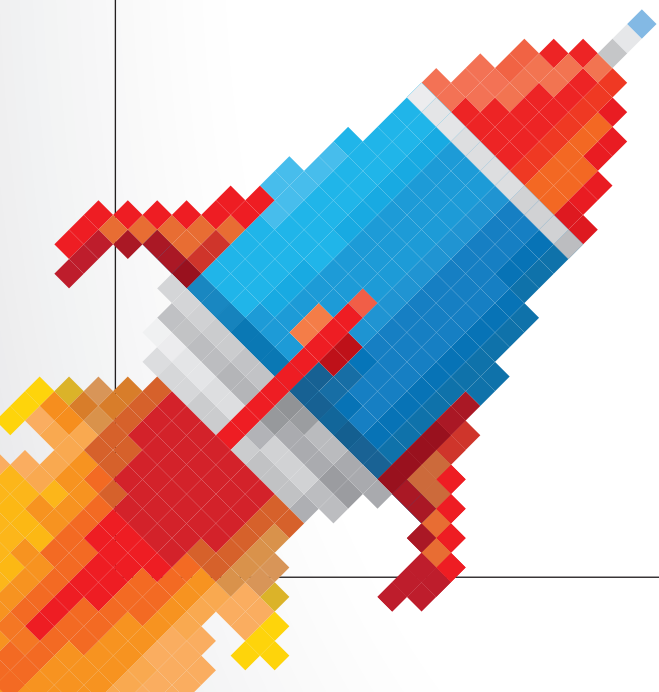


**Guide to**

# **BOOSTING ONLINE SALES**

**with**

## **ONLINE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT**



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## A look at online sales today

**Online sales and e-commerce are attached to one of the fastest developing resources the world has ever known: the Internet. Online shopping continues to soar as increasing numbers of consumers – across all possible demographic profiles – purchase an ever more diversified range of products. Mobility, convenience and speed are lifting levels higher.**

According to the latest reports on global mobile data traffic<sup>1</sup>, the number of mobile-connected devices will exceed the number of people on Earth by the end of 2014 — and by 2018 there will be over 10 billion mobile-connected devices. The latest reports on mobile users say these connected consumers want instant online access everywhere as well as relevant content and personalized assistance to manage their lifestyles with more convenience and speed<sup>2</sup>. This calls for more customized online services to deliver great online experiences across multiple channels and devices (i.e. websites, smartphones, tablets, etc).

At the same time, IT continues to evolve as new technologies and suppliers enter the sector. As they do, advanced methods become available for online sites to attract, identify, engage, convert, support and retain customers. Finding and executing the right strategies, tactics and tools for your business can be time-consuming and difficult. Meanwhile, sales conversion remains amongst the most crucial metrics for online marketers to monitor.

The goal of this guide is to be informative and practical in introducing you to customer engagement technology for online sales. We hope it provides you with the recipe to boost sales.



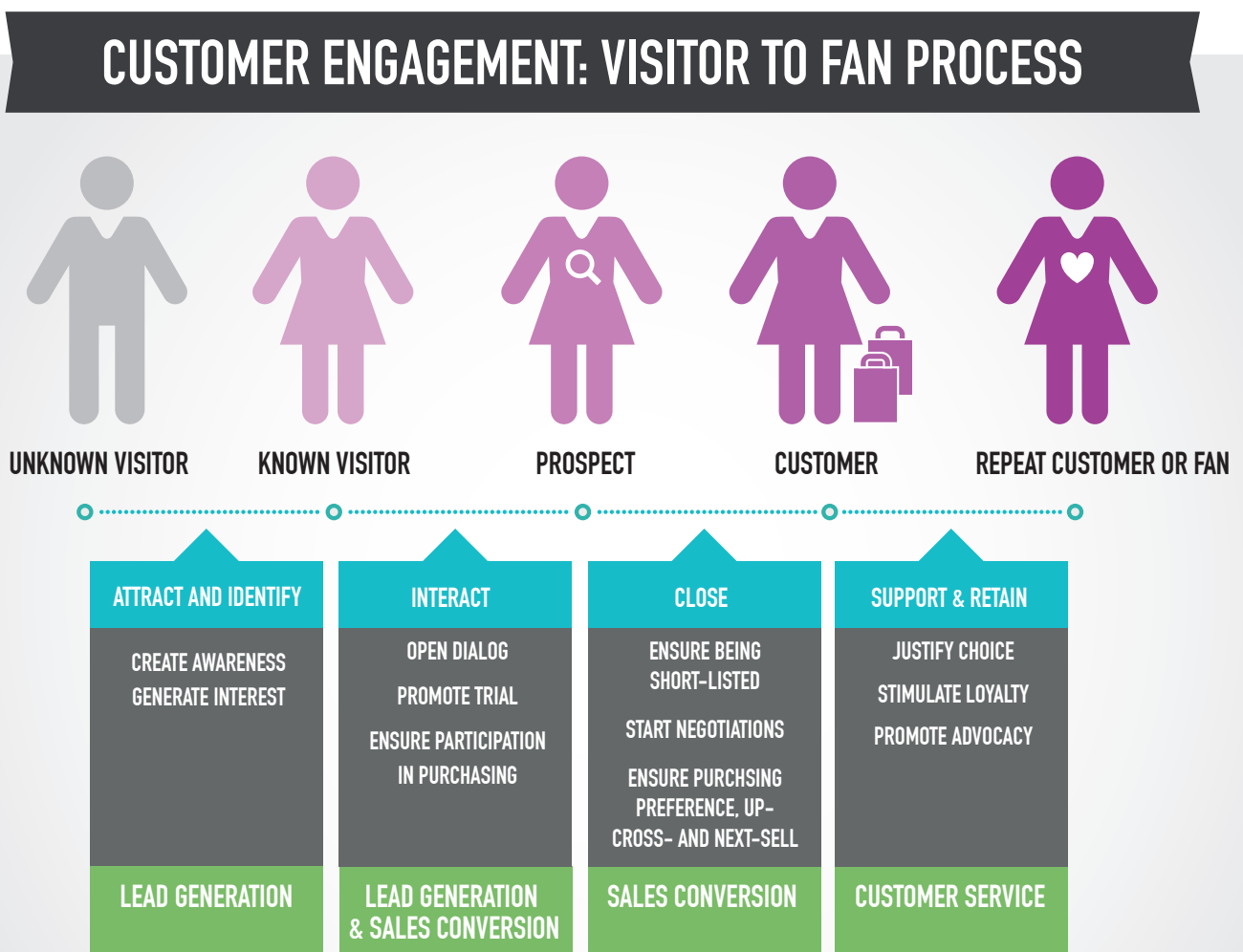
## Background: the search for a definition

**Sales conversion.** Wikipedia<sup>3</sup> defines it as: “an e-commerce phrase most commonly used to describe the act of converting site visitors into paying customers.”

