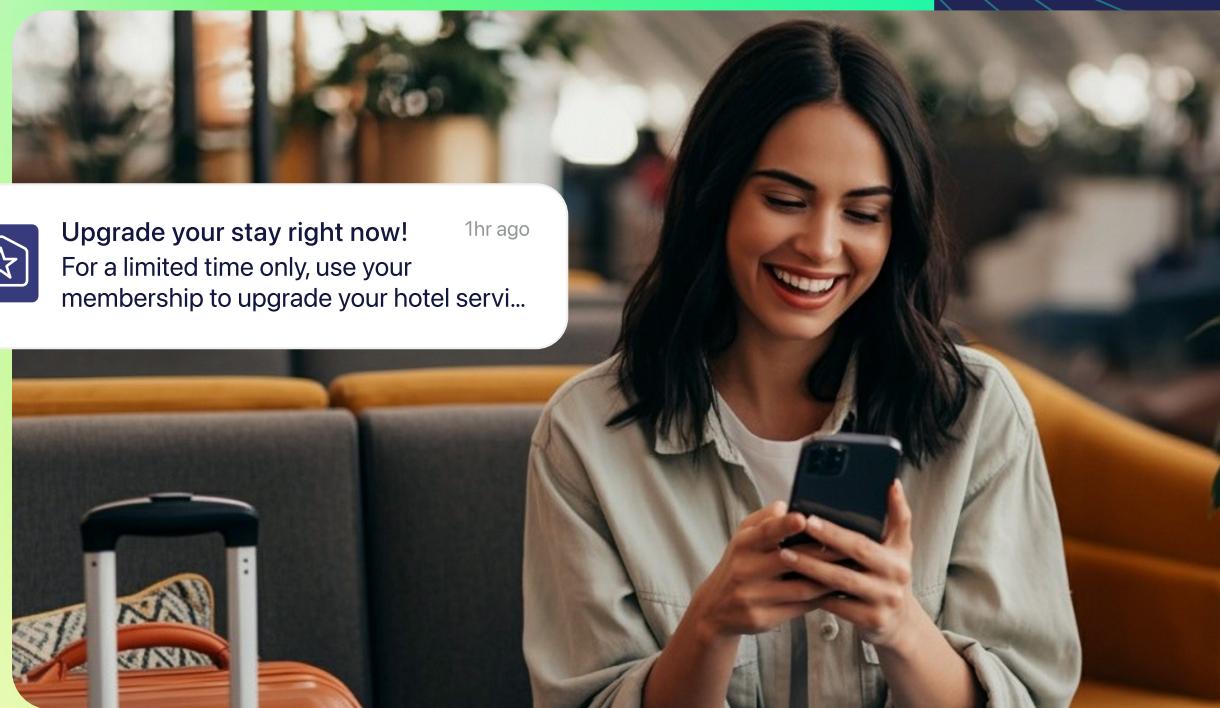




DESTINATION LOYALTY

Creating lasting connections in travel and hospitality

How advanced analytics create seamless journeys and long-term engagement

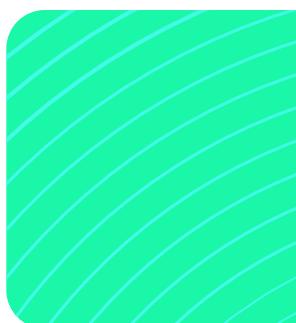
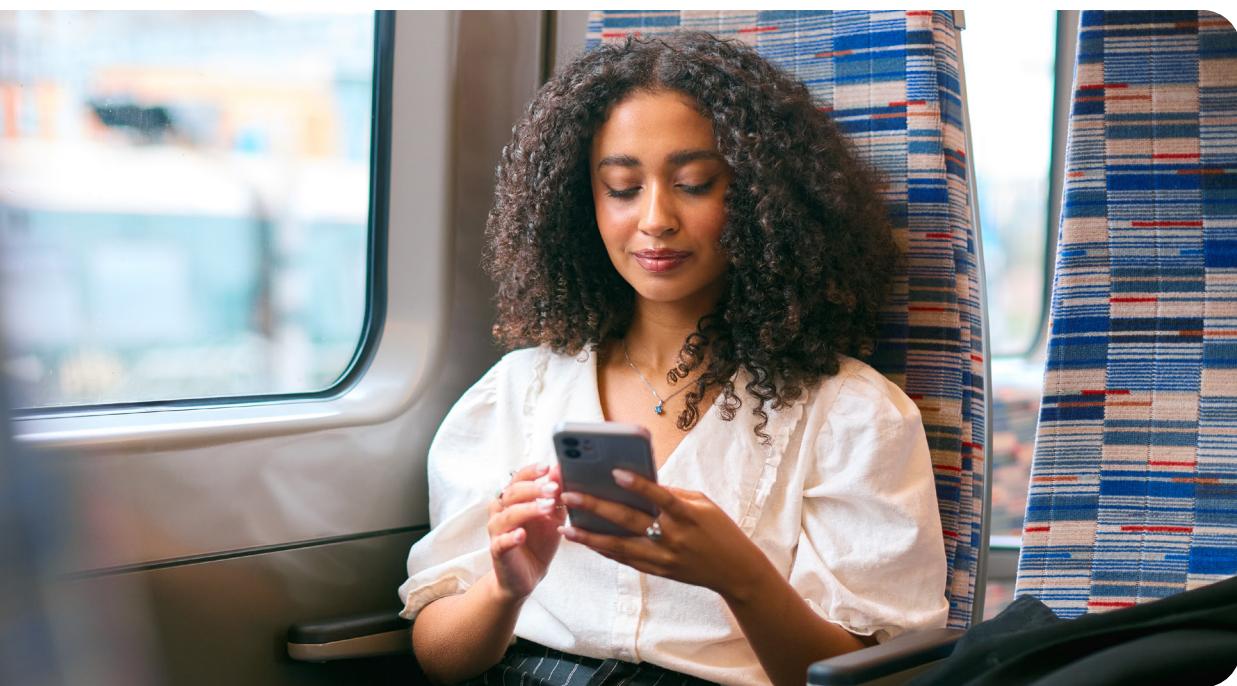




The travel and hospitality industry thrives on moments that matter – transforming transactional and price-sensitive customers to loyal, life-long guests.

But those moments don't happen by chance. They are built through seamless experiences, personalized touchpoints, and data-driven strategies.

This book explores how travel and hospitality brands can leverage modern marketing technologies to craft journeys that resonate. From behavior-driven personalization to optimizing cross-channel engagement, discover actionable insights that will help your brand address key challenges and convert one-time bookings into lasting relationships. Explore strategies that can prevent cart abandonment, scale mobile marketing, and build trust through loyalty programs.





A suite of challenges faces travel and hospitality

Brands are having to navigate rapid change, as customer behaviors shift, competitive pressure mounts, and fast-evolving technology continues to present both opportunities and distinct challenges.

In this industry, a brand's customer-facing communication channels, including websites, advertising, mobile apps, and social media are the best ways to attract potential customers. But getting customers to make the actual reservation is where you win or lose them – potentially forever.

This makes it critical to have a reservation system that can offer a seamless digital journey. Any struggle with a reservation interface and the customer can simply abandon, causing your brand to lose business to a competitor. And with customers engaging in price comparisons, brands need to be able to quickly alert potential customers to the lowest deal opportunities.

To encourage conversions, brands need to offer customers the simplest possible journey from browsing to booking, whether it's on a PC, tablet, or smartphone. But making each interface work simply, seamlessly, and reliably is a major challenge. First, brands need enough chances to ask for customer data to keep them engaged and pull them through the entire customer journey across the customer's lifecycle. Then, brands need to offer a seamless journey across platforms so that someone browsing on their phone at home can easily complete their booking process later in the day from their laptop.



And while this can be a challenge, it's an experience today's customers have come to expect.

To make the experience engaging for customers, brands must be able to gather data at important touchpoints that can help them hyper personalize it, while making the experience as efficient as possible, and keep customers coming back for more. While there are many digital challenges facing the travel industry, most of them boil down to how well brands will be able to immediately capitalize on the moments that matter with their customers.



MarTech has a role to play in the solution

Travel and hospitality brands need more control over their data and visibility into their customers to create, automate, and optimize personalized journeys that drive growth and lifetime customer value. By creating personalized, behavior-based journeys at every stage of the lifecycle, brands can send relevant offers, recommendations, or notifications that don't just meet customers' needs but anticipate them – ensuring customers complete their purchase and return the next time they're thinking about making a booking.

