



Alibaba Travels **Boosts International Flight Early Bookings** By **~680% In 3 Months**, Powered By WebEngage

Industry
Tourism

Founded in
2015

HQ
MEA

About Alibaba Travels



Alibaba Travels was established in 2015 to revolutionize the tourism industry in Iran. Alibaba Travels believes everyone deserves to have a safe, comfortable, and high-quality trip, and it is bringing this belief to Iran's tourism market. Over the years, Alibaba Travels has recruited 740 people and made significant investments, resulting in successful companies in the tourism industry (such as Jabama, Jaran, etc.).

Alibaba Travels offers its customers a full range of tourism services, including the sale of domestic and international flights, trains, buses, group tours, and accommodation bookings. This company is the leader of Iran's online travel and tourism market, with a rate of 2 services sold per second and a growth of 69% in the past year. Alibaba Travels has 138 million annual visitors, and a 55% share of Iran's online tourism market.



WebEngage's ability to simplify complex processes and deliver measurable results has made this tool one of the leading players in our marketing strategy. WebEngage has enabled us to refine our marketing efforts, driving better engagement and higher conversions. Moreover, the team's responsiveness and commitment to addressing our evolving needs have empowered our collaboration and supported our business objectives.

Arash Khosravian |

CMO, Alibaba Travels

Key Features Used



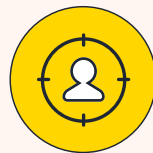
Journey
Designer



SMS



Emails



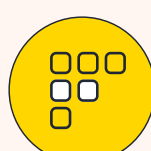
User
Segmentation



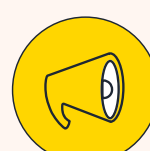
Funnels



Paths



Cohorts

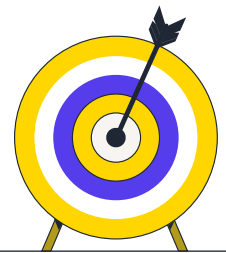


Relays



Push

Company's Objectives



- ✓ Early booking can make a huge difference in your travel experience. It can save time, money, and stress, whether for a flight, accommodation, or an activity. Besides customer satisfaction, early booking helps businesses manage cash flow by bringing in money early, and it is an effective way to increase business success.
- ✓ The Alibaba Travels Customer Marketing team aimed to improve its customer conversion rate through an early booking strategy. But how could they encourage customers to book early?
- ✓ They addressed this question at Alibaba Travels using WebEngage's powerful marketing automation tool.

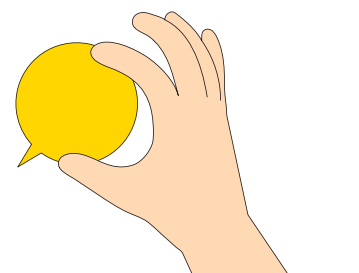
Company's Challenges In Driving The Objective

? What were their challenges in reaching this objective?

- Choosing the right communication strategy
- Finding an automated, scalable, and dynamic engine
- The scale and variety of Alibaba Travels's customer journeys

? What were the solutions to overcome these challenges?

Using the most applicable features in WebEngage, like Custom Dashboards, Journey Designer, Live and Static Segmentation, and Funnel analysis.

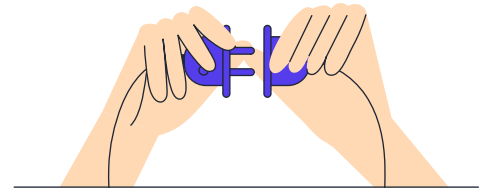


Why Did Alibaba Travels Pick WebEngage?

- ✓ Implementing a comprehensive customer data and marketing automation platform that could meet Alibaba's needs to provide more than 9 Traveling services to several million active users was only possible with a robust marketing automation tool like WebEngage.
- ✓ WebEngage adapting its product to the expected needs of businesses can be one of the main strengths of this product compared to other competitors.



