

Destination XL: A Customer-Centric Approach to Digital Marketing



About Destination XL

Founded in 1976, Destination XL Group, Inc. (formerly Casual Male Retail Group, Inc.) is the largest specialty retailer of men's big and tall apparel. The company offers an array of apparel, from value labels to high-end designers, all in one place at Destination XL.

The company is a multichannel retailer with hundreds of stores across the country, and it currently ranks 234 in the Internet Retailer 500.

Destination XL Group, Inc. has maintained its focus on leveraging its substantial presence in-store, online, and through its catalogs to create the seamless customer-centric marketing strategy that keeps customers coming back.

About Destination XL

For men in the market for big and tall clothing, Destination XL wants shoppers to consider the retailer their number one destination.

And there's a good chance they will, because Destination XL is passionate about delivering the most personalized website experience possible to its customers.

The retailer offers apparel through brick-and-mortar locations, its catalogs, and the Destination XL website, which is also home to five sister brands (Rochester Big & Tall, Casual Male XL, BT Factory Direct, Shoes XL, and Living XL).

"We see our website as an extension of our retail stores," says Jay Nigrelli, Vice President of eCommerce for the Destination XL Group, Inc. "We've seen clearly that our customers aren't single-channel shoppers. They are using each of our channels to support one another, whether it's starting at the store and visiting the website after, or researching products online and then heading to a store to make a purchase."

As part of its strategy, Destination XL leverages deep customer insights to deliver the right message to the right visitor at the right time.



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Vice President
of eCommerce,
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“Creating a great experience online means meeting and exceeding customer expectations throughout the entire funnel,” says Nigrelli. “From when the customer first enters the website all the way through checkout, we have to make them feel like they’ve been welcomed, allow them to find what they are looking for, and deliver the relevant products they want to see. Whether we’re welcoming a new international visitor or promoting a local store, it’s all about delivering that personalized experience.”

Destination XL has a history of using data and analytics to understand its customers. For years, the retailer has mastered direct mail by testing and iterating on its catalog, and targeting content and products to specific customer segments.

“Our background in direct mail and retail means testing is in our company’s blood,” says Nigrelli. “So we’ve always had a strong optimization strategy when it comes to our online presence.”

And that’s what made Monetate, now a part of Monetate Personalization along with sister technology Certona a natural fit for the organization. As a long-standing client, Destination XL and its sister brands have run more than 1,800 marketing optimization campaigns.

“Monetate has enabled us to keep our optimization strategy moving forward,” says Nigrelli. “It’s helped ensure we never slow down when it comes to delivering the experience that keeps our customers coming back. Monetate has helped us accelerate our testing and optimization culture online.”



Knowledge and Innovation Drive Customer Satisfaction

The key to effective online marketing is understanding what customers want in context and responding to that information seamlessly, creating a purchasing experience that makes visitors feel as if their needs are understood and met from the first click.

CASE STUDY 1: PROMOTING THE SIZE-PROFILE FEATURE

When it comes to knowing what customers want, Destination XL responds to the needs of the shopper while addressing their pain points.

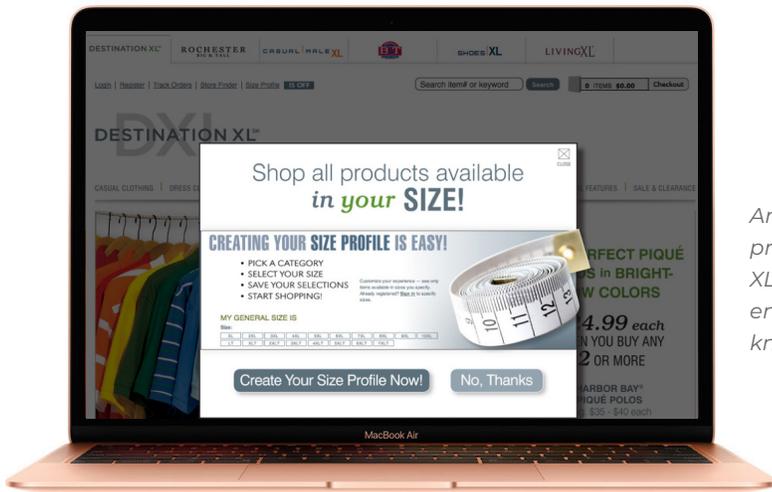
“Our business is size-related,” says Nigrelli. “And one of the biggest frustrations for our customers is being able to find a product in their size. They’ve told us loud and clear in the past that their frustration with shopping online is visiting a product page only to find out that their size isn’t available in a specific color.”