When selecting MarTech solutions, start by prioritizing tools that address your brand's immediate customer engagement needs. A unified customer engagement platform can often help avoid data silos and enable seamless cross-channel campaigns. Here are some key offerings to look for in a unified customer engagement platform:

01. Data collection: With audiences engaging across different devices and browsers, brands struggle to form a holistic view of their customers. Brands increasingly need a platform that can support cross-channel data collection and provide real-time insights into viewer behavior and preferences to offer customers maximum value.

02. Behavior and intent-driven personalization: To speak to your customers' interests, it's essential to have a view of their behavioral signals as well as a means of acting on that information.

Delivering at scale is a challenge that requires a platform with native customer data activation. This way, you can use customer behavioral signals to craft personalized campaigns that address your customers' needs and encourage them to convert. And this activation starts with segmenting your audiences based on their behaviors and setting up triggers to deliver the right message in a timely manner – all without the help of a data team. Customer engagement platforms need to provide tools for optimizing content recommendations and timing as well as predictive insights to help determine the best engagement strategies.

03. Automated journey orchestration: Analytics must be able to quickly react to trending destinations, audience sentiment, and the performance of various deals, bundles, or offers. Traditional methods can be too slow, missing time-sensitive opportunities to engage. Use a platform that enables you to trigger timely messages as customer intent rises or drops, or when behaviors change.



For example, if a customer didn't finish filling out a hotel booking form because the payment processing didn't work, then send the customer a promotion in real time to encourage them to complete the purchase and make up for the poor experience on your website. Or, if another customer didn't finish filling out a flight booking even after everything worked smoothly, in three days send the customer a reminder email or a push notification if they were using mobile.

04. Data privacy and compliance: The rise of data privacy regulations (GDPR, CCPA) impacts how brands collect, store, and use customer data. Compliance is especially complex when handling international audiences, and brands need a robust platform that ensures data security and adherence to regional regulations.





How to build a loyal, life-long customer base

Data lays the groundwork for creating a personalized, 1:1 experience for your customers

As a travel brand, you need to ensure that you have the most relevant and up-to-date data before engaging in communications. However, marketers across industries are challenged with gathering customer data and making it actionable. To get the full picture of your customers, go beyond external sources. For brands that want to boost engagement and loyalty, using first-and zero-party data that customers are willing to share will offer better insight into how to best engage with those customers at any point in their journey. The right MarTech tools can help you leverage this data effectively to increase revenue growth and customer retention.

Equipped with zero- and first-party data, you'll have a better understanding of the touchpoints customers already had with your brand, especially as the purchase and reservation experience is no longer linear. Most customers now expect a singular experience that is tailored to their needs across all the channels they interact with. Leveraging your MarTech stack to personalize communications and create a consistent experience is key. And, choosing a MarTech platform that enables you to leverage that data with less effort, fewer resources, and no additional technical dependencies is paramount.

Zero-party data: Capturing zero-party data along your customers' journey can help keep customers engaged, as it enables marketers to provide personalized experiences that add value for the customer. Setting up a preference center is a customer-friendly way to collect valuable zero-party data, from the essentials like a customer's first name, location, or date of birth, all the way to specifics like travel destinations each customer is interested in, when they prefer to be contacted, how often, and on what channel.

First-party data: This data collected directly from a brand's owned channels, like websites, email, SMS, or mobile push is critical for creating a reliable, compliant, and effective customer engagement strategy. With first-party data, marketers gain an understanding of the full customer journey with increased control and flexibility. This can enable them to act in real time and deepen personalization efforts. First-party data can be used to bring your campaigns to the next level so you can:

- Identify high value and priority customers
- Send your offers to the right audience at the right time using dynamic content
- Target effectively using behavioral and intent data
- See which customers are at risk of dropping out of the journey



Segmentation and personalization power targeted engagement

Segmentation and personalization are critical tools for building stronger connections with customers, driving engagement, and ultimately, boosting revenue. Effective segmentation allows you to create relevant, personalized experiences by grouping customers based on shared attributes like demographics, behaviors, or interests.

For travel and hospitality brands, advanced segmentation can go beyond demographics, factoring in engagement levels, purchasing habits, and intent signals. This approach enables you to tailor content, recommendations, and promotions to meet specific customer needs, driving deeper connections and higher engagement.

