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Take your *KICKA*** Customer Academy to the Next Level

9 ADVANCED TIPS

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Introduction

You've launched a customer academy and things are taking off. You have hundreds — maybe even thousands — of active learners, tons of engagement and retention is going up. That's plenty of reason to celebrate, but don't take your foot off the gas. While some Learning teams will become complacent with initial success, those committed to realizing the long-term benefits of customer education will never stop looking for ways to improve their academies.

If that's you, keep reading. **Here are 9 advanced tips that'll take your kicka** customer academy to the next level.**

1 **Work With Designers to Completely Customize Your Academy**

2 **Use Sequential Learning to Improve Learner Outcomes**

3 **Incorporate Advanced Content Types**

4 **Use Single Sign-on to Boost Retention Rates**

5 **Integrate Your CRM & LMS**

6 **Use Properties to Deliver Personalized Content and a Stickier Experience**

7 **Enhance Your LMS With Integrations and Flexible Developer Tools**

8 **Fuel Your Academy With Advanced Analytics**

9 **Reward Your Learners**

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1 Work With Designers to Completely Customize Your Academy

When you launched your academy, tasks like onboarding and content creation were most likely your focus. In other words, you prioritized metrics that'd validate the impact of your academy.

Now, it's time to focus on one of the bells and whistles: **Design**.

