HARRY & DAVID · CASE STUDY

Subscription Program

Turning seasonal buying into year-round subscriber relationships: a zero-to-one subscription program for a premium gourmet brand, designed to be understood at a glance and built to scale.

ROLE	SCOPE	DURATION	HEADLINE OUTCOME
Senior Interaction Designer	E-Commerce · Product page, landing page, checkout	8 weeks, kickoff to delivery	$330K in the first three months

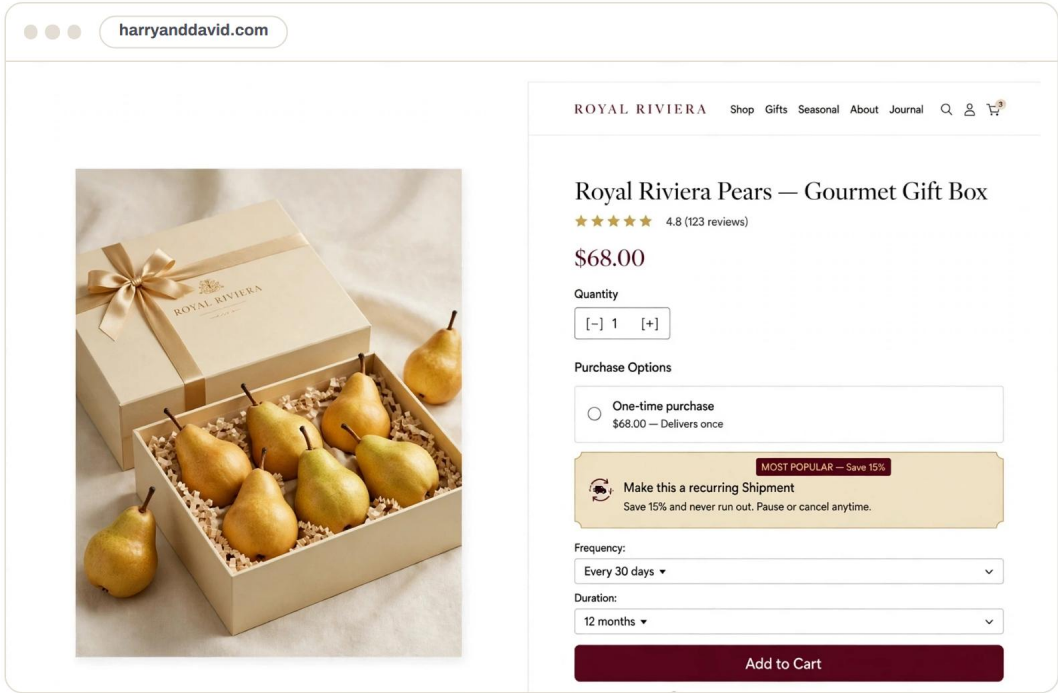
This case study is structured to Nielsen Norman Group standards for UX case studies.

SLIDE 2 · THE RESULT

Seasonal buying became a year-round relationship

$330K

In subscription revenue in the first three months after launch, from a program that did not exist before: a zero-to-one launch into a high-volume, seasonal e-commerce business.



The product page, where the decision happens. A continuous-shipping icon, the words “Make this a recurring Shipment”, and frequency and duration selectors state the commitment before purchase. Visual recreated from the documented design.

SLIDE 3 · THE PROBLEM

A seasonal business needed customers who came back all year

For ten years, Harry & David's financial success had been linked to seasonal buying. A subscription program was introduced as one of several efforts to bring in more sales during the off season, giving customers an easy way to keep their favorite gourmet items on hand.

- **Everything it touched:** a new subscription model would touch checkout, product pages, and legal. Several areas of the site would be affected, and a complete understanding of the impact was critical.
- **Differentiation:** with an extensive product catalog, subscription-eligible items needed to be easy to tell apart from one-time purchases, on list pages and product pages alike.
- **Legal exposure:** Terms and Conditions placement required close, early work with the legal team. Planning and the legal process were expected to be the project's biggest challenges.

The stakes: Harry & David's income is generated primarily through website sales, and product pages are the focal point of the purchase decision.

