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Chapter 1: Shopify At A Glance

Are you planning to sell some products online but you are not sure which platforms to choose? Are you still uncertain about which product should you choose to sell? Or you are not sure how to kick start your business? You are on the right path! Why? This is because in this video I am going to walk through you a better knowledge on the online selling platform, Shopify. A platform where you can build your own e-store and start selling.

What Is Shopify?

First of all, what is Shopify? How well do you know about Shopify? Or did you know anything regarding Shopify? Allow me to give you a brief explanation on what is Shopify and how does it work.

Shopify is a Canadian e-commerce company headquartered in Ottawa, Ontario that develops computer software for online stores and retail point-of-sale system. It was founded in 2004 and was initially based on earlier software written by its founders for their online snowboard store. Shopify is also a web application that allows you to create your online store. It provides you with several templates that can be customized to meet individual user's branding requirement and almost everything you need from end to end despite the product and business know-how to setup and start selling the product.

Furthermore, the system allows physical or digital goods to be sold. It is sort of like hiring a general contractor to build your house, over being the contractor and hiring sub-contractor yourself. You are still in control, but you just let the general contractor use their expertise to make the project happen.

Shopify is idea for you if you want to launch an online shop, or if you already have a physical store, but want to continue to grow your business by selling your products online. It caters to a broad range of industries, such as art & photography, clothing

&fashion, electronics, food & beverages and so much more. Basically any sort of gadgets or widgets or physical product that you would like to sell, Shopify can helps make this an easier process for you.

Why Shopify?

As I have mentioned earlier, Shopify is a simple shopping cart solution for your e-commerce business where you face no concerns over hosting your shopping cart, maintaining servers or presenting your brand and your inventory to potential customer. In this part, we will explore on why you should choose Shopify as your online business's platform.

Easy Access

One of the best thing about Shopify is that it is really easy and simple to use. It gives you tools to build your online store. For example, tools to insert product images, description or details, tools to manage your inventory, tools to organize your product into categories and there are more to go as long as you move your first step out. Not only the tools, Shopify also takes care of the coding and web-hosting issues that you face on your e-commerce site. This means you do not need technical expertise to launch an online store with Shopify. All you need is just inventory. Shopify exemplifies KISS which means Keep It Simple Stupid, allowing entrepreneurs to focus on their business and not on the technical nuts and bolts of website and shopping cart management.

However, "keep it simple" does not mean that Shopify is a bare-bones basic shopping cart. It provides users with Shopify Manual, a collection of guides to help you make the most of your shopping cart. The manual is very extensive, introducing you to your Shopify user interface, guiding you through the process of information capture and database management. In additions, Shopify also hosts a Help Wiki that built collaboratively between Shopify developers and users.

Shopify Is Hosted

Next, Shopify is hosted. What do we mean by hosted? Do you know that with Shopify, there is no software to install on your computer or your server? Your shopping cart is fully hosted by Shopify. They take care of the usual website logistics issues such as management, payment gateway and hosting. Shopify's system allows you to organize customer's information for marketing purposes and keep a close eye on your inventory. It is also flexible enough to adopt to just about any kind of inventory you can throw at it while relieving you from the burden of hours spent coding and fine-tuning your e-commerce store.

In fact, the saying of Shopify is hosted meaning that the money is in your pocket while the burden is off your back. Sound unbelievable? Let me explain. Shopify will cost you $30-180 per month, depending on how many products you want to support and which other features you would like to include. If you wanted to host your own e-commerce store, you can buy a server or rent a server. However, you also have to be careful with the hidden cost including uninterrupted power supply, the regular maintenance and emergency it costs incurred. Furthermore, you will need to purchase a self-hosted shopping cart software package such as Magento which will cost you $15,550 per year or SunShop which starting at $20 per month for an introductory license, $500 for one-time licensing fee for their premium package with annual renewals at a lower price. So, why burden yourself with coding and server management while Shopify hosted everything for you with a cheaper price?

Reliability

You might not be convinced by me right now, but, let me tell you another major advantage about Shopify, which is reliability. Every minute your servers are down is a minute that people cannot buy your product. Amazon and Google have determined that page load delays of only fractions of a second result in significant loss of revenue. On Amazon, a 100 microsecond delays in load time resulted in a 1% decrease in sales. As for Google, the difference between a 10-result page which loads in 0.4 seconds

and a 30-result page which loads in 0.9 seconds decreased traffic and ad revenues by 20%.

Basically, Shopify is not immune to all issues of lags and downtime, but when Shopify hosts your shopping cart, you do not have to worry about it. Meaning that Shopify's team of experts will take a good care of mundane server maintenance and upgrades in order to keep your shopping cart available and loading quickly. If there is anything goes wrong, they have a team of dedicated professionals to fix the emergency problems. Don't you think it is a good thing for them to take hours of works while the frustration is off your shoulders? Shopify has the infrastructure to handle your business reliably and affordably.

The Shopify App Store

Like many other successful products in the tech world, Shopify has spawned an entire community of designers and experts who have developed tons of apps that you can use to add to your e-commerce package. Even though Shopify comes with a ton of features built-in, but no platform can possibly accommodate all the features needed by store-owners. So, Shopify took a page from Facebook, Apple, Android and started an App Store. It would be a real long story to cover the wide array of apps available to amplify Shopify's functionality, so, I have sorted out 3 apps that are currently at a remarkable 100% approval rating in Shopify's App Store.

The first one would be Yotpo Social Reviews. It takes advantage of the social media markets to connect your shopping cart to your reviews. It automatically prompts buyers to leave a review and integrate into you site. Additionally, you can connect positive reviews from any sources on the web to Yotpo and consequently to your cart. This generates shopper confidence and qualified traffic to your store.

The second one is the Product Options which allows you to customize the Shopify inventory and categories interface so that you can easily and quickly manage how your inventory is displayed. This addresses what limitations exist in the built-

inShopify interface, allowing a better customization and description so your customers can get exactly what they want.

Lastly, SEO Meta Manager which does exactly what the name implies. It helps you to control how your products are displayed and appear in searches across the board and raise your brand visibility, driving page views and revenue.

Not all platforms have the scale to pull this off correctly, but Shopify does. They have a business development team that specifically works on developing new apps and bringing new developers to solve problems. You can simply put "low cost" and "award winning" as the results for Shopify's philosophy and model. This is the reason why people love it in the first place and Shopify's philosophy is to make it simple for you to run your business.

Shopify VS BigCommerce VS Volusion

I appreciate and understand that your decision is an important one, as you don't want to spend time building out a business with one of them and then realizing that you may have to switch to another e-commerce builder. Thus, to clear some doubts, I have done some researches on platforms and to be fair, I have choose two platforms which are similar to Shopify. They are BigCommerce and Volusion.

Shopify VS BigCommerce

Most people are generally very sensitive to pricing. We are trained to nickel and dime, clipping coupons and saving as much as possible. We do that all the time too, just like our second nature. However, when we look at picking an e-commerce builder to grow a business, we consciously steer away from making our decision purely based on price per month. Choosing a builder because it is cheaper and saves you a few dollars every month is a very short term way to think and grow a business. Instead, you should be thinking of value. Even though a plan may have a higher price point, if you are getting tremendous value out of it, it is well worth the money.

Shopify's plans start at a monthly price of $9 for a Lite plan and moves up to $29 for Basic, $79 for Pro and $179 for Unlimited. Note that to build an online store, you will need to sign up to the Basic, Pro or Unlimited plans. The Lite plan only gives you access to some selling tools but not the online store builder. As for BigCommerce, it offers 3 pricing plans which are $29.95 per month for Standard, $79 per month for Plus and pricing varies depending on requirements for Enterprise. With the Enterprise Plan, a dedicated BigCommerce team will help you with the set up, data migration and you will get priority support.

Let's be honesthere, design does matter. How many time have you found a website that looked confusing, didn't inspire trust or credibility and you just left the website without giving it a fair chance? Trust me, we do that all the time. Have a good looking, professional and inviting storefront is the first step to welcome your prospective customers to increase the chances of making a sale. It doesn't matter if you have the best product in the world, if your store looks mediocre at best, people won't pay the attention that you deserve.

