COAX

A Complete Guide to e-Commerce Website Development

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FIRST

Content

Everyone around the world is hoping for a much better 2021. Last year, everything changed, almost overnight, including for many millions of businesses.

In the retail and eCommerce sectors, 2020 squeezed a decade worth of growth and change into a single year. Some companies were able to capitalise on this in a massive way, such as Amazon in Europe and the U.S.

In 2021, especially with the global pandemic continuing to affect everyone and the world economy, a BCG Consumer Sentiment survey expects eCommerce sales to exceed $5 trillion this year.

Growth last year was exceptional, but now we can expect that to continue in 2021.

In this eBook, we look at the trends retailers need to be aware of (whether you are new to eCommerce or want to make improvements to what you've already got online). We also cover how to get started in eCommerce, which includes a step by step guide for those attempting to get an eCommerce website off the ground themselves.

Further on in this eBook, we cover approximate costs for having a custom eCommerce website developed (which is a question we can answer in greater detail if you arrange a call with one of our team), and finally, a look at why eCommerce websites fail. Naturally, we don't want any company with an eCommerce website to fail, which is why we recommend looking closely at things such as the marketing plan before investing in one, and ensuring you've got a budget to drive forward growth once a website is launched.

We are living in unprecedented times for eCommerce brands. Now is the time to invest in a website or app (or both) and launch, or overhaul what you've already got online, especially if it isn't getting the kind of results you would expect and need.

Key takeaways

In this eBook, we've covered what you need to know for those considering investing in an eCommerce app or website. Now is the time to invest in eCommerce. Providing you've got products that are already selling, or have a reasonable chance of being popular once you've got an online store setup.

Depending on the growth stage of your business and product (and budget for marketing), you could either dive in with an all-singing-all-dancing website, or start small. If you start small, then this is a great opportunity to see what works, and what doesn't, and the features you need. The more product ranges, and customers you have, the sooner you're going to need a website with more features and functionality.

Due to the way people shop, which is more on mobile devices than any others, an app would be ideal to capture the audience and market share you need to keep growing. If you've got an app or website but they're not getting the results you need, now could be a great time to invest in an overhaul.

In 2021, consumers are expected to spend $5 trillion online. With the right website or app, and marketing, you can drive forward growth, increase market share and get more loyal customers.

Key Custom eCommerce trends to be aware of in 2021

Everyone around the world is hoping for a much better 2021. Last year, everything changed, almost overnight, including for many millions of businesses.

In the retail and eCommerce sectors, 2020 squeezed a decade worth of growth and change into a single year. Some companies were able to capitalise on this in a massive way, such as Amazon in Europe and the U.S. Many smaller and mid-sized businesses were unprepared for the sudden shift to online retail. With lockdowns and other similar orders from governments, forcing shops to close, retailers needed to jump to online sales.

A lot of retailers have been forced to go online, or make much more use of websites they'd already launched. Many others, however, are still struggling with it and aren't quite where they need to be. In some exceptional circumstances, such as Primark, a clothing retailer in the UK losing around $1 billion every few months, the majority of those that didn't have eCommerce websites have now got them online.

In 2021, especially with the global pandemic continuing to affect everyone and the world economy, a BCG Consumer Sentiment survey expects eCommerce sales to exceed $5 trillion this year. Growth last year was exceptional, but now we can expect that to continue in 2021. This means that online and brick-and-mortar retailers need to be more aware of eCommerce trends, and what that means when planning marketing activities. Here are some of the most important we have identified for 2021, and what this means for eCommerce stores and brands.

Server Side Rendering

Schema.org

Integrated social media & social shopping

Increased speed, worldwide

B2B portal for big customers

Brexit, in Europe & UK

#1: Server side rendering (SSR)

Unless you are a developer, some of these trends may sound like words and phrases from an unfamiliar language, such as Server Side Rendering (SSR).

Server Side Rendering (SSR) is a way of giving web visitors an even faster, and therefore better, user-experience. Not only does SSR, which is implemented using React.js, makes clicking on web pages faster for web visitors, who are all potential customers, but this improves the experience for 'web spiders', or crawler bots that search the web and index websites in search results.

What this means is, if automated 'bots' can find your website faster, then it should rank higher in search engine results (SERPS). How does SSR achieve all of these aims? From a development perspective, SSR does this quite simply: When an app is developed using a coding language called React, rendering ensures that pages load quicker.

Rendering loads pages even faster for search engine crawlers, which ensures web traffic benefits. It also helps ensure pages are loaded faster for actual web visitors, who are also potential customers, which should have a noticeable impact on sales.

#2: Use schema.org

Another way to encourage web crawlers to index pages more readily, and quickly, which means positioning them higher in search engine results, is using Schema.org.

Schema.org is a collaborative, community activity, aiming to improve website experiences by using this approach to markup their web pages.

This community has been founded by developers and others at some of the world's largest digital companies, such as Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, and others. The aim is to make structured data, which includes how websites are built and the information on them, more unified, and therefore, easier to find.

If you use Schema, you are part of a growing community of 10 million websites that markup web pages and websites using the same structure, thereby improving the way the Internet is organised. This is achieved using a shared vocabulary, which "cover entities, relationships between entities and actions," and "makes it easier for webmasters and developers to decide on a schema and get the maximum benefit for their efforts."

What this means for eCommerce, is that websites using Schema.org should perform better in search results. Customers will find you faster, if web developers and agencies working on your website incorporate this into the design and structure.

#3: Increase speed, worldwide

The speed a website loads makes a huge difference to the user experience. eCommerce customers expect sites that load fast, and give them a smooth and nearly seamless experience from start to finish. You need to make it easy for customers to find products, go through the checkout, and for search engines to find your eCommerce site, to bring more traffic in. Speed is essential worldwide. If you want to attract a global customer-base then you've got to ensure the website loads as quickly in Australia or Alaska.

#4: Brexit, in Europe & UK

IIn the UK and Europe, one major political problem that is knocking eCommerce companies is Brexit. Four years ago, 52% of the British public voted to leave the EU.

