

HOW TO INCREASE SALES

create.



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1. Basics

Starting with measurable goals

How do you want your customers to act while on your website? Defining your goals will give you a starting point to compare progress further down the line.

Some of the goals you could track are:

- Number of page views
- Unique number of page views
- Number of direct sales
- Number of enquiries
- Sales where more than one product is bought at a time
- Where your sales have come from (referrals from other sites, social media, advertising etc.)

Understanding pricing basics

Customers are more pricing savvy than ever, with comparable products just a few clicks away. It's important for you to ensure pricing is competitive, fair and appealing. Consider your cost for each product, then work out what you need to charge to make a profit. You'll also want to think about shipping costs and if you're able to offer product discounts at certain times of the year based on your mark-up. Discounts for multiple products or for a certain spend, as well as additional pricing add-ons such as gift wrapping are also worth considering.



Understanding competitors

Customers like to research more than one product at a time, so looking to your competitors could help you gain a better understanding of where you fit in the market. Find competing companies by searching for your keywords online. This will also help you determine how you can stand out from the competition and what your unique selling point is. For example, perhaps you are a family-run business unlike your faceless competitors, or you're the only business offering free shipping in your niche.

Focusing on customer needs

Customers are drawn to companies that care about them. Focusing on your customer's needs and how to make their journey better will increase sales and loyalty. Be conscious of your customer's time - ensure that your website is easy-to-use, friendly and that there is a logical order to help them find what they need as quickly as possible.

Understanding the importance of your business story

Your business story and why you do what you do will make you stand out against hundreds of competitors. Just like a person, your business needs a voice that will speak to the visitor as soon as they land on your website. This can be achieved through great website copy, your marketing, the love you give to your product descriptions and the backstory of why you do what you do.



2. Website Tips

Promoting additional products on every page

Has your customer landed on a specific product page? Make sure they can see other product options they might like in a sidebar, so they can see more of your inventory without needing additional clicks.

Including product reviews or ratings

Customers like to buy products other customers have been happy with - show off customer feedback on specific products or services; customer ratings and reviews always help to influence sales (so long as they're positive!)

Writing compelling product descriptions

You know why your customers should love every product - but are you making that clear in your product descriptions? Writing product descriptions that work is an art, so consider:

- Who your target customer is
- Why your target customer should buy this product
- How your product solves a problem
- What the product features include
- What are the advantages of this product over another one?



- The story of the product (for example, if you sourced an item of jewellery from a tiny street market in India, tell your customer about it!)
- What language your competitors use (and what you think works and doesn't work)

Launching a Facebook Store

We know that social media is a great referrer of traffic to ecommerce sites - people talk about products they like or are thinking of buying. Create provides Facebook Shop functionality so that your customers can buy directly on Facebook as well as on your site, so you can sell where your customers are. If you've not yet got a Facebook Shop, [read our guide](#) to get started.

Setting up Google Analytics

Any online business needs to know how much traffic it gets, where their visits are coming from, and what their visitors do. [Google Analytics can be integrated](#) with your Create store, meaning you can track and understand your customers better.



What to measure

- Page views and sessions
- Where visitors are coming from
- How long visitors spend on site
- Top referrers
- Keyword referrers
- Ecommerce tracking
- Most popular products
- Most popular blog posts
- Which blog posts drive the most sales
- Which of your marketing channels results in sales
- What works in your email marketing campaigns
- All paid digital adverts

Paying attention to stats

Keeping weekly or monthly stats recorded can help to influence the direction you move in with your business. For example, if 40% of the products you sell are high-end, you may wish to add further items at a similar price point into your inventory. Or if the majority of your customers come from word of mouth Facebook posts, you could invest in Facebook marketing and a Facebook Shop.

Understanding how your stats increase and decrease month-on-month, identifying shopping patterns and behaviours, and learning what works - and what doesn't work - for your customer, means you can continually improve your website, services and marketing activity to increase sales.



Integrating your social media profiles

New customers are more likely to buy from you if they can double-check you're a 'real person'. Share your other professional online areas with them - it adds validity to your website.

