

The 2020 eCommerce Guide: **Boosting Conversions and Maximizing Sales**

Best practices for ecommerce success in 2020



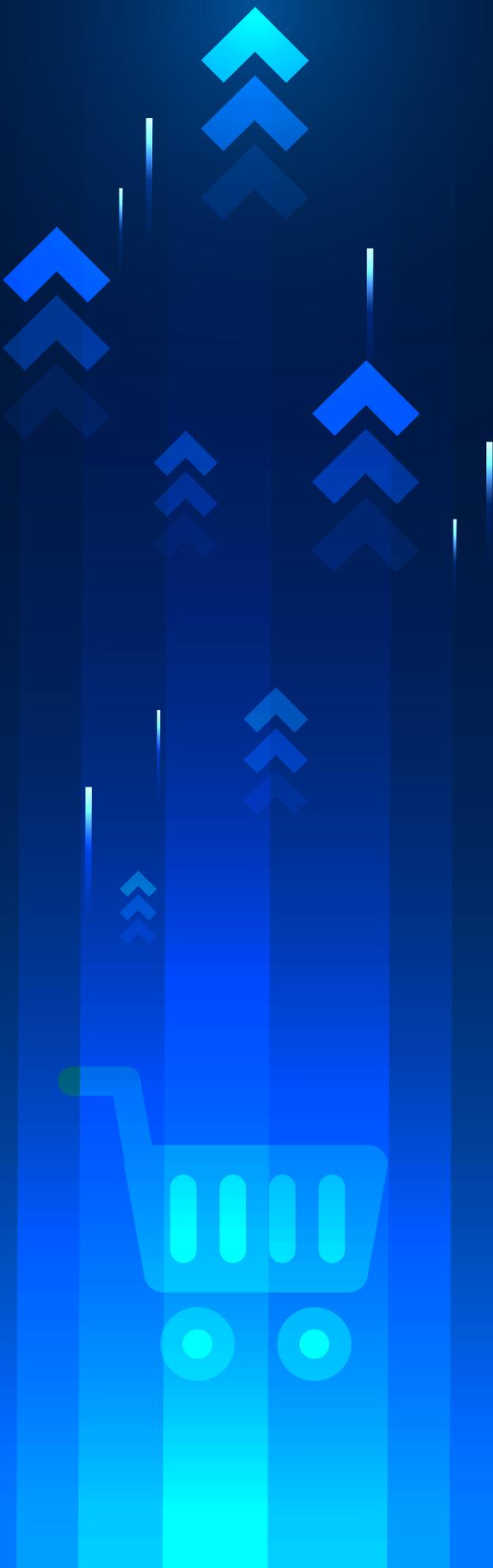


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Introduction

Ecommerce is growing at an unprecedented rate. According to a study by Shopify, the worldwide retail ecommerce sales will reach \$4.5 trillion by 2021. Another recent survey revealed that by 2021, there will be 2.1 billion digital buyers worldwide.

But why is ecommerce growing from strength to strength? As lifestyles become busier and technology changes and improves, consumers are seeking new, more convenient methods to fulfil their sales needs. However, technology isn't the only cause of the massive boost in ecommerce. Below are some other reasons why ecommerce is growing rapidly:

1. User-friendly

A core reason why ecommerce is growing is its user-friendly approach to everyday tasks. Having a website or app makes doing the weekly shopping, buying new clothes or even ordering prescriptions easier. You don't have to travel, walk among busy crowds or battle the traffic. The development of voice-activated shopping even takes the issue away of using a website and makes shopping hands-free. With a simple command, you can order a product or find out more information about a store. This can help you to make more informed shopping decisions.

2. More options

Shoppers also want more choice. They enjoy having every option available in terms of color, size, style or spec. And while traditional brick and mortar stores are forced to carry a smaller range of stock, ecommerce makes all of these options possible.

3. Tailored experiences

Gone are the days of simply being recommended a similar product when you buy something online. The 'customers who bought this also bought' option is no longer suitable for modern consumers who want that bit more. They want to see recommendations tailored to their preferences, purchase history and unique style – whether it's fashion, furniture or even food products. This is delivered to ecommerce sites, with user data enabling a bespoke customer experience.

4. Accessibility

Brands that sell online are no longer limited to traditional store hours. Instead, sales can happen around the clock. Online stores don't close due to bad weather or struggle with queues of customers when staffing falls short. Likewise, customers can shop at any time of the day, 365 days a year – which also applies to their customer services too. Being more accessible at any time also opens businesses up to new customers. For some people with disabilities who may struggle with physical accessibility in stores, being able to shop online can be very useful. Having access to a store or customer service team can also benefit those who don't have the time to get out to the high-street.

How can enterprises build ecommerce strategies that consistently engage and convert customers? And how can they get started in their journey towards ecommerce mastery? This ebook will seek the answers to these questions and explore the secrets of maximizing customer acquisitions.

How do you define customer journey mapping?

Taking the perspective of the customer is essential to understanding his experience with a brand. For this reason, many companies are using customer journey mapping to study the user experience and learn where improvements can be made. Through an analysis of quantitative data and anecdotes from both customers and employees, brands may develop comprehensive maps that reflect the customer's motivations and sentiments along the journey from potential to loyal customer. Here are five key benefits of customer journey mapping.

