

Building a Successful Brand

3 Ways to Use Images on Your Ecommerce Site



If you want people to visit your site and stay on it, you need to have compelling and engaging images.

Our brains are hardwired to hone in on visuals: photos and images. The images on your website's homepage need to tell a story.

- Matt Edmundson

Visitors to your site should be drawn in by your images. The words alone will not cut it. How do you explain who your customers are and how they can benefit from your product or service using images.

How can you tell the customer's story visually?

Here are 3 keys:

- The big hero image
- Video
- Customer personas

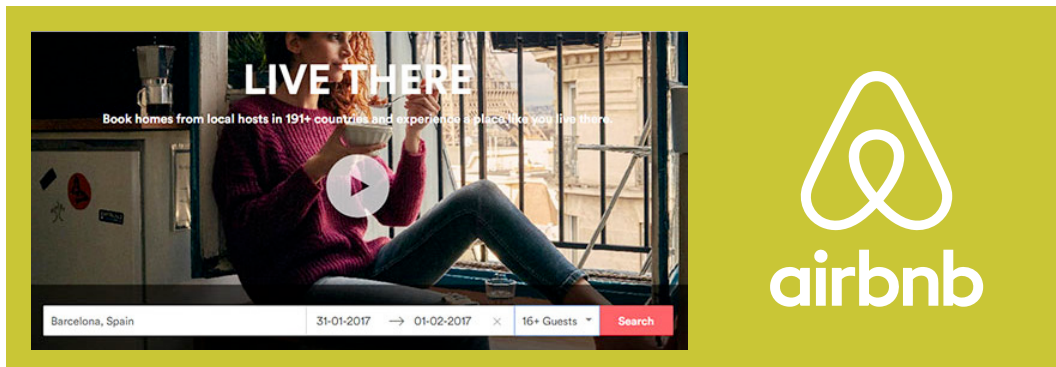
Once you start looking at successful websites you will notice that the majority of them use one of more or the above methods.



1. The Big Hero Image.

I am a little bit in love with Airbnb. Perhaps because my family and I took a family holiday to Italy and stayed in a variety of Airbnb properties. Granted, some were better than others, but the concept is fantastic, as is their website. They have understood the importance of images in telling their story and getting their message across.

Take a look at their homepage.



When you first go onto the site, they have what I would call 'a big hero image': a girl, sitting in a relaxed pose eating something out of a bowl, looking out over a view of a city. She is fairly young and she looks totally at home. Immediately we see their headline and sub-headline in action.

The headline is 'LIVE THERE' and the sub-headline is 'Book homes from local hosts in 191+ countries and experience a place like you live there.'

The big hero image is all about the customer. The customer is the hero. They are central to the story, not the company or the product. The images should show your headline in action. Where possible this should include your customer or your different customer personas.



2. Video.

After a few seconds, Airbnb's big hero image fades away and a video begins to play subtly in the background. The video answers a number of subconscious questions the customer may have and visually explains Airbnb's different customer groups or personas. You see a series of 'experiences' with different customer personas. Initially you see one person knocking on someone's door and being shown in. Then you see a little boy with his dad. The dad is pointing out something of interest to the little boy. Then you see two men going into a property together, they have bags of groceries, as they would at home. Then you see a happy couple walking together through a town, the man is giving the girl a piggyback. You see a range of different ages, ethnicities, family groups and singles. Through their fantastic use of imagery, Airbnb is saying 'we have something for everyone'. The images tell the Airbnb story from the customer's point of view. They are saying 'you can experience another country and another house, as if it is your own home'.

This post is not sponsored by Airbnb (!). However, their site demonstrates how powerful images can be in making your point. The right images create a powerful message, which is both subtle, compelling and engaging.



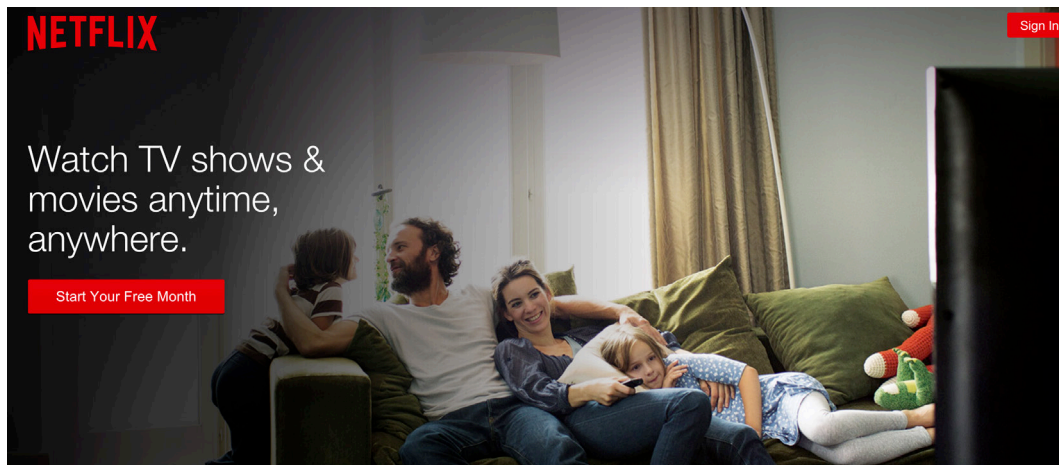
3. Customer personas

Netflix use images to tell the majority of their marketing story. Their website is remarkably simple, yet incredibly powerful:

They have understood their different customer personas.

They created an image for each of those customers.

They subtly rotate those images.



There are four images in total. They rotate, transitioning from one image to another. Each image tells the visitor a different story. As with the headline, the images make the customer the focus. The first image shows children watching TV alone, without their parents. This demonstrates that Netflix is safe for children to view. The next image shows a family snuggled up on the sofa together watching something. The last two shots are of individuals watching Netflix on different devices: tablets and smartphones. The story these images are telling is that Netflix has something for everyone and it can be viewed anywhere on any device. Netflix isn't actually shown in any of the images.

Their brand is strong enough that it doesn't need to be included. Visitors to the site will make the assumption that each different customer is watching Netflix, without even registering that they can't see a Netflix logo or programme on a screen. In this way, Netflix has really made their different customer personas, not themselves and their brand, central to the story.



If you're thinking about starting your own business and want to make it a success from the start, make sure you ask your eCommerce questions in the **Facebook group** or email me at **howdy@mattedmundson.com**

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