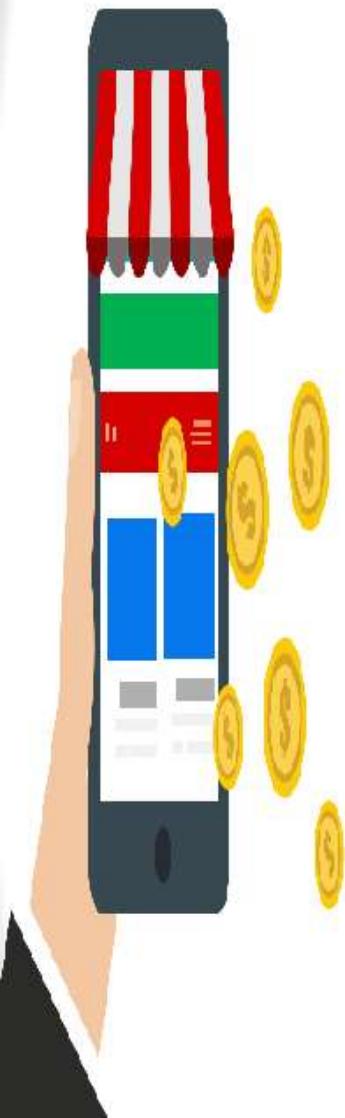
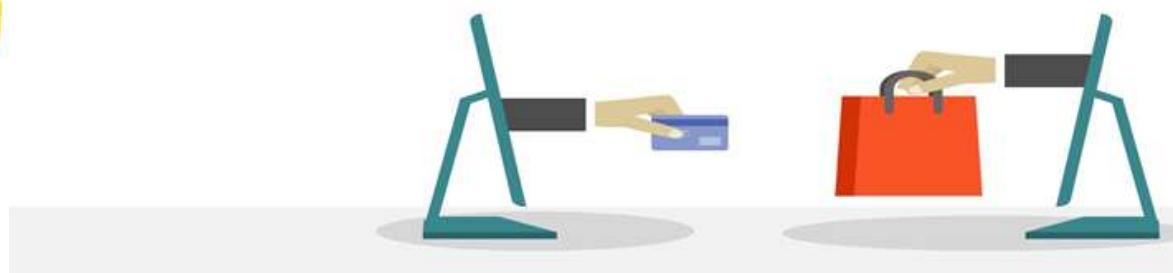
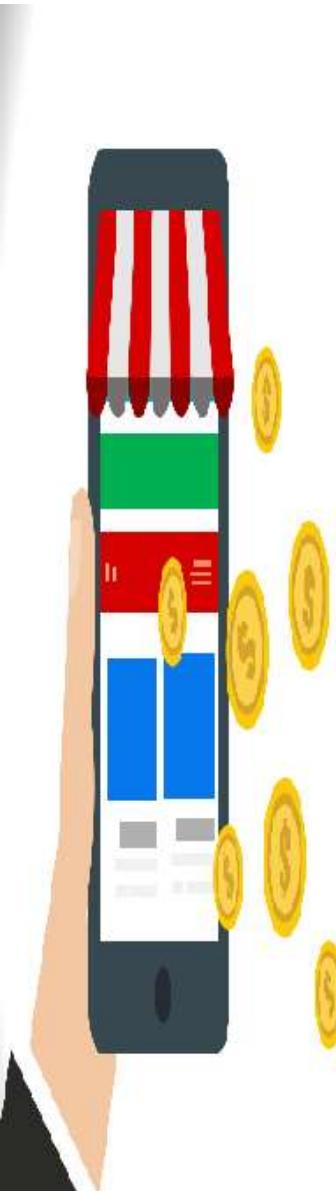


E-Commerce

Dr. Rastgoo





How to Start Ecommerce Business in 2021

- There are different suggestions!

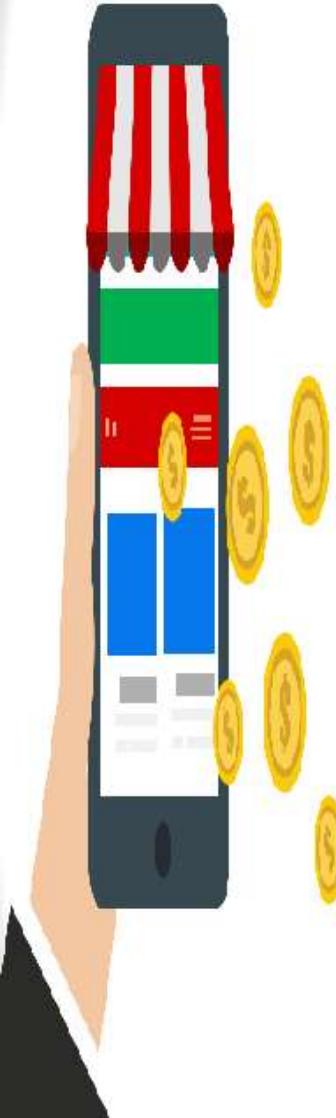
Five-Step plan

Nine-Step plan



How to Start Ecommerce Business in 2021

Nine-Step plan



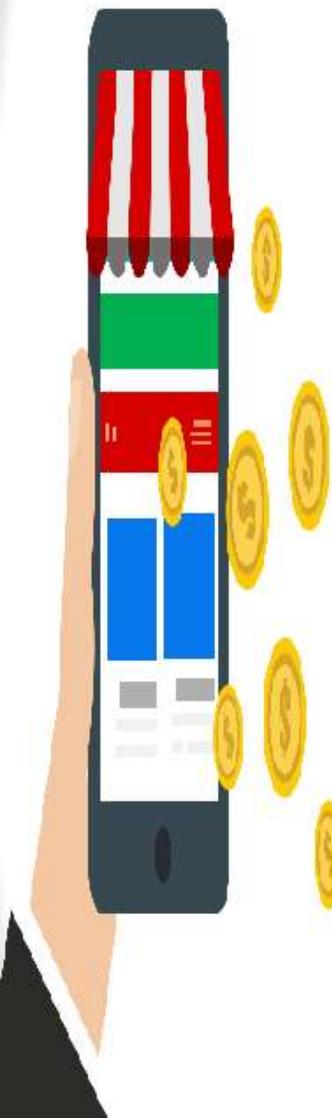
1. Research products to sell online

- To be successful, you need to sell one of **two** types of merchandise:
- A **high-demand** product in a **growing** niche.
- A **high-quality** commoditized product.

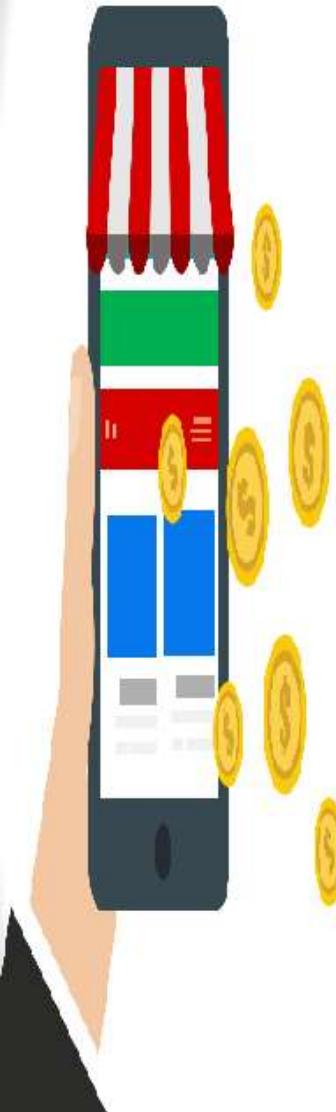
Commoditized products



Niche products



Niche Products



- Niche products serve a very **specific** consumer base.
- Instead of a hundred different product lines, you choose **one high-quality item** — perhaps with multiple variants — and develop a targeted marketing strategy.
- Because they're exclusive and desirable, niche products tend to be price inelastic and usually have quite **high-profit margins**.



Niche Products

- Niche products can be one-of-a-kind (a crocheted shawl or a piece of hand-thrown pottery) or small-batch (handmade leather bags, seasonal preserves).



crocheted shawl



pottery



handmade leather bags



Commoditized Products

- Commoditized products are **high-demand** or **essential** digital or physical products with a broad existing consumer base.
- In short, they're things **everyone** needs.
- Across the board, commoditized products make up the majority of **B2C** ecommerce sales.



Commoditized Products

- All kinds of products are commoditized: chargers, saucepans, sneakers, software programs, clothes, kids' toys — you name it.



saucepans



clothes



kids' toys



Note!

- Many successful ecommerce start-ups sell a **mixture** of niche and commoditized products.
- Their niche products make them **stand out (special)**, while the handpicked commoditized products add **volume** to their online stores.



How to Choose Your Products?



- Think about what **customers** want and consider what you can offer them.
- The following **tips** can help you come up with a solid niche product idea to sell online:
- **Every problem has a solution:** Innovation often starts at home. Can you create marketable solutions (products or services) to solve problems you encounter regularly?



How to Choose Your Products?



- **Find your passion:** You're about to put a lot of time and effort into your new business, so you need to ensure it's based on something you can stay **interested** in.
- **Figure out branding potential:** Branding is vital in ecommerce. How will you brand your product? Who will your target audience be, and how will you create fellowship with them?



How to Choose Your Products?



- **Guilty pleasures are ago:** People spend a lot of **money** on things they love. If you can tap into consumers' passions — or vices — with a strong product, you'll almost certainly build a customer base.
- **Keep an eye out for opportunity:** The most successful entrepreneurs constantly look for **gaps in the market**. Pay attention to societal shifts, and you'll see consumer trends before they ever materialize. You might even help them manifest themselves.



How to Choose Your Products?



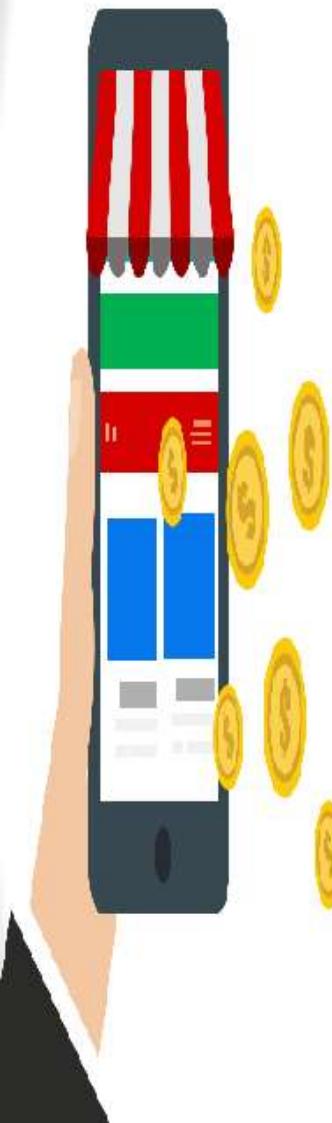
- **Get on the trend train early:** Speaking of **trends** — if you do notice an appealing product trend, get on board with it early.
- **Spot niche markets:** It's such a good example to identify a problem and come up with a solution.

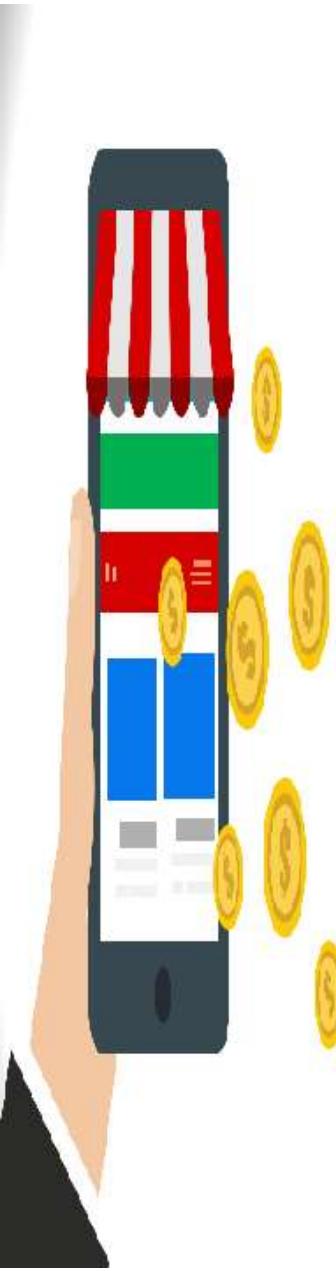


2. Choose your ecommerce business model.



- You know what you want to sell — now you need to figure out **where** to sell it.
- There are **four** main business models in ecommerce: business to consumer, business to business, consumer to business, and consumer to consumer.



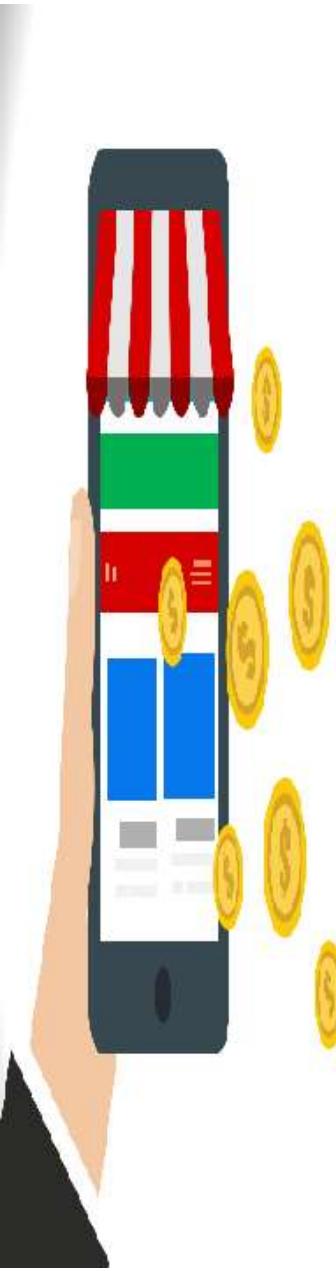


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market!



- At this stage, it's vital to perform **market research** to make sure you have a sound product idea.
- You'll also need to create one or more **buyer persons**, which will help you build laser-focused marketing strategies later on.