Improving your navigation

Clear navigation helps potential customers find products quickly and easily:

- Use navigation labels that make sense (if you're selling socks, include socks in a 'sock' page, rather than 'underwear')
- Organise your label hierarchies in a way that's clear to your customers. Your main categories may be 'outerwear' and 'underwear', and then 'socks' could be a subcategory in 'underwear'
- Ensure all your top level navigation labels are clickable (and not just a place for a drop-down sub-navigation).
- Follow design conventions you think are easy to use. Like how Amazon organises its clothes and socks? Copy their navigation paths.
- Include sales and special offers in your navigation - don't expect your customers to look for it
- Include search in your main navigation



Including an ‘about us’ section

Your friends and family would buy from you because they know you - but what about strangers? To help create trust between yourself and a potential customer, include an ‘about us’ section which outlines who you are, what your business is about, and why you do what you do.

Including a prominent sale section

Potential customers are drawn to sales - if you’re running a special offer, create a prominent section linked to on the main navigation and featured on the homepage. Don’t hide sales sections away.

Answering frequently asked questions

Do your customers always ask about postage costs? Or where your products are sourced? Don’t wait for an email to come in with the question - provide a prominent FAQ section on the site to answer any questions your customers may have. It will save you time, but could also potentially help close a sale.

Including a search bar

Customers like to browse, but they also like to know if you have a specific item available. Include a search box on your site. .



3. Design Tips

Conveying clear value propositions

A value proposition is a clear outline of the benefits of your products or the pain points it solves. These should be included with all products and designed as a series of bullet points or paragraphs under a heading such as 'product details' to help sell your products. As well as product benefits and selling points you can also include other tempting offers such as free shipping in the value proposition outline.

Using high-quality images

When customers view pictures of your products they are imagining what those products would look like in their own homes, as gifts or when worn. High-quality images help your products to look higher-value and will increase sales. Customers also like to see a product from different angles so include multiple images with each product description.

Keeping it simple

Ease of use is much more important than a fancy website design. If you have high-quality images, great product descriptions and a design that is easy to use and navigate you will have higher sales. According to Hubspot, 94% of people leave a website or distrust it because of bad design. Online banner adverts are also the least trusted form of advertising, so don't bombard your user with adverts and offers - even if they are your own.



4. Product Images

Best practice for images

- Clear images
- Images of every angle of product
- Image of product in use (clothing on person, vase in living room, artwork on wall)
- White backgrounds
- High quality
- Own copyright of image
- Name image with keyword of product within image - this helps with SEO
- Add alt tag to ensure product description is included with image
- Add title tag to ensure information about the product (description name) appears when user hovers over image
- Images should be responsive on mobile viewing

How to write SEO-friendly text for product images

All images should be uploaded with the relevant keyword information that will help Google to 'read' about the product.

Include:

- Image caption including any relevant product keywords
- Image title which gives the name of the product
- Alt text - this is the alternative text that will show if the image is unable to display. This should contain a description of what the product is, so that it will be explanatory even if the image can't be seen.



5. Company Reputation

Enhancing your reputation

Ensure you include happy customer testimonials on your website, to ensure future customers know your products, service, delivery and post-sale support are exceptional. This could also be through visual means such as a star rating on each product.

The importance of a professional design

A good, clean design will help your customer to navigate your website more effectively and build brand recognition. When your design is consistent across your website, social media and product branding this will build trust. Small touches such as personalised notes in product deliveries, or a personal message printed on the product invoice will also help to enhance your reputation.

Including social media profiles

Customers turn to your social media profiles to ask for help, give feedback and see new products. Your social media profiles are an extension of your website and should uphold your company reputation. Ensure content you share is 'on brand' and has the same tone as your website. Respond to customers in a polite way - even if they are complaining. If need be, use your social media profiles to direct customers to an email address or phone number where they can receive further support.



Including customer testimonials

What your customers say about your products will carry more weight than what you say alone. Great customer testimonials should be displayed prominently on your website to help support your reputation and increase sales. They can also be shared on social media or in emails to customers - as long as they're relevant.



6. Marketing

Understanding your customer

Customer profiling

Everything you do on your website should be done with your existing and target customers in mind. Your design, language and products should all appeal to these target groups.

General Marketing

Creating a marketing calendar

Plan when your major events will be (Father's Day, Christmas, etc) and organise your marketing activities (social media, emails, promotions) around these. [You can also check Twitter to see trending topics and real time events that you could join in with.](#)



Language for marketing

- Know your target customer
- Ensure your language is appropriate for them
- Keep it snappy, as short as possible
- Ask questions
- Make sure copy is more about customer than about product (for example, ‘New product! Would your son love this exclusive toy car?’ rather than ‘We have a new, exclusive toy car on our site today’)
- Make sure you focus on the benefit of the product (‘This toy car would make your son happy!’)