Reduced costs

Brands that use customer journey maps also reduce costs. According to research by the Aberdeen Group, such brands experience more than ten times improvement in the cost of customer service. In addition, brands that manage customer journeys experience 21% year over year growth, while brands that don't actually experience a decline at -2.2%. Lastly, an increase in positive word of mouth and a decrease in customer churn reduce the costs of acquiring new customers.

Better customer understanding

As a customer moves from one touchpoint to another, a map may indicate how easily he is able to do so. For example, is the customer able to connect to an agent quickly through an IVR menu? Can he switch from social media to the voice channel with ease? What is his satisfaction score post contact? The answers to such questions reveal how the customer feels about every step along the journey and can help brands improve practices that cause frustration or confusion.

Increased sales

The same study reveals tremendous potential for increased sales. Such brands enjoy an average sales cycle that is 18 times faster, with 56% more revenue from up-selling and cross-selling efforts. Marketing practices are also rewarded, as these brands experience a 54% greater return on marketing investment. The numbers show that investing in customer journey maps is essential to optimizing both sales and marketing practices.

Identifying gaps in service or communications

Customer journey maps also reveal where gaps may exist in customer service. For example, one channel may prove to be understaffed and thus a cause of frustration for customers who prefer that channel. Similarly, a switch from a desktop to a mobile device might not work well if the mobile version is not optimized. Problems in communication among employees may also be revealed if agents are unable to obtain timely support from peers during service interactions.

Greater customer and employee satisfaction

As customers are given the experiences they want, satisfaction naturally increases. Indeed, Aberdeen also cites that there is a 24% increase in positive social media comments when brands use these maps. Similarly, as problems within the company are fixed and communications are improved, employee confidence increases as well. Having a better understanding of a company's goals and practices and receiving extra support helps employees perform their roles with greater efficiency.



Best practices for ecommerce home pages

The first thing users do when they land on your site is to explore the homepage. It is imperative to have a user-friendly interface for giving the users an engaging and immersive experience on your site. According to a report, 45.68% is the average ecommerce bounce rate. UX is critical as it improves the conversion rate, builds trust with the users, and increases organic ranking. Therefore, it is essential for you to create an eye-catching homepage. Here are the best practices for ecommerce website homepages:

1. Exhibit your unique value proposition

Displaying the UVP makes you stand out of the competition. UVP is essential as it informs the customers about the reason they must make a purchase from you, which subsequently increases their chances of conversion.

2. Create a special offers section

Promoting special offers can generate a lot of revenue. It attracts customers who look out for deals, and brands must create an easily accessible section to highlight offers and deals.

3. Ensure site security

Many customers are worried that their details will be extracted and exploited. Therefore, you need to ensure your customers that your brand is secure by inserting a renowned trust seal on your homepage.

4. Display the important information upfront

Before making a purchase, 67% of customers check the return policy. They need to have certain information right at the start, as it influences their purchase decisions. Therefore, it is essential to display your shipping, return policies, and other critical information above the fold on the homepage.

5. Personalize the homepage

It is imperative to provide personalized recommendations to your website visitors. Brands can use visitors' browsing and purchase history and provide recommendations based on previous actions. Personalized customer experience can increase customer lifetime value.

6. Have a clear and simple design

Customers dislike web designs with too many images, products, and CTAs. They don't like being bombarded with surplus information that complicates the decision-making process. Remove images that are not needed and have a clear and simple homepage design. It makes it convenient for the customer to find the product they want.

7. Create a mobile design

Mobile commerce can boost sales; therefore, brands need to design their homepage keeping mobile in mind. Most people shop on their mobile devices, and it is imperative to make mobile UX a priority.

8. Ensure the homepage loads quickly

Customers dislike sites where the pages take a long time to load. They expect everything instantly, especially on a mobile site. A delay of just a few milliseconds can reduce conversions by 7%. Therefore, find out what is affecting your speed, by running a speed test and resolve the issues to boost the speed of your site.

9. Display testimonials

While visiting a website, customers like to read the reviews and testimonials of other customers, as they get to know the quality of the product, services, and brand.

10. Have a live chat option

With AI and ML, it is easier for ecommerce sites to have a live chat option for the customers. A live chat option helps resolve customer queries immediately, leaving an overall positive impact on the customer.

Best practices for ecommerce category pages

The most important area to concentrate on to increase the conversion rate on your ecommerce site is the category pages. To create a pleasant shopping experience for the users, you need to organize the category page design in a way that encourages them to make purchases. Here's how you can optimize your category page:

1. Enhance the loading speed

Customers lose interest or exit ecommerce sites when the loading speed of pages is excruciatingly slow. Therefore, you must optimize your back-end configurations and use the speed optimization tactics to get the ideal loading time on your site.

2. Use consistent product images

Consistent, clear and high-quality product images are a must in an ecommerce site. Displaying uniform and consistent product images on a single page can enhance the look and feel of the category page.