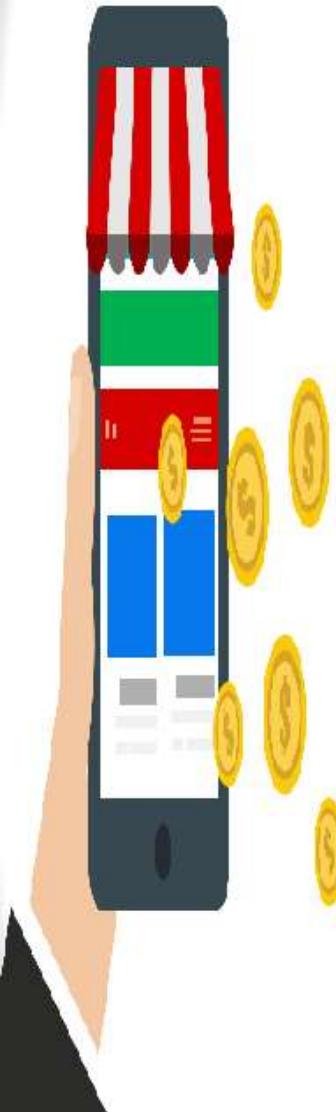


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research



- Market research sounds like something you need to hire a specialist company to perform.
- You can, if you like — but it isn't too difficult to gather information in-house.
- All you need is a **strategy** and the **right tools**.



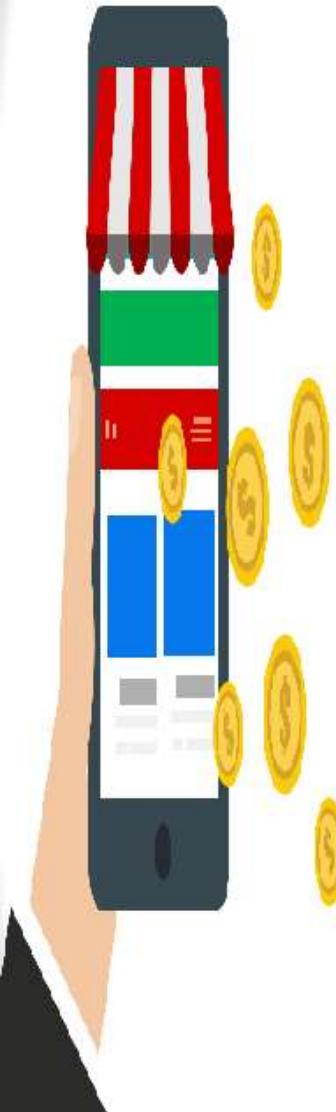


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research



- Here are some of the most effective ways to find out more about your consumer base:
- Conduct Consumer Surveys,
- Interview Consumers,
- Create Focus Groups,
- Create Buyer Persons.



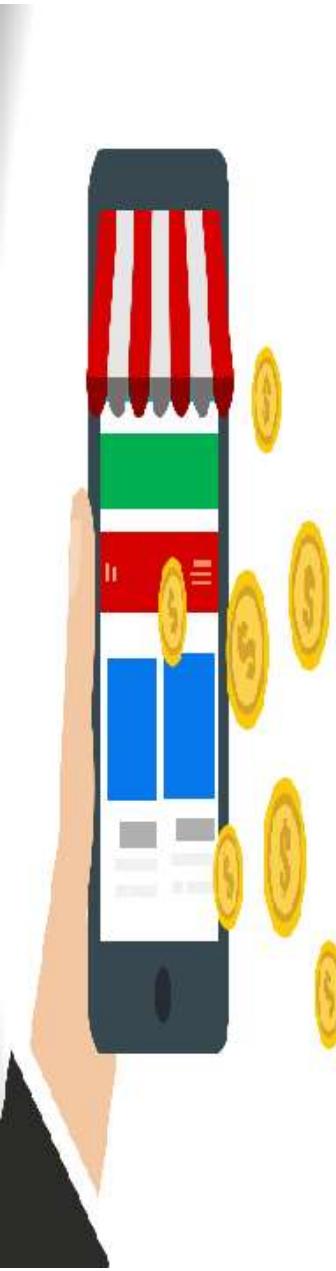


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Conduct Consumer Surveys



- Surveys use good old fashioned **questions** to harvest information from consumers.
- One of the quickest ways to build an **email list** is via social media: simply set up a page for your new business and offer incentives to people who'll take your survey (10% off a future purchase, or entry into a prize draw).
- Paid social media **ads** can help you target a specific audience and drive traffic to your page.



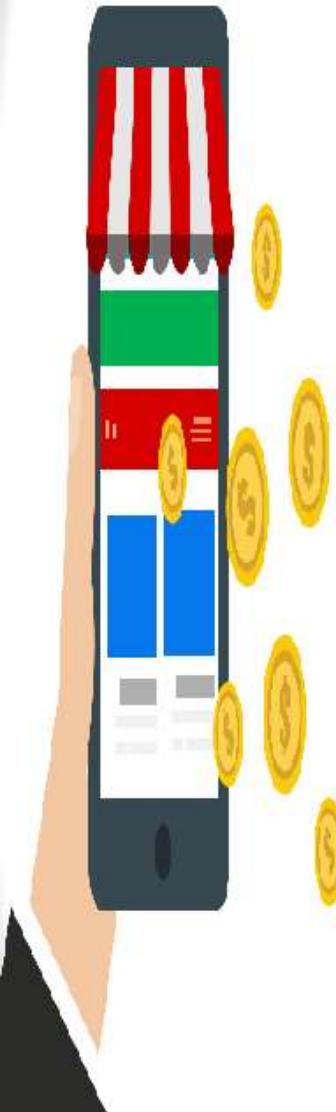


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Conduct Consumer Surveys



- Several great marketing tools, including [SurveyMonkey](#) and [QuestionPro](#), make survey generation easy.
- Simply sign up, create your first questionnaire, and email it to recipients.
- Make sure you track the email-open rate and use the metrics you gain from your survey to develop an impression of your consumer base.



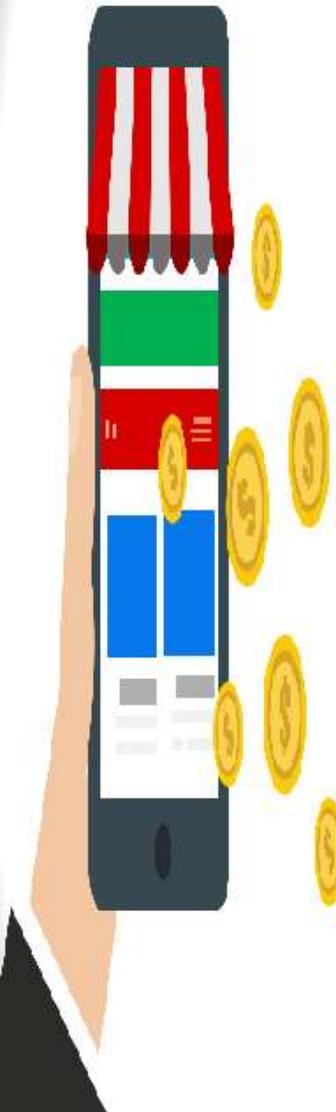


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Conduct Consumer Surveys



- Ask yourself what type of **information** you need from consumers, and craft your questions accordingly.
- Here are a few demographic topics to get you started:
 - Marital status,
 - Number of children,
 - Age,
 - Gender,
 - Country of residence,
 - Household income,
 - Educational status.



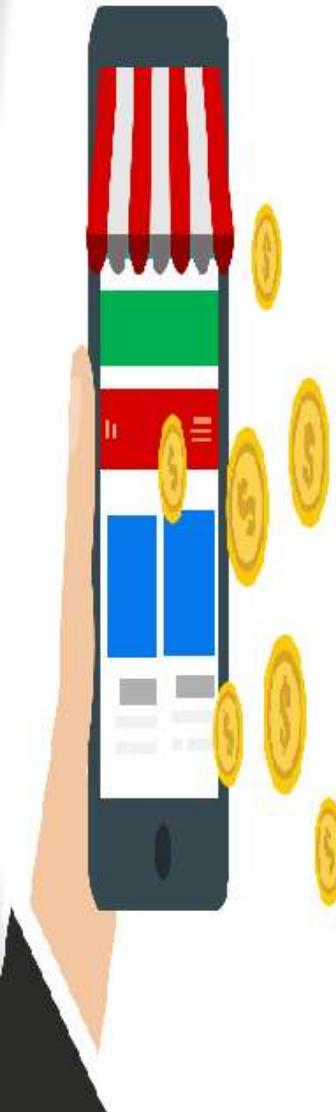


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Conduct Consumer Surveys



- Don't forget to gather **psychographic** data too. Psychographics provide insights into why consumers make decisions. It is the information about a person's **attitudes**, **beliefs**, and **values** that help you understand how they view the world.
- You can include psychographic survey questions about:
 - Musical tastes,
 - Lifestyle choices,
 - Aspirations and life goals,
 - Family values,
 - Retirement goals.



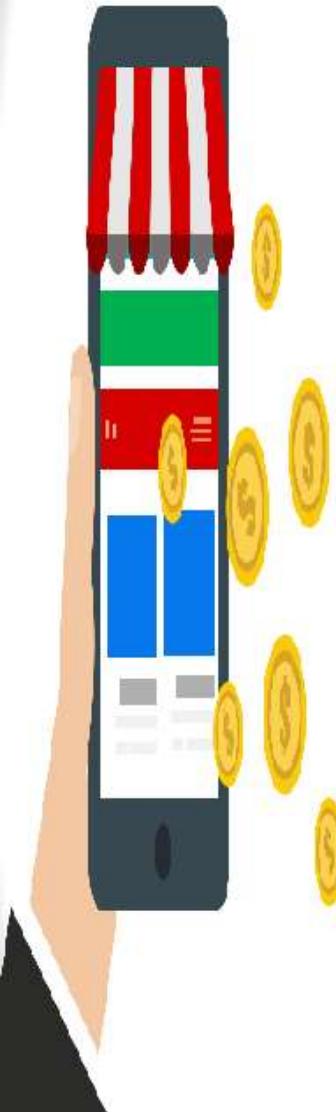


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Conduct Consumer Surveys



- Ask pointed questions about your business idea, and ask participants whether they'd make changes to your products or services.



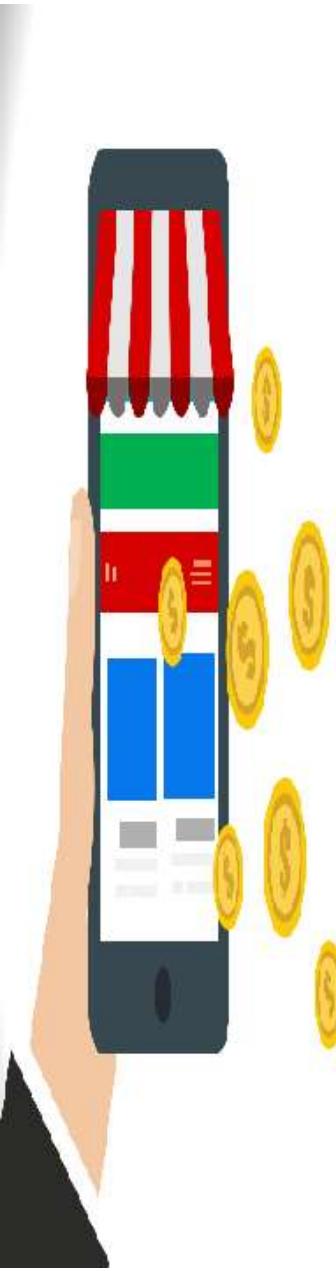


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Interview Consumers



- If you can, arrange **telephone** or **Zoom** interviews with some of your survey participants.
- One-on-one interviews can help you answer specific questions in more detail.
- Don't leave negative-sounding participants out because they might be able to provide valuable feedback that'll make your business better.



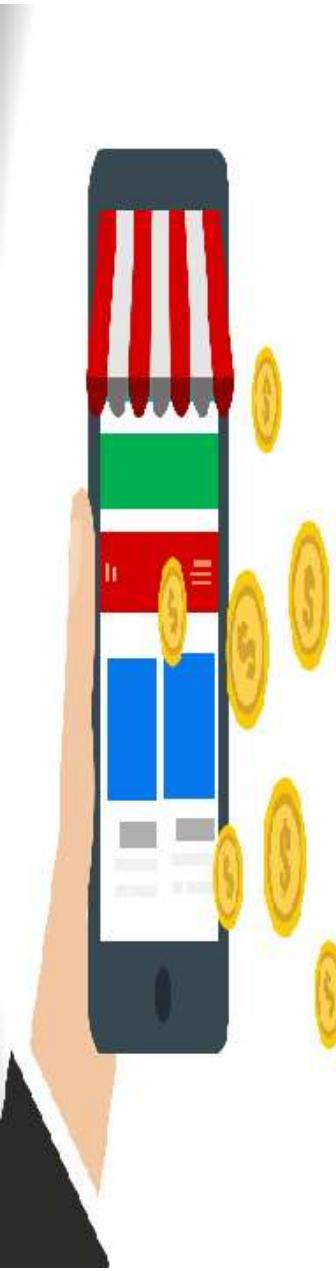


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Interview Consumers



- Email interviewees a list of four or five questions a few days before you talk with them.
- They'll provide better answers if you give them time to think, rather than putting them on the spot.
- Make sure you take as many notes as possible during each conversation.



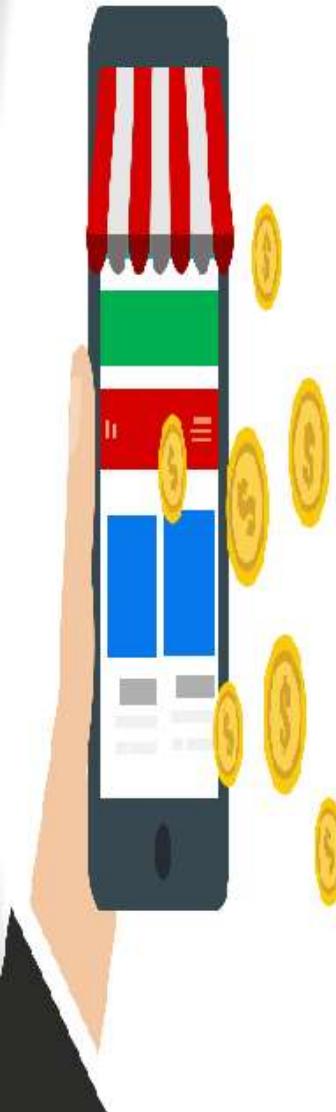


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Create Focus Groups



- Focus groups can get messy, but they often generate good ideas.
- If you have good people skills and want to bring several consumers from your target group together for a **brainstorming** session, go for it.
- You can do this in person or via a video chat app, like Zoom or Skype.