Understanding basic marketing campaigns

Create each marketing campaign with a goal, a target audience and an outcome in mind. Think about how you will track it. For example, if you want to raise sales of a specific item think about who will buy that item, why they will buy it and what you can do to help incentivise them such as a special offer or free gift. Then, how you will track this through Google Analytics, a unique webpage or a special promo code.



Measuring marketing activities and optimisation

At the end of each marketing campaign you should look at your initial goals and ask if you met them. This is where you track the number of sales you made which you wouldn't have made without your special offer or campaign in place.

You can also make your marketing campaigns more exclusive by giving them a deadline or only offering it to X amount of buyers. If you find a campaign wasn't successful, look at how you can optimise it better in the future. You could change the copy, send the offer out on a different day or use a paid campaign to help increase visibility.

Social Media

Get involved with conversations on social media

If your existing or target customers are on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram being the main ones), make sure you have a profile on each channel. Start and join in conversations around your shop area (for example, if you sell cat clothes, join in conversations about kittens, cats, animal health and fashion) to get your name out there. Don't do sales pitches - that's an instant turn off - but be part of the community. You'll learn more about your potential customers as well as them learning about you.



Create a social media marketing plan

Using your marketing calendar, work out what sort of content will be posted on which social media channel and when, based on what you think your target customers do.

- Content examples:
 - Product promotion
 - Conversation starter
 - Viral image
 - Viral video
 - Regular feature (#FreebieFriday can be a competition giveaway)
 - Blog post
 - Promotion from another website (joint cross promotion initiative when you work with other companies)
- Social channel examples:
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Pinterest
 - LinkedIn



- Time of day examples:
 - Early morning - pre-commute
 - Morning rush hour
 - Lunch break (UK)
 - 4pm afternoon lull
 - Lunch break (US)
 - Afternoon rush hour
 - Pre-evening meal time
 - After evening meal time

Social Media 101

Facebook marketing

Setting up a Facebook Shop

If your customers are on Facebook you can create a Facebook Shop to help sell more products. Read our guide to help you get setup. Once your shop is live, you can monitor how many sales you get from Facebook in order to determine how much time and attention to give it as a channel. For example, if the majority of your sales come from your Facebook Shop you might want to add new products there or increase your paid Facebook marketing spend.

Understand the right content to post

The content that is shown to users is determined by Facebook's algorithm. This changes regularly, but currently prioritises content in this order: live video, video, timely content such as news, content from friends and family, images, content that has a high number of shares, status updates and content with a high number of likes, followed by content with links.



Understanding what your Facebook audience wants to see will help you to rise up in Facebook's algorithmic ranks. For example, if you create a video around a timely campaign like Christmas that your audience finds funny they are more likely to share it. The more they share it, the more people will see your content in their news feed.

How to create targeted adverts

In Facebook Ads Manager you can choose the device to show your advert on (mobile, desktop, tablet), the age of your target audience, their likes and dislikes and any other interests. The more you know about your audience the easier it is to create targeted adverts that increase sales.



Twitter marketing

How to engage with potential customers

Find customers by monitoring the hashtags and keywords that relate to your business. Add existing and potential customers to a list so that you can keep an eye on their updates then make your tweets friendly and personable, as if you were talking to a friend. Don't be afraid to ask questions and connect with your customers on a one-to-one basis. Twitter is a floodgate of content and businesses who engage on a personal level are much more memorable.

Tips for increasing followers

Follow customers, who may follow you back and use Twitter's Search tool to find customers who follow your competitors or who mention relevant keywords or hashtags. Asking customers for referrals or competitions where they share your tweets will also lead to a higher following.

Join in with conversations

Twitter chats are a great way to connect to likeminded customers and find those who are interested in your business or the problem it solves. Start by finding a Twitter chat which is relevant to your niche area, then look at the questions around the chat and take part to join in the conversation.



Run paid adverts

There are three main ways to advertise on Twitter; you can use a Promoted Account campaign to attract more followers, a Website Clicks or Conversion campaign to drive users to a website, or a Leads campaign to capture information such as email addresses. For each campaign set up a budget and cost for each click or action then measure your results.

LinkedIn marketing

Strategically connect with people

Every time you connect with someone on LinkedIn, think about the mutual benefit and your network. Choose carefully who you accept and connect with and remember that you don't have to say yes just because you've been sent an invitation.

