

ACT-ON EBOOK

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# Personalizing the Web Experience

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The Key to Better Customer Interaction and  
Engagement on Your Website



In 2005, businesses began making a major shift in the way they positioned themselves online — **reflecting a new philosophy with unlimited possibilities.**

Suddenly, a company's website became more than just a source for potential buyers to learn about a company's specific products and services; it became an opportunity for businesses to position themselves as thought leaders within their space and educate their consumers about any number of topics related to their industry and their offerings.

Digital marketing pioneers realized the sheer power of the internet and began creating content they knew would benefit them for years to come. As a result, websites were now marketing channels as well as sales platforms.

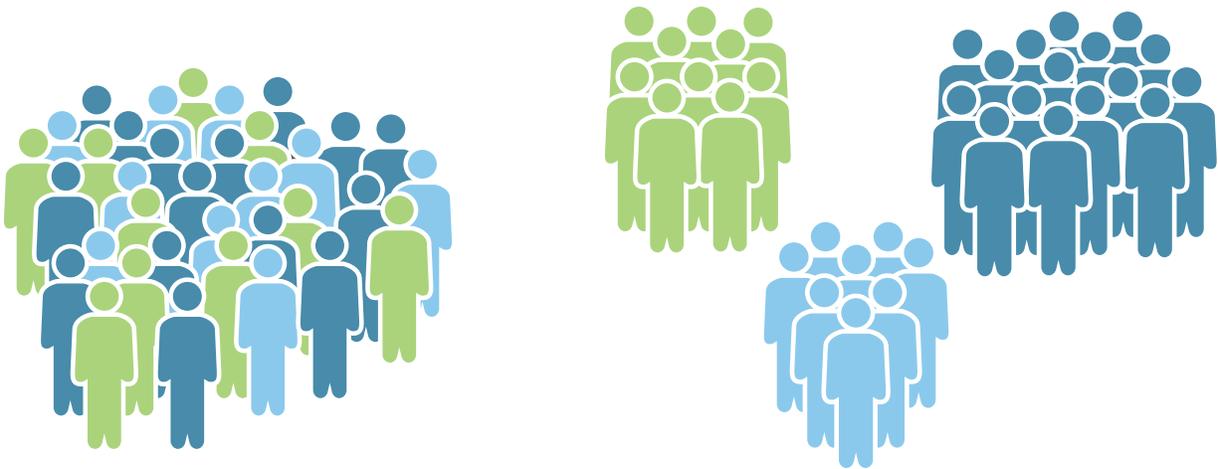
Now, almost 15 years later, we find ourselves on the cutting edge of another seminal digital marketing breakthrough:

## **Personalization.**

Before Website Personalization...

# There Was Segmentation

Traditionally, digital marketers have attempted to create a more personalized experience on their digital properties with segmentation — a method through which prospects and existing customers are categorized according to their behavior and characteristics (buyer personas). They would cobble together this information (industry, location, pages visited, forms completed, etc.) manually through Google Analytics, Google AdWords, and numerous other disparate tracking tools to then create targeted nurturing campaigns that would speak to their consumers on a more personal level — discussing specific pain points and offering solutions to their biggest problems.



To a certain extent, this approach to segmentation was effective for many organizations, especially when done the right way. These companies witnessed improvement in their primary KPIs — including higher email open and click-through rates, lower cost-per-click and bounce rates with pay-per-click advertising, and improved engagement across their digital properties. And why wouldn't they? Accurate, in-depth targeting has always been the single most important element of marketing success.



# Still, this manual segmentation requires an enormous investment of time and resources and is exceptionally difficult to execute properly.

Marketing and sales teams are tasked with accumulating unfathomable amounts of purposeful data and then gradually drilling down on that data to uncover the secret recipe for each of their personas — recipes that are subject to change with each bright, shiny, and new buzzword or trend.

