


A collection of various line-art icons in green and purple, including a gear with a cube, a dollar sign with an upward arrow, a thumbs up, a lightbulb in a box, a speech bubble, a hand holding a plant, a globe with a location pin, a box, and a group of people. Dashed lines connect some of these icons, suggesting a flow or process.

33

Curiously Strong **Subscription Tips**

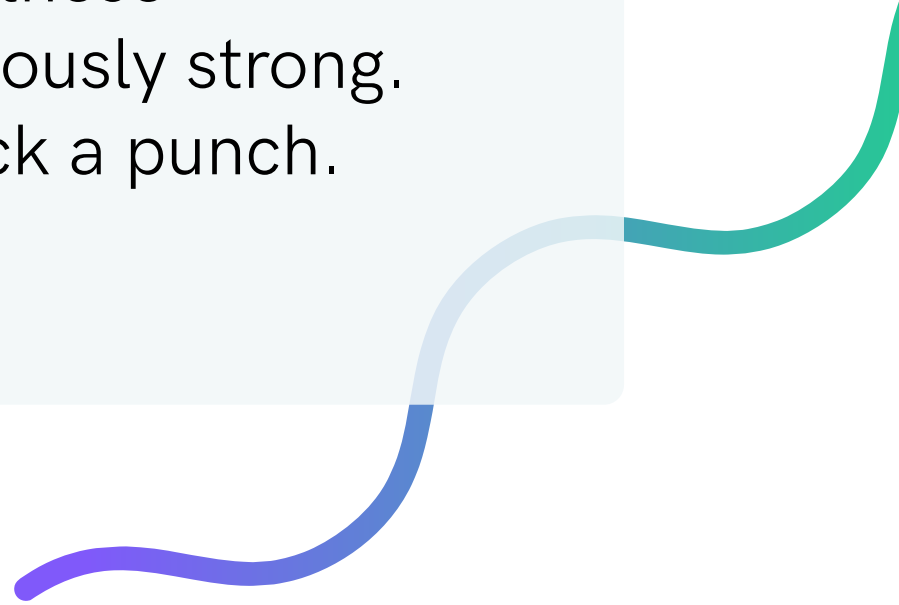


When it comes to subscriptions, you can't afford to tear the whole thing down and start over. You need ways to improve.



Tips that actually work.

That's what makes these 33 subscription tips so curiously strong. Many are simple, but pack a punch.



Tips for actual improvements

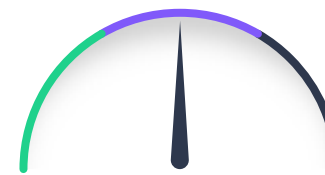
Just pick your focus to start:

- Get More Customers
- Keep Customers Longer

Each section comes with 3 tips.
Every tip is categorized by how easy it is to do:



Strong
[easy to do]



Really strong
[not so easy to do]



Super strong
[hard to do]

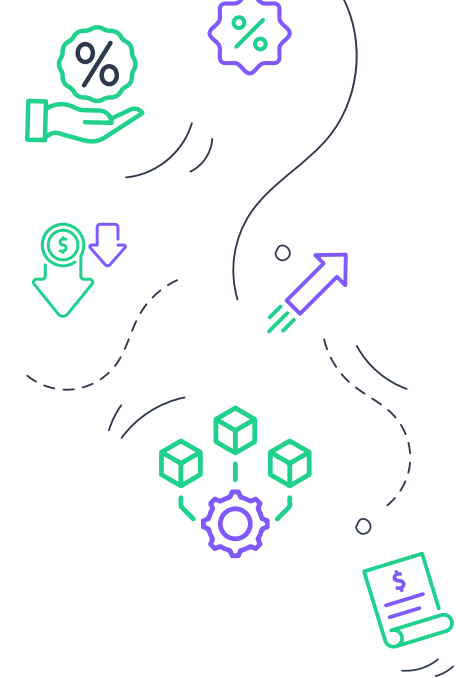
Tips to Get More Customers

- Products
- Subscription offer
- Pricing, discounts, and other incentives
- Upsells
- 'Build a box' functionality

Tips to Keep Customers Longer

- Understanding overall program health
- Notifications
- Making subscriptions easy to manage
- Upsells
- Churn
- Pricing, discounts, and other incentives

But first, some key terms like AOV, LTV, and Cohorts.



Key Terms

AOV

Average order value simply refers to the average revenue per order, per customer. If you know your average costs, or even unit costs, plus any shipping or additional fulfillment costs per order, you can then calculate profit per order.

In 2021, AOV for all sites on QPilot was \$78.

LTV

LTV, or lifetime value, is the total revenue one customer generates over time. One way to think of this is $AOV \times \text{the number of order cycles per customer}$.

For example, Deb's average order value is \$45, her subscription ran once a month for 6 months, so her lifetime value is \$270 ($\$45 \text{ per order} \times 6 \text{ months} = \270).

Average Life Cycle

How long do customers keep their subscription? A cycle refers to how many times an order has successfully been processed. For example, if someone has a monthly subscription and they have received 3 orders then they have cycled 3 times. Or if someone has a subscription every 2 weeks, and they've had it 3 months, they've cycled 6 times.

Understanding Average Life Cycle unlocks the opportunity for lots of improvements. You start by taking the creation date of all subscription orders and comparing that to how many days they've been active (today's date) or when they were cancelled (the deleted date).

This article gives some instructions on how to get the days between date created and date deleted.

You can present this information as an overall average (using days), or can group them by frequency type. For example, if every 2 weeks is your most common frequency, you can see how many cancel within 14 days, 28 days, 42 days, etc. to create cohorts.

Churn

Churn comes down to how many customers cancel their subscription. You can calculate churn by defining a specific time frame, taking the customers lost during that period, and dividing that by the starting number of customers in the period.

How to Calculate Your Churn Rate

$$\frac{\text{Customers lost in a period}}{\text{Customers at the beginning of a period}} = \text{Churn Rate}$$

[Read More
About Churn](#)



Keep in mind that churn can be a snapshot for the time period you're looking at, or you can look at it over the life of a subscription. For example, in Month 1 of subscriptions, churn is 10%. Month 2 of the subscription, churn is 15%.

Want to learn more?

[See how Chargify breaks down churn here.](#)

Cohorts

A cohort is a group. Putting customers into cohorts (groups) lets you track how customers are influenced by your actions.

For example, you make a change to your product page. Everyone that subscribed before the change is one cohort, everyone that subscribed after is another cohort. You can compare things like AOV or LTV between the cohorts to see if your change had a positive impact.

Want to learn more?

[See how Chargify breaks down cohorts here.](#)





Tip #1

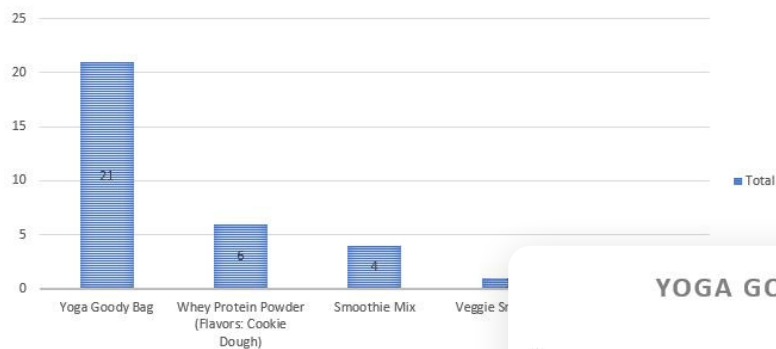
Get More Customers Products

01

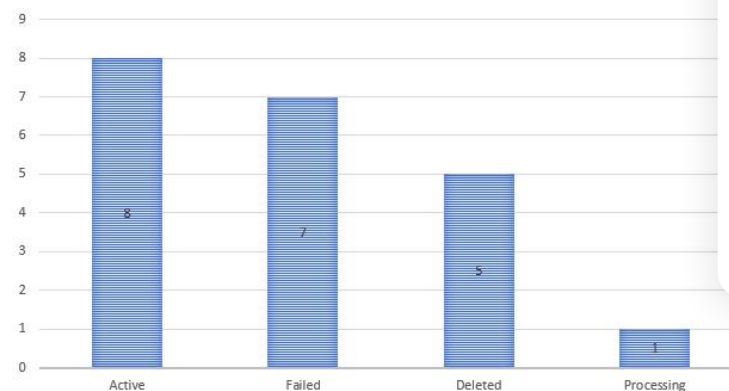
Identify your top 3 best selling products on subscriptions. Push those products into more marketing campaigns.



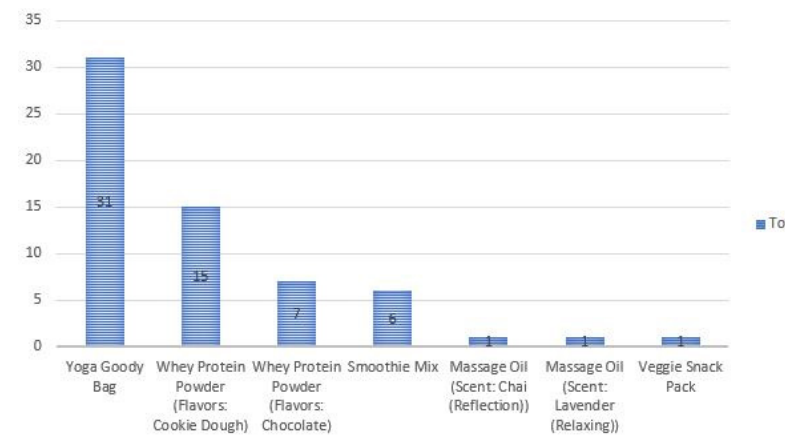
TOTAL PRODUCTS SCHEDULED FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS



YOGA GOODY BAG - SCHEDULED ORDER STATUS COUNT



PRODUCT POPULARITY



See How





Get More Customers Products

☒

Subscribe & Save 10%

?