An image search on Google™ reveals lots of funnels — each visualizing the purchasing process of converting an unknown visitor into a known visitor, a known visitor into a prospect, a prospect into a customer and a customer into a repeat customer and/or fan.

So “conversion” doesn’t mean “sale”<sup>4</sup>. Rather, “conversion” is a person’s behaviour or action that indicates they are closer to making a purchase.

While sales conversion is the focus of this guide, online customer engagement technology is an effective tool for customer service and lead generation, as shown below. NOTE: all results in this white paper refer to sales closure.



LEARN MORE ABOUT CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AT VERGIC.COM

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LINK TO WEB





# From the masses to the individual

**At the beginning of the 21st century, online sales for most companies entailed displaying a standard, static catalog of products to all visitors through a single channel. Times have progressed.**

Personalization means saying goodbye to yesterday's "aim broad, miss many" sales and marketing approaches — and saying hello to individual consumers. Right now personalization is impacting everything from lead generation to point-of-sale to loyalty programs and beyond.

There is a plethora of vendors of IT and technology based products that offer different types of sales conversion solutions based on personalization technology or functions. The most common types of personalization technologies available to date are listed on the next page.

Results have been pretty encouraging — but there is plenty of room for improvement.



## 11 sales conversion solutions based on personalization technology

1. *Software-based recommendations: recommend products or content relevant to perceived interest*
2. *Targeted offers: automates a specific promotion to a specific customer*
3. *Ratings and reviews: uses visitor-generated ratings and reviews*
4. *E-mail personalization: embedded recommendations and/or chat functions*
5. *Online chat: use of chat functionality*
6. *Callback: connects website visitors with marketers via telephony*
7. *Voice of customer: visitor surveys using structured and unstructured data*
8. *Automated guides: fast answers to identified points-of-interest via databases*
9. *Re-targeting: targeted ad placement based on previous site searches or actions*
10. *Phone2web: enables agents to visually guide the customer's online experience at the same time as they are speaking over the phone*
11. *Customer engagement technology: an interface for online, personal, real-time interaction between a customer and a marketer using both agent-assisted and automated functions (listed 1-10 above)*



## Nobody seems to be home at Home

**Websites and online stores now represent the leading channel and tool for many companies to generate sales. In almost any campaign imaginable today the website – be it accessed from a desktop computer, mobile phone or tablet – is where customers are led. However, either: nobody is home to greet prospective customers upon arrival; the web store suffers from being understaffed; or robotic self-service software automation is there to greet the prospective customer – a human. This is true of all too many sites today. And it's exactly like leading shoppers to a physical store either without any employees – or too few – or where machines are the only customer contact. But sites are starting to become more humane.**

Growing numbers of e-commerce sites are now staffed by online agents. However, many sites are not constructed or built to provide online employees with the same opportunities for personal customer interaction that their colleagues employed in physical stores enjoy. And many contact centers employ agents in customer service functions exclusively, missing out on an ability to generate revenue by using their agents to manage the most important conversion phase: closing sales.

At the same time, today's online technology landscape is flooded with companies offering one-off solutions for lead generation, sales conversion or customer service. The result: site owners are burdened with managing and integrating multiple systems to effectively meet their online marketing and customer service needs, creating inefficiencies that result in lower return on investment and lost revenue opportunities.

World-class online customer engagement technology changes all of this.



Hello?  
Anyone?

# Online customer engagement for sales conversion: what, how and why

## What is online customer engagement?

Online customer engagement technology acts as an interface for direct, personal, real-time interaction between a customer and website using both automated and agent-assisted functions. Using a mutually shared point-of-interest together with profiling data, a website identifies an individual customer, agents can understand the context of the current visit and act upon opportunities to trigger online customer engagement solutions. Automated or agent-assisted engagement solutions can be tailored for lead generation, sales conversion and/or customer service applications. Websites can be accessed on any type of device (desktop computer, mobile phones, tablets, etc.).

## A world-class customer engagement solution uses:

- *Profiling, filtering, opportunity and solution algorithms for engagement as well as statistics and analytics for actionable insights*
- *Engagements that are customized to each individual visitor's point-of-interests and phase in decision making or issue resolution processes*
- *Engagements for lead generation, sales conversion and customer service*
- *Both real-time and historical behavior data of the individual customer visiting your site*
- *Solutions that give agents a 360° perspective of each visitor's on-site behavior*
- *Robust queue, case and language management features to ensure each individual customer can receive fast and accurate support from the agent that most capable to suit his needs*
- *Agent-assisted functions:*
  - *Text, video and audio chat, co-browsing with visual guidance, co-browsing with form filling, document sharing and Phone2web*
- *Automated functions:*
  - *Banners, vouchers, coupons, guides, targeted offers, web-forms/fields, surveys, etc.*
  - *Available as text, video or audio*
  - *Canned responses and predefined links for visual guidance to increase agent efficiency*

Some Vergic Engage Platform features



CO-BROWSING



CHAT



AUDIO / VIDEO



SHARE DOCUMENT



MONITORING



PHONE2WEB



RESPONSIVE



CLOUD SOLUTION



SIGNING



## How online customer engagement boosts sales conversion rates

1. *Gives agents a clear picture of a prospective customer's interests, needs, concerns, demands and preferences based on his actual on-site behavior, interactions and purchase history*
2. *Identifies the right individual at the right time in the purchasing process*
3. *Allows sites and agents to adapt to customer online behavior immediately in providing customers with timely, relevant offers — right away, on any online device*
4. *Allows site agents to collaborate with your customers — directly, personally in real-time*
5. *Reduces shopping cart abandonment by recognizing high-risk cases in real-time*
6. *Reduces abandonment by helping prospective consumers find what they are looking for in real-time*
7. *Reduces abandonment by eliminating poor user experiences (complex forms, poor search performance, etc.)*
8. *Acts upon identified up-sell opportunities*
9. *Acts upon identified cross-sell opportunities*
10. *Acts upon identified next-sell opportunities*



Why online customer engagement  
boosts online sales conversion?

**It lets you offer individual customers more personal, engaging  
and satisfying online shopping experiences.**

## Step-by-step methodology to boost online sales

Online customer engagement for sales conversion mirrors the sales process used in physical shops. The steps are identical. As important, world-class online customer engagement platforms can be tailored to suit your specific sales approach, corporate culture and desired brand image.

The sales process is shown below.

### CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY



A STEP-BY-STEP METHODOLOGY TO BOOST ONLINE SALES CONVERSION RATES USING ONLINE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT. LEARN MORE ABOUT CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AT [VERGIC.COM](https://vergic.com)

**vergic**   
MAKES IT PERSONAL



### The main differences to physical sales are:

- *Online real-time personalization enables site content and items to be immediately tailored to match an individual customer's preferences, interests, actions and behavior*
- *All agents can access any customer's current or historical behavioral data*
- *Correct answers about product and service offerings are always readily available to all agents*

These power more personal, relevant, enjoyable and efficient online customer support and shopping experiences. And translate into more successful sales due to increased knowledge, less uncertainty and less delays by agents.