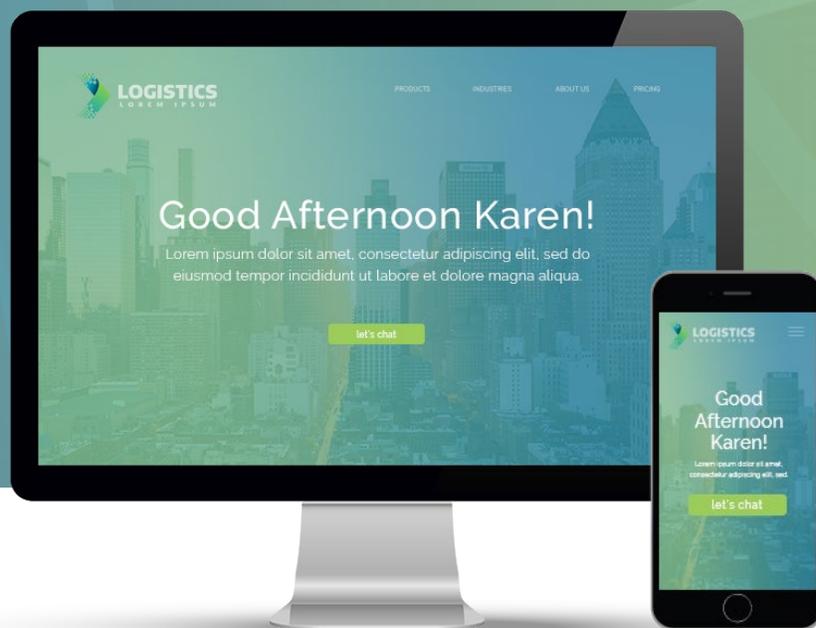
As such, companies spend more money acquiring and retaining top talent when that money could be better spent funding targeted campaigns. Meanwhile, team members spend more time researching and testing campaigns hoping to find a diamond in the rough rather than working together to unify their brand and fine-tune their messaging. All this while the organization misses out on valuable opportunities that, despite all that money and hard work, fell through the cracks due to inevitable human error or oversight.

# What Is Web Personalization

## and why is it so important?

While traditional modes of segmentation offered a glimpse at how marketing could someday be reinvented as a more powerful, targeted, and sophisticated discipline, it never fully delivered on that vision — at least not to the extent that truly automated website personalization can. It's just not possible to track hundreds of thousands of behaviors manually, much less actually turn that information into an actionable strategy.

But with website personalization, we can rely on technology that automates traditional segmentation processes to deliver a highly personalized user experience without any additional work for our marketing and sales teams.

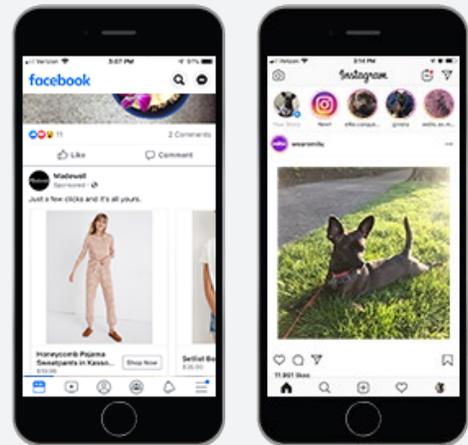


## In simplest terms...

Website personalization is the process through which digital marketers create customized experiences for each website visitor based on their users' behaviors and characteristics. Rather than providing one static digital journey for each visitor, website personalization creates a unique adventure for every person who visits a website and becomes more sophisticated, advanced, and customized with every session.

Website personalization leverages advanced technology to collect essential user data as those visitors navigate your website. As the data accumulates, machine-learning software programs begin to customize certain aspects of a website to make that site's content more relevant to potential consumers.

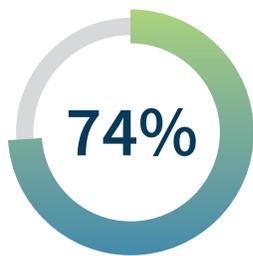
If you are even remotely active on social media, you're likely already intimately familiar with how personalization works. Social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram) use machine learning to serve up content recommendations through a user's feed based on their previous browsing and engagement history. And as we move further into the digital age, the expectation for website personalization is carrying over from social media and other digital channels to company websites and customer buyer journeys.