Every 30 Days

▼

\$44.99

\$1.50 per serving

☐

One-Time Purchase

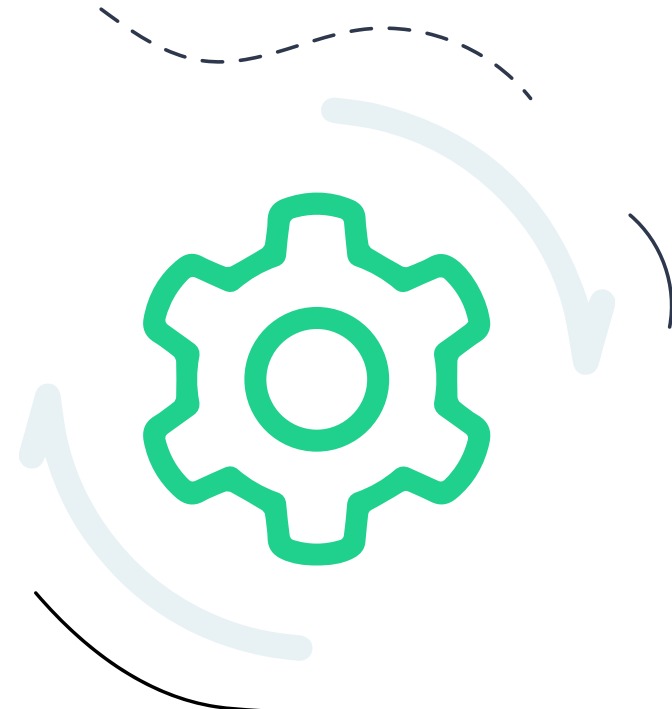
\$49.99

1

^

▼

Subscribe Now

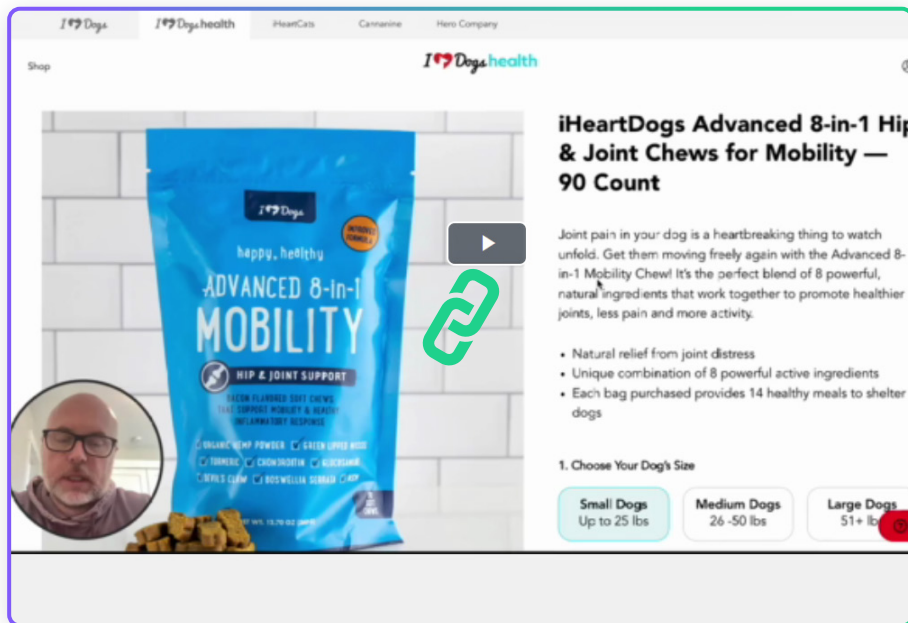


Customers often ask

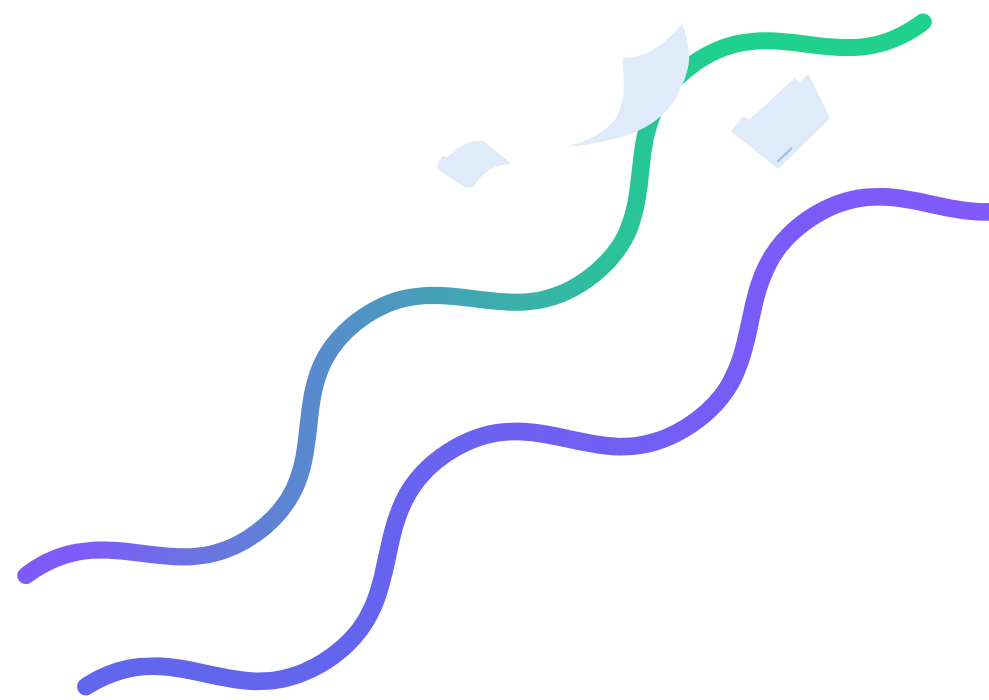
How much of this do I really need?

before choosing a subscription. So show them!

Display usage as a recommended or popular subscription choice.



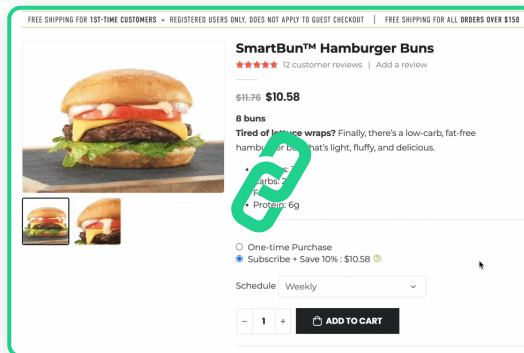
iHeartDogs nearly doubled their conversions by showing customers different recommendations based on dog size



Explain how the program works

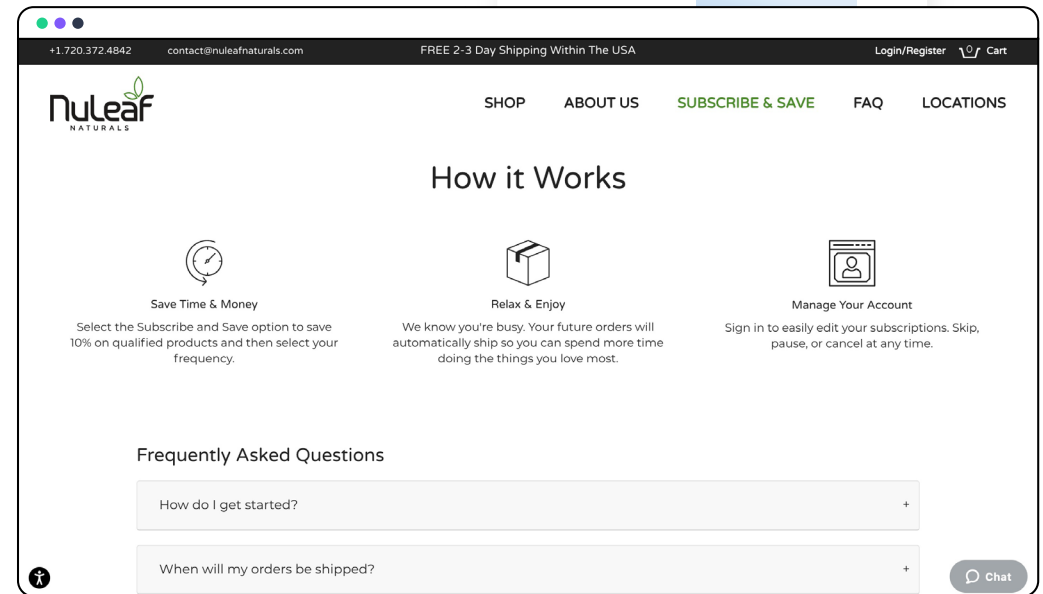
Address frequently asked questions, concerns about cancelling, and show how easy it is to manage subscription orders.

You can do this with a little popup or modal next to the “Subscribe and Save” option. WioDiet does it like this:



Having a page dedicated helps too!
See how Nuleaf Naturals does it:

<https://nuleafnaturals.com/wellness-club/>



It all comes down to good copy

No one does this better than Four Sigmatic. They immediately highlight the benefits of the product, default to the subscription option, and counter common objections right there.

Great copy answers the question: “Why buy a subscription?” It should overcome possible objections, speak to urgency, need or FOMO.

Give them a good reason to buy. Or better yet, a great reason why they can't miss out.

Protein Can - Sweet Vanilla

★★★★★ 250 Reviews

Makes incredible, immune-supporting smoothies, shakes, and pancakes (15 servings) - This chef-worthy plant protein combines some of the world's most wonderful ingredients into one delicious, day-changing blend. It's our favorite recipe. It might be your new favorite ingredient.

\$40 / MONTH - TRY NOW

- ☒ \$40 - Subscribe & Save
- ✓ 20% off subscription products
 - ✓ Free U.S. Shipping
 - ✓ You're in control
 - ✓ Membership Concierge

[See all benefits \(7\)](#)

- ☐ \$50 - Buy once

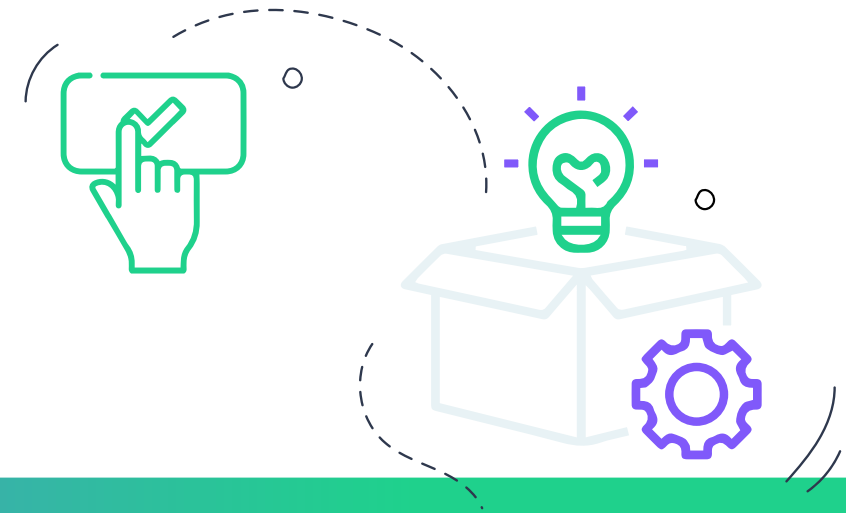
You have customers buying already.