Leverage the power of thought leadership

LinkedIn is a great networking hub and you can use this to gain access to key thought leaders and others in your field. Visit the LinkedIn Pulse channel to read blog posts from experts, like or comment on updates and look for mutual connections between you and your associates.

Build an audience

LinkedIn is a great place to share updates and thought content - as long as it's relevant to your network. Try publishing a post with your latest insights and look for feedback, then adjust and try new topics, ideas or tips as you build your audience.



YouTube marketing

Create video content that your audience will search for

Find the gap between the products you offer and the topics customers will search for on YouTube. Use your expert knowledge to create videos that help and advise without outwardly selling. Focus on how to make your video useful and enjoyable.

Use video to help SEO

Create a video description, title and tags that include your top keywords to help your SEO. Add closed captions to your video by writing a transcript of your video, or editing the one that YouTube automatically writes and re-uploading it. This allows YouTube and Google to index your video's topic.

How video helps market your products and store

Video helps customers to see products in action and contributes to SEO. Seeing someone wearing a scarf is much more effective than a static image of it on a table. Use video to market your individual products both to the customer, and to Google, to help with product SEO rankings.



Pinterest marketing

Pinterest for discovery

Create a Pinterest channel for your business then nurture different boards for your products and interest areas. This will allow potential customers to find you from Pinterest and will send them directly to your website from product pins. You could also create popular generic boards using your products such as:

- Seasonal gift ideas
- Quotes and inspiration
- Craft ideas
- Present wrapping ideas
- Winter outfit ideas

Enticing customers to use Pinterest

The easiest way to drive marketing through Pinterest is to let customers do the pinning for you. By installing the Pinterest pin button to your website pages, a hover will appear that allows anyone to directly pin from your products to the channel.

How product images inspire pinning

The more beautiful and inspiring your images are, the more likely people will pin them. Pinterest has a particular aesthetic so browse first, then use this to inspire your own 'Pinterest worthy' product images.



Instagram

Using Instagram to create engagement

Use Instagram to show off images of your products, your workspace and the people behind it. Invite customers to engage by asking questions, or inviting them to add feedback to new product prototypes.

Sharing your brand and products

Create product images which are optimised for Instagram's classic square format. You can also mix up the type of images you show, from flat lays, to action shots and customer images of people using your products to keep your feed interesting.

Finding new users to follow

Find the types of images that appeal to your audience by looking at competitor channels. Use Instagram's search engine to find users to follow by the tags they use, the people they follow and the places they visit. Look at the top trending images and identify any in your niche, then look through the likes or followers to find new users to engage with.

Creating a social media marketing plan

Plan your social media content to target holidays, seasons, peak periods and even the time of the month when your customers are likely to purchase products. Use this to schedule updates but check your notifications frequently too. A notification tool or social media management platform such as Sprout Social or Respond by Buffer can be used to pull all of your social feeds into one dashboard for faster responses.



Hashtags

Hashtags are an important part of social media channels, particularly on Twitter and Instagram. Hashtags will help with discovery so that you can find potential customers. You can also add hashtags to tweets, posts and pages to help users to find you more easily and see the topics you cover.

Measuring effectiveness

Track your social media efforts by monitoring your key performance indicators each month. Tracks followers, page fans and readers as well as how many direct website referrals and sales you get from social media. This will help you to learn how and where to spend your time, effort and ad spend.



Search Engine Marketing

Use Google product listing adverts

Google's product listings are a version of pay-per-click adverts that show off rich descriptions of your products, complete with images and links. This makes products more appealing as they stand out from within a text-based search engine results page and are placed more prominently on the Google search results page.

Add your physical store to Google My Business

When people Google your business all of your key business details will help them to see that you're open for business and also, where, when and how they can find you. Add key phone numbers, opening hours and your location to your Google My Business page to cover all bases.

How to use comparison shopping engines

Use comparison shopping engines (sometimes called CSEs) to see how customers will view your products and how they match up against competitors. CSEs allow you to place your products directly in front of potential customers in order to get more market share and the users looking at them are often ready to buy.



Partnerships

Finding potential marketing partners

How many more customers could you reach if you had ten other people like yourself, telling everyone how great your products are? Reseller and partner initiatives resell your products and improve brand awareness with potential customers. Reach out to potential partners on social media, or join an affiliate system that rewards others for selling your products.