Shopify's themes are very impressive and updated. They look professional and inviting. Shopify uses independent professional designers to create those themes to make sure the designs are always fresh and modern. They can make your store look credible and welcoming. All the free templates from Shopify are responsive. The contrast between Shopify and BigCommerce in this field is kind of obvious. This is because only 2 out of 16 from the free templates in BigCommerce are responsive. Others are categorized as outdated.

Shopify and BigCommerce both allow you to connect an extensive range of payment gateways to your store. The number available varies by country but you will find that both BigCommerce and Shopify support the major ones such as WorldPay, PayPal and QuickBooks. Shopify however offers more compare to BigCommerce. Normally speaking, connecting third party payment gateway can be a fiddly process which sometimes involves a contract or monthly fees, so users who are not in the mood for

that sort of thing might prefer to use one of the out of the box options provided by both BigCommerce and Shopify. In the case of Shopify this means using either PayPal or its Striped-powered Shopify Payment option. With BigCommerce, this means using PayPal, Stripe or Square.

Shopify VS Volusion

Volusion's pricing is similar to Shopify with options ranging from $15 to $135 per month. But Shopify gets the edge mainly because of the facts that Shopify has a more inclusive feature set across respective price points which include unlimited products, the starter price is slightly lower and they do not charge bandwidth overage fees.

Even though Volusion offers merchants a respectable number of theme from which to choose, but they are generally a slight notch below Shopify in terms of font usage, page flow and overall design. You will find a file editor to access raw code in Volusion and Shopify but overall Volusion's backend admin is less flexible and intuitive than Shopify.

Integrating with more than 70 payment gateways including all the major players, Shopify works with a wide variety of processors. In-house processor Shopify Payment launched in August of 2013. While it isn't compatible with quite as many processors as Shopify, Volusion integrates with several domestic and international gateways. Volusion Merchant Service charges 2.15% per transaction and a $3.41 per month PCI compliance fee on top of that. You will also need to purchase your own SSL certificate which will cost a minimum of $89 per year for Volusion's certificate. If you want one from a more established and trusted site, you will have to pay extra.

Chapter 2: Getting Started With Shopify

Now I will teach you on how to get started with Shopify in just a few simple steps, and also brief you on some packages that Shopify offers. Choosing the plan that best suits your business is very important. You don't want to mess up your business with the wrong choice of Shopify's business plan.

After you have entered the details to create your store, you will see that there are a wide range of plans for you to choose from, which are:

- Lite ¨C $9 per month

- Basic ¨C $29 per month

- Professional ¨C $79 per month

- Unlimited ¨C $179 per month

- Shopify Plus ¨C starts at $995 per month

If you are uncertain about your business, I would suggest that you choose the Basic plan for testing purposes. The Lite Plan doesn't include many features; it only allows you to sell your product through social media pages, which means you will not have your own online store on Shopify. And of course the higher the price of the plans, the more features included.

If you are not really certain, feel free to choose the Starter plan which costs you only $14 per month.