Do you know how often?

Three purchases is a strong signal that they want the product regularly.

Segment customers that have purchased more than 2 times

Offer them a subscription with a special introductory price



Marketing to existing repeat customers is the best place to start growing your subscription program.

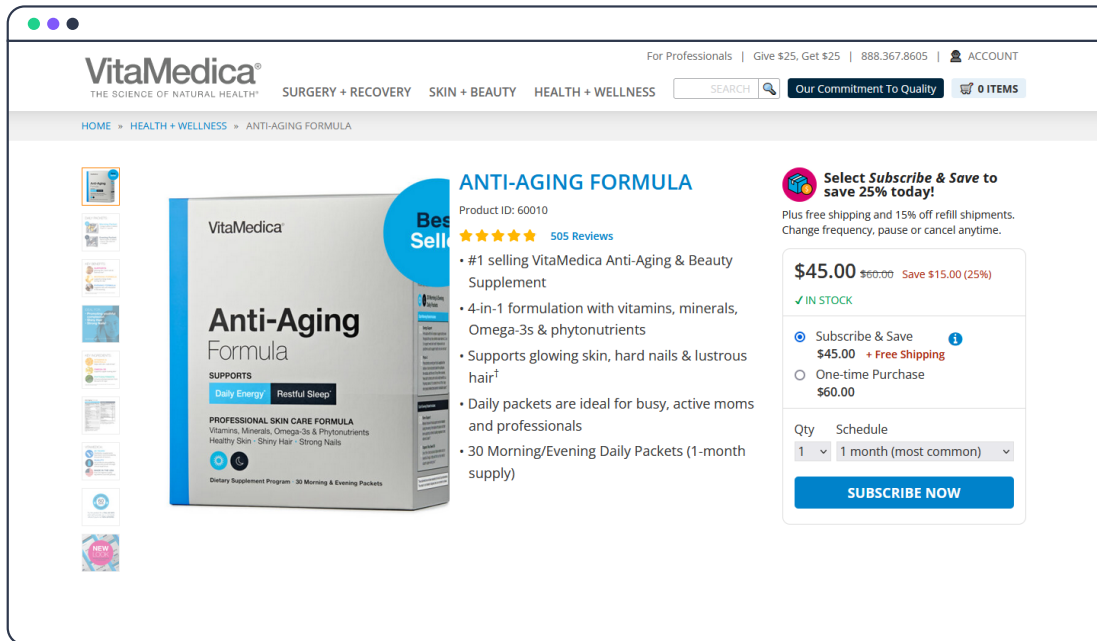


Tip #7

Get More Customers

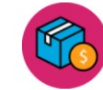
Pricing, Discounts, and Other Incentives

Vitamedica incentivizes customers right on the product page:



25% off. Free shipping and 15% off all refills. Access to reserve inventory when the website is out of stock.

Vitamedica makes the benefit in subscribing clear from the very beginning.



Select *Subscribe & Save* to save 25% today!

Plus free shipping and 15% off refill shipments. Change frequency, pause or cancel anytime.

\$45.00 ~~\$60.00~~ Save \$15.00 (25%)

✓ IN STOCK

☒ **Subscribe & Save**



Subscribe & Save:

- Save 25% today
- Save 15% off every additional shipment
- Free priority shipping
- Access to remaining inventory while we're out of stock on the website
- Convenient refills
- Easily modify products and delivery schedule
- No minimum commitment
- Pause or cancel anytime

[Learn more](#)

Run discount experiments

For example, run a subscriber-only discount over a weekend. Then, you break down performance to see how people converted (as a cohort).

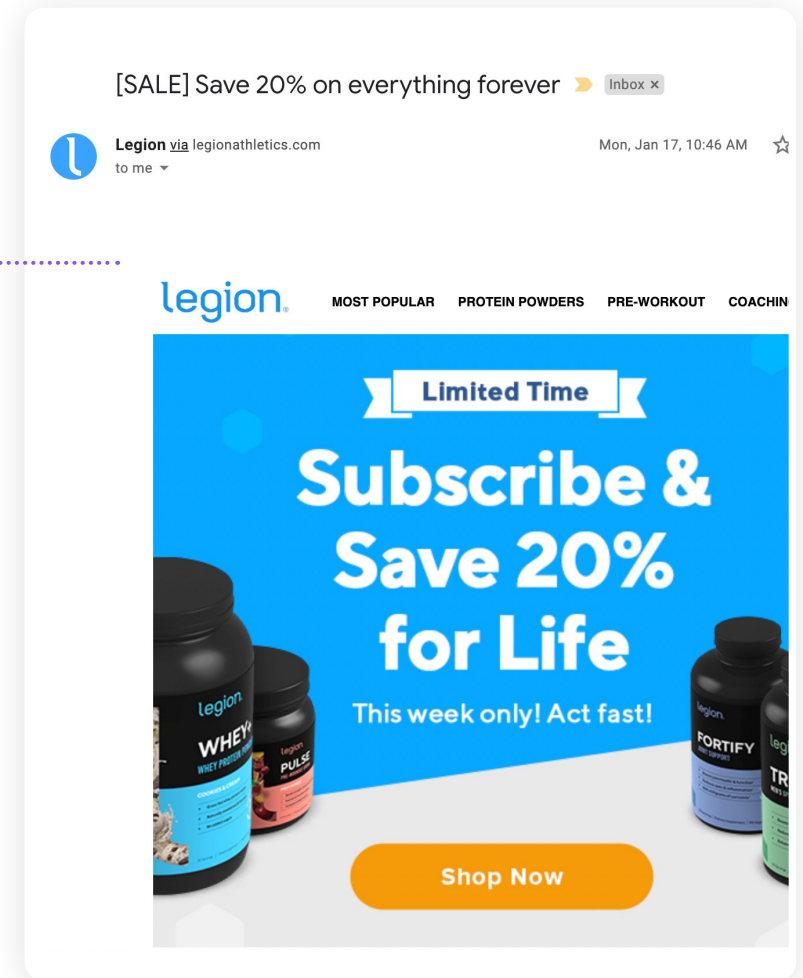
- Run a special discount over the weekend, just for subscriptions (Here's one that Legion Athletics ran recently.)
- Test your conversion rate for that special (page views in Google Analytics versus purchases) compared to the same time period without the special.
- Did you convert more?
- How does that cohort perform over time? You can test that easily with QPilot:

DASHBOARD

Scheduled Order Metrics

Start Date: [] End Date: []

ID	Source	External ID	Customer Email	Customer ID	Date	Frequency	Frequency Type	Cycles	Subtotal	Life
284754	Merchant		boba.bourth@unr@gmail.com	102630	01/18/2022 15:45:48	7	Days	2	\$18.00	\$9
284753	Merchant		boba.bourth@unr@gmail.com	102630	01/18/2022 15:45:50	1	Months	0	\$18.00	\$0
284750	Merchant		boba.bourth@unr@gmail.com	102630	01/18/2022 15:01:31	7	Days	1	\$25.20	\$3
284743	Merchant		boba.bourth@unr@gmail.com	102630	01/18/2022 14:55:44	7	Days	2	\$36.00	\$9
284737	Merchant		boba.bourth@unr@gmail.com	102630	01/18/2022 14:47:31	7	Days	2	\$25.20	\$9
284448	Checkout	wo-181-1-Months	cholethegai@yahoo.com	1065943	01/18/2022 02:07:42	1	Months	0	\$18.20	\$0
284442	Checkout	wo-180-1-Months	taylor99@ya.com	1065937	01/18/2022 08:30:58	1	Months	0	\$35.00	\$0



Offer a shipping incentive to subscribers at-risk for churn

You can implement minimum order thresholds for free shipping, just like you would at checkout.

Or send a free shipping coupon to anyone approaching the average life cycle (approaching the threshold where most cancel).



Bonus Tip: If you regularly run out of stock on some products, creating reserve inventory for subscribers is a great way to add value!
Never run out for your best customers.



Tip #10

Get More Customers

Build AOV with Upsells

Recommend additional products right on the product page

Legion Athletics does this by suggesting a product bundle and displaying it as a graphic. Click the button and all three products are added to cart.

Save 10% With a Stack!

The Build Muscle Stack boosts muscle and strength gain, improves workout performance, and enhances post-workout recovery.



