

A GUIDE TO E-COMMERCE EUROPE

Book 3: Designing the
best customer experience



June 2018

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best customer experience

Welcome to this guide

The European consumer wants to live and share a 24/7 seamless experience, across channels and medias, from initial discovery to purchase, from payment to delivery, including product return options and other services.

These moments of truth can be either positive touch points or become pain points. Hence, companies aiming for customer loyalty and brand advocacy draw a detailed customer journey map and develop an integrated omni-channel strategy.

Your e-shop is the one-stop-space that links you to your customers before, during and after their purchase. And there is a big difference between designing a good looking e-commerce web site and running a digital business that converts leads into sales.

The online purchasing process has to be easy for your customer, supported by a powerful software solution, up-to-date technical features and compelling content. All this is valid both for B2C and B2B companies.

This third book gives you a glimpse into omni-channel experience, e-shop design and management, as well as key success factors and common pitfalls.

The further three books in this series of guides commissioned by NZTE focus on:

- Book 1: The European market dynamics
- Book 2: The European consumer
- Book 4: Improving e-commerce performance.

Author: Marianne Kopf

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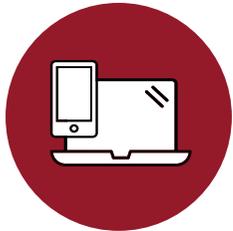
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SECTION 1

A seamless customer experience

A seamless customer experience

European online shoppers want their shopping experience to be easy and stress-free, whether they're browsing products from computers and mobile devices, or popping into a store. New Zealand companies need to think of their e-store as an all-encompassing roadmap for buying their products.



Multiple devices

E-stores need to be easy to use on multiple channels, from mobile to desktop, and offer options to develop loyalty.



Build relationships

To integrate their customers' experience, companies need to use tools of the IT trade, such as CRM, to gain an overall view of the customer relationship.