Now this has finally happened, it's causing extra paperwork and costs shipping goods between the UK and Europe, in both directions.

Although we can expect things to improve, for the moment this is going to cause ongoing challenges. Retailers and eCommerce brands with customers on either side of the English Channel need to be aware of this, and take action accordingly. This will definitely need filling in the right paperwork, such as customs forms, and it might mean needing to find a new shipping/postal provider.

#5: B2B portal for big customers

What if you also sell wholesale to larger customers? It would be useful, so that these B2B customers can place orders directly through the website, to have a portal for them. This way, orders can come in anytime of the day and night, and B2B customers also benefit from a seamless ordering process that should ensure sales values also increase.
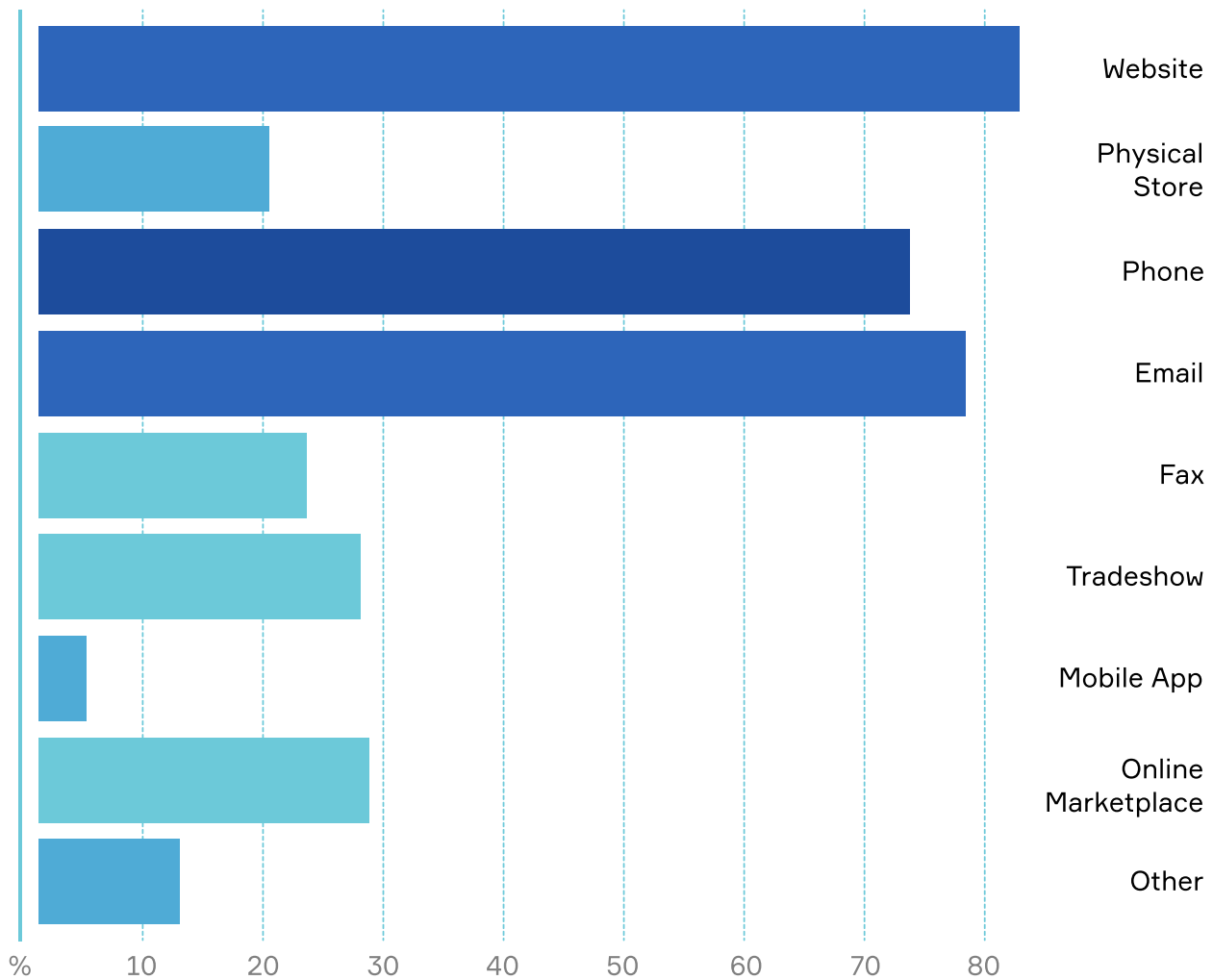
How eCommerce companies accept orders from business customers

#6: Integrate social media and social shopping

Customers are spending even more time on social media. Which means, now more than ever, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to see something on one of your social channels and buy it. On Facebook, Instagram, Google, and even TikTok, there are shopping integrations eCommerce brands can benefit from. Make sure to work with a partner eCommerce agency that can help you achieve these, to drive even more revenue from social media marketing efforts.

Here are a key trends that eCommerce retailers can benefit from in 2021

- Server Side Rendering (SSR), to increase loading speeds;

- Use Schema.org, to also improve how quickly search engine crawlers find a website;

- Increase speed, worldwide. Websites should load just as quickly everywhere, which might mean ensuring flexible servers around the world support global scale;

- Brexit, in Europe & UK. Not something anyone is benefiting from at the moment, but to be aware of and adapt around as needed;

- B2B portal for big customers;

- Integrate social media and social shopping.

How to build a eCommerce website from scratch

Now is the ideal time to start selling products online. Whatever you are selling, there are more customers than ever online. Building a custom eCommerce website from scratch will ensure customers find your products and you can steadily grow an online business. For those new to the world of eCommerce, let's look at the steps you need to take to get started. Don't worry if you've never built a website before.

There are a number of simple solutions which should help you get set-up fairly easily. Also, if you would prefer someone else take care of this, there are numerous agencies and freelancers who can build websites. However, selling online means having more than just a website. As a minimum, you need a marketing plan and to invest time and potentially money in marketing and online advertising.

New eCommerce website owners also need to think of how they will process orders, payments, ship products, and potentially issue refunds. Let's take a look at the various steps you need to take, and why building a custom eCommerce website is only one part of a larger plan and process.