The goal of online website personalization is to create a more relevant experience for consumers, which leads to more page views, time spent on your website, and, most importantly, more website conversions. When you're able to accurately anticipate your prospects' needs without forcing them to scour your site to track down the information they're looking for, you're naturally going to have more success.

# The numbers over the last several years underscore the importance of quality website personalization.

For instance, a 2016 Infosys study found that 74% of customers feel frustrated when website content isn't personalized — and that was three years ago, folks. What's more, 91% of consumers are more likely to shop with brands who recognize them by name and remember their preferences.



of customers feel frustrated when website content isn't personalized

SOURCE: Infosys



of consumers are more likely to shop with brands who deliver tailored recommendations

SOURCE: Accenture

Perhaps most importantly for marketers, according to Rapt Media, the overwhelming majority of marketers (83%) report that creating personalized content is their biggest challenge...

## and here's why.

# The Challenges of Creating a Personalized Web Experience

Many marketers want to believe that launching a new website personalization experience can be accomplished with just a few lines of code. Sadly, we aren't that fortunate. This process is extremely complicated, and there are several distinct challenges that marketers have to address and overcome to achieve lasting success — most of which are impossible to execute properly without automation.

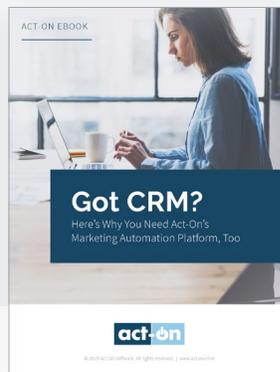
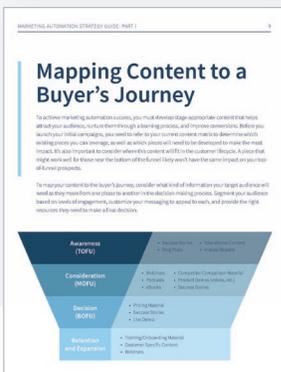
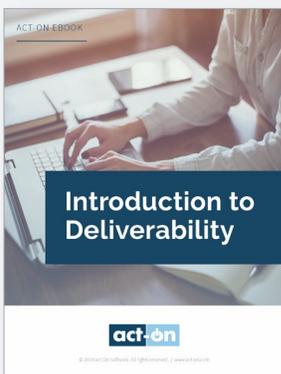
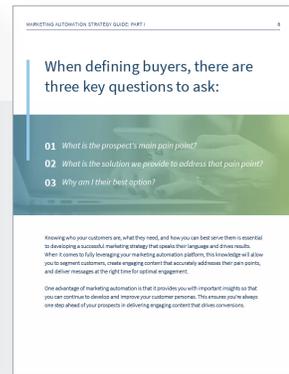
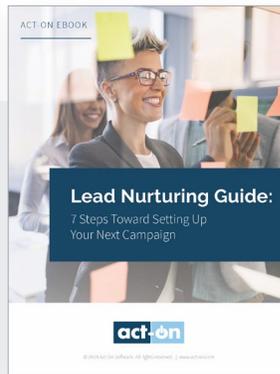
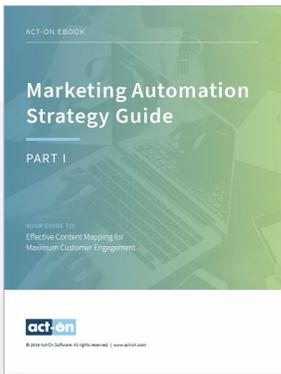


## 01. Tracking Behavior Data

Delivering the right content to the right user at the right time requires an in-depth understanding of who these prospects are and what they're looking for, which means pristine and comprehensive data collection and utilization is also required. Unfortunately, traditional modes of gathering relevant, actionable data are extremely labor intensive and can tax the resources of a marketing department or even an entire organization. Further, not every marketing team has a skilled data analyst, which means not every organization is gathering the right data or using that data in the right ways.

