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GO BEYOND

The most common pitfalls at the beginning of an e-commerce project

7 potential issues to consider before building your digital store

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Content

Introduction

The continued adoption of e-commerce

In recent years, a boom in e-commerce has inspired many commercial companies to expand their offering to include digital retail. In fact, where e-commerce was once seen as a "nice to have", online stores are frequently seen as "must-have" in order to keep pace with increasing customer demands and evolving competition. **Particularly since the pandemic**, which saw lockdowns encourage a dramatic increase in online shopping, **digital stores have become essential for modern business.**

25% of the world's population shops online. In 1st world countries this figure is higher, with **69%** of US citizens using e-commerce.[1]

E-commerce will account for **19.5%** of all retail sales in 2021 and are expected to reach **95%** by 2040.[2]

81% of consumers research a business online before visiting or making a purchase with them.[3]

In 2021, **54%** of US consumers prefer to shop online than in bricks and mortar stores, a **9%** rise from 2020.[4]

With increasing numbers of retailers and suppliers making the move to digital commerce, it's more important than ever to ensure that your company's e-commerce offering is as robust as possible. **There is no point investing online if this will not offer value to your customers and increase your bottom line.**

As ubiquitous as online shopping has become, creating an efficient e-commerce site comes with several potential pitfalls which can negatively affect the value of your online store and, ultimately, your brand.

Become aware of common pitfalls

Technology is incredible for offering many options and few limits. With so much choice, it's sometimes difficult to know which options to take, or even if your final option is really the best one for you. **Knowing some of the most common pitfalls in creating an e-commerce platform can actively help you avoid issues in your own project**.

Some of the following pitfalls may be common, but they're not always commonly discussed. Furthermore, some pitfalls are not always noticeable until they show themselves through visible negative effects. View this guide as a way of prepping yourself to not run into the same difficulties other companies have already experienced.

Avoiding common pitfalls gives you the best opportunity to steer clear of two catastrophic outcomes:

1. Your site becomes inoperational

Even some of the largest online companies have experienced downtime due to poor site planning or overwhelmed servers. When websites are inoperational, they are unable to contribute to your income and leave consumers questioning the trustworthiness of your brand. In some past cases, crashed sites have caused measurable negative effects in company share value, even if they are only offline for a short period of time. All income from potential sales is also lost until trading can resume.

2. Your website is inaccessible for customers

As commonplace as e-commerce sites may be, a lot of planning and knowledge goes into ensuring each outlet performs as efficiently as possible. Every click consumers take on their purchasing journey will have been considered and, if the retailer is sensible, will continually be monitored to ensure continued positive user experience which maximizes sales. Understanding the best ways to achieve user accessibility will also help to increase your own bottom line.

The seven most common pitfalls when starting an e-commerce project

1

Overcomplicating the process

As the old saying goes: "Why reinvent the wheel?" **The majority of customers are looking for an intuitive and familiar experience when they engage with an e-commerce platform**. Unless specific functions are required for a USP, don't overcomplicate your own e-commerce offering. This tip can be applied to multiple aspects of your site, from navigation to purchasing journeys, to the bundling of products and services.

Before embarking on your project, keep in mind that **88% of consumers report that they wouldn't return to a website after having a bad user experience**[5]. Starting out an e-commerce project with a Minimal Viable Product (MVP) may be one of the smartest ways to avoid overcomplicating your digital store. Beginning with a simple offering and building upon this will help keep your site lean but effective.

2

Forgetting your target audience

48% of digital consumers go straight to an e-commerce marketplace when shopping online. To combat this, **your site will need to offer tailored messaging, experience, and products to attract and retain your target audience**. With 46% of consumers stating they've left e-commerce sites due to "lack of message"[6], keep your intended demographic in mind during the creation process to ensure you develop a website which is relevant and speaks to them.

Audiences should also be considered with regards to the kinds of purchasing journeys they expect. Particularly since the pandemic, which caused customer loyalty to falter, consumers are looking for customization and personalization in their interactions with brands. Consider creating an omnichannel experience in order to assist with this. 52% of online stores have omnichannel capabilities[7], whilst **90% of consumers expect consistent interactions with brands across multiple channels**[8].

Ensure responsive design and accessibility

As much as consumers expect consistent interactions across a range of channels, they also expect the same across a range of devices. With **45% of US e-commerce sales made through mobile**[9], ensuring responsive page design is vastly important when planning your site. Consumer browsing on mobile has become so commonplace, mobile-first coding is often employed in newer websites, with Google predominantly utilizing the mobile version of each site for crawling and indexing.

The adoption of mobile is not something that has to be limited to B2C ventures, either. **In leading B2B organisations, mobile commerce is responsible for bringing in approximately 40% of overall revenue**[10], with 60% of B2B buyers stating that mobile has played a significant role in a recent purchase[11].

