The Ten Biggest Do's and Don'ts of Ecommerce

Whether you're an ecommerce novice or a seasoned pro, you've likely heard hundreds of tidbits to help you sell more. And while having a plethora of information is often a good thing, it can be hard to sift through the clutter and find the most fundamental pieces of advice to boost your success.

That's why we made this quick and easy resource: to boil everything down to the most important aspects of online selling. Take a look at these simple, yet critical ideas to keep at the basis of your ecommerce strategy:

1 DO | Plan ahead

Whether you're getting started with your online store, embarking on a site redesign or are getting ready to launch a new marketing campaign, solid execution requires the careful coordination of numerous activities, so start with a solid game plan. Regardless of what you're trying to achieve, this plan should include key objectives and a timeline for when you want to reach certain milestones. Beyond that, it should include key metrics to gauge your progress and success. And, of course, don't forget about planning financially to help get your business off the ground and save up for future investments.

2 Don't | Expect overnight success

As with most things in life, achieving ecommerce success simply doesn't happen overnight. Between building your store, establishing a reputable brand and earning trust, it can take months and even years of steady marketing and quality customer service to reach your goals. This means that you shouldn't get discouraged if orders don't pour in immediately after launching your store. Remember, getting noticed in the crowded online marketplace can take some time – achieving sales success can take even longer.

3 | DO | Pick the right ecommerce solution for the long haul

Switching ecommerce platforms can be a major headache, so perform your due diligence in selecting the right provider from the start. When you're considering various options for hosting your online store, look beyond basic features to ensure that your ecommerce software will scale with your growing business. In other words, think several years down the road when picking your provider, thinking beyond your immediate needs and planning for the growth and success that lie ahead.

4 | Don't | Dismiss the details

Even the smallest details can make a difference to the success of your online business, so avoid the temptation to cut corners or ignore issues that seem inconsequential, especially when getting started. Even minor issues matter, so be diligent in paying painstaking attention to detail. For example, frequently audit your site to find and correct any grammar or punctuation errors. Pay close attention to the smallest fluctuations in shipping or credit card processing costs – while these matters may seem small at first, as your business grows, these seemingly minor details can cost you big bucks and lost customers in the long run.

5 | DO | Consider design and branding every step of the way

Each and every decision you make should, in some way, include design and branding consideration. After all, your brand is the basis of your business, and its corresponding aesthetics make a big impact on how customers perceive your brand. This means that when you're designing your store, or any type of customer-facing communication, that you focus on creating something that's not only impressive in appearance, but is also easy to navigate and digest. From your web design to how you present yourself in email and social media, never forget to pursue what you want your business, and brand, to represent.

6 | Don't | Ignore customer service

Did you know that the cost of acquiring a new customer is around seven times more than the costs of retaining a current one? Beyond that, satisfied customers are more likely to tell their personal networks about their positive experience with your online business, helping to expand sales without costing you a dime. To help move shoppers from customer to superfan, place an extra emphasis on service. Provide readily accessible contact information for customer inquiries, and always go above and beyond to provide a truly personalized and fulfilling interaction at each and every customer touch point. Doing so will go a long way in building brand loyalty, which goes an even longer way in boosting sales.

7 | DO | Make your website the ultimate sales tool

There's a lot of valid talk about extending your presence far beyond your ecommerce site, but at the end of the day, the ultimate goal is to drive shoppers back to your site so they can make a purchase. This means that your online store should be at the epicenter of your ecommerce strategy, focusing on the key details needed to make it a conversion machine. For example, place emphasis on including clear calls to action on each page, writing engaging product descriptions and ensuring that your product photos and overall aesthetic is appealing. To help you make new decisions, don't forget to invite others to look at your site for a second opinion, a popular technique known as user testing.

8 | Don't | Forget to keep your site fresh

Nothing's worse than an online presence that looks boring and dated. Consumers have become much more acclimated to shopping online, and now expect a modern experience, so keep your site fresh with new content, design elements and timely promotions and discounts. This doesn't mean that you need to overhaul your site every few months, but it's helpful to freshen your content and tweak the design occasionally to ensure your site doesn't look outdated or neglected. Even more, continuously updating your site gives your repeat customers a reason to come back for more.

9 DO Target your marketing efforts

While you have access to (and are likely using) dozens of marketing tools to help expand your online business, it's important to focus on the most efficient and effective efforts that best target your customer base. This means that you should target SEO early on, keeping a close eye on traffic patterns to see which levers are working in your favor. As your budget allows, try other marketing channels, such as PPC and email. The idea here is to dabble in a little bit of everything, then closely monitor your performance metrics to see which marketing efforts are most beneficial to your success. As your business matures, you'll then shift your efforts to optimizing your strategies to get the most bang for your buck.

10 Don't Try to do everything at once

It's true that reaching online success requires juggling lots of activities, but keep in mind that you don't need to (and can't) do everything at once. In fact, trying too hard to accomplish everything out of the gate will work against you, making you feel overwhelmed, overworked and discouraged. Instead, plan wisely, set realistic goals and execute your activities according to your pre-established timeline. Take your journey one step at a time and celebrate your victories along the way to maintain your energy and enthusiasm as you near your ultimate goal – *ecommerce success!*

Keep this list of do's and don'ts handy as you continue expanding your online presence. While some of them may seem obvious, it's important to keep them in mind, no matter how much experience you have. Remember: *keep it simple to get it done!*

Happy selling!

Open a successful online store

Volusion gives you everything you need to build, manage and grow a successful online business. Whether you're an ecommerce novice or seasoned online seller, you'll receive the ultimate set of business tools, including your own fully-hosted website, effective marketing tools, user-friendly web design and much more. Over 40,000 customers trust Volusion to power their online business, leveraging a full suite of customer support offerings, including free 24x7 customer support and educational resources to help their online presence flourish.

Ready-to-go templates

Give your site a design that's sure to impress. Simply apply your favorite template with just a click of the mouse.

All-in-one solution

Build and manage your online store with a shopping cart software that's full of easy-to-use tools – no programming skills required.

Unlimited 24x7 support

Receive the help you deserve. Our team of friendly ecommerce experts is here to answer your questions at every hour.

Start your free trial today

Ready to start your journey to online success? Sign up for a free 14-day trial to take our software for a spin, no strings attached.

Try it free