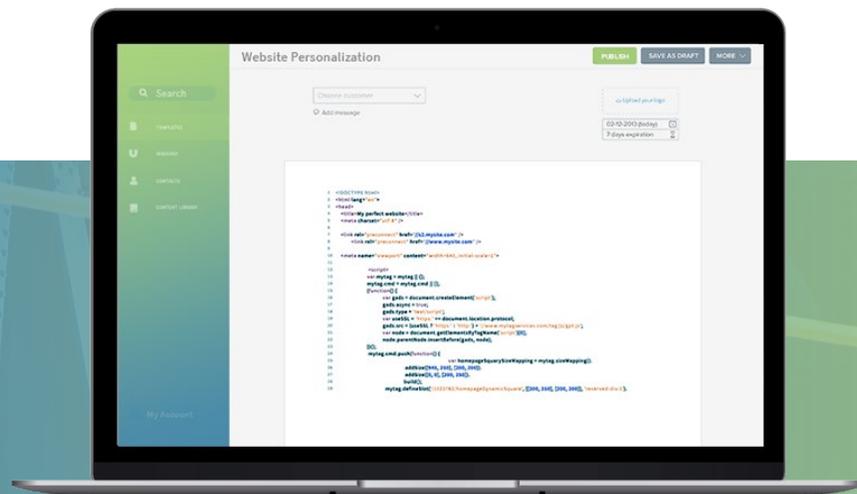
## 02. Developing Content

Creating a vast library of high-quality, engaging content that speaks directly to your prospects, generates conversions, and nurtures existing leads requires a lot of time and energy — not to mention recruiting and fostering the right talent. While not ideal, the reality is that many companies (much less marketing departments) are inherently siloed, making it difficult to gather disparate content tasks, necessities, and assets in one convenient location. And even if you are able to achieve this feat, the sheer volume of these materials is usually such that it's difficult to develop a plausible action plan.



### 03. Manually Creating Engaging Experiences

Not only must you and your team work tirelessly to gain a modicum of understanding of and insight into your audience and their interests, but you also need to then leverage that limited understanding to map out individual customer journeys. And you need to do so with a rules-based approach that requires marketers to create complex if/then directions based on assumptions about how users will behave once they've interacted with individual pieces of content. You also have to consider how to collect accurate, meaningful data and generating actionable reports on key metrics to continue to optimize your site over time.



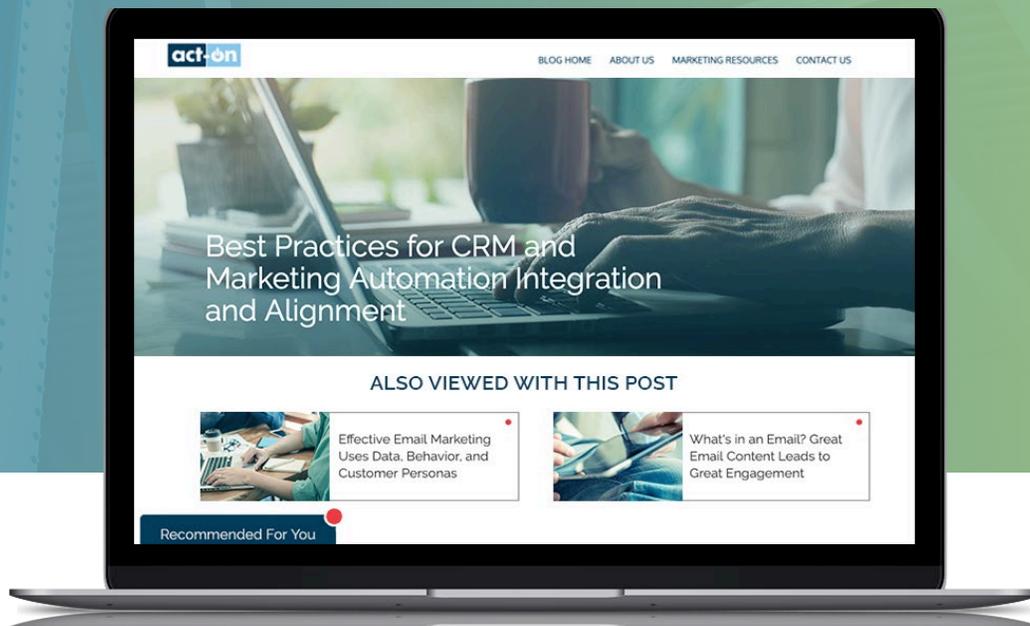
Many website personalization platforms require complex coding and configuration that is beyond the skill set of the average marketer, so new or additional technical resources are often needed.