WebEngage In Action



GOAL #1

IMPROVING THE CUSTOMER CONVERSION RATE THROUGH EARLY BOOKINGS

Data indicates that many Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) customers often postpone their bookings to the last minute, especially during the holidays and the high seasons. However, they may be unaware that waiting until the last minute can lead to higher prices or even missing out on the trip due to limited availability of seats or rooms.

The Alibaba Travels Customer Marketing Team wanted to set up an automated process for engaging with their high-potential early booking customers.

CHALLENGE #1



Choosing The Right Communication Strategy

In the first stage, the Alibaba Travels Customer Marketing team's challenge was choosing the right communication strategy to align with their objectives for early booking.

The team needed to leverage a model of communication strategy that blends the psychological effects of urgency, exclusivity, scarcity, and social validation. When used effectively, they can create persuasive advertising campaigns encouraging audiences to act.

SOLUTION #1



FOMO marketing strategy

In marketing, communication around the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) offers several benefits that Completely support our objectives. These benefits included:

- Driving action through urgency and scarcity
- Increasing conversion rates
- Enhancing brand engagement
- Improving customer retention.

FOMO is known as a powerful tool for driving practically any sales campaign. A survey conducted by Expedia found that 67% of travelers have booked a trip based on FOMO. Using FOMO enables the team to highlight missed opportunities to the customers in the best way.

CHALLENGE #2



Finding An Automated, Scalable, And Flexible Engine

In the travel industry, time is crucial, and losing it can result in missed sales opportunities. Our marketing messaging and channels may shift depending on the season's demand. This means that the Travel industry marketers should develop content for every season and Plan for Seasonality.

To predict and plan for early booking, The Customer Marketing Team needed live dashboards to monitor the current market trends and behaviors, especially before the holidays and the high seasons.

Moreover, the team wanted to create an automated, scalable, and flexible engine to turn it on whenever they wanted and lead its high-intention customers to early booking.

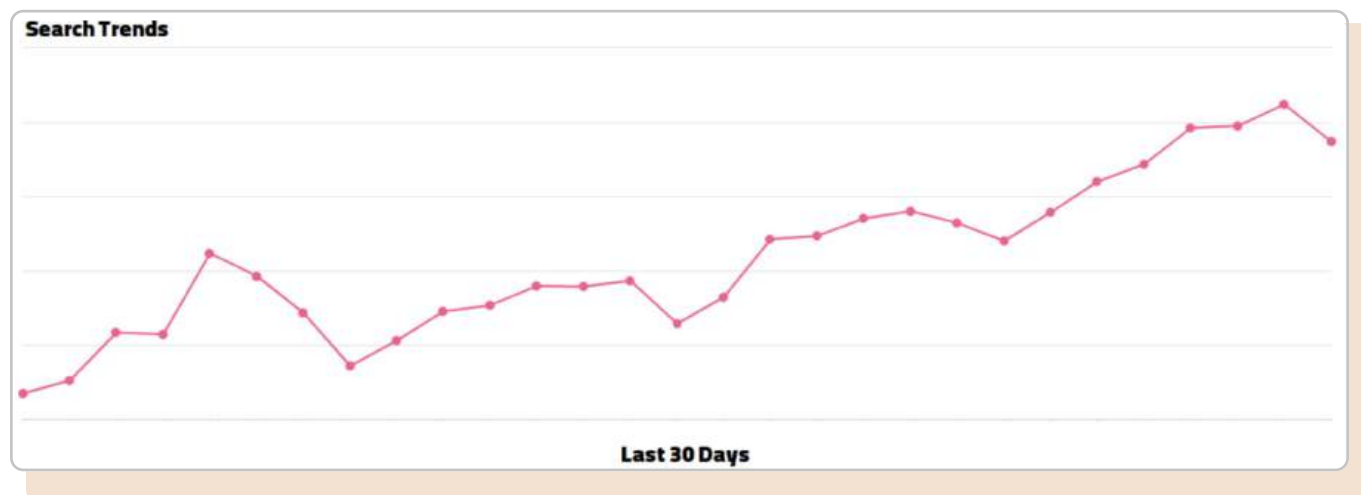
Finding a way to overcome these challenges and Running one-time campaigns across all SMS, Push notifications, and Email channels during the holidays and the high seasons could generate great value for the business.

