
AUTOMATION PLAYBOOK · FASHION & APPAREL

7 automations for fashion and apparel brands

What actually happens to a customer before each one exists, what changes once it does, and what the numbers say it's worth. The pattern shows up far beyond fashion too.

D2C & ECOMMERCE

FASHION & APPAREL

1 Size exchange and returns

What the customer experiences: They order a jacket in their usual size and it runs small. Starting an exchange means digging up the order number, emailing support, and waiting two days for a return label. By the time it arrives, they've already ordered the same jacket from a competitor instead.

RIGHT NOW

Every exchange starts with a person checking order age, generating a label by hand, and updating stock once the item comes back. It's slow, and easy to get wrong.

THE FIX

A return or exchange request gets checked against policy automatically, the shipping label goes out the same day, and stock updates itself the moment the item is scanned back in.

KPI

50%

cut in return processing time when the approval-and-label steps are automated instead of handled by hand. Source: [Opensend, "27 Return Processing Time Statistics for eCommerce Stores"](#).

2 Abandoned cart recovery

What the customer experiences: They add a pair of boots to the cart, get pulled into a meeting, and never make it back to checkout. Nobody follows up. A week later they've forgotten the boots existed.

RIGHT NOW

Someone checks the abandoned-checkout list by hand, maybe once a day if they remember, and sends a one-off reminder after the shopper's usually moved on.

THE FIX

The moment a cart is abandoned, a short, well-timed message goes out on its own: a nudge within the hour, a follow-up later that day. It stops the second the customer checks out.

KPI

10–20%

of otherwise-lost cart revenue recovered by automated flows. Source: [Sendtrix, "Average Abandoned Cart Recovery Rates, 2026"](#).

This one is almost certainly already live somewhere in your stack. If it's underperforming, the fix is usually tuning what's already there.

3 Back-in-stock and restock alerts

What the customer experiences: Their size in a bestselling sweater sells out. They join a waitlist and never hear anything back. Weeks later they assume it's gone for good and buy a similar one from another brand.

RIGHT NOW

Restocks get announced in a single batch email days later, if at all, to the entire list, regardless of which size or color someone actually wanted.

THE FIX

The system notices the exact moment a sold-out size comes back and messages only the customers who asked for that size, with a direct link to buy.

KPI

22.45%

average conversion rate on back-in-stock alert emails. Source: [MarketingSherpa](#), "[Back-in-stock alert emails achieve 22.45% conversion rate](#)".

4 Post-purchase review and UGC

What the customer experiences: They're deciding between two near-identical dresses. One has thirty photos of real people wearing it, the other has none. They buy the one they can actually picture on themselves, not this brand's.

RIGHT NOW

A team member occasionally runs a hashtag campaign, but there's no system for collecting or asking for photos after a purchase.

THE FIX

A request goes out automatically after delivery, asking for a review and a photo with a small incentive attached. Anyone who's already shared one never gets asked twice.

KPI

52.2%

conversion lift on a product page once it has one or more reviews, compared to none. Source: [PowerReviews](#), "[The Impact of Review Volume on Conversion](#)".

5 Lookbook cross-sell emails

What the customer experiences: They buy a dress and never find out the brand also sells the exact heels styled with it in the campaign photos. They end up buying shoes somewhere else entirely.

RIGHT NOW

A generic "complete your look" email goes out to everyone on the list, tied to nothing they actually bought.

THE FIX

A few days after an order, the system looks at what was actually purchased and sends a note built around the pieces that pair with it, styled the way the campaign shot it.

KPI

111%

higher conversion rate for shoppers who click a personalized cross-sell recommendation versus a generic weekly email.

Source: [MarketingSherpa, "Cross-sell in Confirmation Emails: 111% Higher Conversion Rate"](#).

6 Social content and hashtag scheduling

What the customer experiences: They used to see new arrivals every few days. It's been three weeks since the last post. They scroll past without registering it's even the same brand, and a competitor who posts daily gets the sale instead.

RIGHT NOW

Content gets made in bursts, often the night before it's needed, with no real plan for the weeks ahead.

THE FIX

A steady queue of on-brand captions and post ideas gets drafted in advance, ready to review and publish on a consistent schedule.

KPI

5x

more engagement per post for brands that post consistently versus brands that post on and off. Source: [Buffer, "Consistent Posting Means 5x More Likes, Comments, and Shares," 2026](#), analysis of 100,000+ accounts.

7 VIP and loyalty email triggers

What the customer experiences: This is their sixth order this year, and nothing about it feels any different from the first. They get the same generic email as someone buying once. They start wondering why they bother staying loyal.

RIGHT NOW

Loyalty tiers exist on paper, but recognizing who's actually hit one means someone manually checking sales data, which rarely happens.

THE FIX

Spend gets tracked automatically. Cross a threshold, get recognized: early access, a small perk, a real thank-you. No one has to remember to check.

KPI

50%

repeat purchase rate among customers who redeem loyalty points, versus 10.7% among those who don't. Source: [Rivo, "27 VIP Customer Repeat Rate Statistics Every Ecommerce Brand Should Know," 2026](#).

WHERE THIS ACTUALLY HELPS

Not all seven carry equal weight.

01	First impression Size exchange and back-in-stock. A slow return or a sold-out size sends a customer to a competitor before the relationship even starts.
02	Trust and discovery Reviews/UGC and lookbook cross-sell. They shape whether a stranger trusts the fit enough to buy, and whether a buyer discovers the rest of the outfit.
03	Revenue recovery Abandoned cart recovery. Money already earned once, and nearly lost to a slow follow-up.
04	Brand presence and loyalty Social content scheduling and VIP triggers. Keep the brand visible, and keep repeat customers feeling recognized rather than anonymous.

This shows up far beyond fashion too.

I build automations around whatever a founder or their team ends up doing over and over. If any of the following crosses your mind on a regular week, that's usually the signal.

- “ *This isn't the task I started this company to do.*
- “ *Should I hire an intern to do this?*
- “ *Can I hand this over to someone else?*
- “ *Why do I have to spend so much time on this daily?*
- “ *Too tedious of a task.*
- “ *This is too much manual work, not practical to implement in our company.*

GL. **GarvinLabs.**

Want any of these built for your business, or have a different automation in mind? Feel free to reach out at

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