THE GOVERNING CONSTRAINT

The model had to launch for Harry & David inside an eight-week plan and still work long term for every brand under the 1-800-Flowers umbrella.

SLIDE 4 · THE REFRAME

The brief said add a product. The research said design a commitment.

IT STARTED AS

A new subscription product for the site: a landing page, a way to flag eligible products, and changes to the checkout system.

THE EVIDENCE THAT BROKE IT

The comparative analysis found subscription options at other companies confusing precisely because they were not clearly identified as an ongoing commitment, and interview participants were already worried that cancelling might prove difficult.

THE REFRAMED PROBLEM

Design a commitment a customer can fully understand before checkout: what it is, how often it arrives, how long it runs, and how to change or cancel it, stated on the product page, not buried in terms.

SLIDE 5 · MY ROLE AND MANDATE

I led the design end to end, inside a cross-functional team

I owned

UX design for the program

- Senior Interaction Designer at Harry & David, 09/2016 – 03/2021: one of two interaction designers in an 18-brand company with a rudimentary UX culture.
- Design of the product page update, the subscription landing page, and the checkout update.
- The research plan: contextual inquiry interviews and the comparative analysis that set the model.

I led with partners

The team and the process

- Recruited and kicked off a cross-functional team: Visual Designer, Lead Developer, Interaction Designer, Marketing Manager, and Customer Service Manager.
- Set the agenda and led the effort: mind maps, traffic flow charts, and an eight-week plan from kickoff to delivery.
- Ran the legal checkpoint: low-fidelity wireframes for terms placement, approved after two weeks.

Partners owned

Their domains

- Terms and Conditions placement: the legal team, reviewing from low fidelity.
- The build: the lead developer and engineering.
- Business goals and support: management, who backed the diverse team from kickoff.

SLIDE 6 · RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS

Research replaced assumption in the subscription model

FINDINGS	DECISIONS
Cancelling was the quiet fear	Two of five interview participants worried that cancelling a subscription might prove difficult, so cancellation guidance was built into the product page selector, at the point of commitment.
Unclear commitment was the industry failure mode	Across the 20+ companies reviewed, the confusing programs were the ones not clearly identified as an ongoing commitment. The model states plainly that the shipment recurs, with frequency and duration visible before purchase.
Terms had a pattern, and a gate	Terms and Conditions typically sat in checkout or near the product page call to action, and legal review was a known schedule risk. Placement was designed with Legal from low-fidelity wireframes and approved after two weeks.

Method note: two methods drove the design: contextual inquiry interviews with participants in the key persona demographic, and a comparative analysis of 20+ companies with subscription programs, reviewed for inspiration and for what not to do. Amazon was the only directly comparable company operating in a similar multi-brand space. The process followed the Double Diamond and Lean UX: Discover, Define, Ideate, Implement.

The commitment is stated on the product page, in plain sight

✓ CHOSEN

Visual scent and a plain value proposition: a continuous-shipping icon marks the program, “Make this a recurring Shipment” names it, and Frequency and Duration selectors give a quick reference to how it works.

✕ REJECTED

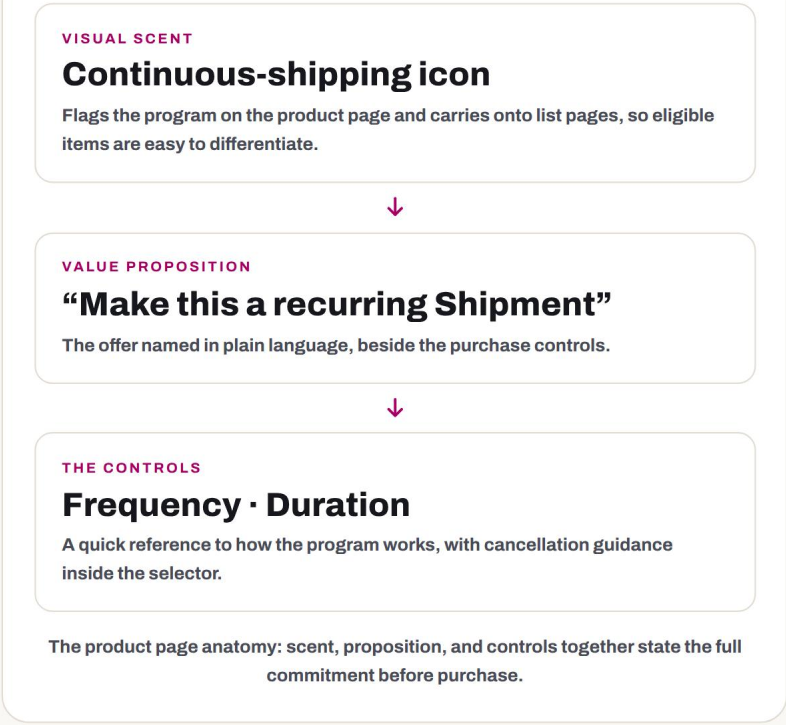
The pattern the comparative analysis warned against: subscription options that are not clearly identified as an ongoing commitment, which left customers at other companies confused about what they had signed up for.