How to get started in eCommerce

1	2	3	4
Prepare a business & marketing plan	Register a domain & email	Create branding	Build an eCommerce wesite

5	6	7
Launch & be ready to scale	Conect Google Analytics	Map out the shipping
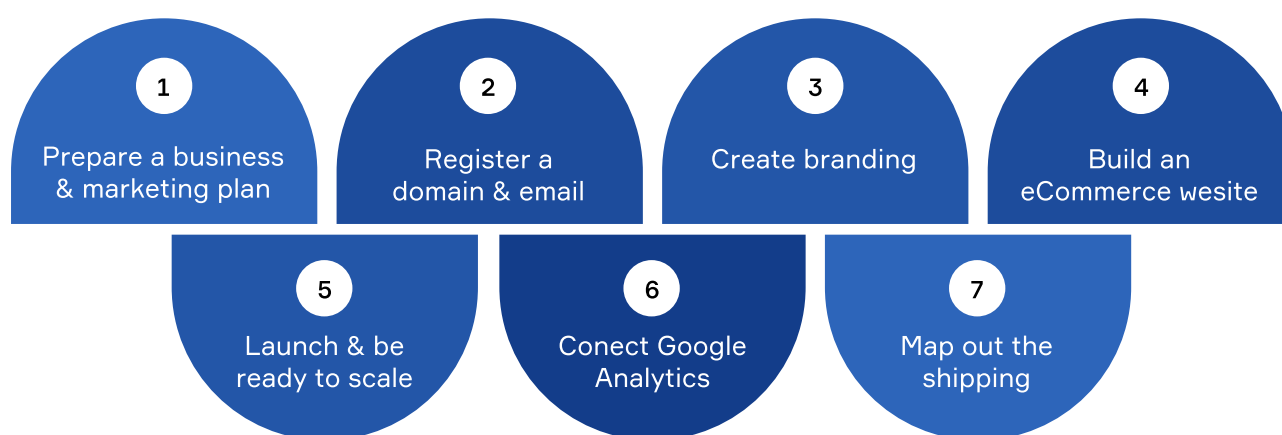
#1: Business and marketing plan

You can't work on the assumption that getting an eCommerce website online will magically generate customers. You need a plan. Working out marketing is the most effective way to turn an idea into an audience, and from that, a customer-base. Understand your customers, and the steps you need to take to get their attention and drive traffic to this new website.

How detailed the plan needs to be, and how long it might take to implement, depends on whether or not you've already got an audience. That means, a group of people already interested in what you are doing/creating. If that is the case, then it makes monetising that audience somewhat easier. Once you've worked out a plan, move onto the next step.

#2: Register a domain and email

Websites require domain names. Aim to pick one that's easy-to-find, and fits your brand name as closely as possible. Although .com is the most common domain ending, there are numerous others depending where you are based, alongside tailored options for online retailers, such as .shop. Make sure to register an email too, which you can do using G Suite (a Google product), or numerous other services. That way, when customers get in contact everything is going through the same domain (instead of Gmail, or Yahoo, etc.), which looks more professional.
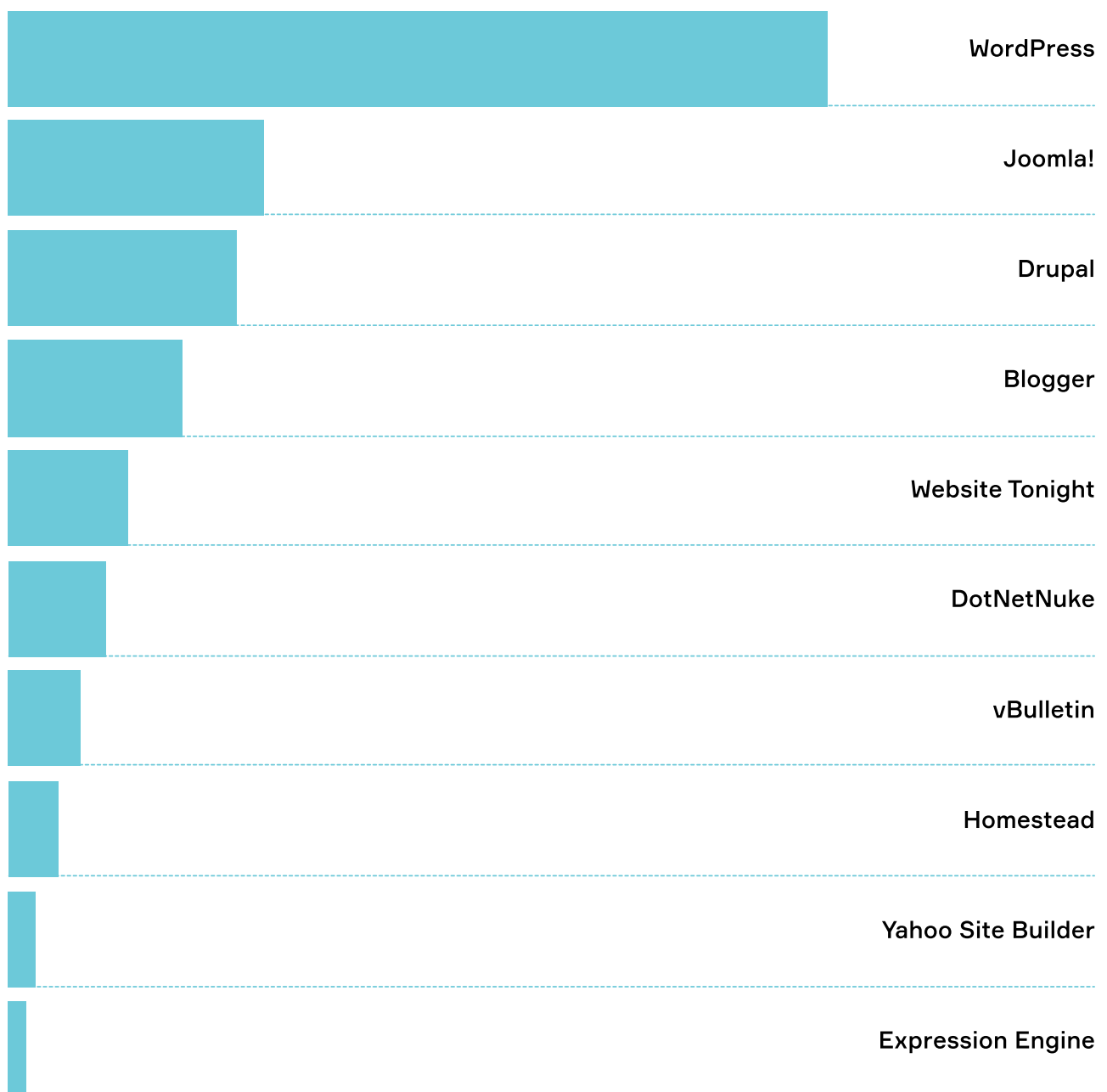
#3: Create branding