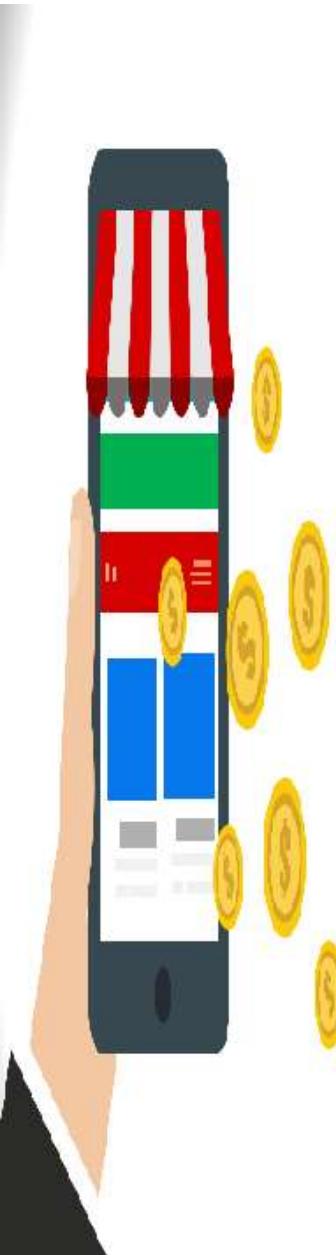


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Create Focus Groups



- Avoiding dominance bias: Dominant characters tend to unbalance focus groups, leading to skewed ideas, so include an impartial and diplomatic moderator in the conversation.



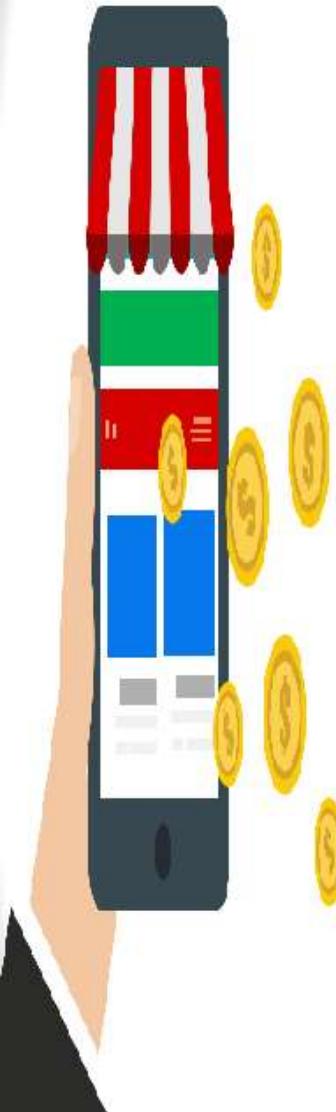


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Create Buyer Personas



- You've gathered information via surveys, interviews, and a focus group.
- Now it's time to weave all that data into a "real" person — or people.
- Buyer personas make marketing easier because they give you "dream customers" to focus on.





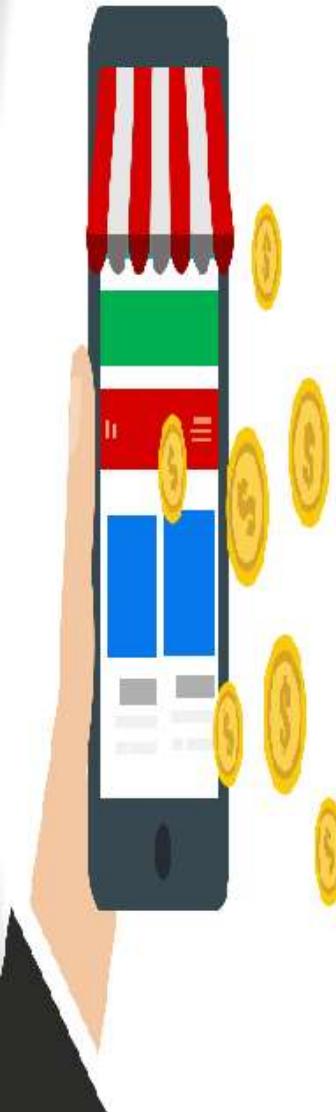
3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Create Buyer Personas



BUYER PERSONA

A buyer persona is a representation of a key segment of your audience derived from customer data to inform strategy and increase engagement.



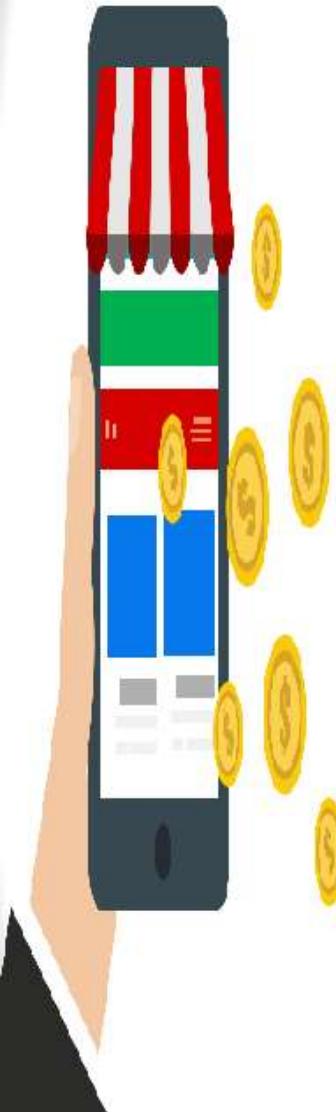


3. Validate your product idea and hone in on your target market: Market Research: Create Buyer Personas



- To get started building a buyer persona:
- Give each **profile** a nickname — “Gary the Banker” or “Lucy the Interior Designer,” for example.
- Attach a **photograph** to make your persona more relatable.
- Add a set of **demographics** to each profile.
- Enrich each persona with **psychographic** tidbits.





4. Create your business structure and register your company



- To get started in earnest, you need to pick a business structure and **register** your business.
- If you're a freelancer trading under your own name, you can sign up as a sole proprietor; otherwise, you'll most likely **register** your ecommerce company as a **partnership**, an Limited Liability Company (LLC), or an S corporation.

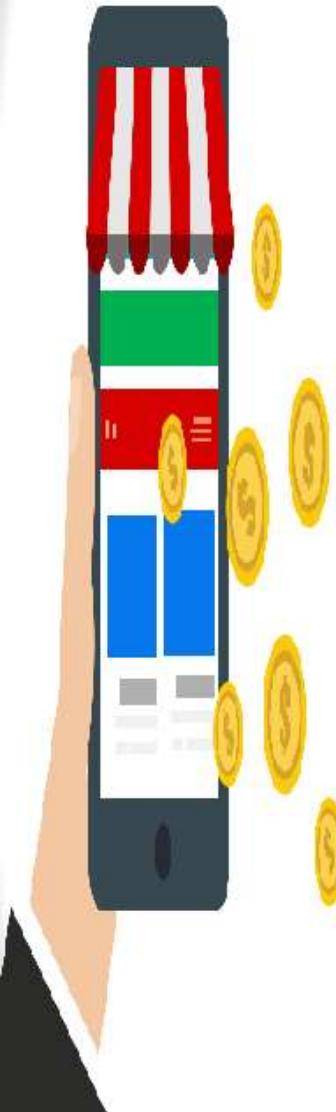


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship



- This type of business structure is ideal for **self-employed** people who don't want to (or aren't ready to) register as an LLC.
- It's a straightforward process in most parts of the country.





4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship



- In many states, you don't have to register your business unless you operate under a **pseudonym**.
- In most other states, you pay sales and use **taxes** quarterly.

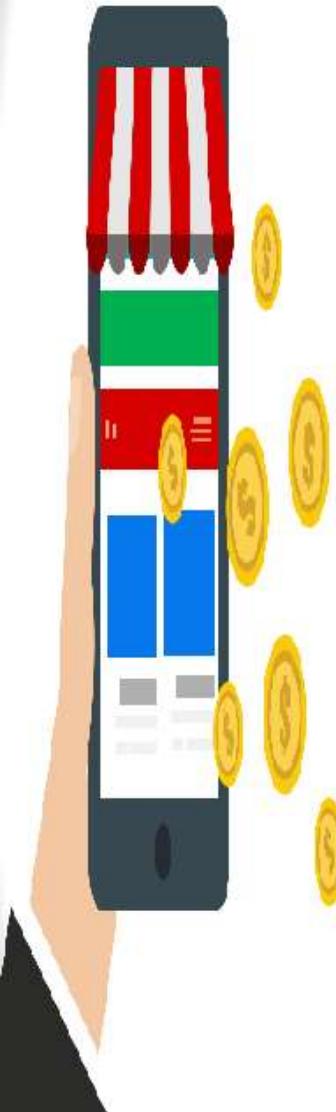


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship



- The setup might be simple, but there are a couple of major **drawbacks** to sole trader status.
- **Firstly**, if your company goes **bust**, your personal assets aren't protected under the terms of a sole proprietorship.
- **Secondly**, you'll be subject to **self-employment** tax, which increases as your earnings go up. The way out of both issues? Pick a different business structure.



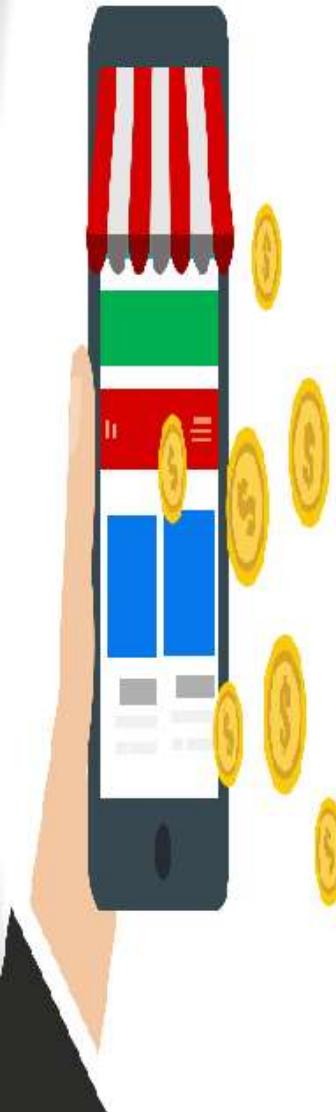


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Company (LLC)



- When you register an LLC, you **limit** your personal liability by **separating** your own assets and your business's assets.
- To get going, **appoint** a registered agent — the person who'll represent the LLC — and file articles of organization with your home state.
- You'll need to **pay** a fee, but it won't come to more than a few hundred dollars.



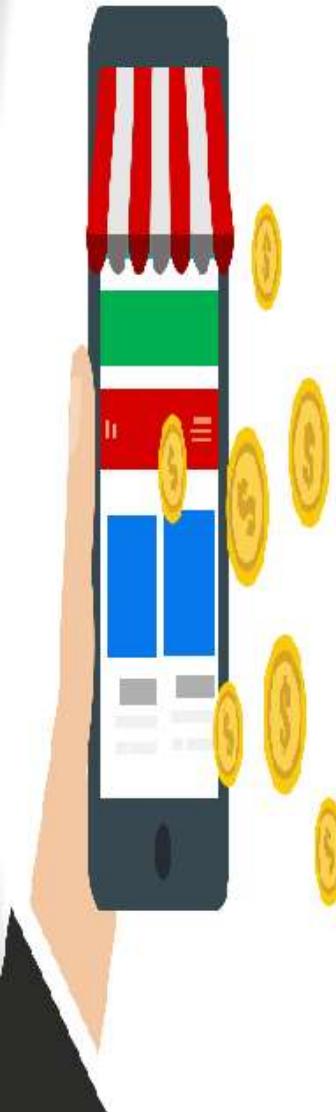


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Company (LLC)



- As the [owner](#) (also known as a member) of an LLC, you can [manage](#) your own company or hire staff to do the work for you.
- You'll need to get an [Employer Identification Number](#) (an [EID](#), also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, or FTIN) from the IRS before hiring employees.





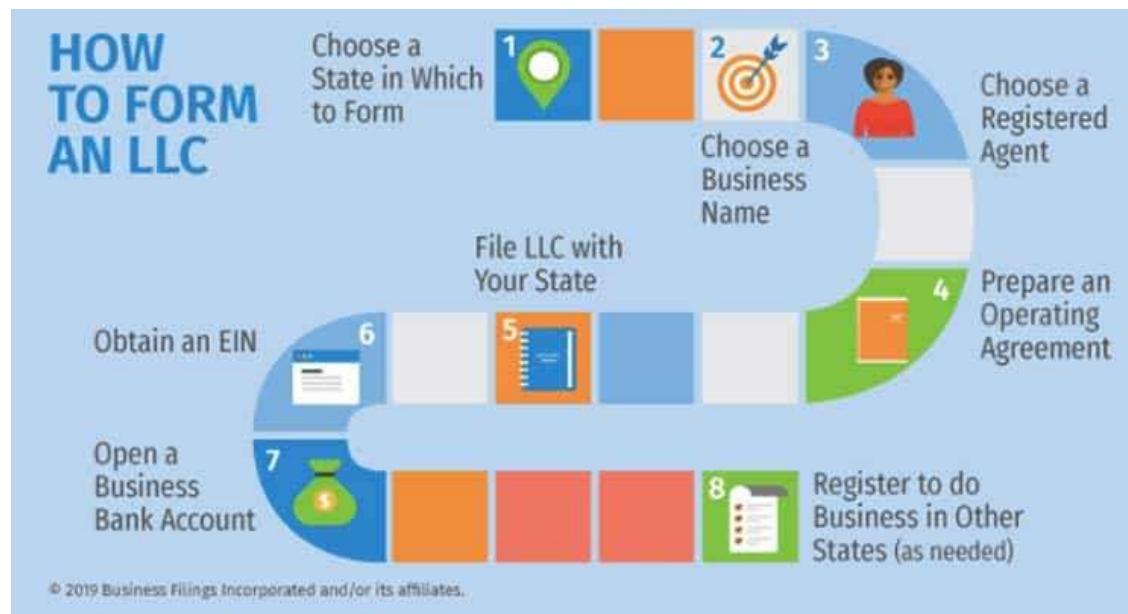
4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Company (LLC)

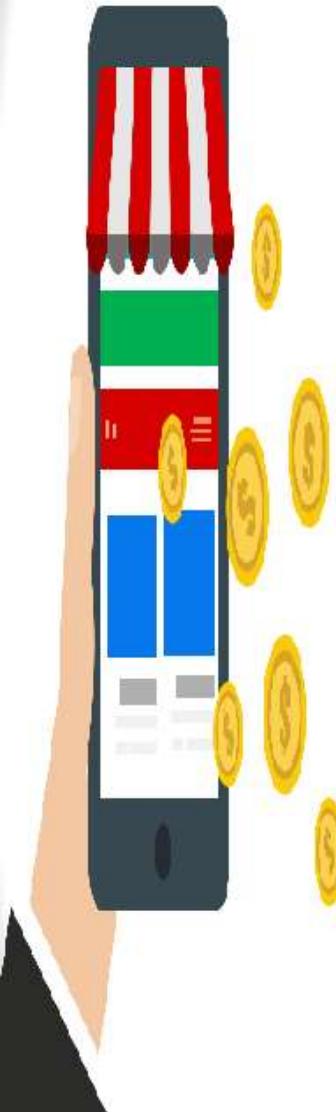


- You don't have to file a tax return **specifically** for your LLC; instead, its **profits** travel through the company to you, and you pay **self-employment taxes** on all of your profits.
- If your company hits the big-time and you begin to **earn** a lot, you can **elect** to pay taxes as an another corporation instead.
- At that stage, you can allocate yourself a “reasonable” salary and **avoid** any taxes on profits over that amount.



