

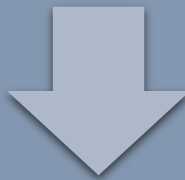


# Recovering lost revenue and increasing competitiveness

CUSTOMER CONVERSION AND RETENTION



Increased customer conversion and retention based on an enhanced user experience



SUPPORT COSTS

Reduction in support costs based on a 95% drop in support conversations related to the user interface

DEVELOPER PRODUCTIVITY



Increased developer productivity with consistent screens and improved maintainability

Jilt.com Case Study

## Reinventing the user experience

“Working with ShakaCode is an absolute pleasure. Their skills and professionalism make them my first recommendation for anyone looking for a Ruby on Rails or React software development partner. They’re always looking for new ways to up their game and provide even more value. The flexibility and speed with which they added more developers to the project when we needed them were invaluable.”



**Justin Stern**, Co-Founder and CTO, SkyVerge

## JILT.COM

SkyVerge is a fast-growing business that builds mission-critical tools for eCommerce brands on Shopify and WooCommerce.

With over 430 WooCommerce core contributions and 66 extensions in the WooCommerce marketplace, over 100,000 customers rely on SkyVerge technology. They also run Jilt, an innovative, user-friendly all-in-one email marketing platform built for eCommerce stores.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### CHALLENGES

- Build an attractive, user-friendly and intuitive UI with highly-sophisticated, rules-based segmentation functionality
- Provide a common look and feel across multiple screens to attract new users, retain existing clients, and reduce the number of support issues
- Ensure a great user experience, rapid employee onboarding, and increased productivity

### SOLUTION

- Technology: Brand new React front-end, Ruby on Rails backend, React on Rails for Server-Side Rendering, TypeScript, Storybook, Styled-components, Cypress.io, CircleCI, and Webpacker.
- Team: ShakaCode developers backed by HawaiiChee.com source code and team, including Justin Gordon, the creator of React on Rails.

### RESULTS

- Increased customer conversion and retention based on an enhanced user experience
- Increased developer productivity with consistent screens and improved maintainability
- Reduction in support costs based on a 95% drop in support conversations related to the user interface

## CHALLENGE

### Convert an abandoned cart recovery app into an email marketing platform for eCommerce

“We initially started building eCommerce plugin extensions for WordPress,” explains Justin Stern, Co-Founder and CTO at [SkyVerge](#). “As we grew the business and successfully expanded our product offering, we decided to diversify into other ecosystems. Among the apps that we developed was [jilt](#), an abandoned cart recovery app for Shopify clients.”

Founded by Max Rice and Justin Stern in 2013, SkyVerge started off building WordPress plugins for WooCommerce before diversifying into developing apps for Shopify. SkyVerge has established itself as a major player in a highly competitive environment. It boasts impressive stats with over 430 WooCommerce core contributions, 66 WooCommerce extensions, and over 100,000 customers who rely on their technology to increase revenue.

“Shortly after we launched Jilt we saw the possibility of developing it beyond simply a cart recovery platform,” expands Justin. “As one of our core products, Jilt had the potential to become a comprehensive, customizable email marketing platform meeting the unique needs of each of our clients.”

### Jilt: Seamless data synchronization for accelerated revenue recovery

“Jilt is an email marketing platform that connects to WooCommerce, Easy Digital Downloads, and Shopify stores and immediately begins recovering lost revenue. To date, Jilt has generated over \$90 million in revenue for online merchants. On average, stores can generate an additional 15-20% in revenue within 20 minutes of installation. One vendor recovered \$3,000 in lost revenue—or 15% of his monthly income—within the first three weeks of switching from a well-known competitor’s solution.

“Our key difference is that we’ve focused on critical processes rather than trying to do everything,” states Justin. “One of our core competencies is our ability to synchronize data from remote platforms with Jilt. Once it’s in Jilt, you can start to make your data work for your business. You can segment customers, set up and customize recovery campaigns, increase repeat sales with automated post-purchase follow up emails, and target inactive customers with win-back initiatives.”

