Websites

E-commerce

Synopsis
SOLUTIONS

Features of an E-commerce Website

E-commerce - buying and selling goods and services online - is one of the biggest uses of the world wide web. Starting an E-commerce business or website, or expanding an existing business with an E-commerce website can be highly profitable, especially as the overhead costs of running a website are very small compared to running a physical shop.

There are all sorts of features and tools you can include in an E-commerce website design which will make the shopping experience quicker, easier and more enjoyable for your customers - and ultimately drive sales.

This paper is a guide to some of the most common E-commerce website features, so that when you come to request a quote from Synopsis Solutions, you will have the knowledge to enable you to discuss your requirements with us in detail.

A Basic Online Shopping System

The standard structure for an online shop is to make use of a virtual shopping cart, trolley, or basket. When customers choose to buy items, they are added to the cart and stored there while the customer browses your site. A good website will remember the items in the cart so that if a customer leaves your site but later return, their items will still be there.

Customers complete their purchases by going to a checkout, which is where they will make their payments and specify delivery options. A professional website will utilise clever techniques such as CSS to make the shopping cart and checkout process obvious, quick and easy to use. If your customers struggle to make purchases they may choose a different online shop with a better web design.

Some E-commerce websites have an extra option to avoid the cart and checkout, allowing customers to skip straight to delivery and payment options, which is makes impulse purchases easy.

Our website developers have existing shopping systems which we can be customised to fit with the rest of your website design. In order to receive payments online your website will need to make use of an existing merchant, which can handle credit card transactions. Many of these will allow you to customise their system to fit with your website design. You can also set up your own merchant account, which will probably require significant initial investment, but cheaper in the long term, and can be completely integrated with you website design.

The websites shopping system should allow customers to register with your site. This is a benefit to the customers as you can store their details and will provide you with invaluable marketing information on their purchases and preferences as well as a way of directly marketing through email newsletters.

Displaying Products

Your website design is key to making an E-commerce website a success. In its simplest form, the website design could behave like an online version of a printed catalogue. Online consumers are fickle and will compare online shops and prices so it is vital that your website makes your products as attractive as possible and gives plenty of information. Rather than having a single, small photo of each product, you could have several angles, an extra large photo, or even videos of the product in use. If you are not sure about these things we will be able to suggest novel ways to display or demonstrate your products online.

Recommendations

A good way to boost your sales is by showing customers products that they may be interested in. This is called a recommendation system and can work in a number of ways. It is a good idea for your website to display products that the customer has previously viewed, so they can get back to them easily. The products a customer views can be used to infer others they may be interested in (for example, if the product requires batteries, offer them the appropriate batteries). Data on what previous customers have bought (for example, all albums by a particular artist) gives your website a further way of recommending items.

Interactivity

One more way to add value to your E-commerce website design is by adding interactivity. Your customers could save a list of items as a wish-list, which is particularly useful for birthdays and Christmas and may drive more customers to your site. User reviews are another excellent feature to have as customers are more likely to buy a product if other customers give it a positive review on your website.

Affiliate Programmes

An affiliate programme is a form of marketing where you pay people (your affiliates) who generate customers for you. The affiliates place advertisements for your site or specific products on their own websites or email marketing and you pay them a commission for any resulting sales. To make the most out of an affiliate scheme, we will provide graphic buttons and banners which your affiliates can use. Also your website must include appropriate mechanisms to track which affiliate referred which customer.

The Next Step

This list of features is by no means comprehensive and innovations in E-commerce continue to be made.
If you choose Synopsis Solutions to build your E-commerce website you can discuss your ideas with us and once we have a good idea of your product or service, we will be able to suggest additional features for your E-commerce website design.

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