

How to create the perfect checkout process

...and defeat checkout
abandonment for good



Table of contents

- What you'll get from this guide
- Getting the right mindset
- 1. "Can I find this cheaper elsewhere?"
- 2. "I bet I can find a promo code"
- 3. "Let me get a second opinion before I commit"
- 4. "I can do this later"
- 5. "What do I do now?"
- 6. "Is this site secure?"
- How to identify your checkout issues
- Conclusion

What you'll get from this guide

Are you in one of the [22% of businesses](#) that's satisfied with their conversion rate?

If so, you can stop reading here. And congratulations, by the way.

If you're in the 78% of businesses who feel there's room for improvement, strap in to find out how to optimise your checkout process to increase conversions (even the satisfied 22% will probably learn something).

According to Econsultancy, [for every \\$91 spent acquiring customers, only \\$1 is spent converting them](#). That's a whole lot of marketing spend sinking into the void: getting customers onto your website means nothing if they don't also buy.

There are three big hurdles along the way:

1. Getting your customer to engage with a product and add it to cart (i.e. defeat browse abandonment)
2. Getting your customer to make it to checkout (i.e. defeat cart abandonment)
3. Getting your customer to make it through the final checkout gauntlet to purchase (i.e. defeat checkout abandonment)

In this book, we're talking about step three – **checkout abandonment**. Fail at this stage and your success in the last two will count for little.

In this guide, we'll take you through some real-world problems e-commerce businesses face at the checkout, with simple solutions to help you create the perfect checkout process.

You don't have to be re-building your checkout from scratch to get value out of this – some of the most impactful changes can actually be incredibly simple. So dig in – you're sure to find challenges (and their solutions) that you recognise.

Ready? Time to check out the checkout (sorry).

Getting the right mindset

OK, so technically there's no single checkout process that's perfect. In fact, part of what makes it so tricky to get right is that **the ideal checkout is unique for every business**, depending on your market, demographics, product, brand, competitors and a whole host of other factors.

This is why – as with all things e-commerce – you need to start by looking closely at your customer.

Your checkout needs to be an experience that works around them, to suit your goals.

You'll therefore find that this guide works around the customer, too. Our [Consulting team](#) has categorised the six most common [reasons that customers abandon checkouts](#) – and the solutions to those problems.

This means that all you have to do is see what applies to your site and work from there (if you're not sure, skip to the last chapter of this guide for tips on how to accurately identify what issues are causing your customers to abandon checkout).

1. “Can I find this cheaper elsewhere?”

How to spot it

Three behavioural indicators can be signs that your customer is abandoning to comparison-shop:

- They reach the page where the final price is shown (i.e. after viewing the cart, delivery step or summary page) then show [exit intent](#), or exit after showing some engagement
- They select and copy the name of a product in their cart