Instead of each store storing abandoned cart and contact information in their own database, it gets offloaded to Jilt. Doing so prevents customer sites from getting bogged down with abandoned cart or email tracking data. It also enables users to track their email data over time and gain valuable insights into cart abandonment and revenue recovery.

## Lacking an attractive and intuitive user interface

"If you look at the older screens on our app, it definitely looks like they were designed and implemented by engineers," says Justin with a chuckle. "An area of the app that didn't do it justice was the frontend. It lacked an attractive user interface and an intuitive user experience. As a team of mostly backend and full-stack engineers, that wasn't one of our core strengths."

The type and volume of support questions quickly made the Jilt team question the viability of the frontend. It obviously wasn't delivering the user experience clients were looking for—or one to match their main competitors. There were too many "how-to" queries that could easily be prevented with a well-designed user interface.

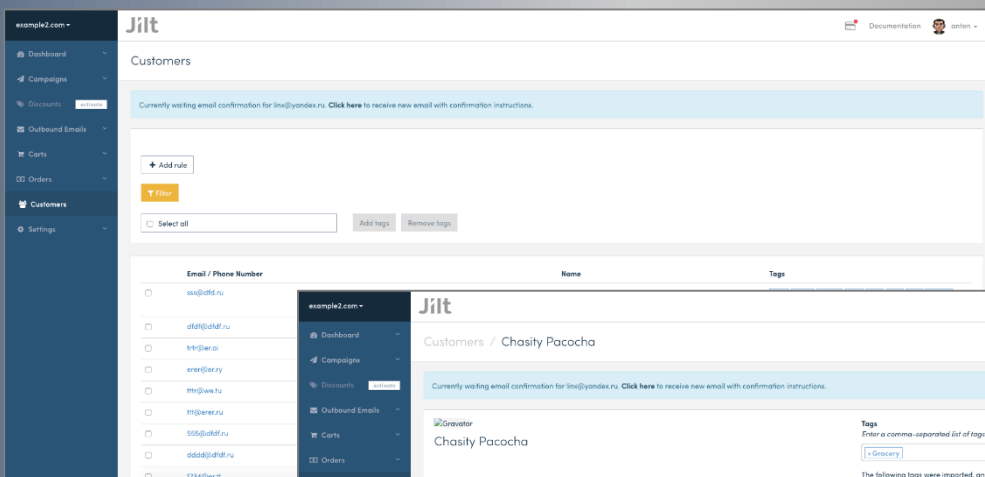
"It's difficult to say whether people uninstalled Jilt simply because of the UI," states Justin, "but I certainly think it was a factor. It's tough to get feedback from people once they've uninstalled the app. We knew that we could do better, and we wanted to build something which would make us proud. Since we didn't have the expertise in-house, we just needed to find the right team to help."

## PROCESS

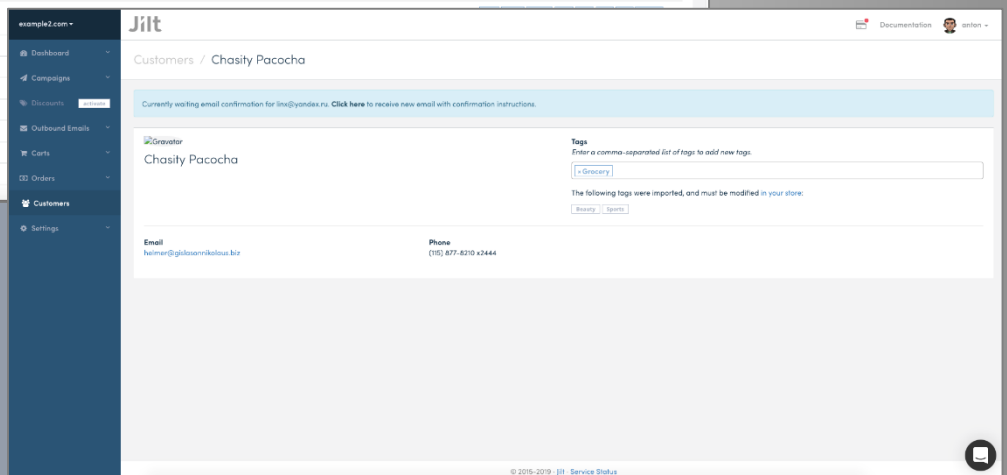
### Finding a partner to design and develop an attractive and functional UI

"Our business goal was simple," explains Justin. "Find help to build an attractive, user-friendly, and intuitive user interface to delight new users, retain existing customers, and reduce the number of support requests we were receiving."