To take your customer academy to the next level, you need to customize it and align it with your overall brand identity. Treat this like building your dream home and picking out everything from the knobs on the cabinets to the chandeliers. By completely customizing your academy, you make it act and behave as a seamless extension of other brand touchpoints, like your website, ultimately creating an optimal learning experience that generates engagement.
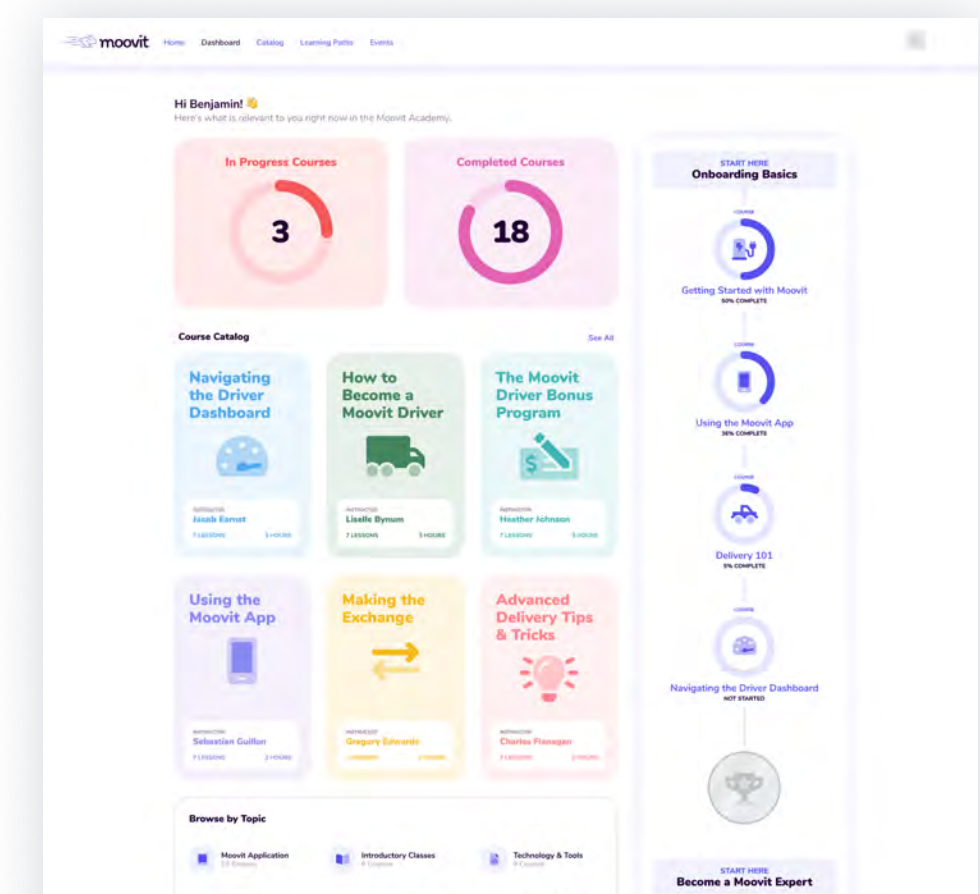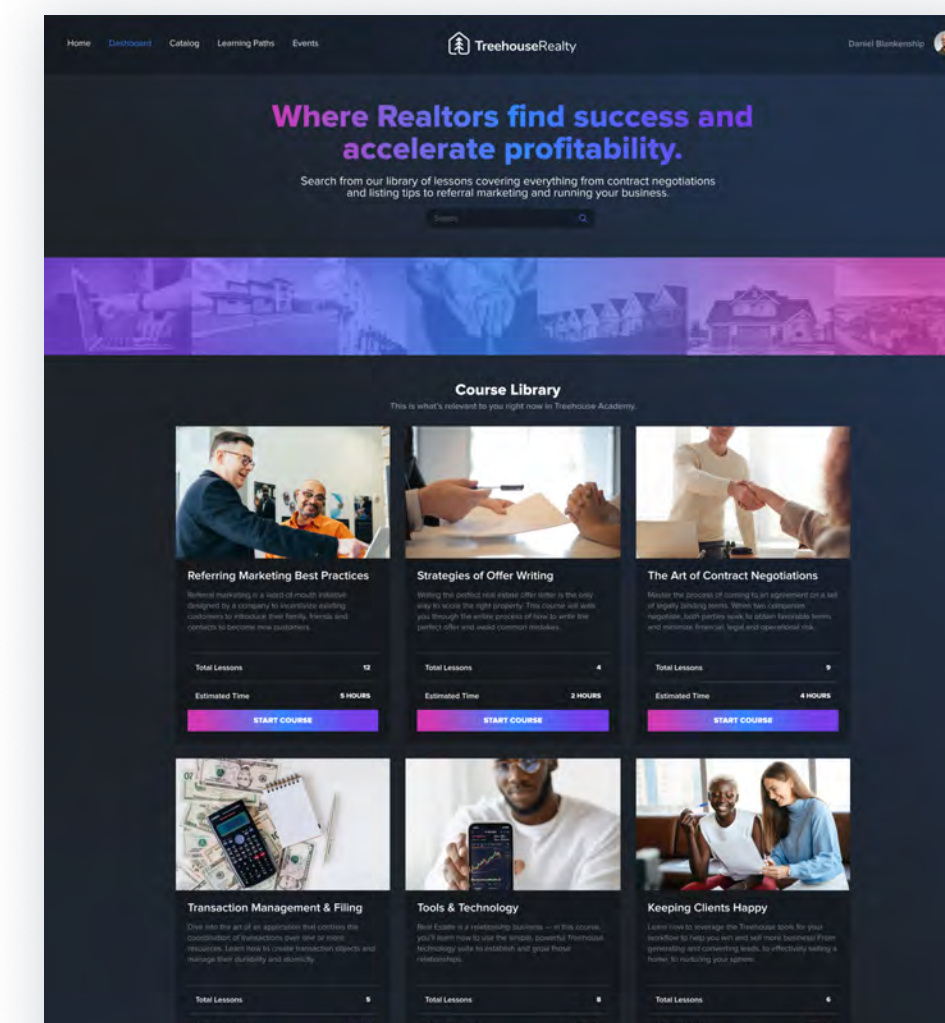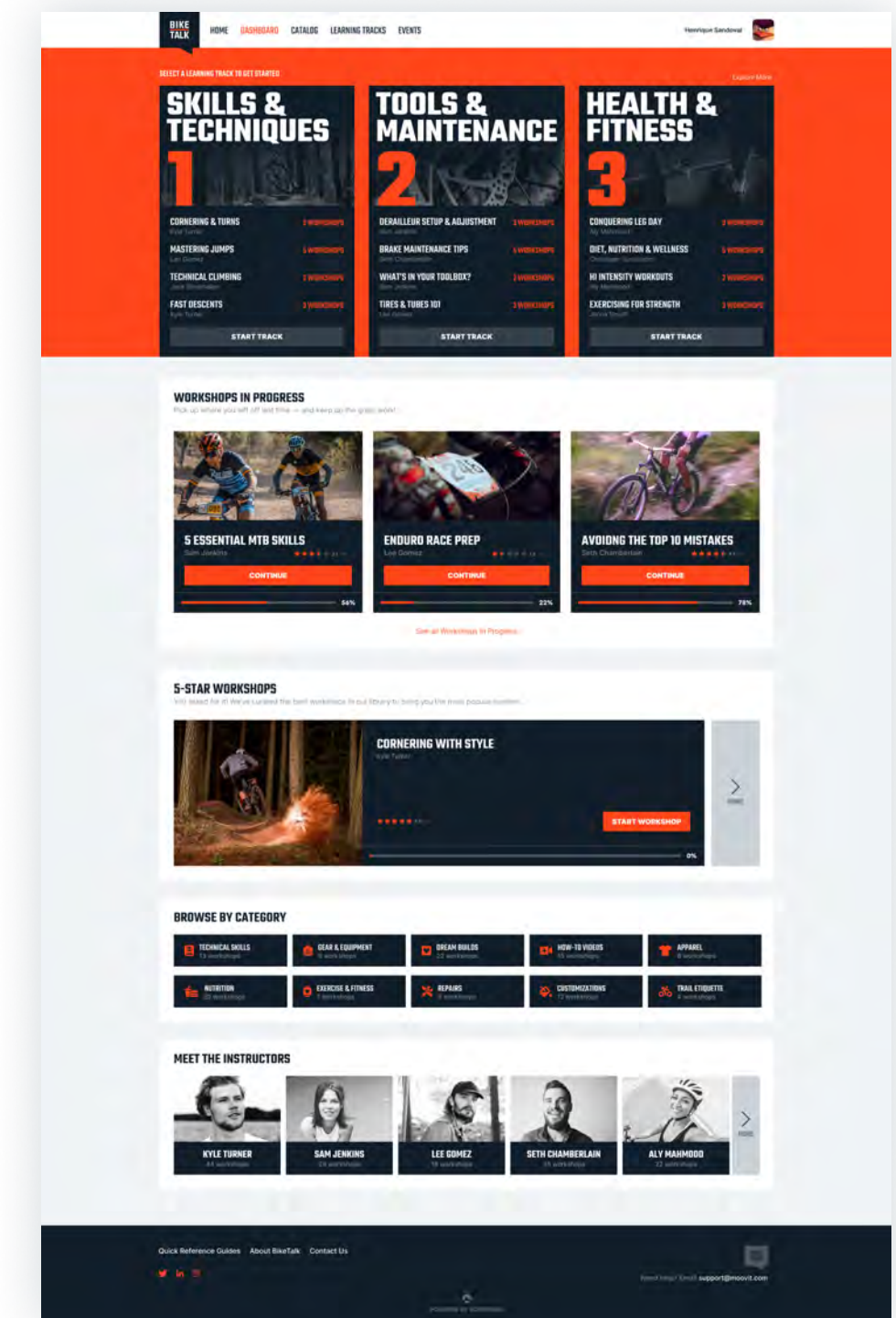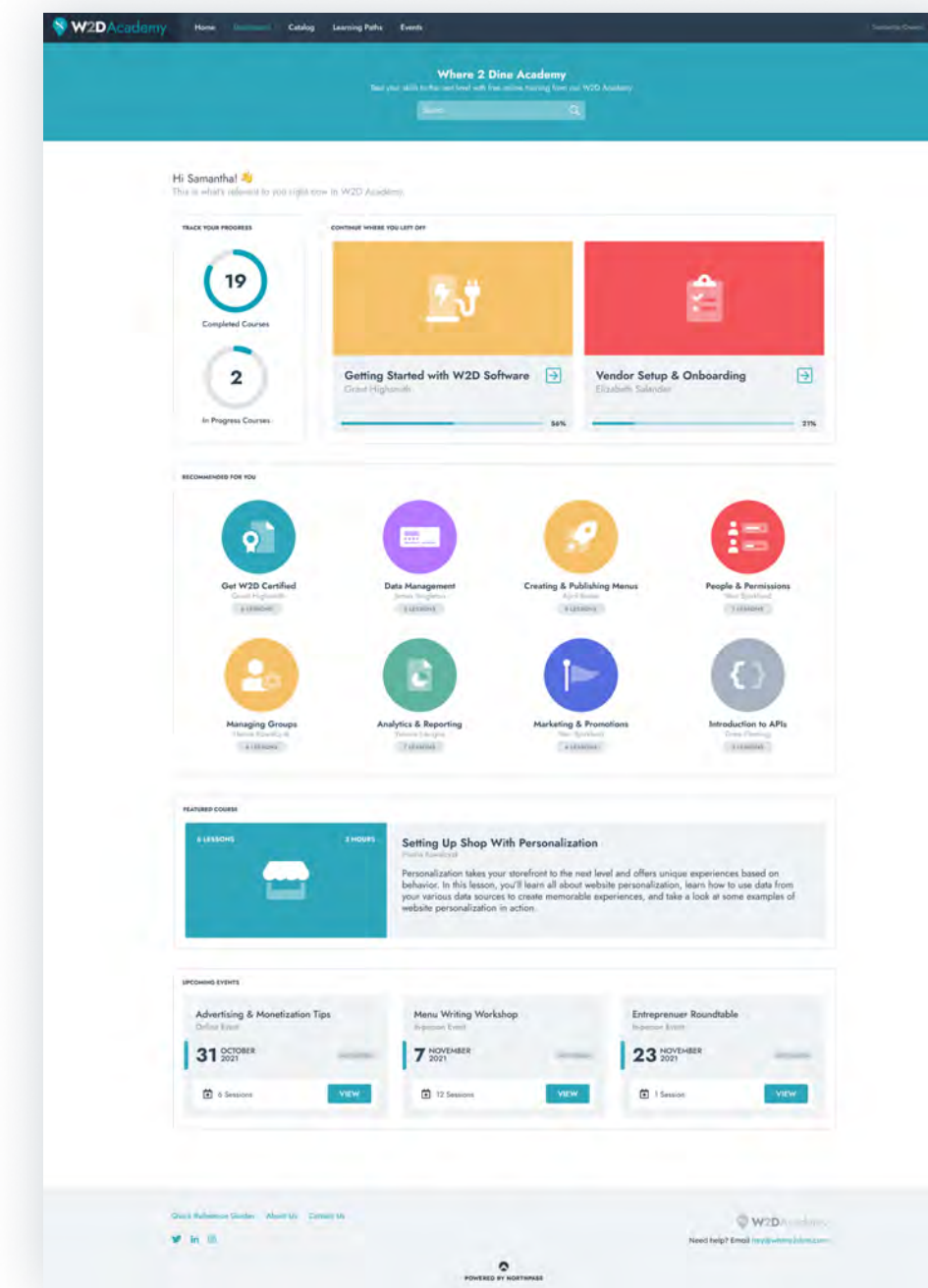
Takeaway: Tap into available design resources, internally or externally, to customize your academy and align it with your overall brand identity.