The forward-thinking company had already offered a size-profile feature on its website, which allowed customers to enter their size information and then ensure the website would only show the products available in their sizes. Then, data about the feature revealed an interesting trend.

We saw conversion rates from visitors using the size-profile tool was greater than those who were not,” says Nigrelli. “We also saw overall customer satisfaction was higher for those customers when we looked through our post-purchase survey data.”

The size-profile feature was fantastic, and customers loved it. The problem: Not enough visitors were taking advantage of the size-profile feature, and Destination XL knew it had to make the option more prominent on its website.





An eye-catching lightbox promotes Destination XL's size-profile feature, ensuring more visitors know about the option.

Whenever we need anything, whether it's after hours or even on the weekends, a member of the Monetate team is always there for us. That's something you don't necessarily get from other vendors.

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Leveraging Monetate, Destination XL deployed a targeted lightbox campaign, alerting visitors about the size-profile feature and urging them to create a profile. Monetate made it easy to add the feature to the website without adding code to the page. The lightbox said "Shop all products available in your size!" and explained how easy it was to fill out the profile.

Once the profile was completed, visitors could save it for future visits to the website, enabling Destination XL to ensure they'd only see products relevant and available to them.

The result: More customers are using the size-profile tool, and Destination XL is seeing extremely positive results on key performance indicators for those visitors.

Location in Context: Making It Easy to Find and Buy Relevant Products

A big part of knowing customers better is understanding where they are, as well as the environment around them. Location in context plays a major part in consumer behavior, particularly the purchasing decisions made based on current and forecasted weather conditions.

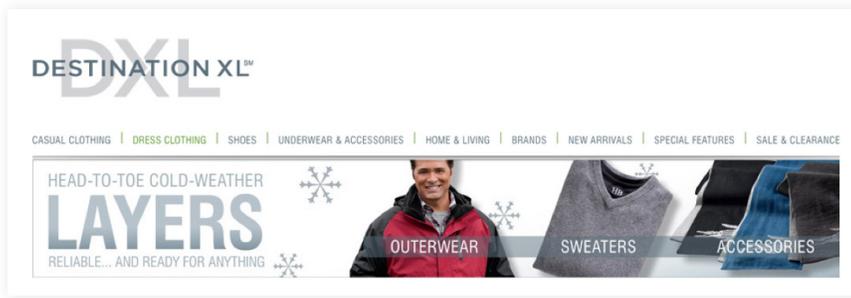
CASE STUDY 2: COLD AND WARM-WEATHER GEOTARGETING PAYS OFF

Destination XL relies on Monetate's powerful weather targeting to make sure it highlights the most relevant offers and products to website visitors.

"Going into the winter months, we make sure that when the temperature drops below a certain temperature for customers, we promote and reinforce our cold-weather products," says Nigrelli. "Customers react to the weather. If it's cold, they want a jacket or sweaters. And rather than making our customers click through categories to find those products, we can promote them prominently on various pages within the site."

Destination XL also uses weather targeting when temperatures heat up, taking advantage of the opportunity to promote warm-weather apparel, like t-shirts or polos. One cold-weather targeting campaign promoted "Head-to-toe cold-weather layers," while a warm-weather campaign called out, "It feels like spring! Shop these warm-weather styles now!"





A winter weather targeting campaign promotes outerwear and sweaters when temperatures drop for Destination XL customers, based on their location.

