7 Easy Steps to Start an E-commerce website

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In today’s business world, having an online presence is unquestionably important. If you are running a physical store, building an online store is equally important. For startups looking to sell products, it is essential to launch an E-Commerce site that impresses both potential customers and potential investors.

Your E-Commerce site will have a dual purpose. Besides being your online shop, it will also be the face of your brand and help communicate the overall concept of your startup. So, before you can even think of it in terms of a store, you need to first think about what you want from your company website overall in terms of style, structure, and messaging. Once you’ve come up with more concrete details on what you expect from your new website, you can begin the process of setting up an E-Commerce website:

Choose and buy a Domain Name
It is highly suggested you choose the name of your startup, although that isn’t always possible. While it’s best to buy a .com domain, you can also look within your country level domain (e.g., .uk, .fr, .ca, etc.). If it is simply impossible to get your company name as your URL, think of other phrases and keywords that would aptly describe your company. Getting the right domain name should be a top priority as it gives users a first impression of your website and also signals to Google and other search engines as to what your company is all about. Do your research and choose wisely.

Select Your Web Hosting
In order for people to access your website, it needs to be stored, or hosted, on a web server. Many companies, like GoDaddy or BlueHost, provide hosting services as well as domain buying services. You may choose to go with one provider in order to get a discount deal.

Choose a Website Platform or Web Developer
These days, there are website builders that don’t require you to do any coding or have any programming knowledge. Easy-to-use platforms, such as Wix or Weeby, give you the opportunity to design your website on your own – and they even include E-Commerce options. However, there are some limitations, including not always accepting direct credit card payments. Many entrepreneurs choose to go with a more advanced CMS (content management system) such as WordPress or Joomla. This gives them the ability to more easily manage the backend of the website. However, it still requires some knowledge of web development, a bit of coding, and some tech “savviness”. Going with a developer is always an option, although of course the more expensive route.

Begin to Build Your Website
Whichever platform you choose, you will need to continually update and add content (and new products) to the website. Make sure you understand how the backend of your website functions. Knowing how to add photos, products, and blog posts will be very important as you continue to expand and grow your business.
Consistency is key when building your website. Make sure blog posts keep the same SEO Meta data structure and that permalinks follow the same general structure, (e.g., sitename/category/postname).

**Ensure the Security of Data and Transactions**
Cape Town based Ecommerce Services company – Comalytics told us that most website platforms you choose with an E-Commerce component will likely have already made the data security preparations for you.

However, it is important to stay up to date on such important matters as this is the part of your business that sees users converting into actual customers. First and foremost, your website needs an SSL security and encryption from Thawte, which is basically the equivalent of an encrypted digital key that activates the http protocol (what you see when you enter secured webpages). However, the SSL certificates do expire after a certain time period, which is why you must stay up to date and make sure your website is providing a secure and safe environment for transactions. Compare all SSL certificates from Thawte to see what is best for you.

**Register with Local Search Engines**
Make sure that your business is listed on sites such as Google, Bing and Yahoo. This will help drive traffic to both your website and your physical location (if you have one).

**Set up Social Networks to Support You're Website**
Explore other channels that can help support your E-Commerce website. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube are the main social channels whereby you can post new products, your latest blog posts, or even field questions from customers. Make sure your website also reflects your social activity, by including social widgets on your website and giving users the ability to share, tweet, or pin your product images.