Examples of Northpass Custom Templates →

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# 2 Use Sequential Learning to Improve Learner Outcomes

For upstart customer education teams, content creation eats into the majority of available resources, leaving the delivery strategy out in the cold. This is a problem.

The content could be great, but if it's not delivered in a strategic way that pushes people toward a goal, it's not going to do its job.

Think of yourself as someone coming to your academy to learn about a new advanced feature. You have to find the content, interpret it and then apply it. If there's additional content to gain a more in-depth understanding, you have to navigate that as well.

This is a lot to ask. Not only are you assuming they'll do all of these things, but you're assuming they'll walk away with the knowledge you intended for them; you'll hope that they achieved the content's goal. In this case, to master the new feature.

This is why you need to introduce **sequential learning**. Sequential learning helps navigate your customers through a series of courses in a defined sequence, taking them from point A to point B without any confusion that'd diminish from the learning experience and the content's objective.
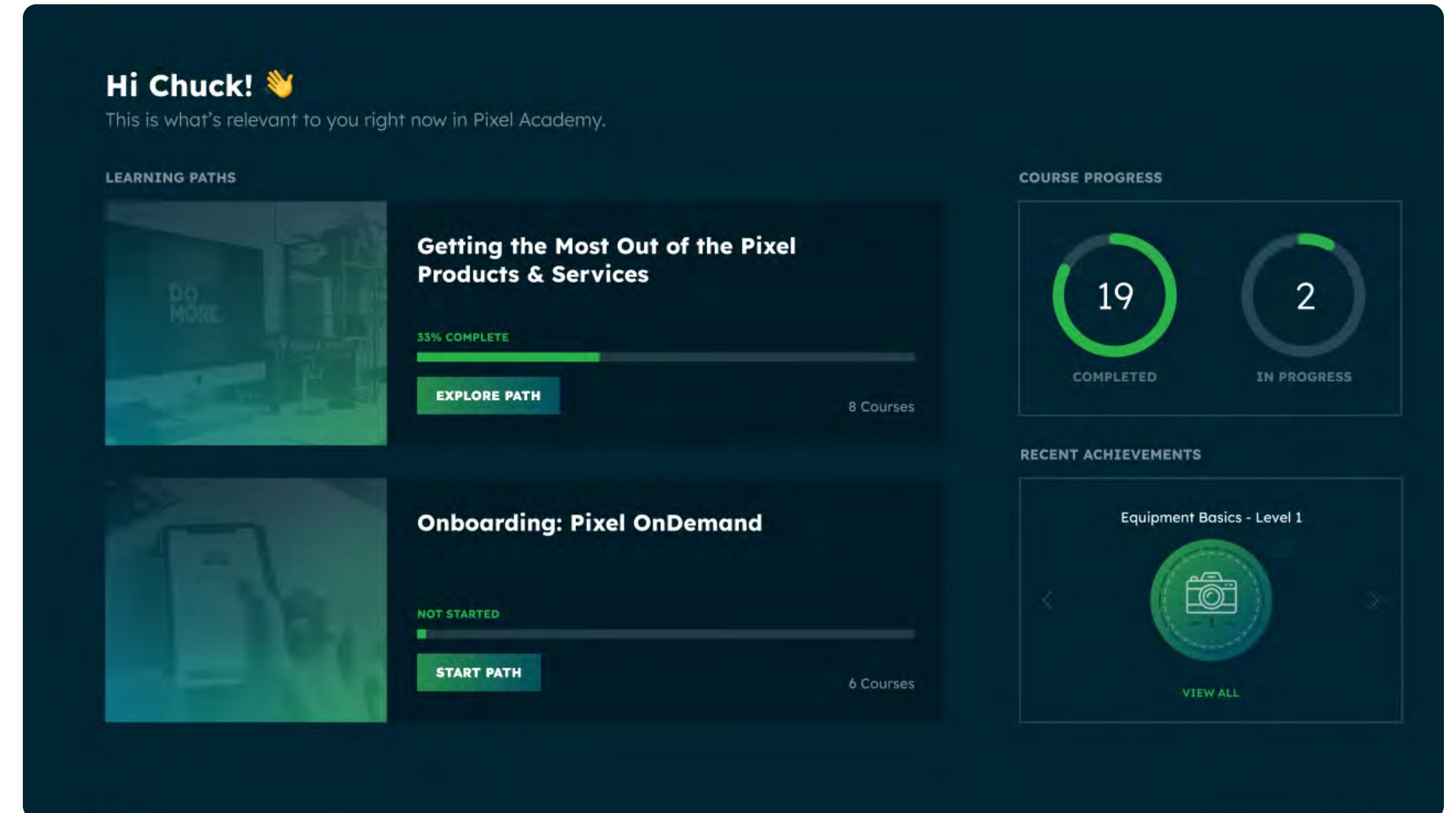
Takeaway: Use Learning Paths to organize and deliver content in a thoughtful way that encourages learning and knowledge retention.
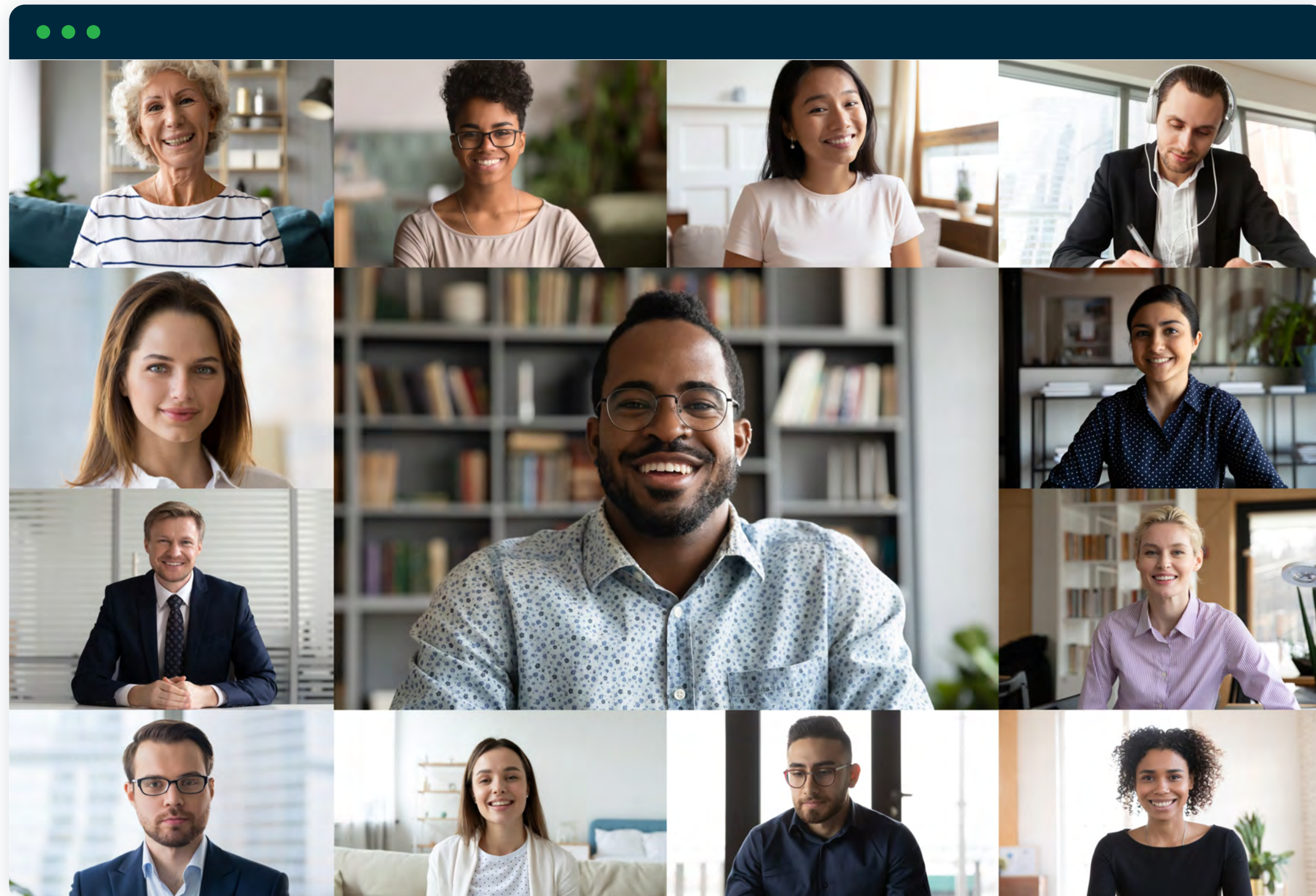
3 Incorporate Advanced Content Types

