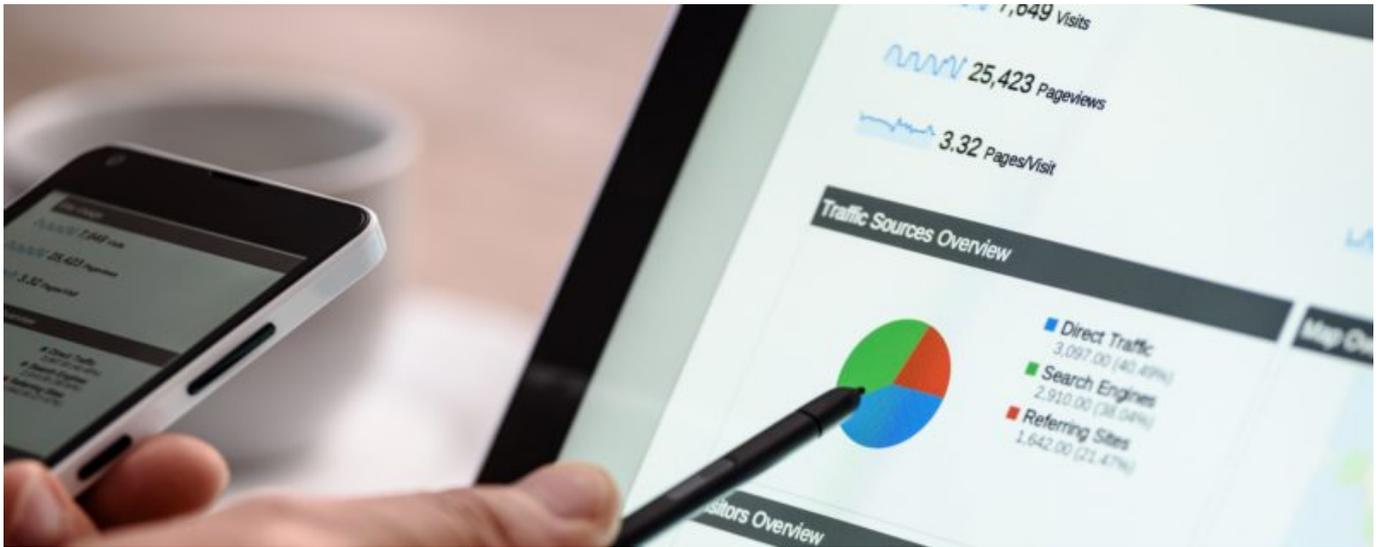# Growing sales via market places like amazon, flipkart

Welcome to the ND Commerce guide that is intended to help online retailers further grow their business by providing informative insights on the working of this dynamic economic sphere. And going by the numbers, the online retail sphere is only going to expand further. Here are some numbers to kick off this guide with: 80% of the population online has purchased products via the Internet, with 50% being repeat customers, and India's ecommerce market grew by 88 percent in 2013 to USD $16 billion.

How can I grow my sales through an online marketplace?

The customer, today, is spoilt for choice when it comes to online retailing. Here's two golden rules to follow at the onset to garner more customers and sales:

1. Make your product image to look as glamorous as possible with a detailed description accompanying it, as this is what the customer bases his final purchase call on.
2. Quick dispatches with proper packaging makes for a very happy customer

PRODUCT STRATEGY

Who is your customer?

The success of a product depends on its customers. So the first thing you need to do is zero down on your target market i.e. who you wish to sell your product to. Know your customers closely and not just their age, profession, location and gender. These questions could help narrow your customer base for you and help you serve their needs better:

- What are their interests?
- What is their spending habit like?
- What places do they frequent?

What do your customers want?

After you have decided the customer base you want to cater to, you need to figure out the wants of your customers and how your product can specifically solve this issue. Some of the major product categories customers gravitate to are:

Draft the design brief

Now that you know what purpose your product will be serving, write out the design brief to get a better overall picture of your business and so that all the specifics are in one place. Questions you need to answer at this stage are:

- What might the intended product be?
- Where and how will it be used?
- What would I need to create it?
- What time frame do I have to create the product?
- Does it require packaging, legal requirements, health & safety, etc.?