SOLUTION #2



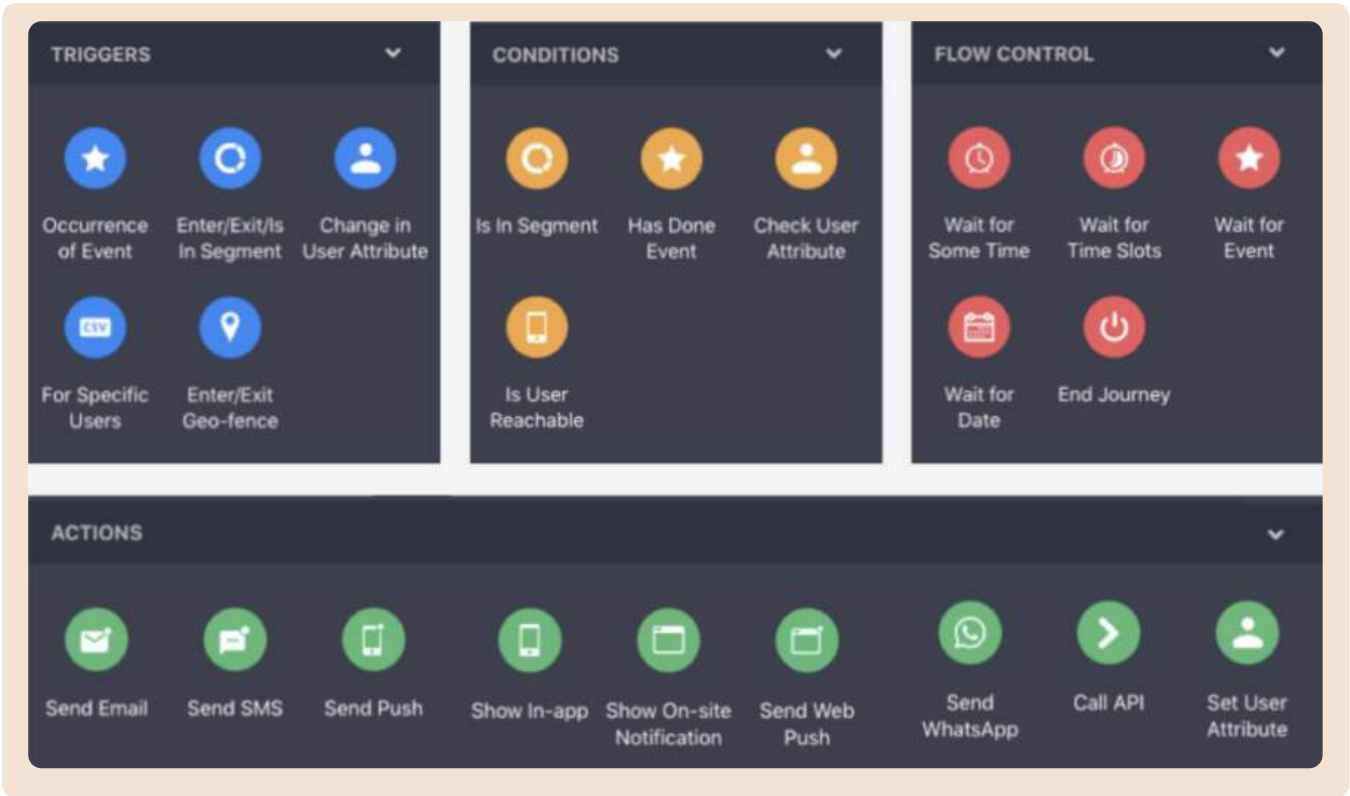
Custom Dashboards, Journey Designer

WebEngage Custom Dashboards was the right tool to cover our needs for prediction and planning. It allowed the Team to create its own Dashboards and access the necessary information in one go rather than navigating through different sections. With these dashboards, the team was always aware and ready to take marketing action.



