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THE E-COMMERCE BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE TO CONVERSION RATE OPTIMIZATION

Fundamental Best Practices For Converting More Site Visitors

3 Primary Tenets of a Basic Ecommerce Strategy

Despite all of its moving parts, basic ecommerce strategy comes down to 3 parts:

1. **Traffic Generation -** Investing in marketing and advertising to drive qualified traffic to an ecommerce website
2. **Customer Acquisition and Conversion -** Optimizing that ecommerce website to receive traffic and reliably convert it
3. **Customer Retention -** Increasing revenue from existing, known customers using retention strategies like email marketing and retargeting to encourage future purchases

In this guide, you'll learn about how to convert more customers on your website.

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Unanswered Questions Kill Conversion

Part of the reason why some people prefer buying certain products in-person is because they can easily ask questions and get personal help. Providing that same experience online is possible.

Live Chat is the Fastest Way to Answer Questions

The best way to get an answer to a question is to ask a human. The human thinks about the question, asks for a few more details in some cases, and then provides the answer. Simple!
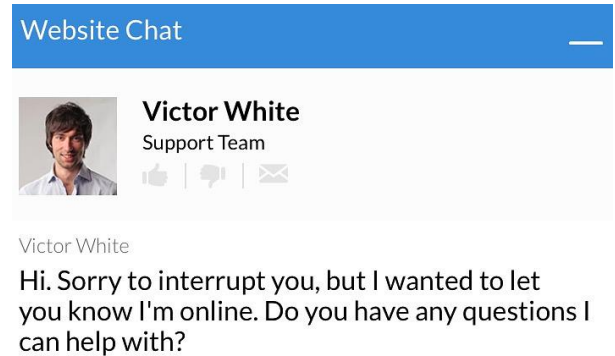
This happens naturally offline, but is tough to produce if you don't have human help available on your site. It's hard to provide this same experience through great user experience testing and content.

The solution? Offer human help through live chat.

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Visitors Prefer Live Chat Over Other Channels

There have been many studies that prove the effectiveness of live chat.

- Live chat has the highest satisfaction score across all support channels.
- There are many benefits visitors get by using live chat over another support channel, but the most important is that they can get answers to their questions quickly.

Website Chat ▬

Victor White
Support Team

👍 | 👎 | ✉

Victor White

Hi. Sorry to interrupt you, but I wanted to let you know I'm online. Do you have any questions I can help with?

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Create Great FAQs and Publish Them in the Right Places

Some people won't ask questions via live chat, but you should still focus on getting them answers easily. Having great FAQs throughout your website gives you a chance to answer these visitors' questions so they purchase.

Create an FAQ page, but don't fill it with "fluff". I know your company has been around since the 80's and you're an industry leader, but a buyer doesn't look to the FAQ section on your website to figure this out.

Address questions related to shipping time, return policies, ingredients or compatibility issues, etc.

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How to Effectively and Efficiently Create Great FAQs

Creating an FAQ page is not a one time task. Also, it doesn't need to be a daunting experience where you guess customers questions. Instead, use a data drive approach.

1. Anytime you get an email with a specific question, save it for later.
2. When you get specific questions on live chat, save those too.
3. Find similar products on Amazon, and mine their FAQs section for questions that are relevant to your product. Using these for ideas is a great window into the mindset of your prospects.

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Publish FAQs Throughout the Website

Having a dedicated FAQ page is important, but you should also integrate relevant FAQs directly into product pages and the checkout process.

RollerSkateNation.com increased overall purchases by 69% by integrating "pro tip" style content into product pages. But if you look closely, this is just a creative way to answer the common question of "which size skate should I buy for my child?".

Don't Hide Contact Info from Prospects

If you're not using live chat and a question isn't covered in your FAQs, what is a visitor supposed to do? They'll either "come back later" (which is unlikely) or they'll want to ask you the question directly. Make it easy for your visitors to contact you, whether it's via phone, chat, or email. Don't hide.

SchoolOutlet.com does a great job of this. The phone number is shown at the top of every page on the website, they have a website chat option, and the contact page gives the visitor the ability to email a question.

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Reply Quickly to Questions

Once someone sends you a question, it's important to reply very quickly. Use a HelpDesk to manage incoming questions so you can easily route questions to the right person automatically and collaborate with your team on complex questions.

Questions stop people from buying. If you make it possible to get answers to questions quickly, then more visitors will buy

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Make The Purchase Process Easy

Making it easy to get answers to questions is important, but your hardcore conversion optimization efforts should be focused as close to the purchase as possible—the checkout process.

Optimize The Checkout Process

Making it easy to get answers to questions is important, but your hardcore conversion optimization efforts should be focused as close to the purchase as possible—the checkout process. Below are the most important things you need to address to make sure you're not pushing people away as they're trying to checkout.

