sky X

Sky (NowTV, WOW, Sky X) personalizes subscription management for millions of viewers

dynamic yield

sky X

See how Europe's largest media company and pay-TV broadcaster optimized and personalized its subscription management sites for 3 services across 5 regions, reducing churn and creating a more streamlined experience for millions.

Summary

Sky (NowTV, WOW, Sky X) is Europe's largest media company and pay-TV broadcaster, with millions of subscribers across the continent. The business maintains separate sites, one for its streaming content, which houses programming, and another for its membership account pages, where millions of people can sign up or adjust their preferences and subscription plans. The Sky team began its personalization journey with a different tool, but in 2021 they switched to Dynamic Yield to scale their testing, deliver more targeted upsell and re-engagement experiences with advanced audience segmentation, and move faster to deliver more time-sensitive messaging to prospects and customers. The team of 117 users runs over 150+ A/B tests and hundreds more campaigns every year, coordinated across three services (Sky X, WOW, and NowTV) in five regions: the UK, Ireland, Italy, Germany, and Austria.

Results

4.8% uplift

in product tenure from guided experiences targeted to current subscribers

39% decrease

in same-month cancellations as a result of optimizing new subscriber landing pages

13% upsell increase

to combo packages with long-term commitments from guided experiences

140% uplift

from recently-lapsed subscribers when shown limited-time offer messaging

Dynamic Yield allows our team to take risks and launch personalization and experience optimization campaigns quickly and effectively, even without much dev experience or resources. It's how we've scaled and seen success in five regions with three services.

– Adriana Scala, Product Owner: eCommerce Optimisation, Sky

Challenge

In the streaming world, media companies win over the competition by creating urgency for prospects and engaging consistently with customers, two experiences that are most successful when the user sees relevant, personalized content. Sky's subscription plans are divided by content type to appeal to different viewers, allowing consumers to choose the path most relevant to them: Sports (channels), Cinema (films), or Entertainment (TV series). To convert new users and combat churn, Sky uses personalization to deliver an optimized account management page designed to consistently re-engage and create a sense of urgency. This is key to securing new business and continuing to retain and upsell existing users. Capabilities of Experience OS, such as the ability to run a single test across multiple regions and in multiple languages, immediately deployable templates, and a hybrid mix of client-side and server-side campaigns, make Dynamic Yield the right tool for Sky to deliver these experiences and reap impressive results.

Execution

### Understanding Sky's goals through its audiences

At the macro level, the Sky team understands its A/B testing and personalization efforts through the lens of three main audience groups: prospects, current subscribers, and returning customers without a subscription (recently lapsed).

Campaigns and tests are organized around addressing different needs for these groups. For prospects, reducing friction builds confidence and improves conversion rates. For current customers, increasing engagement opportunities and educational messaging for cross-sells and upsells reduces the likelihood of churn. And for recently lapsed customers, win-back strategies increase the likelihood of returning business. This section will show examples of how the Sky team has successfully addressed these different needs with personalization and A/B testing across 3 services in 5 regions.

Reducing friction for prospects by increasing confidence

Sky looks to convert more prospects into paying customers by increasing a sense of urgency, leaning into a "fear of missing out" — tactics which overall reduce friction, as a prospect gains more confidence in the decision to subscribe. The team constantly runs a variety of experiences to test effective methods for achieving this goal. One particularly successful campaign was the use of a Dynamic Yield template to trigger time-sensitive messages on the Sports page, informing visitors about impending live sporting events.

For example, prospects in the Austrian market who visited the sports subscription page were shown the following use case on web and mobile, promoting a popular upcoming football match:
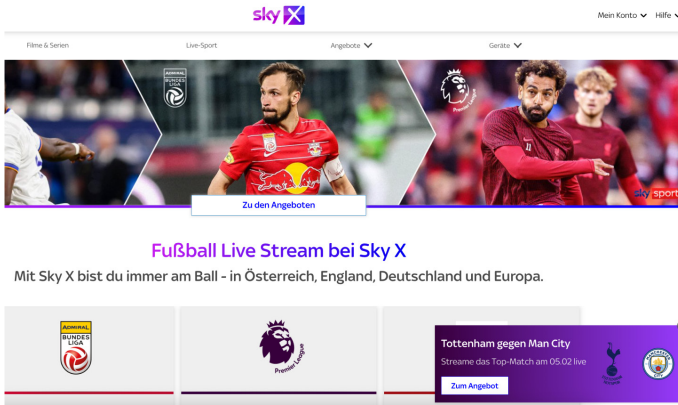

This time-sensitive notification deployed on mobile and web in Austria to prospects visiting the Sports subscription page, prompting users to choose a subscription in order to watch the upcoming football match.