While the original app was developed in Ruby on Rails with server-rendered views and JavaScript and jQuery layered on top, there was no real structure or conventions used. Each new screen looked different from the others because each engineer used a different approach. The result was a set of screens lacking a cohesive look and feel. They were also challenging to maintain.



The old internal Jilt screens



“We decided to try out both Vue and React,” says Justin, “but decided on React because of the strength of the community. However, after trying to figure out the right way to do things and building a couple of screens, we realized we’d built some parts incorrectly and would have to redo them. While looking for a frontend engineer, we decided to find a development partner who could help expedite things.”

“It was a great experience working with ShakaCode on the segmentation screen,” adds Justin, “and the results were what we wanted. Now we had at least one screen that was attractive, intuitive, and user-friendly, but there was a lot more work to do. Based on our initial success—and even though we had recently hired a frontend engineer—we decided to expand the partnership to build the rest of the internal Jilt screens.”

### **Forging relationships based on open source innovation and entrepreneurial culture**

Justin’s co-founder, Max, began searching for the right partner for the project. After reading articles about React and searching Stack Overflow and GitHub, Max eventually identified two potential candidates, one of which was ShakaCode.

“Both companies could have done the job,” explains Max, “but what tipped us in favor of ShakaCode was the fact that they were the ones who created and maintained the `react_on_rails` gem. We used Rails and React, and we wanted to use `react_on_rails`, so it seemed like a logical choice. Chatting with Justin Gordon, the CEO and Founder of ShakaCode and HawaiiChee.com, gave us confidence that he really understood our needs and the challenges we were facing. Moreover, he was an entrepreneur like us, so it felt like a good fit.”

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**Justin Stern**, Co-Founder and CTO, SkyVerge

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### **Leveraging experience to produce desired results**

“The first task we gave ShakaCode was an extremely complicated screen,” states Justin. “It required that they build a sophisticated rule-builder that enables clients to segment their customers, choosing which ones to group and target with which email campaigns. Before that, we had no React within Jilt, so this was an opportunity for ShakaCode to take us from zero React to having a fully React-driven, rules-based, complex segmentation screen.”

ShakaCode’s extensive experience in building web apps with Ruby, React, and `react_on_rails`—along with their competitive pricing, transparent billing, and flexible resource allocation matched what Justin needed. That—together with the results of the initial project—gave him good reason to extend the relationship.

## PROJECT

### **On-time delivery with increased value based on shared best practices**

“When we first started the project,” states Justin, “we were targeting to go live a month or two later. It was a huge undertaking and extremely ambitious, but ShakaCode came through for us even though the specs we gave them lacked detail in certain areas. The flexibility and speed with which they added more developers to the project when we needed it was invaluable.”

With clear deliverables and under pressure to deliver the rules-based segmentation screen in record time, the ShakaCode team put their heads down and got to work.

“ShakaCode’s project manager ensured that the team was always available and stayed focused on the tasks scheduled,” comments Justin appreciatively. “Any questions or concerns we had were quickly addressed. As a result, we hit our important deadlines and were very pleased with the overall speed of development.”

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### **Implementing best practices for accelerated results**

“One of the things that I really liked about working with ShakaCode was their openness to new ways of doing things,” says Justin appreciatively. “They never gave the impression that they were the experts and you had to do things their way. They were always open to new ideas. That laid a good foundation for a collaborative relationship which, without doubt, contributed to the success of the project.”