4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Company (LLC)



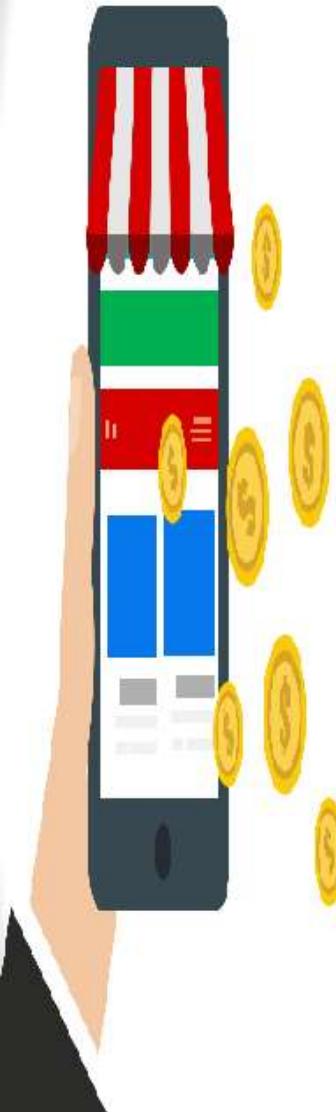


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)



- You can create an LLP just as easily as an LLC, but there are a few differences between the two business models.
- An LLC can have one or more members; an LLP has to have **at least** two members.



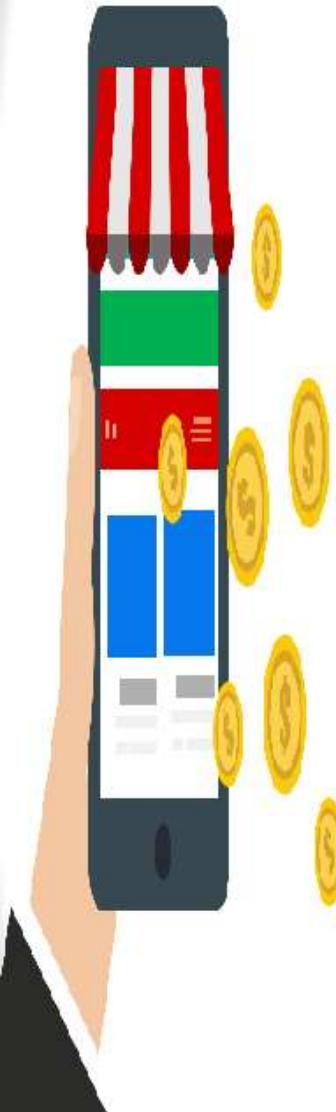


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)



- Unlike LLCs, LLPs have to define at least one partner member who will take legal responsibility for the partnership's actions.
- Silent partners and investors in an LLP are **not** personally liable if the company goes bust, gets into business debt, or gets sued.



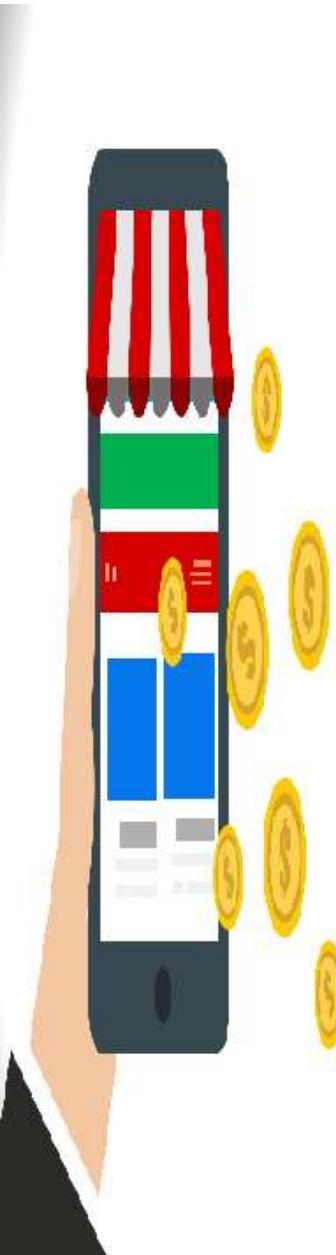


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)



- Small business owners usually register as LLCs; professional partnerships — law firms and accounting firms, for example — go for LLP status.
- In many states, LLCs and LLPs both have to produce [annual reports](#). Like LLCs, LLPs function as pass-through organizations for [tax](#) purposes.



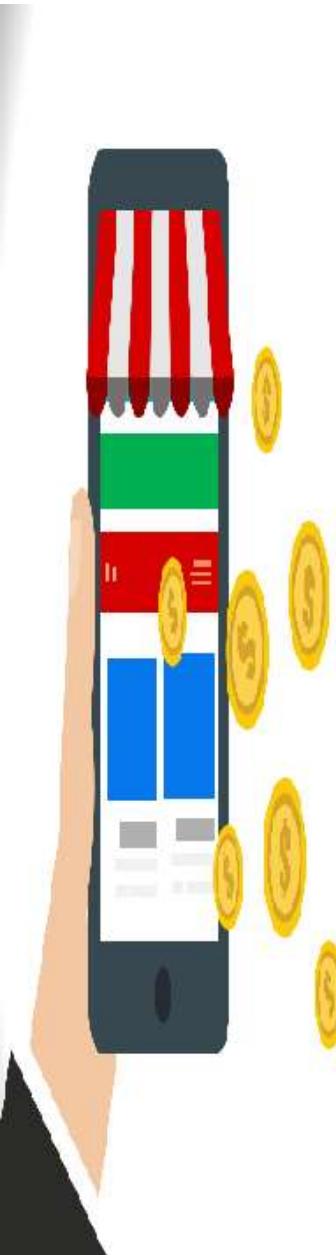


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Corporation



- You **don't** have to bring in millions of dollars a year to incorporate your company.
- With that said, nearly **all** very large publicly traded businesses are **corporations** (companies).
- Two corporate structures exist: C Corporation & S Corporation!



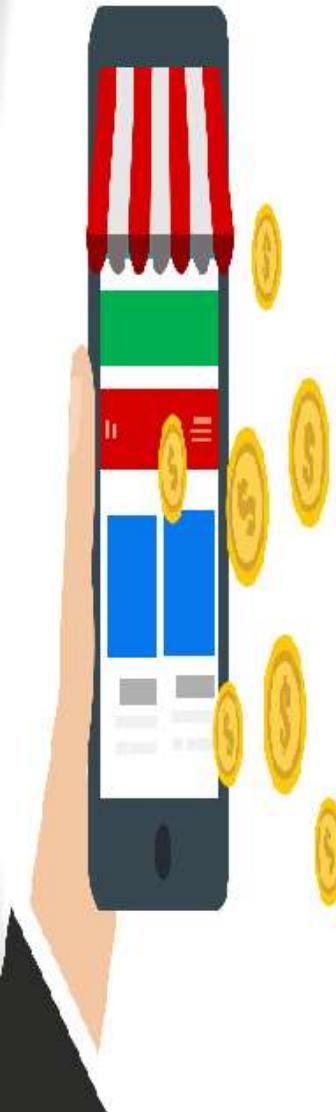


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): The C Corporation



- All businesses that incorporate are automatically C corporations unless they apply for S corporation status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- Like LLCs, C corp owners have limited liability, so they're not held responsible for business losses.



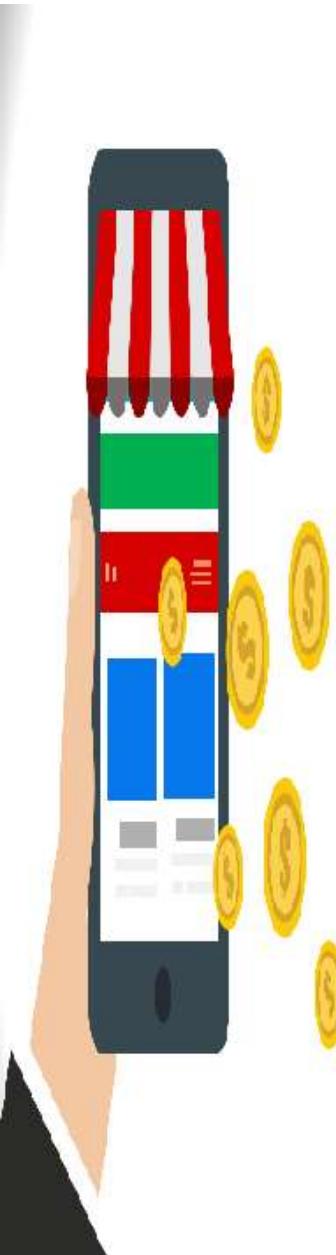


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): The C Corporation



- If you need to raise **significant** capital, you can take your business **public** and sell corporate stocks and bonds to **investors**.
- On the flip side, you're **taxed twice**: once on your own salary and again on company profits.



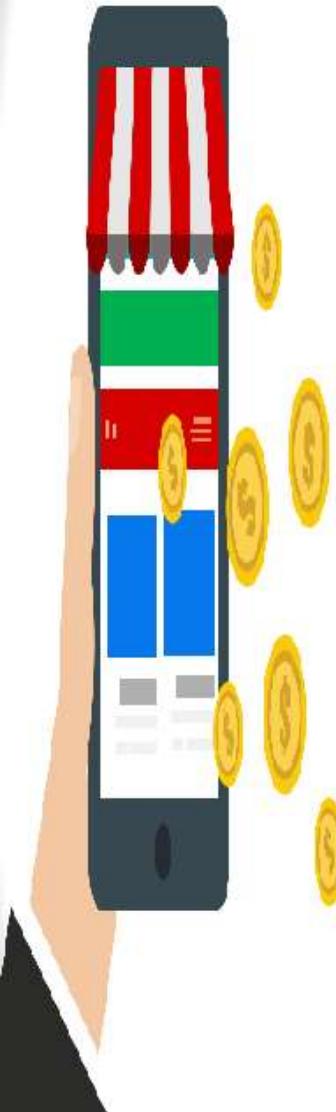


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): The S Corporation



- To create an S corp, you first need to form a C corp and then apply for S corp taxation status.
- Owners pay **themselves** salaries and pay income taxes on those earnings, but then don't have to pay taxes on their remaining profits.



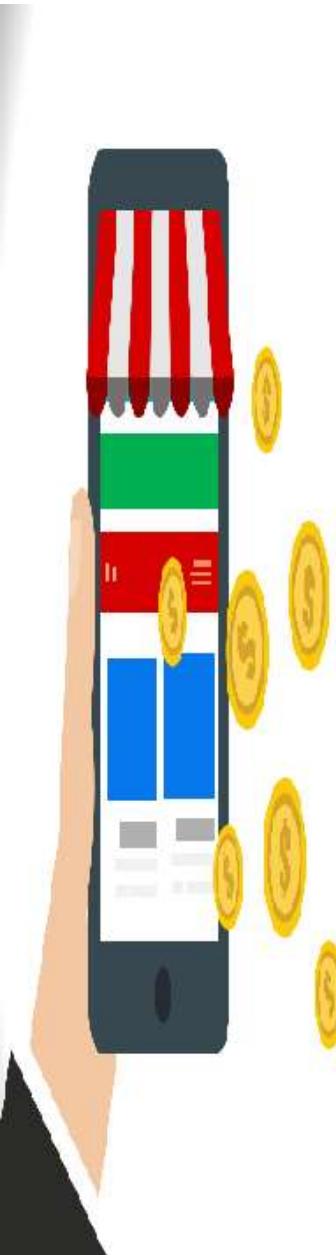


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): The S Corporation



- S corporations **can't** have more than 100 **shareholders**, so if you decide to go public later on, you'll need to convert your S corp to a C corp.
- You'll almost certainly spend more on **accounting** services after you incorporate your company.



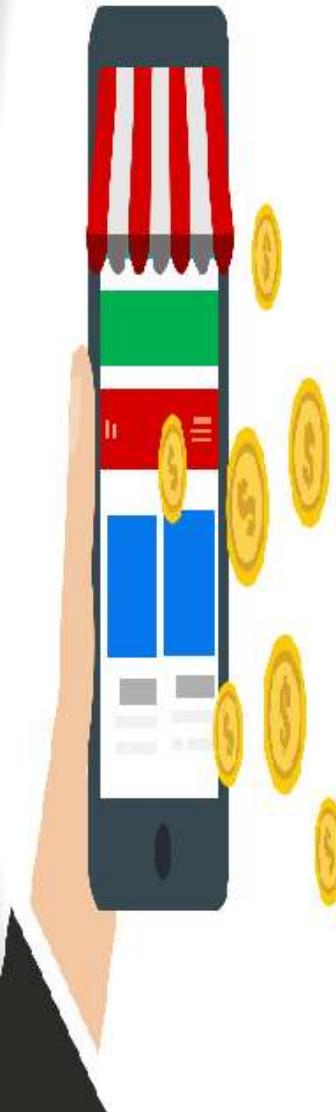


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): The S Corporation



- Corporations have to issue **regular** financial statements.
- Tax season is quite a bit more complex if you decide to **register** your business as a corporation, so you'll almost certainly spend **more** on accounting services every year.



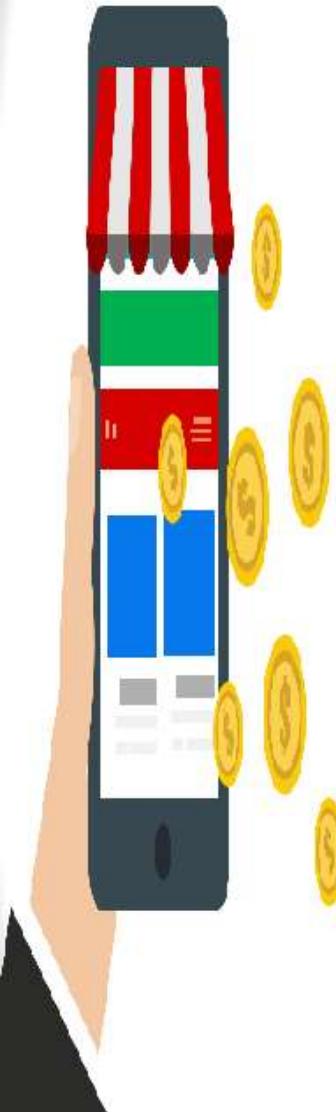


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Obtain Appropriate Business Licenses



- If you plan to do business as an LLC, an LLP, or a corporation — basically anything but a sole trader operating under your own name — you'll probably need some type of business [license](#).



