5 Practical Tips For Small Businesses Making the First Steps Toward Ecommerce

April 24, 2021 6 min read

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

Ecommerce has completely and utterly transformed the landscape of retail. The range of products and services which are purchased through digital platforms is virtually endless, including everything from groceries and electronics to clothing and toiletries. National, multinational and international brands alike have been operating successful ecommerce platforms for a number of years, but these household names aren't the only ones profiting from the e-commerce revolution.

In a digitally-oriented era, it is crucial that large, medium-sized and small enterprises consider setting up an ecommerce platform in order to maintain a competitive edge within an already saturated industry. More and more small businesses are running successful and profitable online stores, and in this article, we're going to be looking at why the opportunities provided by ecommerce are so lucrative, profitable and indispensable.

1. Extend your business' reach

Compared to a brick-and-mortar store, the extent and scope of the reach your business can achieve via ecommerce is truly unparalleled. When your products/services are situated within

a physical location, your reach is largely limited to those customers who can conveniently access your store either by foot or some form of transport.

Related: 6 Steps to Building a Successful Online Drop Shipping Business

With e-commerce, no such limitations exist. As long as you adopt a robust and effective marketing strategy, then you can retail to a considerably more expanded base of customers. You're no longer limited to the local market in your area, and instead, national as well as international customers can browse through and purchase your products/services. This is especially advantageous for small businesses because ecommerce erases geographical barriers and greatly increases profits.

2. An affordable business model

Affordability is another significant factor. Establishing and maintaining an e-commerce venture is considerably cheaper than the responsibilities associated with a brick-and-mortar store. Ultimately, selling your products/services within a physical location requires significant investments which are ongoing and expensive. The costs associated with rent, electricity, heating and cleaning can quickly begin to build up and consume a large percentage of the profits that you earn.

Whether you're just starting or you're thinking of expanding your small business, it's crucial that you retain as much of your profits as you can so that you can invest it back into your brand. An ecommerce platform is a much more financially viable route for anyone with a small business of their own, but doesn't want to expend the entirety of their budget on running costs. The number of resources you invest in your business' set up will be kept to a minimum, enabling you to redirect those resources into efforts that will actively contribute to your business' profits and expansion.

3. Seek out innovative and creative marketing strategies

One way in which you can invest these additional resources is into innovative and creative marketing strategies which will further increase the reach of your business. It goes without saying that you should have an active presence on your business' various social media accounts in order to establish a rapport and connection with your target audiences.

Establishing a brand image for your ecommerce store is crucial, and it involves everything from using the right visuals, pictures, descriptions and information to the way in which your business interacts with potential as well as existing customers.

Related: 10 Must-Learn Skills to Build a Successful E-commerce Business

The possibilities when it comes to establishing your brand are truly endless. Social media platforms, blogging, search engine optimization (SEO), professional websites and collaborations are just some of the ways you can expand your marketing repertoire.

4. Collaborate for increased exposure and revenue

Collaborations are another incredibly effective marketing strategy. The digital retail sector has expanded so much that there are now ecommerce stores specifically dedicated to representing multiple brands within a particular niche or industry. This means that if you're just beginning as a small business or you're looking to increase your revenue, then you can collaborate with a larger ecommerce store that will feature your products/services for you.

With this representation, you'll be able to generate more awareness and interest around your small business whilst simultaneously earning a percentage of the revenue whenever your products/services are sold.

5. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Perhaps one of the biggest advantages of running an ecommerce store is that it doesn't require a constant presence or consistent supervision. With a physical store, you would have to ensure that for as long as it is open it is being overseen by either yourself or a colleague. With an ecommerce store, however, once you have everything running smoothly then you can leave it unattended for hours at a time. An online store can more or less operate independently when it comes to customers browsing through goods and completing transactions.

Related: How E-Commerce Is Being Forced to Evolve In a Post-Covid World

This means that you can leave your store running throughout the night and even on weekends, maximizing the number of sales and therefore the amount of profit that you will receive. What's more, customers will also be able to browse through your online store at their leisure at a time and at a pace that is convenient and practical for them, which wouldn't be possible in a physical store with limited hours of operation.

Selling at the speed of ecommerce

The pace of technological developments is continuing to accelerate, and ecommerce is no exception. By ensuring that you remain updated on these changes and adjusting your business models accordingly, you are priming your business for success in a sector that is shifting away from the traditional high street presence to a digital one instead.

As a small-business owner, you’ll be continually searching for ways to reach out to, communicate with and sell to customers effectively. With an ecommerce platform, you’ll be able to operate your business for twenty-four hours a day, market your products/services to a diverse demographic and really grow and develop your brand. It’s an incredible opportunity which every small business should avail of.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/368131