Help For Shopping

REPORT · 2026

E-COMMERCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The economics of the live chat that sells

Four levers to move chat from cost center to profit center — and prove it.

CONVERSIONS RETURNS RETENTION LTV

HelpForShopping Research · Edition 1 · June 2026

Metrics = industry benchmarks (source: iAdvize), not HelpForShopping's own data.

THE THESIS

Live chat isn't a support cost. It's the most underrated economic lever in e-commerce — and, unlike almost every other lever, it's measurable.

When a person sells in real time — sees what the visitor is looking at, suggests from the catalog, steps in before they leave — chat works on four lines of the P&L. Here's the scale of the effect according to industry benchmarks.

10x
Conversions
IADVIZE BENCHMARK

–55%
Returns
IADVIZE BENCHMARK

+60%
Retention
IADVIZE BENCHMARK

3x
Customer LTV
IADVIZE BENCHMARK

THE POINT

More conversions from the traffic you already have.

The cheapest room for growth isn't more traffic — it's closing the people already on your site. The lever that works there, at the moment of decision, is a real-time conversation with someone who knows how to sell.

The four metrics (10x, –55%, +60%, 3x) are directional industry benchmarks attributed to iAdvize. The hard figures in this report rest on Baymard, Casaleggio and Forrester (see references).

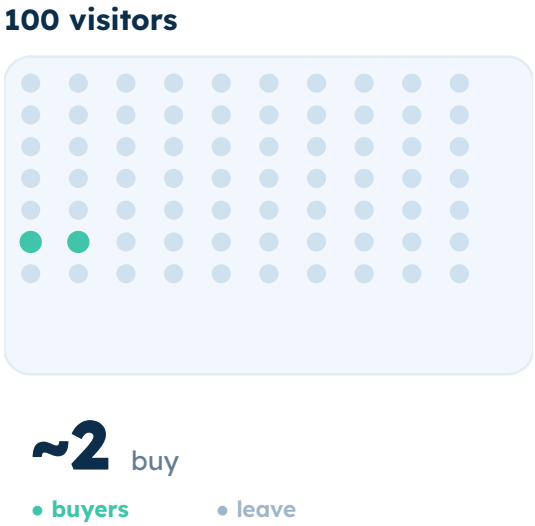
01 THE CONTEXT

Why this report

Traffic costs money, and it's no longer enough. Customer acquisition climbs year after year, and margins keep thinning under logistics, returns and pricing.

The instinctive answer is still to buy more traffic. But buying visits doesn't fix the problem downstream, where the vast majority of people who land on the site don't buy.

In Italy the average conversion rate sits between **0.9% and 2.2%**, averaging around 2.1% (Casaleggio Associati). For every hundred people who come in, one or two buy. The rest look around and leave.



Average IT e-commerce conversion ~2.1% · Casaleggio 2024

02 THE DIAGNOSIS

The economic problem

An e-commerce P&L loses value at four points, and almost always quietly.

Traffic that doesn't convert

Two visitors in a hundred buy. Every euro spent has to pay back on very few sales.

Abandoned carts

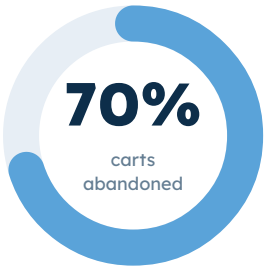
~70% of carts are left before payment (Baymard). The intent was there — what was missing was an answer.

Returns that erode margin

Margin comes back with the parcel: you pay reverse logistics, refurbishing, write-down.

Support as a cost

Traditional chat replies after the fact, logs tickets, and isn't measured. It stays an expense, not an asset.



These four points aren't separate problems: they're the same problem seen from four angles. **At the decisive moment, on the site, there's no one selling.**

70.19% average across 49 independent studies — Baymard Institute, 2024. The model that follows tackles each of these points with a dedicated lever.

THE FRAMEWORK

The economic model in four levers

Each one works on a line of the P&L. Together they move chat from cost center to profit center — with the decisive difference of being measurable.

LEVER 01



Conversion

Active selling in real time: seeing what the visitor is looking at and suggesting from the catalog.

LEVER 02



Returns

Pre-purchase guidance that cuts the return before it ever happens.

LEVER 03



ROI

Native conversion tracking: knowing which chat sold. Measurable like a campaign.