4

Be prepared to engage with analytics

Analytics offer a wealth of information which help you make sense of both your site and customers. Among many useful outcomes they allow you to understand the pages, products, and purchasing journeys which are most popular with the various demographics clicking onto your store, as well as identify and mitigate potential business risks. Analytics can seem overwhelming at first, but benefits bear out in the data: **Top-performing companies are 200% more likely than lower performers to be sophisticated users of analytics**[12].

To effectively utilize analytics it first helps to ascertain the insights you will want them to offer. Will you aim to lower cart abandonment rate by analyzing the stages at which customers seem to give up on a purchase? Are you trying to analyze your best performing products to indicate how regularly you should replenish stock? Would you like to better understand your demographic to more effectively target ads? Whatever your goals, don't shy away from effectively utilizing the data available; 64% of companies utilizing analytics reported improved efficiency and productivity, whilst **46% claimed improved customer acquisition and retention**[13].

5

Offer adequate payment and delivery options

Cart abandonment is a major issue in e-commerce, with **nearly 70% of e-commerce shopping carts abandoned before payment is complete**[14]. Ensuring you offer enough payment and delivery options, along with a convenient and efficient checkout process, can lower this figure dramatically.

Checkout processes should also be optimized via multiple methods; Offering guest checkout, displaying additional charges up-front, and allowing form validation all help simplify the buying process. **These tweaks, among others, can increase cart conversion rates by 36%**[15], positively affecting your bottom line.

Abandoned cart follow-up emails also have an extremely high opening rate compared to other e-commerce communications. Consider implementing these to ensure maximum sales.

6

Recognize the benefit of the testing phase

Before launching your website be sure to adequately test. Testing should cover a range of disciplines, including accessibility, security, and cross-browser testing. With **43% of all online order cancellations due to technical malfunctions**[16], the testing phase is incredibly important to prevent bugs or errors damaging your turn-over and reputation.

To ensure testing takes place as efficiently as possible, approach the testing phase with an action plan. Run each assessment separately to ensure results are not disrupted by a simultaneously running test. Be sure to also check your website across a range of devices and "stress test" the site by simulating user traffic during peak cycles.

Although aspects of the testing phase should be planned out, assessments should also be an ongoing activity, with regular site checks taking place to spot potential issues.

7

Don't assume it can be done alone

When you approach a project like launching an e-commerce store, it's sometimes difficult to comprehend just how much thought and knowledge has to be invested to ensure the end result is a viable product. **Decades of trial and error, digital innovations, and research in user experience have moulded even the most humble e-commerce store into an efficient, accessible, and valuable asset**. Each of these lessons were developed and learnt through teams of dedicated professionals, who will be best placed to advise and guide you through your own project. Don't rely entirely on yourself or in-house teams to develop such an important aspect of your business.

Enterprise Marketplace

B2B

B2C

Unified Commerce Solution

Consider working with Spryker

If you're looking for an expert in e-commerce who can navigate you through common pitfalls and more, consider working with Spryker. With a proven track record of establishing digital commerce presence for a range of retailers and suppliers, Spryker makes it their business to ensure your e-commerce project launches without a hitch.

Whether you require a B2B, B2C, or Unified Commerce offering, Spryker's cloud-native Platform-as-a-Service solution makes it easy to begin trading with a Minimal Viable Product. Our modular approach means additional services and features can be added to your website as and when needed, perfectly suited to rapid growth and ever-evolving markets.

Many of the issues addressed in this guide are automatically covered by Spryker's offering; omnichannel marketing can be integrated into your product, along with adequate purchase and delivery options. Our initial store setups also follow best practices for creating engaging, user-friendly sites.

Crucially, Spryker helps you avoid common pitfalls. Our tried-and-tested approach, evidenced by dozens of international customers, takes the process of avoiding these potential issues out of your hands.

What's next

→ Would you like to know more about working with Spryker? **Talk to our sales team to discover more.**

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About Spryker

Spryker Systems GmbH is a privately held technology company headquartered in Berlin, Germany and New York, USA. Founded in 2014, Spryker enables companies to build sophisticated transactional business models in unified commerce including B2B, B2C, and Enterprise Marketplaces. Spryker is the most modern, fully composable platform-as-a-service (PaaS) solution with headless & API-based architecture that is cloud and enterprise-ready and loved by developers and business users worldwide. Spryker customers extend their sales reach and grow revenue with a system that allows them to increase operational efficiency, lower the total cost of ownership, expand to new markets and business models faster than ever before: Spryker solutions have empowered 150+ companies to manage transactions in more than 200 countries worldwide and is trusted by brands such as Aldi, Siemens, Hilti, and Ricoh. Gartner® recognized Spryker as a Visionary in the 2021 Magic Quadrant™ for Digital Commerce, just one year after it first appeared (2020), and has also been named as a major player in B2B e-Commerce by IDC. Finally, it is the only commerce platform to provide full B2B, B2C, D2C, and Marketplace capabilities out of one stack. Find out more at spryker.com

Do you have feedback for us?
Please feel free to contact us!

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