For example, segment your audience into groups like “frequent travelers,” “summer vacationers,” “window shopper,” or “buying window is within 30 days.” Then, personalize offers and reminders accordingly and send them to the appropriate segments to maximize impact. Using personalization, your brand can create customized offers and experiences that will suit an individual’s specific preferences or behaviors — an essential step if you’re looking to elevate your customer engagement.

Once you’ve segmented your audience and sent personalized messages based on their interests, this audience will start to show differences in their behavior. When those differences in intent become apparent – like which destination they may want to book – you trigger a new set of messages to the sub-groups to bring them through the customer journey.

...And behavioral insights enable you to turn data into action

Behavioral insights help you understand how customers interact with your brand in real time, allowing you to engage with precision. For example, if a potential customer viewed a trip, then abandoned the search or reservation while using a mobile device, you could leverage this knowledge to orchestrate their journey. Send an offer, such as extra points or a special discount, to them via email or SMS to encourage the customer to return and complete the reservation. That extra incentive could save a sale that would otherwise be lost.

Another opportunity would be sending upcoming stay reminders, what to expect, or possible activities, in a tailored format to the channel the customer engages with most like email, for example. The more data you’ve gathered, the more specific and enticing your suggestions can be.





Real-time data can help you power these next-level personalization and behavioral efforts

Real-time insights let brands understand and react to audience interests immediately, whether it's an all-inclusive offer, spring break deal, or summer excursion exclusive. By tailoring recommendations and promotions based on up-to-the-minute preferences and a customer's preferred frequency of communication, brands can keep audiences engaged with relevant, timely content, even as a customer's interest shifts.

There are numerous ways travel and hospitality brands can leverage **real-time data**. For example, if a customer is having issues with their booking and speaking to customer support, behavior analytics could help the team guide them more effectively.

Another example would be ensuring your brand updates customers in real time when a change occurs that will affect their experience. Building loyalty means providing timely updates and communications to customers on the channels they use most. When it comes to travel, unexpected changes in an itinerary can be frustrating enough, but if there's a significant change or last-minute cancellation that you have not immediately made clear, then the result could be unhappy customers.



To succeed, leverage cohesive customer data management tools

Since many marketers have customer data pulling from numerous sources, consolidating that data to paint one clear picture of your customers is often a challenge. Choose MarTech tools that consolidate that data from various sources so that you gain a comprehensive view of each customer. Layer in behavioral and intent data along with real-time events to gain a nuanced understanding of your customers, beyond their demographics and purchase history, so you can make data-driven decisions and tailor your marketing strategies to match their needs.

Real-time customer data management capabilities are part of the **Acoustic Connect** platform. Powered by Snowflake, Acoustic Connect helps to eliminate data silos, giving marketers a comprehensive view of the customer, including marketing signals, behavior, and intent – all natively within a single platform.



A powerful customer engagement platform provides you with automation capabilities that can improve the productivity of your team, reduce the amount of effort it takes to launch and monitor campaigns, and reach your audience with real-time communications. A customer engagement platform can also help you understand which touchpoints and channels prove to be most effective and profitable for each audience segment. Using cross-channel journey automation and creation, marketers can manage and realize ROI more effortlessly without dedicated external resources, no matter the size of your team.





To outperform competitors, brands need to bring their A-game across all channels and touchpoints

Connecting with customers across channels is only valuable if these experiences are consistent and seamless. To create the optimal customer experience, it's important to reduce levels of friction and frustration that can stop customers from converting. For example, constantly giving customers the same pop-up window across your website is not an ideal experience and can lead to frustration which may prevent sales.

Credibility, usability, appearance, and intuitiveness are critical on digital channels. A sale can be lost if the booking process isn't clear or becomes frustrating. For example, if customers must re-enter their credit card at checkout or if their session keeps expiring despite having logged in.

But technology solutions offering centralized data – including behavioral data – can help you provide a more consistent experience. When you have this 360-degree view of your customers, you can more accurately manage each customer's interactions across the journey with better-timed messaging and engagement. In the end, customers have a more seamless experience with your brand throughout their entire journey.