LEVER 04



Retention & LTV

The assisted customer comes back. With Experts Community: 24/7 coverage at variable cost.

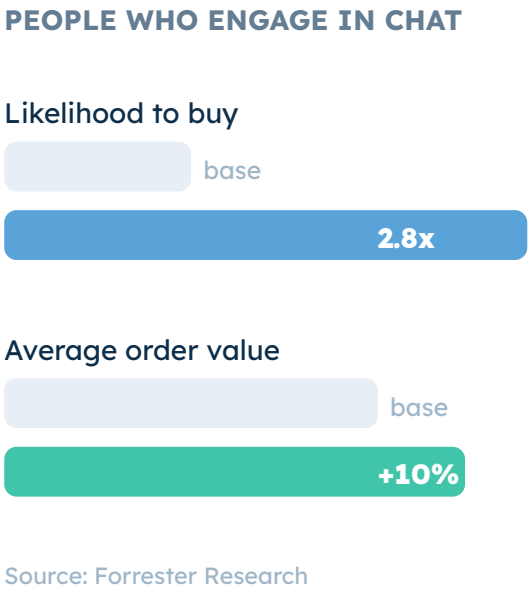
LEVER 01 · CONVERSION

L1 Sell in real time, don't reply after the fact

Support waits for the question. Active selling anticipates the need as it forms.

The agent sees in real time what the visitor is looking at — product page, time spent, cart, where they hesitate — and does what a good salesperson does: steps in at the right moment, suggests the right product from the catalog. Proactive chat intervenes **before abandonment**, not after the complaint.

It's not a bot. Reading a hesitation and making a tailored suggestion is a person's job; technology gives them eyes on the site and hands on the catalog.



SCALE BENCHMARK

Industry benchmarks point to potential of up to **10x** on conversions (industry benchmark — source: iAdvize). A directional reference, not a promise: the argument rests on the Forrester figure.

L2

LEVER 02 · RETURNS

The guidance that cuts returns



iAdvize benchmark

The return is the sneakiest cost: it arrives after the sale seemed done.

Most avoidable returns come from a wrong choice made alone: a size picked by guesswork, a product that doesn't fit the need. A person who assists the choice in real time steps in **exactly at the point where the return takes shape**.

The saving is twofold: you avoid losing the returned sale and the entire reverse-logistics cost. Every return avoided is margin that stays in the books, not revenue to chase elsewhere.

Right size
The size guide explained in chat, not guessed.

Right product
The better-fit alternative flagged before checkout.

Cost prevented
Upstream, not handled downstream like the other costs.

L3

LEVER 03 · ROI

Measure the return, chat by chat

A chat that sells but can't tell you how much it sold stays indistinguishable from a cost. The leap is tracking which conversations generate sales.



You know which conversation led to an order, which agent ran it, which product was suggested. Chat becomes a **sales channel with its own attributable revenue**, just like a campaign or an email automation.

And once you know what works, you replicate it: the hours that pay off most, the products that benefit from a suggestion, the most effective scripts.

IN ONE LINE

ROI isn't an argument tacked on at the end: it's the lever that turns the other three from promise into a verifiable number.

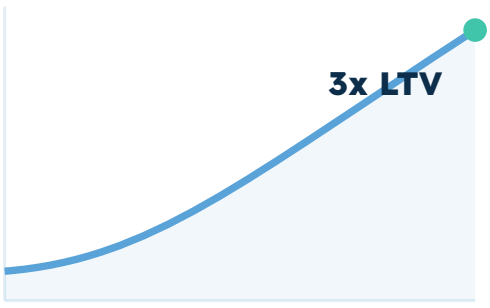
L4

LEVER 04 · RETENTION & LTV

The customer who comes back

The first three levers work on the single sale. The fourth works on time.

A customer who got relevant advice, bought the right product and didn't return it is a customer who comes back. Retention isn't a feeling: it's the share of customers who buy again, the frequency, the value built up over time.