How to solve it

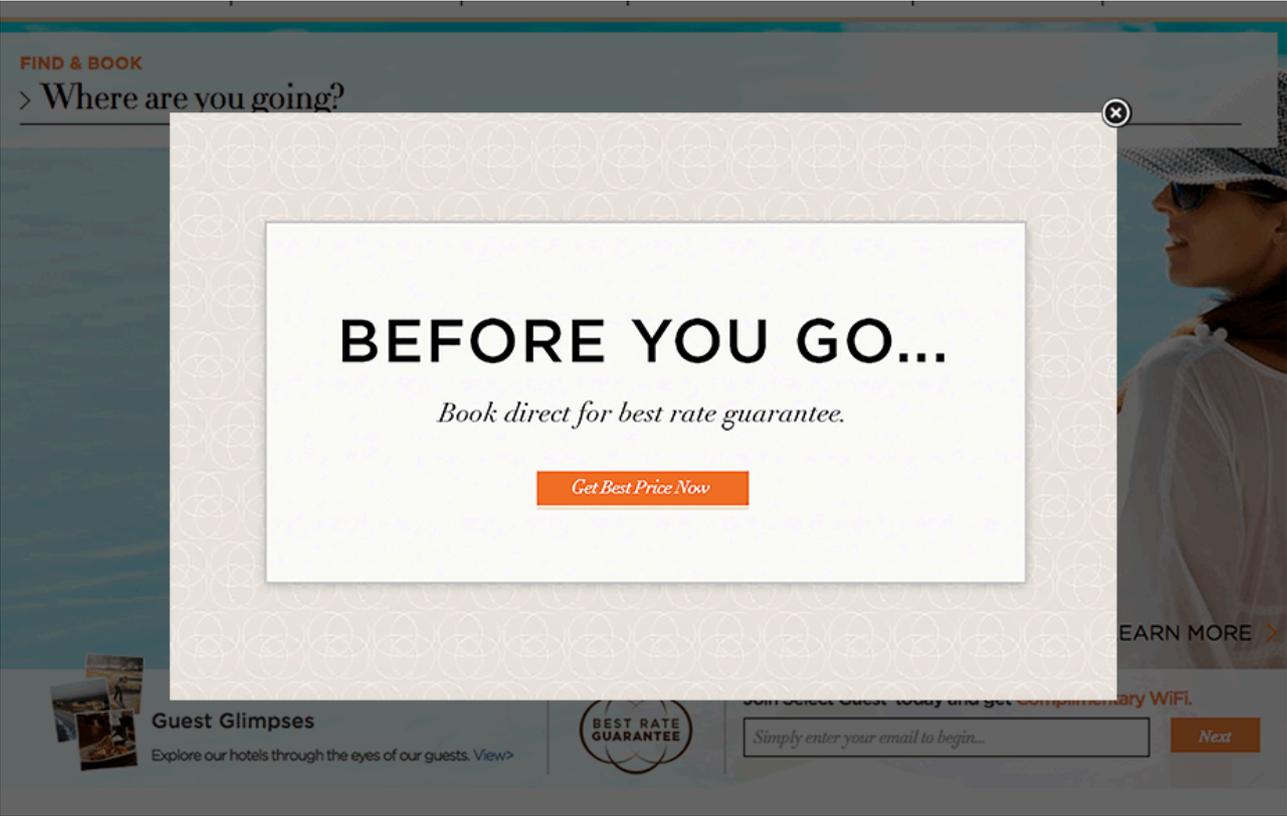
It may be tempting to believe that, if you have competitors offering a similar product or service at a cheaper rate, the battle is lost unless you lower your prices.

However, [discounting is not a sustainable solution](#), and you have plenty of other alternatives to keep your customer in your checkout funnel:

1. **Dispel the idea that better offers are out there:** promote USPs such as price guarantees, free delivery or free returns
2. **Create urgency:** use [social proof](#) to move your customer to purchase by showing that lots of other consumers are buying (which means it can't be a bad idea), or show your delivery cut-off thresholds for express, next or same day delivery
3. **Incentivise with an offer:** this is more aggressive and may therefore be something to restrict to a particular segment of customers such as new visitors, first-time customers or at-risk customers – it's up to you and what your margins can handle.

Case study

[Omni Hotels and Resorts](#), a chain of hotels across North America, found that users abandoned to look at hotel price comparison websites. All they had to do was show that their direct rates were the best in the market and they saw a [39.09% conversion rate uplift](#):



2. “I bet I can find a promo code”

How to spot it

The behaviour here is similar to “Can I find this cheaper elsewhere?”, and distinguishing between the two will depend on whether you accept promo codes, how regularly you promote them and how prominent your promo code field is.

How to solve it

If your customers are leaving to look for a discount, it’s better to offer the discount yourself rather than risk them not returning to their cart. Therefore, you should:

1. **Dispel the idea that better offers are out there:** just as you did with your price-comparison shopper, make sure you clarify that your shopper is already getting the best possible deal
2. **Provide a code on exit or at another point during the funnel:** once a user leaves, there’s no guarantee that they’ll return to your site and make the purchase, whether they find a code or not. Catch them before they go.

Case study

For [Domino’s Pizza](#), a brand with wide market recognition, there is an expectation of what the price of the product will be. But like many takeaway brands, it’s also known for deals and discounts, so the availability of a promo code is also an expectation – not to mention that the input box for the code is a featured part of the checkout.

In order to lessen the number of people leaving the site to find discount codes, Domino's implemented two campaigns focused on its checkout.

One offered first-time customers a 25% discount on exit, while the other targeted returning customers with a different discount offer depending on the value of their basket.