? WHY

Product pages are the focal point of the purchase decision at Harry & David, and eligible items had to be easy to differentiate in an extensive catalog. Clarity at that moment is what converts.

WHAT EVIDENCE DECIDED IT

Contextual inquiry: participants loved not having to re-order every year, and raised cancellation unprompted. Comparative analysis: the clear programs stated the commitment up front; the confusing ones hid it.



The product page anatomy: scent, proposition, and controls together state the full commitment before purchase.

Checkout states the cadence on every line item

✓ CHOSEN

A basic checkout update: delivery frequency was added, and each line item in the order summary clearly states its delivery cadence, a one-time shipment versus a recurring subscription.

✕ REJECTED

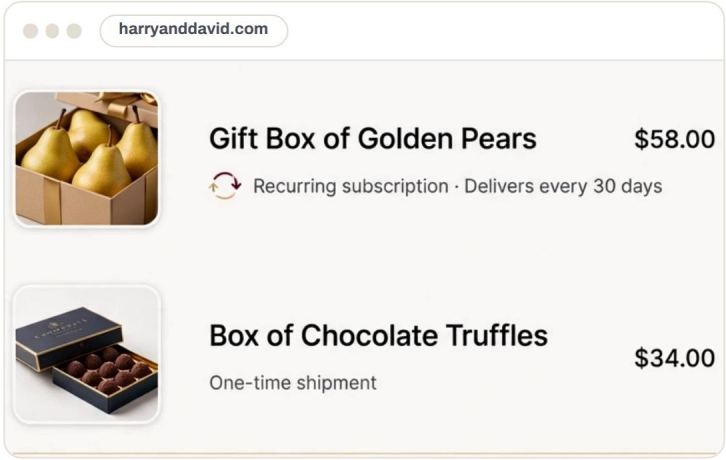
The existing checkout, which said nothing about cadence: a subscription would have entered the order summary indistinguishable from a one-time purchase.

? WHY

Purchase and management were designed as one experience, so no customer is surprised after checkout by a shipment they did not know would repeat.

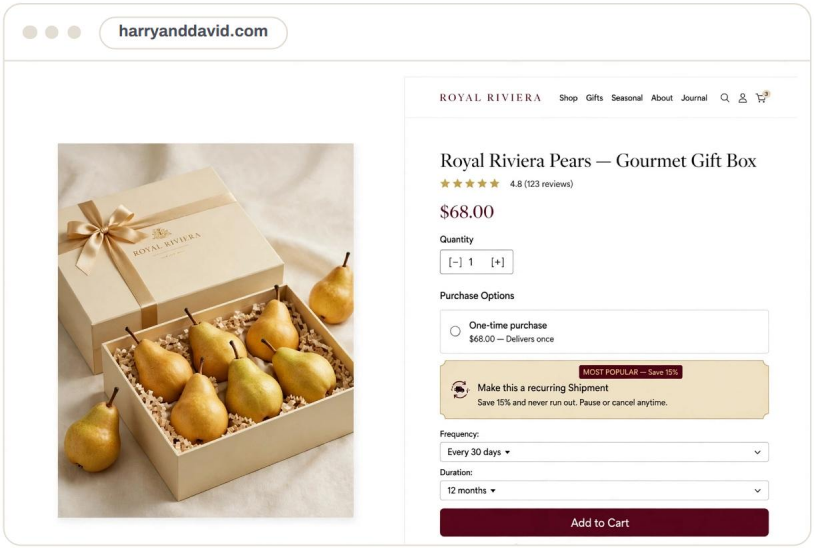
WHAT EVIDENCE DECIDED IT

Validation before launch tested exactly this: whether the value proposition was producing interest and whether customers understood how the program works, across desktop and mobile.