As your customer academy matures, it's important to incorporate advanced types of content.

Think short webinars and instructor-led training. This is especially important if you're educating your customers about more advanced topics.

Imagine getting an email letting you know about a new feature, only for you to dive in and become overwhelmed by its nuances and complexities. In the email, you click on the attached content, but find that the blog post or short slide deck isn't enough. In reality, to take advantage of the feature, you need something more in-depth. Say, a webinar hosted by an employee that demonstrates in real-time how to use the feature. Wouldn't that be more impactful?

Takeaway: Introduce webinars, instructor-led training and other advanced content types to enhance the learning experience and knowledge retention of more complex topics.

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Use Single Sign-on to Boost Retention Rates

Impactful changes to your customer academy don't always have to be as apparent as a redesign or new content type. Small modifications can have the same effect. **Single sign-on (SSO)** is a great example.

Remembering, or even having to create, a new username and password combo can negatively affect the customer experience. With SSO, your customers can use existing credentials to access your academy. (Say goodbye to clicking "Forgot password" every other visit.)

While this small tweak may go unnoticed by some of your customers, it'll have a positive impact on your business. How? By making it incredibly easy to log in, you're reducing friction, which increases adoption.

At the same time, SSO improves security and reduces the number of interactions with your Customer Success and Support teams, which is critical for scaling academies onboarding a lot of customers.
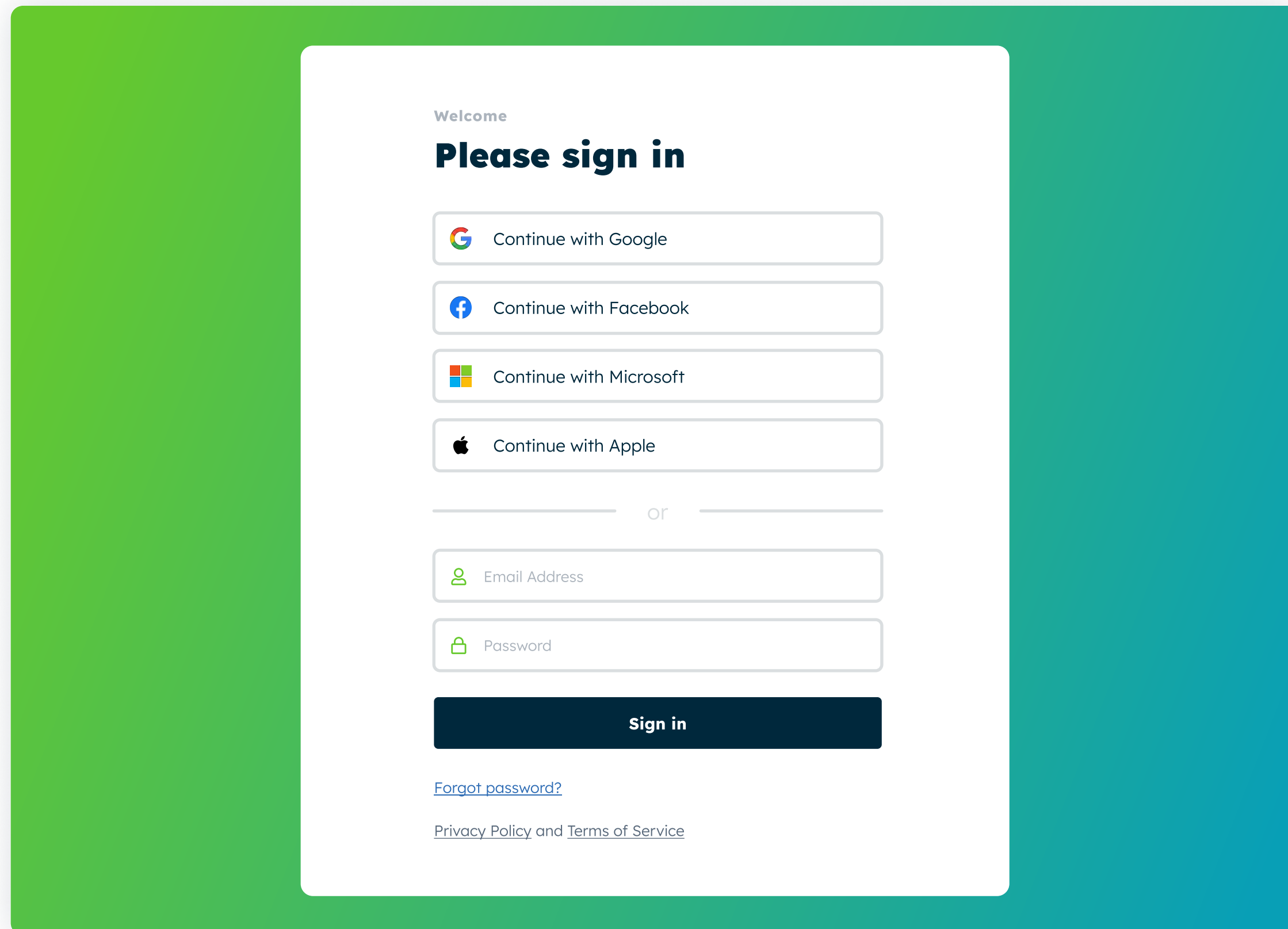
Takeaway: Use single sign-on to improve the learning experience, tighten security and reduce interactions with your Support and Success teams.
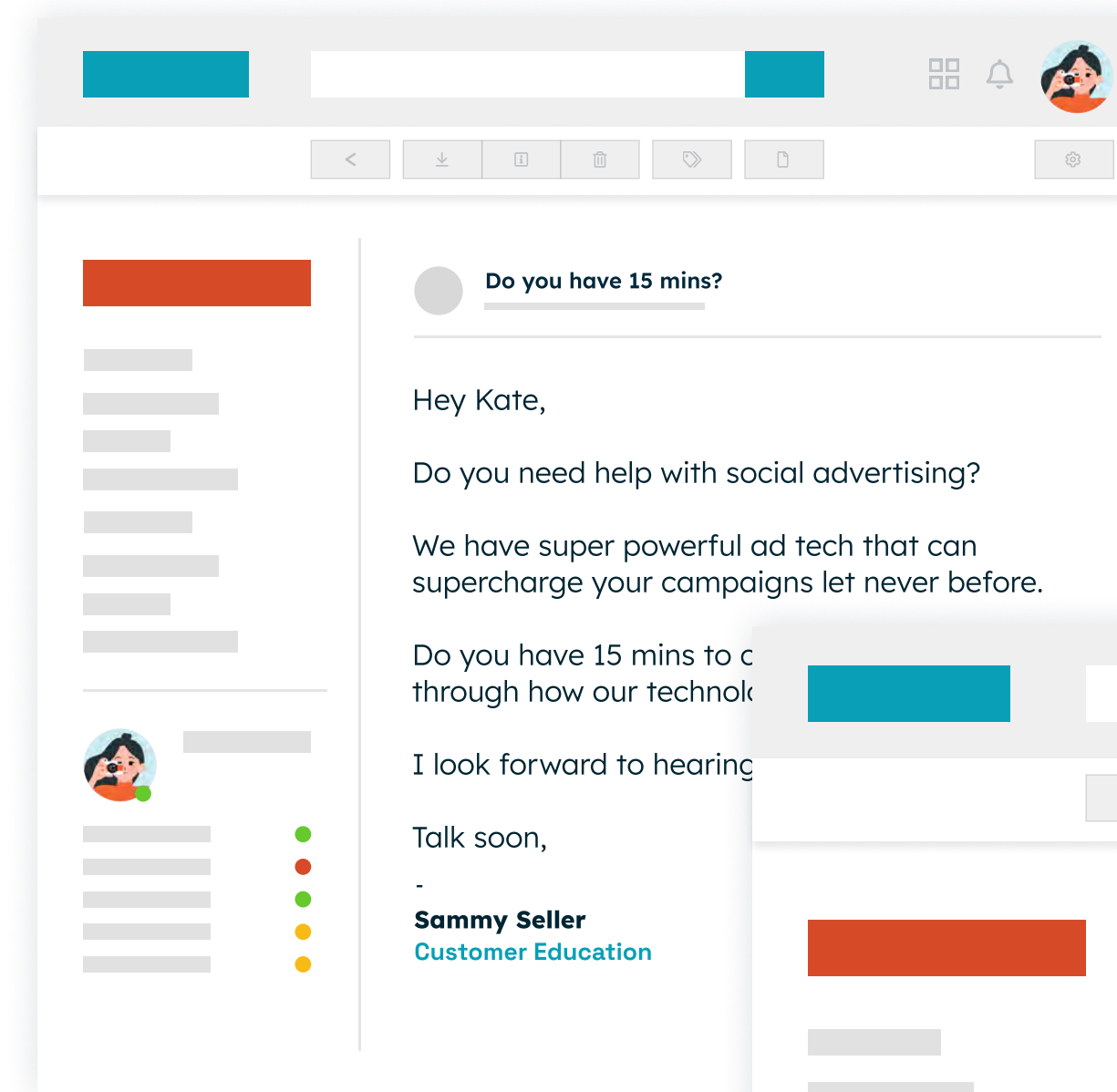
5 Integrate Your CRM & LMS

Customer education hasn't always been a focal point for most companies. Sales, Marketing and Services were. HubSpot started to change that over a decade ago and continues to demonstrate how impactful customer education can be. As a result, Learning & Development teams (that's you) are getting the attention they deserve.

But, more attention comes with more responsibility. As a key cog in your company's growth engine, you have to align your MO with that of other internal teams, namely Sales, Services and Marketing. This is why advanced customer academies must integrate their CRM and LMS.

Now, your Marketing, Sales and Service teams can create strategies built on a foundation of CRM and LMS data that can increase brand awareness and win rates, accelerate onboarding, boost product adoption and minimize reliance upon Customer Success and Support.
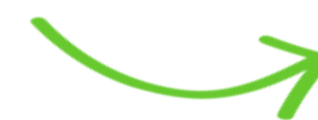
Takeaway: Integrate your CRM and LMS to fuel growth and strengthen the bond with internal teams.

