• Their challenge: needed a better way to store and access a robust amount of data, and use that data to make smart, agile, and timely marketing decisions

• Why Klaviyo: organic partnership, ease of integration and use, impactful product features, strong customer support, and its ability to scale as the brand continued to grow.

• Growth Metrics with Klaviyo: increased productivity, 40% decrease in email unsubscribe rates, 60% increase in email-
attributed site traffic over last year.

"We were surprised at how quickly it [Klaviyo's API] could be set up to push data, dynamically populate our emails, and instantaneously show us our metrics." — Allyson Ayers, Custom Ink

Productivity has significantly increased

Unsubscribe rates are down by 40 percent

Email-attributed site traffic is up almost 60 percent over last year
Custom Ink creates customized apparel and accessories for any group or occasion. Without a way to quickly access and analyze large amounts of data, the brand found it challenging to make efficient and effective marketing decisions that would benefit its customers.

Custom Ink is a global leader in customized apparel and accessories. With more than $300 million dollars in annual revenue, the Virginia-based brand is known as a pioneer of interactive shopping.

Custom Ink’s customers can create purchases of any quantity, and its designs and t-shirts are commonly purchased by businesses, schools, and more. The brand also has relationships with popular apparel companies such as Nike, Under Armour, and Adidas.

Its customer-centric service and easy-to-use website are what set Custom Ink apart from other customized apparel brands.

Creative and innovative designs, high-quality merchandise, and excellent and timely communications make it easy to customize your order, which is fulfilled through on-demand designing and printing.

With both an online store and several brick-and-mortar stores throughout the country, Custom Ink sells through retail, wholesale, and fundraising channels.

As a rapidly growing brand, Custom Ink needed a better way to store and quickly access a robust amount of data, and then use that data to make smart, agile, and timely marketing decisions. What’s more, it
needed an easy way to design and deliver email marketing experiences, at scale, that its customers would enjoy.

Allyson Ayers, email marketing manager and 15-year employee of Custom Ink, spoke about how the brand partnered with Klaviyo to solve these challenges.
How Custom Ink’s RFP process helped the brand find a new marketing automation platform

Like its team, Custom Ink’s email marketing strategy had evolved over the years. In 2018, its email marketing team knew they needed to find a new marketing automation platform that could support Custom Ink’s Enterprise business and grow with the brand as it grew.
“We outgrew our old marketing automation platform. It was cutting edge for us in the beginning, but after time it started to feel stagnant. We wanted to try something new and different,” Allyson said.

Custom Ink kicked off a request-for-proposal (RFP) process with many companies. The email marketing team narrowed down their options to a select few, including Klaviyo.

"We outgrew our old marketing automation platform. It was cutting edge for us in the beginning, but after time it started to feel stagnant. We wanted to try something new and different."

“Our vice president of data and analytics was talking with someone who does a lot of integration work with marketing automation platforms who recommended Klaviyo. After Klaviyo’s RFP presentation, he could see why. He walked out and said, ‘Okay, we’re done right? It’s Klaviyo. They’re going to open up a lot of new capabilities for us,’” Allyson added.

From the beginning, it was a partnership built on trust and understanding.

“We provided the use cases and then Klaviyo explained how they could translate them through to the platform. Everyone felt like we were working together already. Klaviyo understood our hurdles and the process didn’t feel sales-y. It just felt like we were learning about a great product,” Allyson said.
Why Custom Ink found it easy to integrate its direct ecommerce platform with Klaviyo

Like many companies with large and complex business models, Custom Ink built its own ecommerce platform that’s customized to its needs.

Because the brand’s ecommerce platform is direct and not pre-built, Custom Ink was worried that integrating its ecommerce store with a new marketing automation platform could be a long, expensive process riddled with errors.

“Previously, we were running a really manual and arduous process of tracking, collecting, exporting, and analyzing our data in order to send email campaigns,” Allyson said.

“We really liked how, in Klaviyo, the data is set up as events and profiles as opposed to tables of data and SQL queries that you have to connect. That really opened things up for us.”