Regionally-specific, personalized live-event notifications create a sense of validation for prospects on the fence and play into the FOMO. This experience in Austria yielded an overall 6% conversion rate, a +3.1% uplift compared to the control experience, which did not display any notifications or time-sensitive messaging about live sporting events. As a result of this success, similar campaigns were deployed in the UK and Italian markets, in different languages and featuring different events, with positive results.

Testing experiences to increase customer engagement and reduce churn

The Sky team runs hundreds of tests yearly to optimize the current subscriber experience and improve business KPIs. One KPI priority for the team was to reduce churn from its newest subscribers. This audience is likeliest to cancel, sometimes even within 24 hours of signing up, but Sky hypothesized it could reduce immediate churn from this group by increasing user engagement with the content.

To achieve this, the team ran tests to see how they could quickly encourage brand-new users to interact with shows, films, and sports events. First, Sky tested different redirect pages for new users clicking their email verification link. The team wanted to identify the landing pages that would generate the most engagement and reduce churn within an immediate period of time. Sky found that new subscribers were more likely to consume content and stay engaged when redirected to the Web Watch site:
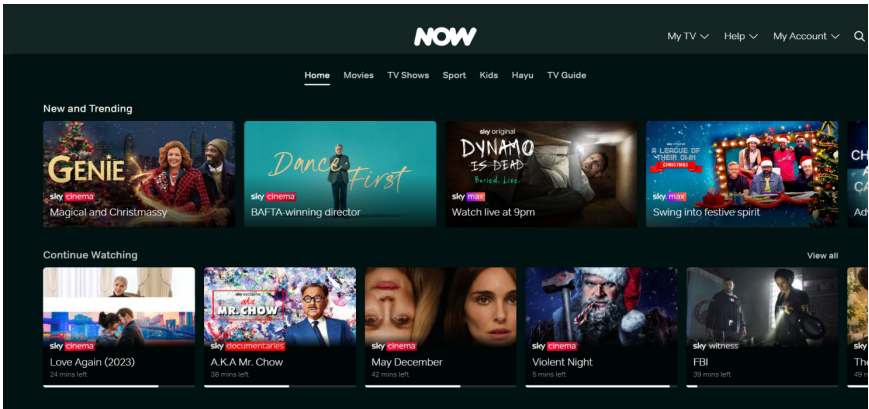
In a test, Sky redirected new subscribers from their email verification straight to the Watch site, where users were more likely to engage immediately with content.

Sky deployed this experience in four regions, testing redirect page performance for new users from email verification. They found that a redirect to the Web Watch site yielded a **39% decrease in same-month cancellations** for new users who interacted with the page during the testing period.

Following this success, the Sky team tested other ways to encourage content engagement from new subscribers. For example, they experimented with removing the "Skip" button from the onboarding page. This change required new users to select content preferences for their watch list and spend time browsing available shows, which educated them on the content available and built interest, ultimately reducing churn rate.
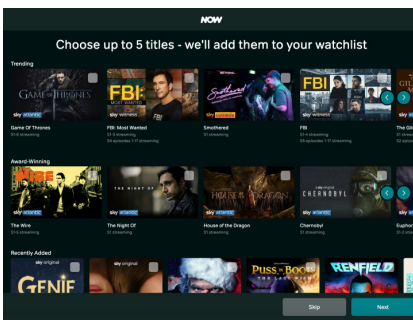
In this original experience, a "Skip" button is displayed, which allows the user to move past this page without selecting content for their Watch List.
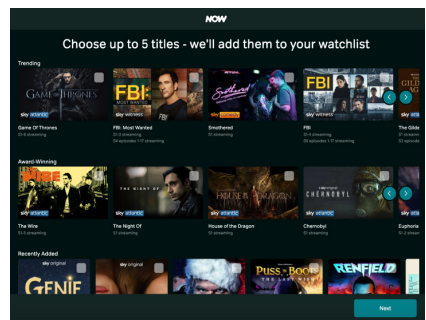

In this variation, the "Skip" button is removed, requiring the user to scroll through titles and select at least one show of interest.

Six total tests, addressed to the three different subscription types, ran across all EU markets, prompting users to choose content to add to their watchlists after purchasing. The campaign yielded a significant increase in click-through rate to watch, most notably a +33% increase in the UK and a +138% increase in Ireland. On average, this campaign yielded a -63.3% reduction in traffic to the subscription management page for new subscribers across all markets, a strong factor in reducing churn.

Leveraging guided experiences to upsell existing customers

WOW, Sky's service in Germany, was recently used as a launchpad to test the effectiveness of guided selling techniques to upsell existing customers. During the launch, the Sky team targeted subscribers who only had an Entertainment package. This package had less value and a shorter minimum commitment than the combined Film + Entertainment package, and Sky wanted to encourage upsells from this group with the following campaign.

