

10 easy ways to make more money from your online store

1. Free Shipping

There are two working options for this technique.

The first is; Provide a threshold for order values such as “over \$150 receives free shipping” This will motivate customers to add more to their carts. Here's a helpful article on setting this up <http://support.ashop.com.au/KB/a290/use-free-shipping-to-increase-your-sales-and-loyal-customers.aspx?KBSearchID=0>

Another alternative is to include the average shipping value in your product price and set your checkout to free shipping. You'll notice this is done with many of the major online companies such as Zappos.com It's simply one less thing for customers to think about.

You might win some, you might lose some, however the grand plan for this is to increase your sales, build your happy customer database and remarket to them in the future.

2. Design and Branding

Have you ever found yourself trawling through the web trying to find that site you loved from last week, ready to buy that handbag? Design and branding play a major role in sales for an online store.

For instance, a distinct set of colours and a unique, clear logo will help customers recall your company name or at least recognise your site apart from ten others next time their looking for that handbag.

A quick question. If you saw the same product at the same price on two different sites. One site looked like its 5 years old and put up overnight, the other has a stunning design, logo and is very user friendly. I bet you'd lean heavily to the nicer store. The reason is that you would trust that site more to deliver on time, handle your payment and maybe answer the phone first time. That might sound like a stretch, but design can do a lot for customer emotions.

3. Allocate a Marketing Budget

The old proverb, “build it and they will come” could not be more out of place when starting an online store. I suppose you have also heard the term “lost in cyberspace”?

Set aside a good marketing budget when selling online. It’s extremely important to get a steady stream of visitors and develop your branding and initial customer base, hence referrals. It can be drained quickly, so don’t blow it all at once.

4. SEO

SEO is essentially marketing. It’s a costly exercise but well worth it when the results start being realised. You see, whilst it can cost a lot with few results in the initial period, unlimited targeted visitors will start arriving once you’re ranked well on major search engines. Other forms of advertising are limited with their traffic flow.

5. Send Newsletters Weekly

Make sure you gather all customer emails during the checkout. If someone has purchased from you before, they are much more likely to purchase again or even refer a friend.

You can remarket to your subscriber list on a weekly basis showcasing new products, sales, discount coupons, referral bonuses and more.

Don’t overdo it, but the more often they see your company newsletter, when they’re ready to buy, you’re the first in mind.

6. Surprise Customers With Discounts or Gifts

It's nice to receive something for nothing!

Sift through your existing customer base and list anyone who orders on a regular basis or has spent over a certain value in your store. Set a permanent 5% discount to their account and shoot off an email to inform them. "We love our loyal customers and hope you enjoy the additional 5% discount permanently set to your account". I wouldn't be surprised if they ordered more and told their friends about you.

7. Interact Online With Live Chat

If your customers have a question, they want an answer right now. Having access to chat instantly will go a long way to closing more sales, cross selling more products and satisfying more customers.

8. Follow up on Sales

Roughly a week after an item is shipped. Drop your customers an email to follow up with a survey or a simple thank you for doing business with you. You'll be surprised at the number of loyal customers this will generate. Your shopping cart software should be able to do this automatically through the newsletter system.

9. Throw in a Little Extra

Next time you pack an order to ship, drop in your business cards (2), a discount coupon for their next purchase, advertising for your other products and a short thank you for your purchase.

10. Ship Orders Faster

A happy customer is one who gets their order on time or early (and of course packed correctly).

Make sure you send either on the same day of an order or at least next day. If you really want to put a smile on their dial, upgrade them to express post for no charge.