BEST PRACTICE GUIDE:
Implementing AI-Powered Commerce with Einstein
Every aspect of your business, from merchandise selection and inventory management to the design of your physical and online store, depends on how well you know your customers. But as customer expectations change readily with the use of other apps and ecommerce sites that leverage artificial intelligence (AI), trying to anticipate your customer’s next move can be stressful and exhausting.

Fortunately, it’s simple to power AI on your ecommerce site with Einstein. Commerce Cloud Einstein enables data-based decisions and grows smarter over time, so you no longer need to rely on demographic data that is largely assumption-based and provides a limited picture of your customer. You can gather real-time behavioral data to understand customers’ needs at a deeper level and more accurately predict the items they are most likely to buy.

With AI embedded in Commerce Cloud Einstein, you have the power to reduce manual merchandising tasks and create true 1-to-1 personalization.
Building Intelligent Shopping Journeys

When shoppers visit Skis.com, they are shown product recommendations based on their real-time clicks gathered by the AI engine. Since not all skiers have the same needs – beginners renting skis purchase different products than a local who hits the slopes every weekend – the site uses AI to build a predictive model for each individual shopper, generating unique customer experiences.

On the back end, this same live click-stream capture powers smarter merchandising and actionable insights for commerce teams.

Read on for more tips on how to implement Commerce Cloud Einstein and individualize the customer experience.
Customers expect to see personalized product recommendations, and retailers are seeing revenue increases after adding product recommendations to their ecommerce sites. For example, Icebreaker found that its shoppers clicked on Einstein Product Recommendations, powered by Salesforce, 40% more often, leading to 28% more revenue from recommended products and an 11% overall increase in average order value when compared with an incumbent provider.

You may find it most effective to take the “crawl, walk, run” approach when implementing AI-driven product recommendations. Often, teams are excited to offer recommendations and other personalization features possible through AI, but instead of adding recommendations immediately to your entire site, start with one product type and then slowly add additional products based on what you learn. This allows you to see what works and understand what your customers are interested in.

**CRAWL:** Make product recommendations part of the experience, not the centerpiece. Customers are easily distracted online, especially if they are using a mobile device. It’s tempting to showcase product recommendations to get the most clicks, but this can actually make the recommendations less effective. By making recommendations visible to the customer – but not necessarily the first item they notice throughout the site – you can increase revenue and encourage customers to interact with your brand.

**WALK:** Use results-based testing. After implementing initial recommendations based on the team’s experience and input, it’s time to conduct usability testing to determine the best way to use recommendations on your site. This ensures recommendations will be effective for your customers.

**RUN:** Use product recommendations throughout your website. In addition to having recommendations on the product page, use your test results to determine other ways you can show customers the products they are likely to be interested in, such as adding recommendations to home, profile, and category pages.
TIP 2:

Personalize Search Results

Customers are not likely to wade through pages of products to find the perfect item. If they don’t quickly find what they are looking for, they will leave your site without completing a purchase. Einstein Predictive Sort uses customer behavior to show shoppers products they are most likely to purchase at the top of their category and search results. It decreases the amount of time a customer spends searching and increases conversion.

Strategically place the search bar on your website and pages. To display personalized drop-down menus and personalize search results, customers must first search for a product. Encourage shoppers to search by placing the search bar in a location they will see when they first view the page. Additionally, make the search bar “sticky,” so it stays on the page when the customer scrolls through products. The added benefit is that AI gathers more data about each customer with each search, which increases your site-search accuracy. This also reduces friction for mobile shoppers that are 2.6x times more likely to purchase when they click on a search bar.

Keep clean data. The accuracy of personalized search results depends on the quality of the data. Follow Commerce Cloud best practices to keep your data clean and organized so the AI system can give your customers the most accurate personalization. If you start with unorganized data with inaccuracies, the insights and personalization will be much less effective.
Manually sorting through volumes of data is time-consuming, and it’s challenging to understand what you can glean from the data to drive revenue and conversions. But Einstein Commerce Insights can turn commerce data into immediate, actionable insight. You can create a roadmap of changes you should make both on your ecommerce site and in your store.

**Use the data to unveil purchase patterns.** Your commerce data gives you a place to start with personalization and unique experiences. Einstein Commerce Insights automatically analyzes the data and gives you actionable insights to optimize site experiences. Site merchandisers can quickly identify co-purchase patterns to create product sets, bundles, and even deals that customers want, increasing average order value.

**Let AI reshape your playbook.** Site merchandising truly is an art, but it gets even better when you marry it with the data science of what customers are actually purchasing. Avoid getting too mired in the aesthetics of a “look” and let customer purchase behavior empower employees to break and remake merchandising norms. This gives site merchandisers the freedom to be innovative and design experiences that will enhance your brand and your bottom line.
While emphasis is often placed on the use of AI for ecommerce sites, insights from collected behavior-related data can also increase sales in physical stores. Here are a few ways to use Einstein Commerce Insights in your store:

**Modify the store layout.** Once you know the items specific customers are likely to be interested in, you can group them together in specific sections of the store. By putting clothing near the front of the store to catch their eye, followed by other items they may be interested in, you can design a path through the store for each type of customer.

**Plan the displays.** Displays are designed to catch customers’ attention, so merchandisers can use broad shopper data from AI to identify shopping patterns and display items of interest next to each other. By using other behavior data, such as information about customers that purchase a specific hiking jacket, merchandisers can add props to the display, such as hiking poles and boots, to increase its appeal.

**Create combinations.** While store associates strive to create combinations, customers often create their own outfits that teams may not have considered. The business insights gleaned from Einstein Commerce Insights will show you the items often purchased together, and your store associates can then use this information to dress mannequins, right down to the shoes and jewelry often purchased with other pieces.
Implementing AI Means Better Results for You

Using an AI engine integrated with your ecommerce site means you no longer have to wonder whether you are making the right decisions, because the data gives you the answers. Most important, Commerce Cloud Einstein becomes smarter over time – the more data that is collected, the more accurate the insights and personalization.

This results in more accurate purchasing decisions, a reduction of manual merchandising tasks, and more time to spend growing your business.

While the thought of using AI for ecommerce may seem overwhelming and technical, easy-to-use AI engines like Einstein simplify the process – without the need for specialized expertise or data scientists to get you started. We work with people like you every day to implement AI, streamline processes, and increase revenue. Customers like Black Diamond achieved a 15.5% revenue increase after adding AI into its ecommerce site.

Commerce Cloud Einstein gives companies the ability to automatically leverage commerce data and power insights that create personalized and innovative experiences for every customer.

All you have to do is turn it on.

Let’s get started growing your business together. Learn more about Commerce Cloud Einstein.