After a comprehensive review of current challenges, the Customer Marketing team decided to change the path of the high-intention users to the special journeys designed specifically for early booking.

Among the available options, the WebEngage Features for creating journeys like Triggers, Actions, Conditions, and Flow Controls seem great. With the help of WebEngage Journey Designer, the Customer Marketing Team could plan its engagement with its users at crucial moments in their life cycles; it was the whole thing the team wanted for creating its automated, scalable, and flexible engine.



CHALLENGE #3



The scale and variety of Alibaba Travels's Journeys

Because of the scale and variety of Alibaba Travels Services, we have encountered a high volume of Journeys at critical steps of the sales funnel for each product. Therefore, adding new journeys parallel to the main journeys can lead users to enter multiple journeys concurrently. Since Alibaba Travels uses the WebEngage Frequency Capping Tool to balance its user engagement efforts across multiple channels, it can cause a significantly increased rate of queued and rejected messages.

On the other hand, it doesn't make sense to change and put the main journeys in stop or sunset mode for every upcoming holiday and special season. So, The team's next challenge was to prevent interference between early booking journeys and main journeys.

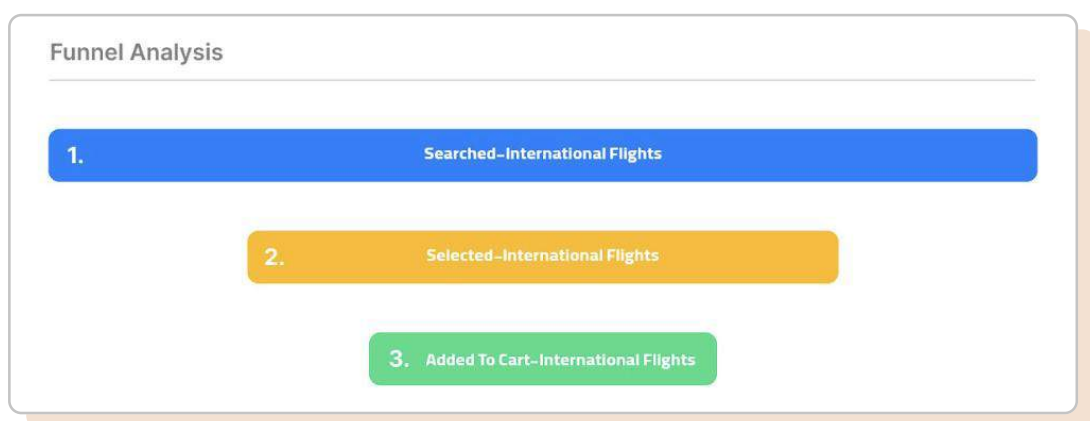
SOLUTION #3

Funnel analysis, Event-based Trigger, Journey Designer, and custom Dashboards



Funnel analysis

Early booking in every product has its definition. So, before creating Journeys, we need a clear visual of current customers who organically book their travel sooner than others for each product. The **WebEngage Funnel Analysis** is helpful for getting these data. This Tool helped the Alibaba Travels Customer Marketing Team understand the current Average time to convert and find the optimal time to start their engagement.



Using **WebEngage Segmentation Tools** and the wonderful feature of adding live And statics segments in **WebEngage Funnel analysis**, we Could analyze the targeted users' behavior in each step of the sales funnel.