3. Incorporate 'Latest Arrivals' to the category pages

Another way to engage users is by adding 'Latest Arrivals' or 'New on Store' to your category page. This will let your visitors know about the latest products available on your site.

4. Incorporate interactive filter

Adding interactive filters can help users narrow their choices and take them swiftly to the conversion funnel. The filters in the category pages should be used meticulously. You need to add filters according to the category type.

5. Use CTA buttons

There are two functions of CTA buttons in an ecommerce store, that is, to lead the customer to the conversion funnel and to guide them to take the next step. At times the CTA button is omitted on the product category listing. It is assumed that customers are already aware of how to get to the product page and will add the products to the cart themselves. But that is a common misconception, as they prefer to be directed to the checkout with a CTA button around the product. Single product shoppers find this process quite easy as it takes them directly to checkout.





Best practices for ecommerce product pages

The main aim of ecommerce websites is to promote sales, and this can be achieved by creating an excellent product page. According to research, an average of 2.42% of ecommerce site visits converts into purchases. In order to increase sales, you need to implement one or a combination of multiple conversion rate optimization (CRO) techniques to your product pages. Here's how you can make stellar product pages:

1. High-quality images

Use high quality and relevant images on your product pages. It provides visitors with visual details of products. You must also see that the images download fast, and it must be mobile friendly too. Product videos can also be used to engage customers.

2. Multiple images

It is better to display multiple images of a single product as it increases the credibility of the site. Visitors prefer checking the product from all angles (a 360 view), as it gives them a glimpse of the complete product they are about to purchase.

3. Product features/ description/ information

It is important for ecommerce sites to provide a detailed description of the products. Visitors would like to know what exactly they are purchasing, especially the size, quality, quantity, material, ingredients, etc. of the product. It is also very important to provide customers with various information like the details of the manufacturer, price, shipping and return policies, ratings, estimated delivery, and more.

4. Cross-sell and upsell other products

You can help customers to purchase other related products along with the main product by providing them with various options on the product page itself. Suggesting similar products can enhance the browsing experience and increase sales.

5. Product reviews

Customers are more likely to make purchases after reading the reviews provided by other customers. The product page must contain product reviews and images to give prospects an insight into the product they are about to purchase.

6. Product FAQs

Adding product FAQs can clear various doubts and queries of customers. It also gives them an insight into the product/service before they proceed to make the purchase.

7. CTA

It is imperative for ecommerce sites to have a CTA button on the product page. You must ensure the CTA button is visible and in contrast with the color scheme of the rest of the page. It should stand out and grab the attention of the visitor.

8. Compare functionality

In case you are offering discounts on products, you must display the original price as well as the discounted price. Display the percentage savings, as well as the actual savings, as this can entice the customers to make the purchase. Position the price details next to the CTA so that it can influence them to make a quick decision. You can also use the compare functionality between two or more products.

9. Add to wish list

One of the best practices is to include the CTA button Add to wish list for customers who would like to create personalized collections of products they may want to purchase. They can save these products in their user account. This gives them the opportunity to review and survey similar products and then make the best decision or simply purchase later.

10. Breadcrumbs to navigate back to the category page

Add a Back or Go Back button to your product page, so that customers can go directly to the category page to explore other categories and products.

Best practices for payment and checkout

Many customers quit the website when they have difficulties during checkout. And if the problem persists more than three times, they consider it as a bad experience and stop shopping on that website. Here's what you can do to prevent checkout abandonment.

1. Guest check out option

Give the customer the option to checkout as a 'Guest.' Later you can recommend them to register with your brand. Making it compulsory for customers to register and log-in in order to make purchases can simply drive them away.

2. Social login option to register

Most consumers have social media accounts. Therefore, it is easy for them to register, as all their details are automatically filled, and they don't have to waste their time registering or repeating your details.

3. Provide multiple payment options including wallets

Most ecommerce businesses do not provide many payment options for customers or customers are unable to find the payment option they prefer. Few customers leave when their card gets declined. Therefore, offer multiple payment options like credit cards, debit cards, cash/ cash on delivery (COD), Paypal, wallets, mobile payments and others.

4. Pick-up from an offline store

For fast delivery, you can provide customers with the option of 'pick-up' from the store or outlet. Customers can physically go to the outlet and pick up what they have ordered. This gives them an omnichannel customer experience.

5. Single page checkout experience

Customers don't like it when their check out process is complex and lengthy. They prefer instant check out. Therefore, you need to give them a single page checkout experience by putting their shipping details and summary of their products on the same page as the checkout page.

6. Confirmation after purchase

After giving their personal information, customers should know the status of their orders. It is a good practice to clearly inform them about the status of their order by writing a confirmation or thank you note/email summarizing their purchase to inform them that the order has been received.



Summary

The future of ecommerce is undoubtedly going to be full of exciting changes and innovations for both businesses and buyers. Whether you're an entrepreneur, or you're working at an ecommerce company yourself, it's important to try to keep your finger on the pulse when it comes to changes in the ecommerce landscape.

The bottom line is that running a successful ecommerce website is not an easy task. Fortunately, you can do many things to improve your chances of driving sales and keeping your customers coming back for more.



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