



## Your E-Commerce Website Checklist

So you have a killer strategy, an awesome set of products and a great design – Now its time to put these things together on your website.

### But HOW do you do that!?

You have deadlines, timelines and need to get to the market NOW. There are all these things that need to be done...how do you get organized?

Here is a list of all the boring, mundane, and yet totally necessary stuff needed to pull together an e-commerce website:

Check List Item	Requirements
Pre-Launch	
✓ Hosting Provider	<p>This company Hosts your website, provides you with FTP access that allows you to make changes to the pages. The Hosting provider must be running Microsoft Internet Information Service (IIS) and must be capable of running asp pages.</p> <p>This is often called using Front Page extensions.</p>
✓ Database Server	<p>In order for your site to store product and customer information, your e-commerce site needs to have a database. Depending upon how much activity you expect, you will need to install either MS Access or a SQL server.</p> <p>If you are using <b>Microsoft Access</b>, then this database is a file that needs to be stored in the same directory as your website with the hosting provider.</p> <p>If you are using <b>Microsoft SQL</b> or similar, you must host your database on a server that is running the Microsoft SQL software. This may or may not be the same server that is hosting your web pages.</p>
✓ Security Certificate (SSL)	<p>In order for your customers to trust you and place orders on your site, you must be able to offer them secure 128-bit encryption using SSL. You do this by purchasing a certificate that gets installed on the web server. In many cases, your hosting provider can get this for you but sometimes it will be necessary to get your own.</p> <p>In many cases, your hosting provider will put you on a</p>

	<p>server that is shared among a variety of its customers. You will then share the certificate among all these other businesses. While there is no technical problem with this, the certificate will not be registered to your business specifically.</p>
<p>✓ Domain Name</p>	<p>If you haven't got one already, you need to purchase your domain (i.e. <a href="http://www.yoursite.com">www.yoursite.com</a>) There are a variety of places that can do this for you including Name Secure, Yahoo! domains, Register.com, etc.</p> <p>If you are moving your hosting provider, then getting your domain to re-point to a new DNS ( a web address that looks like 69.127.34.1) take about 3 days to completely populate.</p>
<p>✓ Payment Processor</p>	<p>If you want to be able to accept credit card payments on your site, you need to have your e-commerce site integrated with a credit card processor. This company serves as a clearinghouse between you, and the credit card companies.</p> <p>Before you can get this however, you need to have a merchant id set-up with each of the credit cards you wish to accept.</p> <p>You can also set-up your site to receive payments from payment service companies such as Paypal or 2Checkout.com these services allow customers to pay for their order using these online accounts.</p>
<p>✓ Shopping Cart Software</p>	<p>You can build your shopping cart from scratch, but this is a costly endeavor. Instead, there are some relatively low cost templates on the market that can be purchased. Example <a href="http://www.candypress.com">www.candypress.com</a></p> <p>If you do decide to purchase your shopping cart then the software must be downloaded and installed on your web server. (The one your hosting provider uses)</p>
<p><b>Post Launch</b></p>	
<p>✓ Search Engine Optimization and Submission</p>	<p>In order for people to find your site, you need to ensure that they are listed on all of the major search engines (Google, Yahoo, AltaVista). To do this you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine what keywords you want people to find your site with - This can be a challenging exercise as you need to keep it under 5 terms or phrases</li> <li>2. Optimize your site with those keywords and meta</li> </ol>

	<p>information</p> <p>3. Submit the site to the search engines.</p> <p>There are also services out there that will submit your site to all the major engines for a fee (usually around \$30-\$50)</p> <p>If you are not building a retail site, then often the search engine optimization is not required.</p>
✓ Web Statistic Software	<p>Often included with your hosting arrangement, you need to get site statistic software that will show you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hits on your site</li> <li>• Unique visitors per day</li> <li>• Average length of visit</li> <li>• Plus more</li> </ul> <p>These statistics provide feedback on how well your site is doing and can be combined with your orders so that you know if you are converting visitors into sales.</p> <p>If the hosting provider does not have this installed, then you can buy this software and have them install it for you. Some options include <a href="http://www.deepmetrics.com">www.deepmetrics.com</a></p>
✓ Backup Procedures	<p>Make sure that your hosting provider is backing up your pages every day.</p> <p>If you are also having a database hosted on site or with another provider, make sure that this is also included in the backup process.</p> <p>You don't want to lose any customers or orders because of lost information...</p>
✓ Change, Alter, Tweak	<p>Once you've launched your site, the work does not end. Managing and maintaining a site takes sweat...</p> <p>Make sure that you use the feedback from your customers, the statistics and people around you to constantly tweak and improve the experience.</p>

Good Luck and Happy Selling!