You can boost online sales using customer engagement by following these three steps:

**Step 1: Planning and getting started**

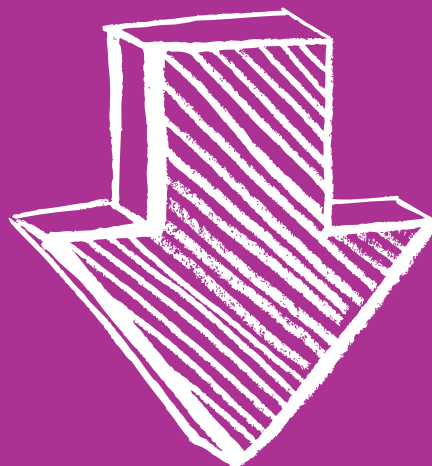
**Step 2: Apply engagement tool and evaluate performance**

**Step 3: Factors to focus on before, during and after implementation**



*Read online and join the discussion!*

*Let's review each step to explore  
how to make it happen.*



## Step 1: Planning and getting started

When considering adding any new technology for your business or website, it is important to first define what you want to achieve and how you will measure success. Online customer engagement technology doesn't need to be a major deployment. It easily integrates as a web browser application, facilitates product interoperability with any other third-party solution and allows freedom to scale, expand or exchange.

What you need to plan for and consider upon commencing a project boils down to basic conversion measuring parameters plus an inventory of your current systems. The only answers you need to know are:

1. **What is the total number of visitors per month today and desired?** *This provides your team with a clear understanding of volumes and resources needed.*
2. **What is your online sales rate today and what levels are we aiming for and by when?** *A clear starting point and course to measure progress and track success.*
3. **What are some of the underlying tactics you need to boost online conversion rates?** *Do you need to decrease shopping cart abandonment rates? Increase agent efficiencies in converting existing opportunities? Create more opportunities?*
4. **Which IT systems and tools are you using and where are they located?** *For managing your product catalogs, product pages, shopping cart, checkout process, thank you pages, etc.*



## Step 2: Apply engagement tool and evaluate performance

There are numerous vendors offering online customer engagement tools. While the scale spans from advanced to basic functionality, several features are key to successful online sales. The things to look closely at handle these conversion phases and functions:

- *Before engagements: identification and profiling*
- *During engagements: opportunities and solutions*
- *After engagements: analytics, statistics and reporting*

**NOTE:**  
a checklist of  
criteria to evaluate  
online customer  
engagement  
solutions is on  
page 28

### Before engagements: identification and profiling

The function is to identify a visitor upon entry, then keep track of on-site behavior. The task are: identifying each visitor's on-site actions, interactions and specific data points; building and scoring data specific to an individual visitor, prospect or customer and his online behavior; and saving data in a profile card.

### During engagements: opportunities and solutions

The function is to engage in real-time with individual online customers — as well as use online behavior factors to offer personal support and advice, share information, resolve issues, collaborate, etc. When an individual's current or past behavior triggers a point-of-interest opportunity, configured events start online engagements (canned responses, chat, co-browsing, document sharing, signing, etc) based on engagement solutions for sales conversion, customer support, CRM optimization, etc.

### After engagements: analytics, statistics and reporting

The function is to track sales conversion and customer satisfaction levels. The tool provides marketing attribution and analytics to evaluate online customer engagement performance.

1

2

3





## Step 3: Factors to focus on before, during and after implementation

Online customer engagement is not your typical plug-and-play tool for the simple reason of what it is used for. When operating at its best, online customer engagement helps people enjoy more personal, engaging and efficient online experiences. This is driven by real-time, collaborative, useful connectivity between e-commerce site employees and customers. The technology acts as an interface for sites to share information, resolve issues and collaborate with customers — online and in real-time.

### Factors to focus on before, during and after implementation include:

- *Make it easy for customers to engage with agents (or feel personally assisted)*
- *Help agents provide personal and accurate shopping experiences*
- *Increase the number of agent-assisted dialogs*
- *Reinforce your desired brand culture and image*

The following is intended to provide an overview of each factor.

1

2

3



## Make it easy for customers to engage with agents (or feel personally assisted)

**Ensuring customers enjoy a positive shopping experience at your webshop is the single most important factor in online sales conversion. And it is dependant upon providing personal service. So the greater amount of personal service you offer your online customer, the greater the potential for sales conversion.**

Allowing your customers to directly interact with webshop employees always makes sense. This is evidenced by the exponential rise in consumer preference for using live chat. However, even simple automated online customer engagement functions — like dynamically adding layers of text or visuals to help customers gather facts or evaluate features, pricing and cost calculation — delights customers as they feel the marketer respects their time.

What is of high interest and relevancy? To which shopper? At which phase of the purchasing decision is a customer operating in now? Answer these fundamental sales questions to make it easy for customers to engage with agents (or feel personally assisted). With these insights you can determine whether your site should offer reactive, proactive or both activation options for online customer engagement. Reactive mode requires the user to click a button on the site to launch chat or another function; proactive mode directly alters the online experience — for example, via a pop-up window or lightbox and dialog script — to invite the visitor to engage with an agent.

Coverage is another aspect to consider: should you permit online customer engagement on all high priority sales pages? Every page? Only on site navigation or similar areas? Again: the easier it is for customer to enjoy the feeling of personal service during their shopping experience, the greater the potential for sales.



## Help agents provide personal and accurate shopping experiences

**Online customer engagement technology is simply a tool. It does not execute the sales conversion alone – the person using the online customer engagement tool accounts for 40% of the success.**

Online customer engagement driven e-commerce takes into account the behavior of each visitor in real-time. As such, it offers typical conversion process maps based on identified opportunities — like sales cheat sheets — for your agents. Agents then use the solution modules to guide and quickly respond to actions and preferences of consumers — all in real-time, while evaluations and decisions happen. Customer engagement is ultimately generated by your employees — sales and customer support agents. Personal sales and service fosters trust. Research clearly shows that consumers are much more likely to trust agents than automated marketing only, especially when shopping online.

Agent skills and confidence are key to their ability in providing the type personal and accurate shopping experiences that lead to sales. High agent turnover and slow start-up results are common issues that can negatively affect results. At the same time, individual agents are just that: individuals. When agents feel empowered to make a difference, they take more pride in their work, are more effective and are more inspired to act in a responsible manner.

Providing good service during the shopping experience is about timeliness, the accuracy and the quality of the information that is provided as well as personal advice, tips and inspiration. So the goal should always be for all agents to offer consistent support levels: any issue, solved by any agent, at any time. Online customer engagement technology helps improve agent efficiency, profitability and satisfaction. Be sure to empower your agents with proper training and by seamlessly integrating information so they can efficiently help customers.

