

Driving More Traffic

Useful Techniques to Boost Multichannel Sales



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Introduction

There are many ways an online retailer can create or drive traffic to their sales pages. Whether it is a website, web store, store on a major retail channel such as eBay or an affiliate marketing page, traffic is the life's blood needed to keep an ecommerce business going.

Unfortunately, many retailers still use an "all eggs in one basket" theory that sees them sinking their budgets into the development of one great website or channel and then having nothing left to market or drive traffic to the site. Even those with room in the budget rely on SEO to such an extent that they overlook the other, equally effective options.

Though SEO is the king, and will remain so in the coming years, it is not the only way to create traffic and sales. Free as it is, SEO is not the only path, and you can use multichannel sales to take your business towards success too.

What does multichannel mean? The website Practical eCommerce has this to say: "multichannel selling can be defined as sales within the various online channels: single website, public marketplaces and shopping-comparison sites.

Either way you define it, tapping into multiple sales channels can increase opportunities for additional sales as well as help expand your brand's recognition."

They are not wrong on that point. One recent report indicated that "medium-sized retailers who sell through a branded shopping cart site (like Shopify, WooCommerce, or Bigcommerce) make 38% more revenue by expanding to sell

on a single marketplace (like Amazon, eBay, or Etsy). And simply adding a second marketplace can grow retailers' revenue by an estimated 120%."

Generally, those who sell on two marketplaces are going to see more earnings than those who sell on a single one. The figures indicate around 190% more!

In the hyper-competitive world of online selling, it is to any business owner's advantage to add sales channels in order to boost sales and create more brand awareness.

Naturally, when you add more sales channels, it also means you are going to increase the complexity of your business model. Instead of a single, streamlined set of tasks, you now have multiple steps across those channels.

It also means more advanced marketing may be in order too. This begs the question of whether or not is worth it, and those sales figures are the answer. A 190% increase in revenue just cannot be ignored.

In this brief guide, we are going to look at tips and strategies that you can apply when you increase the number of sales channels. Whether it is direct traffic via an email marketing blast, paid traffic from a PPC campaign, the use of a marketplace such as Amazon or eBay, mobile channels, or CSEs (Comparison Shopping Engines), you can boost your returns substantially when you reconsider your approach and use the tips and tools here.

Section One

Why It Works

The idea of multiple channels may feel a bit discouraging or unwelcome to the already active business owners. After all, your direct traffic may be keeping you fairly busy, and the idea of adding your presence to a marketplace, as well as promoting it, may be the last thing you want to do.

However, there is a lot of sense in building a solid portfolio of established ecommerce channels. This is going to work for you just the way an investment portfolio can - minimizing your risk while ensuring you get maximum sales.

As an example, online sales can have a range of margins depending on your suppliers, your market, and the current pricing. Think of the flexibility you will enjoy when you find channels that allow for even slightly higher margins. Additionally, some channels are going to provide you with far more opportunity for conversions and acquisitions and some may be better for a specific niche in your product line or your industry in general.

Of course, the key is having the time and tools needed to analyze the channels. Fortunately, we will consider some streamlined methods for doing this in the next section.

Multichannel sales also work because they, quite literally, ensure that your products are everywhere possible. Rather than hedging your bets on one site or option, you can now be sure that you appear on the search engine results, Google shopping results, eBay and Amazon results, and even on something like Shopping.com!

Even better news is that customers appreciate multichannel marketing and reports indicate that "customers who respond to multichannel marketing are different from single-channel customers". Earning more, and buying more, they also tend to spend more each year than those who are best described as single channel shoppers.

A study by Shop.org determined that multichannel shoppers have a 12% greater tendency to purchase, and spend 32% more annually than those who remain loyal to offline shopping venues.

Even more intriguing is that "trichannel" shoppers tend to have more loyalty than single and dual channel shoppers. Those who purchase from retail and online channels revealed a 73% likelihood to return to those same retailers.