The screenshot displays the WebEngage Funnel Analysis interface. At the top, the 'FUNNEL NAME' is 'Early Booking - International Flights'. Below it, the 'FILTER USERS' section shows a selected segment 'Early Booker - Internati...' with a dropdown arrow and a red 'ADVANCED' badge with a '1' icon. The funnel consists of two steps: 'STEP 1' labeled 'Searched - International Flights' and 'STEP 2' labeled 'Selected - International Flights'. A downward arrow indicates the flow from Step 1 to Step 2. Each step has a dropdown arrow and a minus icon to its right.



Event-based Triggers

After monitoring and analyzing the data and trends, the team Matched its data with Alibaba Travels data analysts to get an approximate estimate of which segments of users have the potential for early booking. Now, we could define the right trigger for our potential users to initiate the journey. WebEngage event-based triggers help the Alibaba Travels Customer Marketing Team to Trigger its considered custom events based on Filtered attributes.

Trigger: Occurrence of Event

Trigger journey when user does

Searched - International Flights



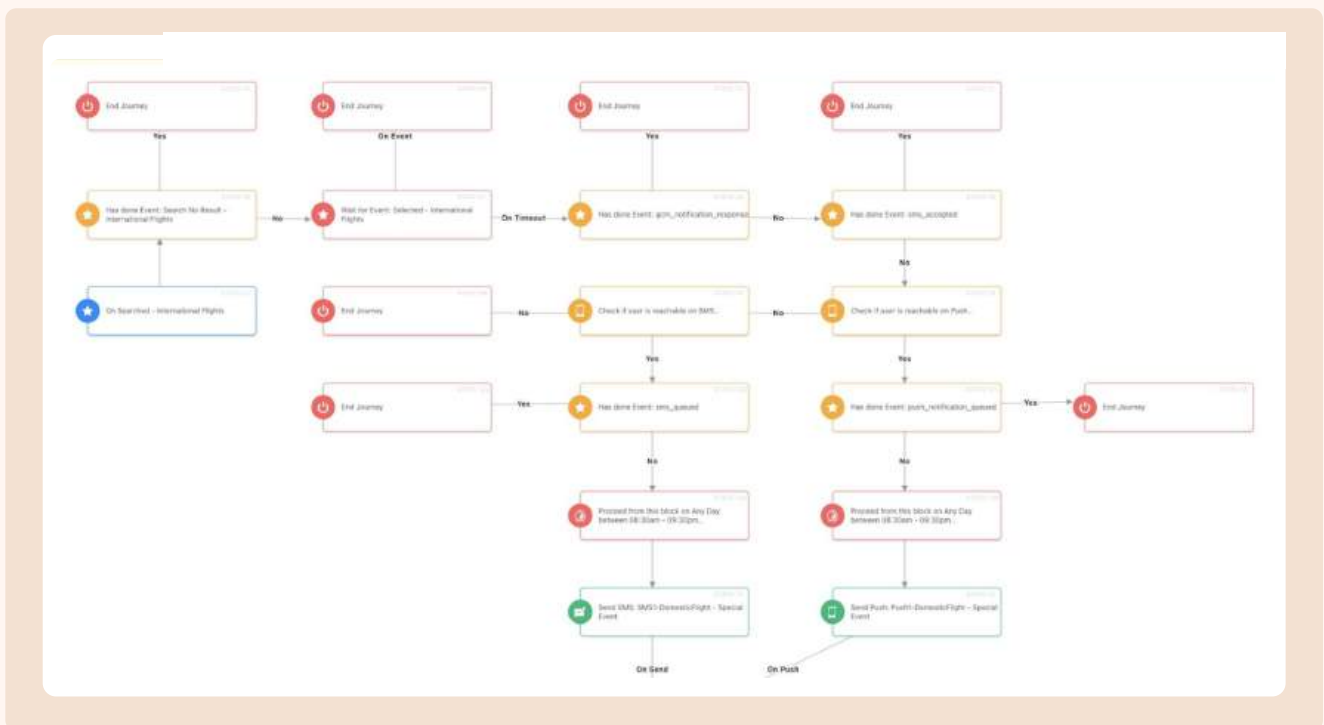


Journey Designer

Now that the team has defined the correct trigger for its new journey, it's time to proceed with its journey design process using WebEngage Journey Designer.