# TRAINING



1

2

3

## Increase the number of agent-assisted dialogs

**When setting call center performance metrics for online customer engagement technology, it is important to remember that agents are not only working with issue resolution – agents help drive and secure revenue. If it is to be a sales-focused contact center, the metrics should incorporate those for revenue generation as well as handle times.**

Consumer expectations for more personal, human online shopping experiences continue to grow. While chat has come a long way in recent years, it serves as an example of the evolution that is now taking place. Text-based chat techniques focus on agents being able to “avoid robot responses” by promoting natural conversation style. This calls for a careful balance of both scripted and spontaneous tactics. But it’s time to go beyond text and incorporate visual and speech. Visual and speech chat are significantly improving web self-service and are natural sales support tools.

The most important factor is increasing the total number of dialogs an agent handles. An agent with a 10% conversion rate that interacts in 10 chats secures one order. By doubling that agent’s number of interactions, you double his contribution to sales. More agent-assisted dialogs secure more revenue.





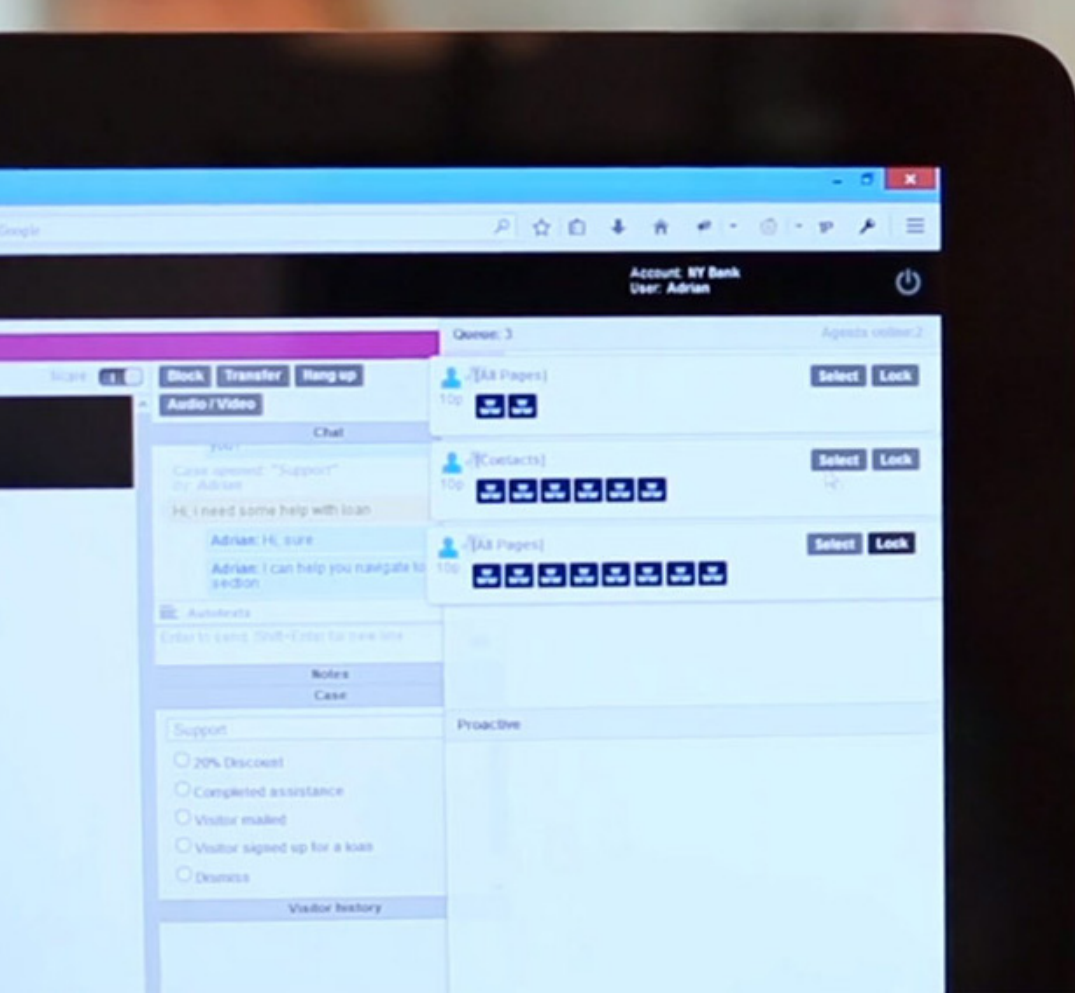
## Reinforce your desired brand culture and image

**Is your brand built around words like accessibility, approachable or customer support excellence? Is your reputation that of a knowledgeable, competent company? What kind of service culture do you aspire to offer? All these are areas in which your image is aided by online customer engagement technology.**

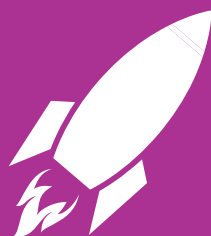
As a tool, it lets your agents demonstrate accessibility and customer service excellence. You can adapt in how your agents use the technology to match your brand's service and sales approaches — e.g. aggressive, proactive or passive tone-of-voice. And you adapt design, colors, imagery, fonts, tone-of-voice, etc. to suit your identity and image.