ShakaCode’s commitment to quality and best practices ensures that all code is peer-reviewed and has automated test procedures built-in. Moreover, each task is carefully tracked with detailed reports provided each week. The process helps ensure budgets are adhered to, milestones met, and issues addressed without delay. Continual process improvement is a critical part of ensuring that projects are smooth and seamless.

“Just before the project with ShakaCode,” states Justin, “the jilt team had moved from a waterfall to an agile development model, adopting several tools to support the approach. ShakaCode also had their tools and best practices, but Justin (Gordon) was always looking for new, better, more flexible ways of doing things. He was interested in how we structured our project management and quickly adapted to fit in with our processes. It allowed us to evolve and improve our processes together.”

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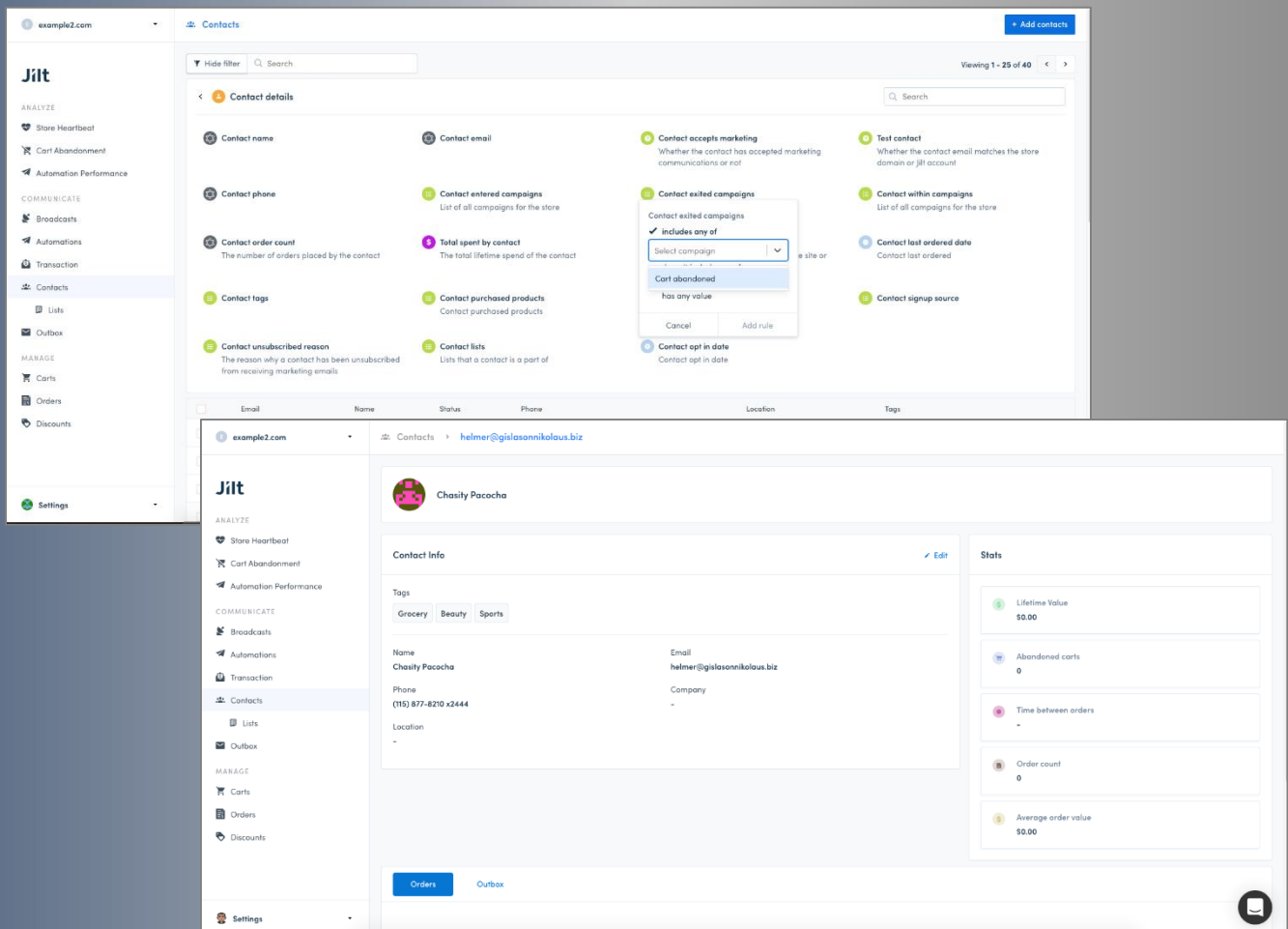
## Knowledge sharing to drive innovation