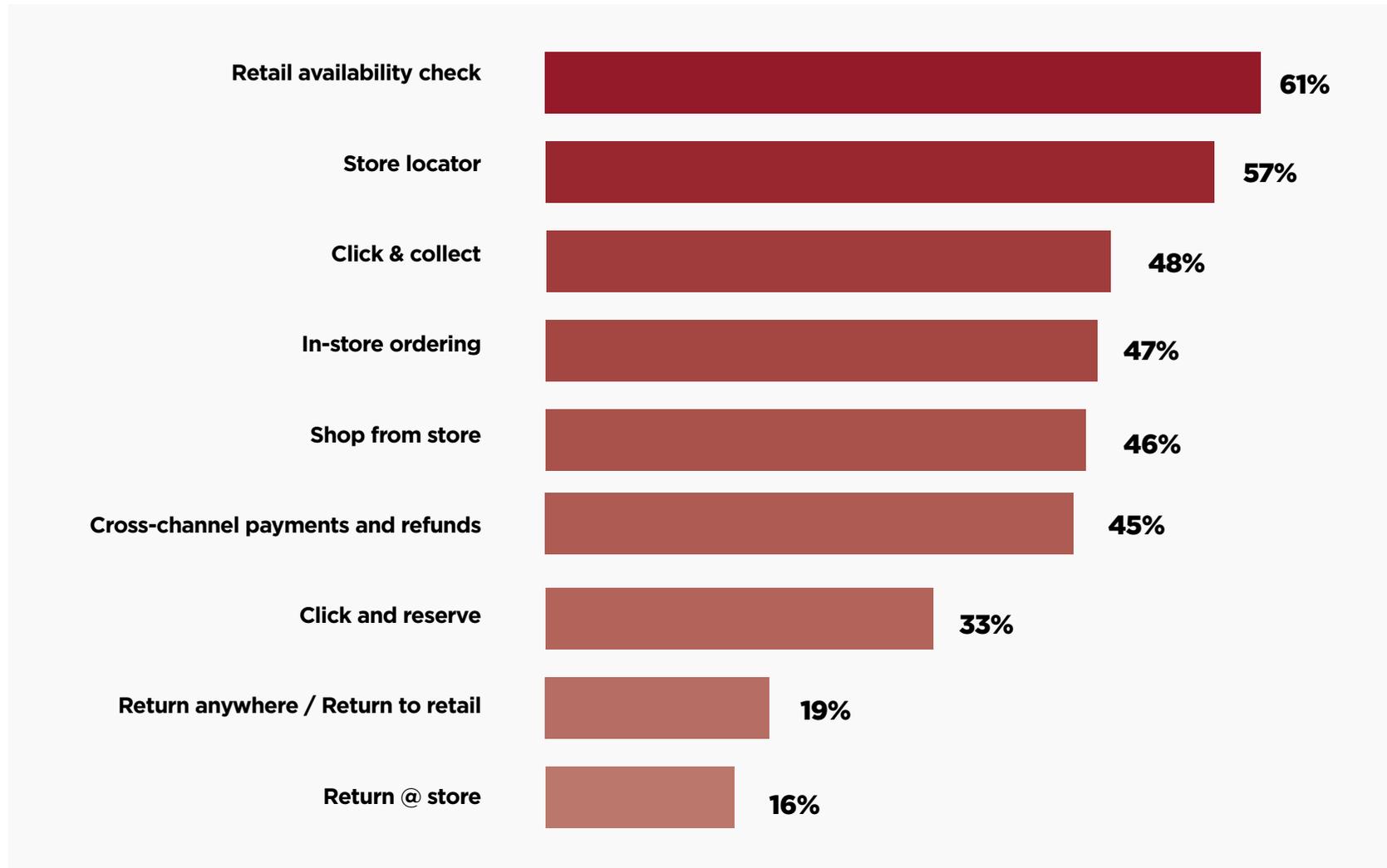


Be personal

E-stores need to offer a personalised shopping experience, which will drive increased engagement, loyalty and sales.