Generic Email

Personalized Email
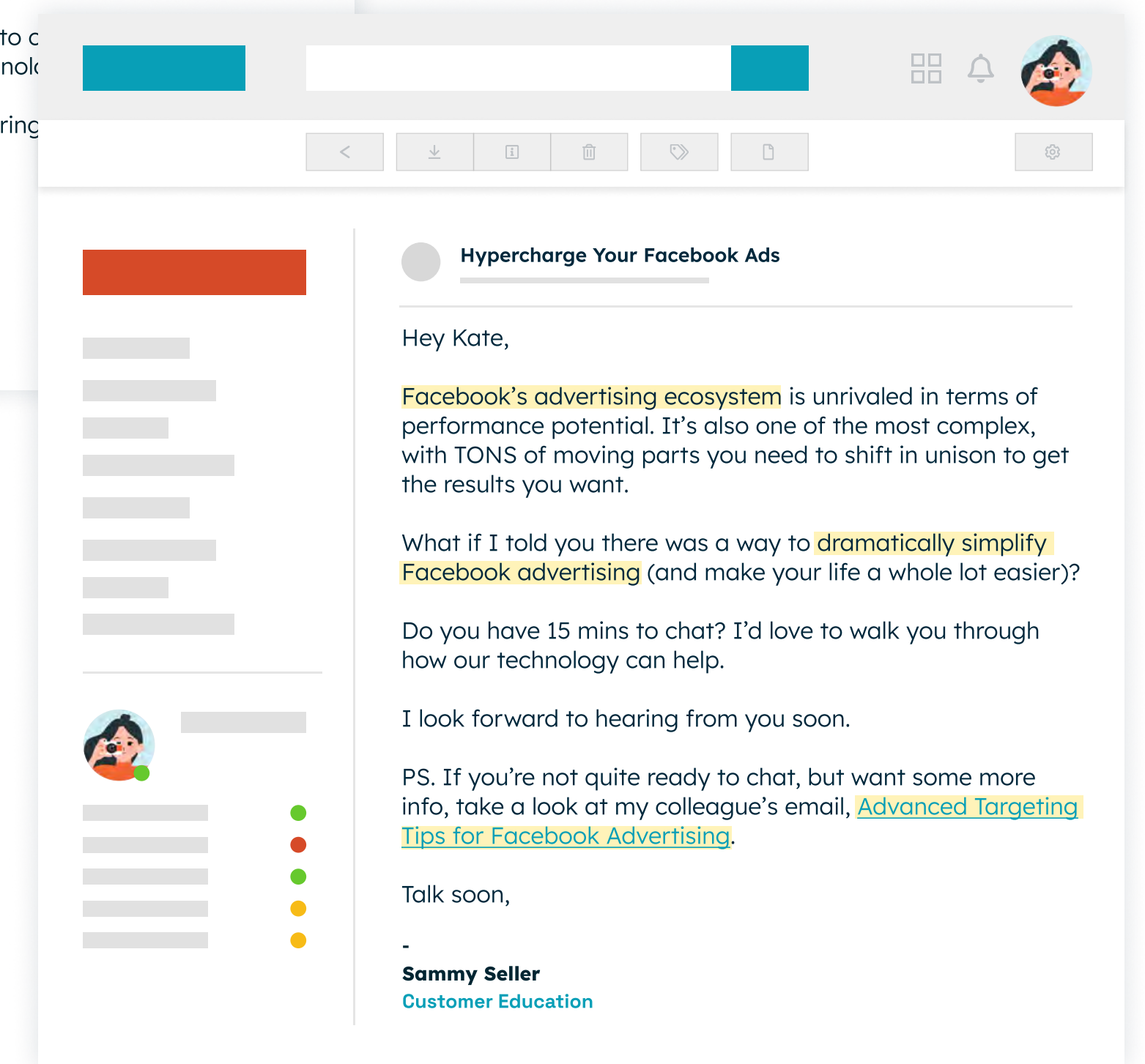
This email was personalized (notice the highlighted text) with insights gained from an LMS + CRM integration.

Do you have 15 mins?

Hey Kate,

Do you need help with social advertising?

We have super powerful ad tech that can supercharge your campaigns let never before.

Do you have 15 mins to
through how our technolo

I look forward to hearing

Talk soon,

-
Sammy Seller
Customer Education

Hypercharge Your Facebook Ads

Hey Kate,

Facebook's advertising ecosystem is unrivaled in terms of performance potential. It's also one of the most complex, with TONS of moving parts you need to shift in unison to get the results you want.

What if I told you there was a way to dramatically simplify Facebook advertising (and make your life a whole lot easier)?

Do you have 15 mins to chat? I'd love to walk you through how our technology can help.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

PS. If you're not quite ready to chat, but want some more info, take a look at my colleague's email, Advanced Targeting Tips for Facebook Advertising.

Talk soon,

-
Sammy Seller
Customer Education

6 Use Properties to Deliver Personalized Content and a Stickier Experience

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The long-term success of your academy relies heavily on your ability to consistently deliver meaningful content to your customers. Seems like a no-brainer, but there's a challenge. What one person needs to succeed could be drastically different than what another one needs.

For example, you're launching a new feature that has different use cases for the Marketing and Services team. Would the same piece of content effectively educate both of them? Maybe, but more than likely, some degree of content versioning will be necessary. Remember: **Personalization is key**.

By using properties inside your LMS, which give you the ability to apply data points to learners, courses or your entire customer academy, you can deliver relevant information, that improves the learning experience and creates a stickier environment that boosts retention.

Takeaway: Use personalization tokens and similar features to make each learner feel like you created the experience and content just for them.