Creating joint initiatives for marketing

Other companies who have a similar business to yours could make great marketing partners. Create a giveaway for their Twitter channel to extend your own reach, or partner up in order to build an email list that you can both market to.

Google Adwords

Create a Google Adwords campaign in order to send your ads to the top of the search engine results page when people search your keywords. You'll be bidding against other similar products, so crafting the right advert is key. Include as much information as possible but in a catchy way, with a description of your product and a direct link to the product itself (not just your website).



Google Display ads

Google's display network gives you a much wider reach across the web by showing your adverts on a variety of different sites. These ads can be highly visual or text-based but must be written to stand out against the other content on page. In this instance the user isn't directly looking for your product, so the advert has to entice them to find out more.

Remarketing

Remarketing is a paid campaign designed to keep past visitors engaged. If a visitor has viewed a product on your website and left without purchasing it, remarketing shows the same product to them the next time they head to Facebook or another participating channel. Use remarketing to remind the customer why they wanted to buy the product in the first place or to give them a special time-limited incentive.

Running competitions

Competitions are a great way to get additional exposure for your business. Ask participants to retweet, follow or reshare your post on social media or sign up with an email address. This gives them the chance to win a new product and allows you to build an email list of people you know are interested in your products.



Running offers

Plan special offers for throughout the year, whether this is to coincide with events such as Boxing Day or Black Friday, or at times when customers may not have as much money to spend. You can test your offers using unique codes, flash sales and free gifts to discover what is most appealing to your audience.

Measuring effectiveness

Find out what works best out of paid adverts, offers and competitions by measuring their success. Track visits to the website, sales or social media followers and referrals then tweak your copy, offer or images to try and improve your metrics campaign-by-campaign.



7. Content Marketing

Writing guest posts in marketing partnerships

Many popular sites with high readerships will allow you to become a guest writer or write a one-off post for their audience. Read other guest posts on the site first to see what might be considered, then craft your post exactly to the site's guidelines to increase your chances of being published. Use your bio on the guest post to share your website and social media links.

Publishing guest posts

Reach out to thought leaders in your industry to write guest posts for your blog or create a blog post swap with other business leaders. This will help direct traffic to both of your sites and expose you to new audiences.

Creating viral videos

Use apps or free video editing tools such as iMovie to create your own videos then publish them online. A viral video trend such as the 'Mannequin challenge' is something any business could get involved with and by putting your own spin on it, you could gain thousands (or more) of shares, followers and retweets.



Creating viral images

Create images that your audience is likely to share; relatable quotes, thoughts and images are particularly shareable as are images that are funny or heartwarming. Although virality is beneficial, remember that building long-term engagement with images that mean something to your brand is more important.

Thought leadership

Use content to show your thought leadership in key areas. For example, if you produce cotton jumpers why not share the story of where it comes from, how you discovered the best type and why people like to wear it. Thought leadership shows expertise and customers are much more likely to buy from an expert.

Structure & formatting - how to make content readable

When writing speak to your audience as though they are a friend or colleague. Some tips that will help make your content more readable include:

- Break down all of your content into paragraphs
- Limit paragraphs to 3-4 sentences only
- Write shorter sentences (these flow better when reading on screen)
- Optimise your content for SEO but don't stuff it full of keywords - readability is more important
- Limit difficult words, use language your audience understands
- Vary the style and use rhetorical questions to ensure your audience is listening



Tips to make content more engaging

Quotes - use quotes from employees, customers, leaders in your industry or suppliers to give your business a voice and provide authenticity.

Stats - use statistics to support your point of view and make the reader feel as though the content is well-referenced.

Lists - using bullet points within your content, or comprising an article or guide entirely in list format, will make the content more digestible to the reader.

Creating emotion - add a back story to your content and bring in emotion that others will be able to relate to. Personal stories are much more emotive than sales pitches.

Storytelling - look for stories that have an authentic, emotive angle. Use familiar storytelling tropes of structure, reveals and characters. Ensure you cover 'who, what, why, when and where' to give a well-rounded story.

Measuring effectiveness

Reviewing how well your content does will help determine where to focus your efforts. For example, if a blogpost on a certain topic got 50% more views and 20% more social shares than other posts, you'll know it's a topic your audience is interested in. Use Google Analytics to measure each piece of content against key metrics.