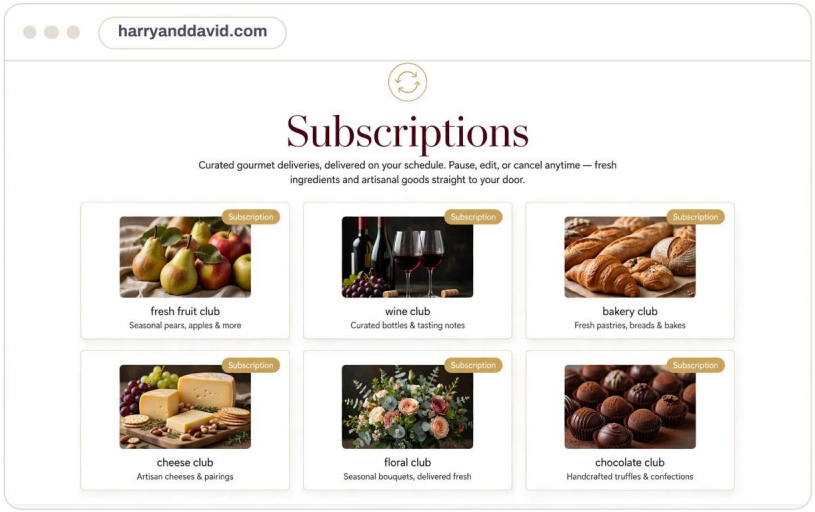


Detail of the updated order summary: the recurring subscription states its frequency, and the one-time shipment states that it is one-time. Visual recreated from the documented design.

What shipped: find it, understand it, subscribe



The product page: visual scent, the recurring-shipment proposition, and frequency and duration selectors on every eligible item.



The subscription landing page: every subscription-eligible category browsable in one place, carrying the same scent and proposition.

SLIDE 10 · OUTCOMES

Measured in the program's first season

MEASURE	BEFORE	AFTER LAUNCH
Subscription revenue, first three months	The program did not exist	**$330K**
Brands the model was built to extend across	Harry & David at launch	**18**
Projected incremental sales, 2020 holiday season	Forecast stated in the launch plan	**$5–8M**
Phase 2 self-management features underway	Deferred at launch: skip, pause, change frequency	**3**

Timeframe and framing: the $330K is the program's revenue in its first three months, the documented result of the launch. The $5–8M figure is the launch-era forecast for the 2020 holiday season stated in the source material, not measured revenue. The program was one of several efforts to grow off-season sales; the contribution claimed here is the subscription experience itself, researched and designed by me within the cross-functional team. Customer feedback surveys at the time reported customers very happy with the offering.

WHAT THIS DEMONSTRATES

> *"Subscription design is trust design. When customers understand exactly what they are committing to (and how to manage it), conversion and revenue follow."*
>
> STEVE MOORE · FROM THE CASE STUDY SUMMARY

SLIDE 11 · WHAT I LEARNED

Design the whole experience, not the page in front of you

Lesson 01

Think past the page

Always consider how a design may impact the entire experience. A subscription is never one page: it is product pages, checkout, legal, and every shipment after.

Lesson 02

Bring Legal in early

Get with Legal as early as possible: reviews can take time. Terms placement was reviewed from low-fidelity wireframes and approved after two weeks.

Lesson 03

Plan phase two during phase one

Think ahead and plan for future functionality early. Skip, pause, and change frequency were mapped against their system triggers while the first release was still fresh.

And the patience to match: results do not always present early. If the customer experience is positive, favorable results will follow.

SLIDE 12 · THANK YOU

Thank you for reviewing this case study.

The summary page holds the outcomes, the approach, and the full document.