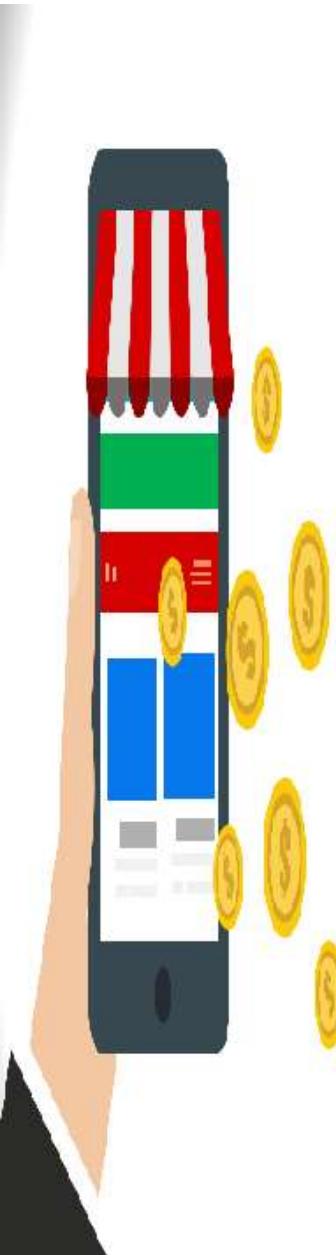


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Obtain Appropriate Business Licenses



- If you run a dropshipping business from home under an assumed name, you'll have to get a **DBA** license and a sales tax license.
- For example. Business licensing and permitting requirements vary from state to state, so it's important to check if you fall into any of the categories in your jurisdiction.



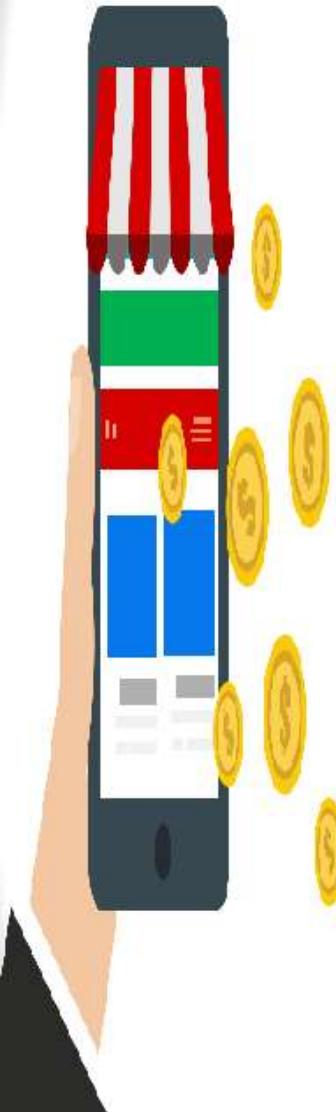


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): S vs. C?



- What's the difference between C and S corporation?
- The C corporation is the standard (or default) corporation under IRS rules. The S corporation is a corporation that has elected a **special** tax status with the IRS and therefore has some tax **advantages**.
- Both business structures get their names from the parts of the Internal Revenue Code that they are taxed under.



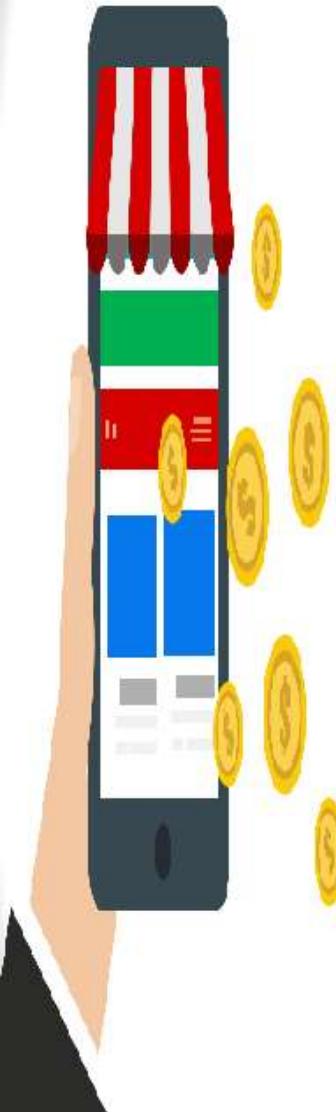


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Branding Your Company



- Visual branding is a complex topic worthy of its own 2,000-word article, but we'll go over it in nutshell form here.
- To make your company memorable and create brand awareness, you need to come up with a logo and complementary branding colors that stay the same across all of your sales channels.





4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Branding Your Company



- You can design a logo yourself, or you can use a designer to get a professional result.
- In either case, consider the following when branding your company:
- **Relevance:** Your logo should be purposeful; it should instantly tell customers **what** your brand **offers**.

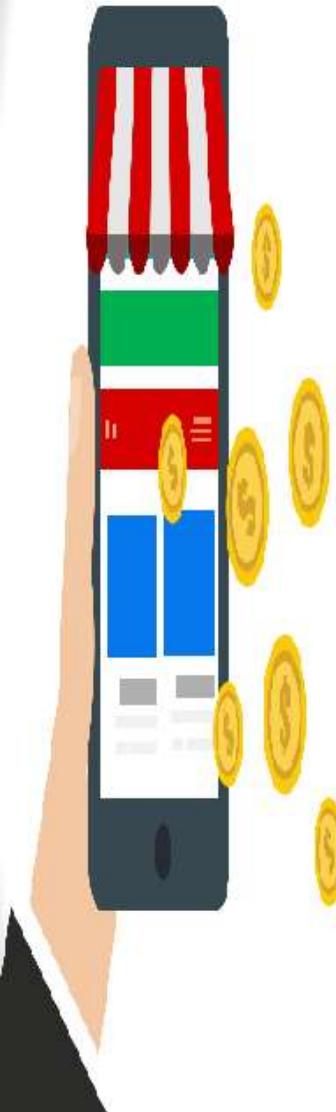


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Branding Your Company



- **Simplicity:** Don't get too clever or complex — customers need to be able to remember your logo.
- **Versatility:** You need a logo you can use on your site or on a billboard. It has to **scale up and down** without losing integrity or meaning.
- **Uniqueness:** Your logo has to be unique enough that consumers associate it with your business.



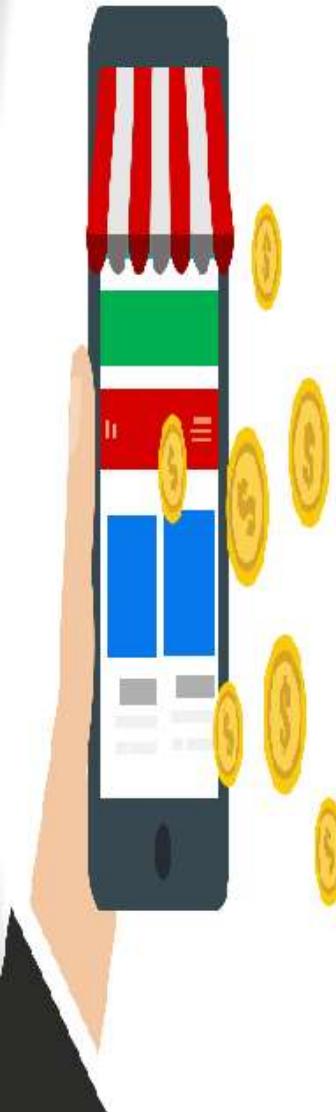


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Branding Your Company



- The best logos in the world are **unmistakable**, even when you take all peripheral text away; even toddlers recognize **McDonald's** Golden Arches — sometimes from half a mile away.
- High-performance camping equipment retailer Sierra Designs has a **simple**, memorable logo, and it works with or without the adjacent logotype.



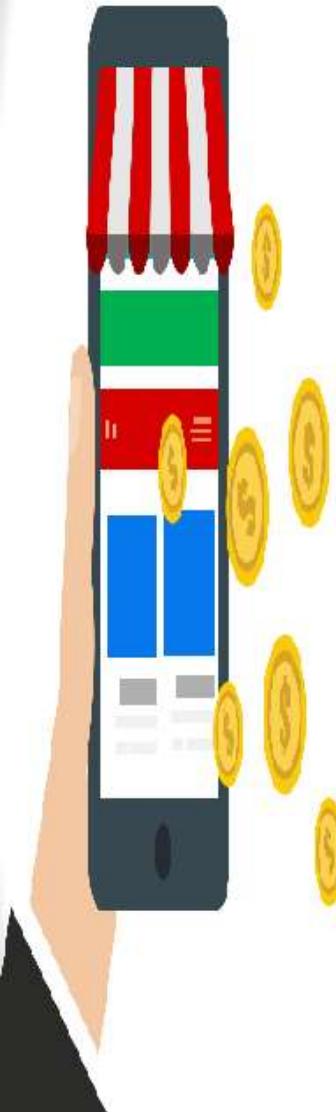


4. Create your business structure and register your company: Sole Proprietorship: Limited Liability Partnership (LLP): Branding Your Company



- Once you have a logo you're happy with, use its colors to influence the rest of your visual branding, including your site design, packaging materials, marketing emails, and ads.





5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?



- It's time to get a little more specific about the **product sourcing methods**.
- There are **three** main ways to source products: DIY production, wholesaler or manufacturer, and dropshipping.
- Many online retailers combine methods to achieve a balanced income stream.



5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: DIY Products or Services



- People have been making and selling things for thousands of years.
- Neolithic **traders** had to **travel** overland to sell beads, pottery, and sculptures; nowadays, you can sell handmade items globally via the **internet**.

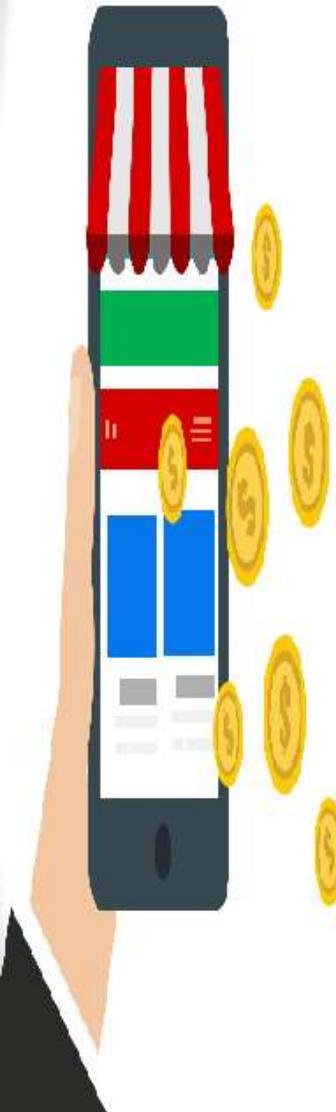


5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: DIY Products or Services



- Startup **costs** for a DIY tend to be **low**, but you put in a lot of your own time to make up for it.
- On the other hand, you have **full** control over the production process, and you can **change** designs on the spot if products don't perform optimally.
- As you **scale** your business, you might decide to form an alliance with a manufacturing company to **create** products in **masse**.





5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: DIY Products or Services



- If you choose the DIY route, remember to:
- Arrange a reliable supply chain for **source** materials.
- Determine **mailing** options in advance; will you **hire** a shipper or send items yourself?
- Figure out your production **timeline**.
- Think about **where** you'll store your inventory.



5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: Wholesaler or Manufacturer



- If you're ready to make and ship products on a **larger scale**, consider using a wholesaler or a manufacturer as a product source.
- Let's look at both options in a little more detail:
- Wholesalers sell brand-name goods in bulk.



5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: Wholesaler or Manufacturer: Wholesalers



- They also sell **white-label** products in bulk.
- You apply your branding and resell generic merchandise to your customers.
- If you'd rather concentrate on the **marketing** and **scaling** your business rather than product development, you can save time and money with a wholesaler.

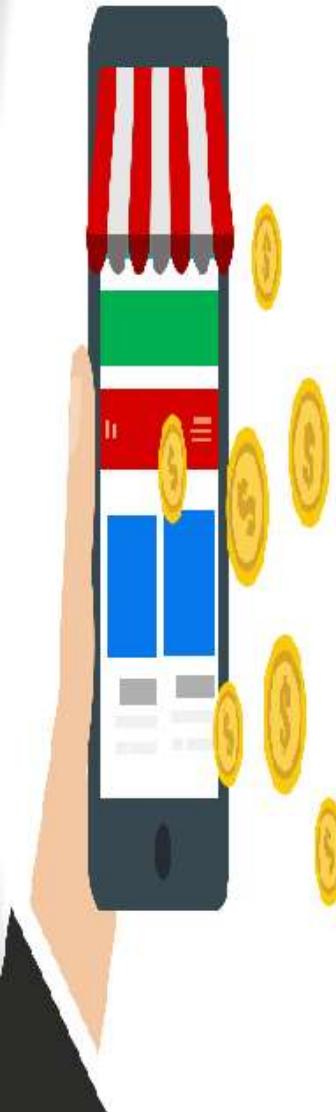


5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: Wholesaler or Manufacturer: Manufacturer



- If you have a product prototype or you want to scale up your DIY business, you can partner with a manufacturer.
- Some manufacturers help entrepreneurs create new products and manage the development process from start to finish.





5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: Wholesaler or Manufacturer: Manufacturer



- If you decide to work with a wholesaler or a manufacturer, consider the following:
- Read company [references](#). If the manufacturer is based in the U.S. or Canada, check its Better Business Bureau [rating](#) and any associated [reviews](#).
- Get a production cost [estimate](#).
- Ask about minimum order quantities.
- Obtain a manufacturing time estimate.
- Go over [bulk](#) freight options
- Examine contracts carefully.
- Inquire about guarantees and after-sales support.



5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: Dropshipping



- If you don't have a unique product idea and you'd rather not work with a manufacturer or store merchandise in bulk, dropshipping might be your best product sourcing solution.
- When you partner with a dropshipping supplier, you become a retail distributor.
- You list the wholesaler's merchandise on your site, and the vendor creates products and ships orders on your behalf.



