



CART ABANDONMENT STRATEGIES FOR EMAIL MARKETING

The 2019 Guide For Brands

Table of Contents

Introduction to Cart Abandonment	3
The Cart Abandonment Series	5
The Cadence	6
The Call To Action	8
The Promotion	10
The Product Assortment	12
Testing	14
The Ultimate Cart Abandonment Checklist	17



Introduction to Cart Abandonment

Abandoned cart emails represent your brand's best opportunity to continue the conversation with a valuable audience: shoppers who demonstrated the highest level of purchase intent, but for one reason or another did not convert.

The cart abandonment series is an essential part of any successful email marketing program. Due to their high level of personalization and relevance, cart abandonment emails can generate conversion rates [3x higher than average automated flows](#).

"Cart abandonment emails are a major revenue driver for brands and should be an area of continued focus. Test new ideas and optimize frequently to ensure you're keeping up with best practices and new trends in the industry."



Stacy Strom
Senior Strategist, CRM & Email
Tinuiti



The Cart Abandonment Series: 5 Steps To Win Over Customers



The Cart Abandonment Series:

5 Steps To Win Over Customers

There are a myriad of factors that can prevent shoppers from making it through the checkout process on your site.

Customers often get interrupted while shopping online, whether by ads, videos, social media notifications, or life's little offline distractions. But sometimes shoppers abandon due to issues on the site. Considerations around price, shipping costs, or the products themselves can cause users to hesitate, abandoning their cart to be revisited later. Some customers cart several items with no intention of purchasing them all, instead using their cart as a "wishlist" to save products for later consideration.

Regardless of the reason for cart abandonment, the five steps below will help you craft an email series to retarget these contacts at the right time with the right content to motivate them to complete the checkout process.



1 The Cadence

Did you know that over [70% of carts are abandoned by online shoppers](#)? With that many potential conversions on the line, a timely cart abandonment email is a must.

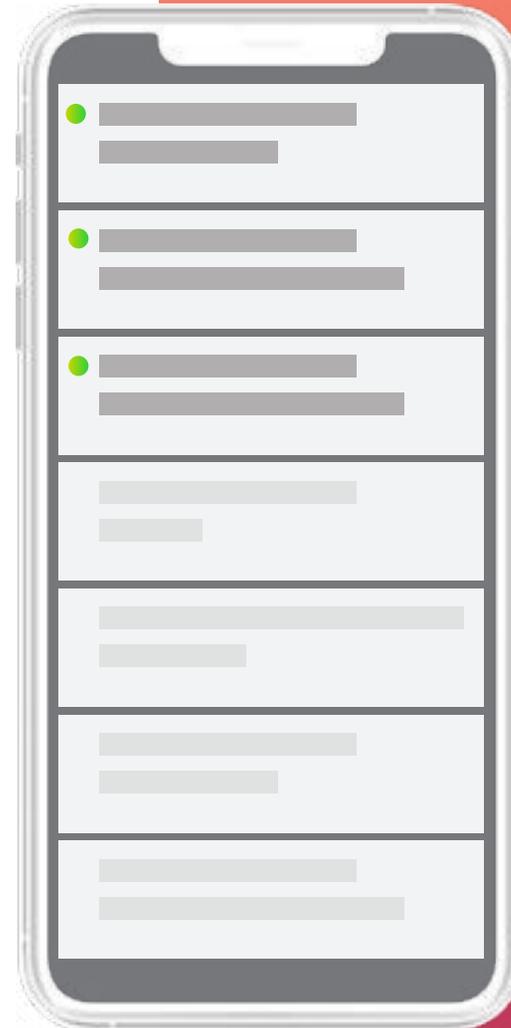
For cart abandonment emails, getting the timing right is crucial. Trigger too soon and you might interrupt a user who is still shopping your site. Wait too long and you risk losing business to a competitor offering a similar product.

Some shoppers need more time to consider a purchase, especially if the price is a sticking point. While one reminder email might be enough to motivate a significant number of completed checkouts, if you're not sending two or even three cart abandonment emails in a series, you're likely leaving money on the table.