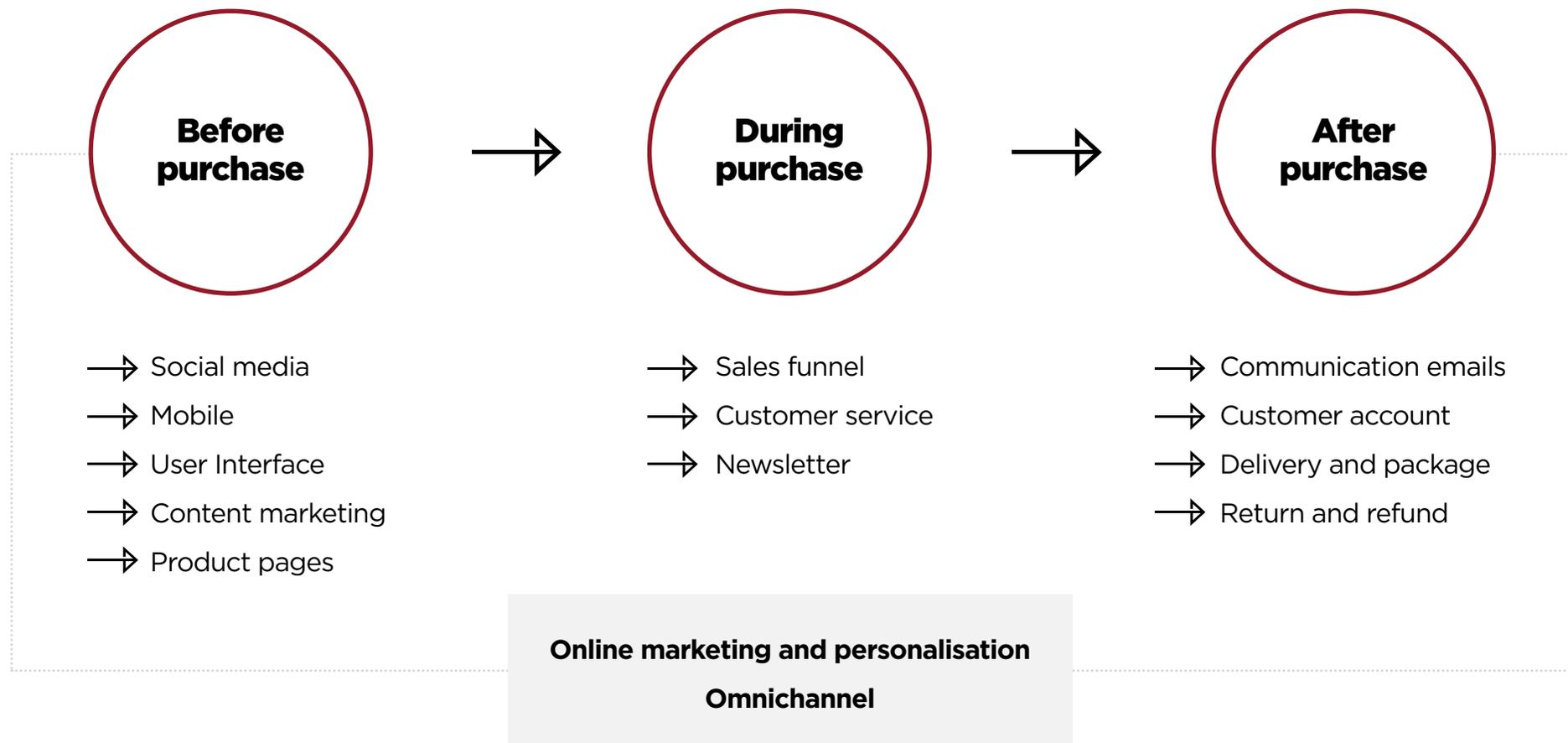
Elements of an omni-channel experience

The preferential features for an e-shopper:



Map your customer's journey

An online shopper's journey to your e-shop does not start on your home page – it begins with other encounters with your brand. Each time a potential customer comes into contact with your brand, they decide whether to make the next step towards your e-store. Make sure all elements of your brand online reflect the brand's values and that each step towards your e-store is tailored for your customer.



Working with multiple sales channels

Retailers in Europe's top three online markets (UK, Germany, and France) are selling across multiple channels, including online marketplaces and their own branded e-stores. They integrate the in-store and online customer experience.

Involving distributors and retailers in your e-commerce strategy is crucial to your success.



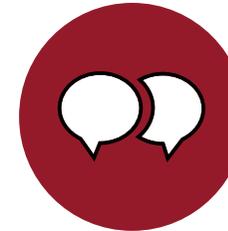
Multiple outlets

Be aware that your distributors or retailers may want to place your brand and products on their own e-shop or on a marketplace of their choice.



Small print

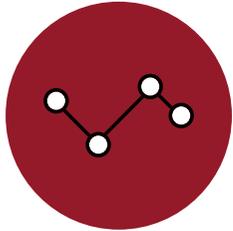
Regularly review any franchise agreements to include e-commerce rules and obligations.



Conversations

Maintain a relationship with your in-market partners and talk regularly about your online strategy.

Trends in a seamless customer experience



Centralised call centre services, customer database consolidated across channels.

Inventory levels of products in the retail store can be checked in the online store.

Internet kiosks in the retail store enable customers to check product availability online.

The shopping cart is stored across online and mobile channels.

An integrated purchase history is kept online and in store.

Future purchase recommendations are made based on past consolidated purchases.

Customers can track their orders and get access to their wish list across different channels.

Customers can pay for their online purchases in a physical store.

Customers can receive a refund in cash in the store for a product originally ordered online.

They can return products purchased online in the retail store.

Vouchers can be redeemed.

SECTION 2

What makes a winning e-shop?

Key objectives for your e-shop



Welcome online visitors to your e-shop with an engaging introduction to your brand that works smoothly on any device.

Convert visitors into customers and convince them of your product and your brand values.

Facilitate their journey from random browsing to filling their cart and placing an order.

Give clear and accurate information on terms and conditions, products, pricing, special offers, payment, delivery and return options.

Offer continuity once the order has been placed, through delivery tracking services, notifications and regular personalised communication.

Follow-up on first order customers and offer them a personalised selection of products.

Ensure you keep in touch with your customer after purchase to develop the relationship and encourage loyalty and brand advocacy.

Define your customers

Don't make the mistake of marketing your products before you've defined your customer.

Example of a customer persona



Sarah

Sarah is looking for fun and adventure, but is concerned about safety.

She prefers local one day treks and hikes.

→ About

- 30–50 years old
- BA qualification
- Professional: dual-income
- Possibly married, no kids

→ Outdoor pursuits

- Scenic treks
- Hikes of moderate difficulty

→ Watches

- Premium TV (HBO, Showtime)
- NatGeo
- Coven
- Dancing with the Stars
- Sons of Anarchy

→ Reads

- Backpacker
- Women's Adventure
- Natural Health
- Women's Health

→ Career

- Senior roles
- Management positions

Site priorities

- Easy to find local day trips
- See how exciting the great outdoors are
- See the potential for new friendship

Potential solutions

- 1 Trip planning made easier. Decide into categories of difficulty, length, and locality
- 2 Trip and story packages should be visual and include images of adventure. People in groups and friends having fun.
- 3 Introduce a way for her to easily connect with others: Facebook, Twitter integration for example

Offer a great user experience

Online shoppers are looking for a seamless, easy customer experience. Each step of their journey to your e-store presents new risks.