Yes, it is more involved than that comfortable single channel marketing that most online retailers have grown accustomed too, but not as overwhelming as you may think. Let's look at the best ways to increase your multiple channel sales opportunities, and discover just how to do it.

Section Two

It is Not That Complicated

If you speak with online retailers using multiple channels successfully, one thing seems to come up often, and that is the issue of tracking. Inventory, orders, supplier details, and customer issues all need to be dealt with in "real time".

After all, if you have ten different channels that sell the same items, how can you know how many you actually have available or on hand to meet customer demand?

How can you know the status of orders, dropshipping orders, and wholesale purchases?

Of course, the steps you will take with a single channel are both different and similar to multiple channels. Juggling all of those balls, though, can cause major problems and flaws in your service, sales, performance, and earnings. Consider what you have to do with a single channel:

- ❖ Publish/relist items across the channel
- ❖ Track inventory available
- ❖ Manage all orders
- ❖ Manage shipping
- ❖ Use all data to predict your needs and uncover opportunities

Considering these steps, it is little wonder that so many retailers hesitate to expand to more than their initial channels, but as we already learned in the previous section, the risks are well worth the rewards. You don't have to think of it all as rocket science, though, because modern computer and Internet technologies actually make it much easier than many realize.

Software Saves the Day

While you could try to use many spreadsheets and systems to handle the individual channels, you don't have to! Fortunately, the popularity of multichannel sales has created a demand for software and online services that actually sync your inventory through a single bit of software.

As an example, let's say you sell a designer shirt you sell through Amazon, Woo, and your online store. You need to always gauge just how many are on hand and keep the different channels up to date in order to continue to sell the shirts until you no longer have any available through your suppliers. You can manually do this, but there are options in software that can do all of that work for you.

These same software solutions can also allow you to manage orders in a central location. For example, you can accept and track standard orders, wholesale orders, track the shipping of packages sold, and even integrate dropshipping sales or third party functions (such as Fulfillment by Amazon features).

Even more exciting is that some of the software options can also give you analytics that show just how certain items are selling in their respective channels and if some markets, margins, or opportunities are better than others.

What this means is simple, you must implement a system that uses automated tracking and provides you with a unified, dashboard-like view of the current inventories, orders, and so on. This allows you to focus on the best ways to increase your sales, do some marketing, improve your products, and more.

[Look for More than Inventory Counting](#)

In addition to inventory, orders and shipping being integrated into a single location, you also need to have software that allows you to analyze everything too. As one site says, "making smart and quick business decisions is the key to survival in today's multichannel environment".

However, this can be difficult if you cannot easily compare all of the performance data from all of your channels. Looking at inventory is one thing, but what about

customer data, purchase or product histories, and overall shipping details? These are all issues that can lead to flawed decision making and lost opportunities.

As a simple illustration, can you gauge how the views of products compare to the actual sales? Are there many page visits but not so many product purchases? If so, you need to test and analyze the data to understand what is happening at one or more channels.

This could be a challenge if you have to take individual sales or order data, compare it to your Google analytics or page and web data. However, using a unified software or web service can help you to get the "big picture" in a single location.

Naturally, you need to get such systems in place and wait for some performance data or customer details to begin to enter the system. Once that data is in hand, the best software and services allow you to test the different channels and begin to optimize them. You will see far more conversions when you have all of the facts in a single place, and when you can begin to make the right choices for each, individual, channel rather than sweeping strokes that can cost you or which may be based on guesswork.

In other words, one way to boost multichannel sales is to use tools that let you look at everything in real time based on individual channel data. Reports and tests can then be used to boost performance and make better decisions.

Customer Preferences Must Be Measured

If you are unable to keep track of your most loyal or dedicated buyers or clients through your system, you are losing major opportunities. A good tracking system

for multichannel sales is going to help you see who is providing the best revenue, and you can then easily implement services and tactics that build your relationships with them.