Imagine a World...

# Where These Challenges Don't Exist

The barriers to success listed above have given website personalization a poor reputation — or, at least, a reputation for being more trouble (and more expensive) than it's worth. But emerging technology is mitigating and even eliminating some or all of these issues. This innovative software enables effective, efficient personalization for marketers of all skill levels and companies of all sizes.

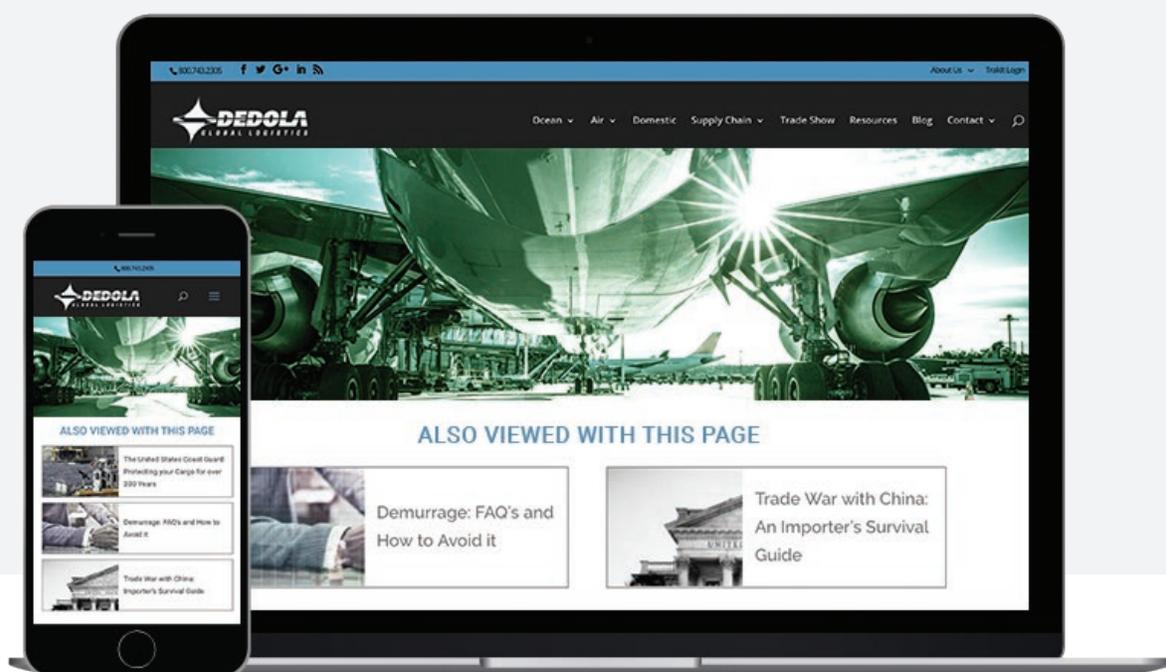
We call it  
**Adaptive Web**



Our newest adaptive marketing solution transforms your website into one of your most powerful marketing and sales tools, empowering you to:

