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12 E-Commerce Tips for Small Business

SHOPPING CART- Research what shopping cart will meet your business needs best. Selecting one that can work with your POS system is key and highly beneficial. Shopify, Wix and Square are all recommended.

SITE DESIGN - Once you decide on your shopping cart, use one of the basic free or low-cost templates to start. You can always upgrade later. Remember, start small and you can build on it.

SHIPPING - Plan out the best way to ship your products. USPS is generally the cheapest method for packages 5lbs or less. If your products are heavier and larger, consider shipping via UPS or FedEx. ShipStation is great software to assist in streamlining the shipping process.

MARGINS - When speaking with UPS or FedEx, have an estimate of how many packages you will ship each week. Ask for a discount. You will be surprised how easy it is to get a 15-20% discount by simply asking.

LISTING PRODUCT - Prioritize and plan out which products are going to move the quickest and give you the most profit right away. In your store, you might have hundreds or thousands of SKUs. It can be overwhelming to think about getting that all online. Here are a few strategies to think about when deciding what to list first:

- Ease of shipping. Small, less fragile items are easier and more cost effective to ship.
  (ex. - jewelry, baby gifts, plush, accessories)
- Consider putting your top selling brands online first.
- Are your vendors and competitors often sold-out of a popular item on their retail website? You can set yourself apart by offering product customers can't get elsewhere.
- Seasonally appropriate items – get those Mother's Day gifts online ASAP.
- SKUs you have a lot of inventory. Don't spend hours listing items that you have 1-2 of in stock. Start with the products that you have a dozen of.

DROP SHIPPING - Ask your sales reps, which vendors drop-ship? Any products you can list that you don't have to stock is a bonus. Keep in mind the vendor's inventory levels and their shipping speed and post that clearly on your site.

CUSTOMER SERVICE - Prioritize exceptional customer service. Answer customer emails/questions within 24 hours. This can be your leg up over the big box stores and competition if done right.

EFFICIENCY - Ship within 1 business day, 2 at the maximum. Your customers are used to shopping on Amazon. They will expect the same level of speed from you. When your store reopens, offer online purchasing with in-store pick-up. Have item wrapped and ready to go.

FREE SHIPPING - Offer it if possible! But watch your margins. You are in this to make money. Increase the price of your product if necessary or set an order value minimum to get free shipping.

SOCIAL MEDIA - Post daily and turn those posts into sales. Utilize Instagram Shopping and Stories. Plan out your content ahead of time. Hootsuite is a great site to help you manage this.

EMAIL MARKETING - Still very effective for driving traffic to your website. Set a schedule of at least once/week and email your customer list.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS - This could be as simple as asking one of your customers who has a decent following in your community to tag you and your store in a post. Offer free product, a store gift card or payment for this service.

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Success Story

"I was able to get my website up and running with the help of these 12 E-Commerce Tips (from my Ivystone Rep) during the first week of quarantine! I applied this information to digitally connect with customers. With my new website & creative selling tips my sales this March surpassed sales from last March!"

- Illinois Retailer

for more creative selling tips and other helpful resources visit

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