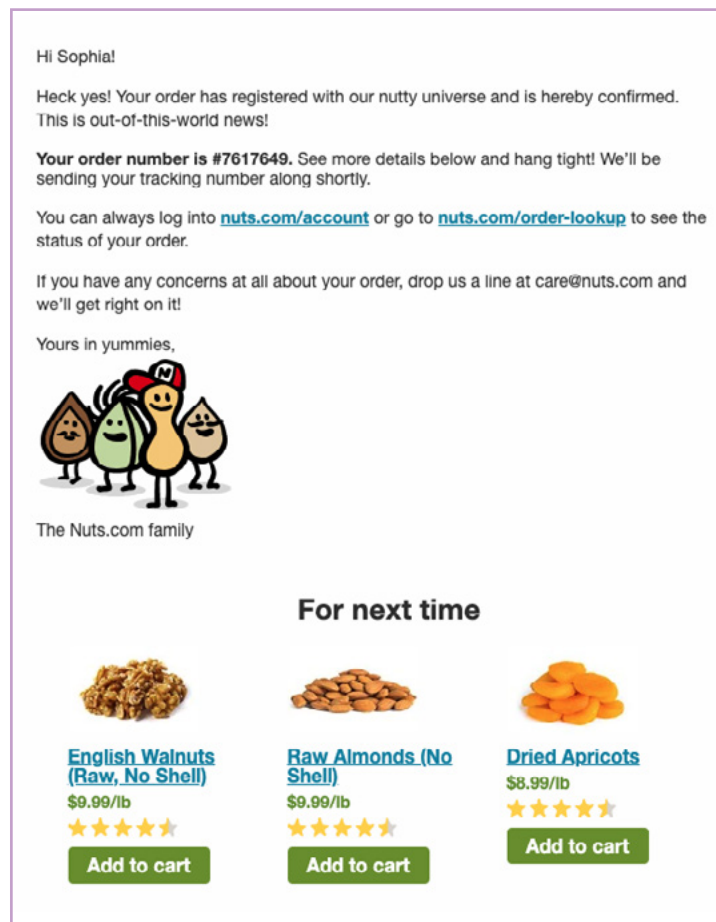
This upsell offer may seem like it nets less revenue from customers, but is a great strategy if a brand is looking to increase its customer lifetime value.

3. Order and shipping confirmations

When your brand sells products and services online, customers can easily come back for another purchase. Compare that to an in-store experience where someone has to physically drive, park and walk into a store to get something.

So why not add a cross-sell or an upsell to your order and shipping confirmations, just in case a customer forgot to pick up an item related to their initial purchase?

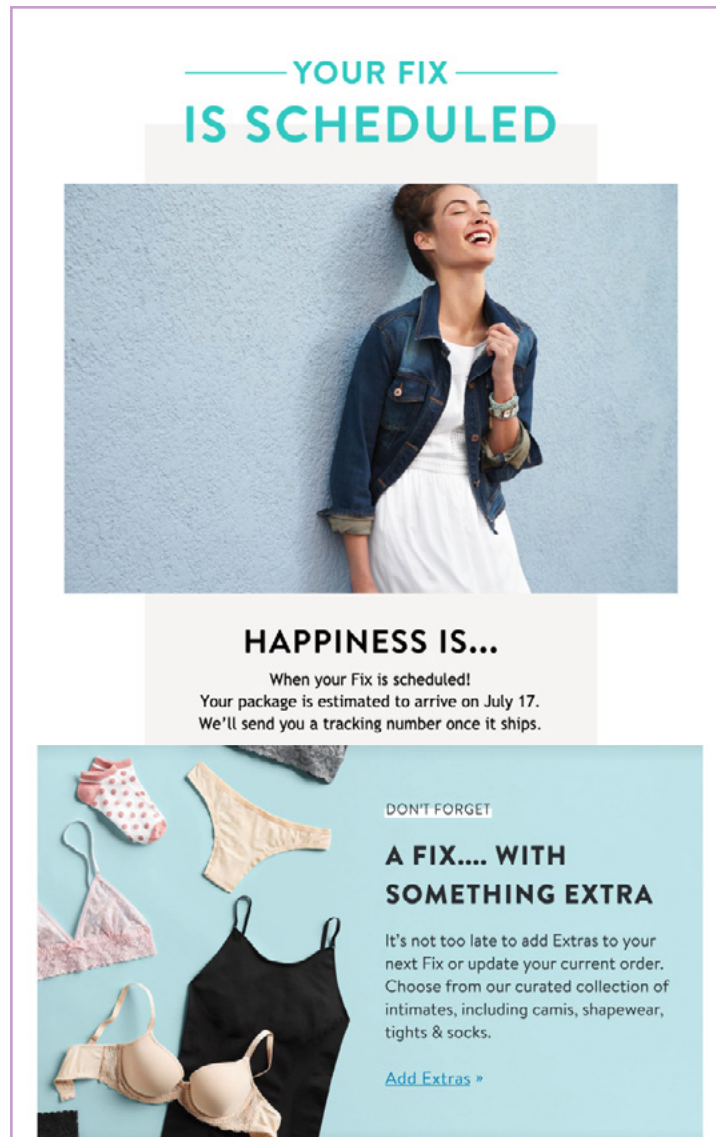
For bulk foods retailer Nuts.com, they use their shipping confirmation email to cross-sell additional items for the customer's next order, just in case they felt they "missed something."




