



# THE TOP ADVANTAGES OF eCOMMERCE: WHY YOU SHOULD SELL ONLINE

As you consider selling online, look at the top advantages of eCommerce selling.

Over the past decade, consumers have constantly changed the way they want to shop and merchants are trying to keep up. Shoppers fluidly search, compare, and buy from online sites, marketplaces, mobile apps,

physical stores, and social sites. As innovative technology aids their journey, consumers are looking for remarkable experiences across these digital and physical touchpoints with brands.

Whether you're looking to expand your brick-and-mortar business or just starting, eCommerce selling has many advantages for a long-term strategy to win over customers. Look no further than direct-to-consumer brands that are disrupting the retail landscape by creating digital-first approaches to create loyal customers. Last year, 81% of consumers plan to shop for direct-to-consumer brands within the next five years. Where have these brands built their enterprises? Online.



## What is eCommerce?

Before you can dive headfirst into an eCommerce business, you should know what it includes.

eCommerce encompasses any commercial transaction that involves the transfer of information across the internet.

That's a broad description for a reason. eCommerce can take many different formats. It can include a branded website, mobile app, marketplaces like Amazon and eBay, and social media platforms like Facebook Marketplace, Instagram Shoppable Ads, and Pinterest Buyable Pins.

While there are many ways to sell to consumers over the internet, the main advantage of online selling is you can sell to consumers anywhere, anytime. You can meet the customer where and when they're shopping. It doesn't matter if they're sitting at home on the couch, on their lunch break at work, or even using your app in a physical store – they can complete a purchase online.

Here are some of the major benefits of eCommerce selling:

### Top 8 Advantages of eCommerce

Here are the top reasons why first-time and established merchants are turning to eCommerce as a main source of revenue.

#### 1. Fast Go-to-Market Time

Unlike traditional retail, your eCommerce store can be up and running in just a few clicks (if you're looking for a basic store.) eCommerce platforms like Shopify, BigCommerce, and Squarespace use pre-made templates to create your store. They take care of hosting, PCI compliance, platform maintenance, and more. Marketplaces like Amazon or eBay just require you to set up an account before you start selling.

Over the last several years, SaaS-based eCommerce platforms like these have made it realistic and simple for business owners to create attractive and reliable sites with minimal effort. You don't need deep technical or eCommerce knowledge to have a professional website up and running in just an afternoon. You can even grow substantially before you need to consider in-house resources or a digital agency to take your site to the next level.

You can get off the ground quickly with eCommerce solutions, especially if you've already created word of mouth or a social following to tap into. You can quickly get a site up and running and then drive traffic to your new site.

#### 2. Low Cost

In many cases, it costs less to start an eCommerce business. See how:

- eCommerce and marketplaces are free to sign-up or prices as low as \$20/month
- Marketplaces are free to sign-up and take a small percentage fee for sold items
- Use drop shipping to procure inventory without a large, upfront investment
- Social media, organic search, and Google Adwords are cost-effective ways to market your business
- Run and manage the business by yourself to eliminate costs of payroll



When you're first starting, eCommerce allows you to avoid many of the large, upfront investments that traditional retail can incur – like a physical storefront, inventory, or payroll. With an online store, you can sequentially build out your business as your sales grow.

### 3. Shoppers Start Online

The use of digital channels keeps increasing. 87% of shoppers begin product searches on digital channels, up from 71% last year. Even if they end up buying from a physical store, shoppers are more likely to start their search online, especially on marketplaces like Amazon and eBay.

Shoppers research online for a variety of reasons to compare prices, compare brands, search customer reviews, check inventory levels, and more. The only way to ensure potential shoppers find your products is to have an online presence. Even if it's just to check store hours or locations, customers must find the information they're looking for. You always want to be where your first customers are shopping, and evidence points to online.

### 4. Customer Data Insights

One advantage of online selling you might not have thought of is how easy it makes it to collect, measure, and act on customer data. If you want to be hyper-focused on the customer experience, then you need to own your consumer data. Online selling lets you collect first-hand data by tracking customer interactions. You'll have a constant feedback loop of actionable insights to continue to innovate your customer experience.

As always, it's important to think about ethical ways to collect and act on consumer data. There are privacy laws like GDPR to think about. And, if you're collecting sensitive data, you better be protecting it too.

### 5. Reach New Customers

As mentioned above, eCommerce selling can take on many different formats. Each channel has a unique audience that sellers can reach. An online site can help you reach international shoppers. Social sites can reach new demographics. Marketplaces like Amazon provide the widest audience, but can also help you find niche markets. Marketplaces like Etsy, Newegg, and Poshmark serve specific audiences looking for certain products. The best part is that you can also use a mix of online touchpoints to engage multiple audiences at once.

Unlike brick and mortar, online channels aren't limited to who can physically visit your store. Whether you're just starting or an existing seller, you can reach someone online that you couldn't before.

### 6. Content Marketing Strategy

An online presence allows you to provide more information about your products and services to your customers. A branded site especially gives sellers a place to provide key content to customers.

Key product content includes in-depth product descriptions, product comparisons, in-store inventory availability, and pricing. This information helps a customer make their purchasing decision both in-store or online.

Your eCommerce site can also provide more information about your business or how to use your products. Webpages and email marketing can be dedicated to your brand's story and how your products are made. Blog posts and videos can also provide helpful content about the use of your products or services. Learn more about how a content marketing strategy can increase sales online.

For example, food companies provide recipes and tips to consumers on their websites. This type of content creates a story for your brand while providing an overall better customer experience. In a competitive market, this type of information differentiates you from other sellers.

## 7. Serve Niche Markets

eCommerce makes serving niche markets even easier. It can be hard for that rare coin collector to find a seller. However, the ease and breadth of the internet make that search easier. If you serve a niche market, you might find it easier to distribute your products online. You'll open your business to a greater depth of consumers.

## 8. Meet Customers Where They Want to Buy

Shoppers don't just research products online. They also complete purchases online too. eCommerce makes even it easier for shoppers to hit that buy button, no matter where they are. Shoppers can complete purchases from Instagram Ads, mobile apps in-store, and more. eCommerce allows sellers to remove friction points and make it as convenient for buyers to purchase the products they want.

Sell where your customers are. If most of your customers shop online, then you should be selling online! eCommerce allows you to meet the shopping expectations of your customers.

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Source: *nchannel*