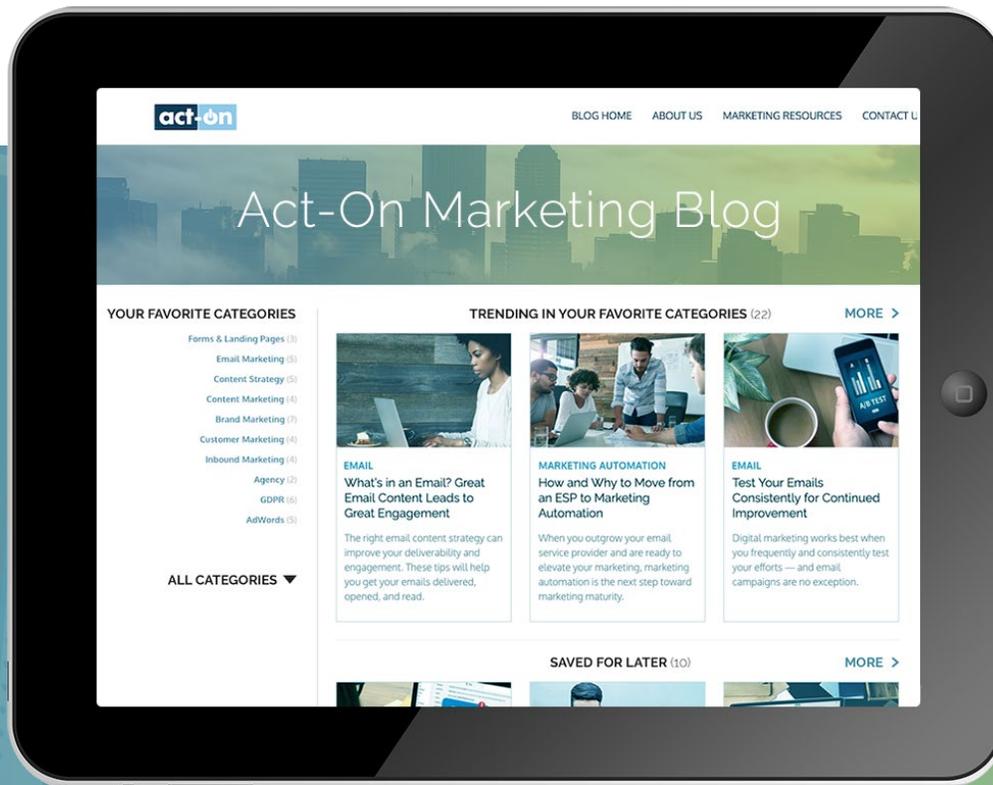
## Deliver Behavior-Triggered Content that Engages Customers and Gets Results

We believe every aspect of a marketer's digital marketing efforts must become more personalized to their target audience. Act-On's Adaptive Marketing vision is focused on this critical need for more one-to-one personalization, and we're excited to be continuing to execute on this vision. With Adaptive Web, marketer's are able to drive behavior-triggered content recommendations to better engage each website visitor at every stage of the buying journey.