As mentioned above, WebEngage Features for creating journeys are great. The Customer Marketing Team aimed to use these features and obtained data from funnel analysis to overcome the interference between early booking journeys and main journeys challenges.

Here is a glimpse of the International Flights journey:



How Does The Early Booking Journey Work?

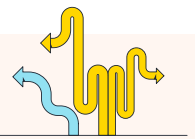
The journey starts with the event Trigger 'Searched—International Flights.'

'Searched—International Flights' is a custom event triggered when users search for International Flights on the Alibaba Travels website or its app.

Because the team has used parallel Journeys, after the User searches specifically during defined periods (early booking), the user enters the 'International Flights—Early booking' and 'International Flights—Searched abandoned' journeys simultaneously. The journey uses a 'Has Done Event' block to check whether the user is faced with a no-result page. If the answer is yes, the user will exit both journeys immediately.

If the answer is 'no,' the journey uses a 'Wait for Event' block until the user selects the preferred Flights. This is where the team makes the priority 'International Flights—Early booking' journey by setting the right time and proceeding the user to the next block sooner than the other Journey. After that, by checking the previous and queued SMS and Push notification campaigns through the 'Has Done Event' block, the journey prevents the user from being annoyed. It increases the rate of queued and rejected messages.

Now that the user has arrived at the 'Is User Reachable' block, the journey leads the user to the first channel on which the user is reachable and sends their message.



Journey Designer



*Don't be late to buy your ticket!
The June holidays are very popular.
To make sure you don't miss your trip,
complete your purchase on Alibaba right
now.*



*Don't miss out on August flights!
They're filling up quickly.
To keep your travel plans on track,
book your ticket on Alibaba right now.*



Flights for next month's holidays are already filling up! If you're planning a trip, get your ticket from Alibaba today.



Book your desired flight before it's too late... Summer flights fill up quickly. Finalize your booking on Alibaba today.



September is a peak travel month... Book your summer hotel through Alibaba today to have a smooth trip.



Time is running out to book top summer tours! Become an Alibaba traveler today and reserve the best tours at the best prices.



Don't miss out on summer vacation flights! During the September holidays, there are more travel lovers; book your flight today.



Haven't you reserved your ticket yet? September holidays are a great time for travel lovers; book your flight today!



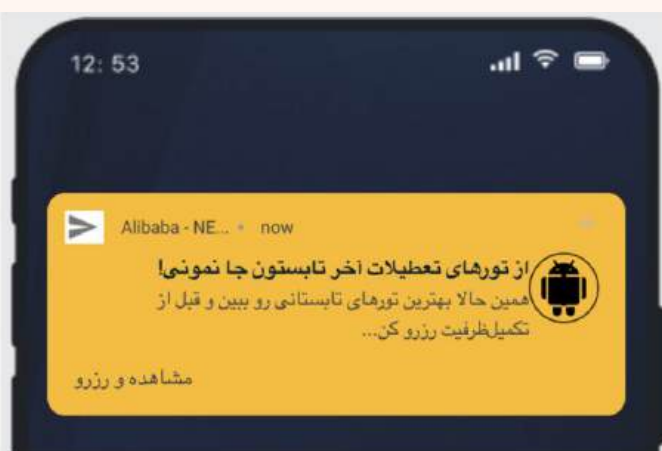
Book your hotel to ease your mind. For summer vacations, check the complete list of hotels & finalize your reservation before they fill up.



Don't forget to reserve your hotel! Reserve your hotel now for the end of summer vacation.



It's time to book your tour... The list of Alibaba tours is complete, but capacities are filling up! Reserve quickly...



Don't miss out on summer vacation tours! Check the best summer tours now and reserve before they fill up...