- Make It Easy to Enter Payment and Shipping Information
- Allow Buyers to Easily Come Back to Their Shopping Cart
- Use Checkout Abandonment Email Reminders

Make Entering Checkout Info Easy

- **Don't Force Account Creation** - Forcing customers to create an account pushes 1 in 4 of them away.
- **Auto-Populate Addresses With the Google Maps API -** When you start typing an address into Google Maps, it automatically shows the full address after typing the first few letters of the address or street name.
- **Simplify Credit Card Entry -** Many people get confused when entering their credit card information. They don't know what a CVV code is, and they have to match the fields on your payment form with the right information on their credit card. You can make this dead simple by asking for the information in the same exact format as the credit card they're holding in their hand.

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Allow Buyers to Easily Come Back to Their Shopping Cart

56% of customers add things to their shopping cart as a way of saving products. Once they're ready to buy, they'll clean-up their shopping cart and complete their purchase.

This isn't a problem for you, unless they want to come back later today or tomorrow and finish the checkout… You can allow visitors to automatically "save" their shopping cart so they can easily come back and complete the purchase. You can definitely have them create an account and save the shopping cart for later, but that's not dead simple for them…

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Allow Buyers to Easily Come Back to Their Shopping Cart

Using a **"Persistent Shopping Cart"** gives the customer the ability to come back and see their cart without having to save anything or create an account.

- Configure your store to use persistent shopping cart cookies that keep track of what's in the cart without them having an account on your website.
- Next time that visitor comes back to the site, your store sees the tracking cookie on their computer and displays their cart.
- They can then complete the checkout as if they never left in the first place.

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Use Checkout Abandonment Email Reminders

Around 70% of people leave the checkout process before completing a purchase. This happens for a lot of reasons. Using a persistent shopping cart makes it easy for them to finish the checkout process when the come back, but what about those customers that don't actually come back?

- You can use email reminders to get customers back to the website to complete their checkout.
- Shopping cart abandonment emails used to be a ninja tactic, but they're a standard best practice now that every store should be using.

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Use Checkout Abandonment Email Reminders

If implemented correctly and improved over time, you can recover anywhere from 12% to 40% of these otherwise lost sales opportunities.

- **Get the Customer's Email Address Early in the Checkout Process -** This allows you to automatically follow up if they abandon checkout.
- **Automatically Send a Reminder to Finish the Checkout Process -** You can configure abandoned checkout reminder emails to go out after a specific amount of time, or specific action on the site.
- **Test the Abandoned Cart Email Sequences -** If you're not using abandoned cart emails, get the basic 1-email sequence in place right away. From there, test different sequences, timing, offers, etc.

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Optimize Product Pages to Sell Effectively

Once your checkout process is really dialed in, it's time to optimize the next step back from the purchase - the product page. The goal of the product page is to get buyers to add the item to their shopping cart, so that's what we'll focus these optimizations on.

Make Product Images Awesome, and Consider Video

People like to see and feel products before paying for them. You might not be able to let someone touch your product (yet) before buying online, but great images and videos can give them a similar feel for your product.

- High quality images and video, coupled with free shipping and no hassle return policies, can have a big impact on conversion.
- Multiple formats are great, but test which format is best for your product. Then, make that the default option.

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Make Product Images Awesome, and Consider Video

Below are basic image best practices:

- **Make Product Images BIG -** People like to see and feel products before paying for them. Great images & videos can give them a similar experience.
- **Use Editing and Post Production to Make Images Awesome -** People need to see the detail of your product. Don't use small low quality images. Also, even out colors and tones in the image, remove blemishes with spot retouching, and just generally perfect the look of the images. This matters!
- **Use 360º Rotating Images for Even More Detail -** Big high quality product images are great, but interactive 360º images give your customers a chance to see even more detail.

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Include Text Summary Descriptions And In-Depth Details

Product images are more important than text descriptions, but you should still make sure your descriptions are strong. 79% of people quickly scan the page for information, but many people will dive in deeper to certain details. You need to cater to everyone.

The quick summary should make clear who the product is for and show basic details. For example, the first sentence or two can describe the product, and you show the most important facts and specs as bullet points.

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Show Product Reviews, Even Negative Ones

No matter how good your own product content is, people want to see real product reviews before they buy. Nielsen found that 35-57% of shoppers, depending on the product category, considered reviews before buying.

If you fully commit to getting product reviews from customers, you might be thinking "What if someone leaves a negative review…". That's a valid concern.

If you're truly doing your best to help customers and selling a quality product, then negative reviews shouldn't hurt your sales.

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Emphasize the Call to Action

The goal of a product page is to get the item into the shopping cart. Product images, descriptions, reviews, and other product information help make that happen. But the call to action to add the item to the shopping cart should be emphasized.