Establishing a cross-channel experience

You need to reach your customers using methods that match how they want to engage with you at different points in their journey. But when reaching your customers, your messages won't convert if you aren't delivering the right message, on the right channel, at the right time. And to achieve that, your **tech stack needs to work together**. It's not enough for your AdTech to launch digital advertisements across the web nor is it enough for MarTech to launch campaigns on each channel or for your website/app to be optimized from a technical perspective. You need a connected tech stack that relays the product or service information, messaging, segmentation, and more across each campaign that goes live.

By optimizing the journey based on customer needs, preferences, intent, and behavior, marketers can create brand-consistent customer experiences across all channels. Tools that enable marketers to build these cross-channel campaigns on one unified platform can accelerate this process; **AI can boost your productivity** efforts and enhance creativity; and predictive analytics can enable any marketer to advance their personalization efforts with fewer dependencies.



Don't fall short in the last mile: Every detail counts

When you invest so much in providing the best customer experience, don't fall short before the finish line. Because there is so much competing for your customers' attention, every detail counts and the experience needs to be seamless and effortless, so your customer makes the purchase or takes action — and comes back again in the future. While purchasing travel and hospitality experiences is exciting for many customers, it is also a cost, so any level of frustration or difficulty could send customers away.

Imagine, for example, your customer tries to enter an offer code to get an extra night of their hotel stay at a discounted rate — but the checkout won't successfully apply the discount, and the customer abandons their cart in frustration. With real-time data, brands can recover the situation by becoming immediately aware of the problem, fixing it, and re-targeting those customers with a message notifying them the problem is fixed or offering an even better discount to encourage them to complete the purchase.

Adding any additional friction to the experience could cause a brand to lose customers. For example, imagine as a customer checking out, the website keeps making them login even though they don't want to, or keeps prompting them with a message encouraging them to sign up for something they aren't interested in. Customers could get frustrated and easily abandon their cart.

Even after customers make their bookings, a combination of email, SMS, and mobile push can help them stay up to date with their itinerary and use it conveniently during their trip.



Mobile marketing can also benefit your brand and the customers you serve beyond purchase updates — in fact, a mobile-driven strategy can transform how your brand engages with customers all along the customer journey. Ultimately, building loyalty and engagement doesn't end at checkout and the experience needs to continue throughout the customer's entire journey with your brand.



Marketing to your customers with SMS

The first part of any successful SMS strategy is to have a mobile audience large enough to realize your goals. To build your mobile marketing list, apply the following strategies:

- **Market your SMS program everywhere**

For example, include a prompt to sign-up for text updates when a customer completes an online purchase. You can also market your program via email, mobile apps, and social media, reaching customers on each channel they engage with.

- **Give customers a good reason to sign up**

Let them know the benefits of signing up by offering promotions, discounts, personalized recommendations, early access, exclusive offers, or loyalty program bonuses. Clearly communicate these benefits with your sign-up message. You could even offer a bonus promotion just for signing up.

- **Ensure you gain consent**

Many customers view phone numbers as a much more personal piece of information than an email address. But even beyond perceptions, it's legally required to gain consent. Be aware of the local laws in the regions where you operate to ensure compliance.

Once you have a sizable list, you can begin seeing higher ROI on your SMS campaigns. There are a few basic best practices to be aware of as you begin implementing this strategy:

 **Keep it concise**

One or two sentences to get your message across is plenty. The best texts are those that are simple and easy to scan, particularly when customers are so busy.

 **Focus your audience by only using one link or CTA**

Clickability is an asset in SMS messaging and accidentally tapping the wrong link can be a frustrating experience. Similarly, because SMS messages are typically short, you don't want to confuse your audience by asking them to take multiple actions.

 **Timing and frequency are everything**

Since text messages are typically read within minutes, you'll want the message to coincide with the action you're hoping the recipient will take.



Leverage automation

Using SMS messages that are triggered based on a time sequence, account change, or behavioral event are critical to creating highly relevant, efficient mobile marketing campaigns.

Don't overuse SMS

It's important not to bombard your customers with marketing text messages. A safe rule of thumb is between two and four texts per month. With text messaging, it's easy to opt-out quickly — usually it only takes one "STOP" response from a customer. You don't want to over-text your customers, prompting them to opt-out of your program.

Each channel has its strengths and weaknesses, so it's important to understand why your customers would want to engage with your brand through SMS. Brands shouldn't treat SMS and email the same way. SMS has advantages when trying to convey timely information that can't be missed, for example notifying customers of a new ticket price to a destination they prefer. Be strategic when using this channel, if the communications you share are relevant, timely, and personalized, the customer experience will be positive, encouraging more customer loyalty.

