

Best practices to launch a successful eCommerce shop

by Prasanth Janardhanan | October 12, 2022



As an ecommerce consultant, I have architected, designed, developed, and launched quite a few ecommerce sites. The critical question is, to launch a successful ecommerce business, is it enough to just get the site up and running? For a business owner, there are a lot of things to be taken care, decisions to be made, issues to be hashed out before his business can really launch an ecommerce site for customers and be successful.

In this blog, I would like to list out the areas and best practices that needs to be taken care to launch and grow their customer base by opening an ecommerce store.

1. Getting your site ready

The real challenge for the business starts once the technical team hands over the ecommerce application to the business. The site is thoroughly tested for functionalities, integrations, performance, and scalability, but it is still a blank slate. The technical team also would have provided training and documentation to the business. Now it's up to the business to dress up the site in accordance with their business vision and needs.

The Home Page – which the user sees when he first lands on the site – needs to be updated with the banners, images and content that highlights the vision and mission of the business.

The technical team would have created multiple integrations to the ecommerce site based on the requirements. Business now needs to make sure that the integrations are changed from the test mode to production mode and subscriptions enabled as required. This includes the Order Management System,

Payment Gateways, Fulfilment system, Shipment service and various small integrations for analytics, tracking sales etc.

2. Choosing the right products

In this age of explosive growth of ecommerce market, for a business to make profit, they need to carefully choose the product line they want to sell online. Due to the number of competing online merchants, the business should find a unique selling point for their merchandise. It could be a product line that is not available in mainstream market, or very competitive pricing, or even the promotions and offers that can be provided to the customers. Next, the business needs to decide on how to manage the inventory – whether to purchase and stock the products or to use drop-shipping where distributors ship the items directly to the end customer.

3. Conversion – easing the customer journey to reduce abandonments

Checkout flow is one of the most crucial steps of a customer's online purchase journey. Since converting casual visitors to actual buyers is the biggest challenge for an online shopping site, ecommerce companies have done extensive research to identify the best experience that enables customers an effortless checkout experience. A few of the best practices for checkout experience are:

- Single page checkout – design a simple looking page which accommodates all the information needed for the checkout – Shipping/Billing address, Shipping/Payment method selection, item details, cost breakdown etc. organized in an elegant manner
- Guest Checkout – Allow users to checkout without registering
- Design pages so that they are equally appealing in mobile/tablet/web
- Optimize pages and products for search engines

4. Customer Satisfaction – Fulfilling the promises

Once the order is placed by customer, it is up to the business to make sure that the experiences provided by their technical team on the website is maintained throughout the order journey of the customer. For that, the customer needs to be made aware of every step of the order journey till the ordered product reaches the customer.

A customer ordering from the website expects the product to be at his doorstep at the earliest. The best thing business can do is to set the expectations clear by mentioning a tentative date when customer will get the product.

A few of the challenges faced by business in fulfilling the orders is listed below:

- Keeping the inventory – Businesses tend to incur loss when there are no proper predictions on the orders, and they must keep inventory of all the items listed on the site in their warehouses. Not keeping the sufficient inventory increases the risk of shipment delays and in turn, customer complaints. One solution for this is to choose drop shipping, where the orders are shipped to the end customers directly by the distributors.
- Branding the shipments – Getting the ordered products in a generic shipping box does not delight the customer one bit. This is where Amazons and Walmart of the world succeeded by shipping the products in branded boxes. Boxes with the business branding not only provided a sense of belonging, but also increases the customer confidence on your brand.
- Manual Delays – The business may be using a futuristic, innovative solution for fulfilling the orders, but there are certain unavoidable manual steps involved in the overall fulfilment process, which may



slow down the entire flow unless managed diligently. The person(s) who are to oversee the fulfilment system need to be trained and equipped for any contingencies that may occur. They need to make sure that the manual processes like packing, generating shipments, handing over the items to the carrier etc. are as seamless as the automated processes like invoice generation, order status changes etc. in the fulfilment system.

5. Customer Retention – After Sales Support

It is equally important for a business to retain its existing customer base as it is to attract new customers. The key to customer retention is knowing what your customer may want beforehand and start acting on it. Following points will help in identifying the key areas to focus:

- **Proactive customer support:** Rather than waiting for customer complaints and act on them, Businesses would want to identify the pain points thru proactive monitoring of various aspects which will enable them to address customer issues before they even know it. One example could be, if there is a payment failure, set specific alerts which will enable the customer support team to be notified and they can reach out to the customer to fix the issue. Also, seek continuous feedbacks, engage in social listening, find out what the customers are saying about your products online. Respond and react accordingly.
- **Prompt or retarget:** After the first purchase, send a nudge to the customer to make another purchase, or at least lure them to your site by giving a promotion.
- **Loyalty Programs:** an effective way to retain customers is to enroll them in a loyalty program that provides points or cashbacks for every purchase they make. Devise the program in such a way that it looks unique
- **Goodwill Offering:** If you have an unsatisfied customer, you can always calm them by giving a one-time coupon. For customers on a wall, a free shipping or a free extended warranty will go a long way.

An ecommerce site reflects your brand and business value. Every online shop should thrive to provide unmatched customer experience so that you can retain skeptical buyers, attract new customers, convert casual visitors to loyal ambassadors. This is a continuous process, when executed with the best practices we have discussed here, is guaranteed to produce business success for you. You may have to tweak some of these practices according to your specific use cases and business conditions. You need not be alone in this journey; you can rely on technology and operational partners such as [Gadgeon Smart Systems](#).