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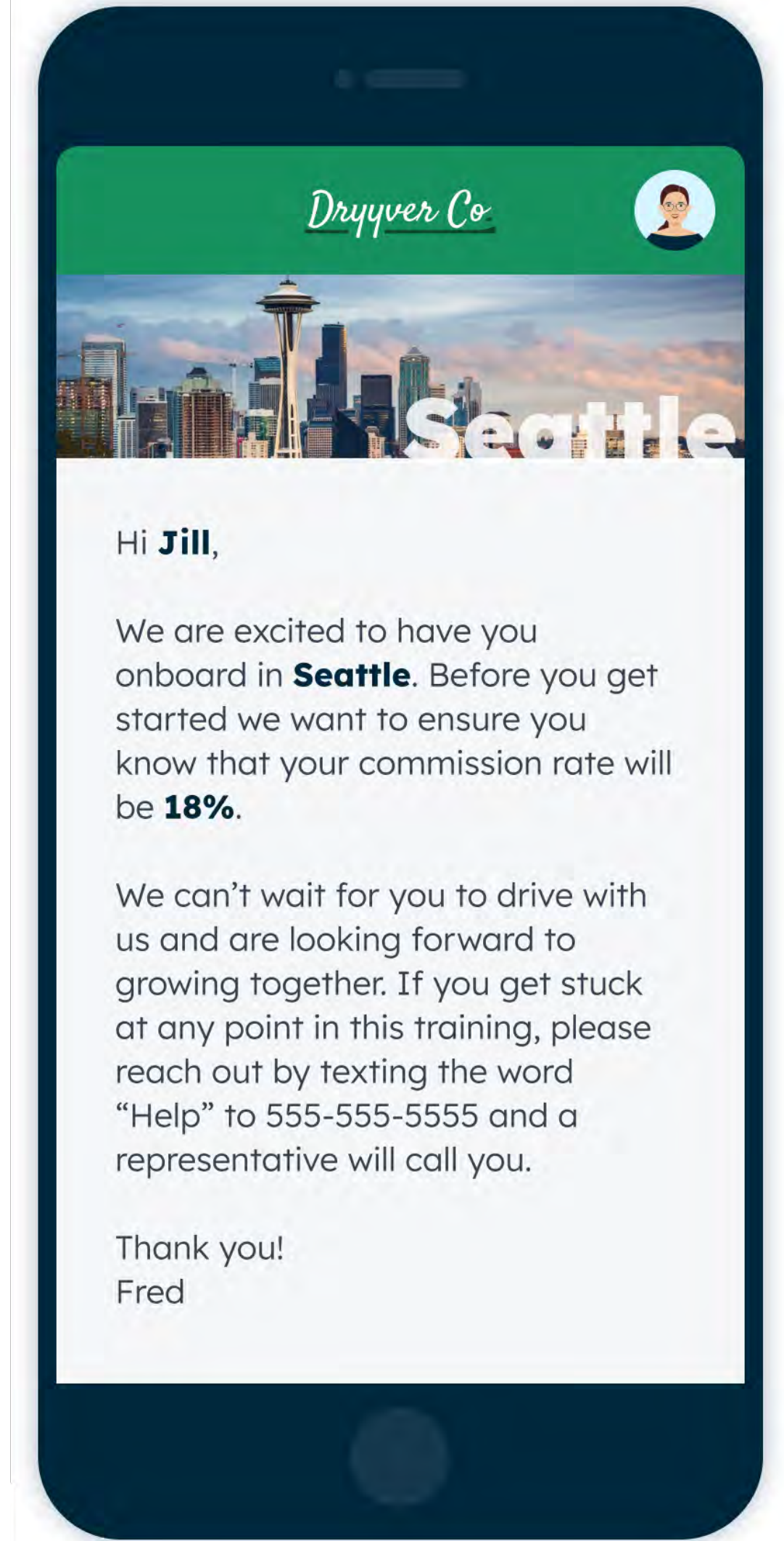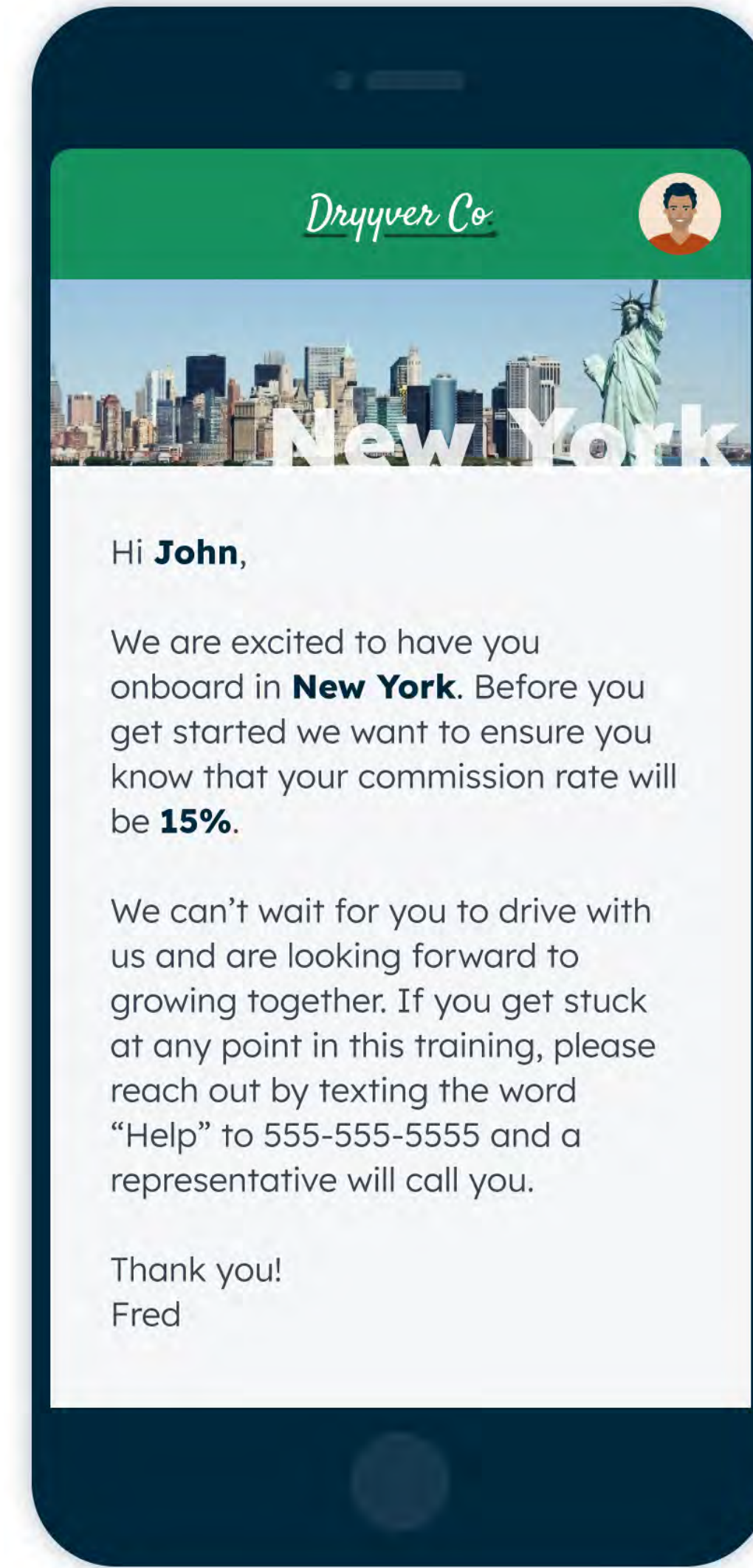
Enhance Your LMS With Integrations and Flexible Developer Tools

LMSs are kicka** straight out of the box, but as your academy grows (and your customers expect more), it'll be important that you consider the ways different integrations and developer tools can take your academy to the next level.

APIs and Webhooks

These make it possible to connect your LMS to your tech stack.

With these tools you can easily:

- Automate content updates by synchronizing properties with your systems of record.
- Automatically take action on learning events such as a course completion.
- Automate administrative tasks.

Takeaway: Use personalization tokens and similar features to make each learner feel like you created the experience and content just for them.