Bulk foods retailer Nuts.com cross-sells additional items in their shipping confirmation emails.

Whereas for personal styling service Stitch Fix, the goal is to get the recipient of their subscription box to "keep" as many rental items as possible.


While they can't always guarantee that the user will always love the fit, color or style of a piece of clothing or an accessory, Stitch Fix reduces the risk by adding an upsell of essential intimate items like camisoles, tights and socks to increase the likelihood that the customer will keep more items.



— YOUR FIX —
IS SCHEDULED



HAPPINESS IS...
When your Fix is scheduled!
Your package is estimated to arrive on July 17.
We'll send you a tracking number once it ships.



DON'T FORGET
A FIX.... WITH SOMETHING EXTRA
It's not too late to add Extras to your next Fix or update your current order. Choose from our curated collection of intimates, including camis, shapewear, tights & socks.
[Add Extras »](#)

Online styling service StitchFix upsells a curated collection of intimates in their shipping confirmation email.

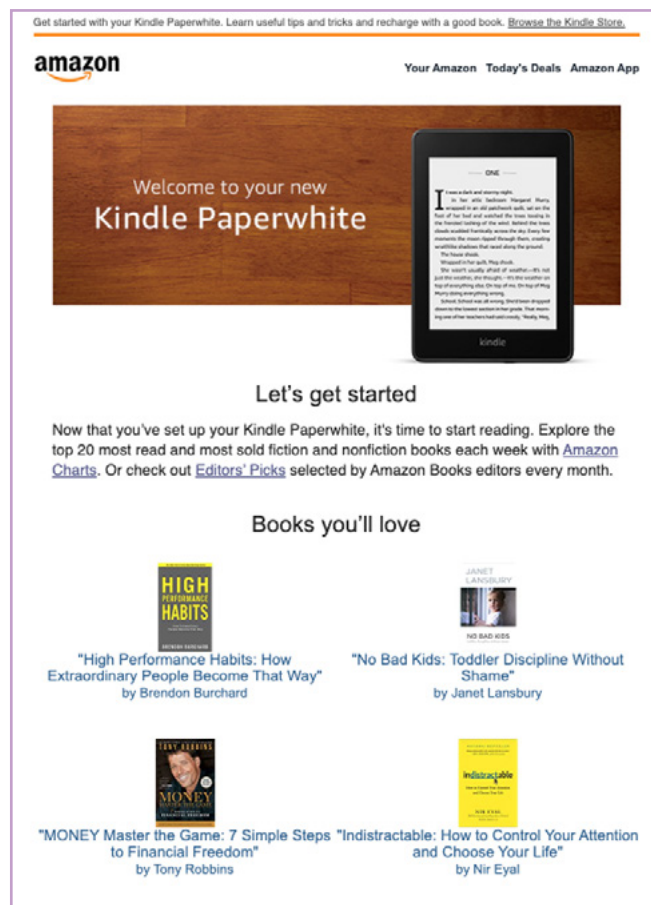
Obviously the benefit to utilizing cross-sells or upsells in an order or shipping confirmation email is the increase in customer lifetime value. But even if a customer doesn't take you up on the offer, it can at least give them ideas on what to purchase the next time they return to your website.

4. Welcome and onboarding

It's a pretty well-established fact that [welcome emails are crucial for building trust](#) with subscribers—after all, this is the first interaction your customer has with your brand.

But is it the right move to immediately try a cross-sell or an upsell?

