



INSPIRE

GETTING STARTED IN ECOMMERCE

**75 QUESTIONS TO ASK
YOURSELF WHEN
YOU'RE READY TO
START SELLING ONLINE**



YOU

1

It's been in the back of your mind for an age.

That idea that won't go away. How can you take your idea, your products and create a website so your customers that you haven't met yet can buy those all so carefully curated products.

Let's get started...

1

YOU

1 Why do you want an ecommerce website?

2 What has led you to this decision?

3 What are your expectations of having an online store?

4 What are you going to sell?

5 What is your Unique Selling Point (USP)?

YOUR CUSTOMERS

2

You need to have an idea of the kinds of people that will buy from you.

Build a picture of them.

Why would they buy from you rather than anyone else?

2

YOUR CUSTOMERS

6 Who will be your customers?
(age range, demographic, socioeconomic)

7 Where do they live?

8 What will be your average basket spend?

9 How often will your customers come back?

10 How many customers will you need every year?

YOUR COMPETITION

3

The internet allows all businesses to compete equally, although bigger businesses spend more money and effort into looking good online.

Make some time to get to know your competitors at all levels.

3

YOUR COMPETITION

11 Who are your competitors?

12 What do they look like?

13 Do they have a shop, an online shop or both?

14 Who would you like to be?

15 What other websites do you like and why?

MARKETING

4

99.9% of your time should be spent marketing your business, wether that's using social media channels, email, direct mail or advertising, it's important to invest the time and money into getting your business noticed.

4

MARKETING

16 Where will you be advertising?

17 Do you have social media accounts already?

18 Do you have a social media strategy?

19 Do you have a (permission based) customer database that you can email regularly?

20 Do you know what SEO is and how it works?

MONEY

5

Let's talk about money.

The cost of setting up your website need not be expensive but doing it properly is an investment not only in getting your systems in place but also in the confidence that's created when everything is up and running smoothly.

Don't start anything without a plan and that plan includes money.

How much do you think you'll make and how much will you spend getting there?

5

MONEY

21 What is your turnover/profit now?

22 What do you expect your turnover/profit to be in years 1, 2 &3?

23 Do you have a business plan with costs included?

24 Have you produced a cashflow forecast?

25 How much have you set aside for contingency?

INTEGRATIONS

6

It's best to know at the very beginning of a project what systems are already in place and which of those you will want to integrate with your ecommerce website.

6

INTEGRATIONS

26 Do you have an EPOS system?

27 What accounting software do you use?

28 Do you expect your website to be able to 'talk' to your accounting software?

29 Do you want your shop to appear in facebook, instagram, google or anywhere else?

30 Are you using any other software that you want to integrate with your online shop?

PRODUCTS

7

Even the cheapest product needs to be treated with love and care.

Make sure your product photography and product information is the best it can possibly be.



7

PRODUCTS

31 How many SKUs do you hold/will be selling?

32 How many variations (colour/size) are there per product?

33 Are you stocking your products or dropshipping?

34 Will you offer your whole product range/a subset or a restricted range?

35 Do you have an established product/SKU coding scheme?

DELIVERY

8

Delivery can be a complex process particularly around postcodes and regions but get it set up right at the beginning and it should rarely need to be touched again.

8

DELIVERY

36 What countries will you be selling to?

37 How will you fulfil your orders? Who will do the work?

38 What carrier will you use?

39 Are you insured for losses in transit?

40 What delivery promises will you make, e.g. 24 hour delivery, free returns etc.?

DELIVERY AGAIN

9

You should understand online and distance selling regulations for every country you are selling in and include all the necessary details in your terms and conditions.

Resources:

<https://www.gov.uk/online-and-distance-selling-for-businesses>

<https://www.gov.uk/online-and-distance-selling-for-businesses/online-selling>

9

DELIVERY AGAIN

41 Will your delivery be based on weight, cost or size, or will you have a flat rate?

42 Is the delivery charge built into your cost or is it added at checkout?

43 Will you offer free delivery above a certain order amount?

44 Do you offer warranties and/or guarantees which would effect returns?

45 How will your products be packaged?

CONTENT

10

Your words and pictures should represent you and how you want to be perceived. Should your tone of voice be chatty, professional or something else? Should your pictures be heavily styled or cut out on a white or coloured background.

Take a look at other websites and put together a collection of what you like the best.

10

CONTENT

46 Who will write your non product content; about us, privacy policy, terms and conditions, contact pages etc.?

47 Who will provide product photography and how will they provide it?

48 Do you have any software that you can use to crop and resize images before you upload them to your site?

49 Who do you expect to upload your initial content including products?

50 Who will provide product descriptions and prices and will you have more than one photograph per product?

Your identity should be consistent and be a true reflection of your business.

Simple is always best but getting to be simple and original is often a long road so be prepared to put the work in.

Every time you think of a new name do an online search for it and see what comes up, if there's anything close to your idea in the same field of interest; start again.

Resources:

<https://howbrandsarebuilt.com/resources/#namingbooks>

<https://howbrandsarebuilt.com/store/>

<https://www.gov.uk/check-the-patents-journal>

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IDENTITY

51 Do you have an name for your business?

52 Have you checked that there isn't a company trading in your space with a similar name?

53 Do you have an identity for your business, logo, strapline, colours, typography, identity guidelines etc.?

54 Do you have original vector files for your identity?

55 Is your business set up as a limited company?

A payment gateway is a requirement on all ecommerce websites.

This is the software that creates the link between your website and your bank. Most payment gateways take the customers money and then return them to your website without the customer even noticing. The money then sits with the payment gateway before being released to your nominated bank account.

Payment gateways take their fees when a customer creates an order. This fee is usually a flat rate or percentage of the order or a combination of both.

Payment gateways are usually PCI compliant but this should always be checked for the countries you are selling in.

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PAYMENTS

56 Do you have a merchant account set up with your bank?

57 Who do you bank with? Not all payment gateways work with all banks.

58 Do you have a payment gateway set up and understand the fees you will pay?

59 Do you want to accept PayPal?

60 Do you know what PCI compliance is and how will you deal with it?

CUSTOMERS

13

Do you know who your customers are and where they are likely to be?

Make a picture of your ideal customer and consider how you will reach them.

Make sure you understand about customer permission.

Treat your customers how you would like to be treated yourself.

Resources:

<https://seths.store/permission-marketing>

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CUSTOMERS

61 Do you want your customers to be able to register on your website?

62 Do you understand about your customers rights to their data?

62 What will you do to keep your customers data safe?

64 Where will you keep your customers and marketing data?

65 Do you understand about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and are you registered with the ICO?

PLANNING

14

Make some time to sketch out your business including all customer touch points so you can make sure nothing will happen to surprise you and when it does you'll be able to deal with that surprise easily and efficiently.

14

PLANNING

66 Do you have a sitemap, navigation plan or content plan sketched out?

67 Have you registered a domain?

68 Where is your domain hosted, and do you want to continue with your hosting set up if you have one?

69 Do you have an SSL certificate?

70 Who will administer your site and be responsible for updating software and maintenance?

BUDGET

15

Having a budget keeps your project on track and will help you understand the intricate details of your business.

15

BUDGET

71 What is your budget?

72 How did you decide on that figure?

73 How is your budget broken down, website build, photography, content creation, marketing, etc.?

74 How much have you budgeted for ongoing updates, marketing, maintenance, photography etc.?

75 Who will do your accounts and how?



INSPIRE

**Any more questions?
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