Before learning about Klaviyo’s flexible application programming interfaces (APIs), Custom Ink’s email team thought they would need to send tables of data to Klaviyo every 24 hours for the platform to review, clean, and then send back to them. But the team quickly learned about Klaviyo’s APIs and how they could use them to track, capture, store, and access large batches of data automatically.
“We really liked how, in Klaviyo, the data is set up as events and profiles as opposed to tables of data and SQL queries that you have to connect. That really opened things up for us. The only hurdle we really had to jump was how to wrap our minds around that new way of thinking. But it’s so great now. We’re able to look at email addresses as people and profiles as opposed to huge tables of data that we have to manipulate to get information. That was huge,” Allyson said.

Walid Bendris, a success engineer at Klaviyo, worked with the team at Custom Ink to show them how Klaviyo’s APIs would work and ultimately helped them with the integration.

“Walid showed us how much easier and more impactful our email marketing could be with Klaviyo’s APIs. They’re easy to customize. In fact, he took a snippet of code from Klaviyo’s documentation, used it in a test account, and showed us a live example. We were very excited about how this could help fuel our email marketing strategies. And we were surprised at how quickly it could be set up to push data, dynamically populate our emails, and instantaneously show us our metrics,” Allyson said.

**How Custom Ink found value in Klaviyo’s data visualization tools and easy-to-use platform**

After a quick integration, Custom Ink was immediately impressed with Klaviyo’s performance analytics dashboard and the impact it would have on reporting.
“Klaviyo’s robust data visualization tools allow us to quickly glance into our campaign metrics and make game-time decisions when we test or monitor our daily email performance. We can also see if a user is active on our site, if they viewed a product, if they saved a design, if they drafted a fundraiser, or if they placed an order. We now have a lot more visibility into what email is doing for our business. Being able to log in to the dashboard to see flow by flow, campaign by campaign, revenue numbers, revenue by recipient, and show the real impact our email marketing strategy is having is incredible. It’s so much easier to access our data and report on it now,” Allyson said.

This readily available insight has helped Custom Ink’s email marketing team to improve their campaigns and drive conversions.

“Our email-attributed site traffic is up almost 60 percent over last year. More people are now engaging with our email content and coming to our website,” Allyson said.

Members of Custom Ink’s email marketing team also find Klaviyo easy to use.

"Our email-attributed site traffic is up almost 60 percent over last year. More people are now engaging with our email content and coming to our website."

“We had someone join our email marketing team who didn’t have any prior experience with email marketing. Within two weeks of her start date, she was able to launch campaigns thanks to Klaviyo’s
comprehensive help center, user-friendly interface, and intuitive design,” Allyson said.

How Klaviyo helped Custom Ink increase productivity and improve cross-channel collaboration

Since switching to Klaviyo, Allyson’s seen her team’s productivity increase thanks to how easy the platform is to use plus its automatic and dynamic product information feed. This increase in productivity has been a catalyst for company-wide cross-channel collaboration at Custom Ink, according to Allyson.

“It’s so simple now to test! A/B testing is important for my team. Before Klaviyo, we were manually duplicating variations to create our tests, and now we can test with the click of a button. We ran our first tests within our first month of Klaviyo, which was really helpful and fast,” Allyson said.

“With Klaviyo, things feel more agile, like we can set something up now and it will still work for us in a few years. We’re confident we’ll be able to grow with Klaviyo.”

Allyson also spoke about how working with Klaviyo created internal efficiencies and more cross-channel collaboration with Custom Ink’s social media and creative teams.
“The product feed feature is awesome, too. Custom Ink has an internal product catalog and we’re able to automatically feed that into Klaviyo. We can now dynamically pull in product images, names, pricing, and any information we have about our products into our emails. Being able to do this automatically has been really great for the team,” Allyson said.

Allyson also spoke about how working with Klaviyo created internal efficiencies and more cross-channel collaboration with Custom Ink’s social media and creative teams.

“We now have an email signup on our Facebook page because it was so simple to set up. We’re sending emails that encourage following us on our social channels. And we have landing pages that have a simple email signup so we can capture more emails at local events. These are things we didn’t have before. With Klaviyo, things feel more agile, like we can set something up now and it will still work for us in a few years. We’re confident we’ll be able to grow with Klaviyo,” Allyson said.