Boosting  
online sales  
with Vergic

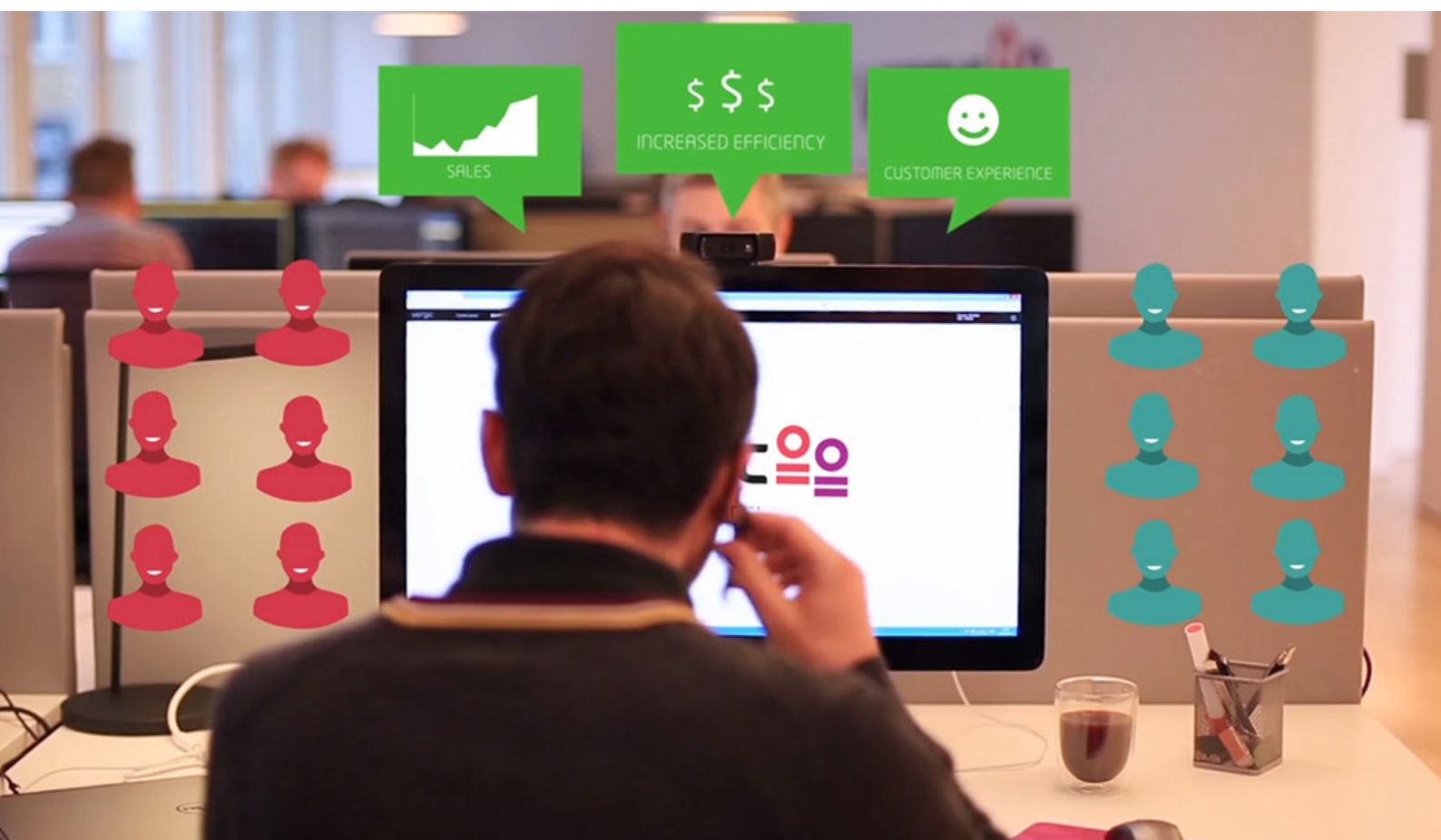


# Overview of the Vergic Engage Platform

## About our engagement tool

Amongst global customer engagement technologies, the Vergic Engage Platform offers world-class performance in executing identification and profiling, customer engagement opportunities and solutions as well as analytics and reporting. Some of its general key qualities include:

- *Is available as a web browser application*
- *No download or installation is required of website visitors or on agent side*
- *Lets agents engage with multiple customers in real-time simultaneously*
- *Automatically matches an individual visitor to the available agent with the right skills and language*
- *Supports an unlimited number of customer websites with the same agents and queues*
- *Queue management uses both reactive and proactive engagements*
- *Offers SAML2 high level security*
- *Has a negligible impact on site performance*



# Overview of Vergic professional services

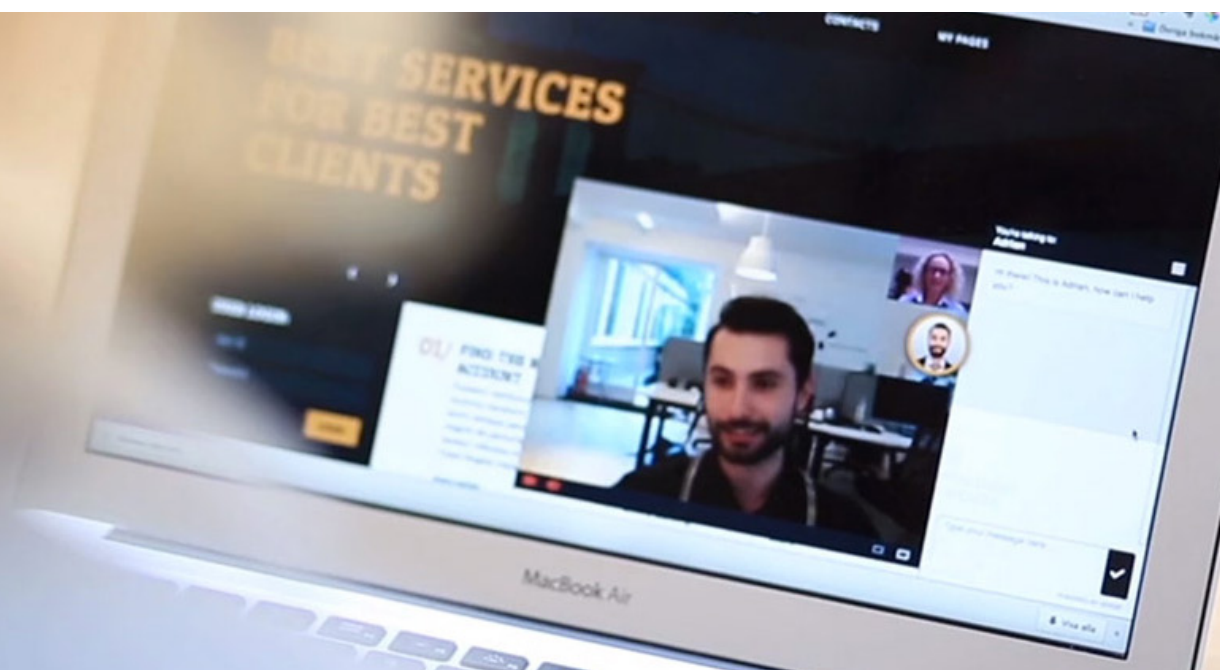
## Getting started

Vergic professional services support customers in meeting the key performance indicators (KPIs) that matter most to their site. Often, the first step is to perform a joint assessment and analysis of a site in order to produce clear, practical recommendations on how to meet specified objectives. Every deployment and implementation is optimized to each customer's goals, IT structure and resources. KPIs typically include:

- *Lead generation, quantitative levels*
- *Lead scoring, qualitative levels*
- *Customer conversion rates*
- *Shopping cart abandonment rates*
- *Increase order values*
- *Customer issue resolution success rates*
- *Customer engagement value*
- *Agent productivity levels*
- *Customer intelligence and patterns*
- *Customer satisfaction*
- *Customer loyalty*
- *Customer service costs*

## Optimize implementation

Integration, training of staff in the tool and customer interaction skills, development, deployment, optimization, customization and beyond. Whatever type and level of support you need, Vergic will work directly with you.



## Results achieved

The following are results Vergic clients have achieved. Client names have been excluded upon their request. Contact Vergic for more details.

### Introduction: some examples

These cases show the impact on sales online customer engagement has upon deployment on a website.