“Our initial goal was to move to React,” states Justin. “It sounds simple, but it doesn’t just happen. A decision like that opens up a whole lot of other questions about styling and testing that required answers before moving forward with implementation. That was the first thing that we put on ShakaCode’s plate.”

Justin gave ShakaCode the mock-ups for the new screen to play around with, looking to the ShakaCode team for recommendations on the right technologies to deploy to get the desired results. In addition to using React and specific libraries, ShakaCode made recommendations for the entire tech stack. These included reusable UI components with TypeScript, Storybook, and Styled-components, Cypress.io for testing, CircleCI for continuous integration and delivery, and Webpacker for building deployment packages.

“ShakaCode did an awesome job when it came to recommending which technologies to use and setting them up for us,” states Justin enthusiastically. “We’ve been delighted, and so have our new team members. It’s quite something to have a potential employee ask what tech stack you’re using, and, when you tell them, their response is: ‘Good choice!’”

The result?



The new internal screens for jilt.com

## RESULTS

### **A cohesive, high-performance, and intuitive user interface for a great user experience**

“We now have a fully functional, highly complex segmentation screen that delivers the functionality our users need,” states Justin. “It’s built with the best technologies, leverages best practices, and has established a pattern that we can consistently apply to the rest of the app. Now we can build and deploy fast, attractive, and user-friendly screens—something that we couldn’t do before.”

One recommendation that had a significant impact on the Jilt team was Storybook, a powerful frontend tool for developing UI components in isolation to React. By streamlining the process and eliminating the need to worry about data or business logic, it speeds up and simplifies the design, builds, and organization of UI components, including full screens.

“Our users now have a consistent look and feel across all screens,” expands Justin, “and the response is much snappier than previously when we used server-side rendering. When combined with the attractive and intuitive UI, the increased performance has resulted in a significantly enhanced user experience. ShakaCode has also developed several screens for new features—such as email list management and support for sending out newsletters—which has reduced churn and improved retention.”

### **Improved maintainability, increased productivity, and reduced support costs**

“Before the project, the codebase wasn’t uniform and maintaining it was a challenge,” explains Justin thoughtfully. “Now that we have quality code and established, reusable patterns, we can develop much faster and maintain the app more easily. It’s also accelerated the onboarding of new team members since they can easily get up to speed and be productive. Moreover, we see significantly fewer support requests than before.”

And the prospect of a future relationship with ShakaCode?

“We want to grow our relationship with ShakaCode,” states Justin. “We’ve got a ton of new features that we want to add and some old screens to redo. We also need to update our public-facing website to match the look and feel of the internal app. Moreover, with technology changing so fast and our finding it difficult to keep up, it’s great to have ShakaCode as a trusted partner to help guide us through the process.”

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*“The ShakaCode team is super committed to both empowering their clients and giving back to the open-source community. They were an immediate and effective extension of our team. You can approach them with any complicated issue or technical challenge, and they have the knowledge and experience to provide the right answers and solutions. It would require investing a lot of time on my part to find the answers myself or bring in an independent contractor to do it. Our experience with them has been exceptional.”*

**Justin Stern**, Co-Founder and CTO, SkyVerge

Do you want to attract new customers  
and increase retention with a delightful,  
high-performance user experience?



**ShakaCode**  
**makes it happen!**

Email us at [contact@shakacode.com](mailto:contact@shakacode.com)  
for a free consultation.