Chapter 3: How To Set-up Your Shopify E-store
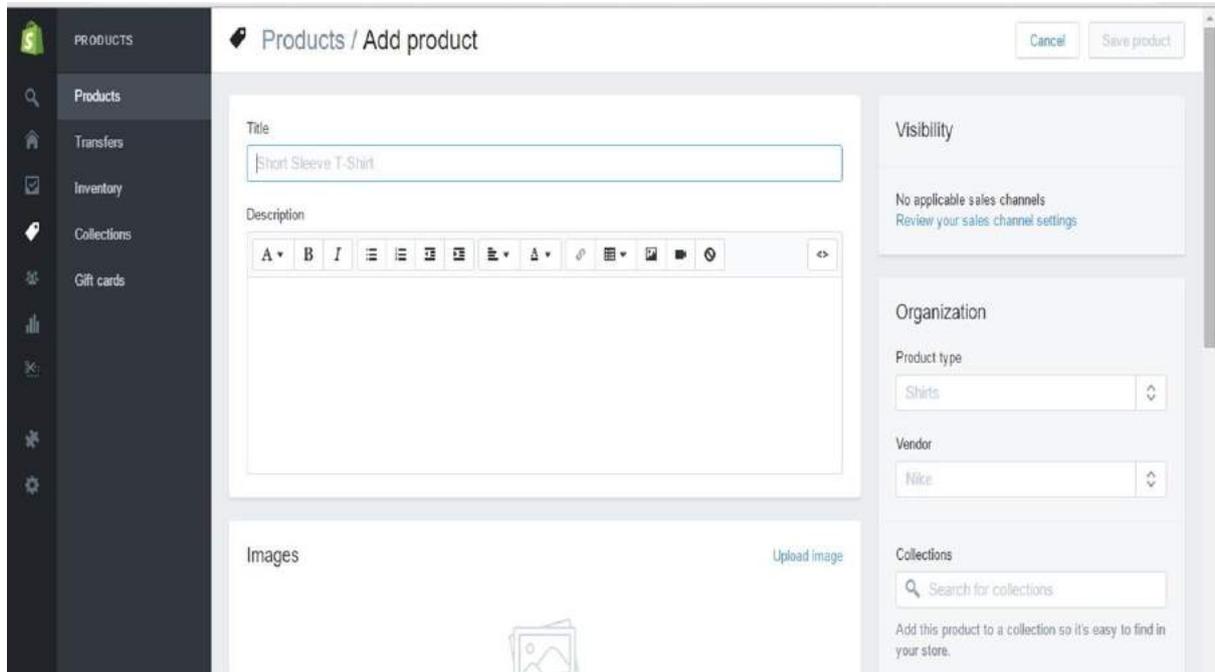
You will be linked to the picture as shown in the second slide after you have clicked on the "add product" button. This is also the place where you upload your product images and description.
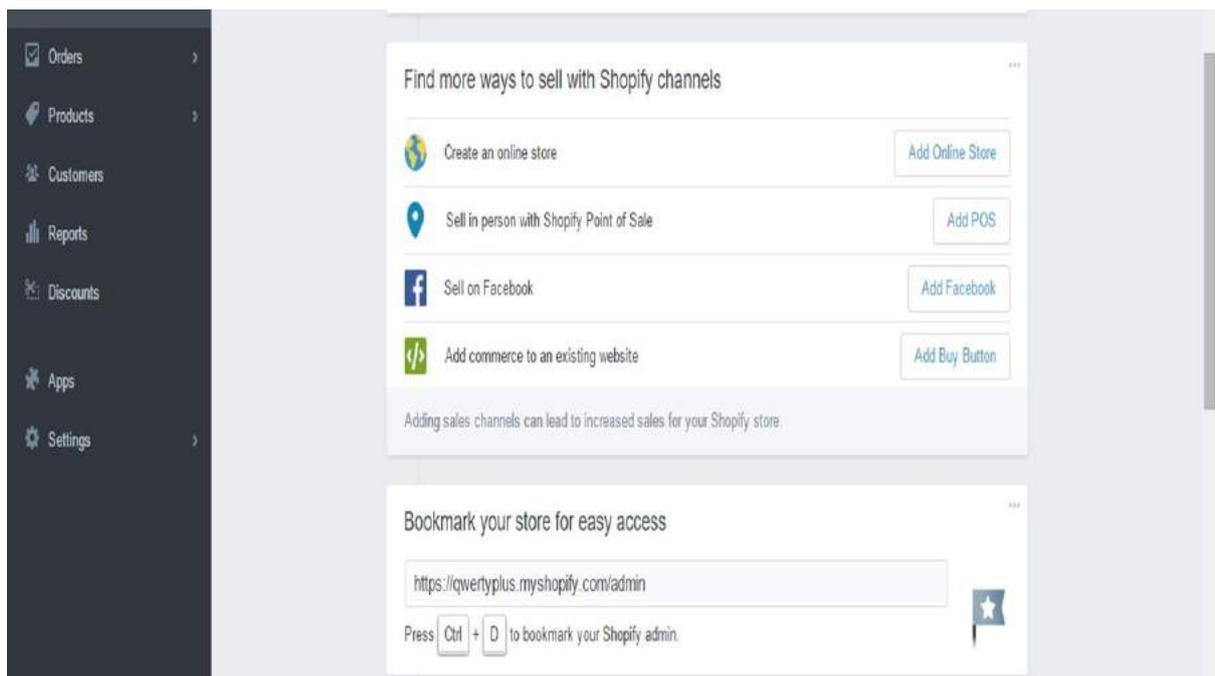
You will also notice that there are some options for you to choose just below the "add product" button. This is where you can select your own selling channel. Feel free to determine which channels suit you best.
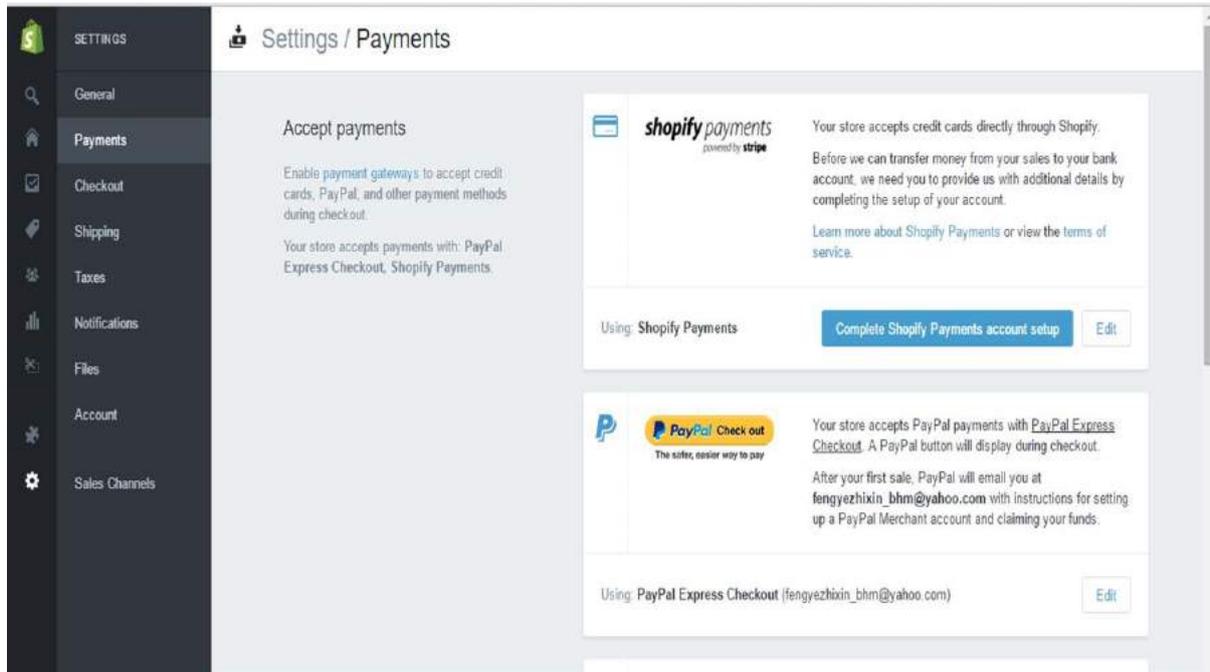
By clicking the payment button, you will notice that Shopify provides you with two different payment methods, which are Shopify Payment and PayPal. Choose the one most convenient for you to handle.
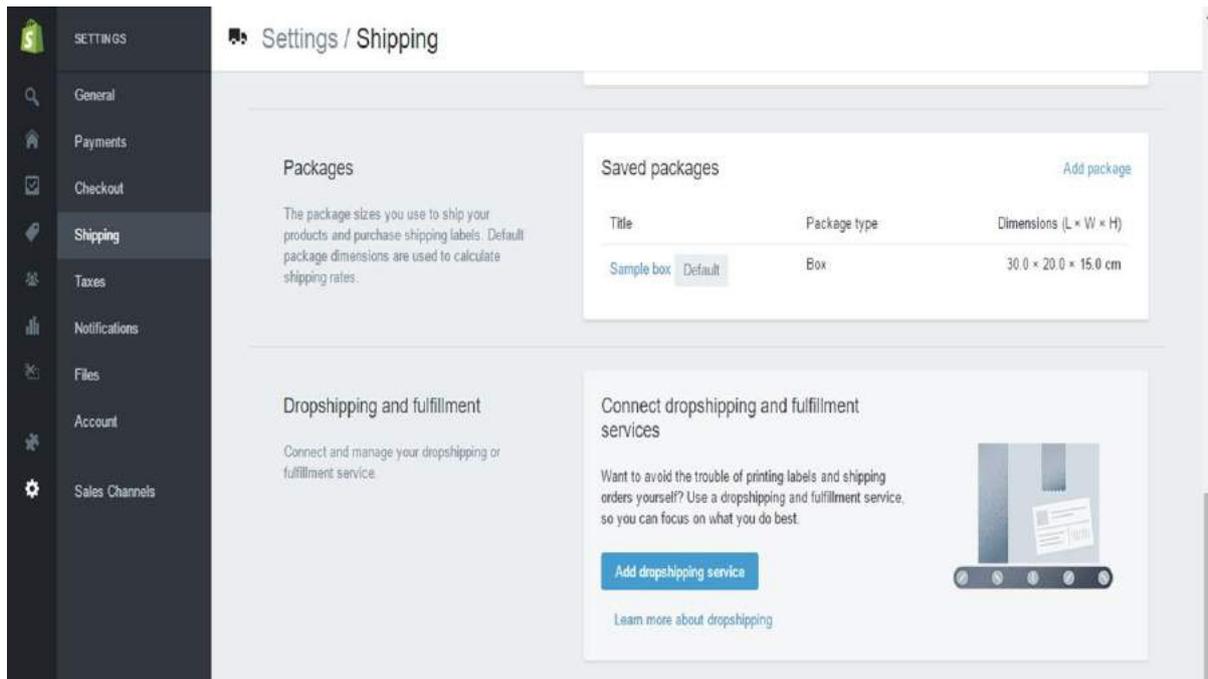
As you see in the picture, the packages option is the package size for you to use when you ship your product and shipping labels. In this part, you will need to enter the title, type and dimension.

In this part, you will get to know and choose the tax rates to include in your product's price. Just a friendly advice, it is better to include the tax in your price so that people will not have the "I am paying for the tax" feeling.

Chapter 4: How To Identify Hot Selling Product For Your Shopify Store

For new entrepreneurs, deciding to start an online business is exciting but it is also new terrain that can be intimidating and difficult to navigate. One of the biggest challenge aspiring e-commerce entrepreneur face is figuring out what to sell online, whether it is a single product or multiple products that occupy a niche in a market. Coming up with product ideas can be tough and it often feels like everything has already been done. Not to mention there is a lot of competition online these days. But, there are still golden opportunities out there and new, successful products are being launched all the time. So, how can you get in on the action? Is there any products that are trending right now? Well, I am here to tell you, yes, there are. Calm your worries down and allow me to tell the stories.

Strategies To Find Your First Product

Find The Best Approach

First of all, you need to know which approach is the best for your business. You don't want to sell your products just by offering the lowest price as others can always undercut you. If you don't really care what you sell, as long as it generates an income, you will still need to do your homework. You must willing to learn about the product you have finally decided to offer in your store.

Don't sell what everyone else is selling. It makes business a lot harder. Things that people are able to pick up at WalMart such as DVDs, books, well known clothing brands and other such items will be difficult to sell because there is not much extra value you can add on. People know these products and are happy to pick them up in a department store without any advice or by buying them for the best price online.

It is no secret that organic search traffic is a massive marketing channel. Looking for keyword opportunities involves strategically looking for a product or niche online

based on the search queries people are using, volume and competition for those searches. This approach is fairly technical and involves a strong understanding of keyword research as well as SEO. Finding opportunities in keyword searches can be an effective strategy for capturing consistent organic traffic from Google. This strategy is particularly useful if you plan to dropship products, as margin on drop shipped goods are thin, making it difficult to use paid advertising channel effectively.

Tools To Verify Trend

The quickest way to verify trending products to see if they hold their water in weight is with the Google Trend tool. The Google Trend tool will show the trend of your product ideas based on total search volume starting from 2004. Not only showing you the total search volume but also display the countries and cities that the ideas are most popular in.

Besides, Trend Publication are one of the best future places to start your search for trending products to sell online. Unlike the other resources on this list, this may not give you direct and exact product ideas, however, it helps you to start understanding the direction of consumer buying pattern are headed which can spark some incredible product ideas. Others product searching engines are PSFK, Cool Hunting, The Cool Hunter, UberCool, Trend Wathcing, Trend Hunter and SpringWise.

