

Improving your website's online shopping experience

 By [Sophie Baker](#)

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If you're running an e-commerce site, or even if the option to buy online is a small part of your business, you need to make sure that your website is optimised for online shoppers. More and more people are making purchases online due to the ease and convenience, but there are some conditions attached...



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Firstly, make sure any payments are safe and secure. Buyers are not going to want to pay online if they think there's a chance their details could be stolen. Make it very obvious that your site is safe by asking them to sign in 'via our secure server' or reiterating that consumers' personal details are kept private.

Make payment easy. Customers want to pay with their credit cards or PayPal, not having to fill in addresses, card numbers and so on, every single time. Make sure that if the customer has an account, the main details are saved. Also consider providing an EFT option for those without a credit card.

Ensure customers can see exactly what you sell within the first few seconds of landing on your homepage. They don't want to have to guess what your products are.

Don't make it near impossible to see your returns and delivery policies. Put them in an obvious area of your site - many buyers are swayed by free delivery or free returns if the product is not what they expected. Even if you don't offer these, make sure visitors to your site can see average delivery times, delivery options and costs, and your returns policy.

Ensure that your products are neatly categorised. Don't just list them, make them easy to find via categories, sizes, uses, or whichever sorting method is best for your products. If you are selling multiple options, try and have the option to filter

your search results. A good example would be an online clothing shop allowing you to narrow results to women's dresses in a size 34, costing under R500. On top of this, ensure that you have a working search button. That way, if your site visitor is looking for a particular product he or she can simply enter the search term to navigate to it directly.

Include a well-written description of the product. Outline any features and highlights, describe its uses if necessary, and provide at least one clear, high resolution photo as well.

Finally, make sure your online shop is easy to navigate on both web and mobile platforms. Make sure you can click directly to the store from the homepage, with a clearly marked "Shop", "Buy Online" or similar tab. If the process is safe, easy to follow, and looks professional then you are well on the way to a roaring online trade.

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