Effortless purchasing

Customers will go elsewhere if the purchasing process is too complex, or if the information online is irrelevant or outdated.



User interface

A well-designed e-store that is easy to navigate and attractive to your customer will speed up the buying process.



Provide a shortcut

The less clicks to reach a product page, the better. The homepage should have direct access to product pages, portfolios and offers.

Make your e-store visually compelling



Easy on the eye

European e-shoppers click if they like the look of a website. Ensure your images are professional and aligned with your brand's style.

Be on brand

Use branded illustrations, logos, labels and product promotions to differentiate your brand.

Interactive actions

Provide visual guides on your e-store such as infographics, icons, action buttons, animated elements (moving sliders, text and headers).

Visualise your brand

Short, professional videos are a good drawcard and can help tell your brand story.

Choosing your e-store name

Getting the name right for your online store URL will help to attract more customers and interest in your brand.



Localise your URL

European customers prefer local names for URLs, with .fr or .de or .co.uk extensions. To register a .fr domain name, you need to have a real address in France.

Instinctive localisation feature

An option is to follow the lead of international brands and use an automatic geo-localisation feature that guides the user to their local site.

Grow trust

Choosing a local URL will help to develop trust in your brand.

Brand specific extension

It is now possible to register your e-shop with a “.your brand” extension.

Manage your e-store brand

Once decided, you can buy, sell, park and manage your e-store name URL on a number of online platforms, such as Network Solutions (US), Eurodns or Sedo (Europe).

SECTION 3

Content is king

Telling your story

Your brand is unique. Your e-store needs to tell your brand story in a way that builds trust and creates an emotional connection with customers.



Create a spark

Developing the story of your brand and products will trigger your customer's interest.

Consistency is important

The tone and key messages of your brand need to be aligned throughout your online and in-store activity.

Ask the professionals

Many content production providers can be found in Europe.

Smart partners

Choose agency partners who know about your business sector, your competition, as well as the country, language and culture of your targeted customers.

Social responsibility

Your story should include information on sustainability, ethical supply chains and corporate social responsibility. These are topics Europeans like to read about.

Show and tell - product pages



Be relevant

Product pages need to cover key information, relevant data, special offers, key features and detailed pictures.

Functionality

Viewing options will support your customer's decision process, such as zoom, different angles, and filtering by price, size and colour if relevant.

Clear postage options

Delivery and return options should be visible on product pages.

Product insight

Clothing retailers need to provide size conversion charts for clothing or shoes, which are different in Germany, France, Italy and UK.

Compliance

Produce pages must clearly state the compliance to EU regulations for consumer packaged goods.

SECTION 4

Filling up the cart

Creating a stress-free and memorable purchase journey



Focus on making the purchase journey quick and easy

Help customers add more items to their cart by showing related products on each individual product page. These are products that complement their original choice.

Personalise their order with special offers. These could be tailored to large orders, seasons, or promotions.

The experience continues when customers open their parcels. Packaging can convey a brand's image, include information on future offers, and be gift-like.

Have a clear call to action

A button on the homepage or main menu can guide your customer on a quicker journey to filling the cart.

You may also use a button for subscriptions to your newsletter or to join the brand membership.

The pros of pop-ups

Many online retailers use pop-up messages that appear while the customer visits your website. Pop-ups help to trigger shoppers' interest and generate sales and subscriptions



The 5 most popular pop-ups:

1 Welcome

Appears as soon as your visitor arrives. You can use this tool to quickly convey new information – for example, a sale.

2 Exit

Appears when your visitor moves the cursor to leave the page. This pop-up offers a deal that's difficult to refuse, in a bid to retain the potential customer.

3 Behaviour-driven

Appears when a visitor follows a certain pattern and the pop-up offers what they are looking for.

4 Time-driven

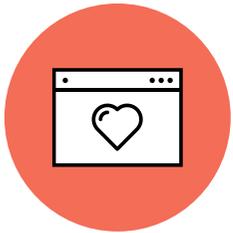
Appears when a visitor has spent a certain amount of time on your site, this pop-up offers them more content.