PSFK is a top trending online publication whose goal is to make things better. Cool Hunting is an award-winning publication that uncovers the latest design, technology, style, travel, art and culture. Cool Hunting's original content helps to inform the creative community in designing the future. As for The Cool Hunter, it is a natural fit for its e-commerce entrepreneurs who want to stay in the know and ahead of the curve. The Cool Hunter is a leading authority on all things creative and a truly global hub for what's cool, thoughtful, innovative and original.

UberCool is run by the only one man, but there is lot of information and product ideas up for grabs. TrendWatching on the other hand searches the globe for

upcoming consumer product trends. It utilizes a team of 30 trend scouts in location worldwide, all on the search for product trends and ideas that you can use. Trend Hunter is one of the largest trend communities with a global network of 137,000 members. It is a great source of idea inspiration to aspire entrepreneurs on the hunt for new product ideas to sell online. And lastly, you can browse the new business and product ideas that they have published in the last 30 days in SpringWise. It also publishes a daily and a weekly newsletter which you can subscribe for free.

Online Marketplaces

Marketplaces are probably the most common sources to find trending products because they feature products currently selling online. However, because of the sheer size of many these market places, it's easy to get overwhelmed and give up unless you know the strategy to find the best trending online products within these marketplaces.

Firstly, business-to-business (B2B) marketplace are gold because you not only able to find the gems but you can also find a supplier at the same time. One of the popular B2B wholesale product site is Alibaba. I bet you have heard of Alibaba, they are the biggest e-commerce company in the world, even larger than Amazon and eBay combined. Alibaba connects consumers all over the world with wholesalers and manufacturers typically from Asia. With hundreds and thousands of products, there is not much you can't find in Alibaba. Some of the largest competitors of Alibaba you should also spend time exploring include TradeKey, Global Sources, Made In China and IndiaMart.

Next, consumer marketplace are the places that are selling direct to the end consumer. By strategically searching some of their trending pages you can get a better sense on consumer trends and products related to them. Some happening examples would be eBay, Amazon and Kickstarter. eBay is the largest online consumer auction site. You can find some of the most popular product categories on

eBay Popular or use eBay Watch Count which is an online tool that will list the popular items on eBay based on how many people are "watching" them.

As for Amazon, the largest internet retailer, you can find the most popular products based on sale on Amazon Bestsellers which updated hourly. Also, you can find Amazon's biggest gainers in sales rank over the past 24 hours in Amazon Movers and Shakers which also updated hourly. Kickstarter on the other hand is the largest crowd-funding website. You are able to browse all projects by popularity, funding, staff picks as well as many other options with Kickstarter Discover.

Interesting Product Ideas

First of all, these are not suggested product to sell online. It is some interesting ideas that are trending upwards according to Google Trend. Before selling anything online you must first do your own due diligence to determine market demand and potential. Trending products are good, but if you can make it even better, why not? Put in your own idea to an existing product to make it better and make it your own piece is not plagiarising but an innovative product recreation.

The nutrition and health industry is always changing and there is always opportunity for new products to cater to the latest diet. One of the bigger but interesting trends in the last few years is the Paleo diet. Just an extra information for you if you do not know what's a Paleo diet, it is a modern nutritional plan based on the presumed diet of Palaeolithic humans that lived 15,000 years ago. There is a massive spike in Google Trend beginning at the tail end of 2010.

The next trending item is wooden glasses. Who would have thought about this? A search for wooden sunglasses in Alibaba returns 22,603 products from 555 suppliers. With all this suppliers, there is like strong demand. By taking wooden sunglasses to Google Trend, it appears that wood framed sunglasses are fairly new product but have seen consistent growth almost every year since inception. After finding the wooden sunglasses, there is a curiosity on other wooden accessories. Even though

there are plenty of products, but wooden watches came across to be an interesting one. Form Google Trends, it appears they came into existence at the end of 2004 and has recognized a slow but steady climb in interest up to 2012.

The last interesting trendy product is matcha powder. What's matcha? Match is finely milled green tea powder originated from Japan and has become increasing popular along with the tea category in general. Supermarket tea sections have exploded from carrying Red Rose and Tetley to a variety of hundreds of brands in recent years. The trend for matcha powder according to Google Trend has been increasing every year since 2009 and just recently seen a massive spike in search interest.

Chapter 5: Shopify Optimization

Configuring Your Store

Now that you already know how to identify your niche and price your product, the next thing that you will need to study on is how to configure your store. This is an essential step to setting up your Shopify store. Setting up an online store only takes a short while, and with the features by Shopify, this can be done even faster with several clicks and a small monthly investment.

First thing's first, before you can even start setting up and configuring your store, you will need to know the features of Shopify. Let me list them out before I get into detail:

- Ready made themes
- Easy procedure to add your products
- Customizable buy buttons with codes
- Shipping made simple
- Number of extension apps to customize your store

These are some of the features which you can use to set up your store. Let's get into each feature now.

Ready made Themes

The best part of using Shopify as the platform to start is that you don't need to be a coding expert or multimedia designer to design your online store. Shopify provides over 100 professionally designed themes to keep your store looking fresh, vibrant and inviting.

This is the part of the configuration that I would advise you to spend a longer time on. As we already know, people are looking at designs more than the quality of the product nowadays. Whether you like it or not, visuals always come first.

Your theme of the store represents the first impression, and it creates a powerful impact on your viewers. Use Shopify to solve the problem of designing your store, and you can easily set up a professional looking store with just a few clicks.

Easy Procedure to Add Your Products

A store isn't complete without your products! Once you've set up the theme for your store, the next thing that comes to mind would be your products. This would be the most essential and exciting part, as you are going to see your store set up from scratch to a store with merchandise to start selling!

Adding products to your Shopify store is extremely easy. Even a newbie to Shopify will not find any problems uploading the product. You'll just need to follow a simple 3-step procedure and you are done with it.

Step 1: Look for the Add a productbutton from the Products tab.

Step 2: Insert Product details.

- Product name
- Product description
- Product image
- Type of product
- Vendor
- Price

Step 3: Save Your Product!

That's all there is to it! A simple 3 steps to complete the upload of your product. Once you're done with the first one, do the same for the rest of your products.

Customizable Buy Buttons with Code

The customizable buy buttons on Shopify allows you to easily turn any website into ecommerce by embedding the buy button codes to the website. Moreover, the buy buttons are connected to your Shopify checkout. Therefore, regardless whether you are selling on your Shopify store or on your own blog, visitors will be directed to your Shopify checkout.

One thing which may be bothering you is if you want to use the buy button from Shopify but you do not wish to start a brand new store to build up your audience again. No worries, Shopify's buy button isn't limited to your Shopify store alone, you

can also sell your products on your own website, or wherever you've already built an audience online. This is the first way you can use the buy button.

The second way would be to start your own Shopify store, which includes product pages, an embedded cart, and a secure checkout. You can keep track of orders through your Shopify admin. And yes, it is still workable regardless where you sell your products. As long as you are using the Shopify buy button, you can keep track of orders with Shopify.

The customizable buy button enables you to match any webpage's theme. You can design your own buy button according to your own style and format. They are all fully responsive and offer your customers a better experience on shopping in your store on their computers, smartphones, or tablets.

Shipping Made Simple

After you've set up the theme, products, and the buy buttons, you will need to configure your shipping details. Organizing and shipping the products to the customers can be troublesome. However, Shopify can make your shipping simpler!

You can set shipping to be a fixed price (based on the weight of individual products) and set extra charges for shipping out of the country. You can also select whether to charge taxes on the product, and based on the product's weight to calculate shipping.

Numbers of Extension App to Customize Your Store

There is a Shopify app store with numbers of extension apps to customize your store. Whether you want to print labels, add customer reviews to your stores, or install live chats, you can find the extension on the Shopify app store.

There are paid and free apps which can be installed with just a few clicks.

Customizing Your Theme

Choosing a theme for your store is worth a stand-alone sub-topic for it. As mentioned, the theme of your store represents the first impression of your business. Once the first impression is ruined, you will not have the second chance to build up the connection with them.

People nowadays put priority in packaging. In this scenario, your packaging is the theme of your store. Hence, choosing a right theme for the store is vital. Shopify has over 100 themes to choose from, which includes a wide range of both free and paid themes.

Having logged into Shopify, visit the Theme Store. You can filter themes by paid or free; by industry; by features, and so on. This could save your time of choosing from scratch.

