10 BEST PRACTICES FOR PRODUCT BADGING
Product badging is the practice of adding small “stickers” to products on your site, with words like “Top Rated” or “Hot Pick.”

Websites with product badges outperform sites without badged products by 5%. Our strategic badging campaigns for a large portfolio of ecommerce clients bear that out, leading shoppers further into the conversion funnel. Our badging campaigns alone have probably cumulatively yielded our clients between $50 to $100 million in revenue. For one of our clients in particular, our recent badging campaign produced a revenue-per-session lift of nearly 15% and a projected annual revenue increase of $2.7 million.

Whereas many marketers report that it takes their IT departments several days to badge a single product, the Monetate platform can insert multiple badges—testing and optimizing them in the process—with speed and ease. What’s more, we can automate badging campaigns based on any criteria you establish, including time and geographic parameters.

Because there are so many different types of badges—ranging from “New” and “Top Rated” to badges that underscore product attributes or viewable videos—it can be difficult to identify a strategic focal point. We’ve worked closely with clients to help them do so, devising strategic, optimized badging campaigns that drive results.

In the process, we’ve unearthed a series of best practices for marketers to employ when testing and optimizing their product badges.
1. START WITH THE TRIED AND TRUE

“Bestseller” and “Top Rated” badges encourage conversion because they connote an unofficial “seal of approval” from other shoppers.

Try automating “Bestseller” and “Top Rated” badges according to data from 30- to 60-day lookbacks, adding and removing badges in real time. If you’re just getting your feet wet in the realm of badging, these two types of badges are the best place to start. They’ve been shown to add value in all cases we test across product categories.

“NEW” badges—a good place to start.
2. RUN THE TESTS

To yield a significant lift in conversion from product badging, a period of testing and optimization is critical. When you know consumers are responding positively to the badges you’ve inserted, continue to iterate around factors like messaging, size, color, and position until you’ve arrived at the optimal solution. Although results for those kind of site-specific factors show variance from one website to another, three basic rules will keep you on the right track:

- **Start by placing badges in the upper left-hand corner**, where they’re unobtrusive but visible.

- **Position and size your badge so that it doesn’t obscure any part of the product**. At the same time, take care to ensure that the text on your badge is legible.

- **Badges are as much a design consideration as any other feature on your site**. Color and font selections should complement the visual language you’ve established in the rest of your site design.

Keep it simple When a multichannel consumer electronics retailer recently launched a new version of their signature product, they wanted to communicate that its souped-up capacities made this new offering worth the higher price tag. Initially, the company used a badge on which the product’s highly technical, alphanumerical name appeared, working off the assumption that this would convey superior performance.

When the company engaged our services, we ran an A/B split test to find that the badge was performing poorly because of the messaging on the badge. When the alternate badge simply read “New,” consumers responded favorably.
3. BADGE WITH RESTRAINT

Badges are powerful in part because they call out products whose qualities deserve special attention.

Sites that are overpopulated with too many badges lose traction in that regard. Another potential pitfall: Labeling more than a reasonable percentage of products as “Top Rated,” which could erode consumer trust. How many is too many? What’s a reasonable percentage? Given the site-specific nature of product badging, there’s only one way to find out: Test it. As a general rule, however, aim for a balance between different types of badges, mixing “Bestseller” and “Top Rated” badges with more product-specific badges, like those that tout product attributes or brand names.
4. REIGN IN THE JARGON

When it comes to phrasing, the language on your product badge—where there’s hardly room for pontificating—is most effective when it’s kept short and straightforward. Avoid technical jargon and industry speak. Instead, go with phrases that consumers are already familiar with, like “On Sale,” “Top Seller,” “New,” and “Top Rated.”
5. TAKE THE BROAD VIEW

Once you’ve optimized your “Top Rated” and “Bestseller” badges, consider adding a multiview feature, which can be “badged” with a rollover icon.

The opportunity to view products at varying degrees of detail and from different angles does the hard work of replicating the experience of shopping in a brick-and-mortar retail outlet. FreePeople.com does this to good effect: Consumers roll over a product image to reveal a magnifying glass icon at the bottom right corner. When they click on that icon, a pop-up appears in which items and detail shots are shown from multiple perspectives.

ABOVE: Multiview badges replicate the experience of shopping “off the rack.”
6. ADD MOTION TO YOUR SITE

To engage shoppers more fully with your brand, try video badges. On Freepeople.com, videos of models during photo shoots do double duty, showcasing the clothes and providing an inside glimpse into the fashion industry, a subject in which Free People’s stylish consumers are invested. When customers click on a video badge (in this case, the icon is a familiar “play” arrow, set in the upper left corner of product images), a new screen appears. Here, shoppers have the option to view video footage, which creates a deeper consumer connection than could still photography.

ABOVE: Use video badges to engage consumers with your brand.
7. GET A “BRAND BUMP”

People who visit Altrec.com are likely to be familiar with the Windstopper brand. Some, in fact, will be looking for it. Badges that show recognizable brand names, like the Windstopper label in the upper left corner of this jacket, make it easier for those shoppers to find what they need. And by calling attention to your alignment with highly regarded brands, you experience a bump in credibility and earn consumers’ trust.
8. USE HOLIDAYS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

There are some holidays—Christmas, Valentine’s Day, and Mother’s Day all come to mind—that benefit from badging.

For these holidays, your customers will be shopping ahead, looking for that perfect gift for a special someone. Badges help to highlight those items they might be interested in.
9. Badge Like a Shopkeeper

Once you’ve tested and optimized the most frequently used badges, consider doing the same for badges that call out product attributes or provide more detailed, catalog-specific information.

A badge that reads, “Limited Edition,” lets shoppers know they won’t see their purchase on every other person they meet. In the t-shirt example shown here, a retailer evokes the experience of interacting with a helpful shopkeeper by inserting a badge that reads: “Great Under Dress Shirt.”

ABOVE: Shoppers recognize “Limited Edition” products as unique. Badges can also be used to give shoppers helpful suggestions like “Great Under Dress Shirts.”
10. USE GEOTARGETED & WEATHER BADGING FOR ADDED EFFECT

Sheplers.com, a leading apparel and accessories retailer for the western lifestyle market, reaches both the Australian and American markets. When we badge Sheplers.com’s top sellers, we start by automating badges according to a 30-day lookback, labeling those products that are selling at high rates at that specific time. Then, we take customization one step further: we localize.

Online shoppers in Australia, whose buying patterns differ from Americans’, see badges for bestselling items in the land down under. For U.S. shoppers, badges for bestselling American products appear. In these cases, Monetate can further break down badging campaigns by city, state, and, when relevant, even weather patterns.