Overall Impact

Time Frame: June to August (3 months)

+684.54% Uplift In International Flight Early Booking

+673.59% Uplift In Domestic Hotel Early Booking

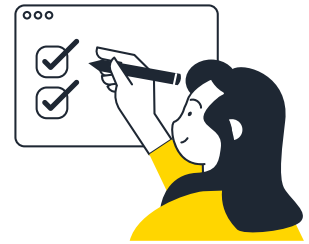
+270.66% Uplift In Domestic Flight Early Booking

+152.47% Uplift In Tour Early Booking



Use Cases

Still not convinced? Here are some use cases you can implement using the WebEngage dashboard.



Convert Your Visitors Into Buyers With Effective Lead-Capturing Mechanisms

Using intuitive on-site surveys to capture your visitors based on their interests or targeting them via Facebook or Google ads using the WebEngage dashboard increases your chances of converting more of your web visitors.



Abandon Journey (Preventing Drop-Offs)

The more people see your site, the more potential customers you will have. The number of people who stay on your website beyond just visiting and dropping off increases the value of those customers. The number of visitors to your website becomes the number of opportunities your business has to give an impression, generate qualified leads, share your brand, and build relationships, thereby leading to selling your product/service or service, gaining new clients, and helping grow your business.



Nudge Users Towards Repeat Purchases

It is common knowledge that repeat purchasers spend more on your business or website, are easier to sell to, promote your business, and help you build customer retention rates. Who wouldn't want that?



Send Reminders For Upcoming Bookings (Experiences, Hotels, Flights, Etc.)

There are always a bunch of experiences to sell to the user. Remind your users that your services exist among a sea of other services that many may provide and that you stand out from the crowd, emerging as a winner in world-class travel.



Drive More Conversions Through AI-Based Recommendations

Show your users customized and relevant content through a catalog of recommended products, which will further increase cart value, boost revenue, show brand consistency, and give a holistic, personalized experience.

Closing Testimonial

“ The powerful features provided by WebEngage have significantly enhanced our marketing automation. The ability to segment and track our audience across all channels, allowing us to accurately target our users and deliver personalized content, has greatly increased user engagement and conversions. The support from the WebEngage team has been outstanding, and their flexibility in meeting our specific needs has made this partnership very productive. ”



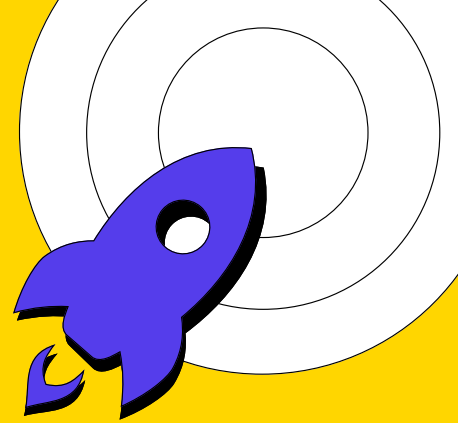
**Mohammadreza
NasehKhorram**



Customer Marketing Lead,
Alibaba Travels



About WebEngage



WebEngage is a full-stack customer engagement and retention platform that helps consumer businesses increase their customer lifetime value. With a robust customer data platform, you can get a unified view of your customers, engage them across 12+ channels with automation workflows, and hyper-personalize their experiences with a state-of-the-art personalization engine, all backed by a solid analytics framework.

WebEngage goes beyond a marketing automation platform and powers user engagement for thousands of enterprise brands worldwide. It works across several industries, including E-Commerce, Edtech, Fintech, Foodtech, Media and publications, Gaming, BFSI, Healthcare, and Online Retail. The key clientele includes marquee brands like Adani, Bajaj Auto, IKEA, MakeMyTrip, Yes Securities, L&T SuFin, Eureka Forbes, Akasa Air, etc.

With a mission to humanize the world's websites and apps, we now power over one billion messages sent every day to our customers across 50+ countries and 20+ industries.

[Schedule my free demo](#)

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