Branding is so important when it comes to eCommerce. You need to stand out. You need something that clearly identifies your business. If possible, draft ideas yourself, and then work with a designer, unless you've got professional design skills and software. Use this branding on the new website, and also on every social media platform; consistency is crucial when it comes to branding.

#4: Build an eCommerce website

When it comes to building an eCommerce website, you have a wide variety of options. You might want to start on another platform, such as

Etsy, eBay and Amazon. But at the same time, you'd benefit enormously from having your own website too, especially if you want to grow and scale, and not have another company cut into your profit margins.

There are a number of well-known eCommerce website builder platforms you could take a closer look at: Magento, WooCommerce, and BigCommerce. Another option is to use a drag-and-drop website builder that comes with an eCommerce plugin, such as Squarespace, Wix, or numerous others.

WordPress

Joomla!

Drupal

Blogger

Website Tonight

DotNetNuke

vBulletin

Homestead

Yahoo Site Builder

Expression Engine

What about WordPress? That's another option, providing you've got some confidence and experience building websites from scratch.

When building a website yourself, one of the most important decisions is which theme to go with. There are hundreds of options, and of course they can be tweaked and customised, usually without you needing any coding skills. Picking a theme has a huge impact on the website. It determines how your customers perceive and experience it, which means the theme needs to be aligned with the audience you want to attract.

If you are selling boutique clothes for women, then you need a theme that makes it look and feel as though your customers are in a boutique store. Whereas, selling protein powder for those who do a lot of weights needs a more sports, fitness-focused look and feel.

The theme also influences the functionality. Before deciding the theme, and how it should look, you need a list of the features your store needs. If you are only selling 10 to 50 products, and many fit within a few categories, then a simple theme, and clear functionality should be all you need.

Whereas if you are selling hundreds of products (say for a new fashion eCommerce brand) under dozens of categories then you need something more robust, with considerably more functional features. At the same time, the user experience needs to be friendly, quick, easy-to-navigate and of course, mobile-first.

Whether you go with a more technically involved option, which should provide greater functionality, or a drag-and-drop solution, the aim should be the same. Create a website that is easy-to-navigate and user-friendly, loads quickly, is mobile enabled and can be tweaked and improved to drive even more sales every month.

#5: Map out the shipping, customer service and payments journey

You've got your first order! Brilliant, now what?

As payments come in, orders need to be shipped out. Setting up an eCommerce website also means connecting a payment processing service, or provider, such as PayPal, Stripe, Apple Pay, and a wide range of other options. Make sure this is then connected to your primary business bank account.

Before launching a website make sure you know every step of this journey, and have clear Terms & Conditions online so customers know what happens if they want a refund. Unfortunately, returns and refunds are a normal part of running an eCommerce business, so it makes sense to keep money in a separate account until the refund timescale has elapsed, in case you need to pay any money back.

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10 best payment options for the eCommerce sites

#6: Connect google analytics

An essential part of having an eCommerce website, or any website, is analytics. You need to know where web traffic is coming from, what pages web visitors are clicking on, and what makes them click away. You can also integrate a number of other data-based services, such as software that helps you re-target potential customers with adverts after they leave your website.

The more you know about web visitors, the more easily you can make improvements to the website, scaling it quickly and effectively.

#7: Launch and be ready to scale

Once everything is ready, and you've got products online and marketing in-place, now is the time to launch and scale. Let people know your store is online. Start promoting it and driving traffic. As you generate more and more sales, you can start thinking about scaling. Getting a bigger, shinier, all singing and dancing website built, for example, is a great way to drive even more sales and revenue from eCommerce.

Getting an eCommerce website off the ground, and generating revenue from it, means following these steps:

- Know what you are selling, then create a business and marketing plan;

- Register a domain and email;

- Create branding;

- Build an eCommerce website;

- Map out the shipping, customer service and payments journey;

- Connect Google Analytics;

- Connect Hotjar (to improve the user experience);

- Launch and be ready to scale.

Custom eCommerce website development: step by step

Custom eCommerce development is either an investment of time, or money, or both, especially if you work with a trusted partner to create and launch a customised eCommerce website.

It's not unusual to create one yourself, if you're self-employed and just starting out in eCommerce. And then after a year or more, once you've got decent traction and a strong customer-base, to invest in having a custom eCommerce website developed. Depending on your level of technical skills, you may attempt this yourself. Or you might want a partner website development agency, with a specialism in eCommerce, to build one for you.
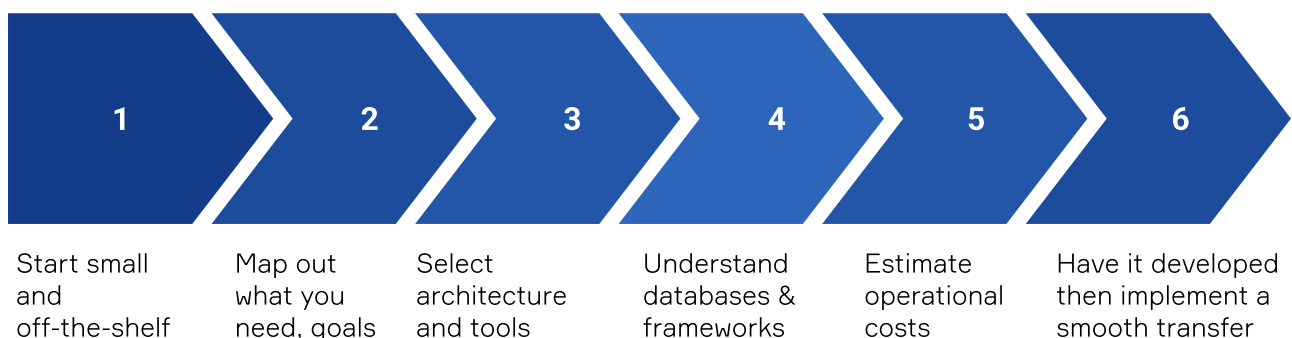
Custom vs. Off-the-shelf: what's the difference?