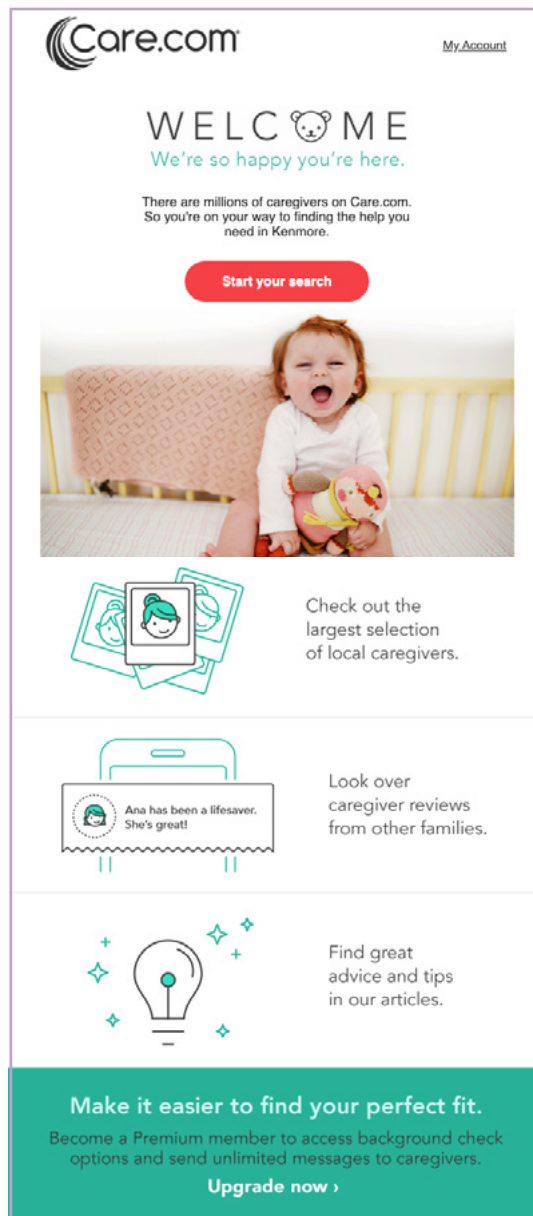
Take, for instance, this welcome email received from a purchase of Amazon's Kindle Paperwhite.



Amazon cross-sells e-books in their Kindle Paperwhite welcome email.

In this case, it makes sense for Amazon to cross-sell a few popular e-books based on the book purchase history of the user. After all, that's what they purchased a Kindle for.

You can also do the same thing with an upsell. This works especially well if your brand has a service that's free to use, but also a premium subscription for more features.



Care.com upsells their Premium membership in their welcome email.

In the above example from Care.com, the world's largest online destination for family care, the user has signed up for a free account to search for qualified caregivers in their area.

However, the free account caps the amount of messages the user can send to prospective caregivers, so it makes sense for Care.com to add an upsell for the Premium membership, just in case the user needs background check options and unlimited messaging.

Once you can see how easy it is to add cross-sells and upsells to your existing email campaigns, you can apply the same strategy to your other messaging channels.

Advanced Tactics to Up Your Cross-Channel Messaging Experience

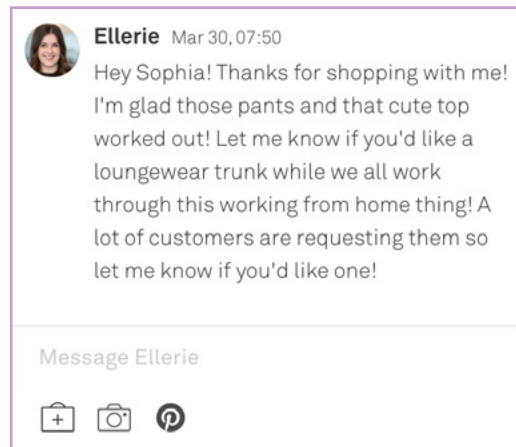
If your brand has already maximized the existing email campaigns you have with cross-sells and upsells, don't worry—we have a few ideas on how to incorporate them into your cross-channel messaging experience.

In-app messaging

For brands with mobile apps, [in-app messaging](#) is a great way to interact on a personal level with a customer—especially if a [Mobile Inbox](#) is activated.

For Nordstrom Trunk Club customers who haven't placed an order in a while, personal stylists can message customers and make suggestions for clothing items they need next.

Like all good cross-sells and upsells, this in-app message is personalized, relevant to the customer's current situation and offers a suggestion.

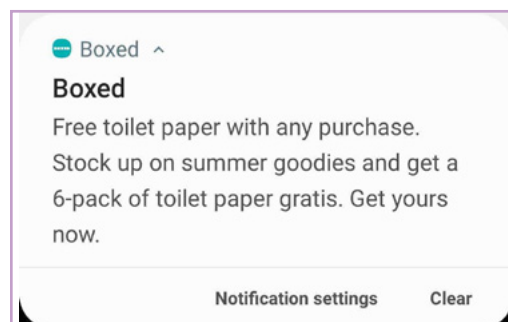


Nordstrom's Trunk Club sends in-app messages to upsell their clothing subscription box service.

Mobile push notifications

If your brand has a mobile shopping app like Boxed, an online wholesale grocer, you can personalize a [push notification](#) based on a customer's past shopping history.