Test variations of your call to action on product pages to get more people to add the product to their cart, and increase conversion rate.

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Emphasize the Call to Action

VeggieTales tested an emphasized add to cart section on product pages and saw revenue per visitor increase by 13.9%.

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Address The Ultimate Concern —Can I Return This?

Your product images, descriptions, reviews, and customer service team can help overcome any hesitancy to make an online purchase—but having a no hassle return policy is best.

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Your product images, descriptions, reviews, and customer service team can help overcome any hesitancy to make an online purchase—but having a no hassle return policy is best.

- UPS and comScore found that 63% of shoppers check the return policy before buying, and 48% would shop more with a retailer that offered hassle free returns.
- The Journal of Marketing tracked purchases over time and found that customers who received free shipping on returns actually increased their purchases by 58% over the next 2 years.

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Address The Ultimate Concern — Can I Return This?

If your customers see a "restocking" fee or some other friction point for returning products they're not happy with, they will pause before making the purchase and might think twice about buying from you in the future.

ProTeethGuard.com, a company that sells customized mouth guards to help people that grind their teeth, emphasizes their free shipping and 110% money back guarantee throughout their entire website. This is important since their customers are used to purchasing these types of products from a local Dentist.

Additional Tips for the Shopping Experience

Optimizing your checkout and product pages are most important, but there are also a few best practices that apply to the overall shopping experience on your site.

We'll cover those in this section.

Make Product Navigation and Filters Easy to Use

If someone lands on your website, you need to make it simple for them to find the product they're looking for. Otherwise, they might go back to Google to try to find the product there and land on a competitor's site.

- **Make Your Navigation Clear and Easily Filterable -** Apart from using live chat to personally help visitors, your product navigation is the most influential part of the shopping experience on your site. It needs to be easy to use and effective in finding the products they're looking for.
- **Make Filtering Products Within a Category Easy -** Once visitors are in a specific category, you can use filters to make finding the right product easy.

Optimize Your Site Search

Some visitors opt to use your product site search if they can't quickly find products another way. An eConsultancy study found that 1 in 3 visitors use site search. If the experience is poor, they might go back to somewhere they'd expect a better search experience—Google, which may send them to a competitor.

- **Regularly Monitor and Tweak the Quality of Search Results -** Monitor how well your search results are performing using Google Analytics. Get in a routine of monitoring this data regularly to see insights you can use to improve the search quality of your site.
- **Emphasize the Search Box -** Once you are confident the search feature is working well, emphasize it as an option for visitors.

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Make Accessing Recently Viewed Products Easy

While visitors are browsing your site, they'll probably look at a few products. They might be comparing different features or checking compatibility between multiple products that they need.

- Whatever the reason, if they have to start over with navigation to find certain products again, they might get frustrated and go elsewhere.
- Using a simple "Recently Viewed Products" section for simple navigation makes it easy to get back to these products.

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Quick Start Checklist

Conversion optimization is something you can spend years and 100's of thousands of dollars on. It's never "done". But if you haven't addressed these best practices, take action now.

You'll see significant improvements in conversions, and will have a strong foundation to start testing more granular aspects of conversion on your store.

Quick Start Checklist

- Create comprehensive FAQs and make these accessible throughout the site
- Streamline the checkout process by making data entry easy or automatic
- Allow visitors to come back to abandoned carts, and send email reminders
- Use large high quality images to showcase your products, and consider video
- Organize the details on product pages for both quick and in-depth review
- Gather and publish product reviews from customers (even negative reviews)
- Clarify shipping and return policies and "add to cart" on product pages
- Make finding products easy with site navigation, search, and recently viewed.

Having a human available on live chat 24/7 significantly increases conversions because it allows the visitor to get fast answers and help in any situation.

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Your Action Plan

WE CAN BE YOUR 24/7 LIVE CHAT TEAM

We run live chat for 100+ ecommerce stores 24 hours per day 7 days per week. Our team of agents can actually chat directly with your visitors.

With our industry leading onboarding process, **we can learn your business** and ensure a high quality chat experience for your visitors.

Pricing is a flat fee per month, sales are tracked directly within Google Analytics, and we only take on clients we can hit a home run for.

Whether you decide to use our live chat team or to run live chat yourself, be sure to properly plan a good strategy for your live chat. This will ensure you get the best results and **don't hurt your business by offering a poor live chat experience.**

BOOK A FREE STRATEGY CALL

During the Strategy Call, we'll talk through a few specific questions about your business for us to know that HelpFlow will be a home run for you. From there, we'll talk through the best approach for using HelpFlow on your particular business.

CLICK HERE TO BOOK A STRATEGY CALL