Expert Best Practice

Our experts recommend targeting contacts with a cart abandonment email within 1 to 4 hours* of abandoning their cart, with an additional reminder (or two) 24 to 48 hours later. Triggering within 4 hours helps to entice a purchase while your brand and products are still top of mind for the shopper.

*The timeframe is highly dependent on your brand / audience and should be tested. One hour can be aggressive for some brands, but if your brand is sending emails daily contacts are likely used to that frequency of communication.



Utilize a multi-touch series to provide more information to your customers and help them feel confident about making a purchase. Include FAQs, customer testimonials, or easy access to customer service contact info (live chat, email, phone number) so shoppers have every piece of information at their fingertips to feel secure in their decision to buy from you.

“If someone is comparatively shopping, they’ll be targeted by your competitors with thoughtful emails that provide help in the buying process. If you wait too long, your competitor could have already sold them while you were waiting to deploy your first message.”



Kellie Collins
Senior Strategist, CRM & Email
Tinuiti

Success Story

A Tinuiti client that sells fashion jewelry recently tested the timing of their cart abandonment emails, with a split delivery for first the touchpoint at 1 hour post-abandonment vs. 4 hours post-abandonment.

The 1 hour email won out, with key KPI lifts including:

-  **65% increase in revenue**
-  **12% lift in the first touch open rate**
-  **5% lift in click to open rate**

Another Tinuiti client that sells breast pumps for new mothers tested the timing of their second touch cart abandonment email at 48 hours vs. 72 hours post-abandonment. In this case, we found the follow-up at 48 hours post-abandonment won out with 69% lift in revenue.



2 The Call to Action

Honing in on the perfect CTA for your cart abandonment emails often requires time and iterative testing—but getting them right is well worth the effort. An effective CTA should motivate users to take the desired action, and effectively communicate where they will be landing on your site. Nailing this language can lead to a significant lift in clicks, driving additional traffic to your site and boosting revenue from your email campaigns.

When selecting CTAs for your emails, consider the following:

- ✔ Use an active verb
- ✔ Focus on buyer benefit
- ✔ Keep it short and to the point

Expert Best Practice

CTAs for cart abandonment emails should drive a user back to their active cart and compel them to convert. Communicate where you're sending them and what you want them to do when they get there by utilizing clear, simple CTAs:

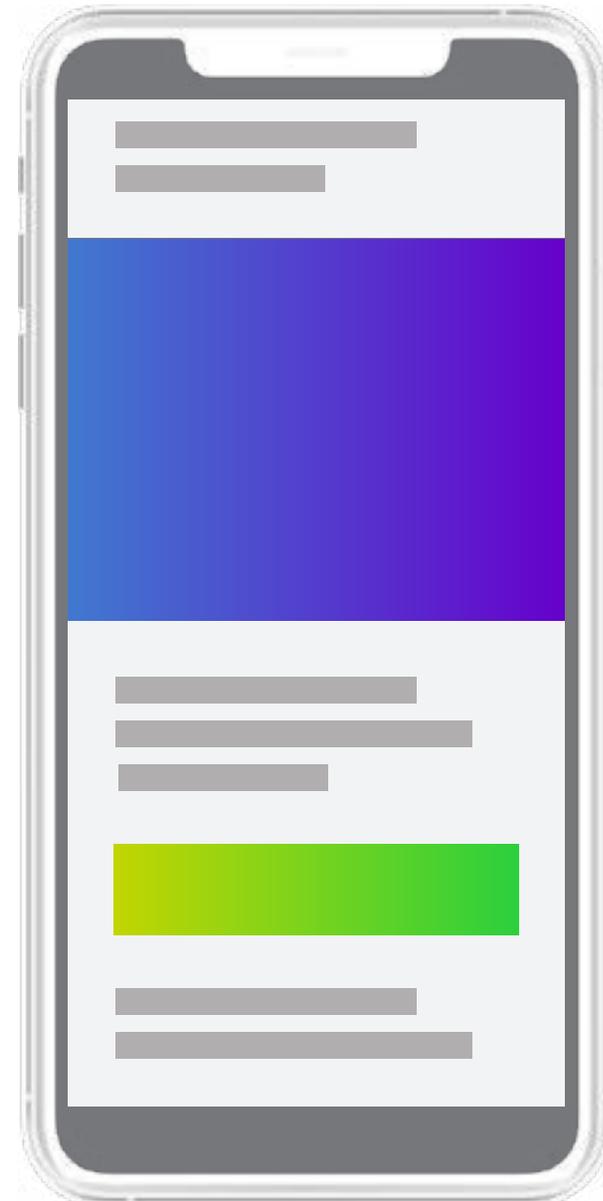
-  **"Buy Now"**
-  **"Complete Checkout"**

