Ecommerce Website Design Checklist

A handy guide to designing your ecommerce website

Why is ecommerce website design important?

Good ecommerce website design is critical when building your online store, as good design attracts potential customers, provides an enjoyable user experience, and increases sales. Since designing for ecommerce differs from building a regular website, we outline the essential elements your website should have to provide a good customer buying experience.

How to Use this Checklist

This checklist is divided into five areas based on ecommerce website design principles we outlined in our guide. As you build your online store, use this checklist as a guide to ensure that your website builds trust, attracts buyers, and provides a seamless checkout experience.

1. Instill Trust in Your Buyers

> **Goal:** Create a good first—and lasting—impression from visitors that instills trust in your website, and ultimately, your business so they will buy your products.

Develop and Consistently Show Your Branding

☐ Decide on your brand. Stuck? Create a customer persona so you can build your brand based on your ideal customer or target audience.

☐ Design your branding assets:

  ☐ Logo (have your logo designed professionally).

  ☐ Typography

  ☐ Color themes

☐ Choose an ecommerce website builder. Choose from our best ecommerce platform recommendations.

Tell Customers About Your Business

☐ Create an About Us page.

  ☐ Include a detailed story of your brand

Make It Easy for Customers to Reach You

☐ Have a Contact Us page visible throughout your website, including:

    ☐ Website's main navigation and footer areas

    ☐ Display your email address, phone number, and physical store location (and hours, if applicable)

    ☐ Provide multiple ways to get in touch.
    Note: Live chat and automated chatbots can help customers find and select the right products and increase sales conversions.

    ☐ Set clear timeframes when it comes to getting back to your customers

☐ Add a frequently asked questions (FAQs) page.

☐ Link to social media profiles, if there are any.

Display Customer Reviews & Testimonials Strategically

Use social proof to your advantage because the most effective recommendation is showing what real customers ultimately buy.

☐ Add a rating system to your site and encourage buyers to leave honest reviews.
Note: Most ecommerce platforms offer this as an added extension if it's not a native offering.

☐ Display a testimonials section on your homepage and product pages.

☐ Leverage user-generated content (UGC) by adding a widget to your site or product pages. This type of content serves as testimonials and proof of how real people are using your product.

Prominently Display Security Seals

☐ Ensure your site's SSL certificate stays current and valid.
Note: Most ecommerce website builders include SSL certificates in their subscription plans.

☐ Make ecommerce payment security a priority.

☐ Display your refund or returns policies prominently on your website.

☐ Display your security compliance and all the payment methods you accept throughout the site.
Note: These are usually placed in the footer section of your website.

2. Design With a Mobile-first Mindset

> **Goal:** Provide a consistent shopping experience across different browsers and devices.

☐ Choose a mobile-optimized theme for your website.

☐ Your website sections' padding and margins do not disappear on smaller screens. Moreover, font sizes and line spacing should adjust automatically to the amount of white space on the screen.

☐ Your website should also load fast, as mobile shoppers are more likely to purchase from sites or apps that help them make purchases quickly (shoppers usually only notice when pages are slow or broken).

☐ When viewing your ecommerce website, view it from several different devices and operating systems.

3. Place Importance in High Visual Appeal

> **Goal:** Create a website that invites visitors to stay and look around—and that establishes what your store is about at a glance.

Use Simplicity and Color to Your Advantage

☐ Utilize white space.

☐ Limit your website colors to no more than three per page where possible

☐ Follow the 60-30-10 design rule even in using color throughout your website—60% dominant color, 30% of secondary color, and 10% for accent colors.

☐ Employ simple and readable fonts.

☐ Have website colors that pass accessibility guidelines.

☐ Make content scannable.
Note: Use headers and break up content into an easy-to-scan format with bullets, short paragraphs, and bold typeface to focus on crucial information.

☐ When using a grid layout for displaying products, we recommend limiting a row to display up to **three or four products** only to maximize its visual appeal.

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Use High-quality Images

Learn how to take quality product photos at home with our photography tips.

☐ Include images of your products from different angles.

☐ Make sure that your images are optimized for the web.
Note: *Go with an ecommerce website builder that compresses and optimizes your images automatically for easy website viewing.*

☐ Use lifestyle images of people using or interacting with your products whenever possible. For example, clothing products are more appealing when worn by a model instead of photographed flat on a surface or a mannequin.

Ensure User-friendly Navigation

☐ Your brand logo should lead to the homepage and always remain in sight, no matter how deep the user goes, they can easily find their way back.

☐ Display your main navigation menu on top of your website and have well-organized website sections.

☐ Include a search bar with an auto-complete feature or relevant filters.

☐ Have a CTA button on each website page, especially the homepage.

☐ Enable filtering by size, color, brand, etc., especially if you have an extensive product catalog.

☐ Activate breadcrumbs on your product pages.
Note: *Breadcrumbs allow users to return to several product categories and subcategories— and can serve as an expansion of the search.*

4. Provide a Seamless Checkout Experience

Goal: Ease customers' worries or concerns, lower their perception of risk, and avoid surprises throughout the checkout process.

Optimize Product Pages

Most of what we have discussed above—like navigation, social proof, easy checkout, and high-quality images—also applies to your product pages. .

☐ Add more than one image for your products, ideally from different angles or perspectives.
  Note: Consider enabling a zoom or 360-degree photo feature on your images so customers can zoom in and see fine details.

☐ Add keywords relevant to your product's title and image alt tags.

☐ Incorporate videos, if helpful.
  Note: Learn how to create product videos.

☐ Place the Buy Now button above the website fold and use striking color to make it stand out from the page.

☐ Have clear pricing.

☐ Write well-crafted product descriptions broken down into distinct sections for readability. (When appropriate, the product page contains a size chart, preferably with size conversions.)

☐ The product page contains recent product reviews.

☐ Return policy and shipping information are included on the product page.

☐ **Optional features:** Add-to-wishlist or buy-later options, product recommendations (upsell or cross-sell); Desktop only: A "quick view" option on collections that allows customers to view the product without opening the product page.

Have a Quick and Easy Checkout Process

Have your customers fill out as little information as possible—only get what is necessary for a purchase to push through.

☐ Option to checkout as a guest or sign-in to an account.

☐ Discount codes and earned rewards can be applied to the cart.

☐ The shopper can edit the cart's content from the checkout page.

☐ Upfront shipping options and fees.

☐ Clear return and refund policies.

☐ Enable the one-click checkout option if the feature is available. (For example, Shopify businesses can use Shop Pay.)

☐ Familiar payment methods are available—like PayPal, Google Pay, Apple Pay, and buy now, pay later options.

☐ Guarantee site security by employing ecommerce security best practices and display security seals on your website pages.

☐ Prominently placed field for enrolling in order status tracking.

☐ Rewards and discounts for future sales are surfaced on the order confirmation page.

☐ Easy access to the contact page in case order editing is needed.

To learn more about how to design your ecommerce website, and see visual examples for each criteria, check out our full guide to ecommerce site design.

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