The team ran an initial CTA on the WOW homepage and redirected users who clicked on the membership CTAs to a guided selling journey, promoting upsells by displaying a reduced rate option with a longer commitment period.
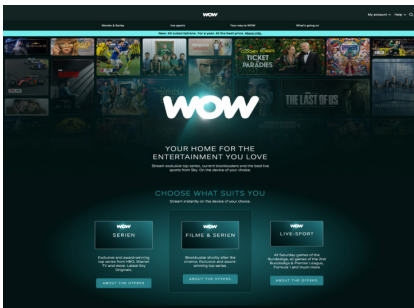
Step 1: Sky put the three entertainment package options on its hero banner, delivering a clear CTA to prospects.
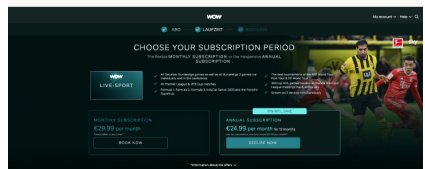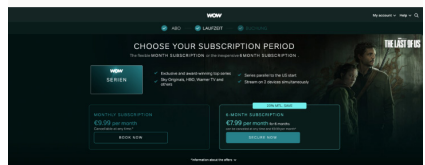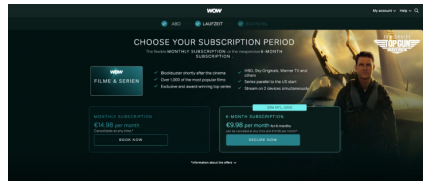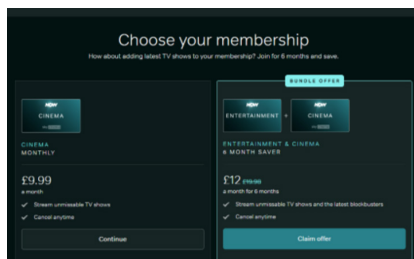

Step 1: Sky put the three entertainment package options on its hero banner, delivering a clear CTA to prospects.

By redirecting visitors to an upsell page instead of the control checkout experience, users were better educated on the savings available for each subscription type. From this guided selling test in the German region, the team saw a **+4.8% uplift in product tenure** and a **+13% increase in upsells** to a combined subscription plan.

This campaign was the initial test that kicked off a larger guided selling approach Sky launched across 3 EU markets, involving content, radio buttons, offer formatting, and product mix. A few examples from other markets can be seen below:

In this guided experience in Italy, similar logic from the initial German campaign was applied, but Sky tested design differences by adding radio buttons on the upsell page.


Step 1: Sky put the three entertainment package options on its hero banner, delivering a clear CTA to prospects.

The radio buttons test in Italy drove a **+6% uplift in purchases** of the membership with a longer commitment period. The redirect test in the UK drove a **+4% uplift** in prospect click-through rate, and a **+3% uplift** overall in purchases of the bundle subscription.

Re-engaging churned customers with limited-time offers

Sky uses Dynamic Yield to segment its former customer audience into subcategories, including known users with a recent purchase and known users who haven't purchased within the last 30 days. Based on each group, Sky either deploys a personalized, limited-time offer to the visitor (with the goal of winning back churned customers), or deploys campaigns that cross-sell memberships to the existing former customer base.

For example, in the following campaign that ran in Italy, Sky identified former customers with recently-lapsed Entertainment or Cinema subscriptions, as well as known users with no recent subscriptions, and showed each group exclusive limited-time offers.
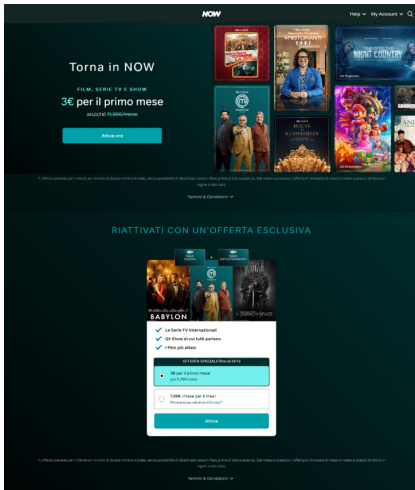
This limited-time offer appeared to customers in Italy with recently-lapsed Cinema or Entertainment subscriptions. It offers an exclusive discount on Cinema and Entertainment.
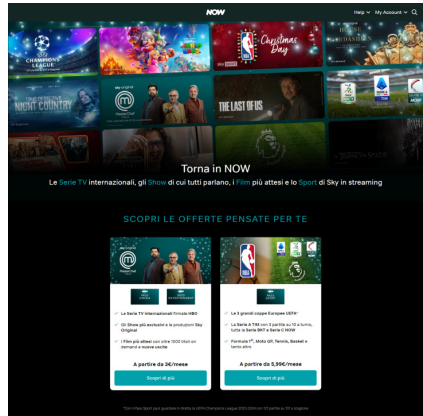

For returning customers with no recent subscription, this limited-time offer appeared in Italy, offering exclusive pricing for all three subscription types.