In follow-up emails, consider shifting your CTAs to evoke a sense of urgency around sell-out risk or the expiration of an associated promotion:

-  **"Get It While You Can"**
-  **"Offer Expires Tomorrow"**

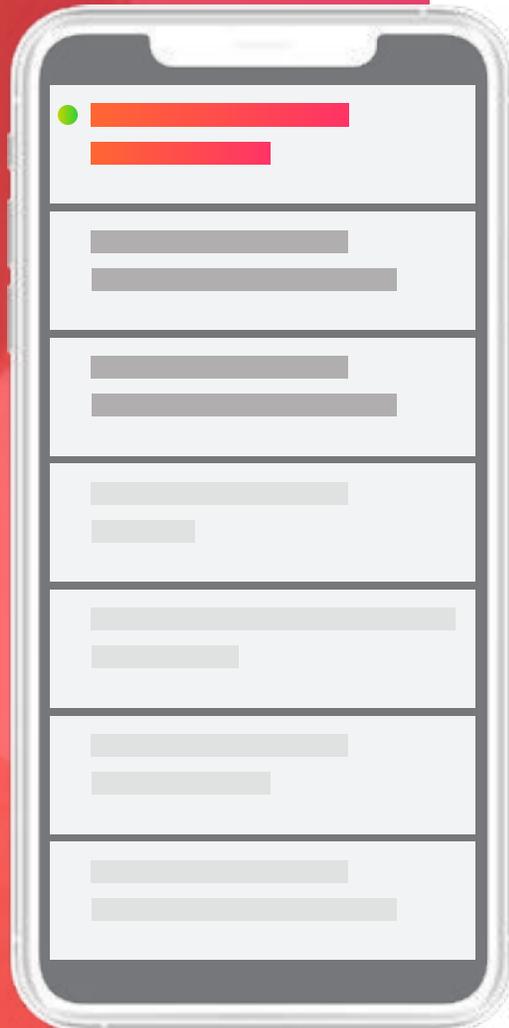
Test creating a second version of your existing series specifically for low inventory items that enables your brand to lean into the scarcity messaging in the subject line and email.

-  **"Get it Before It's Gone!"**
-  **"Buy Now - Only a Few Left"**



3 The Promotion

When it comes to cart abandonment, nailing the promotional strategy can be tricky. These shoppers have already displayed a high level of purchase intent, so they may only need a gentle nudge to complete their purchase. While you'll want to consider including a promotion at some point in the series, approach your discounting conservatively. Too low and you won't motivate contacts to complete their purchase. Too high and you could be training shoppers to abandon their carts and hold out for a steep offer down the line.





Expert Best Practice

Tinuiti recommends waiting until the second or third touch of a cart abandonment series before including a promotion. Sometimes a friendly reminder is all that's needed to convince shoppers they can't live without your product. Include an image of the abandoned product in the email to remind users what they were interested in, and be sure to mention any persistent offers you might run all the time, like free shipping or free returns.

If shoppers don't convert after the initial email, it may be due to the price of the product, or the expense of shipping fees. Consider offering up a small discount on the second touch to help remove friction for those that are price sensitive.

"Promotions work great in a cart abandonment series, but save them for those non-converters later in the series to help maximize revenue. Our team typically sees very high conversions on the first email in the series; why discount if you can get a large portion of your audience to convert at full price? Introduce the offer in the second email, and consider slightly increasing the discount on touch three to help seal the deal for those who are hesitant to buy based on price."