Before diving into the step by step guide for this, let's look at what it means to have a custom eCommerce website developed?

A custom website is customised, or created from scratch, instead of being similar to what hundreds of other online stores could be using. This means it's one-of-a-kind, with features and functionality that is unique to what you need. Unique to the needs of your customers, web visitors and products. Although you can get close to what you need, it's the same difference between off-the-shelf clothing (such as a suit) and

one that has been uniquely tailor made. Now let's look at the steps you need to take to get a customised website developed.

Step by step for customised eCommerce development

1	2	3	4	5	6
Start small and off-the-shelf	Map out what you need, goals	Select architecture and tools	Understand databases & frameworks	Estimate operational costs	Have it developed then implement a smooth transfer

#1: Start small, and off-the-shelf

When you are getting started with eCommerce, you need a simple off-the-shelf website. Of course, it would be amazing to have an all-singing-all-dancing one, but that requires it being custom-built. If you start small, with something you can self-build, such as using Shopify or Wix, then you can start generating revenue.

This is also a chance to see what works, and what doesn't. So that when you're ready for a customised eCommerce website, you have a better idea of the sort of functionality and design features you are going to need.

#2: Map out what you need, goals

With a new website, what are you wanting to achieve? Hopefully higher conversion rates, more orders, reaching even more happy customers, and ultimately generating larger revenue figures.

Work out what you need to achieve this, how an enhanced website would play a key role in that, including the sort of functionality you might need. Working with an eCommerce web development partner will help you understand how to turn those goals into reality.

#3: Select architecture and tools

From this point onwards, if you are having it developed, it should be in the hands of an agency creating the website. Usually they are responsible for selecting the architecture and tools to build the website, but this is still a series of decisions it's helpful to understand more about.

How an eCommerce site functions depends on the architecture, tools and flow of data through the website to process orders, payments and customer information. It also depends on how much functionality goes into the back-end of the website, such as connecting it with marketing platforms, CRMs, a CMS, product databases, loyalty software, and other solutions.

Website functionality influences the architecture, which partly depends on your budget. Larger websites, with more complex functionality cost more, as they take more time to develop. This also depends on the tools used, as developers could code entire websites from scratch, or they could use a series of tools built-into eCommerce frameworks (such as Magneto, BigCommerce, Shopify, etc.) and other tools, to make this process significantly easier.

10 best eCommerce platforms for 2021

#4: Understand databases and frameworks

Databases and frameworks are two separate areas, but they intersect within the UX/UI of every eCommerce website. When you have hundreds, if not thousands of products, you usually need to keep this information in databases. You need databases with accurate stock and customer information, alongside any other systems that include databases and play a role in the functionality of the website.

Frameworks refer to the overall design of a website. How a site looks and feels, how web visitors navigate around it and ultimately buy products makes a huge difference for an eCommerce brand. Work with a partner agency to create the most effective and visually appealing design possible, to make the framework fit your goals.

#5: Estimate operational costs

Before a fully functional website is built, you need to know the operating costs. All of that will have an impact on your bottom line. Everything from hosting to third-party apps and software that play a role in the functionality, to maintenance, should be a fixed or fluctuating (depending on web traffic volumes, in some cases) cost. Make sure you are clear on all of this before going ahead with getting a new customised eCommerce website built.

#6: Have it developed, then implement a smooth transfer (from old to new)

Once a website is ready within what's known as a staging or development area, it can be tested on different web browsers and operating systems. As soon as everyone is happy with the outcome of this testing, and final changes have been made, and any bugs worked out, the new website can go live.

To reduce the risk of any problems, this needs to happen smoothly, with domain changes within a DNS to get the new site live, and old one down. You should aim to do this when orders are quiet, or ideally non-existent. You could even put up a temporary holding page on the old site, to

ensure no orders are going through when the new website goes live.

Soon as the new website is live, ensure you test everything on a range of devices. Make sure orders go through smoothly. Payments are processed. Customers get the right automated emails, and that you can find products easily and quickly using a range of search terms. Likewise, if you have any advertising campaigns running, pause them while this transition happens, and ensure the right links are in-place across the campaigns.

How much does it cost to build a custom eCommerce website in 2021?

In 2020, demand for eCommerce exceeded all expectations. An unexpected and devastating global pandemic forced hundreds of millions indoors, and with shops shut in many countries and regions, consumer trends to shop online increased dramatically.

Some businesses were able to capitalise on this sudden shift in consumer habits straight away. With eCommerce websites up and running, retailers could keep selling online, or switch to predominantly online selling if physical shops needed to close.