Protein Powder



Pre-Workout



Post-Workout

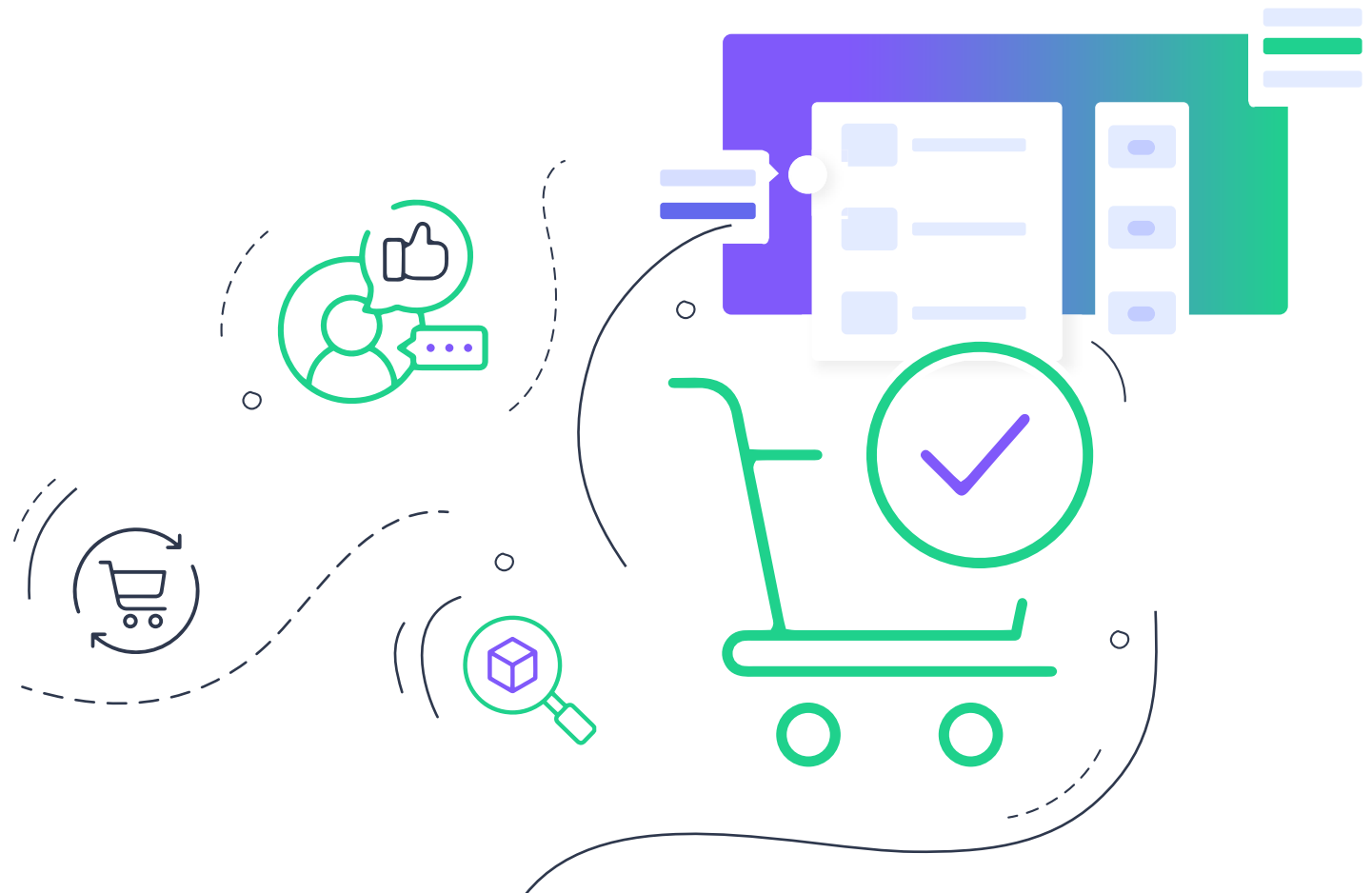
~~\$119.97~~ \$107.97
You Save \$12.00!

Add to Cart



Post purchase product recommendations

Give them something to add quickly, right after checkout. Purchase intent is high, so capture some of that momentum.





Tip #12

Get More Customers

Build AOV with Upsells

Take **Tips #10** and **#11** to the next level with personalization on product recommendations. You need a recommendation engine to do this. But you can show anyone buying Product A that Product B is normally bought with it.

Just like Amazon does.



Bonus Tip: Add your most popular products to the order confirmation. Since this email has the tracking information, over 60% are opened. And most are opened 3-4 times.

(See more tips on upsells in the retention section.)



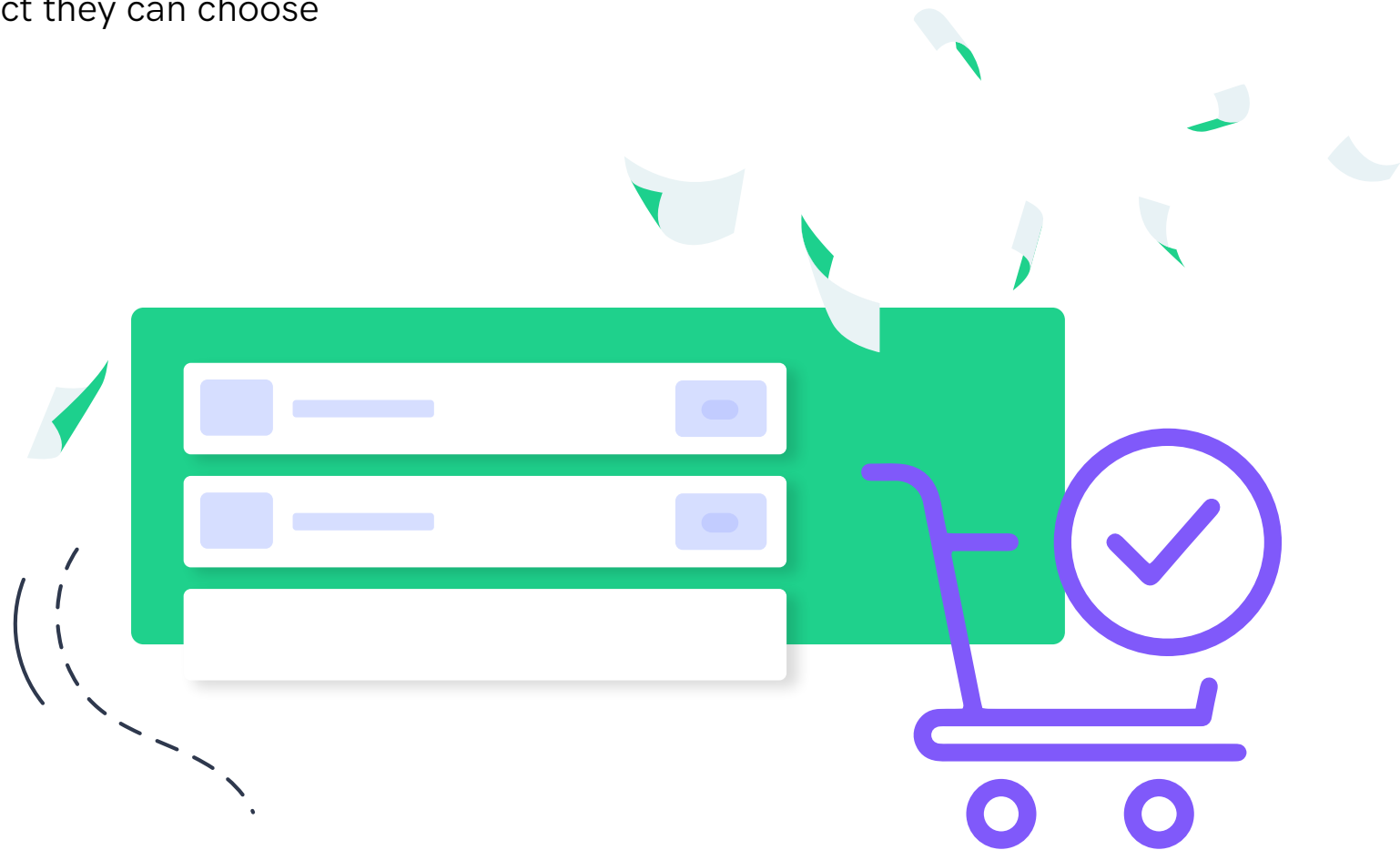
Tip #13

Get More Customers

Build a Box Functionality

'Add-to-Cart' popup









When someone adds a product to their cart, show them another product they can choose to go with it.



Make it easy for customers to add products to their subscription order

Do it within the subscription portal.

This meal delivery site makes it easy to add products right on the subscription order:

	Product	Quantity	Price
	 Broccoli Mushroom Quinoa FRESHBOX-BMQ	<input type="text" value="2"/>	\$8.99
	 Broccoli Chicken & Rice FRESHBOX-BCR	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99
	 Penne & Spicy Tomato Sauce FRESHBOX-PST	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99
	 Quail Egg & Radish Salad FRESHBOX-QER	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99

ADD

✓ Select a Meal

Grilled Eggplant & Cilantro \$8.99

Hawaiian Salmon Poke \$8.99

Penne & Spicy Tomato Sauce \$8.99

Chicken Tikka Masala \$8.99

Spicy Rice & Pork \$8.99



Tip #15

Get More Customers

Build a Box Functionality

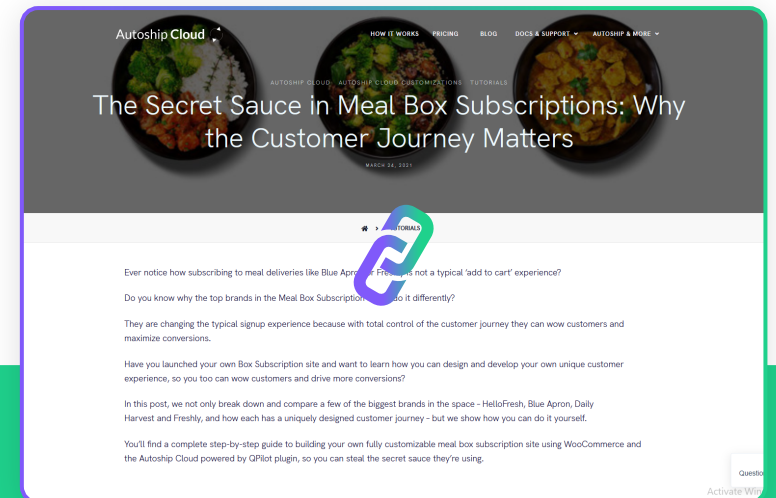
Build a box right on the website

Sites like Dollar Shave Club and Blue Apron have crafted entire online shopping experiences this way. Customers go through a process to 'build their own box.'

Changing the typical buying experience can be powerful. You control box sizes. Customers get something more than just "add to cart."

Making the process step-by-step lets you control the steps. Introduce different upsell opportunities. Suggest more things to go in the box. Powerful.

Bonus Tip: If you're on Wordpress/WooCommerce, here's a [tutorial](#) that shows how to do this.





Tip #16

Keep Customers Longer

Understanding Overall Program Health

Identify the top 3 errors for why subscriptions don't process

For example, in 2021, the top three errors that hurt subscription orders:

- **37% came from payment issues**
- **23% came from an empty scheduled order**
- **23% came from no items to ship**

See Tip#30 for ways to address these errors.