#### Retail

**Client:** Multinational electrical, home, multimedia and leisure products

**Duration:** Data from two week period

**Traffic:** Average of 76 500 unique visits/week

#### Results:

19%

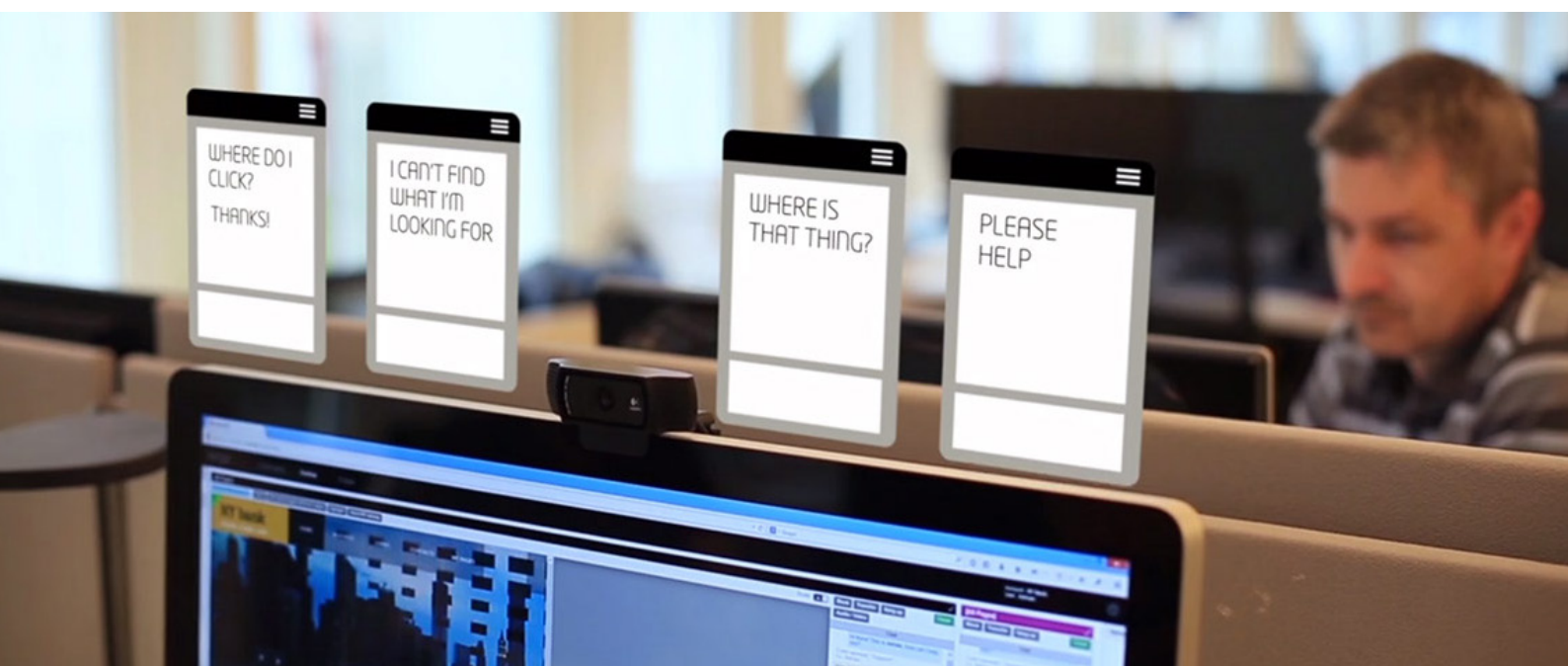
Average sales conversion rate with agent-assisted dialog

18x

Greater sales conversion rate with agent-assisted dialog than without

1/5

Purchase frequency with agent-assisted dialog



## Introduction: some examples, continued

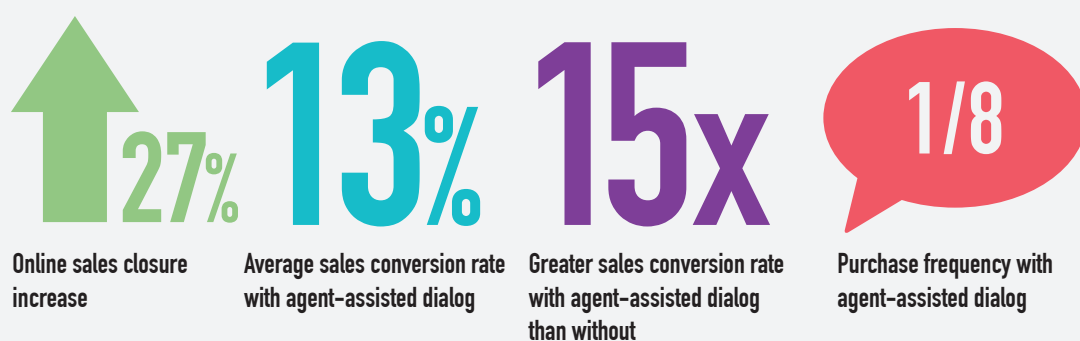
### Fashion

**Client:** Multinational fashion retail brand

**Duration:** Data from a ten week pilot project

**Traffic:** Average of 150 000 unique visits/week

#### Results:



### Telecom

**Client:** Multinational telephony operator and services provider

**Duration:** Data from two week period

**Traffic:** Average of 440 000 unique visits/week

#### Results:





## On-going: some examples

The next examples show the effect of escalating online sales after the completion of an introduction period.

### Services

**Client:** Swedish energy services provider

**Live since:** 2010

**Duration:** Data from three month period

**Traffic:** Average of 4 000 unique visits/week

**Results:**

35%

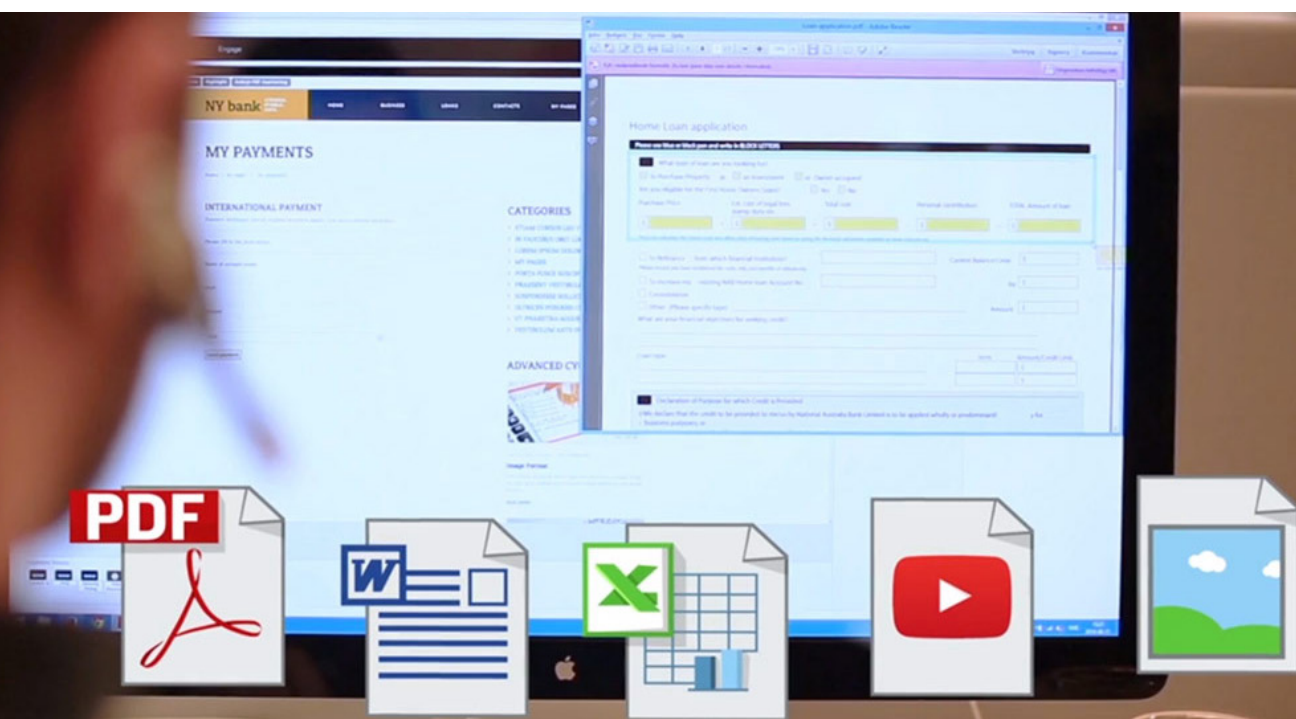
Average sales conversion rate with agent-assisted dialog

