

Cheat Sheet: Profiting from e-Commerce the right way

E-Commerce is becoming an increasingly popular business model. However, many SMEs can't fully exploit this revenue channel, mainly because they are unsure about what to do or how to begin optimizing their business practices for e-Commerce.

This short guide offers some "Quick Wins" to make a distinct difference on the number of website visitors that end up making a purchase (user conversion rate).



Going International

You may finally decide to take the big step to start selling abroad. In this case you may want to know which e-Commerce aspects to focus on, in order to benefit the most from your efforts.

Currency: Make sure your website integrates local currency payment options.

Language: You may assume that you should only translate your website in English since, it is a widely spoken language, but chances are that your customers won't be happy trying to figure out what to do. So, translate your website to the local language, or at least the landing page.

Phone number: It is an essential element that can truly make a difference on your profits. What you can do is to have visible a toll free phone number throughout your website. Preferably the person who answers the calls is a native speaker of your customer's language.

Live Chat: Let's say you own an e-shop with clothing items. Your customers may wonder "Will this fit me?". Allowing your customers exchange opinions with others, and having a customer service person available to answer all

questions can make a substantial difference to your conversion rate.

Payment Options: Offer a PayPal payment option. Currently there are 110 million PayPal accounts. Offering PayPal as a payment option can increase the chances that shoppers will complete transactions on your website.

Deliveries: If possible don't charge delivery costs to your customers. Also notify them on the delivery times with detail and accuracy. Surveys indicate that experienced online shoppers select retailers that do not charge shipping costs and offer fast delivery times.

Returns: Don't charge returns and have your customers know that they can return purchased items at any given time. Don't worry that they won't, since most of them when they realize that they are not satisfied with what they bought they will return it right away.



Optimizing your website

De-risk online shopping: Ensure the customer that the data he/she provides are safe, use trust seals, and don't additionally charge deliveries and returns.

Promotional Quotes: On several places of your website use quotes that will encourage users to buy. These quotes may refer to product scarcity, limited time offers, guarantees etc. This technique always drives sales; your conversion rate can sky rocket up to 50%.

Images: Invest in high definition photos of your products, since they convey the most important information the customer needs to know. Photos must be clear and accurate and product dimensions easy to grasp. Another thing to look into is styling and design of your photos. Good quality product image can increase your conversion rate up to 20%.

Usability & Looks: Your potential customer will click away once he/she visits a messy page, with lot of text, wrong itemized products or hidden buttons. Invest on a professionally looking site.

Checkout: The online checkout process must be clear and staged. Don't confuse your customers with external links. Always inform them on additional shipment charges and delivery times.

Search box: Most users don't bother to browse your website to find what they are looking for. They use the search box instead. Add auto-complete functionality to your search box to see your conversion rate increase up to 8%.

Back order: Place a back order option for products that are not currently available. If the product is not available the customer must be given the opportunity to place a back order and be notified about product availability via e-mail or phone call.

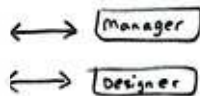
Personalization: Segment your customers to new and returning ones. In terms of product placement, display *Hot sellers*, *Most popular* and *Promos* categories for your new customers and for returning customers *Recently viewed* and *New arrivals* categories. You can also combine the categories: *Top sellers*, *New arrivals*, and *Top rated*.

Quick shop: Offer functionality in which when a user hovers over the image of the product, it gets enlarged and displays product information (e.g. price).

- **63% of buyers research for an item online before they purchase it from a physical store**
- **89% of online consumers also buy at physical stores**
- **Currently early adopters of the Internet as a shopping channel are people in the early 60s**
- **Multichannel customers spend 3.5 times more**
- **40% of EU citizen are online consumers**

Use the right tools

- ◆ Google Global Market Finder: Lets you know potential markets for products internationally.
- ◆ Google Remarketing Tool: Personalize shopping recommendations for your abandoned cart users, and remarket products.
- ◆ Google Display Network: Is a tool to advertise your products, in context related sites. When you decide to use it, include a very strong 'call to action' quote for the user.



Invest in Social Media

Social media can be used in multiple ways in order either to market your business or even to improve your products. You can utilize social media to conduct focus groups for your products and to also form your opinion leaders' base by launching user contests.

- ✓ Be personal and relevant online.
- ✓ For mail product campaigns segment your customers in terms of previous shopping history; The same applies to customers from different countries.

- ✓ Always "split test" your campaigns before launch.

For a successful social media campaigns:

- ❖ Identify who your opinion leaders are (product/brand enthusiasts, loyal consumers).
- ❖ Provide them the tools to promote you.
- ❖ Keep track of How, Where and When the opinions are shared.
- ❖ Monitor and respond.

Want to know more? Keep track of PECOS4SMEs project: www.pecos4smes.eu