+60% retention · 3x LTV — iAdvize benchmark

EXPERTS COMMUNITY

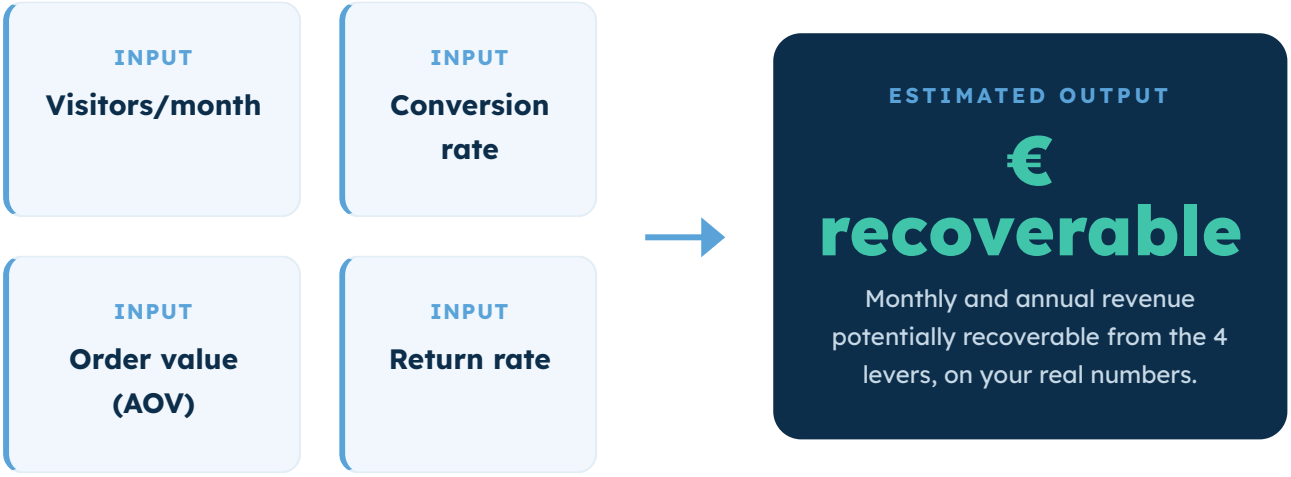
24/7 coverage at variable cost

The merchant's VIP customers — the ones who know the products better than anyone — become advisors paid on the sales they generate. They're paid in proportion to the revenue they produce, not for hours on standby. Coverage grows with the community, and the community grows with sales.

05 THE TOOL

The ROI calculator

The four levers become concrete on your own numbers. Not a promise: an estimate of the recoverable value, starting from your store's real data.



Two rules make the number credible. **First:** always use your own real data as the baseline. **Second:** the coefficients on conversion and AOV rest on Forrester and Baymard; the more aggressive multipliers (10x, –55%, +60%, 3x) remain directional benchmarks (source: iAdvize) — they give the scale, not the expectation.

The value of the exercise isn't the final number: it's the shift in perspective. Once you write the recoverable revenue next to the cost of the tool, chat stops being an expense and becomes an investment to size.

IN SUMMARY

06 Close the four leaks where they form

Italian e-commerce doesn't grow by buying more traffic for a funnel that leaks on four sides. It grows on the site, at the moment of decision, with a person who knows how to sell.

01 · CONVERSION

A real-time conversation measurably shifts purchase and basket size.

02 · RETURNS

Pre-purchase guidance prevents the cost before it forms.

03 · ROI

Native tracking turns every chat into attributable revenue.

04 · RETENTION

The assisted customer comes back; Experts Community covers 24/7 at variable cost.

READY TO MEASURE IT ON YOUR OWN NUMBERS?

Activate the free Starter plan and install live chat in 5 minutes.

Free Starter plan · 5-minute setup · WooCommerce · Odoo

TRANSPARENCY

Methodology notes & sources

The hard figures in this report rest on three verified sources. The four metrics cited as the potential of conversational commerce — up to 10x conversions, –55% returns, +60% retention, 3x LTV — are **directional industry benchmarks** attributed to iAdvize, presented each time as a reference for scale, never as guaranteed results or HelpForShopping data. No number in this document is a proprietary result: every figure is attributed to its source.

1 **Baymard Institute** — Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics, 2024. 70.19% average across 49 studies.

VERIFIED baymard.com/lists/cart-abandonment-rate

2 **Casaleggio Associati** — E-commerce in Italy 2024. Average IT conversion 0.9–2.2% (average ~2.1%).

VERIFIED casaleggio.it

3 **Forrester Research.** People who use live chat ~2.8x more likely to buy; AOV ~+10%.

VERIFIED cited in industry studies

4 **iAdvize** — conversational commerce benchmark: up to 10x conversions, –55% returns, +60% retention, 3x LTV.

INDUSTRY BENCHMARK directional reference, not HelpForShopping data