This saw a 13% uplift in conversion rates for exiting visitors, plus a 9% increase in average order value from visitors who saw a campaign. Check out (pun intended) the full story [here](#).

3. “Let me get a second opinion before I commit”

How to spot it

For bigger purchases, or cases where a switch in service provider might be in play, customers may want to consult with a partner, friend or colleague before buying. This behaviour can be detected in:

- Extended dwell-time on the cart or summary page
- Multiple views of the cart summary page followed by exit

How to solve it

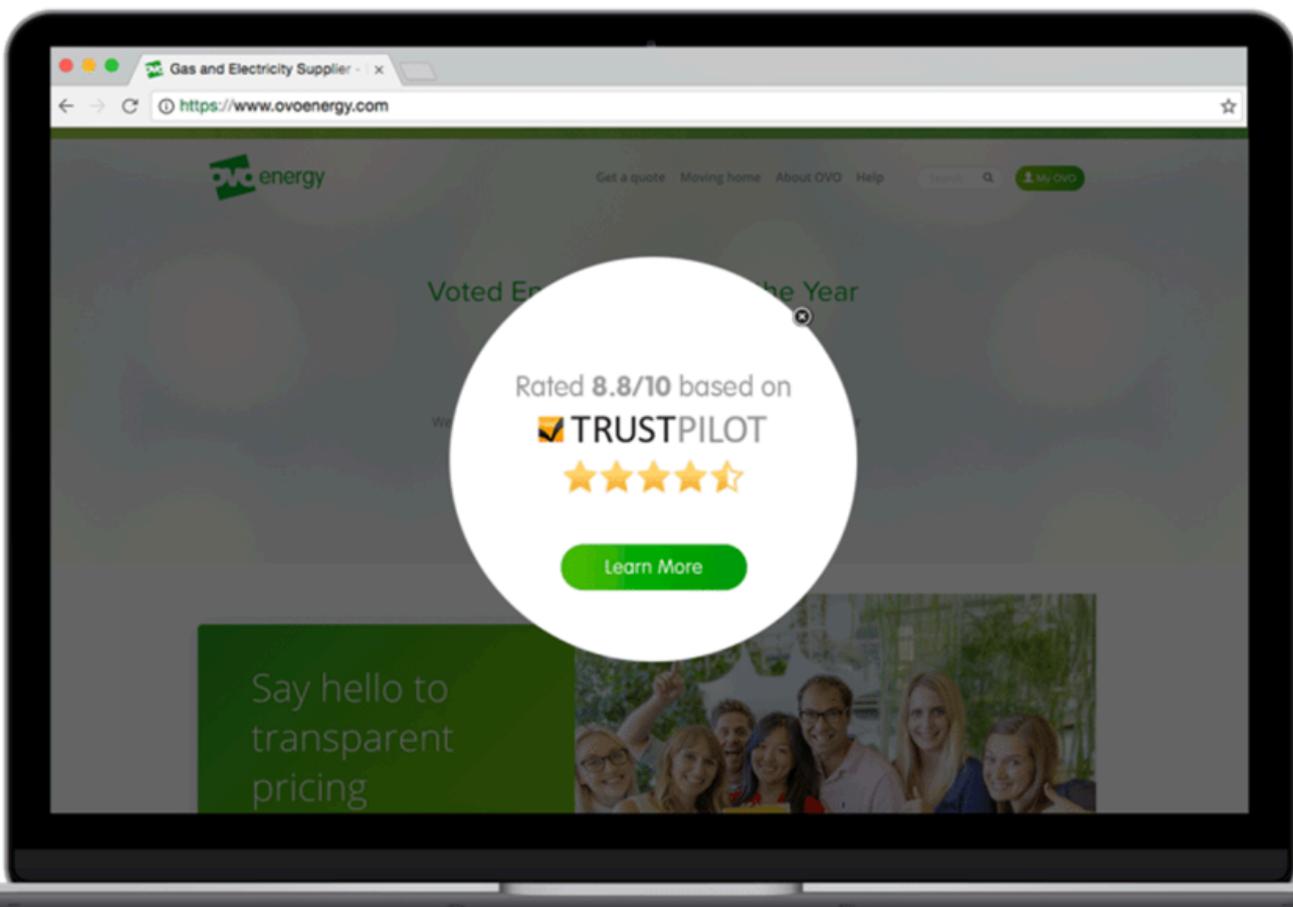
Rather than urging the visitor to buy now – risking an unhappy customer – there are a number of ways you can encourage users in this situation to return to a cart:

1. **Enabling the ability to save a cart**, flagging this function either within the funnel or in a [follow-up email](#)
2. **Allow users to share their cart** via email or social media
3. **Promote your returns policy** to reassure uncertain shoppers that they can change their mind
4. **Send an email summary of the cart** (they can then forward this on to another person)
5. **Promote trust symbols**, delivering a ‘second opinion’ from thousands of other consumers

Case study

[OVO Energy](#), a new energy company, aims to get people who are overspending on their current energy bill to switch providers. However, switching energy providers is a big decision that often seems complicated (which is partially why so many people stick with unfavourable deals).

To overcome this, [Ovo targeted people appearing to get cold feet](#) – that is, dwelling in the switching funnel – with an overlay promoting Ovo’s outstanding Trustpilot score. This move resulted in an 18% uplift in conversion rate (read the full story [here](#)).



4. “I can do this later”

How to spot it

One of the dangers of the online checkout is the process appearing too long, discouraging people from seeing it through. Again, once someone leaves the process, there’s no guarantee that they’ll return to it, even if they had intended to.

This impulse can be identified if someone starts the checkout process, moving beyond the cart page but [does not interact with the form](#) or interacts with a few fields before abandoning.

How to solve it

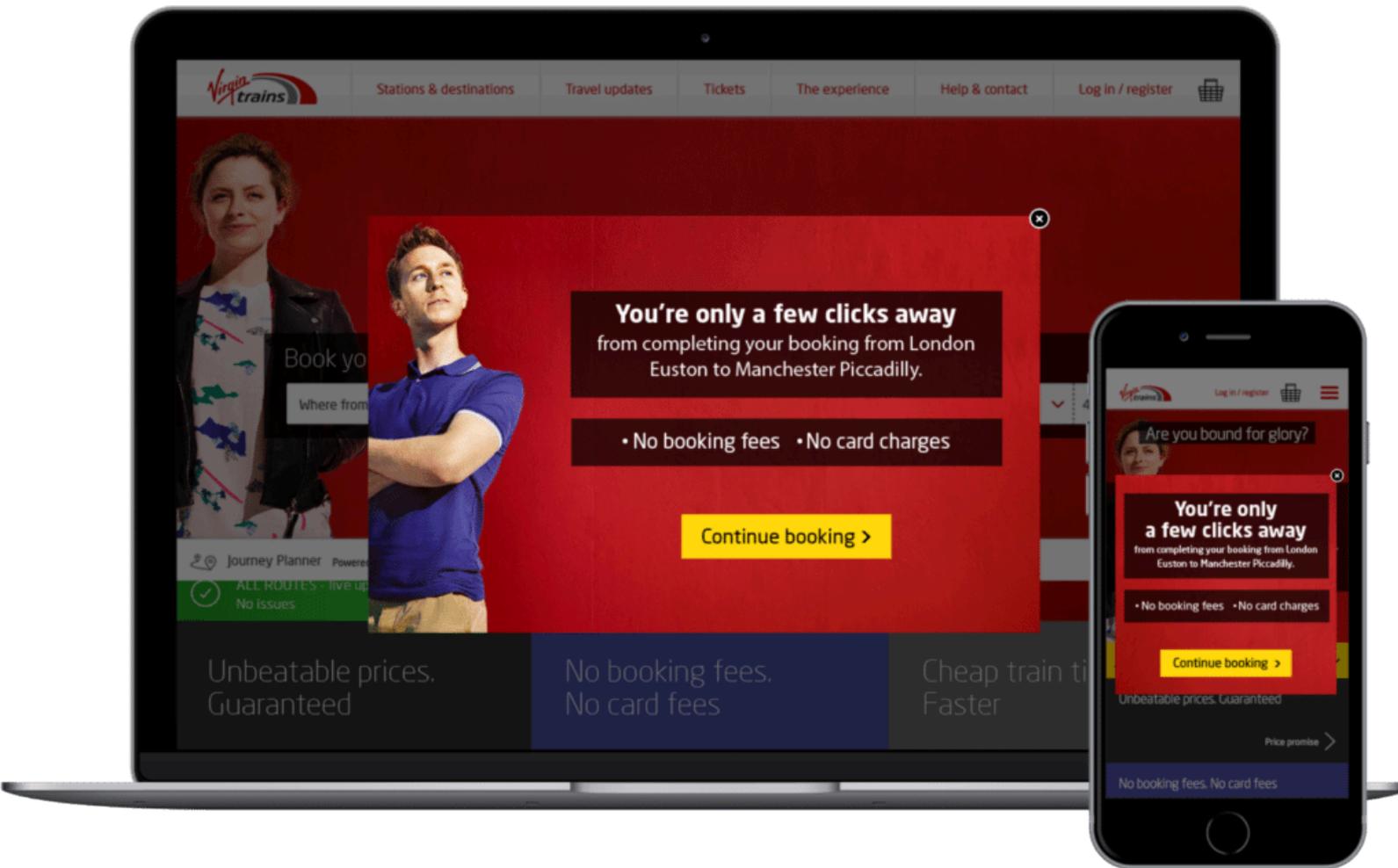
This solution may involve either content and messaging tweaks or some technical changes to the checkout process:

1. **Promote ease of completion** – state how long it usually takes to complete the process (or how many steps there are). This can be bolstered by demonstrating to your customer how far they’ve progressed in it, increasing their feeling that they’ve invested in the process and making them want to see it through.
2. **Highlight (or add) easy checkout methods** such as Apple Pay, Amazon Pay and Paypal (especially important on mobile). Many businesses only show payment methods in the footer or leave them until the payment page where somebody has many opportunities to leave before seeing them.
3. **Create urgency:** use [social proof](#) to move your customer to purchase by showing that lots of other consumers are buying (which means it can’t be a bad idea), or show your delivery cut-off thresholds for express, next or same day delivery. This also helps with

dissuading price-comparison behaviour.

Case study

[Virgin Trains](#) targeted abandoning customers at several points in the booking funnel with overlays highlighting how close they were to completing the booking. This responsive messaging resulted in a [16.6% conversion rate uplift at the point of payment](#).



Check out the full story [here](#).

5. “What do I do now?”

How to spot it

This issue can take the form of customers either not knowing how to proceed, or not knowing what details to enter. This is particularly common for [financial services](#), which will sometimes require very specific information to be entered.

The customer might display:

- Extended dwell on form pages such as details, delivery or payment, having engaged with most or all of the other form fields
- Progression through the form but dwelling on a specific field

How to solve it

Using analytics tools, pinpoint the stumbling block that’s causing people to falter. When the desire to complete is there, it can be especially frustrating for users who are unable to progress. Here’s how you can help:

1. **Review your copy and instructions.** Is there anything that’s unclear or could be misinterpreted? Add prompts and extra information if necessary
2. **Offer support** either online or through another channel such as a call centre or live chat if available
3. **Deliver a clear progression CTA** showing your customer what to do next – the next step may not be obvious to all users

4. **Promote FAQs or troubleshooting pages** to help your customer answer their own question before they leave your site

Case study

With a need for some very specific details in order to tailor a quote for life insurance, [Barclays'](#) application process includes prompts for each field, with a hover-over instruction to unobtrusively offer information about information is needed and why.

Below, for the requirement to enter an occupation, specific instructions and examples are given about what information to provide, assisting the customer in accurately and easily filling out the application.



Thank you for choosing to apply for Life Insurance from Barclays - provided by Aviva

✓ Life cover

✓ For you

✓ For 40 years

By applying you could be one step closer in helping to protect your loved ones' financial future

Essential documents

Guide to Insurance 

Provided By Aviva

References to 'we', 'us' or 'our' mean Aviva Life & Pensions UK Limited, the insurance provider. Please read the [Important information from Aviva](#)



We need to let you know

You'll be sent an email to jane citizen@gmail.com with your details and a link to get back to your application.

Application reference number: **478031BSWPSS**

It's important you have the cover you need, so as a reminder, another email will be sent seven days before your details are removed, if you haven't submitted your application before then.

