

# Waitrose Drives 66.8% Engagement Lift Using AI Experience



**+66%** engagement lift

UK grocer Waitrose is famous for their personal and immersive in-store experience. Monetate helps them bring that individualization to their online customers, too.

## Unforgettable In-Store Experiences

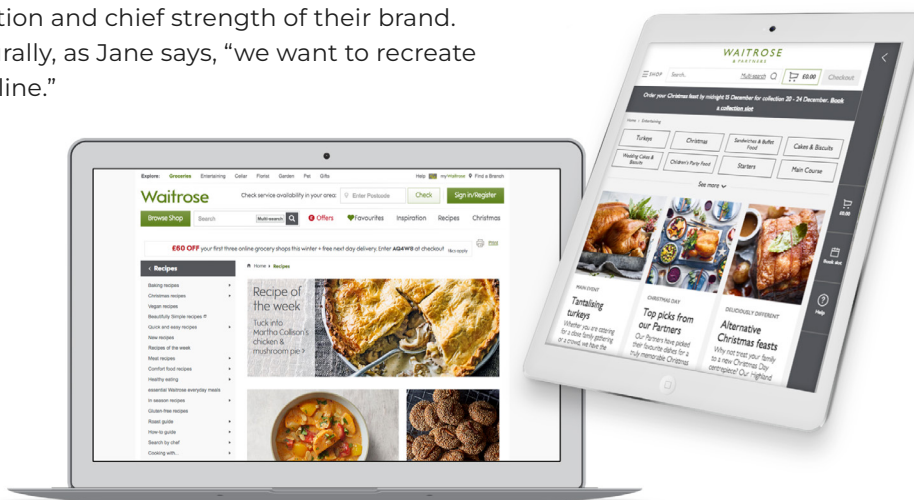
Supermarket chain Waitrose & Partners is a division of John Lewis Partnership, the largest employee-owned retailer in the United Kingdom. Known for the quality of their products, high standards of customer service, and ethical sourcing, Waitrose has over 350 shops in the United Kingdom and exports products to 52 countries. The brand has been using Monetate for four years: they currently have one of the highest adoption rates among Monetate customers and are engaging with every part of the platform.

Waitrose prides itself on the care that they invest in their in-store experience, which is designed to elevate the task of grocery shopping from a chore to an immersive and enjoyable journey. "Customers love shopping in Waitrose stores because they come away inspired; it's a richer experience," shares Jane Godfrey, Digital Optimisation Manager at Waitrose. "They know they can ask any of the partners who work there for advice, recommendations or knowledge, and they'll receive personalized service instantly." That experience has become the foundation and chief strength of their brand. So naturally, as Jane says, "we want to recreate that online."



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**JANE GODFREY**  
Digital Optimisation  
Manager, Waitrose



## Encouraging Exploration

Many users from across the globe regularly interact with the brand through the content they offer on their website. This means that the site must serve several audiences with different goals, all while reinforcing the Waitrose brand identity as a trusted source of premium products and experiences. As explained by Jane, their goal isn't to rush visitors straight through the site to the checkout page. Instead, she shares, "just as we encourage our customers to spend time exploring in-store, we want them to spend time on the website browsing around and exploring our products rather than getting quickly in and out. We are looking to drive engagement."

One of the most popular features of the Waitrose site is the recipes page, in which the brand shares recipes along different themes such as "Quick and Easy", "Comfort Food," and "Healthy Ideas." The various categories have all been shown to appeal to Waitrose customers, but they carry very different context and message: choosing the right content to capture a visitor's attention is essential, especially on the homepage where page real estate is at a premium. The marketing team began exploring which contextual factors would be most influential in determining the best recipe to display to each customer. "That's where Monetate came in," Jane reports, "and suggested that Individual Fit Experiences [now Automated Personalization] would be the perfect way to test this. Instead of us trying to decide which customer should see which type of recipe, why not let the machine decide?"



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## Automated Personalization Serves Up the Right Recipes


The team set up an initial test on the recipe page to see whether AI could help drive engagement by selecting optimal content for each visitor. The experience was targeted to the entire audience using default context and additional CRM data, with a goal metric of driving clicks. They saw results right away: the Automated Personalization Experience drove a lift of 6.21%, with 98.6% certainty that the Automated Personalization Experience was performing better than a control group that had received random recipe assignment. Once the initial results had given them confidence, the team elected to move the experience to the homepage in order to drive click-throughs to the recipe page.

Engagement exploded. When exposed to the heavy traffic of the homepage, the recipes experience saw a lift of 66.8%, with 99.9% certainty that the Automated Personalization Experience was better than random assignment.



## Timely is as Important as Tasty

The boost in click-through rate was already a big win for the team, but there were further benefits to be had: seeing which factors had been influential in picking the right recipe provided valuable audience insights. They learned that customer data points such as family income, population density, and shopper's OS were influential in recipe selection. The team was also surprised to learn that day of the week was one of the most important factors. "On a Monday or a Tuesday the healthy recipes were much more popular. At the end of the week people are more likely to be planning a dinner party, treating themselves, or enjoying a night in in front of the TV—but at the beginning of the week they're being healthy and virtuous again. It does make sense now that we know it, but we wouldn't have made that

  
**6.21%**  
lift in trial experience  
on recipe page



guess if the test hadn't shown those results. There were also other correlations that we can't explain, but we trust the machine to use them as part of the decision." Jane shares that the weekday discovery was "an eye opener," and valuable because it will be easy for them to incorporate into their future content planning. "We would not have made that discovery without AI, and we plan to do a lot with it going forward."

As Jane puts it, the value of these additional insights is that they can augment existing knowledge and testing strategies: "If we're targeting younger, busy people who live in London, for example, we now know that they are more likely to want quick and easy products and recipes. It's another layer that we can add on to our knowledge of our customers."

## Scaling Up the Success

Despite their extensive use of the platform, Jane expresses that "we still feel like we've only just tapped into the benefits that Monetate can bring. We'd like to do a lot more." The results from their initial Automated Personalization Experience have given the team confidence that AI can help them deliver an online customer experience that meets the brand's in-store standards. "We want to be able to provide our customers with relevant content and product suggestions in the same way they could ask a partner in store for advice, for example at the butcher's counter." We can deliver some of that personal feeling with the quality of our content and products, but AI allows us to scale up and automate so that we can give more of our customers that richer experience. And Monetate is the partner that we trust to help us achieve that."



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# 66.8%

lift in trial  
experience roll out  
on homepage