Christine Watson
Director, CRM & Email
Tinuiti



4 The Product Assortment

Sometimes carts get abandoned because shoppers change their mind about a product, or decide it's not the perfect version of what they're looking for and continue their search elsewhere. Recapture the attention of these users by providing alternative options that might be a better fit for their needs.

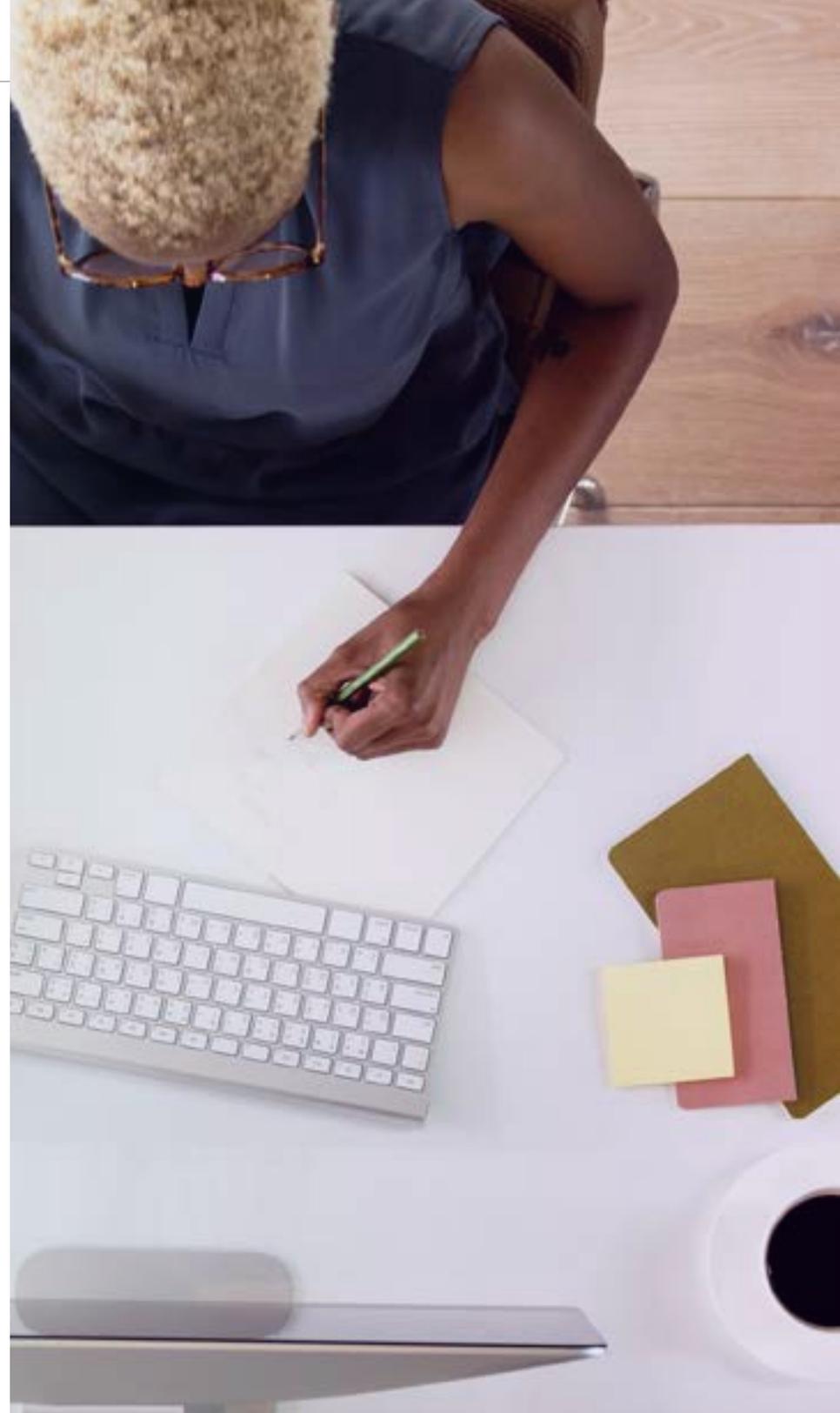
Expert Best Practice

If you have the ability to display dynamic product recommendations based on a user's browse or purchase history, include items in your emails that correspond to the product that was left in the cart. Consider showing:

- ✔ **Other products browsed**
- ✔ **Products customers purchased alongside the product abandoned (i.e. bought this, bought that)**
- ✔ **Products similar to those the user has purchased in the past**

If you don't have the ability to display dynamic recommendations, including static alternatives is the next best thing. Test showing:

- ✔ **Best-selling items**
- ✔ **New arrivals**





“Not all products purchased from the first touch of a cart series are the actual product in the cart. Customers often use the cart as a way to gather a ‘wish list’ items, but the key is to get them back to the site where they can shop all items of interest. Product recommendations are central to driving this additional engagement and conversion activity.”



Stacy Strom
Senior Strategist, CRM & Email
Tinuiti

Success Story

A women’s clothing and accessories retailer turned to Tinuiti for help connecting the brand’s email subscribers with their unique product offerings and content. To recapture visitors who left the site without completing checkout, the Tinuiti team helped launch a two-message cart abandonment series.

In addition to spotlighting the item left behind in the cart, the abandonment messages include a selection of recommendations based on what other categories and products the recipient may be interested in purchasing. These optimizations helped contribute to a 34% increase in email channel revenue.

[You can visit the full case study here](#)



5 Testing

As with any email marketing strategy, what works for some brands will not work for others. Every company is different, and the same goes for the makeup of their audience and their expectations for the way you'll communicate with them. Test each element of your cart abandonment series to ensure messages are optimized for your users to drive the best results.

Expert Best Practice

Be sure to test just one thing at a time so you can isolate the element that led to a lift or dip in your metrics. Consider testing:

- ✔ **Timing of emails**, including the initial trigger and time between follow-ups
- ✔ **Content of subject lines and preheaders**: gentle vs. urgent, generic vs. personalized with product name, featuring the discount vs. leaving it out
- ✔ **Incentives provided**: free shipping vs. dollar discounts vs. percentage discounts
- ✔ **Product recommendation rulesets**: best-sellers vs. browsed product vs bought this, bought that
- ✔ **Audience**: suppressing contacts from other mailings vs. letting them receive all marketing communications





Success Story

An up-and-coming shapewear brand came to Tinuiti with a well-established email marketing program, but no internal resources to dedicate toward ongoing strategy and workflow optimization. The performance of their email program had plateaued.

The brand turned to Tinuiti to help them uncover new and creative ways to boost performance and improve conversions. Our team identified an opportunity to improve conversion rates for their cart abandonment series by shortening the time frame between email touches.

The change resulted in a 20% increase in conversion rate for touch one and a 3% increase in conversion rate for touches 2 and 3. [You can visit the full case study here.](#)

Timing Sequence Changes for Email Touches After **Cart Abandonment**

	Touch #1	Touch #2	Touch #2
Old Timing	2 Hours	2 Days	4 Days
New Timing	1 Hour	1 Day	2 Days

