

7 easy tips to increase your online sales

If 'selling' is in your blood, you will instinctively know how to attract customers, create desire and convince your visitors to purchase your products. You will even know how to get into the head of first-time buyers and turn them into faithful and returning customers.

Of course, not everyone is born a salesman, and for the want-to-be's it may be a little tougher to understand and convert all the key concepts into sales. Finding out what works and what does not may indeed be a bit of a challenge, but with a few helpful strategy tips and conviction, that obstacle should be easy to tackle.

1. Affiliate marketing and strategic associates.

Picture a store in your neighborhood. You know exactly where it is located, how to get there and you even know the manager's name. Every week when the flyers come in the mail, you notice that particular store's many ads. You enjoy reading about their sales, specials, contests and new products, and if they went into business with another partner, or opened up another branch.

Being visible and creating awareness are key elements to the success of an online business, and instead advertising in flyers, magazines and pamphlets, you will have to develop other marketing techniques to 'spread the word.'

Once you know your audience, start with online networking. Try trading with product related sites for ad space on their site. They place a link to your shop on their site and vice versa. Of course make sure that their products relate to yours - e.g. someone buying a tractor is probably not going to be interested in baby clothes, while an expecting mother will most likely not be thinking about starting a farm.

If you have an established business and money is not an issue, you can also pay to have your links to your business listed on more powerful e-commerce markets and directories. In addition, you can also get noticed by submitting editorials and blogs to ezine publishers and article banks.

2. Frequently test your site - broken links can cost you sales.

It has happened to the best of us. We're at the store and need a specific item. We ask the clerk for directions and he points to aisle 7. We get there, search for a few minutes, can't find that breakfast cereal we love, and finally leave.

To successfully manage an online store you have to pay as much attention to detail and customer service as in the conventional world. Take the time to frequently test all links and features. If a link to your check out or payment page is broken, you might be missing out on a sale!

3. Promotional frenzy works miracles

How many times has it happened that you threw out yet another pizza place flyer? It keeps coming back week after week, you hear their ads on the radio and when you went to the fair last week, one of their bakers even handed you a coupon. You may not like being bombarded constantly, but in the end, you will be thankful for the reminders when it's late and you need a bite to eat.

Working magic on the Web is no different. Use every possible sales channel, including phone orders, mail-order catalogues, and discount offers emailed to your customers. Use every Internet tool available to you, including social networks such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter if possible. Even if it is not business related, still mark every email you send out with your URL. You never know when the recipient may need another TV, medical supplies or inflatable toys. If you are lucky, he or she will remember you.

When sending out your products brand your return address, packing paper and tape, shopping bags, shipping boxes, business cards and stationary with your URL - make sure it is readable and bold. It may catch the delivery boy or mailman's attention too. If you attend conferences and trade shows, don't forget to mark all your promotional materials and your booth's signage and banner with your website's URL.

4. The importance of a domain name.

Don't miss an opportunity if you can afford it and register variants and misspellings of your domain name. Customers who type in your web address wrong will still be able to find you. It may cost you a few hundred dollars now, but if one of those bad spellers still ends up on your site - instead of with the competition - and spends a few thousand dollars on a huge order, who will be laughing then

5. The personal touch.

It is safe to say that most people like personal attention. Everyone wants to feel special and appreciated. During a business transaction merchants should tap into this desire and create a special bond between him and his customer. The attention will create a trust that will relax the customer, who will then be more inclined to buy. Although this is more difficult to accomplish on a website, don't overlook opportunities to treat your customers well, such as greeting them by name when they return, remembering their preferences, and offering to keep their shipping information on file.

6. Be honest and descriptive.

When composing your product or service descriptions try to be as complete and sincere as possible. If a dress needs dry cleaning, do not hint that it is machine washable. It will only create disappointment and the customer will not come back.

Adding quality pictures to introduce products is almost a must. Try to show an item from different angles, and enlarged, if possible, and check that the images are clear and the colors match the item.

7. Set attractive delivery policies.

The advantages of Internet shopping for buyers include that they can easily and quickly compare products and prices. That also includes shipping charges. Many merchants will debate if "free" shipping charges will boost sales or not, and so far, no 'golden rule' has been written. Someone has to pay the delivery fee, and if it is not the customer, then you, the merchant has to somehow work the expense into your product cost, driving up the price.

8. Offer advanced services.

Offering your goods and services is only part of your business dealings. You also have to provide excellent customer service and explain all of your policies. Will you promise 100% money-back guarantees, with no strings attached? Will you replace damaged goods? Do you offer free samples? What is your shipping time? Do you offer loyalty club points, contests and discounts?

These are just a few of the questions you will need answered before taking the plunge into the expanding world of e-commerce. Good luck is always welcome, but good planning is more reliable in the long run!

9. Have an SEO campaign

[Seo](#) will drive qualified traffic to your website. Before people buy they will first research the net to see what is the best product or service. SEO will have you ranking highly on the search engines. If you rank highly for the keywords they are typing in, they will assume that you are an authority website.

About the Author

Shout is a fast growing [seo](#) agency in Melbourne. Shout create strategic link building [seo](#) campaigns. Shout also works on website conversion rates. Once you have high volumes of traffic you need to convert the visitors.

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