Your application - Ms Jane Citizen



Personal details

[Edit](#) 

Part 1 - Occupation

[Skip this part for now](#) 

It's important that you answer all questions fully, truthfully and accurately. This is because we'll use the answers you give to determine what your policy will cover and the price you will pay for the policy.

Even if you've already provided information in a previous application, you must provide it to us again on this application form.

If you don't answer all the questions fully, truthfully and accurately this could affect how much we pay out if you make a claim and could mean we won't pay out your claim at all.

Please tell us your occupation or advise if you are a houseperson, unemployed, student or retired?

If you have more than one occupation please enter your main occupation

Please advise the job you do rather than your specific job title. This will make it easier to select a match.

For example

Enter

Administration

Shop assistant

Director

Service engineer

Rather than

Office team leader

Part time shop assistant at a supermarket

Director of management consultancy

Self employed soft drinks machine engineer

[Search](#) 

6. “Is this site secure?”

How to spot it

The question of whether your payment process is secure is a very common concern – the behaviour that it results in can be hard to distinguish from that of shoppers who would rather just buy in-store or over the phone. Both of these abandoning shoppers can be identified by exiting from the payment or summary page, having interacted with payment options

To understand exactly which of these is happening on your site, you’ll need to form a hypothesis and then test it by tweaking your messaging.

How to solve it

This is an issue that may be trickier to navigate since it’s based on a gut instinct rather than on straightforward financial motivations of saving money. In fact, as recently as 2015, [85% of customers](#) still preferred shopping in a physical store.

To combat this, you should:

1. **Highlight trusted payment methods** and trustmarks
2. **Incorporate reviews** and other [social proof](#)
3. **Offer a chat window** or phone number so customers can ask questions

Case study

Secured by Norton, Symantec's trust symbol (formerly VeriSign), has been found to be the most recognised trust symbol in the world, with [a reported 81% of users recognising it](#).

Hotel and flight booking engine [Opodo](#) reported a 10% sales increase within a week after adding a VeriSign symbol, while [virtualsheetmusic.com](#) reported a 31% increase in revenue after the symbol was reinstated following a lapsed contract.

We Are Certified By...



How to identify your checkout issues

You've seen a number of different behaviours in this guide that serve as your key indicators as to the intent behind your customers' abandonment of the checkout funnel. But how do you accurately identify them on your site?

In order to understand why people are leaving their carts, you must first conduct a [funnel progression](#) or abandonment analysis to uncover data on aspects of the funnel such as:

- Distribution of average time spent on page
- Overall average time to complete the checkout process
- Field depth by page

Add to this your qualitative observations, such as when a customer will see the total cost. Heatmapping tools can add to this insight.

Gathering this data and analysing it should tell you a lot about how people behave inside your funnel, and where, when – and hopefully why – users drop out of your checkout process.

Once you have an indication of which of our key six problems your checkout is facing (or even, which combination of them), you're poised to start testing your changes.

Conclusion

If, as indicated by the [Baymard Institute's aggregated statistics](#), up to 8 in 10 baskets are abandoned, a lot of revenue is going down the drain for e-commerce businesses.

By paying attention to your checkout funnel, diagnosing your issues and considering your checkout process from a customer-centric position, you can take simple but effective action to reduce the revenue lost at the final hurdle.

It'll take analysis, testing and problem-solving to reclaim that revenue, but having acquired the traffic and engaged it, think of this process like you're a customer approaching the very end of the checkout funnel – you've come this far, why let the last hurdle get you down?

Ready to turn more browsers into buyers? We can help you get your visitors across the finish line.

[Book a Demo](#)

About Yieldify

Yieldify makes it easy for e-commerce businesses to deliver customer journeys that convert, through a combination of smart and simple multichannel technology and expert strategy.

Trusted by over 500 brands on more than 1,000 websites globally, Yieldify helps some of the world's innovative companies drive incremental revenue, including Marks and Spencer, French Connection, Steiner Sports, Omni Hotels and Anthropologie.

Some of our clients

GOLDSMITHS
SINCE 1778

The Fragrance Shop

M&S
EST. 1884
Kiehl's
SINCE 1851

FRENCH CONNECTION

WATCHSHOP