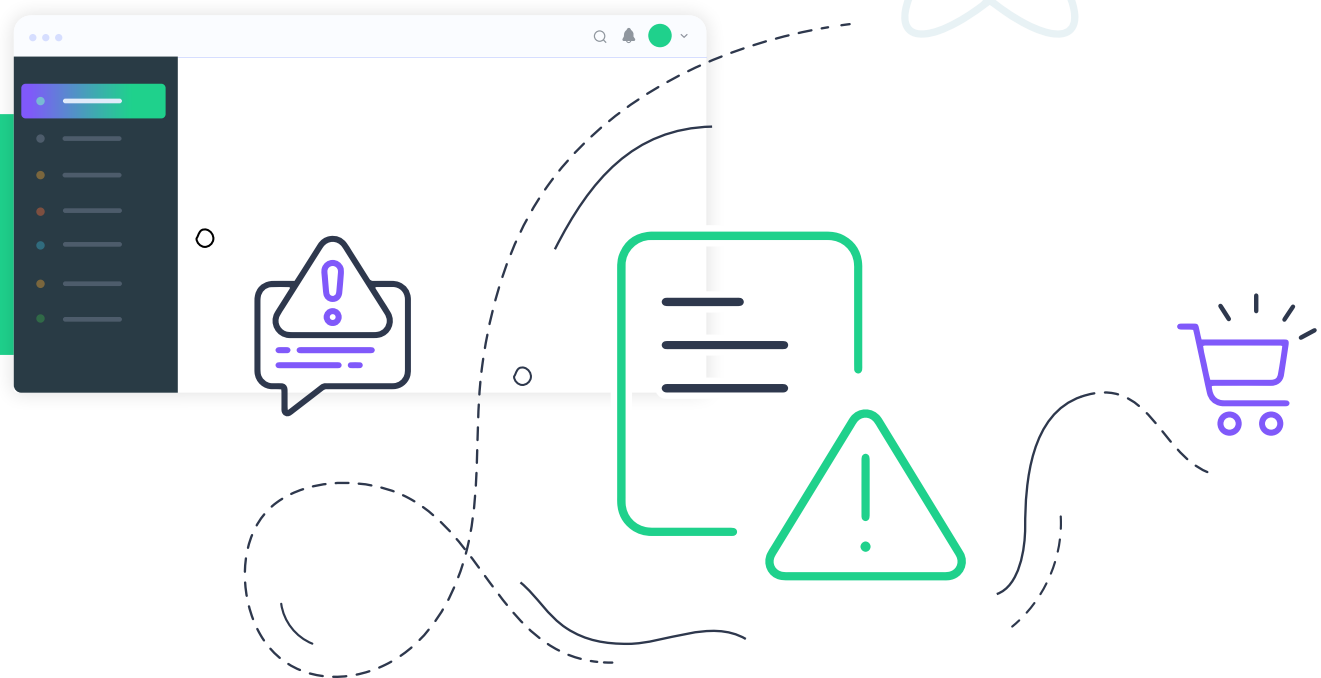


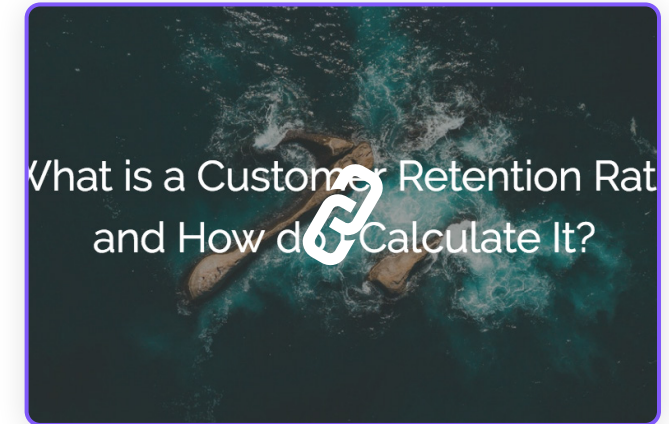
Figure out your net retention rate

Knowing your net retention rate means you can understand how your program is growing (or retracting). It also lets you decide to focus on acquisition versus retention efforts.

Fancy term, but it comes down to TWO factors: **how many people cancel each month, and how many people sign up?**

To calculate:

- Take your total subscriber count (start of the month)
- Add in any new sign ups for the month
- Take out any cancellations
- Take your new total (end of the month) - (start of the month count) / (start of the month count)



If you're adding in a lot, but losing more → focus on retention.

If you don't lose many, but are growing slowly → focus on acquisition.



Tip #18

Keep Customers Longer

Understanding Overall Program Health

18

Know your AOV, LTV, and Average Life Cycle

(see the Key Terms section above for how).

These numbers give you a baseline to compare improvements you're trying to make.

Here's how industries on QPilot fare:

AOV

- Wellness \$48.44
- Animal \$64
- CBD \$90.2
- Food & Bev \$38.1

LTV

- Wellness \$307.63
- Animal \$288.56
- CBD \$258.81
- Food & Bev \$319.51

Average Life Cycle (for active orders)

- Wellness 4.7
- Animal 5.6
- CBD 2.3
- Food & Bev 11

Average Days Active

- Wellness 250
- Animal 252
- CBD 120
- Food & Bev 270

Average Days Before Deleted

- Wellness 143
- Animal 158
- CBD 50
- Food & Bev 99

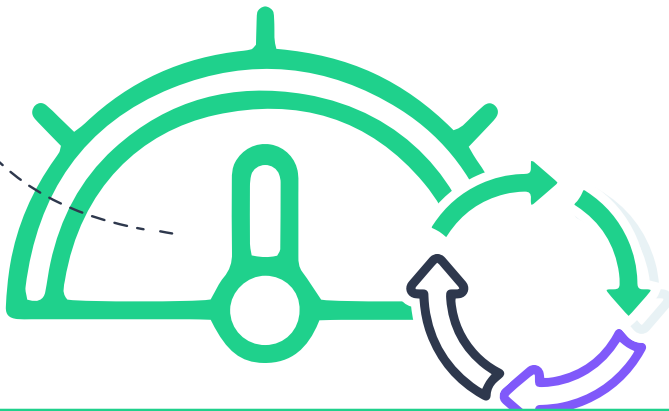


Tip #18

Keep Customers Longer

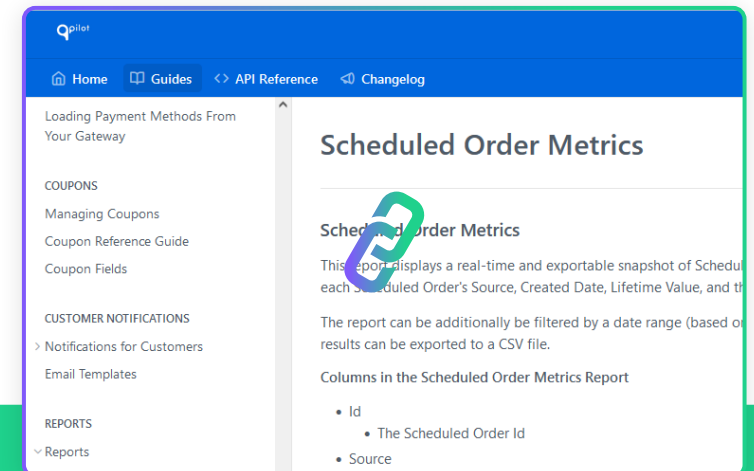
Understanding Overall Program Health

Industry comparisons aren't very helpful in that all businesses are different. But if you're looking for a place to start targeting for improvements, seeing how you compare should give you an idea.



Bonus Tip:

What is your most popular frequency?

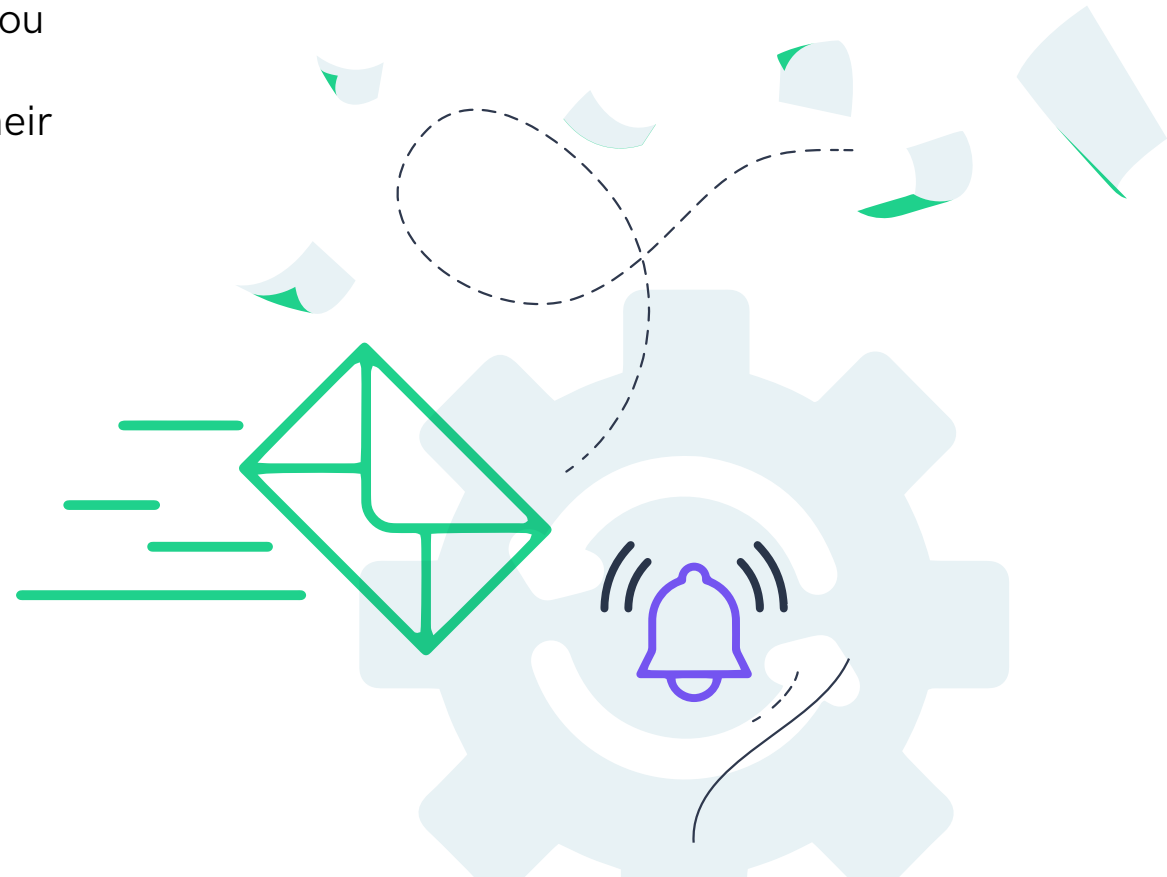
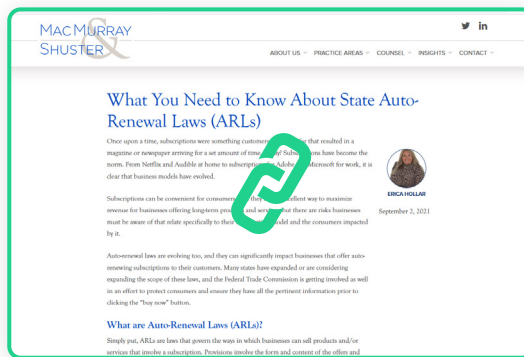


Send (2) notifications before any order processes

For example, 7 days out and the day before.

