Building an End-to-End Online Shopping Experience
Albertsons is aiming to provide a consistent and distinctive omnichannel customer experience, both in-store and through digital channels. As one of the first grocery stores to start online delivery back in the 2000s, Albertsons has always been ahead of the curve when it comes to eCommerce.

Now as they consider the grocery industry today, Albertsons is thinking beyond speed and convenience. They want to inspire their customers on what to cook for dinner, offer them multiple ways to shop, and serve up personalized, relevant content wherever they can.

Albertsons are also looking to meet the demand as increasingly more people are shifting their grocery shopping online. "We believe online grocery is going to explode in the coming years," shares Shanti Vellanki, "so we're investing heavily in eCommerce and our digital capabilities."

Shanti Vellanki is the IT Director at Albertsons, one of the largest parent-run retailers in the USA averaging 34 million customers per week. Shanti is responsible for the entire search and browse experience for Albertsons, including the digital catalog, product recommendations, sponsored ads and search. He's also heading this project to transform Albertsons' online shopping experience.

**Site Search as a Basket Builder**

Starting with the existing data, Shanti realized the poor quality of search results in terms of accuracy and relevance. This naturally contributed to the high bounce rates Albertsons was also experiencing. Shanti wanted to turn this around by elevating the customer experience and increasing basket size.

Central to this transformation was site search. "We clearly see that nearly 50% of our eCommerce online is attributed to search," Shanti points out. He goes on to compare that "while the in-store shopping experience starts with preparing a list and knowing which aisle to go for each item, the online shopping experience starts with search. For eCommerce, whether they're new or returning customers, site search is actually the primary tool for building baskets and conversion."

Shanti saw an opportunity with product search and browse solutions to reduce the time it takes to build a basket, increase basket size, and lift conversion rates. After opting for Bloomreach Search & Merchandising (brSM), "We clearly saw huge improvements," reveals Shanti, "it's more than a search box. brSM powers our whole search and browse experience on our eCommerce site."
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- Shanti Vellanki, IT Director, Albertsons

Delighting Customers with Relevant Search Results

As well as delighting customers with precise, relevant search results, Shanti could offer them personalized search results and product recommendations, powered by Bloomreach algorithms.

From Shanti's point of view, the effects of a sophisticated site search were clear. "We saw a massive impact," he admits, "brSM is a huge value add to the overall shopping experience. The improved quality of search results increased customer satisfaction and engagement."

Shanti continues, "We can also see from the data that customers are able to find products and add them to cart much faster with brSM. Overall, our basket-building speed went up by over 25% since implementing brSM."

Shanti has also worked on improving other areas of the shopping experience to lift customer satisfaction. For example, he's implemented a product filtering system that sorts by discounts and manufacturers' coupons.

The Albertsons eCommerce team can also take a more data-driven approach to merchandising. "Now our merchandisers have better visibility and control in regard to search queries and how they can tune results," shares Shanti.

What's Next for Albertsons?

Next on the list of innovations, Shanti is working with Bloomreach on integrating recommendations based on shopping history. Customers will be able to build their cart faster with product suggestions based on the purchases they've made over the last couple of months. He also unveiled that Albertsons is looking into powering a menu and recipe search, linking individual ingredients to a dish using the same technology.

"We're working on various initiatives that focus on improving the overall online shopping experience end-to-end," outlines Shanti, "it's not just about groceries, it's about loyalty and focusing on the recipes rather than the ingredients to make people's lives easier."

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- Shanti Vellanki
Bloomreach Search and Merchandising (brSM) offers a set of algorithms and advanced merchandising tools so that commerce businesses, like Albertsons, can fully optimize each visitor’s search, browse and landing page experiences. Learn more at Bloomreach.com

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+5% increase in revenue per visitor
Increase revenue per visitor (RPV) by up to 5% across all devices. Proven best-in-class algorithms improve customer experience, shorten the customer journey, and lift conversion.

+10% search and browse revenue
Boost search and browse revenue by up to 10% in your first year with improved team efficacy. brSM helps merchandisers diagnose problems, find solutions, and prove the impact of their decisions.

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