5 Push notifications

These are alerts sent to your visitor's smartphone via their browser.

A welcoming landing page

A landing page is any page a visitor lands on after clicking through from an advertisement or some form of online marketing. These are standalone pages that you send visitors to, and are designed for a specific marketing campaign.



Create a buzz

A landing page is accessible only from the link you're providing in your marketing content.

Visual impact

The purpose of a landing page is to attract potential customers to your e-store.

Call to action

Landing pages provide an attractive offer or information that encourages a potential customer to click through to a shopping cart or checkout.

Engage the customer



People power

Customer generated content is important: reviews, comments, product rankings may be interesting for some retailers but not aligned with the brand image of others.

Shareability

Europeans are very active in social media, where possible give them the opportunity to share your content on popular social media platforms.

Know the do's and don't



Cookies

Websites in Europe need to clearly mention the use of cookies and get the visitor's consent. This "cookies information banner" has to be updated every year.

Selling alcohol

If you sell alcohol you need a visible disclaimer when a visitor first opens your website, to confirm the visitor is of legal drinking age.

Host

Any website should clearly state who is publishing the site and hosting it.

Terms and conditions

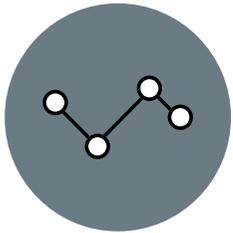
These, as well as privacy policy, have to be visible on all pages. Data privacy is being reinforced in 2018 in Europe ([*GDPR*](#)).

SECTION 5

Trends in online shopping experience

Trends in online shopping experience

There can be a lot of hype over digital trends in the retail world - staying one step ahead does not necessarily mean jumping on the latest innovation. Make sure the tools you use help improve the customer's shopping experience.



Transparency about product's components and country of origin.

Mobile apps, including payments, special offers redeemed in store, in-store information (map, news, events) and contact with sales people.

On the spot interactivity with the shopper via live chat and other web call features.

New and faster delivery options:
Amazon Drone & Locker.

Online marketing and personalisation based on browsing and previous purchases.

Online pop-up stores to test or launch a product or to support an event in-store.

Seamless services between online and in-store, such as click and collect, return and exchange, book an appointment in-store.

Devices in-store to check product availability or place an order.

SECTION 6

Technical know how

Good design functions



Get the basics right



Trustworthy ISP

Choose a trustworthy Internet Service Provider (ISP) to host your e-shop, preferably on a dedicated and secured server.

CMS

Select a content management system (CMS) and technical solutions that enable you to easily update your content (images, text, pricing, offers).

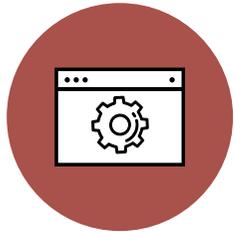
Responsive

Use a responsive design suitable for smart phones and tablets as well as laptops and computers.

Multi-channel

The website should also support all the current web browsers such as Explorer, Firefox, Chrome and Safari, to guarantee the same quality of experience to PC and Mac users, anytime, anywhere.

Software options



SaaS (Software as a Service)

You pay a monthly or annual fee for a ready to use e-shop. Cheap and fast option for small and medium sized shops. Little customisation. Fully dependent on updates by the provider.

Example: [*Shopify*](#), often recommended for social commerce.

Open Source plug-ins (extensions) uploaded to your web site

This offers more visual and technical features, but every time you update your CMS you will have to update your e-shop plug-in. Minimum features are free. Not much personalisation. Some cyber-security issues may occur.

Example: [*Woocommerce*](#) for Wordpress.

E-shop software with a dedicated CMS

This is the preferred option as it offers flexibility and creativity. Solutions to link your e-shop to a marketplace or a company ERP (enterprise resources planning). More robust solution, more expensive, will support your growth and changing needs overtime.

Examples: [*Prestashop*](#) and [*Magento*](#)

Ongoing investment

Design and development costs for an e-shop depend on the size of your business, whether it is a single or multi-currency and language site. It also depends on the level of security expected and your IT infrastructure.



Operational costs

These include IT services, personnel, photo and video production, copywriting, specific web designs or imagery, translation costs. Also technical maintenance

Technical costs

These include web hosting, renewing registered domain names, and search engine optimisation (SEO).