Once you've found a theme that you like, click on the theme's sample image. Check on the theme details and reviews. When you are on the page, you will be given more information about the theme; such as whether the theme is responsive and so on.

One of the interesting features with Shopify's theme is that you can preview it. Simply click on the 'View Demo' button and you'll be able to see the whole theme live in action. If the theme comes with a few styles, you can view them all by clicking on them.

Instead of visualizing it in your mind and seeing a different result when it is the real deal, you can preview the theme before deciding to use it. If you like the theme, click on the 'Get Theme' button. To confirm this action, click on 'Publish as my Shop's Theme'.

You can switch your theme from time to time when you feel like it. After the theme has been installed, Shopify will notify you and give you the option to go to your theme manager, where you can view and customize your themes from there.

Optimizing Your Store

Optimizing your store plays a vital role to increase and boost traffic to your store. The more the optimization; the more likely it is for your store to appear on the search result page on search engines.

Optimization is all about keywords. You can optimize these pages:

- Store policies
- Store pages (About, Contact, FAQ, etc.)
- Product listing pages
- Product images
- Coupon codes

First and foremost, look for a few suitable keywords in your niche. For instance, if you are selling digital products, suitable keywords will be 'digital', 'e-products', and so on. I highly recommend using Google Adwords to find suitable keywords for your niche.

Once you've decided on which keywords to use, fully utilize them in all the pages I've mentioned. Writing original content from scratch with the keywords will be the best way to optimize your store.

Avoid reusing the contents from other sites. This will not help you to increase the traffic. In contrast, it may halve the traffic to be shared between you and the other sites. It is definitely worth your time to write all the pages from scratch. After some time, you can then replicate and tweak a bit for the new pages.

Pages like the 'About', 'FAQ', and 'Contact' page are especially important when you are optimizing your page, because those pages are more likely to be searched. On these pages, you will want to be extra careful on:

- Clarity and Copy
- Search Engine Optimization
- Missing Information

We will look into Search Engine Optimization only, because this affects the optimization of your store the most. Most of the newbies may have overlooked the SEO for the pages; your store is more likely to have many missing titles, Meta descriptions, and URLs.

When you know how to optimize these elements, it helps Google to have a better understanding on what your store is all about, as well as increases the visibility on the search result page. When the visibility of your store increases, the chances of people clicking on your links from the search results page will also increase.

Chapter 6: Launching Your E-Store

How To Launch Your E-commerce Business

Prepare Your Social Network

For many businesses, social media is the lifeblood that brings a consistent flow of traffic and customers. It's an audience of people interested in your products and your brand.There are a few important things every online business should do to prepare their social channels for launch.

Claim Your Name

As a general rule of thumb and regardless of your niche, you'll likely want to cover your bases with the two largest social networks, Facebook and Twitter. Even if you don't plan to use them heavily, you should claim your name on both to manage your brand and prevent others from taking them. In social media, there's nothing worse than having different usernames on each network. Use a service like NameChk or KnowEm to search for consistent name availability across hundreds of social networks before choosing the name you want to go with.

Choose Your Social Network Wisely

Beyond the staples of Facebook and Twitter, you'll likely want to join other key social networks. Some social networks will work better for your business than others. You will need to discover over time what works best for your brand. If you have a very visual array of products or a brand that celebrates a certain lifestyle, visual and photo-centric networks like Instagram and Pinterest might be great options for you. If you plan to produce video content, you'll want to make sure you claim your name on Youtube. Remember though, social networks require time and commitment to cultivate so only choose networks you can and plan to properly manage.

Set Up Your Profile And Cover Photo

Next you'll want to set your profile and cover photos, as well as seed the social networks with some posts so new fans and followers will have something to look at without feeling that they're the first people to the party.

Build A Following And Start Connecting

Now comes the most difficult and time-intensive part of preparing your social networks for launch, building a following. Truth be told, your first few hundred fans/followers will be the most difficult to obtain, therefore you'll want to dedicate some time every day to building your following and connecting with your fans and followers.

Get Your Email Market Ready

Now that you have your social accounts lined up, you need to get what will be one of your most important communication channel ready. Email marketing has been proven time and time again to be one of the most effective marketing channels, providing consistently higher return on investment.

Choose Your Email Provider

There are many options on the market for managing your email marketing, however, you'll want to choose the best one for your business. A great start point is to consider which ecommerce platform you will be using and to look at which email providers integrate with that platform. Shopify has a host of email options with direct integration that can even track sales resulting from your emails to monitor return on investment.

Setting Up Your Template And Launching Campaign

Once you have decided on your email marketing software, you need to spend a few hours getting your hands dirty. Since email marketing can be the most effective form of marketing, you should make sure you get things ready by setting up your templates, crafting a welcome email, preparing your email marketing campaigns and setting up your shopping cart abandonment emails.

Launch Your Landing Page

Your next step is to build a landing page. A landing page is essential for a few reasons. It will be your brand's temporary home until you launch with your full website. Your landing page will begin to showcase your brand and teases your pre-launch audience as to what's to come. Most importantly, it's a place to start building your email list of people that are interested in what you have to say and to learn more about your launch. There are a few tools you can use to build your landing page that are really quick and inexpensive to use: Spaces, Striking.ly, LaunchRock and Unbounce.

Install Google Analytics

Analytics are important to set up from day one. Analytics will give you valuable insight into your visitors and customers. In a physical store, you see your customer and you can easily chat with them. However, online, you're essentially blind without analytics. There are four steps to fully put in place Google Analytics for your online store: create you Google Analytics account, connecting your Google Analytics to your store, activating E-commerce tracking and setting up funnels and goals.

Do Your Keyword Research

Before you begin setting up your new online store, it's important to do your keyword research. Keyword research is an important part of search engine optimization (SEO). The underlying value of choosing the right keywords is to help Google and other search engines understand what your ecommerce site is about and what products you sell. This in return increases your visibility by increasing the chance search engines will list your site in the search results when potential customers are looking for the products you sell.

Build Your Online Store

Now that you've set up much of the essentials, you're finally ready to begin working on your actual store. This is a big task, so make sure you give yourself enough time. Some of the things you'll need to consider are: choosing the tight store theme, overall store design, product photography, product description and adding apps.

Before you launch, you'll want to define a few key performance indicators (KPI's) to monitor going forward. Defining the metrics that are important to you and your business early will help keep you on track and focused. There are several key performance indicators that everyone should track for their ecommerce business listed below:

Sales Key Performance Indicators

- Monthly Sales
- Average Order Size
- Average Margin
- Conversion Rate
- Shopping Cart Abandonment Rate

Marketing Key Performance Indicators

- Site Traffic

- Unique Visitors vs. Returning Visitors

- Time On Site

- Page Views Per Visit

- Traffic Source and Referrals

- Newsletter Subscribers

- Social Media Followers or Fans

Knowing Your Shipping Strategy

Your shipping strategy is an integral part of your ecommerce business. Shipping profitably can be difficult and there's lots to learn, so you'll want to prepare carefully for it. There are several important factors to consider including: packaging options and materials, which shipping carriers to use and shipping time and costs.

Finalize Your Launch Promotions And Strategy

Finally, as you're preparing to launch, you'll want to consider the launch itself. How do you plan on launching your new business? Will you launch with a promotion like 20% off everything, offer free shipping, or a sweepstakes? What communication channels will you use to tell you audiences about your launch? The good news is that because you've been building an email list and an audience on social media, you have an excited audience to share your news with. You may also want to consider reaching out to relevant publications to have your new store featured for launch.

Launch

Now that you've completed this 10-point launch plan, it's time to launch your online store to an excited and expecting audience. If you've done everything on this list, you should have a healthy following on social media and an email list of people ready to line up and purchase from your new store. Don't forget, building a business is hard work and a long road but hopefully with this guide you'll be able to set the right tone for your business from the start.

Strategies To Launch Your Business

Once you've made the decision to start your own E-commerce business, the process of launching it can be confusing and overwhelming. There are a lot of decisions to make, and focusing your efforts in the wrong areas can lead to months of wasted effort. Fortunately, these guidelines will help make your own E-commerce launch a successful one.

Pick An Easy-To-Use Shopping Cart

The more time you spend wrestling with a complicated shopping cart, the less time you'll have to focus on what really
matters: creating valuable content, interacting with your customers and marketing your business. So make picking an easy-to-use platform a priority when launching. You can always change/upgrade later if you need to.