Upgrade your upcoming flight for free now for a limited time!

Hi there! Don't forget to finish booking your hotel stay. These vacation packages won't last much longer: link.travelhotel.com

Your next adventure awaits. Book your flight and hotel stay together using the code: BUNDLE.

FLT 39: You have been moved off the standby list! Enjoy the flight.





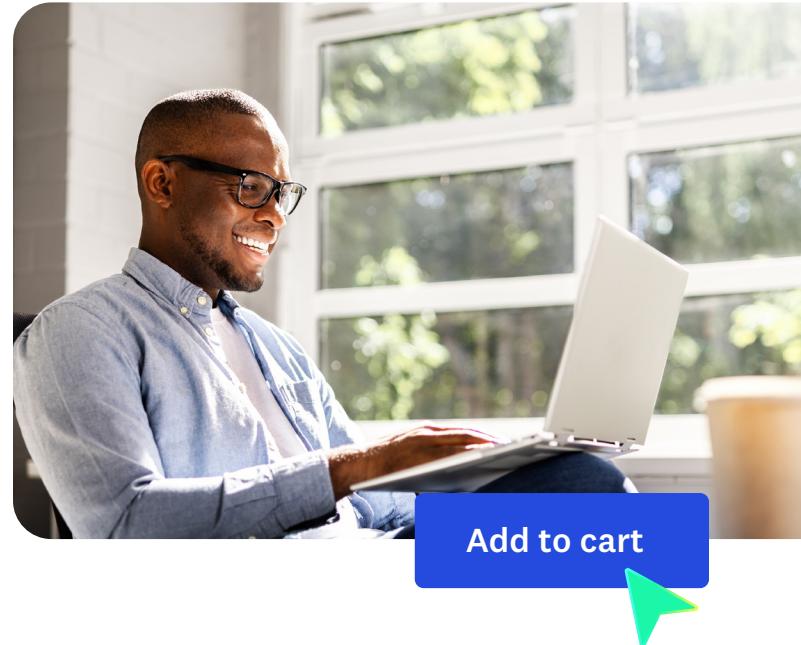
Conquering cart and browse abandonment and customer churn

With so many touchpoints, from so many possible platforms, frustrations can arise at any point. Communications can link to webpages with unavailable dates, bad QR codes, confusing booking forms, or misleading calls-to-action.

The challenge is to find out what went wrong so you can fix the problem. And what's needed is a way to see the exact points where each customer abandoned in full context. What were they looking at before they made the decision to buy? What's really happening behind the scenes in your IT environment that's causing errors? What was the customer seeing and doing when they left? By looking at the customer's journey, you can spot trends and see where bounce rates are highest.

Customers may churn or drop usage for several reasons, but only with deep behavioral and predictive analytics can you uncover the true reasons for cart and browse abandonment and win them back. From an unclear interface to buttons not working, attempted fraudsters (in some cases, click bots), or the customer simply not being ready to buy yet, it's critical to dive deep into the online behaviors so you can optimize the experience. Not all abandonment should be treated the same.

Access to **behavioral data** can help answer questions when brands see patterns from their customers. These insights provide an opportunity to deliver more impactful, targeted campaigns, and opportunities for engagement, leveraging a deeper understanding of customers. First-party behavioral data that



includes intent signals can help brands identify which customers need more time or need immediate attention so you can deliver timely and relevant messaging that matches their current experience. The abandonment message will be different based on whether they've abandoned their cart because they are price-sensitive buyers or if they couldn't complete the process because the page wasn't loading.

When brands understand intent, they can enable more successful cross-market and up-market opportunities based on the changes of a customer's level of engagement and product interest changes at any point in the customer journey. For example, brands can offer content, services, or products based on a customer's engagement score with the brand's platform or site. This data-driven personalization gets marketers closer to 1:1 marketing, all in **real time**.



Build customer relationships that last

Acoustic Connect is a customer engagement platform that empowers brands with deeper customer insights as well as the ability to easily create and deliver highly personalized campaigns and experiences. As a result, marketers can infuse their customer journeys with deep personalization, engage with customers in the moment, and drive customer loyalty.

[Learn more today](#)