However, if you weren't in a position to capitalise on this last year, now is the time. Whether you are an established business and want to add an online channel, or a completely new business and eCommerce is your

primary sales channel, it's useful to know what it costs to have a custom website developed.
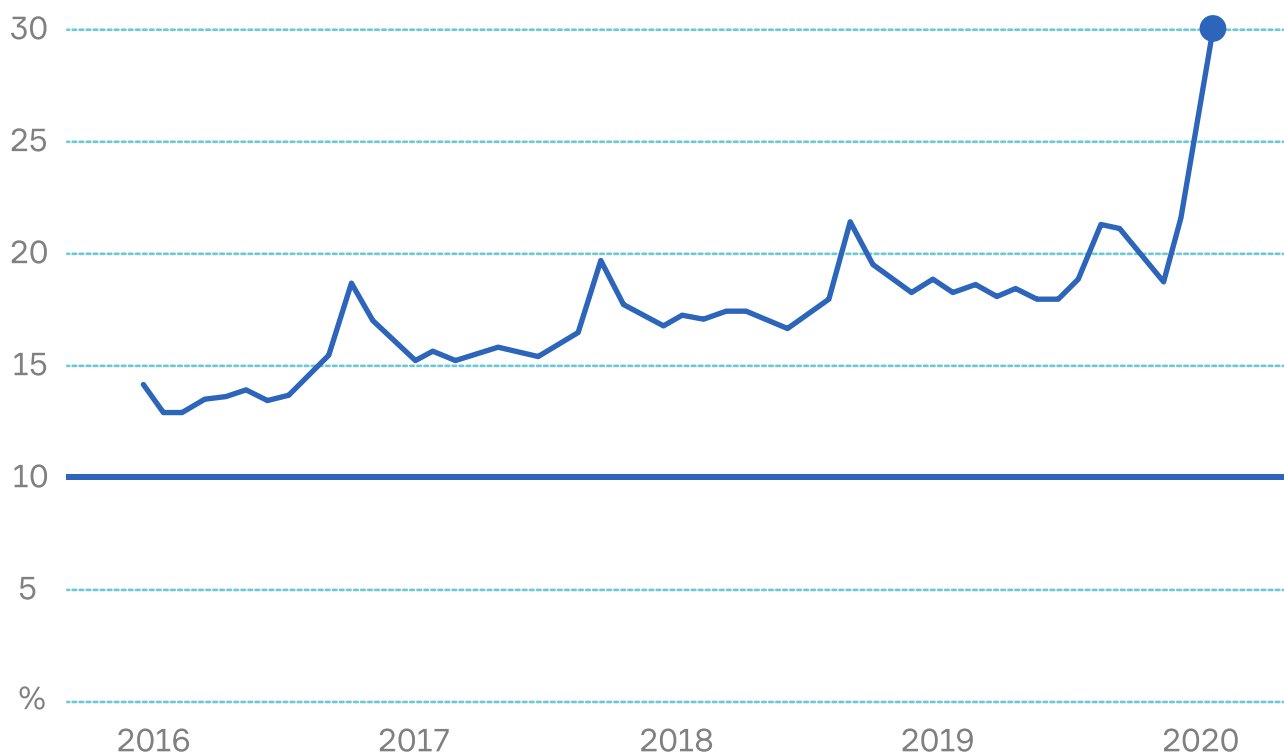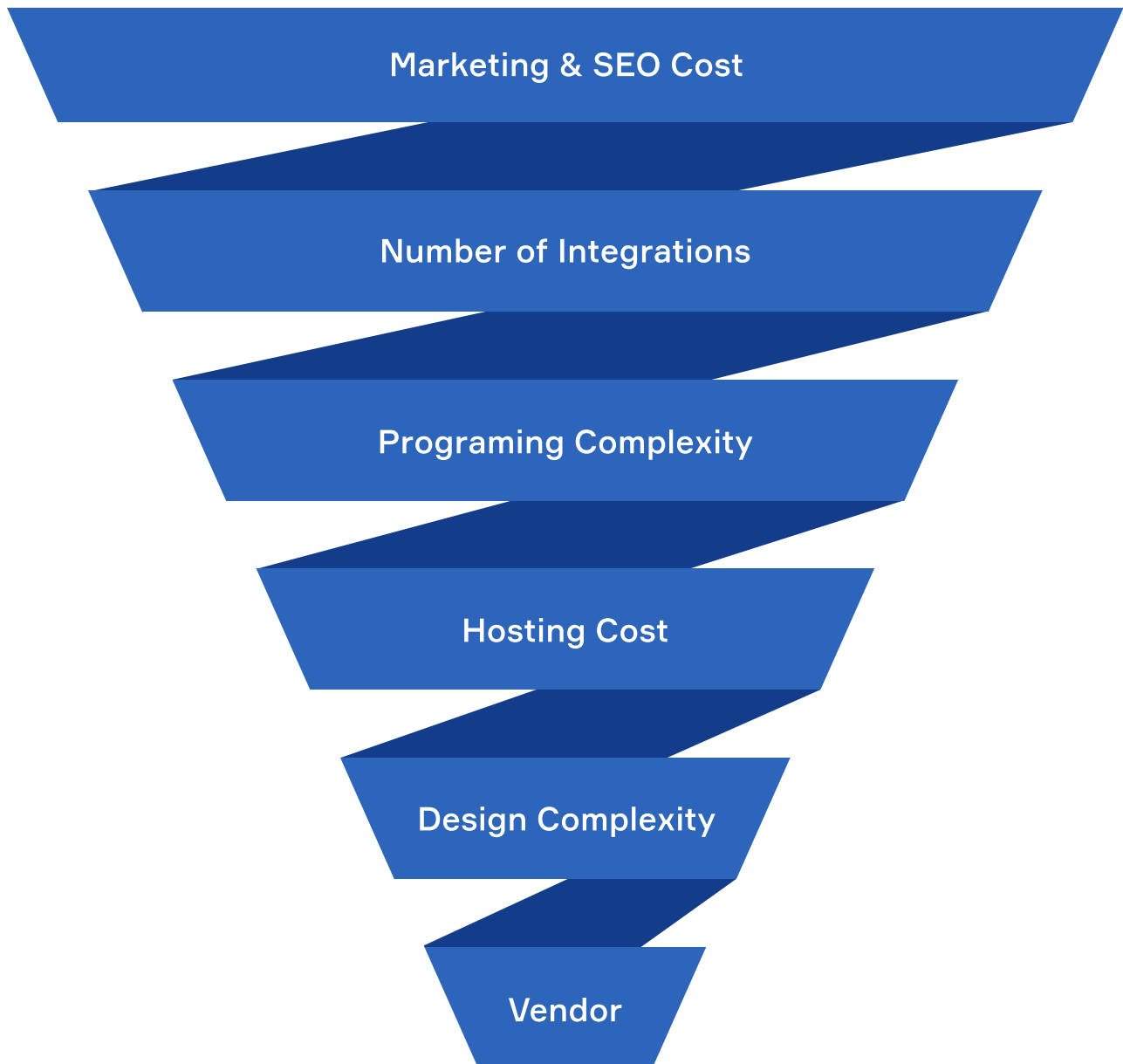

Online sales as a percentage of total retail sales

When it comes to the cost of a custom eCommerce website, here are a few of the main considerations that influence the price of the work:

� Cybersecurity;

▸ User experience;

▸ Scalability;

▸ Build an eCommerce website;

▸ Generating traffic;

▸ Mobile-centric.