Launch As Quickly As Possible

It's time to kill your perfectionist tendencies! Launching your store quickly is one of the best things you can do for your fledgling business. If you're new to your niche, you likely have no idea who your customers are or what they need. Oh, you may think you know, but you don't. So trying to invest in creating the perfect store to address your customers' needs, wants and problems is almost certainly a waste of time. Instead, get a basic store online as quickly as possible to start interacting with your customers to learn more about them. Once you have a better idea about your

niche, then you can improve your website based on your new knowledge. And while you've been collecting all this information, you've almost certainly rung up a few sales, too. Another reason to launch quickly is because it takes a lot of time and effort to market your store. The sooner you have a storefront up and online — even a really basic one — the faster you can start telling the world about your business, building links and marketing.

Do It Yourself

If you don't understand how your business fundamentally works, you won't be able to effectively train a team in the future. And having to rely on paid contractors (programmers, web designers, etc.) every time you need to make a change is an expensive and helpless position to be in. Doing things yourself also makes you prioritize what's important to move forward and what can wait. It's really easy to throw money at a problem instead of really analysing whether it's:

1) Really necessary

2) A good investment. When you do most things yourself early on, you're less likely to waste money on nonessential items.

Market Relentlessly

Most people grossly underestimate how much marketing is required to build a viable E-commerce business. Especially in the early days, it takes a LOT of effort to get your business on the map and noticed. For the first six months of any new E-commerce site, I'd recommend the following time priorities:

- Month 1: Launch a basic site

- Month 2: Improve your site

- Months 3 – 6: Market like your business depends on it … because it does!

Chapter 7: How To Generate Traffic To Shopify

Increasing Your Store's Traffic

So today I want to dive into some out-of-the-box ways to increase your store's traffic. Ranging from smart ads to sponsorships, these tips will give you a unique look into the business of increasing your online business. Keep reading to learn about some of these more unusual techniques, and feel free to try them out.

Consider Switching Out An Email Subscription Form For Social Signups

The email signup form is a wonderful way to grab people who stop by in your store and send them emails for promotions and other cool stuff. In short, emails work wonders for getting customers to return to your store. The only problem is that many consumers are becoming numb to the email list signup form. You see them all over the place, and people are less and less likely to sign up for yet another campaign that clogs up their inbox. Consider swapping out your email signup form for a social sharing or social sign up option.

Sponsor A Local Event

This may sound like something a brick and Mortar Company would try out, but it's actually not uncommon for online companies to reach out to their communities to sponsor live events. When you sponsor the live event you will give your company tons of exposure, bringing in additional traffic for your site. Even if most of your company works from home, and in different locations, you can decide on a location that is filled with a significant amount of your current customers. This way, those people will come to the event and share the word about it when you start advertising.

Put Coupons In The Packages You Send Out

A coupon on your email receipt is a nice touch, but there's something about receiving a tangible gift when a box shows up at your home. Zappos is known for giving away some free stuff when they send out their boxes, and I received a 15% off coupon from Moo.com when I ordered a few business cards. With email coupons, customers are more prone to forget about the email or delete it. With this, they get the joy of getting an actual present, and they can post it on their refrigerator to return to your online store at some point.

Find Companies In Your Industry And Cross-Promote

This usually comes in the form of guest blog posts, but that's not exactly what I'm talking about here. Chances are you have various other companies in your industry (or not in your industry) with which you can cross-promote with. For example, you went to a hardware store open house where they gave away free pizza. Each plate had a little slip of paper with an ad for the pizza shop that donated the pizza. How can this work with online shops? Consider giving some free items to another store in your industry. When that store makes sales they can give these out for free and mention your store during the sale. Those customers are then pushed to your store for more traffic!

Drive Traffic With Facebook

Anyone who works for a major news website or publisher knows that social referrals, which mean links that are shared on social networks have become a crucial source of incoming traffic and have been vying with search as a source of new readers for some time. So now, let's us dive into how to drive traffic with Facebook to your store.

Create Engaging Facebook Post

In a nutshell, engaging posts come in 3 forms, which are text updates, photos and 3rd party links. A study by Facebook Studio shows that posts with images drive more engagement. So whenever you can, share images along with links to your site to drive more engagement and to get more people to click on the links. The nice thing about this is that the description travels with the photo when it's shared so you are then controlling the message a bit more. Besides, you could also do something like what Social Media Examiner do, where they take a screen shot of their latest post and publish it along with a description and the link to the post. This can drives a lot of engagement. This technique also leads to more website traffic. The other nice thing about this is that photos can show up larger in the news feed. Another technique that has been popular in the past to get greater reach is to post your link in the status section and then "X-out" the link data that is pulled in to change the post to "text only", even though it has a link in it. The benefit of this in the past has been that text-only posts were getting more reach.

Optimizing Facebook Post

According to a study, very short posts receive more likes, but long posts receive more likes and shares. Posts that are either very short or long tended to have higher like in percentage, whereas longer posts tended to get more shares. Therefore it is better to write long posts compared to short ones as you will not only receive more likes but also more shares which can be instrumental in driving more website traffic from your Facebook page. Writing essential post is important but posting at the right

timing would definitely boost your post visibly. According to a study, the best time to post on Facebook is at noon. You could also try and post at the best times in different time zones using a tool like Post Planner or just post at different times and see which one works for you.

Create A Fan Page

Besides your personal Facebook account, you can also create a fan page to drive the traffic. An easy way to drive more Facebook traffic is by adding a link to your website in the "about" box. It is the one located right below the profile image of your page. In this way, people can easily visit your website with a click as soon as they read the description, which is only one or two lines long and then follow it up with a link to your website. If it is too long, people won't be able to see your link right away. So keep it short so people will see the link right away. This will encourage more people to visit your site. Furthermore, do not leave the link all by itself so that it is right at the top. You may a few words about your business and then leave the link. Another great way to drive more traffic to your website from your Facebook page is by pinning post to the top. When you publish a new post or your most important ones, pin it right to the top. This can be done by hovering over your post and click on the edit button and then click on pin to the top. When the golden marker appears on the right corner of the post, it means that the post has been pinned to the top. Remember to regularly unpin old post a pin on the new ones. You could pin your latest blog post, important news or images.

Drive Traffic With Instagram

Instagram is one of the hottest visual social media platforms, bringing a human and approachable aspect to your brand. If you have a brand account on the Instagram, then your main attention is to grab more followers' every day. Photos or images as you know make social media go gaga. And here's how you do it.

Make Good Use Of Hashtags

Just like Twitter, Instagram uses hashtags to organize photos. If you have used Instagram, then you might have noticed that the picture description has many hashtags which makes the picture more searchable. The best way to generate exposure and get more engagement is to use hashtags on Instagram. Some hashtags are more popular than the other, but it is advisable to use the relevant hashtags that fit your brand image. Instagram search engine is more powerful than the Twitter, therefore if you start adding more hashtags, the higher the chances of getting your images discovered by more number of people. However, do not over hash-tagging in each post. Yes, hashtags are a great way for a brand to be discovered but only when used wisely. A caption should not stretch two images height when scrolling just because it's full of hashtags. Sometimes too many hashtags in one picture could be annoying and people will not read them one by one. Around 5 to 7 hashtags are acceptable per post.

Use High Quality Images

Impressive photos with captivating calls to action are what makes Instagram users follow new people and leave Instagram to visit a website. Display your best products, make a brand personal and add contrast to make a photo stands out on Instagram. The background of an image is important factor for posting quality Instagram images. Some of the best Instagram users have carefully crafted a background for their photos. Whether their displaying a perfect homemade candy bar for Halloween or a high fashion purse, photographer and designers are making backgrounds as a priority and using them as a tool to highlight a product. Engagement increases sharply as

does traffic from Instagram when multiple products are featured in front of well thought out backgrounds.

Optimize Your Instagram Contest

Having contest and giving out attractive prizes on Instagram drive a lot more traffic than you think. For example, you just launch your online store's Instagram account, you might have a launching giveaway on your Instagram account. But of course, before you held a contest or giveaway event on your Instagram, you might want to stimulate audience curiosity. Post a picture or smoke signal for people to sneak peek and preview to attract people to your website. You can take picture of your new developing or latest product and direct people to your website for more details, along with the giveaway date.