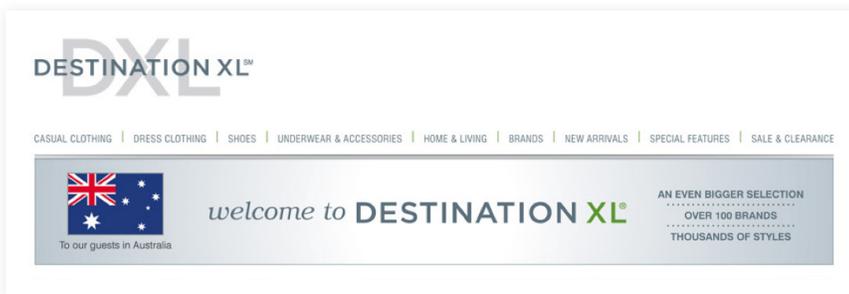
“Looking at our cold-weather and warm-weather campaigns, we clearly see a positive impact,” he says. “For an apparel company, the ability to create and run campaigns that are targeted to customers in specific regions experiencing certain weather in real time has been very productive.”

The result: Making it easier for customers to find and buy the products they need in real time has improved performance and provides a relevant shopping experience.

CASE STUDY 3: DELIVERING AN INTERNATIONAL WELCOME

International visitors are increasingly becoming a lucrative customer segment for websites to win over, as their average order values and overall spend are often higher than their American counterparts.

As a global leader in apparel for larger sized men, Destination XL attracts visitors from all over the world. To keep the experience personalized, Destination XL leverages Monetate to create dynamic messages for those visitors who landed on the homepage, using their IP address to determine where they were visiting from and welcome, for example, guests from Australia.



Destination XL leverages geotargeting to welcome international visitors from their specific countries, creating a personalized, relevant experience.

Using Data-Based Decisions to Understand Customer Needs

Data-backed decisions are often what separates successful companies from those that aren't capitalizing on their online presence. Without data, it's hard to know your customer. For Destination XL, data-backed decisions are a critical part of the company's success, and that's where Monetate has been an asset.

“We've found over the years through testing different features and campaigns that what you expect doesn't always turn out to be right,” says Nigrelli. “So it's critical to validate your hypothesis with actual results.”



Nigrelli points to Monetate's easy-to-understand and real-time analytics as a key factor in answering important internal questions about the best features and campaigns to offer visitors.

CASE STUDY 4: LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS AND RESPONDING

One example of analytics driving business decisions: Destination XL launched a test to determine how visitors preferred to see products displayed on category pages.

The test was a three-way split: One group of visitors saw products displayed three across, one group saw products displayed four across, while another group saw products grouped by "sub-departments."

"Many of us thought grouping products into sub-departments on the department page would be the most effective, and generate the greatest ROI," says Nigrelli.

"We thought it would be an effective way to take customers into sub-departments so they could browse. But we found the three across was the winner."

In fact, there was an increase in conversion and add-to-cart rate for visitors who saw products displayed three across.

Allowing the customer to "tell" Destination XL what worked best through data and behavior means the company can not only solve internal debates about what's the most effective, but the company can truly understand its customers with the metrics and analytics to support those decisions.

"This is one of those perfect examples where you think one thing is going to happen, but then customers do something else," says Nigrelli. "Without Monetate and the data it offered us, we wouldn't have known what our customers actually wanted."

Leveraging the Client Success Team to Uncover Wins

Beyond using Monetate to turn customer insights into personalized experiences, Destination XL relies on the Monetate Client Success team for support in its digital marketing strategies. Thanks to regular calls and around-the-clock support, the relationship between Destination XL and the Monetate Client Success Team has not only benefitted the company, but also its customers.

"I give Monetate's Client Success team five stars," says Nigrelli. "The Client Success team has been one of the best partners we've had, in terms of flexibility, collaboration, and responsiveness. The team does a great job of supporting us and our initiatives. Whenever we need anything, whether it's after hours or even on the weekends, a member of the team is always there for us. That's something you don't necessarily get from other vendors."

Nigrelli says the relationship with Destination XL's Client Success team is just part of what makes the company's relationship with Monetate so beneficial.

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Just as clothing isn't one size fits all for Destination XL's customers, neither is the company's website. And Destination XL plans to continue ensuring that each visitor receives the most relevant, personalized experience possible.



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