How Custom Ink uses segmentation and personalized messages to drive customer satisfaction

Segmentation is the cornerstone of a successful email marketing strategy, yet one of the most challenging elements of a segmentation strategy is deciding how to segment your customers and how to do so at scale.

Custom Ink created a segmentation strategy and coupled it with personalized messaging to deliver soft-touch and relevant
communications to their customers in a more effective way. As a result, Custom Ink’s unsubscribe rates are down by 40 percent, according to Allyson.

On Custom Ink’s website, customers can provide their emails at many stages of their journey and the brand then collects information about each customer that they use to create segments.

For example, customers can share their email when they’re saving their design. Custom Ink can then collect information like the design, the product, the customer’s zip code, and the purpose of the customer’s order (i.e., school, business, family reunion, etc.) to get an idea for the frequency of future orders. All of this information helps Custom Ink segment and provide personalized messaging to its customers more effectively.

“For example, we know school seasonality cycles like back to school and graduation season, so if someone’s placing an order for a school, we can build different content and landing pages for those seasons. We cull those insights to inform the messaging and the timing of our emails. We’ve been able to make the messaging more personal and our data is showing that our level of customer satisfaction has increased since implementing our segmentation strategy,” Allyson adds.

Allyson believes post-purchase communication is vital to building long-term customer relationships, as well.

"We’ve been able to make the messaging more personal and our data is showing that our level
of customer satisfaction has increased since implementing our segmentation strategy.”

After someone has ordered a design from Custom Ink, the customer receives an automated flow of emails that acknowledges their order, shows the company is appreciative of their order, and that human beings are working on processing their order.

“A human touch that’s purposeful and personalized is so special. I’m really proud of it and Klaviyo makes this so easy to do. Not only do we see great open rates as a result, but this approach also helps drive additional revenue. It’s a great relationship builder and revenue driver. Sending simple copy at the right time with as much personalization as possible has really made a big difference in the performance of our email marketing strategy,” Allyson said.

Why customer support mattered to Custom Ink

Custom Ink’s previous marketing automation platform had an excellent customer support model, but Allyson said it declined over the years. With a new partner, Custom Ink wanted dedicated customer service and that’s partly why Allyson said the brand chose Klaviyo.

“Going from data tables and SQL queries to events and profiles required a learning curve. Having a dedicated contact for our onboarding process was essential in helping us successfully get up and running with our new marketing automation platform. Our
contact was knowledgeable, thoughtful, patient, and super responsive to all of our many questions. I also knew I could call our account manager whenever we had an issue and he’d get back to me fast. He’ll take on anything and he’s also super receptive to feedback. This was the caliber of customer service we had early on with our previous marketing automation platform before they changed their model. Klaviyo’s customer success surpassed our expectations. It’s excellent,” Allyson said.

Sarah, ready for your next order?

CustomInk
to me

Wondering what to create next?

Hundreds of products plus a constantly growing library of art, fonts, and design templates make bringing your ideas to life easier than ever!
What’s ahead for Custom Ink

Custom Ink chose Klaviyo to support its Enterprise business for many reasons, including an organic partnership, how easy it would be to integrate the systems, how easy it would be to use the new marketing automation platform, how useful and impactful the new features would be, and the level of customer support the brand would receive.
"We previously had our own segmentation plan that we did on an order basis, but Klaviyo will help us unlock more of what our users engage with and their future value, as well."

But most importantly, Custom Ink chose Klaviyo because it recognized its ability to scale with Custom Ink as the brand continued to grow.

“We’re most looking forward to testing increased frequencies and cadences, and we think Klaviyo will help us unlock a lot more data about our audiences so we can target differently. We previously had our own segmentation plan that we did on an order basis, but Klaviyo will help us unlock more of what our users engage with and their future value, as well. I’m very excited about the new product features rolling out and how we can use them to get new customers. Email is often seen as a repeat business driver for existing customers, but I think there’s an opportunity to use things like browse abandonment behavior to acquire new customers at the top of the funnel,” Allyson said.

The future is bright for this $300+ million-dollar business that continues to thrive and delight customers.