5. How to source and manufacture products for your ecommerce store?: Dropshipping



- Dropshipping has a **lower** profit margin than white-label or private-label reselling, but it's a **quick** and **easy** business model.
- Some companies combine dropshipping with DIY.
- For example, an artist who **sells** and ships one-of-a-kind paintings **from home** might also **sell** reproductions and branded mugs via a dropshipper.



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!



- Take some time to **think** about the future before you jump in at the deep end.
- Roughly 50% of new businesses **fail** within five years, often because they don't plan ahead.

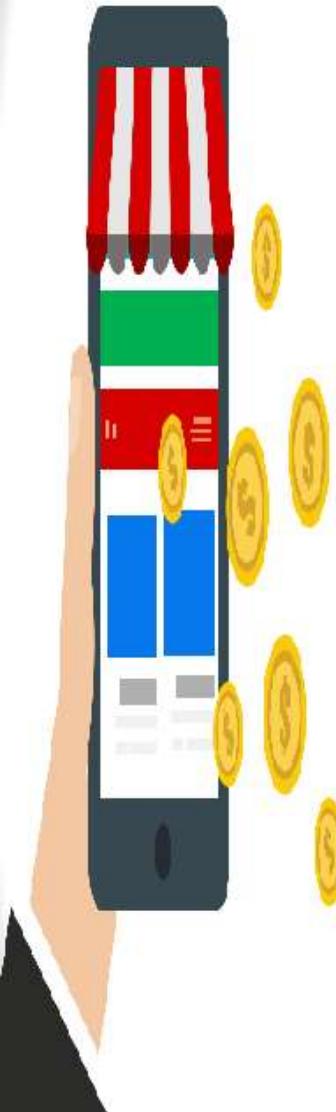


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!



- Writing a **business plan** can give you a deeper understanding of your unique offering and help you:
- Find the **resources** you need to run your business.
- Figure out what your **competitors** are up to.
- Spot **opportunities** in the marketplace.
- Identify your **target market**.
- Visualize your company's **future**.





6. Create your ecommerce business plan!



- Business plans usually have at least **seven** sections.
- You can use the following blueprint to create a strategy of your own:



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Executive Summary



- An executive summary condenses your business idea into a few paragraphs. It sits at the front of your business plan and tells readers about:
- What your company does.
- Your business goals.
- The products or services you sell.
- Your target market.
- Your sales channels.
- Your monetization strategy.

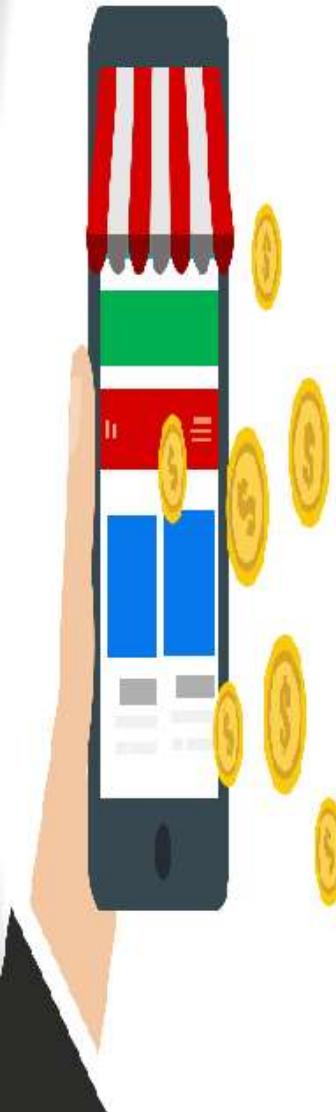


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Executive Summary



- You'll almost certainly write your executive summary last.
- Doing so will give you the chance to digest every other part of your business plan before providing a recap.





6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Company Overview!



- Here's where you provide readers with a really thorough company overview.
- This section begins with your business name before moving on to its business structure (LLC, S-corp, etc.) and domain name.



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Company Overview!



- After that, you'll write a brief mission statement, and then you'll clarify your vision for the company.
- Write some background information about your business idea and unique value proposition, then wrap it up with a list of major competitors.



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Market Analysis!



- You get to show off what you know about your target consumer base in the market analysis section.
- Many company owners begin with the results of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis.
- Then, they move on to competitive analysis.

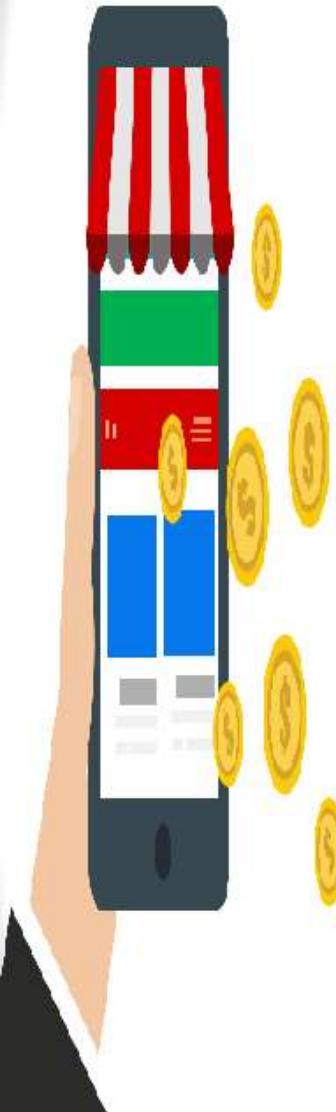


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Market Analysis!



- Competitive analyses help you understand your competitors so you can gain ground in the marketplace.
- They do this by identifying and listing each competitor's:
 - Domain name and amount of website traffic.
 - Business model and product features.
 - Product pricing strategy.
 - Mission statement and vision.



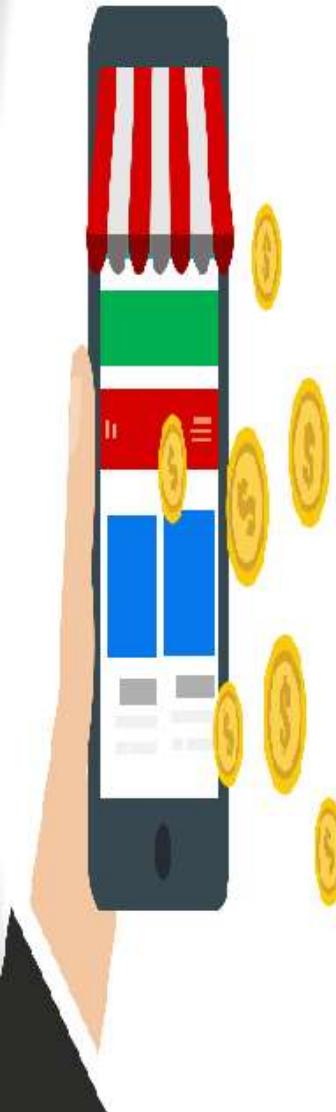


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Market Analysis!



- We conclude with a paragraph detailing how you intend to make your company an industry leader.
- You can do this in three main ways:
 - Customer segmentation: You'll offer high-quality products in a trending niche market.
 - Cost leadership: Your products are cheaper than those offered by your rivals.
 - Differentiation: You offer a unique product or a much better version of a competitor's product.



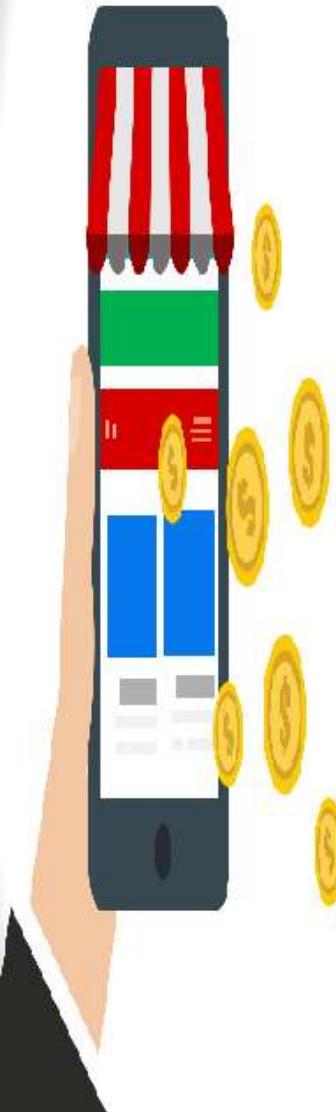


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Products and Services!



- This is where you go into detail about your product or service.
- Tell your readers more about the merchandise you sell or the service you provide; if you sell a lot of different products, write in general terms about your inventory and why your company stands apart from its industry peers.



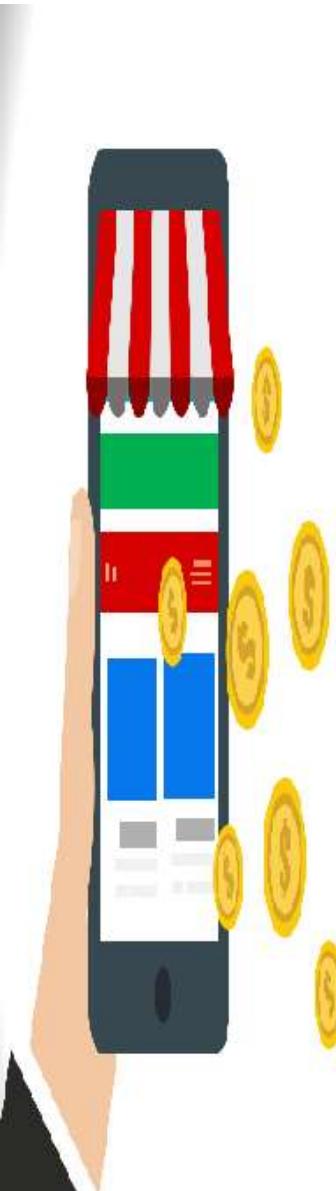


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Marketing Plan!



- In this section, you'll tell readers about your marketing strategies.
- The segment begins with a breakdown of your marketing budget and continues with a list of the marketing channels you intend to use to promote your business.





6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Marketing Plan!



- Marketing channels fall into two main categories:
- **Organic Marketing Channels:**
 - ❖ Search engine optimization (SEO) tactics, content marketing, social media pages, and blogger networks drive organic traffic to your website.
 - ❖ Organic marketing channels are inexpensive, build value over time, and help you elevate your brand name.

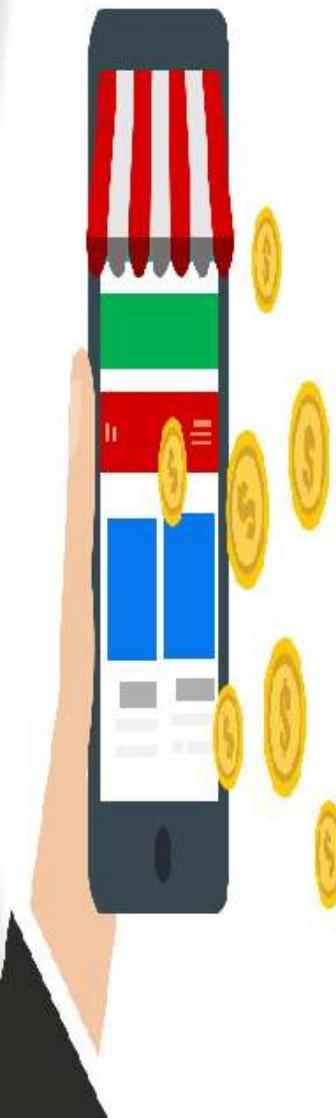


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Marketing Plan!



➤ Paid Marketing Channels:

- ❖ Paid marketing channels get results quickly, making them an attractive choice for businesses looking to get off the ground.
- ❖ Pay per click (PPC) ads, social media ads, influencer marketing, and affiliate marketing all cost money, but they produce solid leads.



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Operations and Logistics Plan!



- Your operations and logistics plan cover everything you need to physically run your company.
- Office space, technological needs, personnel, and warehousing needs all fall into this category.



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Operations and Logistics Plan!



- Don't forget to include details about:
- Your supply chain.
- Your production plan.
- Shipping and fulfillment options.
- Where you'll store inventory.



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!



- This part of your business plan helps investors understand the everyday expenses associated with your ecommerce business.

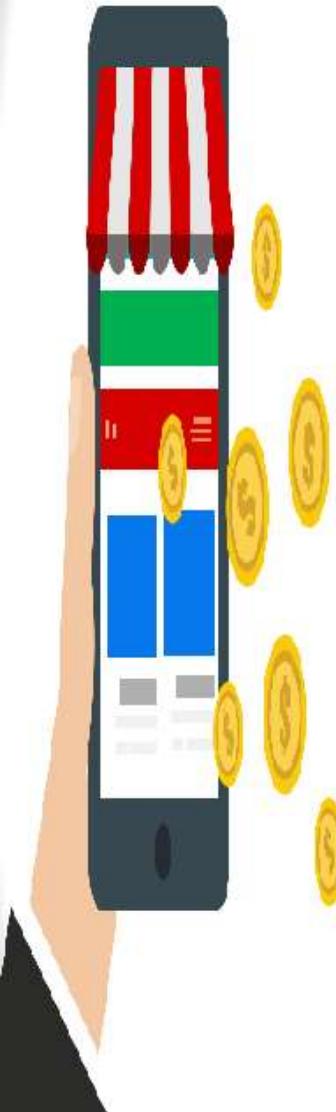


6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Financial Plan!



- You'll need capital to get your ecommerce business going.
- If you don't have start-up costs in hand, you'll need investors or a bank loan to begin trading.
- You need to convince potential backers and lenders that you can handle money and that you will make your business profitable.





6. Create your ecommerce business plan!: Financial Plan!



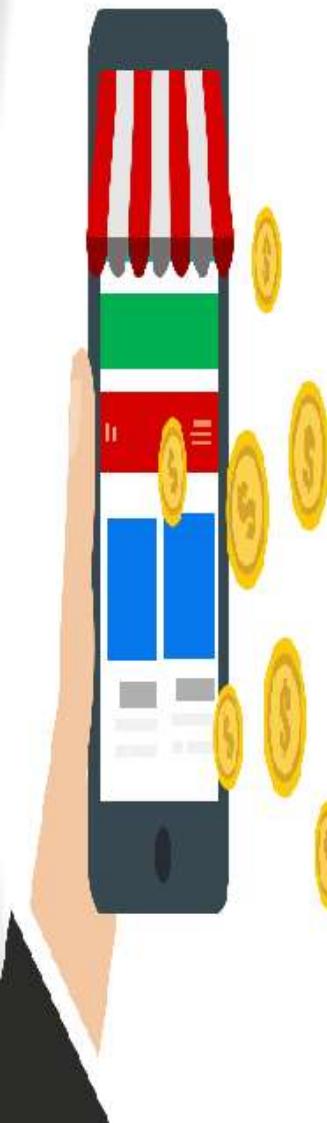
- Most financial plans include:
- An income statement: A breakdown of all sources of revenue and all your expenses over a particular time period.
- A balance sheet: A dual list of all your assets and all of your liabilities, culminating in shareholder equity.
- A cash-flow statement: A real-time income and expenses statement, indicating when money comes in and when it goes out.