Not only does this mean repeat or ongoing business, but it ensures that customer service is superior, and that is a major factor in online success.

While many buyers say they scout out the best prices, when they feel that they are treated with attention, through special offers, triggered emails (such as birthday or anniversary offers), and thoughtful promotions, they respond favorably. It is not easy to build relations with a customer base without important details and information, and without some sort of automated support.

You can make all of the best plans for relationship building with clients, and you can seek to engage with them at a more customized level, but only if the data is in a well organized and accessible place. Again, this is why the multichannel management services are the most effective tools for building multichannel sales success.

[A Few Words on Multichannel Marketing](#)

Creating a seamlessly integrated system for managing your multiple channels is not the same as effectively marketing them. Before you sigh and say, "I knew it was all too good to be true!" consider what one blogger says about multichannel marketing: "Multichannel marketing refers to the practice of interacting with customers using a combination of indirect and direct communication channels – websites, retail stores, mail order catalogs, direct mail, email, mobile, etc. – and enabling customers to take action in response – preferably to buy your product or

service – using the channel of their choice. In the most simplistic terms, multichannel marketing is all about choice."

What that means is actually very simple: You will still have to market, but in the end it is going to be about customer choices. One buyer may prefer to shop through the larger marketplace at Amazon, and yet another may prefer to use your web store to make a purchase directly through you.

The keys to successful marketing across your channels begins with data. You can then create targeted messages, test responses and take the right steps. For example, your marketing can use a planned campaign of targeted messages you cue recipients to read and act on the messages.

This requires a very choreographed campaign that could "span multiple channels fluidly, in a way that the customer finds meaningful and trustworthy". This is in line with targeted messages, but it also means you can create a single campaign and then just tailor it to the channel.

This means you need to know what is triggering customer responses in order to refine. This is possible when you create and maintain a single view of each customer. You need to track how customers are interacting with your brand on all of your channels.

Only then can you provide them with consistent experiences no matter which channels they are choosing. Is it complex? Yes, but if you are using a tracking system that integrates all of your data, you can see customer patterns emerge, and you can consistently build marketing around this key information.

In Conclusion

There is absolutely no doubt that you must consider using more than a single channel. Direct traffic through your email marketing, affiliate marketing or through the use of your selected URL used to be enough, but today that accounts for only 9% of consumer shopping behaviors.

Since 2010, the dominant way that online shoppers will find their products is through a search engine. That means you need to be on as many channels that you can, and to be there aggressively. While the use of SEO is the key way of getting yourself into the top search engines, limiting yourself to one channel no longer suffices, and SEO may not always grab the customer.

After all, though 44% of consumers use Google or a search engine, more than 1/4 of consumers prefer to visit a "marketplace" first. The leaders in this area include Amazon, eBay and Etsy, but don't forget that many other groups have entered the fray. Newegg.com, Buy.com, and even Walmart are key competitors, and sites that you can also use as your own channels.

If you decide to remain a single channel, you can be at the top, but keep in mind that you are giving up a shot at around 91% of the market! Instead, diversify yourself across as many channels as possible.

You can streamline your activities, and see massive boosts in your sales when you then turn to automated tracking systems. A software like [Orderhive](#) allows you to handle inventory, customers, orders, shipping and suppliers easily, but also hands you reports and data that can allow you to make fast and effective business decisions on all platforms.

Just imagine selling on Amazon, Shopify, and your own web store. Importing data for your accounting system, such as QuickBooks, without any struggles or glitches. Shipping using recognized and trustworthy names like DHL, UPS, and FedEx directly from the system, and keeping track of everything in easy to read dashboards. With such easy tools at hand, you can become a multichannel sales success without a huge time or financial commitment, and you may even see your revenues increase by nearly 200%!

Explore these options today and see precisely why so many online retailers have expanded to include not just multiple channels but dropshipping, wholesale and more. The best of luck to you in your multichannel enterprise!

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