Letting your customers know what is coming and when is good business.

It also may be the law, depending on where you live. Some states and countries have a legal requirement to notify subscribers ahead of their next renewal date. In the US these are called "Auto-Renewal Laws."

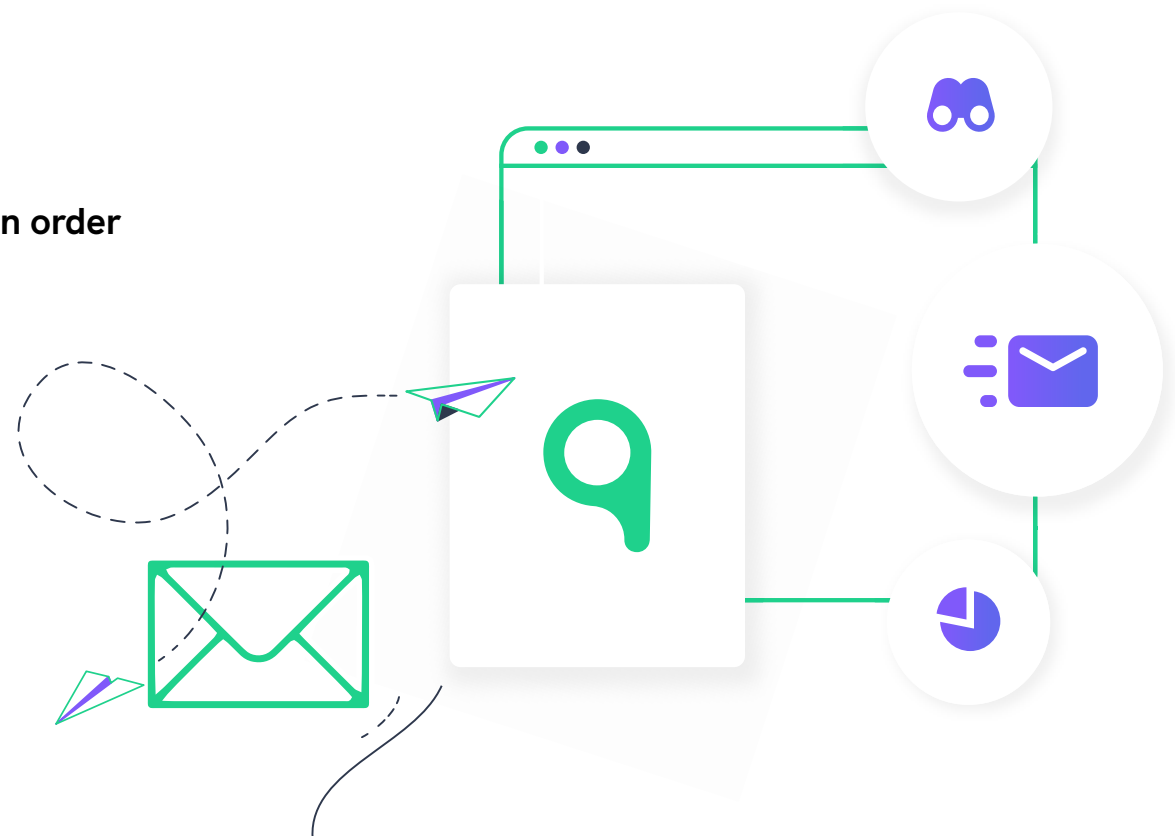


Send a separate email 2 hours after a subscription order is created

Separate from regular order confirmation emails, this email outlines (again) what a subscription entails.

This should include:

- **When the next order will process (schedule)**
- **Instructions on how to manage their order**
- **Reiterate the benefits of a regular subscription order**





Tip #21

Keep Customers Longer Notifications

Send periodic emails explaining how easy it is to manage (change) their subscription order.

You can do this in order notification emails.

Make sure you explain how easy it is to pause, move the date, change the frequency, or even try a new product!



Great automation builds trust and empowers subscribers by making it easy for them to manage their upcoming orders exactly how they want.



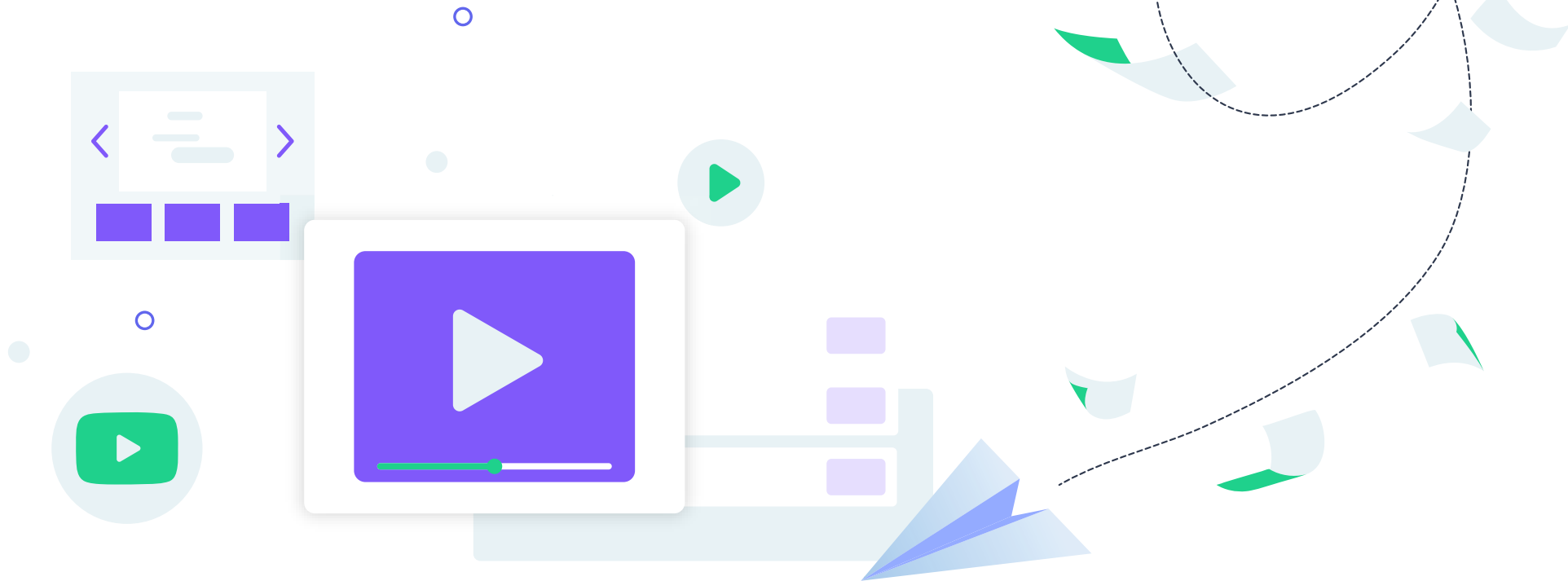
Tip #22

Keep Customers Longer

Make Subscriptions Easy to Manage

**Show your customers how to manage it themselves
(easy video, especially from the founder).**

Put this video on the page that explains how the subscription program works. Include it on any emails related to subscription orders.



Make it really easy to actually manage schedule & frequency.

Start with notifications so they know what's about to happen, and tell them how to make the desired change.

When customers can't make changes, they churn. It's frustrating.

Increasing flexibility (making it easy for customers to change future subscription orders) results in more revenue and higher lifetime value:

When customers make a single change:

LTV goes up

\$65

When customers make 3 changes:

LTV goes up

205%

When customers switch a product out 3 or more times:

LTV goes up

600%

The most profitable customers are those that make regular changes to schedule and frequency.



Tip #24

Keep Customers Longer

Make Subscriptions Easy to Manage

Give them an incredible subscriber experience with a customer portal like this:

What can be managed through this portal, that sits directly on the "My Account" page:

- **Order status: Active, Paused, or Cancelled**
- **Date and frequency**
- **Adding or removing items**
- **Applying Coupons**
- **Shipping rules, like Free Shipping on orders over \$50**
- **Payment method**
- **Billing and shipping addresses**

You need a customer portal that is simple. Easy to manage orders. This is platform and software dependent, but great customer portals are typically customized to match the business need.

Fresh Box 5 Meal Plan

Fresh Box #218504

Status: **Paused**

Next occurrence would be on **March 23, 2022**






5 item(s) currently paused but originally scheduled for **Every 2 weeks**

EDIT SCHEDULE

RESUME

CANCEL BOX

ADD NEW BOX

	Product	Quantity	Price
✕	 Hawaiian Salmon Poke FRESHBOX-HSP	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99
✕	 Stir Fried Shrimp & Rice FRESHBOX-FSR	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99
✕	 Tangy Cobb Salad FRESHBOX-TCS	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99
✕	 Broccoli Mushroom Quinoa FRESHBOX-BMQ	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99
✕	 Tomato & Basil Spaghetti FRESHBOX-TBS	<input type="text" value="1"/>	\$8.99

ADD

Select a Meal



Fresh Box Meal Count
5 Meal Plan **5/5**

UPDATE MY BOX!