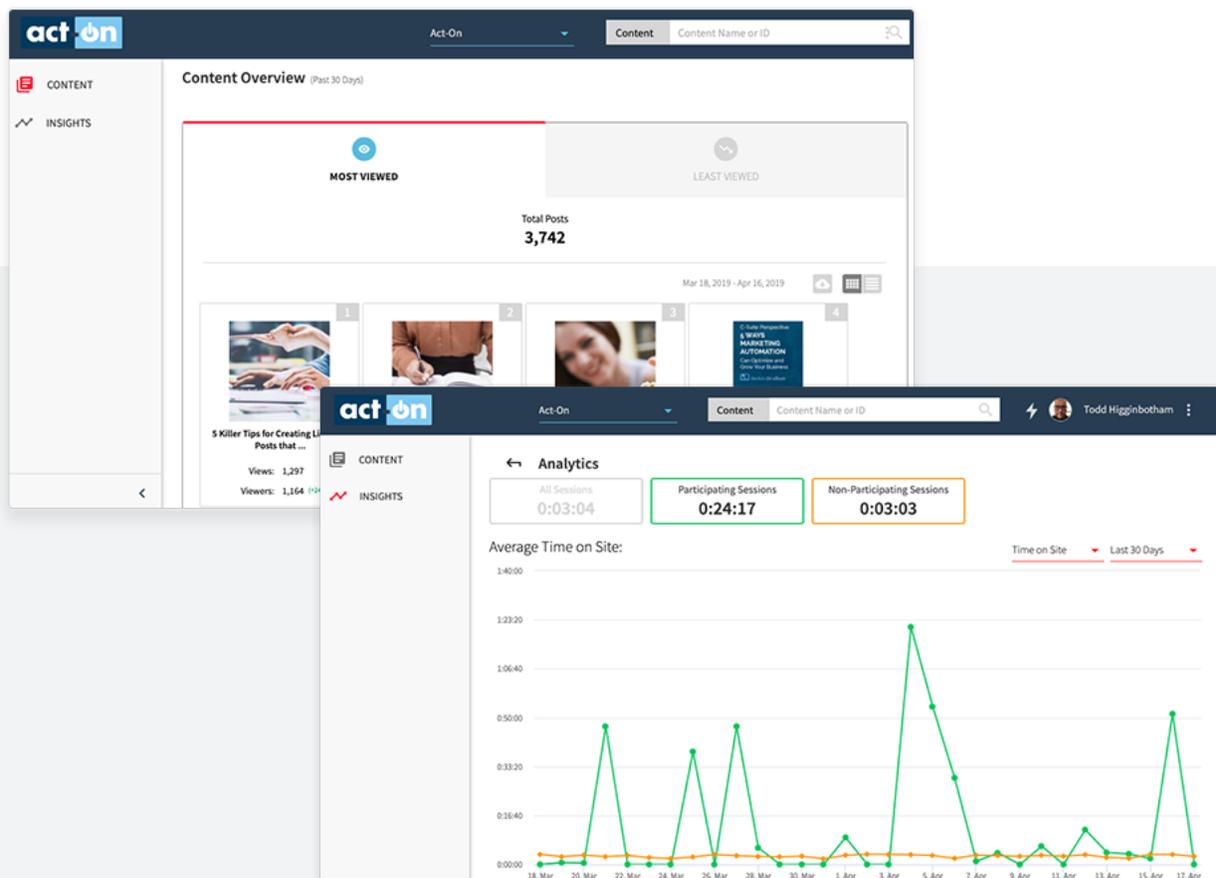
## Save Time and Resources with Machine Learning

We've designed our Adaptive Web solution to make website personalization simple, easy, and attainable for every marketer. Our offering uses machine learning to track your customers' website behavior and automatically provide updated content recommendations as they navigate through your website. Unlike other website personalization tools, Adaptive Web provides individual-specific content recommendations and requires no extra work for the marketer — saving time and resources while making real-time website personalization a reality for any organization.



## Gain Access to Key Insights to Measure Your Marketing ROI

In addition, our website personalization reporting platform gives marketers clear insights into critical KPIs so they can better understand the impact of Adaptive Web on their site traffic, engagement, and ROI. This includes comparison reports of time spent on site and average pages viewed for those who have viewed vs. who have not viewed the recommendations.



# Begin Your Adaptive Journey Today!

At Act-On, Marketing Made Personal is more than just a tagline; it's our identity, our mantra, and our mission. With Act-On Adaptive Web, we're helping marketers accomplish what has, up until now, been considered impossible: leveraging machine learning to make sense of each site visitor's behavior to provide personalized experiences to your prospects that drive more engagement, more leads, and ultimately more growth, without any extra headcount.

If you're ready to deliver a more personalized experience for your prospects and existing customers, we're ready to help!

[Check out Adaptive Web from Act-On!](#)