6. Create your ecommerce business plan!



- With the right business plan in hand, you'll find it much easier to find investors and convince your bank to approve vital business loans.



7. Build your ecommerce store!



- You've validated your product ideas, registered your company, and written a business plan — now it's finally time to build your website.
- Most online retailers and wholesalers choose sales as a service (SaaS) platforms because they're simple to use and offer website-building tools and ecommerce platforms.



7. Build your ecommerce store!



- Remember to look for the following features when deciding on your ecommerce platform:
 - Domain name hosting.
 - Excellent speed and uptime.
 - A great in-product website builder.
 - Free, user-friendly themes.
 - Responsive website design.



7. Build your ecommerce store!



- An extensive app store full of reliable plugins.
- Full PCI compliance.
- Built-in SEO tools and fully customizable URLs.
- Promotions, discounts, analytics, and other ecommerce marketing features.
- Customer support via phone, email, and live chat.
- An unlimited product catalog.
- Zero transaction fees and low credit card processing fees.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: BigCommerce!



- Arguably the best SaaS platform out there, BigCommerce has a range of tiers from Standard to Enterprise.
- All BigCommerce plans include high-quality themes, a responsive mobile-ready website, multiple sales channels, unlimited storage, unlimited bandwidth, and professional analytics.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: BigCommerce!



- If you sign up for the Pro package, you gain access to a number of extra features, including custom SSL, segmentation tools, and abandoned cart saver.
- BigCommerce's excellent customer service is another major perk. Scalable and powerful, BigCommerce is great for growing businesses.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: BigCommerce!



- If you are a fan of WordPress, they also have a new WordPress plugin called BigCommerce for WordPress that's a competitor to WooCommerce.
- BigCommerce receives my highest recommendation for medium to large businesses and you can get started with a 15-day free trial.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: BigCommerce!



The image shows a screenshot of the BigCommerce website homepage. The URL 'bigcommerce.com' is in the browser bar. The top navigation bar includes 'ENTERPRISE' and 'ESSENTIALS' tabs, along with links for 'Call Sales: 1-888-248-9325', 'Help Center', and 'Log In'. The main navigation menu includes 'BIGCOMMERCE', 'Solutions', 'Product', 'Customers', 'Partners', and 'Resources', with a 'REQUEST DEMO' button. The main headline reads 'ECOMMERCE FOR A NEW ERA' with a teal underline. Below it, a sub-headline says 'Build a business that's ready for anything with the flexibility of Open SaaS.' A 'GET THE PRODUCT TOUR →' button is visible. To the right, there's a large image of a smiling man in a blue shirt with his arms crossed. In the background, there's a watch on a stand and a line graph. At the bottom, there are illustrations of a computer monitor, a credit card, and a briefcase.

7. Build your ecommerce store!: Wix!



- Very popular with small businesses, Wix has a good range of carefully designed templates, SEO tools, easy to use WYSIWYG editor, plus a number of promotion and gift card options.
- Website setup is a breeze and you can build a site in under an hour.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Wix!



- Wix comes with an integrated store-builder tool, and you can use its built-in product galleries to arrange merchandise or services in an attractive way.
- Other features, like a secure checkout, 24/7 customer support, and multiple payment gateways make Wix a good choice for businesses with a limited product catalog.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Wix!

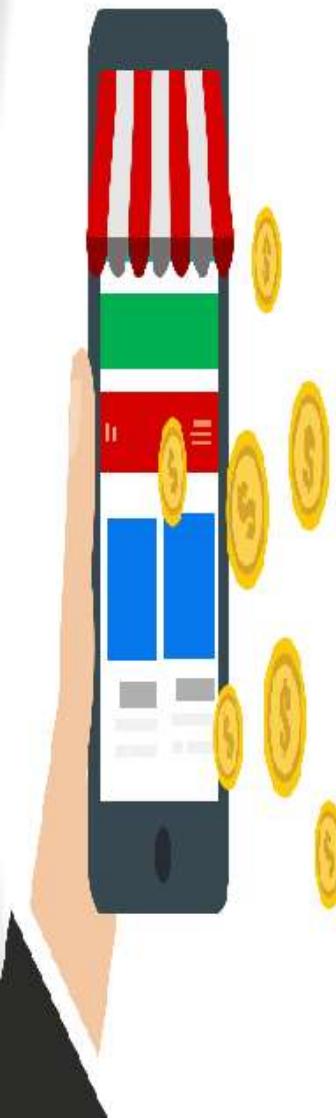


WiXeCommerce [Launch](#) [Sell](#) [Manage](#) [Promote](#) [Resources](#) [Pricing](#) [Log in](#) [Create Your Store](#)

Create an Online Store and Grow Your eCommerce Business

Scale your business and run your online store from one professional eCommerce platform. Use the Wix eCommerce website builder to sell on multiple sales channels, accept secure online payments, manage end-to-end fulfillment and target shoppers with advanced marketing tools.

[Create Your Store](#) [Watch Video](#)

A screenshot of the Wix eCommerce platform. The dashboard features a sidebar with user stats: 1 Order, 100% Complete, 100% Delivered, and 100% Paid. The main area shows an order summary for an 'Ibiza Collection' sunglasses, a product page for 'Ibiza Collection' sunglasses, and a sidebar with user stats.

7. Build your ecommerce store!: Shopify!



- Shopify is an ecommerce giant.
- Overall, they work best for dropshipping stores because integrations and store setup is fast and easy.
- A longtime name in ecommerce, Shopify launched in 2004 and became a prominent SaaS provider pretty quickly.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Shopify!



- Platform perks include abandoned cart recovery, free website SSL, marketing tools, and decent customer service.
- Shopify does have a few drawbacks.
- For starters, you're limited to 100 product variants, so if you have a large catalog with multiple product options (size, material, color, etc.), Shopify might not be right for you.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Shopify!



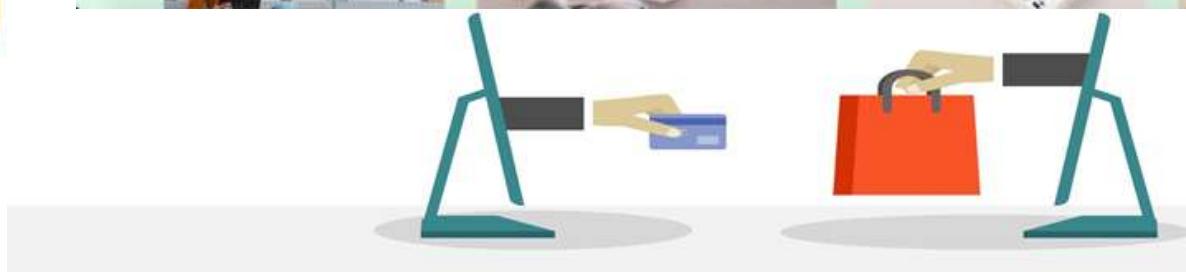
- SEO is also a slight shortcoming.
- You can't create your own custom URL structure and are forced to use the Shopify format.
- Overall, they're a great, easy to use ecommerce website tool best for small sellers and dropshippers.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Shopify!



A screenshot of the Shopify homepage. The main heading is "Build your business" in large, bold, dark green text. Below it is the tagline "You've got the will. We've got the way." A white input field for an email address is followed by a green "Start free trial" button. To the right is a video thumbnail showing a person working in a shop. Below the video are four smaller images: a person working at a desk, a close-up of hands working on a laptop, a smartphone displaying a map, and a blue baseball cap on a wooden surface.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: 3dcart!



- 3dcart is best known for its strong SEO features.
- Other advantages include zero transaction fees, unlimited bandwidth, and a ready-made Facebook store.
- You can use 3dcart's promotion manager to create configurable sales, custom discounts, scheduled promotions, coupon codes, and more.



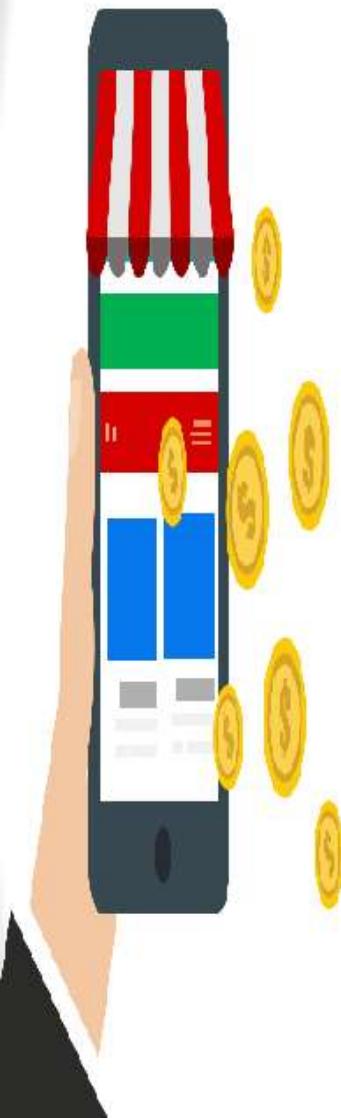
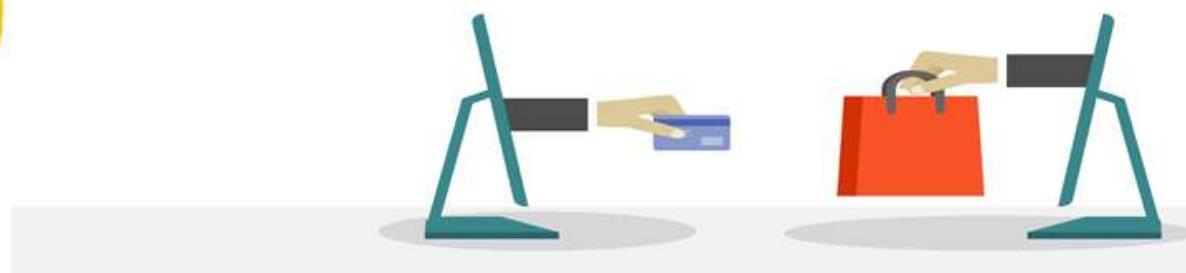
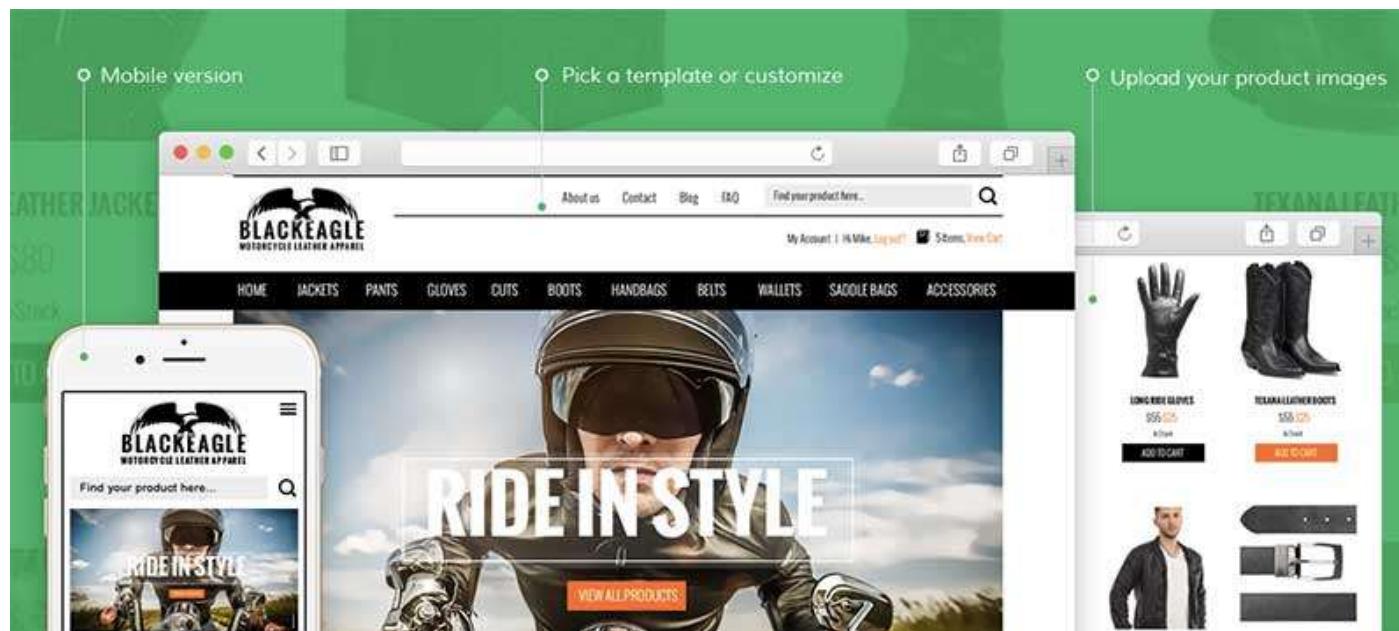
7. Build your ecommerce store!: 3dcart!



- 3dcart has a cheaper basic plan than many other SaaS platforms, but like so many things, you get what you pay for.
- Fewer features, fewer themes, and lack of enterprise functionality make this provider more suited to smaller businesses than mid-size sellers looking to scale.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: 3dcart!



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Volusion!



- Volusion is a user-friendly ecommerce oldie.
- Its founder, Kevin Sproles, started his website-building career in 1999 at the age of just 16.
- He launched Volusion in 2002 at the age of 19.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Volusion!



- Stable and functional, this robust all-rounder has a great-value \$26 per month basic package, which includes online support, unlimited products, and no transaction fees.
- Volusion is a user-friendly ecommerce oldie.
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7. Build your ecommerce store!: Volusion!



- He launched Volusion in 2002 at the age of 19.
- Stable and functional, this robust all-rounder has a great-value \$26 per month basic package, which includes online support, unlimited products, and no transaction fees.
- The platform's updated content builder lets you edit article pages from the store's front end, so if you see anything out of place, you can change it immediately.