6x

Greater sales conversion rate with agent-assisted dialog than without

1/3

Purchase frequency with agent-assisted dialog



## On-going: some examples, continued

### Retail

**Client:** Nordic retailer of home appliance products

**Live since:** 2013

**Duration:** Data from four week period

**Traffic:** Average of 206 400 unique visits/week

#### Results:

27%

Average sales conversion rate  
with agent-assisted dialog

10x

Greater sales conversion rate  
with agent-assisted dialog  
than without

1/4

Purchase frequency with  
agent-assisted dialog

### Retail

**Client:** Nordic entertainment products

**Live since:** 2013

**Duration:** Data from three week period

**Traffic:** Average of 666 700 unique visits/week

#### Results:

19%

Average sales conversion rate  
with agent-assisted dialog

18x

Greater conversion rate with  
agent-assisted dialogs  
than without

1/5

Purchase frequency with  
agent-assisted dialog

## On-going: some examples, continued

### Retail

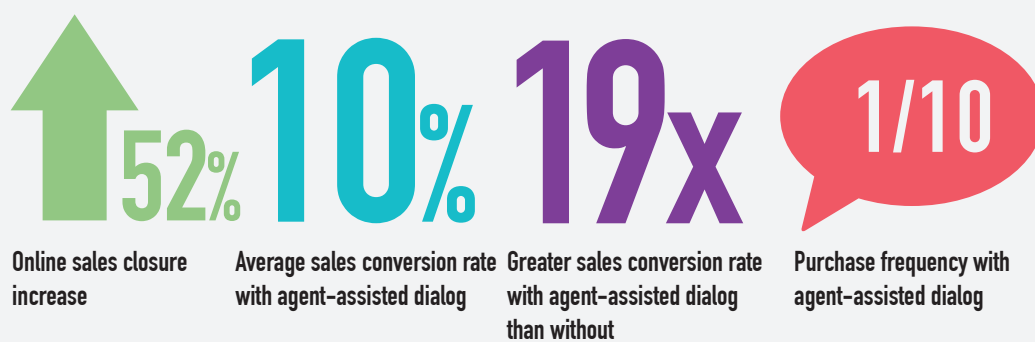
**Client:** Nordic retailer of consumer products

**Live since:** 2011

**Duration:** Data from a one week period

**Traffic:** Average of 652 700 unique visits/week

#### Results:



### Retail

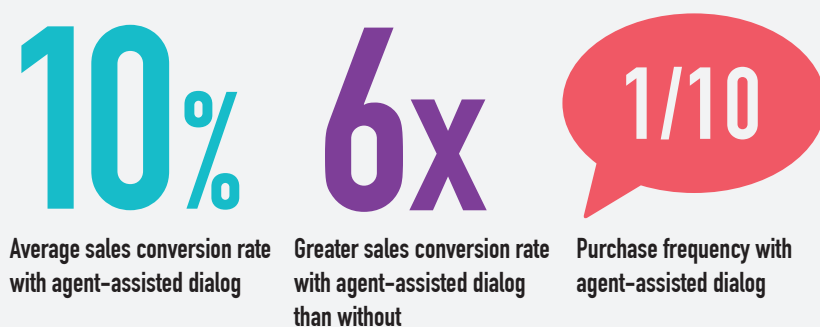
**Client:** Nordic retailer of consumer products

**Live since:** 2014

**Duration:** Data from three week period

**Traffic:** Average of 539 700 unique visits/week

#### Results:



Conclusions:

# Online customer engagement boosts sales conversions!

**Sites that are not actively engaging with visitors are missing sales opportunities and moments to connect with potential and existing customers. There is a new way of engaging with customers — powered by real-time online customer engagement technology. And it works!**

As the figures cited show, online customer engagement boosts online sales conversion rates. Upon initial implementation, 30-50% uplifts in conversion rates with engagements are possible. Agent-assisted functions increase conversion rates even higher. For instance, an average of our data shows customers engaged in chats with agents purchase 15% more often compared to those who are not chatting. This can be further increased with more advanced interaction functions. And by supporting agents in developing their skills and competence as well as providing them with greater sales responsibilities. Once deployed, the effect of online customer engagement to increase online sales will continue to increase. This is driven both by further acceptance of online shopping, website/webshop chat and other online customer engagement functions as well as improved competence and best-practice amongst agents, online stores and contact centers.

## Online customer engagement succeeds for these three reasons:

1. *Makes it personal. Customers expect you to know them. The technology lets you get to know each individual customer and the context of their current interest.*
2. *You gain real-time influence. You instantly adapt to a customer — matching content and items to an individual customer's preferences, interests and actions. All agents can access any customer's behavioral data as well as gain correct answers about product or service offerings quickly.*
3. *You collaborate with your customers. Help them with advice. Find information. Chat about what is important to them. You deliver the right information and support, right away, on any online device. They enjoy the feeling of personal service and their online shopping experience.*

# Checklist to evaluate online customer engagement solutions

## Supplier

- ✓ *Demonstrates security-of-supply and long-term stability.*
- ✓ *Offers you experience in your industry: references and results.*
- ✓ *Offers you proactive service and support.*

## Technology, in general

- ✓ *Is available as web browser application.*
- ✓ *No download or installation is required of website visitors or agents.*
- ✓ *Lets agents engage with multiple customers in real-time simultaneously.*
- ✓ *Automatically matches an individual visitor to the available agent with the right skills and language.*
- ✓ *Supports an unlimited number of customer websites with the same agents and queues.*
- ✓ *Queue management uses both reactive and proactive engagements.*
- ✓ *Offers SAML2 high level security.*
- ✓ *Has a negligible impact on site performance*