RESEARCH

Researching about the competition should be the next step as you need to know the standard you need to beat and maintain.

- What products/businesses will you be going up against?
- Why do people buy those existing products?
- What could you do to improve them?
- What can you do differently than your competitors?
- Why isn't it being done already?

Competitive research is followed by **Market Research**. Gaining an idea from your customer base on the product idea you are developing – suggestions and criticisms – will help you refine your design brief and get more specific in being the number one choice for your customers.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

You will need to submit different identifiers depending on the type of product you submit and the country you target. The three recommended attributes to use to boost ad performance and make it search-friendly for users is: 'GTIN' (Global Trade Item Number**)**, 'brand', and 'MPN'(Manufacturer Part number). You won't be required to submit a 'gtin' for store brand items and for products where you are the sole seller. Specific types of products call for different set of attributes to be submitted.

Compatible products: If you sell a product that is meant to be used with another, but not necessarily from the same brand, submit the GTIN and brand from the manufacturer who actually built the compatible product.

Multipacks: A merchant-defined pack of several individually packed identical items sold as a unit. Use the unique product identifiers that relate to the multipack, and not the items contained within.

Bundles: A merchant-defined bundle is a customized group of different products defined by the merchant and sold together for a single price. Along with the unique product identifier of the main item in the bundle, include the 'is bundle' attribute in your data too.

Customizations: If you offer customization, engraving, or other product personalization, submit the GTIN and use the 'is bundle' attribute.

LISTINGS
The launch of Product Listing Ads by Google in India means a richer product information can be provided – product image, price, merchant name – without needing additional keywords or ad text.
Above is an example of Product Listing Ads

PRODUCT SELECTION

Your site needs to make the problem-solving decision of the consumer purchase process as simple and straight-to-the-point as possible. You need to be able to show your customer the right product at the best price they would purchase it at. Your product selection goals for customers thus should include:

- Helping your customers select the best product for them
- Providing a price that meets their budget
- Convincing them that they have made the right decision

Here are some methods to help you achieve these goals:

1. Listing products and sort order

This is the most basic method where the products and their features are listed. Customers can compare different products and their elements to find what best suits their needs. You can improve on this aspect by choosing which product information is most relevant and control the sorting order by creating one based on some particular product characteristic. Providing options within the sort order to suit the customer's needs, such switching from lowest to highest price points, viewing the latest products first enables them to make the purchase decision quicker. Further on, we will also look at tools such as categorization, filters, search, etc. that will make the product sorting process even more specific.

Specific product recommendations

Recommending certain products to customers, based on sales numbers or page views,

generates great interest among those visiting your site and helps in the purchase decision-making process. Specific product recommendations are of great help when the product range contains a large number of product as it narrows down the best options for the customer.

2. The fold and "call to action"

Category pages are special pages that help your customers select from just a specific set of products. Category pages are most effective when they use all three tools of selection support: product listing, narrowing down options, and specific product recommendations. You can also design your category pages to resemble separate home pages or landing pages in order to make it more interesting and attractive for your customer.

COMPETING ON MARKETPLACES

Competition on the online retail marketplace has grown bigger than ever! According to Google India, there were 35 million online shoppers in India in 2014 Q1. This number is expected to cross the 100 million mark by end of 2016.Small sellers with a low budget stop themselves from selling on these marketplaces, afraid that they will be eaten up by the competition.

Key Performance Metrics
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provide internal and external clients with actionable metrics in easily accessible, customizable formats to increase the effectiveness of their operations. What differentiates KPIs from the wealth of metrics that can be generated from any business is that key leading and lagging indicators can be used to reflect the strategic performance of the organization here.Critical questions to consider when developing your KPIs include:

1. How does this measure contribute to the strategic goals?
2. Is it quantifiable?
3. Is the data currently available?
4. Can current performance, benchmarks, and target values be defined?
5. How will it be used as a management tool?
6. What is the high level plan for the establishment of reporting?
7. Is there an outline for how continuous improvement activities will be implemented?
8. Has a cascading plan to all levels of the organization been developed?

