

Recurly Case Study



CORA

Empowering Women, One
Subscription Box at a Time —
With Help From Recurly and Shopify



Overview

Cora is a subscription e-commerce business with a mission: to empower women. As described on their website, Cora believes that “every woman is a force of nature and should be revered as such. We also believe every girl deserves an education, yet millions of girls around the world miss school during their periods because they can’t afford pads.”

Not only does Cora provide the convenience of a subscription service for period-care products, for every month’s supply of product a subscriber purchases, Cora helps provide a month’s supply of pads and health education to a girl in need. The company also fights for gender equality and provides products, education, and jobs to girls and women in need in developing nations and here in the U.S.

Free Trial Experience One Key to Subscriber Acquisition

Prior to implementing Recurly as their subscription management platform, Cora was using an out-of-the-box solution from Shopify called Recharge which, unfortunately, was quite limited in terms of its features. For example, it did not allow Cora to offer free trial subscriptions of their products, something that Cora knew was key to acquiring new customers.

According to Puja Patel Rios, Cora’s VP of E-Commerce, “through research, we’ve found that the main reason a woman decides to switch products or brands is either based on a friend’s recommendation or because she’s had a free trial of the product. So, we knew that giving her that trial experience would be key to opening up the top of the funnel and allowing more customers to discover Cora and try our products.”

Integrating with Recurly and Shopify has allowed Cora to scale. “Our site is hosted on Shopify, which has been great for us in that it’s a straightforward, out-of-the-box solution. This has meant that we haven’t had to create something on our own, from scratch. Instead, we’re able to take advantage of the features and products that Shopify and Recurly develop, which has been great. Recurly also helps us to ensure that we are offering our customers the best possible experience,” says Patel Rios.



Benefits of Recurly

- Integrating with Recurly and Shopify has allowed Cora to scale
- Recurly’s hybrid commerce feature gives Cora the ability to offer both recurring and one-time products in the same transaction
- Cora relies on Recurly Analytics for easy access to the metrics important to growing their business. Recurly’s Trial Performance report provides data that’s vitally important



Reduced Friction and Increased Revenue Through Hybrid Commerce

One key to providing an exceptional customer experience is Recurly's hybrid commerce feature which gives Cora the ability to offer subscriptions and one-time products in the same transaction. This option is particularly important since there's a wide range of complementary products in Cora's category that don't make sense to offer on a subscription basis.

"Without the ability to offer both subscription and one-time products in the same cart, there'd be a ton of drop off due to the friction caused by forcing somebody to check out twice. I'm sure we'd see a huge loss in revenue." So, we consider this something essential that any subscription platform would have to offer," notes Patel Rios.

Optimized Dunning Reduces Involuntary Churn

Recurly's automated dunning feature is another key benefit of the Recurly platform. Using this feature, Cora has been able to learn the patterns related to when declines occur in their subscriber base. Then, after conducting some tests, they were able to set the dunning cadence that's optimal for their business in order to minimize the involuntary churn that can result when payments fail. "Dunning is one of those things where you want to figure out the formula and then set it and forget it. Recurly lets us do that," remarks Patel Rios.

Actionable Insights Through Recurly Analytics

Cora relies on Recurly Analytics for easy access to the metrics important to growing their business. "Recurly's Trial Performance report provides data that's vitally important. It lets us easily segment out that cohort of customers versus those that came to us through a paid subscription. The fact that I don't have to do this manually saves me quite a bit of time. The trial cohort behaves extremely differently from the cohort that comes in via an initial paid subscription, which is why the trial performance report is so important to our business," says Patel Rios.

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Puja Patel Rios
VP of eCommerce



She also cites the ability to monitor voluntary churn versus involuntary churn and to track any unusual changes through Recurly's Churn Analysis report. "Let's say that one month involuntary churn went up quite a bit. That's something I can easily monitor and investigate. Perhaps there's a cohort of subscribers coming from one source that has a ton of payment declines—maybe due to fraud. Recurly makes it easy to investigate what's causing a certain issue when it comes to churn."

Streamlined Reporting With Automatic Revenue Recognition

In terms of reporting, Cora's finance team finds Recurly's revenue recognition feature to be invaluable. Cora offers their products both on a quarterly and an annual billing cycle—but they only ship quarterly. This means that Cora has to calculate accruals for subscribers who pay annually upfront and then receive their products once a quarter. "Recurly's revenue recognition feature automates our complex financial reporting requirements, eliminating the need to do this accounting manually, on our own. This is a huge time-saver," states Patel Rios.

Testing and Iterating With Recurly's Product Catalog Feature

As for Cora's future plans, they're very excited about Recurly's product catalog feature, set to be released in late 2019. As Patel Rios describes, "being able to have one set of product SKUs, and then to be able to mix and match and apply different prices or discounts, or bundle certain SKUs together—this will offer us a lot more flexibility, both to us as the customer and to the end-user shopping on our site. A plug-and-play product catalog like this, that can be adjusted, will be really important to our business."

Patel Rios is particularly intrigued by how they might use the product catalog to test new pricing. "Right now, if we want to price-test a subscription to see where that elasticity is, we have to create thousands of duplicate SKUs, each with a different price. But through Recurly's product catalog, we'll be able to test different price points. Perhaps we can even test a new price point with just a small segment of new subscribers to see where that true elasticity is before we roll it out to everybody else. That's something that I expect Recurly will play a key role in."

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Succeeding in the Market, With Recurly

In addition to these benefits and others which Cora sees every day in its partnership with Recurly, Patel Rios appreciates Recurly's responsiveness to customer feedback. "Recurly is constantly launching new features and products, and they have come to me several times and asked for feedback on those features. There are also times when I've called my Customer Success rep to tell them that I wish Recurly had this product or offered this feature, and that's something that I know gets shared with the product team. I really feel like what we need in order to succeed in the market and offer our customers the best experience is genuinely understood and taken to heart at Recurly."

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