8. PR & Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing

Influencers - bloggers, thought leaders, journalists, or key people in your industry - with large social media followings, can help to increase your brand awareness. Some influencers now expect to be paid to become brand advocates, but many will spread the word about your brand and product if they genuinely love what you do.

Finding appropriate influencers

- Undertake research to determine best influencers with the correct brand fit
- Reach out to the influencers - explain who you are and what you do, and why you'd love to work with the influencer.
- Get to know the influencers. Find out what you could do for them - if you could partner with joint marketing - as well as determining what they're prepared to do for you
- Offer samples and services to the influencers for free - and also for a fair and impartial review / or promotion.



Influencer guidelines

- Be prepared to accept that the influencer may not have the opinion of your product or services that you were hoping for ... but that anything positive is still valuable
- Understand that influencer marketing really only works with more than one influencer - multiple voices are always better than one
- Consider the numbers. If Influencer A writes a tweet about one of your products and they have 10,000 followers, only a small proportion of people will see this. To amplify the numbers be prepared to spend money on paid marketing to boost reach.
- Remember that influencer marketing is about relationship building and not quick wins.

Writing positive blog posts about influencers

Share information on your favourite influencers, comment them in and tag them on social media when you share the post. This will alert them to your brand presence and they may also share the post, helping you to gain additional reach.

Writing press releases

Write a press release if you have a newsworthy product or store. Try to keep this to one page or less - journalists are busy! Ensure your headline is newsworthy and that it sums up the hook in one sentence. Tailor your press email and the press release to each publication to increase your chances of being published. Lastly, think about the timing of your release. News that goes out at 10am on a Monday morning is much more likely to be published than on Friday at 5pm.



Creating a press list

Look for publications in your industry that release news about businesses like yours. Find who the press contact is on those stories, either by looking at the byline or by checking the 'contact us' page details. Many publications will have specific formats and requirements for submitting news, tips or stories so ensure you read these thoroughly before reaching out.

Measuring effectiveness

Track your press efforts by linking campaigns to sales, web traffic and referrals. Use Google Analytics to see which sites direct traffic and if this has resulted in sales. Influencer outreach and press campaigns also contribute to long-term goals such as increased search engine rankings.



9. Email Marketing

Starting and cultivating an email list

Email has an ROI of around 4,300% (according to the Direct Marketing Association) - meaning if you create marketing emails to existing and prospective customers, your sales should rocket. Have a 'sign up to our newsletter' option on your website so you can send marketing emails to people who are interested in your products.

Persuading potential customers to join your list with offers

Use an incentive to give customers who join your email list more value, such as a 10% off code for their first purchase. Ensure you only send timely, relevant, valuable offers so that they open your email campaigns and remain subscribed.

Segmenting customers to deliver targeted campaigns

The more relevant your email campaigns are, the higher the open and clickthrough rates will be. Segment your customers into groups so that you know where they signed up, what they are interested in and whether they are repeat or new customers.

Tailoring content to customer segments

Create individual content for each customer segment which is tailored to their buying or sign-up preferences. This will increase open rates and sales, showing your customers that you have listened to their needs and aren't just bombarding them with irrelevant information (like many other businesses!).



Promote new or sale products

Don't just send general emails about your products and services - start marketing campaigns by sending emails about new or sale products. You can also create event specific emails (about Father's Day, Christmas, product-related events) to increase sales.

Personalising your email campaigns

Some sales emails work well - especially if they include a discount code - but a more personal, conversational tone (from you to your customer) will have a better effect on reputation and sales than overt sales pitches.

The importance of call-to-actions

Each time you send an email campaign think about the action you want your customer to take. This could be viewing a product on your website, following you on social media or buying a product using a discount code. Include clear call-to-actions in your email campaign and make it easy for the customer to see and use them.

Including company branding

Use your company branding in the design of your email campaign so it is instantly recognisable as being linked to your brand and products. Add your company name and a well-used email address to your sender details as this will help decrease bounce rates, ensuring that your email gets to the recipient.



The importance of responsive design

More email (55%) is read on mobile than on desktop according to Litmus. Therefore it's crucial that your email campaign is responsive, which means that it adapts and changes shape or structure depending on where it is being viewed. Most modern email software (Mailchimp, Campaign Manager etc.) offer responsive templates as standard.

Creating effective subject lines

The subject line of your email is the first introduction or hello - so it needs to be great! Keep it short, catchy and relevant to your audience. You can also use A/B testing to try two contrasting subject lines to see what works best for your audience.