Pricing strategy on marketplaces

Low prices are generally encouraged from the marketplace seller point of view since there is no cost of goods, postage, packaging or warehousing to pay for. And profits can thus be guaranteed even at low price points. This also helps pull in more customers who are more likely to add more items to their cart due to the low price point.

This poses a challenge for the sellers, however, since competition can be fierce and margins can be quickly consumed by under-cutting from other sellers. Repricing software from third party vendors alerts sellers about competition that has entered with low prices. In many cases, one

can automatically adjust the pricing to remain competitive.

PRODUCT PROMOTION

About 75 percent of online Indian shoppers are 35 years old or younger.Ecommerce is a super competitive industry and ecommerce companies need to pull in huge efforts to sustain their customer base. While digital marketing is the most essential tool to promote your online products, it is also necessary to run and maximize digital marketing campaigns. The few promotional tools you can make use of include:

- **Social media:**Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, Pinterest, etc. are very effective ways to engage your existing audience/customers and expand your consumer set.
- **Target Advertising:**Target advertising can be carried out in the form of Google Adwords, Facebook Ads, and Pinterest.
- **Ratings, Reviews and Testimonials:**Ratings and reviews are a major source to direct traffic to your website. Testimonials act as facilitators for future sales as positive reviews encourage other consumers to buy from your site without any worry.
- **Offers and Competitions:**Gaining new customers is more likely to place by holding competition and offering discounts.

Do's and don'ts

DO max out your email allowance if they are available on your marketplace of choice.
DO use short-term discounting to encourage your products to appear in the automated promotion slots.
DO use your inventory template to set up browsing associations for your products.
DO find out your short URL on each marketplace and use this to promote your store front.
DO NOT be tempted to market to customers products outside of the marketplace or inside the order packaging.

SELLING INTERNATIONALLY

The weak Rupee position and low labour costs can be maximized internationally only when the domestic sales have been solidified. There are quite a few reasons that you might decide to start selling abroad; it could be to sell seasonal stock that you've bought for a domestic event or sell the excess stock from Diwali for the Christmas collection showcased internationally. Selling internationally also helps a company increase its margin by avoiding the price wars at home.

Where to start selling abroad

Identify the target market internationally for whom you will select the product without too much hassle, and get paid quickly.

Export Shipments

Shipping products internationally depends on several factors. If you ship the items individually, you will have to concern yourselves with how you will process refunds. 'Bad buyers' may claim

that the product received doesn't match the description and you will have to ship another product. Time and cost are two major risk factors here.

Customs and Taxes|
You need to obtain a Business Identification Number(BIN) from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade prior to filing of shipping bill for clearance of export goods. You have to get the authorized foreign exchange dealer code (through which export proceeds are expected to be realized) and open a current account in the designated bank for credit of any drawback incentive. Exports are also exempt from consumption tax.

For more information regarding this matter, visit: Indian Customs and Excise Gateway (ICEGATE) and Central Board of Excise and Customs.

AVAILABLE SUPPORT

Social media, press releases, advertisements, etc. are a few ways in which an online retailer can establish contact with potential clients. A few specific options include:

Marketplaces:It is here that the business gets noticed, clients are attracted and a regular flow of orders begin. The digital boom in India has made it necessary for businesses to go online and sell on amazon, flipkart, snapdeal etc.

Service providers: You may consider employing online service providers if you cannot manage listings and order data across multiple sales channels.

Industry communities and blogs: This helps in getting in touch with customers and finding out how the product has fared, their reaction, and most importantly, are they happy with the end result.

Industry organizations:Organizations like ND Commerce offer support for your online selling success. ND Commerce provides help with setting up new products on amazon, flipkart, snapdeal using GTINs, and will you keep up-to-date with industry standards and developments.

HOW ND COMMERCE CAN HELP FURTHER

If you have any questions about the content in this guide, you can contact the ND Commerce service team. Please note, however, that each marketplace has different rules and expectations in terms of how merchants should operate.It would thus be best to approach the specific marketplace directly.

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