Chapter 8: How To Optimize Your Store

Optimizing your store can be said the most direct way to increase the traffic to your store. Why would I say so? You must be wondering and start guessing how could change just a few words and settings on the site could generate traffic to my store?

This is closely related to the search engine optimization, which I am not going to talk about the full details about it here, because it is a total different topic here. Back to the topic, when you optimize your store to be SEO friendly, your store is more likely to show up on the search results when people are looking for certain keyword.

And this is why optimizing your store is important. Without any further ado, let's begin.

Why Optimize Your Store

Just like I've mentioned just now, optimizing your store can increase your ad rank in the search engine. For instance, when people are looking for the keyword shopify on Google, the first page that shows on the search results page would be Shopify. This being said, the ad rank of Shopify ranked first.

When the ad rank of your store increases, it increases the traffic to your store as well. When you improve your store's visibility and make it easy for your potential customers to access your service, the traffic to your store would be boosted as well.

Last but not least, it increases your profits as well. As you can see from here, these reasons are all tied closely to each other. Optimizing your store can actually lead to a better ad rank, better quality of traffic, hence, better profits as well. So, why wait for traffic when you can actually make it happen?

Methods Of Optimizing Your Store

While there is no one-size-fits-all strategies for online stores owners to optimize their store, because different type of stores requires different type of methods. They need to have a few strategically planned methods to improve the web presence. I've listed out a few methods that will help you to optimize your Shopify store and achieve higher ranking and more traffic here:

- Write unique contents
- Configure your website setting
- Search Engine Optimization, and
- Give out promotional codes.

Let's have a look into each method one-by-one now.

Write Unique Content

First thing's first, you will need to write unique contents for your store. However, before you can even start with writing a unique content, you will need to research on the keywords that you are going to use for your store. For instance, if you are selling watches on Shopify, look for a keyword that could represent your store. Fully utilize Google Adwords to look for a profitable keyword.

Once you've the keyword for your store, start writing the original contents for your store. Always remember, do not duplicate content from other sites. When I am talking about original content, it means you will need to write everything from the scratch. Only original content could increases the ad rank.

Each and every time when you are writing for your store, try to use different kind of keywords. When you expand the range of your keywords, the visibility of your store would be better, because your store is more likely to be appeared on the search results when you have a variety of keywords.

The content on your store is not limited to the product description. It can includes blog posts, reviews, social proof, information about your upcoming promotions,

social media updates, and so on. Generate content regularly and provide fresh contents could satisfy the search engines as well as your regular customers. You definitely do not want people to always see the same page over and over again when they go to your store.

As mentioned just now, include your client's testimonials could be a good social proof for your store. When someone else is commenting on your products and giving good reviews, it creates a huge impact to the readers than you did. So, include client's testimonials could be a good method to optimize your store as well.

Configure Your Website Setting

Moving on to the next method, configure your website setting. This may requires a little bit of technical as you will need to ensure the page loading speed is fast. The page loading speed of your website can have a tremendous effect on its ability to convert visitors. It has been often observed that visitors are actually exit the store if the site loads slowly. Speed is everything in these days; people would expect things to be fast. Therefore, make sure to optimize the speed of your store as well. If you do not have this knowledge, you could contact the web host, in this case, Shopify to solve the problem.

And then, ensure to link the product page from your home page. This is a major problem for most of the people out there, especially those who are new to this business. They can possibly forget to link the product page to the home page. This could cause bad web experience for the visitors, which will lead to a bad impression and reputation.

Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization, I've mentioned this from the beginning. I will only touch a basic of SEO here, because this topic deserves a whole chapter to explain. As some

of you may know, SEO is all about keywords. Therefore, look for different keywords to put on your store.

Optimize the images of your store. Did you know that you can actually search the name of an image through the search engine? How you named the images that you upload to your store can actually help you to increase your SEO as well.

Lastly, optimize the anchor text on your store. You can easily enhance the visibility of your store by adding keywords to the internal links. Instead of simply write 'Click Here', choose something interesting and catchy. You can even include keyword rich links and link similar products together. It functions just like hash tags.

Give Out Promotional Codes

You can give out promotional codes to optimize your store as well. Simply drop email or private message to your potential customers about this upcoming promotion. When you conduct an event on your store and you could actually optimize and run ad campaign for the event. This could possibly increase the visibility of your store as well.

You can hold events on your store occasionally, such as Christmas sales, or Valentine's sales. According to research, people are more likely to spend on special occasions than the normal days. So, don't miss those chances to boost your traffic and sales by conducting your own promotional events.

Chapter 9: Shopify Apps To Drive More Traffic

Things To Learn While Creating Your First Shopify Apps

Shopify is quite a bit different than most platforms out there, and we learned a lot along the way. There's a bit of a learning curve, but once you get through it, you'll find it's one of the best platforms you've ever had the pleasure of developing for.

Shopify Is Not Wordpress

Most of us web developer types have dabbled in Wordpress Plugins at some point. Anything you've learned about hooks, actions or filters – forget it when it comes to Shopify apps.Unlike Wordpress, with Shopify your app code will never run on a client's server. Shopify is a central platform that provides an interface for apps via an HTTP-based API. Using an HTTP API may sound like a limitation, but it's good. You never have to care about what version of Wordpress the store has running, or any weird internal server bugs. Any communication between your app and the client's store can be kept to an absolute minimum. As Shopify's API is HTTP based, you can use any language. To make things simpler, there are libraries available in a number of languages including PHP, Ruby, and Node.

Liquid

If you haven't heard of Liquid before, it's a templating language that Shopify invented in 2006. Since then it's been adopted by many companies and open-source projects including Jekyll, Locomotive, Desk.com, and Google. The syntax is crazy simple. It can be used to read a huge amount of data on any given page and is made available for your apps. It's ok to ask customers to copy & paste code. (Just not too much!) Shopify store owners are completely used to this, but expect that you might need to help them a little on the way.

Use The Embedded App SDK

It may be a long name that's hard to say quickly, but the Embedded App SDK (EASDK) is really, really good. Introduced at the start of 2014, the EASDK allows you to run your app within the Shopify admin. The code is still running on your server, but it's loaded inside an iframe in the admin of each store. To the storeowner, it feels like your app is part of Shopify! That's not all though. Shopify also provides you with standardized JavaScript UI elements such as:

- Loading messages

- Modals

- Navigation buttons

- Alerts

Not only does this make your app design more consistent with the main Shopify admin, it also makes things simpler for you as you don't have to create the UI elements yourself.

Reviews Are Everything

Reviews are great for three reasons:

1) **Shopify will rank your app higher in the store.** The ranking algorithm is based on the number of stores installing the app and most importantly, the number of positive reviews the app has received recently.

2) **Storeowners will trust you.** Reviews are customer testimonials, and the more positive reviews you have, the more people who will install your app. Unlike regular customer testimonials on websites, reviews on Shopify have a lot more credibility because… well, they can't be faked.

3) **Shopify will feature you.** If your app is new and innovative with a few positive reviews, the Shopify team are great at helping to promote you.

Offer World-Class Support

If your app does anything more than the simplest of tasks, chances are some Shopify storeowners will have some questions sooner or later. And this is where you really get the chance to shine. Live chat can be a great tool too. If you're using the EASDK as discussed above, it's even better. The storeowner can experience your world-class support without even having to leave their Shopify admin.

Great Shopify Apps To Enhance Your Store

There are some excellent free options but many of the plugins do come at a price, usually a monthly subscription charge. With minimal investment though you'll soon be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with the bigger stores in your niche and offer your customers all of the same options they do – giving you an unlimited potential to bring in the profits. Beware spending too many late nights searching through the app store for that one killer app though. If your ecommerce store is going to be successful, you'll need to stay focused on what's most important – selling products. Here's our recommendation:

ShopConnection

Your no.1 priority when starting out with your ecommerce business is undoubtedly to attract customers to your online store, otherwise it might as well not exist. If you want to attract visitors, you need to be seen on the various social networks. ShopConnection offers one of the simplest ways to connect your store with social networks and encourage customers to share your products there. Their free option allows you to install sharing buttons for the big shopping focused networks like Pinterest and Tumblr, and you can connect more services if you sign up for their paid option. One of the best features of ShopConnection is smart buttons which mean each visitor sees the buttons for the sites they are currently logged into first, and you can also set default buttons for those who aren't logged in. The upgrade also adds 'follow us' buttons to your order confirmation page.