You will need to plan a budget for SEO:

Professional SEO services cost from €6,000 to €12,000 per year depending on your market maturity, the number of pages and products, the complexity of your content, etc.



Professional
SEO services
cost from
€6-12k
per annum

Get found with SEO

Online shoppers are most likely to find your e-store through a search engine. Google is the most popular search engine for 96% of Europeans, thanks to its efficient algorithms and associated services.



Start the climb

The top ten results on the first page of a search engine get about 95% of all clicks on generic search results. Appearing amongst the ten first responses on a specific search is difficult to achieve.

Make the investment

Invest in Google AdWords and SEO tools and services.

Your content should be SEO

Using words and phrases that search engines will recognise and promote will improve the chances of visitors clicking through to your website.

Long tail key wording

An integrated search engine using long tail key wording is also expected from experienced e-shoppers.

Search friendly descriptors

Adding captions and descriptions to your images will help with SEO.

Customer centric

Choose keywords that your customers would type in, not just your product names or brand jargon.

SECTION 7

B2B implementation challenges

Catering for B2B

There can be a number of challenges in online B2B implementation.



Confidence to deal online

In B2B, cyber-security, confidentiality issues and seamless integration with IT & business systems are essential for e-procurement specialists.

Pricing policies

Managing price will require B2B retailers to establish and enforce minimum advertised pricing (MAP) and pricing policies into the distribution channels.

Analytics

Big data and live analytics are needed to enhance the customer journey in real time, to inform in-house “touch point” teams and ultimately increase sales.

Future proofing personnel

B2B companies will also need to hire/train new talent who can fully embrace digital commerce, develop services that will respond to the next generation of buyers and lay the foundation of new business partnerships.

Benefits of e-commerce for B2B sales teams

Operating a digital B2B sales platform also has its advantages.



Increase efficiency

Beyond faster response time and enhanced customer satisfaction, self-service offerings free up sales and service teams to spend more time building relationships with customers, including cross-selling and upselling products.

Profit margins

Sales teams become trusted advisors, reducing the average cost per transaction and increasing profits.

Extra customer focus

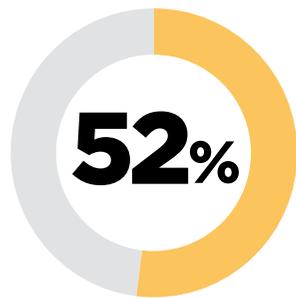
Teams can concentrate more on marketing and on high volume customer relationships.

Digital sales tools

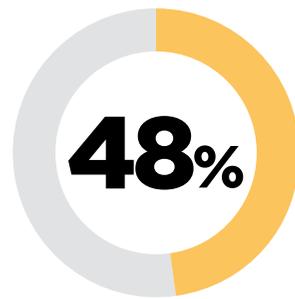
B2B sales teams get empowered with digital sales tools such as real-time inventory information, product data, instant ordering and flexible delivery options.

Advantages of operating B2B e-commerce programmes

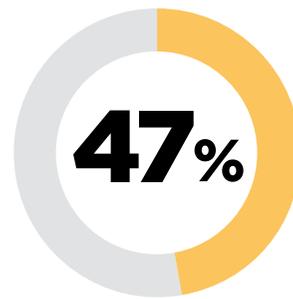
Value B2B decision makers see in their current e-commerce programmes for customers:



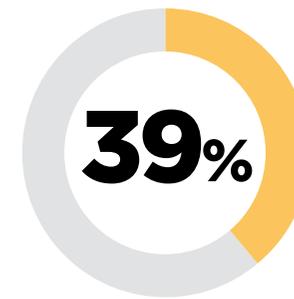
Tailored product offerings



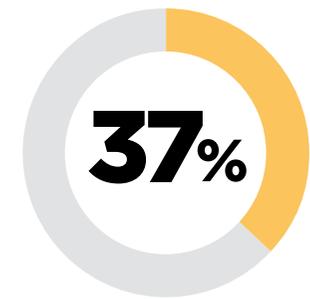
Order automation



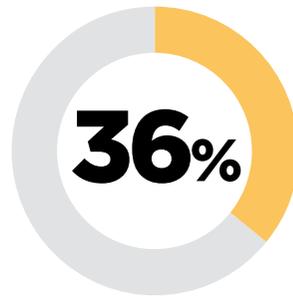
Contracted pricing



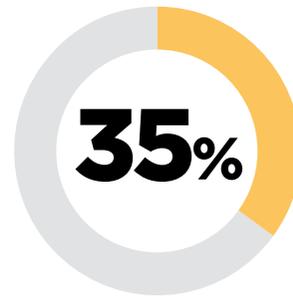
One-click checkout



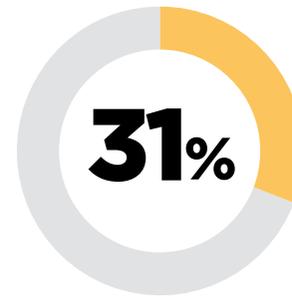
Tailored recommendations



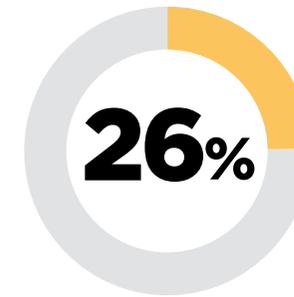
Fast customer service through online chat



Self-service ordering



Exclusive online-only products



Order history from previous interactions

SECTION 8

Tips to overcome common mistakes

Common e-shop implementation hazards



- 1 Once the e-shop is online do not leave it to fate.** This is when the work really starts! Prepare for a step by step launch.
 - 2 Be willing to adapt.** You need to refresh the product offering, provide customer support, do inventories, manage stock, offer sales deals. Make sure you have the people and resources to keep your e-shop open and measure its performance.
 - 3 Online stores are open 24/7, often in many languages.** Only offer chatbots, live chat or both when someone is online to respond.
 - 4 You will need to overcome resistance to change.** Allocate time to educate and engage with your personnel and channel partners long before you go live. How can you best handle free product return?
 - 5 Do not spend all your time making the e-shop look perfect** and underestimate the back-office work (administration, IT, CRM, ERP, SEO). Plan your project carefully.
 - 6 Do not underestimate your e-marketing budget** and the time needed to develop brand awareness in Europe, on the web, in social and other media.
 - 7 Focus your energy and resources on customer satisfaction,** not on technical performance.
-

SECTION 9

Questions to chart your progress

Questions to chart your progress

You've read the guide, now it's time to reflect on your plans to tackle e-commerce in Europe.



- 1 Do you have a clear understanding of your customer's journey?
- 2 How can you design a seamless strategy across mobile devices, in-store and desktop that enchants your customers?
- 3 How can you get your current distribution partners to embrace e-commerce?
- 4 How can you design, set up and manage your e-shop?
- 5 How will you produce and update your e-shop content?
- 6 Which are the key new e-commerce features you should implement?
- 7 What are the IT, cybersecurity and regulation issues to consider?
- 8 What will your investment and ongoing operational costs be?
- 9 How can you improve your e-shop's visibility?
- 10 How can you avoid the most common mistakes?

Index of document links

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Source: E-commerce Foundation - <http://ecommercefoundation.org>

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GDPR - <http://www.eugdpr.org>

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Shopify - <https://www.shopify.co.nz>

Woocommerce - <https://woocommerce.com>

Prestashop - <https://www.prestashop.com/en>

Magento - <https://magento.com>

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Source: Cloudcraze.com - <https://cloudcraze.com>



NEW ZEALAND
TRADE & ENTERPRISE
Te Taurapa Tūhono

New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) is the Government agency charged with a single purpose: growing companies internationally, bigger, better and faster, for the benefit of New Zealand.

We employ 600 people, have over 200 private sector partners and draw on a global network of thousands more. We have people based in 50 offices, working across 24 time zones and 40 languages to support New Zealand businesses in over 100 countries. Our global presence lets us deliver value to the businesses we support, through our unique know-how (knowledge and experience) and know-who (networks and connections).

Our know-how and know-who is expressed in our Māori name: Te Taurapa Tūhono. Te Taurapa is the stern post of a traditional Māori waka, which records valuable knowledge, and stabilises and guides

the craft forward. Tūhono represents connections to people and an ability to build relationships.

We provide customised services and support to ambitious businesses looking to go global. We help them build their capability, boost their global reach, connect to other businesses and invest in their growth. We also connect international investors with opportunities in New Zealand through a global network of investment advisors.

We call on our Government network and work closely with our NZ Inc partners and the business community, to grow our national brand and help businesses to open doors in global markets.

nzte.govt.nz

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