## Before engagements: identification and profiling

- ✓ *Lets you identify and profile the visitors that you actually want to interact with by incorporating data from a broad a range of factors, i.e. visitor, point-of-interest, phase in the purchasing process, etc.*
- ✓ *Lets you match the right agent to an individual customer's interests, needs, issues, language, etc.*
- ✓ *Lets you quickly and easily set rules for engagements.*
- ✓ *Lets you act upon visitor behavior other than just new page views or session duration.*

## During engagements: opportunities and solutions

- ✓ *Lets any agent directly gain a full understanding of any individual customer by directly accessing both real-time and historical data about behavior, interests, needs, issues, etc.*
- ✓ *Lets agents adapt site content (text, images, video, etc.) in real-time without affecting the customer's booking or purchasing process.*
- ✓ *Lets any agent seamlessly switch between any type of customer interaction function — e.g: from chat to co-browsing; from text chat to video or audio chat; from phone to web; etc.*
- ✓ *Lets the online customer enjoy the same level of personal service available to a customer in a physical store. This is enabled by the broad range of functions and features described earlier.*

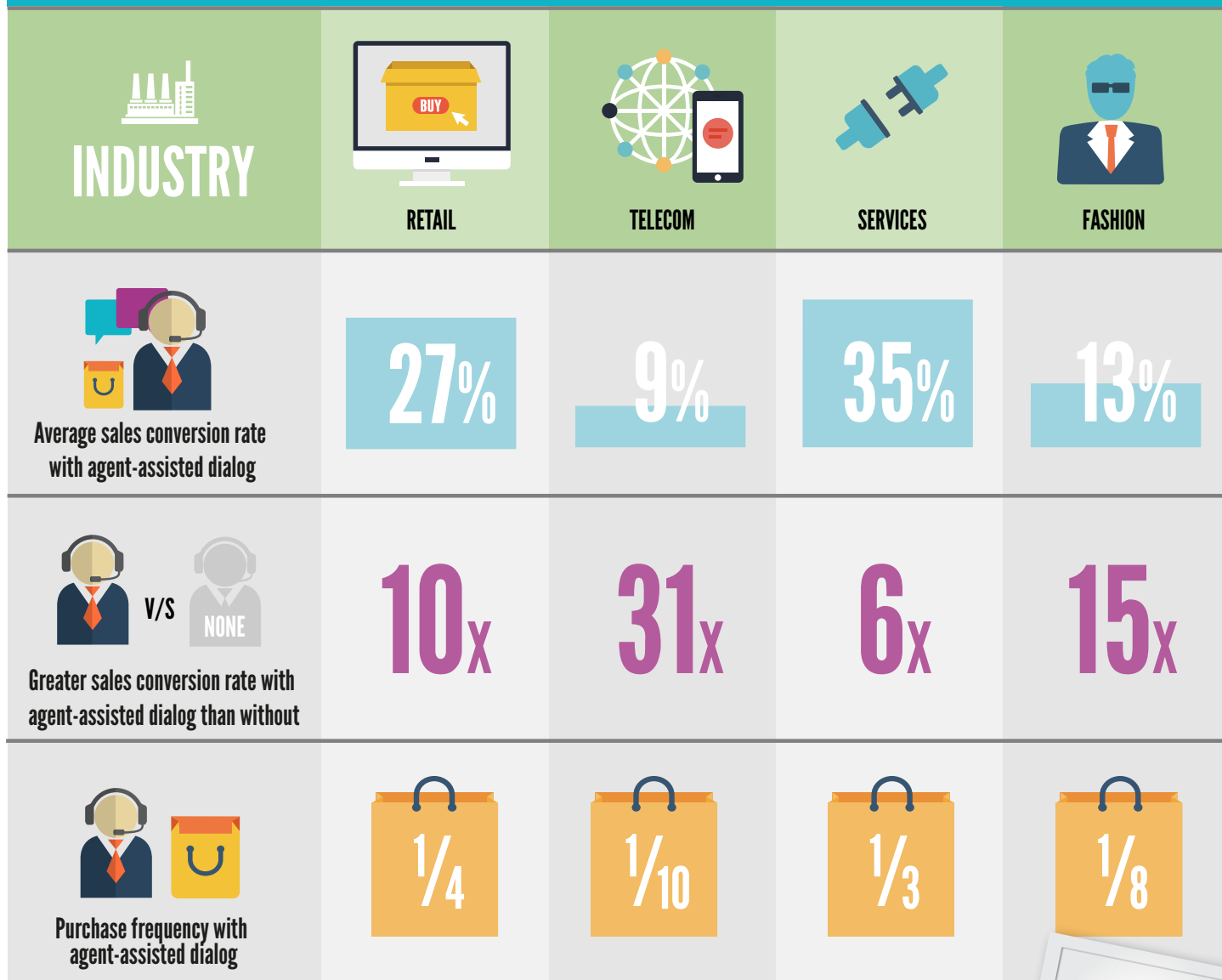
## After engagements: analytics, statistics and reporting

- ✓ *Lets you measure, view, analyze, track and build reports on your specific KPIs in the way you want.*
- ✓ *Lets you seamlessly integrate its data with your CRM or any other data system to give your team real-time insights into individual customers or customer groups by any demographic you want.*



# VERGIC IMPACT ON ONLINE SALES

## HIGHLIGHTED RESULTS



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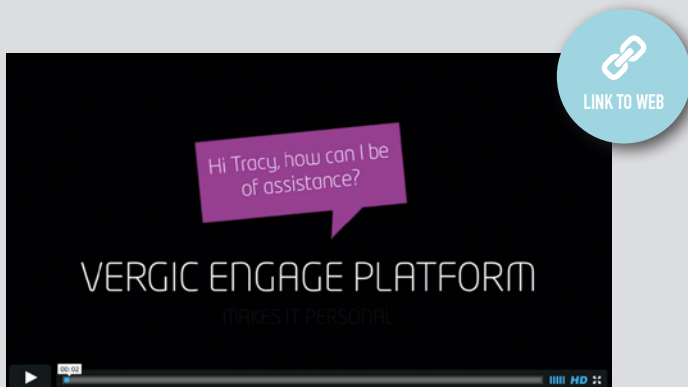


## About Vergic

Vergic online customer engagement technology powers more personal, relevant, enjoyable and efficient online customer support and shopping experiences — in real-time, on any device. The Nordic region's leading online customer engagement provider, our Vergic Engage Platform is intelligent cloud-based software that turns any web page into an interface for customer and agent interaction using text, video or audio chat, co-browsing, document sharing and a range of automated functions. Engagements for lead generation, sales conversion and customer service enable sites to adapt to behavior and provide timely personal, and relevant support, advice and offers — right away. Vergic is privately owned, headquartered in Malmö, Sweden and has over 15 years experience conducting business and building relationships online. Vergic makes IT personal.

Visit [www.vergic.com](http://www.vergic.com) for more information

### Videos of Vergic and our technology



Watch the Vergic Engage Platform and concept



Watch the Vergic Engage Platform at work

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