In this, we look at each of these in more detail so you can get an understanding how much it can cost to get a custom eCommerce website developed in 2021.

Marketing & SEO Cost

Number of Integrations

Programing Complexity

Hosting Cost

Design Complexity

Vendor

#1: Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is absolutely crucial. You need to ensure your customers details are safe, that transactions aren't intercepted and payment details taken, and that everything you store about customers adheres to relevant legislation. In the UK and EU, that means GDPR. In the US,

that means the CCPA, although New York has similar legislation, and both are the most far-reaching versions of data protection laws in America.

Most other countries and regions have similar legislation, and all are geared towards giving consumers significant protections under the law. Hence the importance of doing everything you can to safeguard consumer data, especially payment information. When it comes to payment information, payment processing providers (such as banks, PayPal, Stripe, and numerous other solutions) shoulder a lot of the responsibility for security.

However, when having a custom eCommerce store developed, you need to pay special attention to security. Make sure every effort is made to safeguard data being transmitted through the store to the payment provider, and equal efforts are made to safeguard everything you need to retain about customers.

#2: User experience

As much as you need to keep customer data secure, you can't do this at the expense of the user experience. Customers need a frictionless user experience. In many cases, you aren't only competing against direct competitors, but numerous others around the world, giving customers more choice than ever. Plus, if similar products are sold on major eCommerce platforms, such as Amazon, Alibaba, and eBay, then you are competing against those too.

Hence the importance of user experience. Custom eCommerce websites make it easier for web visitors to find what they want, and complete a purchase.The number of products you're selling, determines the complexity of the website. More products means more features, to ensure customers can find them easily enough and therefore ensure

customers can find them easily enough and therefore ensure your entire range is visible, not only a small percentage of popular ones. All of this needs to be delivered without negatively impacting the user experience.

#3: Scalability

Connecting with the above: more products means more features are needed. But say you don't want to put everything online at once, or you need to wait to pay for expanding the website as traffic and revenue increases. How scaleable does this new website need to be?

This is something that needs mapping out in the design stage. To ensure you're going to have all of the features you need in the here-and-now, and the future. You don't want to develop a website that needs a massive overhaul down the road because scalability wasn't built-into the roadmap to begin with.

Scalability also includes web hosting. Make sure the services being used to host the website will scale as traffic increases, without you being hit with ridiculously high hosting costs.

#4: Generating traffic (SEO and advertising)

How are you going to win customers?

Whether you are a new brand, or established but new to eCommerce, web traffic is the key to sales. Marketing and advertising will generate traffic. Commonly used and successful tactics include a mix of social media, advertising, and organic SEO (blogs, articles, press coverage) to drive traffic.

Which means you need to budget something to get traffic, and ensure it keeps flowing in. Once that traffic flows in, enough of them need to convert to become customers (e.g. 1000 web visitors, convert 5% = 50; and those 50 spend on average $100 = $5,000 Gross Revenue).

#5: Mobile-centric

Absolutely crucial, especially when it comes to eCommerce. Web traffic on mobile devices surpassed desktops several years ago, and for eCommerce more people than ever shop on smartphones. Check and double check, during the QA/testing phase, that customers can shop and complete purchase on all of the most popular mobile devices without any problems.

How does the above impact the cost of custom eCommerce development?

Numerous factors influence the cost of a custom eCommerce website, making it impossible to give an accurate quote for the work required until you speak with one or more eCommerce website development agencies. As a general rule, based on current trends, eCommerce websites increase in price when they need more more complicated features, and uniquely customised design.

Basic websites can take a minimum of 100 hours to develop from scratch, with many in the 200 to 500 hour-range. When working with an agency developing this, they often need to deploy front and back-end engineers (developers) and designers, alongside other professionals, such as copywriters. Hence the wide cost range, which can be between $20,000 up to $200,000 to develop a custom eCommerce website.

Plus you need to consider monthly costs. Hosting can be anything from $29 per month, up to $1000 or more, when you've got a site with a lot of traffic. Likewise, a marketing and advertising budget could easily cost $1,000 a month or more, to generate the traffic you need, which should turn enough web visitors into customers.

Features	Small ($)	Medium ($)	Large ($)
Design	>1,000	1,000-5,000	10,000-80,000
Functionality	<2,000	5,000-12,000	20,000-100,000
Fulfillment	Free	30-400	5,000
Marketing	0-500	500-2,000	5,000
Maintenance	0-500	500-1,250	3,600-12,000
Essentials	300	6,000	10,000

Key takeaways:

� Every custom eCommerce cost is different; it depends on the design and number of features, time required to design, develop and test it;

▸ Custom eCommerce websites need to be mobile-centric, SEO friendly, fast, secure and scalable;

▸ Don't forget the monthly costs; that needs to include hosting, payment processing, marketing and advertising.

Why custom eCommerce websites fail?

Custom eCommerce websites can cost anything in the region from $20,000 to $200,000 to develop, and can have running costs from at least $1,000 per month. The last thing you want is for this investment to fail.

Although we are witnessing a boom in eCommerce, the norms when it comes to making an investment decision still apply. Especially if this is your main source of income, or you are taking a leap into eCommerce as an established retailer.

Which means you need to understand why custom eCommerce websites fail, to ensure you avoid the same mistakes?