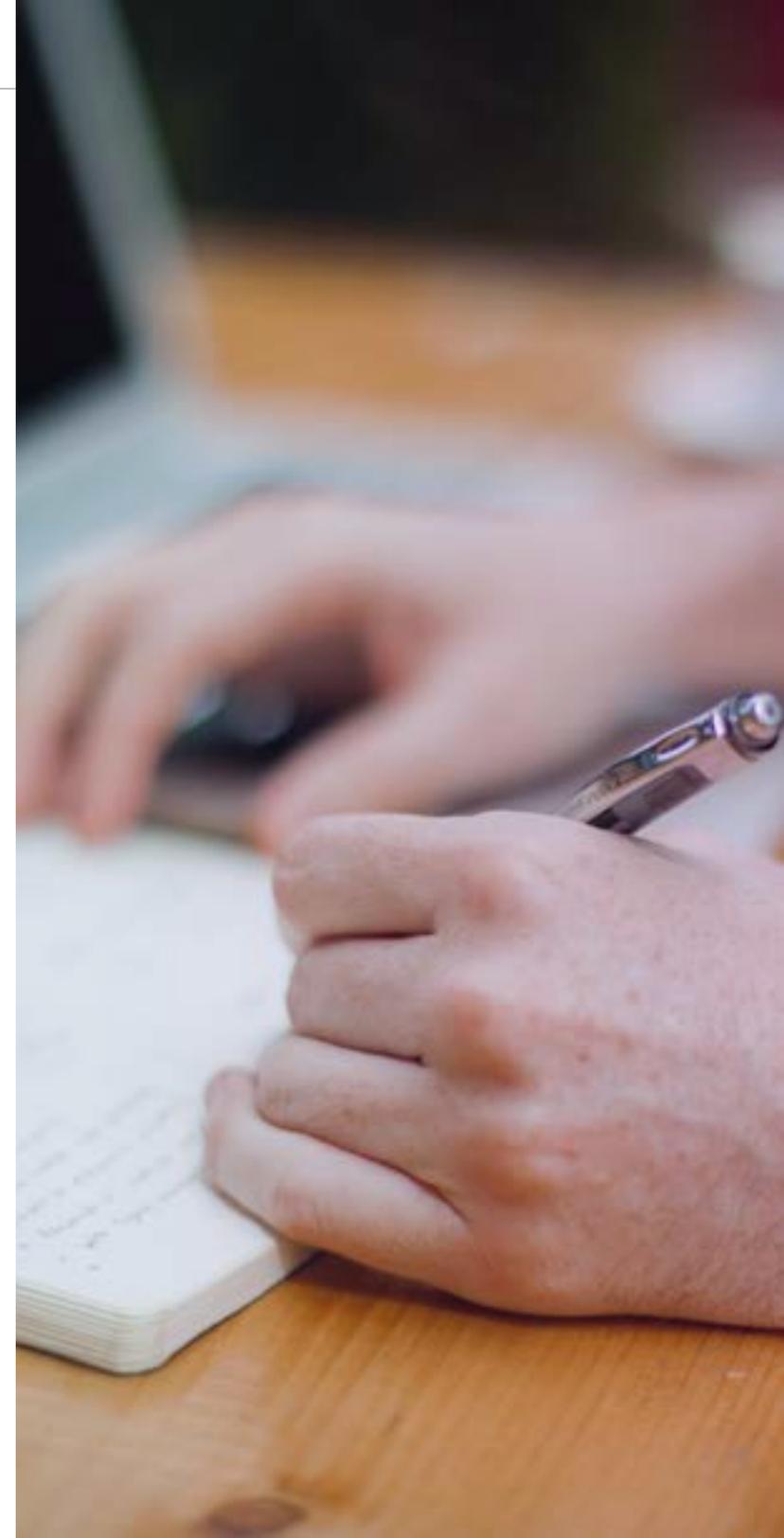
The Ultimate Cart Abandonment Checklist



The Ultimate Cart Abandonment Checklist

Whether you're getting ready to launch your first cart abandonment series, or looking for opportunities to optimize what you've got in place today, utilize the checklist below to help take your program to the next level.

- ✔ **Target contacts within 1 to 4 hours of abandoning** their cart, with an additional reminder 24 to 48 hours later.
- ✔ **Use a subject line that directly calls out their action** (i.e. "You forgot something in your cart") to help cart emails stand out from other marketing messages.
- ✔ **Include items abandoned in the cart** with a clear CTA that drives users back to cart on site.
- ✔ As a follow up (in a second touch point), **use a CTA with a strong sense of urgency** to drive conversions.
- ✔ Consider including a **promotion or discount** in the second or third touch of the series to drive conversions.
- ✔ **Include product recommendations** for other items customers may like that correspond to product in cart.
- ✔ **Testing timing** of email sends to optimize conversions and engagement.



Take the Next Step

Schedule Your Email Marketing Evaluation

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