Coupon Code

APPLY COUPON

Subtotal

\$44.95

Shipping Total

Free



Tip #25

Keep Customers Longer Build AOV with Upsells

25

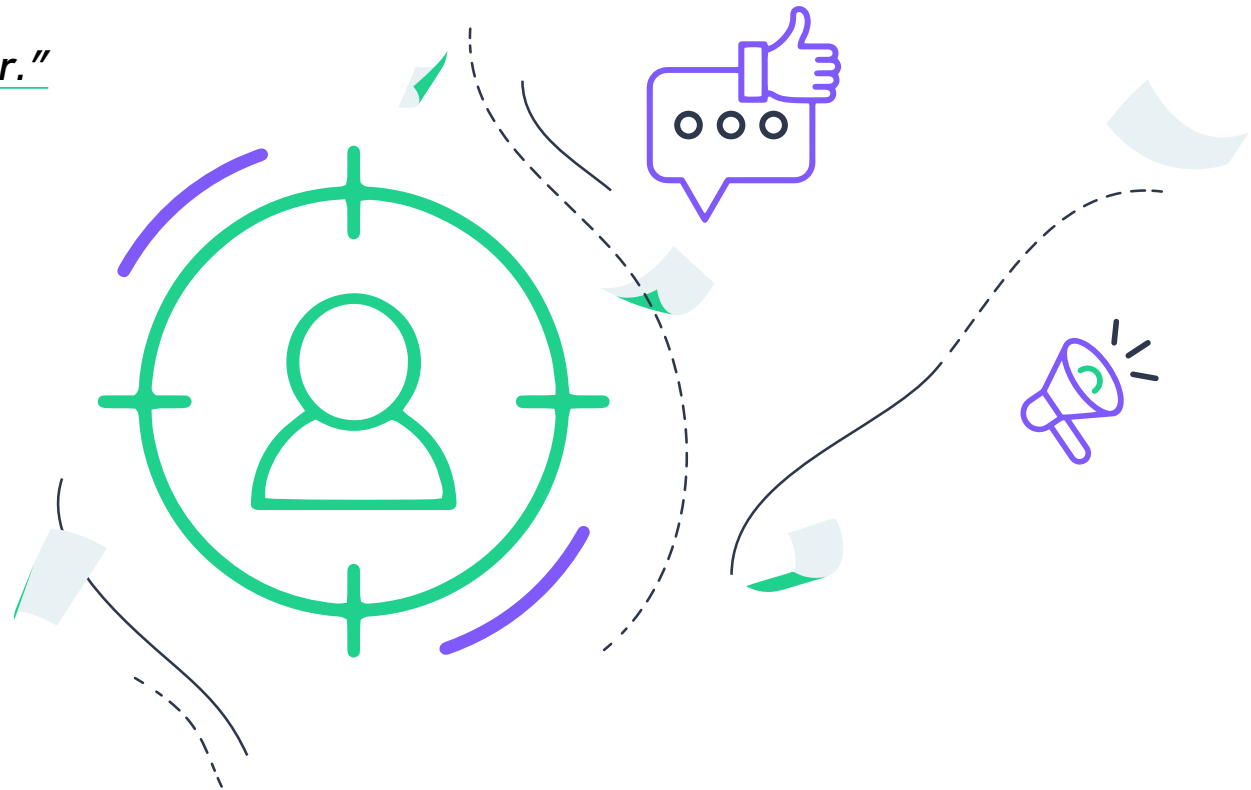
Segment out your subscribers and market to them specifically.

New product releases, specials, whatever you're running - make sure they're getting something specific.

Use language like,

"Add this to your next subscription order."

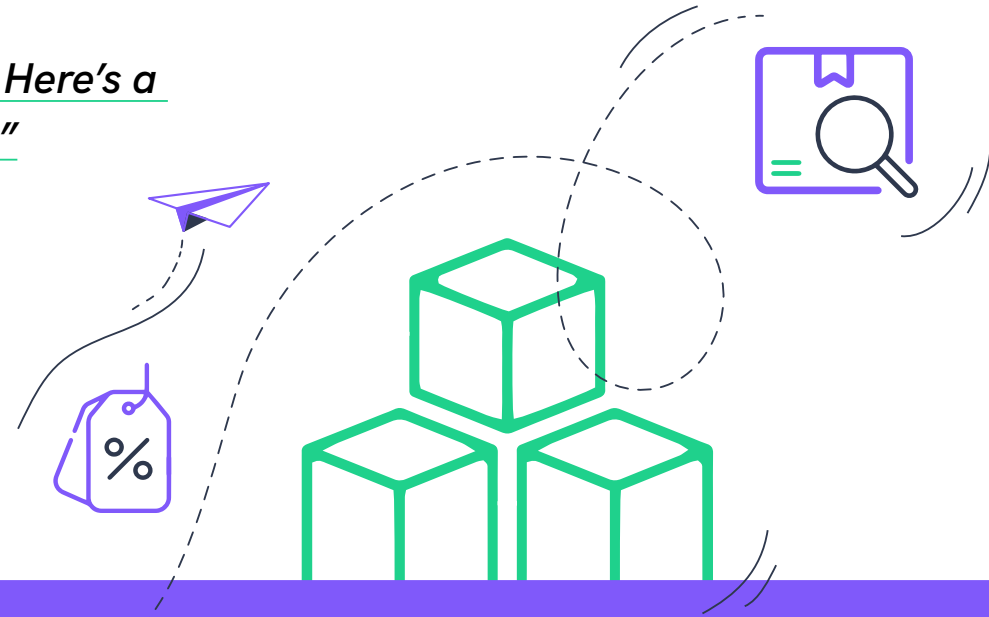
Or, "As a valued subscriber..."



Segment out your subscribers by product.

If you know what they are currently getting, then you can tailor new offers.

"Enjoying product X? Product Y goes great with it too. Here's a 10% discount to try it on your next subscription order."



The key to unlocking real growth here is understanding overall customer behavior. When are they most likely to try a second product? Month 2? 3? This is something you can test.

Make it super simple to add a product to their next subscription order. Like single click super simple.

The link builder by QPilot is a great example; you can embed product links in buttons within emails or text. "Click here to add to your next order" means that when they click, it gets ordered. That simple. [Read more about that here.](#)



Bonus Tip:

Send sample products. You're already shipping to them - so add something light and inexpensive!



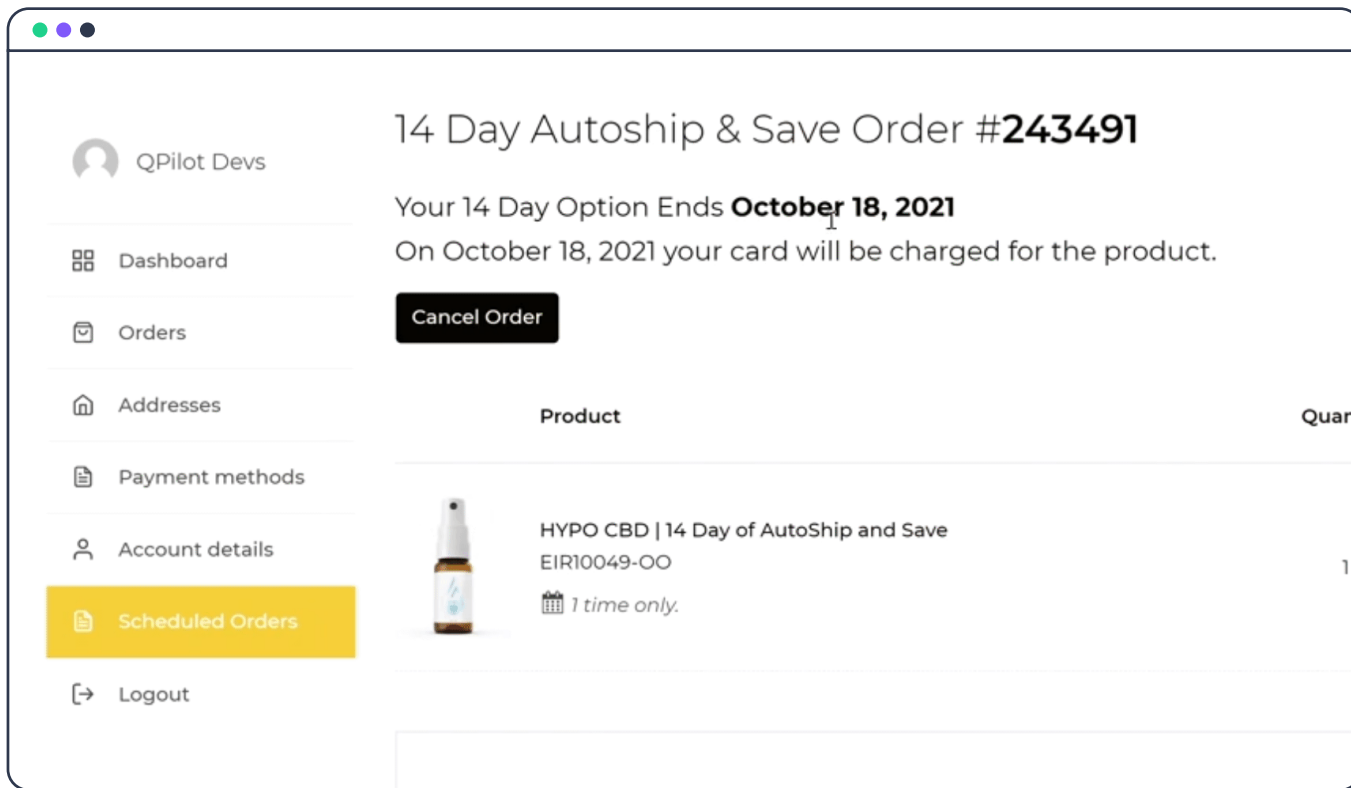
Tip #28

Keep Customers Longer Churn

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Make it easy to cancel, but don't let them go easily.

When someone clicks that cancel button, give them a quick message asking to pause instead.



That doesn't work?

Ask if 10% off their next order makes a difference. Easy to trigger this so it can only be used once.

Send surveys in cancellation emails.

Collect information whenever someone cancels. This type of information lets you learn about common problems related to subscriptions.

Some common reasons:

- **Too much product**
- **Tired of product**
- **Better deal elsewhere**



Once you start collecting data around reasons why customers cancel, be proactive! Use notifications and incentives to keep customers engaged.