The importance of opt-out & unsubscribe

Make it easy for your customers to choose to unsubscribe or receive less emails from you. The 'unsubscribe' button is usually found in the email footer and should instantly unsubscribe the user, rather than making them type in their email address or go through further steps.

Frequency & consistency

Keep up a regular flow of email communications to your audience but don't bombard them. A weekly or monthly newsletter should be consistent so your customer knows when to expect it. Flash sale or special offer emails can be sent more infrequently or at different times, to surprise and delight customers.



Measuring effectiveness

Measure your email campaigns by tracking the number of sales, website referrals, open rates and clickthroughs on each individual campaign. Test different content, subject lines and images to see which turn out the highest results.



10. Reducing Abandoned Baskets

Ensuring ‘unexpected’ costs are presented before checkout process

You don’t want your customer to abandon their shopping right at the last minute, so be honest and obvious about all of the costs they can expect from the start. This includes shipping costs, processing fees and specific currencies.

Keeping the checkout process quick and simple

Offer both registered and guest checkout services so that customers aren’t forced to set up an account to order from you. Keep the checkout process simple and try to reduce the number of steps your customer takes and the information they have to enter. As an example, allow them to duplicate their billing address to their delivery address so they don’t have to enter it twice.

Addressing payment security

Two flags customers will look for when buying from a site are that it is SSL enabled and that your checkout pages have an SSL checkout certificate. Build customer trust by ensuring that your site has full SSL encryption and starts with https://, instead of http://. Then [switch on SSL in Create](#) to ensure your checkout pages are secure and to give customers the peace of mind that comes with seeing the small padlock icon in the browser.



Providing multiple delivery options

Customers now expect flexibility in their delivery options. Popular choices include ‘express’ or ‘next-day’ delivery (usually for an additional cost), tracked delivery if the item is valuable and business class delivery which has a smaller fee or is potentially free. The flexibility of your delivery system could help you win sales over other merchants.

Providing free delivery

The ‘ASOS effect’ which refers to ecommerce merchants who offer free delivery on all orders regardless of their amounts, means that many customers now expect this as standard. Offering free delivery on orders over a certain amount, or in exchange for a delayed wait, could help you to achieve more sales.

Ensuring customer support is at hand

You don’t want your customers to fall at the final hurdle when putting in their payment details so ensure that customer support information is on hand. Provide obvious details of where customers can get in touch for queries, whether this is an email address, chat messenger, phone number or Twitter handle.

Providing multiple payment options

Supporting credit card and debit card payments as well as a digital wallet system like PayPal will ensure you cover the majority of payment choices made by customers. If you don’t offer PayPal or a specific credit card payment service let people know why by adding the information to your FAQs.



11. Pricing

Covering the full range of pricing

Your profit margins and the demand for your products will help you develop a pricing structure. Keep this consistent, for example if one product costs X amount a pack of two should cost 2X or less, but definitely not more. You can help customers to find products within their price range by offering filters that categorise the pricing into £0-£10, £10-£50, £50+ and so on.

Ensuring your prices are competitive

Conduct market research to ensure your prices are competitive, as customers will instantly be able to compare your product to hundreds like it. If there is a reason why your product is more expensive, such as hand-crafting, personalisation or better quality, then make this obvious.

Including postage costs if applicable

Postage can be added onto the item(s) at checkout, can be given away for free or can be built into the cost of your product so that it appears free but does not affect product margins. If your customer is expected to pay for postage, this should be presented from the very first product description to save any at-checkout surprises.



Offering inexpensive products to draw people in

Hooks such as ‘Gifts under £10’ and ‘stocking fillers’ are a great way to attract customers and show that there is something for everyone in your online store. Inexpensive products will draw in customers who may later go on to buy more expensive products. These products can also be offered as ‘add ons’ at the till, just like in a regular shop.

Offering free shipping on higher basket values

Incentivise your customers by giving a reward such as free shipping when they spend over a certain amount. This will make them feel valued for spending more with you and will also increase spend on your products. If a customer has spent £45 and has to pay £4.95 for shipping, or they get free shipping over £50, it’s likely they’ll add an additional product to their basket.

Rewarding frequent shoppers with discount codes

Provide discount codes for people to share with their friends and reward them for referrals as friends sign up or purchase products. This type of referral marketing is highly effective as the recommendation or discount code is coming from a peer. Discount codes also help increase repeat custom as they incentivise loyal customers to return.