Returning customers who landed on the site directly from media campaigns and viewed this experience had the **highest conversion rate of 23%**. In contrast, the control offer experience for this same group had a conversion rate of only 4%, meaning the variation yielded about a **+140% uplift** in orders over four weeks when compared to the control.

Expanding personalization horizons with a product feed

Until recently, Sky's personalization program achieved results in conversion, cross-sells, and upsells through experiences based on context, profile and subscription data, and UX experiments. Sky did not run advanced recommendations due to the lack of a product feed. However, the team recently prioritized and completed work on an initial product feed. This exciting accomplishment empowers them to recommend content and create dozens more personalized touchpoints with visitors, the first step in an ambitious roadmap.

To test the feed, the Sky team deployed an early use case leveraging a Dynamic Yield template, designed to re-engage newly-cancelled users. The campaign serves these churned users with a survey to help learn customer pain points. Then, it recommends content, articles, and more based on responses, adding a layer of personalization to the experience and creating a new touchpoint with this group.
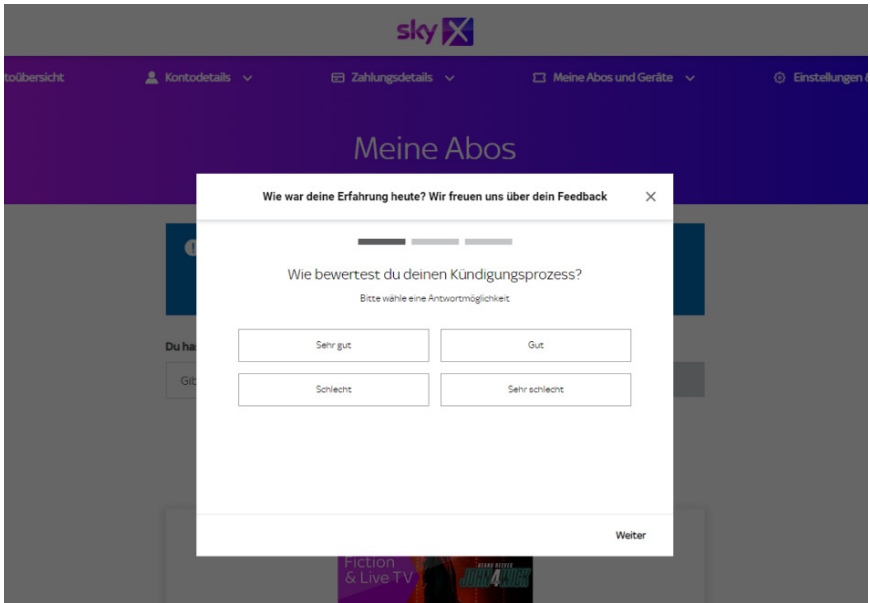
This survey, built with an out-of-the-box template, has allowed Sky to test its new product feed MVP. The survey engages with newly churned subscribers to learn their pain points, then recommends content, articles, and more based on responses.

This test use case helped the Sky team determine best practices for a more detailed product feed that will be developed in the coming months, empowering them to surface recommendations and personalization in the Help sections and create a more seamless, automated customer service experience.

Key Takeaway

For Sky, personalization and A/B testing optimization are critical to reduce churn, increase subscriber loyalty, and win back lapsed customers. But their success to date is only the starting point: with the introduction of a product feed, the team has laid the groundwork for an exciting personalization roadmap that includes content and subscription recommendations, the key to creating a more seamless, automated customer service experience. In the next year, the team aims to focus on more recommended content, and they plan on leveraging new analytics capabilities through an integration with mParticle, where they will combine insights from Experience OS, their platform Contentsquare, the streaming sites, and more. By adding in data from the streaming sites, the team will gain the ability to create experiences based on a subscriber's watch history and preferred shows, unlocking the next level of personalization for the membership and account site.

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Dynamic Yield by Mastercard helps businesses across industries deliver digital customer experiences that are personalized, optimized, and synchronized. With Dynamic Yield's Experience OS, marketers, product managers, developers, and digital teams can algorithmically match content, products, and offers to each individual customer for the acceleration of revenue and customer loyalty.

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