Tip #30

Keep Customers Longer Churn

30

Here's how to handle your top processing errors from the program health section.

If you're getting:

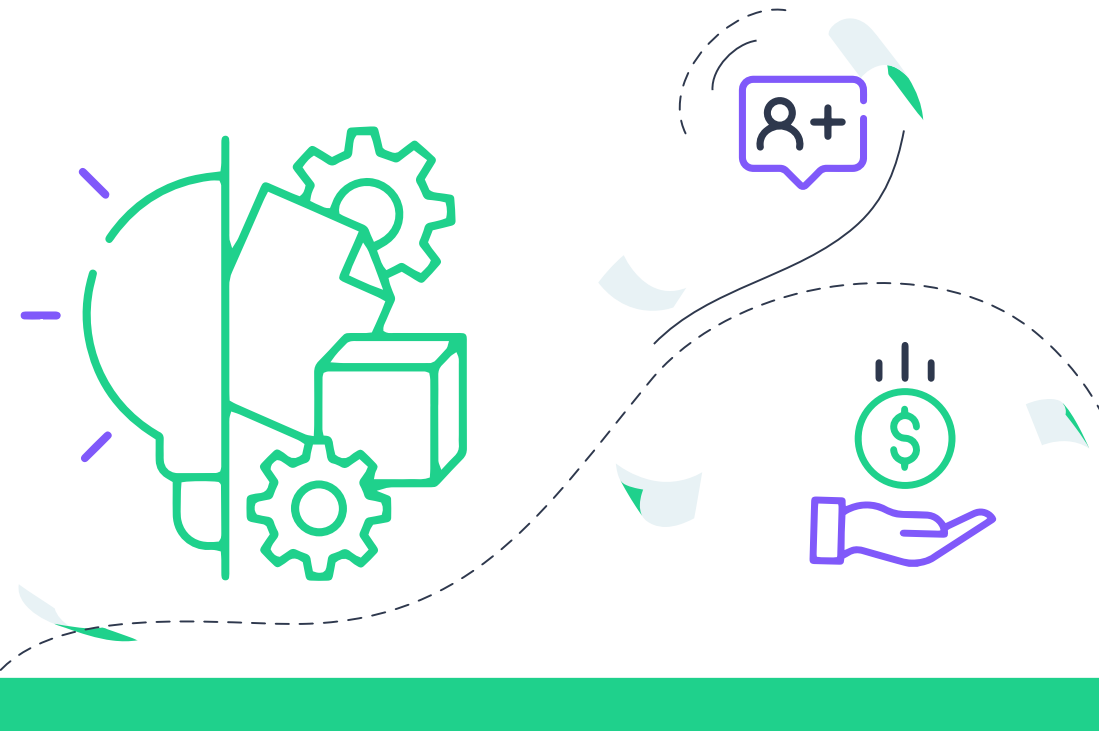
- **Payment errors** → audit your checkout process to ensure payments are being properly tokenized and not dropping off. You can also setup automation so that when this happens the customer is notified. You can also get a service like [Gravy Payments](#) for direct outreach.
- **Empty scheduled order errors** → this can happen when someone removes items instead of canceling. But for many customers, they don't know they can add products back in. So let them know! (ahead of time, if possible)
- **No items to ship error** → when you're out of stock (or about to be), segment subscribers by that product and let them know ahead of time. Suggest an alternative product with a discount attached. Or just let them know their order will process when it's back in stock.



Bonus Tip: Look at churn in two ways: what happens before the first renewal, and what happens over time.

Discounts and incentives made at the time of purchase will affect churn before the renewal. For example, higher discounts may mean more subscribers, but they may churn higher than average before the first cycle processes.

Discounts and incentives made over time can influence how long someone sticks around.



Discounts and incentives work together and can be used strategically over the lifetime of a subscription.



Tip #31

Keep Customers Longer

Pricing, Discounts, and Incentives

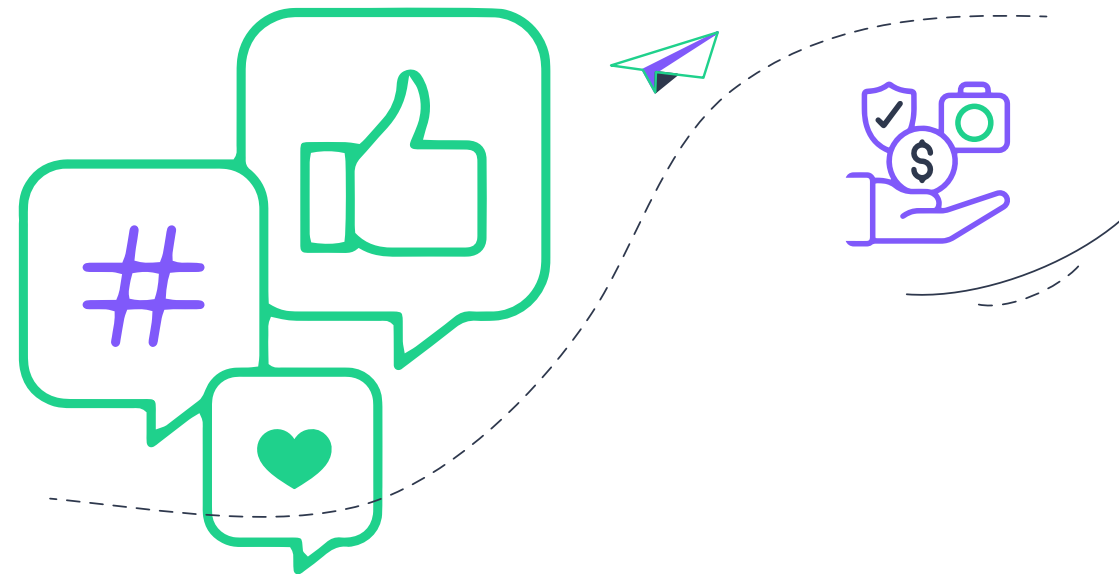
31

Send a free gift.

Do it before your average days to deletion, or before your most common deletion month.

For example, your average days to deleted is 120 days. That's 4 months. In month 3, send a small gift that delights or excites. A new product. A sample. The list goes on.

But send something that reminds your customer of the value in their relationship.



Test (as a cohort) anyone you send gifts to so you can see if they perform better than average.

Give a discount before or after your most common drop-off point. You can do this a few different ways.

Do it automatically, before.

*"Congrats! You've just earned 10% off this order.
Thanks for being a loyal customer!"*

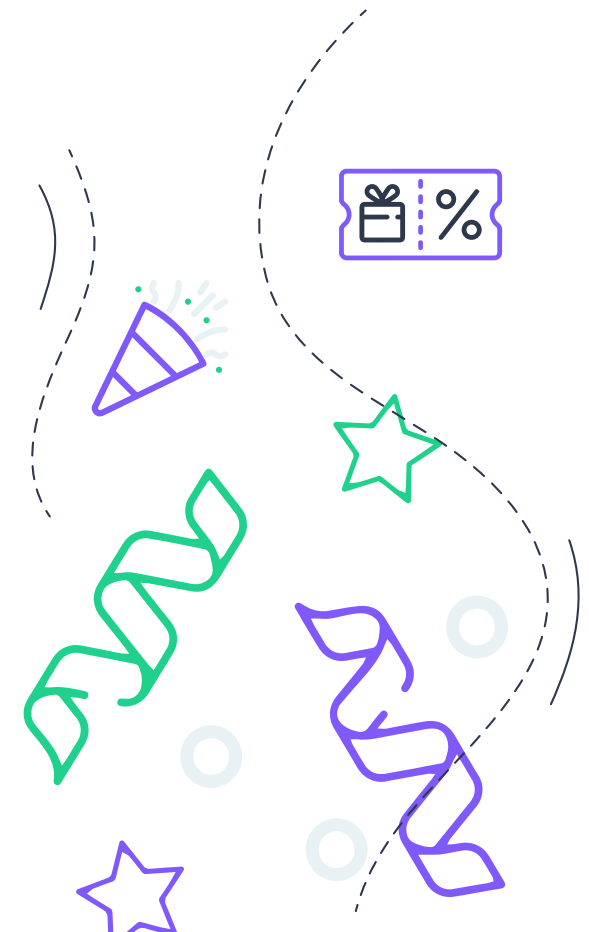
Do it automatically, after. BUT tell them it's coming.

*"Congrats! Your next order qualifies for an extra 10%
off. Thanks for being a loyal customer!"*

You can test both to see how they perform. Two key dates to target:

- **Average days to deleted**
- **Average days active**

See if you can extend either beyond the average.





Tip #33

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Reward loyal subscribers with progressive discounts.

Only your best customers should get the best discounts, right? Hemp My Pet uses this strategy.

You get 5% off at first, and then 5% more every month. At month 6 - that's 30%! And that discount continues for as long as the customer keeps their subscription going.

Turn "deal hunters" into subscribers by letting them know that the best and highest discount on price is achieved by keeping your subscription.

For Hemp My Pet, it's a brilliant strategy. Their AOV is 13% higher than the industry average, but their average cycle count is **240% higher!**

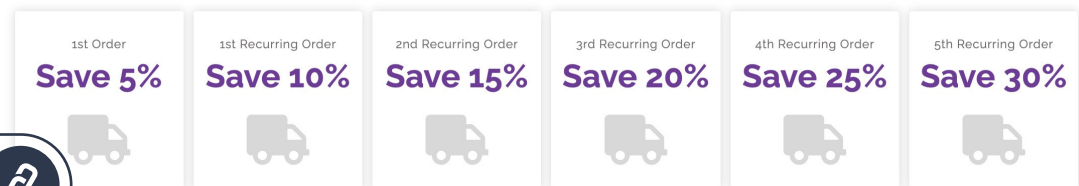


Simplify Your Pet's Care

THE HEMPMY PET™ AUTOSHIP PROGRAM

Never run out of your pet's favorite biscuits or oils with the convenience of automatic ordering and shipping, and save more with each recurring purchase – up to 30%!

How It Works



Continue to Save 30% on all recurring orders.

Edit, pause or cancel anytime. No commitments, contracts, or fees.

<https://share.getcloudapp.com/eDulKklk>



See how easy you can make
subscriptions with QPilot.

