

Marketing

MARKET LEADER



Business English

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This unit looks at developments in Internet retailing and the features needed by successful websites.

BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss these questions.

- 1 What kind of products or services do you buy on Internet shopping sites?
- 2 What are the advantages for consumers of buying online?
- 3 What are advantages for retailers of having a virtual store?
- 4 What do you think are the seven top qualities and features for a successful shopping website?

READING

A Understanding the main points

Read the article on the opposite page and say whether these statements are true (T) or false (F). Correct the false ones.

- 1 To compete, retailers need websites that have lots of different technical features that will improve customers' shopping experience.
- 2 Most consumers today no longer expect retailers to have physical shops.
- 3 Consumers still see shops as the best source of product information.
- 4 Advances in web technology mean that retailers can have a 'virtual' catalogue of all their products on their sites.
- 5 Advances in web technology have increased the marketing options for promoting products online.
- 6 For online retailers, the main customer service issue is making sure the site is easy to use.
- 7 As website technology changes so fast, retailers need to make web development an ongoing activity.
- 8 Analysing data is an important way of responding to customer concerns about the website.

B Understanding details

Read the article again and mark the order in which the writer mentions these features of an Internet shopping website.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| a) Be easy to use | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Have technology for collecting data about customers, e.g. a registration form | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Have an attractive appearance that clearly reflects the retailer's business | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Be able to show all products, e.g. through an online catalogue. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Use the right technology solutions to deal with activities, from ordering through to delivery of products to the customer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Include a wide variety of features for creating a good shopping experience | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| g) Be able to deliver different types of web content fast and easily, e.g. video, graphics, audio, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Connecting with customers through online content



by Robert Bredlau

A As the first point of contact for new customers, a company website is one of, if not the most important channel to market. To be noticed in an increasingly competitive marketplace, e-businesses need to introduce a wide variety of features to their websites to improve their customers' shopping experience. But what does a more interactive and interesting website really mean for the e-tailer?

B The development of a multichannel marketplace is having a big impact on the retail market. Customers can

15 balance their purchasing between the online and the offline world. Offering a multichannel service provides customers with the flexibility they have come to expect.

C Customers are becoming more demanding as they search for greater convenience and value online. With 70 per cent of consumers searching for product information online before making a purchase (according to Accenture, 2007), shop assistants are no longer regarded as fashion experts or authorities on hi-tech cameras and plasma televisions. Consumers are more informed than ever, turning to the

Internet for the latest product reviews.

D As retailers increasingly adopt next-generation e-commerce functionality, they are able to market their products in more exciting ways. Retailers can now display their full range of products online, and not suffer from limited shelf space as they would in a physical store. They can also use 'scarcity' tactics: for example, they can put products into limited-edition categories or limit availability online. Tactics like these give the impression that products are in short supply and so increase demand.

E As Internet retailing matures, customer expectations are changing. Today, customer service is the new priority, especially in terms of usability – a good returns policy, geographical awareness and how the website is presented. Retailers also need to have all the technology in place to ensure that product is delivered to the customer as ordered.

F A company website needs to be user-friendly. It also needs to be informative, attractive and capture the essence of the business. The systems used to build these websites need to deliver all types of content – video, print, audio, PDFs and images – quickly and easily. But website development and content delivery can evolve quickly. In order to remain competitive, retail companies must be flexible and update web technologies to ensure they can meet the future needs of the business.

G Retailers also need to analyse data effectively to ensure they are responsive to changing customer needs, and use this information to create websites that build and develop customer interest. Only when they have done this will they be able to attract new business and meet the challenges of a fast-changing economy.

FT

VOCABULARY

A Understanding expressions

Choose the best explanation for each phrase from the article.

- 1 ‘The development of a *multichannel marketplace* ...’ (lines 12–13)
 - a) a business world in which goods are sold through a combination of sales channels
 - b) a place where products are sold directly or indirectly to customers
- 2 ‘... *next-generation e-commerce functionality* ...’ (lines 32–33)
 - a) advanced technology for online selling that comes from a related business area
 - b) an improved version of technology for Internet selling that has lots of new advanced features
- 3 ‘They can also use “*scarcity*” tactics ...’ (lines 39–40)
 - a) marketing techniques that create an impression that there is a limited supply of a product
 - b) dishonest tactics used to trick people into paying more because they think there is a shortage of a product.
- 4 ‘... *capture the essence of the business.*’ (lines 58–59)
 - a) give a short summary of the important facts about the company
 - b) show clearly in words or images the essential quality of a company

B Definitions

Match these words and phrases from the article (1–7) with their meanings (a–g).

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 convenience | a) critical evaluations of something |
| 2 authorities | b) being quick and easy to do |
| 3 reviews | c) an item produced in a specific quantity, just for a limited time |
| 4 limited edition | d) how easy it is to use a website |
| 5 usability | e) the graphics, sound, video and text that make up a web page |
| 6 geographical awareness | f) experts |
| 7 content | g) an understanding of where customers are for effective distribution |

C Word partnerships

1 Match these words to make noun–noun partnerships from the article.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 multi-channel | a) review |
| 2 product | b) delivery |
| 3 content | c) development |
| 4 website | d) service |

2 Match these words to make verb–noun partnerships from the article.

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| 1 make | a) web content |
| 2 display | b) data |
| 3 deliver | c) products |
| 4 analyse | d) a purchase |

D Word search

- 1 Find words and phrases in the article which fit these meanings.
 - 1 expecting a lot (paragraph C)
 - 2 worth the money paid (paragraph C)
 - 3 knowledgeable (paragraph C)
 - 4 not enough to meet demand (paragraph D)
 - 5 becomes more developed (paragraph E)
 - 6 gradually change over time (paragraph F)
 - 7 quick to react (paragraph G)
- 2 *E-tailing* is short for 'electronic retailing'. Find three other words in the article that start with 'e'. Which one means 'Internet retailer'? Which refer to electronic buying and selling?
- 3 Find five adjectives used to describe the qualities of a good website

E Sentence completion

Use words and phrases from the Exercises A–D to complete these sentences.

- 1 We have experience in helping major retailers to plan their *e-b*.....^a and advising on a *m*.....-*c*.....^b service, so that they can offer customers both online and 'bricks and mortar' shopping.
- 2 We can also help you with all aspects of *w*.....*d*.....^a and make sure your site delivers suitable *c*.....^b.
- 3 Today's more *d*.....^a shoppers are looking for higher quality and better *v*.....^b products from all *e*-.....^c.
- 4 Our website will offer them *p*.....*r*.....^a that are *i*.....^b and references from satisfied customers to help them make *i*.....^c purchasing decisions.

OVER TO YOU

- 1 Creating a sense of scarcity is a useful marketing tactic to get more customers to buy more.
 - Why does this tactic work so well?
 - What kind of activities work best?
 - Are there any risks associated with it?
- 2 Research some examples of companies that have successfully used scarcity tactics to increase demand and persuade customer to make a purchase. Then present your results.
- 3 Compare the websites of two or three competing e-tailers.
 - a) Make notes on:
 - functionality
 - usability
 - appearance
 - shipping and returns arrangements.
 - b) Take some 'screen grabs' and use them in a presentation of the results. Include suggestions for improving the websites.