#1: Low quality products

What you are going to sell is the most important decision when it comes to opening an online store. If you're selling products you've been selling for a while, then this is an easy decision. However, if you're new to eCommerce and trying to pick a niche, then this is a harder decision.

Whatever you do pick, the products you sell make a huge difference. As a general rule, higher-quality products perform better. Do as much research as you can into your customers, looking at gaps in the market,

ways you can meet their needs better than competitors. Also look closely at branding, web traffic data (keywords and advertising) and the social media presence of competitors.

Aim to perform better than them in every way, to attract and win customers. Which means ensuring the quality of the products on sale is high. Low quality products contribute to the downfall of eCommerce websites.

#2: Poor/no customer services

So does poor or non-existent customer services. Shopping online means trusting people you can't see or speak to with your money. You are trusting that the products are as good as they look, that goods will be shipped within the right timescales, and that you can get a refund if you aren't happy.

Consequently, providing excellent customer service is essential for eCommerce websites. You need to respond to customers quickly if they have questions. Use automated bots to answer some basic questions, and provide customers with FAQs and any other information they need, but reply quickly and be helpful every time a message comes through. If you have customers in other timezones, make sure they either know when to expect a response, or have a team around the world to provide customer support 24/7.

If too many customers receive a bad service, that will soon be reflected in negative reviews online. This is another way to sink an eCommerce store.

7 reasons why businesses fail

1 — **You start your business for the wrong reason** — Starting a bussiness with hopes of making lots of money - instead of doing what you love - can equal disaster.

2 — **Poor management** — Lacking business and management experience can be detrimental when it comes to managing employees and finances.

3 — **Lack of planing** — A comprehensive business plan is critical to the success of your business. Without it, the chance of failure increases.

4 — **Insufficient capital** — One common mistake for many start-ups is not having sufficient operating funds. It takes time to build revenue.

5 — **Location** — Location is critical to the success of your business. Know where your customers are and how to reach them.

6 — **No website** — 77% of the population in the US uses the internet. Every owner needs a good website to promote their business.

7 — **Overexpansion** — Businesses often fail when owners confuse success with how fast they can expand their business.

#3: Bad pricing choices

Pricing is so important. Price too high, and customers could go elsewhere.

Pricing too low, and you won't make as much profit, and you've got no way of putting sales on if the margins don't exist. Low prices do attract customers, but a trade-off needs to be made. It's often a delicate balancing act between offering quality products at the right price, which must also align with cost margins and what competitors sell similar products for.

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#4: Cashflow problems

Pricing also has an impact on cashflow, of course. How much you've got coming in will impact what needs to go out, and what you can take out as profit. A key part of this, is ensuring you've got enough in a payments account to issue refunds if customers return profits.

This is one way eCommerce brands can get in trouble; is not having enough set-aside for refunds. Therefore, to avoid cashflow problems, always keep some money aside during your returns window (usually 30 days). Also, keep a close eye on returns to make sure they are staying within acceptable limits, and not happening too frequently.

#5: Poor user experience (especially on mobile devices)

How often have you clicked on a website, whether on a laptop or mobile device, only to click away and never return?

Chances are, you've done this either because it was difficult to navigate, or too slow, or both.

Slow speeds and poor user experiences, especially on mobile devices, put so many web visitors off. They go, and don't come back. Make sure this is as good as you can possibly get it, and test over and over to ensure your website works on mobile devices, from first click to checkout.

#6: Not enough traffic (SEO, advertising, etc.)

Once you've got a website set-up, how are you going to get customers? Have you thought about how to generate web traffic?

Most eCommerce websites use a combination of advertising, social media, and organic content to generate traffic. You need to plan this. A marketing plan, with a budget, and someone or a team of people to implement is what's needed. Without traffic, you won't have enough potential customers, which means you definitely won't have enough actual customers to make it sustainable and profitable.

#7: Scaling problems

What happens when you want to scale? This could mean adding hundreds of new products, new website features, or expanding into new countries and regions (and therefore adding various language options to the website).

If a custom eCommerce website was built with scaling in-mind at the start, then this shouldn't be a problem. If not, you run the risk of needing to almost rebuild from scratch, which can prove prohibitively expensive. Scaling, especially into other countries, means you need to be able to handle a wider range of currencies and the website should load just as fast in every country or region you are selling in.

#8: Poor automation

One final problem that can cause customers to go elsewhere is poor automation. Customers need to know what's happening when they've placed an order. Otherwise they can worry a retailer has taken money and won't deliver what they ordered. So save you, and your customers a lot of trouble, by implementing automation that works from day one.

Key takeaways:

Here are some of the main challenges that can cause serious problems for custom eCommerce stores:

- Low quality products;

- Poor/no customer services;

- Bad pricing choices;

- Cashflow problems;

- Poor user experience (especially on mobile devices);

- Not enough traffic (SEO, advertising, etc.);

- Scaling problems;

- Poor automation.

Conclusion

In this eBook, we've covered what you need to know for those considering investing in an eCommerce app or website.

Now is the time to invest in eCommerce. Providing you've got products that are already selling, or have a reasonable chance of being popular once you've got an online store setup.

Depending on the growth stage of your business and product (and budget for marketing), you could either dive in with an all-singing-all-dancing website, or start small.

If you start small, then this is a great opportunity to see what works, and what doesn't, and the features you need. The more product ranges, and customers you have, the sooner you're going to need a website with more features and functionality.

Due to the way people shop, which is more on mobile devices than any others, an app would be ideal to capture the audience and market share you need to keep growing. If you've got an app or website but they're not getting the results you need, now could be a great time to invest in an overhaul.

In 2021, consumers are expected to spend $5 trillion online. With the right website or app, and marketing, you can drive forward growth, increase market share and get more loyal customers.

Are you ready to have a custom eCommerce website built?

Contact COAX Software, to get a quick no commitment custom quote for app development. Let us know what you want to achieve, the sorts of features you want, your target audience/customer base, the platform(s) you think the app should be on, and we will get the app costs worked out.

Get in touch today to discuss your app ideas, and we can get back to you with a customised quote. Just leave your request here.