

Selling online, or e-commerce, is the process of buying and selling goods and services over the Internet. Although it's often associated with large corporations, e-commerce is equally essential for small businesses, offering significant opportunities for expansion and success. With [273 million Americans](#) shopping online, the potential reach for small businesses is significant. Whether you're just [starting a business](#) or looking to broaden your reach, establishing an online presence can open new avenues for development and help you build lasting relationships with your customers. That said, the world of e-commerce can feel overwhelming without the right approach. By strategically embracing online selling, small businesses can tap into a wealth of opportunities, increasing visibility and driving long-term success.

Selling Online: Attracting Customers Online

Implementing a comprehensive online sales strategy involves various methods to attract customers to your website. One effective strategy is to focus on search engine optimization (SEO) to ensure your [website design](#) ranks higher in search results, making it easier for potential customers to find you. Regularly creating valuable content, such as [blogs](#) or [how-to guides](#), can also improve your [SEO](#) rankings by providing your audience with relevant information that matches their needs. Additionally, leveraging [social media platforms](#) to create engaging content, run targeted ads, and interact with your audience can drive traffic to your site. With the right social media strategy, you can build brand awareness and create a loyal community.

Email marketing nurtures leads and encourages repeat visits through personalized communication; however, it risks being perceived as spam and requires diligent list management. Once you have a solid distribution list, you can segment it based on customer behavior, preferences, or [demographics](#) to send personalized content that resonates with each group. Additionally, Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising offers targeted reach and quick results, but it comes at a cost and involves intense competition for ad space. Similarly, influencer partnerships [leverage established](#) audiences and may foster authenticity, yet they carry the risk of being associated with undesirable actions and high costs. Ultimately, balancing these strategies allows small businesses to connect with diverse audiences and achieve their objectives.

- U.S. Small Business Administration – [marketing and sales guide](#)
- How to Market Your Small Business on a Shoestring Budget – [cost-effective advertising techniques](#)
- Drive Traffic to Your Website – [33 tactics](#) to attract customers
- Email Marketing Services and Survey Software – [benefits of different services](#)

Selling Online: Customer Call to Action

Once a potential customer has arrived at your website, it is essential that you present a call-to-action (CTA). A call to action is a prompt on your [small business website](#) that encourages visitors to take a specific action, such as making a purchase, signing up for a newsletter or contacting you for more information. It is a critical element in guiding your visitors through their journey to help convert interest into tangible results.

- Introduction to Call-to-Action - [different types with examples](#)
- Call-to-Action Ideas - [tips for writing](#)
- What Is a Call to Action? - [definition and examples](#)

A variety of factors influence a potential customer's decision to make purchases from you. These decisions involve both rational and emotional considerations. Online purchasing is most successful when customers are searching for specific products or services, making paid and organic search the top conversion methods. For high-involvement decisions, like selecting a [daycare](#) or [medical practice](#), it's essential to provide detailed information about what you offer, your unique features and how you stand out from the competition. To set yourself apart, ask: What makes your [restaurant](#) or service unique? Do you emphasize affordability, quality, personal care or emotional connection? What strong reason do customers have to choose you over others? Offering trials, samples or consultations may also help secure sales. These efforts are only successful when they deliver true value to customers.

- Value Proposition - [examples and considerations](#)
- Consumer Decision-Making - [steps in the process](#)
- Customer Value Strategies - [creating value](#)

Selling Online: Customer Experience

Shopping cart abandonment is one of the biggest hurdles for selling online. [According to Shopify](#), 70.19% of online shopping carts end up abandoned. The primary reasons online shoppers abandon their carts are costly shipping rates, slow delivery speed, invalid promotion codes and re-entering shipping/payment info. Creating friction-less ways to shop (e.g., same-day delivery, curbside pickup, click-and-collect) encourages customers to complete their purchases and shop with you again.

For a convenient online customer experience, focus on the following:

- *Make it Easy to Buy.* Once a potential customer has reached your website and

understands your value proposition, ensure the purchase process is as easy as possible.

- *Keep it Simple.* Don't require the customer to complete complicated forms or provide unnecessary information during the check-out process.
- *Make it Obvious.* Avoid making your customers hunt through your website for purchase options, as it diverts their focus from the primary goal of closing the sale.
- *It Doesn't Stop There.* It costs five to 10 times more to acquire new customers than to retain existing clients. Therefore, it's important to provide excellent, end-to-end customer service to earn customer loyalty. Maintaining your website and managing reviews can go a long way.

Customer Service

Providing a seamless customer experience is imperative for online sales success. Simplifying the checkout process, offering convenient services like same-day delivery, and ensuring clarity throughout the site help encourage purchases and reduce cart abandonment. Focusing on ease and excellent service not only drives conversions but also builds lasting customer loyalty.

- Customer Service Feedback - [benefits and how to gather it](#)
- Ways AI Can Improve the Customer Experience - [list of customer experience tools](#)
- Improve Customer Service on Your E-commerce Site - [tips for boosting the experience](#)
- Online Reputation Management To Enhance Brand Trust - [approaches to](#)

- Abandoned Cart Recovery: How to Reclaim Lost Sales – [strategies and techniques](#)

With a smooth customer buying experience and impactful digital marketing strategy, your small business is well on its way to thriving in the world of e-commerce.

Digital Marketing for Small Business

Continue reading more from our series on Digital Marketing for Small Business:

- [Digital Marketing Basics](#)
- [Website Design for Small Business](#)
- [SEO for Small Business](#)
- [Social Media Marketing](#)

Additional Small Business Resources

Already in business or thinking about starting your own small business? Check out our various small business resources:

- View more small business help topics here: [Small Business Information Center](#)
- View small business reports here: [Small Business Snapshots](#)
- View industry-specific research here: [Market Research Links](#)
- View business plans samples here: [Sample Business Plans](#)
- View our small business cybersecurity resources here: [Cybersecurity](#)

Remember, you can also receive free professional business advice and free or low-cost

business training from your [local Small Business Development Center](#)!

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