At the time this mobile push notification was sent, there was a [nationwide toilet paper shortage](#). Boxed used the situation at hand to create a compelling upsell that may prompt a past customer to make another order to prepare for upcoming summer activities.

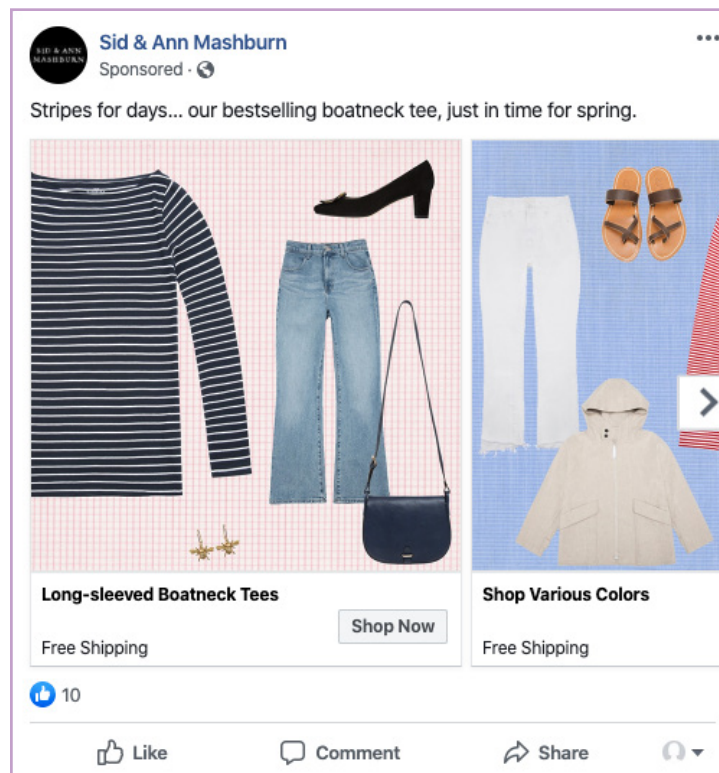


Online wholesale grocer Boxed uses mobile push notifications to upsell a complimentary pack of toilet paper.

Social retargeting

If your customers spend a lot of time on Facebook and [your email service provider integrates with Custom Audiences](#), it might make sense for you to invest in upsells and cross-sells using social retargeting—especially if you have a user’s browsing and purchase history saved.

As seen below, clothing store Sid & Ann Mashburn utilize Facebook ads to cross-sell one of their bestselling items—a boatneck t-shirt.



Clothing retailer Sid & Ann Mashburn uses social retargeting to cross-sell complementary items in their inventory.

Mashburn also suggests other clothing and accessories that could pair well with the boatneck shirt in the imagery. But just in case the customer isn’t interested in navy, they also suggest another option in red (also paired with complementary items).

A Quick Recap on Upsells and Cross-Sells

It's important to remember that as a brand, you [show empathy to your customers](#) by adding cross-sells and upsells to their existing marketing campaigns.

As consultant and author Jay Abraham says...

“You can’t allow a client to just select what they want to buy until and unless they’ve been educated to know how much more or better is possible.”

And for e-commerce brands, the easiest place to start is to incorporate upsells and cross-sells into the emails you already send to your customers.

Add them to campaigns like:

1. **Cart abandonment**
2. **Reactivation and re-engagement**
3. **Order and shipping confirmations**
4. **Welcome and onboarding**

And once you’ve mastered emails, you can sprinkle them into additional marketing channels, such as:

- **In-app messaging**
- **Mobile push notifications**
- **Social retargeting**

Now that you are well-versed in upsells and cross-sells, what are you going to do to stand out from the crowd?



About Iterable

Iterable is the growth marketing platform that enables brands to create, execute and optimize cross-channel campaigns with unparalleled data flexibility.

Leading brands, like Zillow, SeatGeek and Box, choose Iterable to power world-class customer engagement throughout the entire lifecycle.



Data Flexibility at Your Fingertips

Access real-time user, behavioral and event data to trigger personalized messaging at virtually unlimited scale. Support an audience of millions while appealing to each subscriber's unique preferences.



Unified Brand Experience

Orchestrate seamless customer engagement across email, mobile push, SMS, in-app, web push, direct mail and more throughout every lifecycle stage, from activation to re-engagement.



Agile Iteration & Optimization

Launch, measure and fine-tune campaigns with ease to deliver more relevant messaging faster than the competition. Experiment and iterate on-demand to determine the right content, channel and cadence for each user.



Customer Journey Mapping

Visualize the entire customer journey and build sophisticated, cross-channel segments and campaigns with Iterable's intuitive, drag-and-drop Workflow Studio.

If you want to learn more about Iterable, please request a demo:

[Request Demo](#)

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