Fliptabify

A powerful Facebook presence could be the thing that propels your store into success – after all, almost everyone is hooked on getting their fix from Mark Zuckerberg's brainchild on a daily basis. Fliptabify allows you to showcase your products on the world's biggest social network by installing a tab on your Facebook page which lets users browse your inventory without having to even visit your site. Their free plan allows for unlimited products and installation on unlimited Facebook pages. You may however want to pay for their 'Power Plan' as it allows "Like-Gating". This means that certain products can be hidden until browsers like your Facebook page, increasing the chances of customers becoming engaged with your brand and staying in touch.

Chimpified

Chimpified seamlessly integrates your store with your Mailchimp account (I highly recommend them as an email sender in general), allowing you to target email campaigns at your customer base. This, however, is true integration from the moment they checkout to their repeat purchase. Chimpified begins with asking customers to sign-up to your mailing list and automatically syncs them to your Mailchimp account. From there, the real fun starts. The app lets you craft the perfect email using templates and segment targeting. This can achieve a wide variety of benefits from encouraging product reviews to announcing sales promotions. And, like any great app, pretty much everything can be automated!

SEO Meta Manager

Organic search results are where the bulk of your potential leads are likely to come from. Unfortunately, the first impression that search engines provide to browsers is what web crawler decide to show them. These bots are not perfect, your page descriptions and titles in search engine results pages (SERPs) can be taken out of context or have key information missing or just be sloppy. This is where SEO Meta Manager comes in. The app lets you designate the titles and page descriptions for your store that are shown in SERPs. From making changes yourself, such as promoting free delivery, you are almost guaranteed to increase your click through rate. This is a critical benefit because SERPs are often the very start of the conversion funnel.

Plug In SEO

So your new store launch has gone down well. But are you struggling to maintain a steady stream of organic customers? You have probably looked into SEO, only to have been bewildered by thousands of articles all with different recommendations on how to improve store performance. Plug in SEO cuts out the crap. The app simply tells you what to change within your store. If you check out the reviews, you will see that Plug in SEO is loved by store owners for its 100% bespoke recommendations.

Retailtower

Comparison shopping used to be for the buyer, with great tools like Retailtower, now you can compare and sell on popular channels suited to your products. Retailtower offers a seamless integration between your shop and shopping comparison engines through automated feed submission in engines like Amazon, Google TheFind and a dozen others. Starting with a free offer, channel your energies into your shop while Retailtower does channel shopping for you.

Tidio Live Chat

With Tidio Live Chat, you can add a live chat window on your Shopify store so that your site visitors can easily contact you. Customers can easily contact you if they have questions during their shopping. Best thing with Tidio is that you can monitor the visitors browsing activity in real time and also the pages they are visiting the most. Tidio offers mobile apps as well so you can talk to the customers anytime using your mobile phone. Sometimes customers have questions regarding payment options, discounts or anything about the product that they may want to ask when they are on your site, and if they find it easier to connect someone using live chat, then they will complete the purchase.

Yotpo Product Reviews

Yotpo Review app helps in getting your product reviewed easily from your customers. Having reviews on products increases the trustworthiness of your store. A site that has reviews get more sales as visitors mostly purchase from a site having reviews. This app is helpful in many ways like it sends email to every customer after few weeks of the purchase and ask them to review the product. The best part of app is that it allows customers to leave the review right from their email as well so it increases the chances to get the product reviewed. The feedback will be added to corresponding product directly. The reviews can be shared on social media as well.

Chapter 10: How To Start Your Affiliate Program As A Vendor

What is Affiliate Program

Affiliate program is a program where you, as the product vendor pay a commission to your affiliate when they've made sales. On the other hand, if you are not a product vendor, you'll join other people's affiliate program to earn commission.

To make a long story short, it is an online salesman program. Product vendor wants to sell his product, and affiliates promote the product to earn commission from the sales. In this case, to generate traffic to your store, you will conduct your own affiliate program to attract the affiliates to promote your store for you.

Why Affiliate Program

An affiliate will send traffic to your store from their subscribers list. In return, they get paid in commission. This would be a great way to generate traffic to your store, because you only pay the affiliates whenever a purchase is made through them.

When you conduct your own affiliate program, you can boost the traffic to your store. At the same time, you get to boost your sales. Both of these factors are closely related to each other. With Shopify, you can keep track on the traffic to your stores in the Shopify dashboard.

As I have mentioned, if the traffic to your store increases, chances that your sales could grow as well. When you receive affiliate request, highly recommend you to filter the affiliates. Pick only those who are in the same niche as yours. Focus on quality instead of quantity. When you get all the quality traffic, sales could be boosted as well.

Last but not least, when you conduct your own affiliate program, you only pay for results. When they make sales, you pay the commission. You do not need to pay them for the promotion, because affiliate program is a commission-based program.

Meaning to say, cost to start your own affiliate program can be said zero. You only need to pay when their subscribers purchase your product.

How Does Affiliate Program Works

To give you a better picture to understand how does an affiliate program works, I will now show you step-by-step of the whole process of the affiliate program.

First thing's first, after the affiliates have their request approved by you, they will then mail out your offer to their subscribers. You can prepare swipe emails and some necessary promotional tools for them to be mailed out. I will talk about the promotional tools later in this chapter.

Next, the subscribers will then click on the link and be directed to your store. First scenario is the subscriber did not make any purchase, and leave your store. In this case, you do not need to pay the affiliate. Second scenario is the subscriber makes purchase. In this case, you will then pay commission to the affiliate.

Shopify Affiliate Program

Now that you already know the whole process and concept of how an affiliate program runs, the next question that you may be asking is: "How to keep track on which affiliate had made the sale? How to pay the commission accordingly?"

Here's the solution for all these problems regarding the affiliate program, which is the Shopify affiliate program. Shopify provides in-house affiliate program that linked to Shopify. You can conduct your affiliate program with Shopify and get notify by Shopify whenever there is affiliate request, or sales.

Instead of searching the other platform to conduct the affiliate program, start one straight with Shopify.

Promotional Tools To Provide

As I've mentioned just now, you can provide the promotional tools for the affiliates. This could be one of the factors that attract the affiliate to join your program. The promotional tools are provided to make the promotions easier for the affiliates.

What you will need to provide is the swipe emails and the banners, graphics and or videos. Swipe email is the promotional email that your affiliate going to send to their subscribers. It is best if you can write in a generic tone and voice, so then the affiliate can reword them to suit their subscribers.

Banners, graphics and videos provided for them to put in their promotional page or review page that they lead their subscribers to. All these graphic elements directly represent your brand, which is why you would not want them to use their own graphics in the promotional page.

Other Methods to Recruit Affiliates

Other than waiting for affiliates to join your program, there are other methods to recruit affiliates. Instead of being passive and wait for them to come, you can join the Facebook groups; both closed and open, to approach the affiliate first. When you are on Facebook, search the keyword 'affiliate' or 'Shopify' on Facebook and look for a group that suits you. It's a great way to network, too.

Besides, you can participate in some forums as well. You can do the same on search engines. Search keyword 'affiliate' or 'Shopify' to look for a community of affiliates or vendors. After you've joined the groups, you must first demonstrate your dedication and credibility, so the others will return your favour. For instance, help them with their promotion first.

However, when you are looking for Facebook groups and forums to join, make sure that they are active. You do not want to join a group where no updates are being made. In addition, read the about section to know what the group is all about before your join them.

Tips

Here are some tips for you to attract more affiliates to join you. First, emphasize on the benefits of joining your affiliate program. When the affiliate reaches to the affiliate page that you prepared, first thing they are looking for is what they can gain from a program. They ask, "What's in it for me?" This is exactly what you should focus on. It is the same technique used by marketers in their sales page. When selling, after telling the 'what', you have to answer the 'why'. Why should they buy from you? The same thing applies here with affiliates. There are hundreds of other affiliate programs they can take part in. Why should they choose yours?

Second, a simple sign up process is definitely a must. You collect only the necessary information that you need, which are the name, email address, and the ID. This would be great for both you and the affiliate. It saves their time as well as yours.

Third, filter and talk to the affiliates. Even though there are numbers of affiliate request, not all of them are suitable for your program. You should filter them according to niche. Pick only those who are in the same niche as you. If you can, talk to them to connect with them.