Integrations

Integrations exist to make it easy to connect with other systems without needing any technical knowledge. Integrations are usually just a click away and give you access to third-party tools without leaving your LMS environment. Thus, making it easy for you to create the best academy possible.

Data Warehouse Sync

A direct connection to your learning data from within your company's data warehouse will allow you to see how your learning program moves the needle.

8 Fuel Your Academy With Advanced Analytics

When you started your academy, all that really mattered was activation metrics, like monthly active learners (MALs), which courses they completed and other metrics that proved the impact of your academy.

These metrics are still important; however, now that you've demonstrated the impact to the rest of the company, including the Leadership team, you'll need advanced metrics to continue growing.

Examples of Advanced Metrics:

Course Progression
(e.g., how far specific people are with individual courses)

Company-by-company Metrics
(e.g., which companies are engaging the most)

Completion Rate
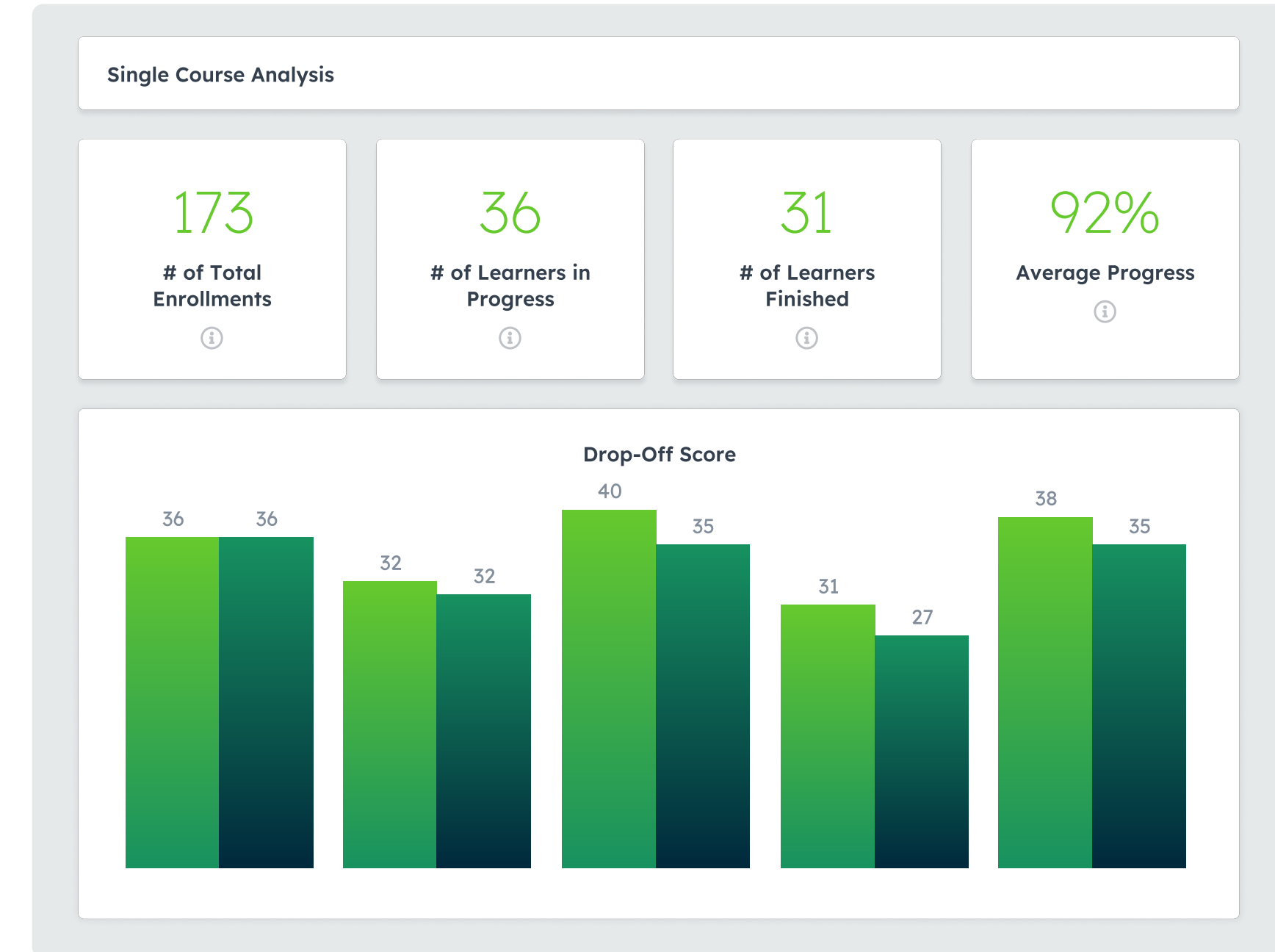(e.g., how many learners completed a particular course)

Drop-off Rate
(e.g., how many learners — and where they — stop in the middle of a course)

Quiz Rate
(e.g., the collective scores of learners who successfully completed quizzes)

These metrics speak to the impact of your academy and are the most reliable guiding light for you to continue maturing it.

Single Course Analysis

173	36	31	92%
# of Total Enrollments	# of Learners in Progress	# of Learners Finished	Average Progress

Drop-Off Score

36 36   32 32   40 35   31 27   38 35

Takeaway: Use advanced metrics to truly understand your learners and how they're interacting with your academy. Then, take what you learned and adjust accordingly.

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9 Reward Your Learners

Remember when you went to the dentist as a kid and they gave you a toy at the end? How did that make you feel? Probably really good. People inherently respond to rewards. It's human nature. You can, and should, apply this way of thinking to your academy.

To do this, implement rewards and certificates. It doesn't need to be complicated, it just needs to make learners feel like they've accomplished something and encourage them to continue. For example, after a customer completes their first onboarding lesson, you can send them an email with confetti or a fireworks gif congratulating them on their accomplishment. When they complete a full course or learning path, send them a digital badge to display on their LinkedIn account. If you want to level it up and take it offline, send them branded stickers in the mail. (Thankfully, we are all little kids at heart and our love can still be bought with stickers.)

By doing this, you're adding a layer of fun to your academy and giving people something tangible to work toward. Over time, this will also make people more prone to share their accomplishments with peers and colleagues, thus adding another element to your strategy: **word-of-mouth advertising**.

CERTIFICATION
COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

_____

_____

_____

Official Signature   Date of Completion

_____   _____

Takeaway: Use rewards and certificates to incentivize your customers and transform them into the ultimate brand champions.

Unlock the Next Level of Customer Education With Northpass

The best customer academies are constantly evolving and looking for new ways to improve the learning experience.

For customer education teams transitioning to that next level, design customization, sequential learning, advanced content types, LMS integrations and more are ways to do just that.

Want to see how Northpass can help?

Book a Demo

or email us at sales@northpass.com