7. Build your ecommerce store!: Volusion!



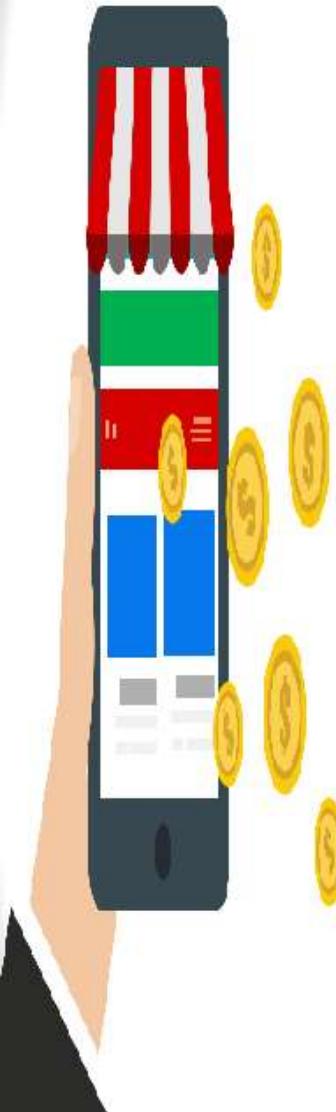
The image shows the homepage of the Volusion website. The top navigation bar includes links for Features, Pricing, Themes, Customers, Resources, Studio, and a contact number (1-800-646-3517). A green 'START FOR FREE' button is prominently displayed. The main headline reads 'Ecommerce for everyone' with the subtext 'Everything you need to sell online. Try it free for 14 days. No credit card required.' Below the headline is a screenshot of a Volusion store's product page for 'PRISM APPAREL', showing a t-shirt and a shopping cart interface. The bottom of the page features a smartphone icon with gold coins, a t-shirt, a shopping cart, and a hand holding a credit card.

7. Build your ecommerce store!: Squarespace!



- If you're a visual person with limited ecommerce needs, Squarespace might be your ideal ecommerce provider.
- It's not a platform for enterprise-level companies, but it does offer a very user-friendly drag-and-drop website builder.
- Squarespace customers gain access to an impressive mobile-friendly template portfolio, product management tools, and a range of third-party shipping and fulfilment apps.





7. Build your ecommerce store!: Squarespace!



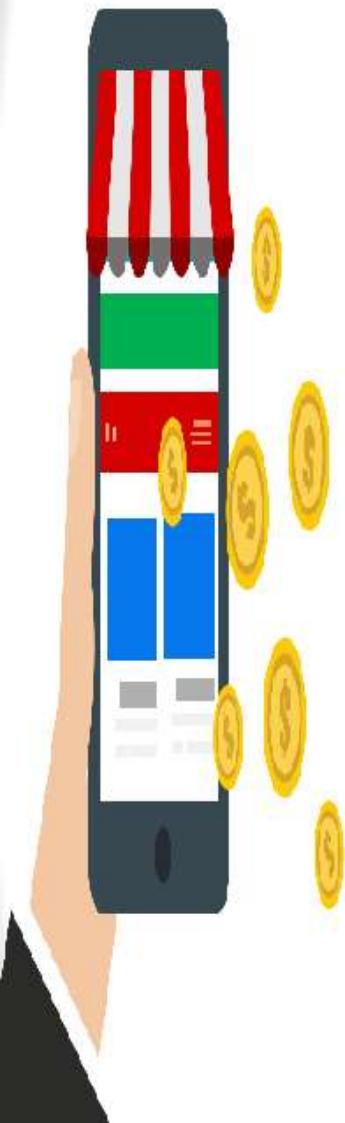
- Squarespace has four service tiers, and you'll have to pick one of the more expensive options to set up an ecommerce store.
- Squarespace SEO can also be problematic: URLs mimic each other, so certain pages look like duplicate content — and that can really impact your Google ranking.
- Overall, Squarespace is a great website builder, but not the best for ecommerce.

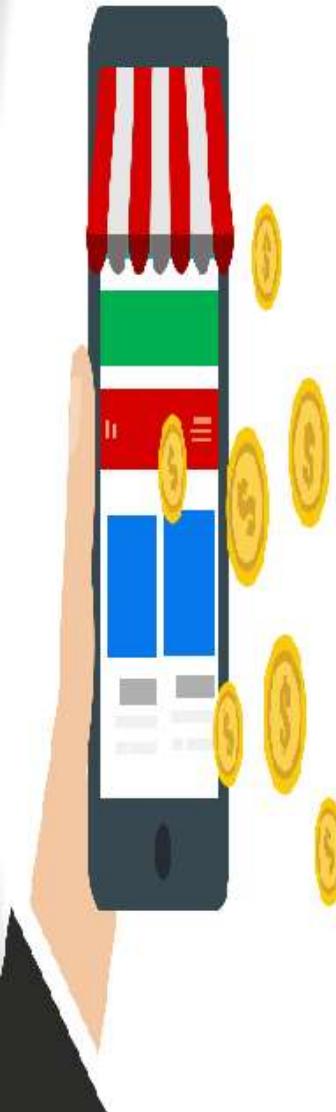


7. Build your ecommerce store!: Squarespace!



A screenshot of the Squarespace website homepage. The header includes the Squarespace logo, navigation links for PRODUCTS, TEMPLATES, and RESOURCES, and buttons for LOG IN and GET STARTED. The main content features a large white banner with the text "CREATE YOUR WEBSITE" and "The leader in website design." Below this, a subtext reads: "Stand out online with a professional website, online store, or portfolio. With Squarespace, you can turn any idea into a reality." A "GET STARTED" button is located at the bottom left of the banner. To the right, there are two examples of website designs: one for a cellist named India Zum and another for a food brand named Fayette.



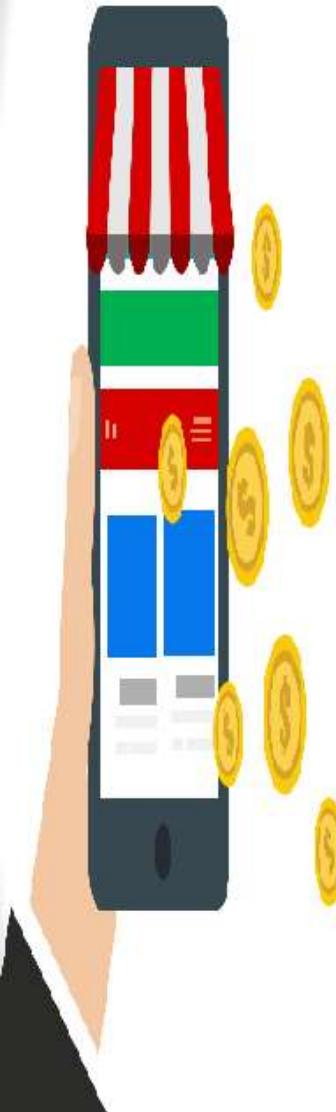


8. Driving traffic to your online store!



- Launching an ecommerce site is easy.
- The challenge comes when you need to drive traffic to it.
- We'll cover both paid and free digital marketing tactics to boost your website traffic – and sales.



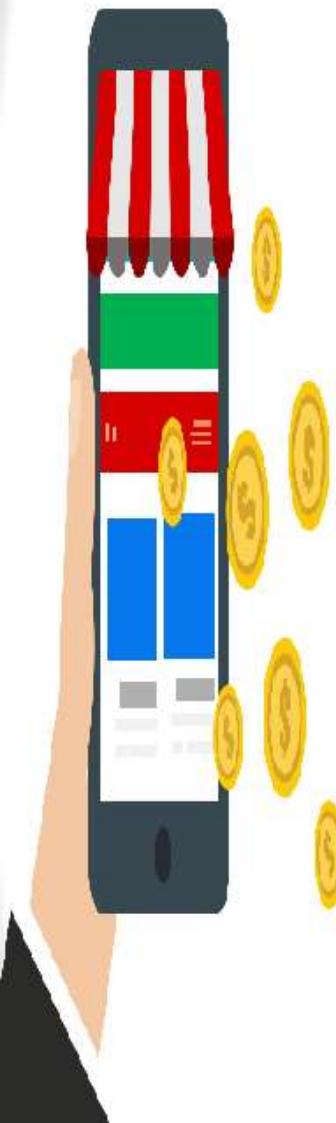


8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Organic Marketing Channels!



- Organic marketing channels take time to build traction, but they create the strongest long-term return on investment (ROI). A few of the best tactics include:
- **Search engine optimization (SEO):** Relevant keywords included in page text, product descriptions, and other website content boost search engine rankings.
- **Content marketing:** This includes starting a blog on your site, optimizing blog posts, articles, to drive targeted traffic to your site.





8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Organic Marketing Channels!



- **Social media pages:** Active Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages encourage new website visits.
- **Link building (off-page SEO):**
 - ❖ It is very hard to get Google traffic without a lot of high-quality, relevant links to your website.
 - ❖ These link building strategies include guest blogging and forming link partnerships with other sites in your niche.

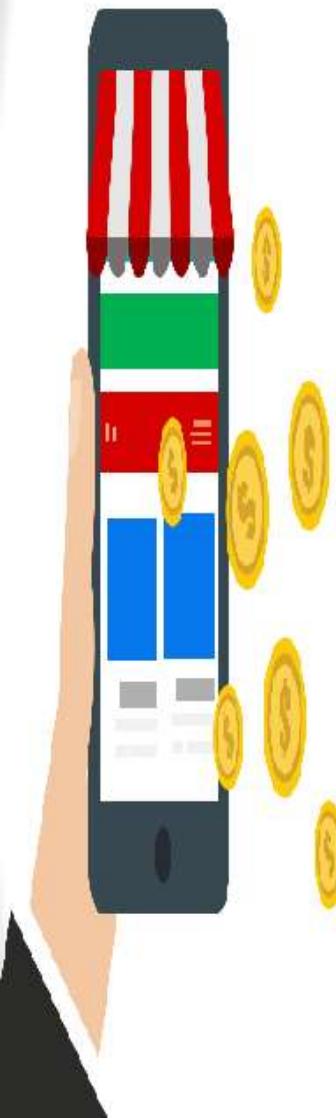


8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Organic Marketing Channels!



➤ Email marketing:

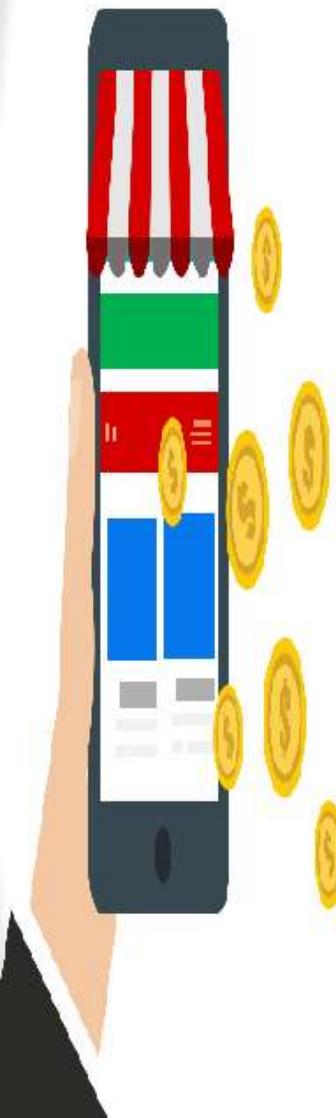
- ❖ Email is a huge marketing channel for ecommerce businesses.
- ❖ You should choose an email marketing service that lets you create email popups, send abandoned cart emails, create welcome email series (that include discounts), and send targeted, image-rich marketing emails for holiday promotions.



8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Paid Marketing Channels!



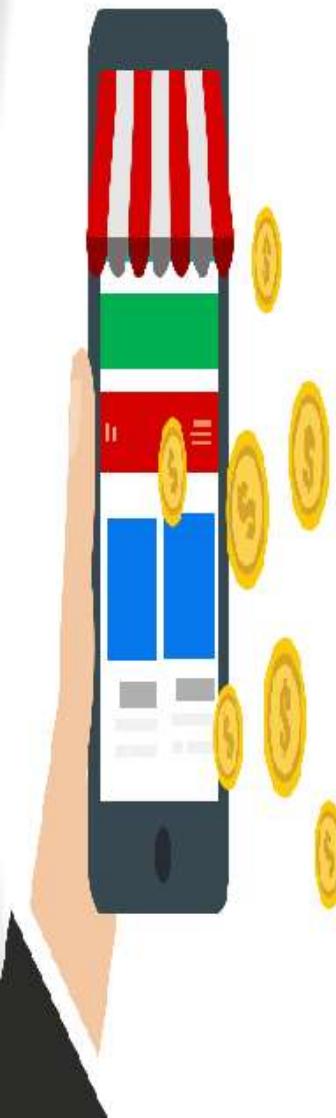
- Paid marketing channels produce quick results, so they're a popular choice for start-ups as well as large-budget businesses.
- While they provide quick online marketing wins, they typically have a lower ROI than free tactics (excluding affiliate marketing, which has a strong ROI).



8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Paid Marketing Channels!



- Here are some of the top paid acquisition channels for ecommerce brands:
- **Affiliate marketing:** Bloggers and influencers with popular websites join your company's affiliate program and are paid affiliate commissions for any sales they help generate via their affiliate links.
- **Influencer marketing:** Social media influencers on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and other platforms promote your products for a fee. (Here are my guides about how to make money on Instagram and TikTok.)

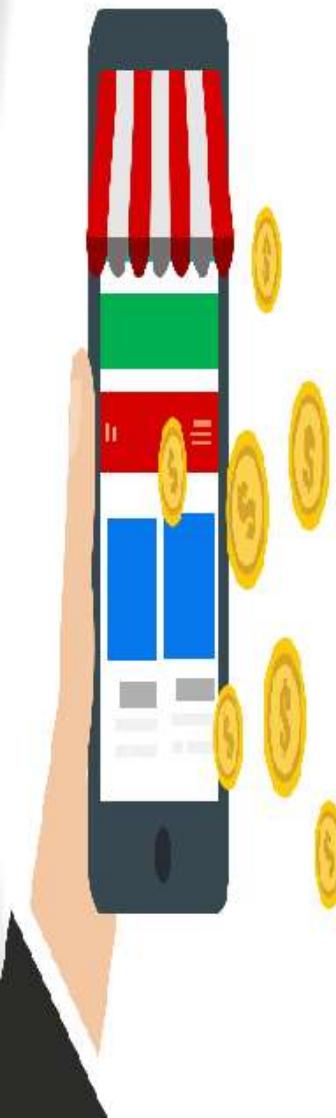


8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Paid Marketing Channels!



➤ Pay per click (PPC) advertising:

- ❖ You set up PPC ads with Google and pay each time someone clicks on your ads.
- ❖ This can also include Google Shopping ads, which sync to your product catalog and make your products available on the Google Shopping platform.

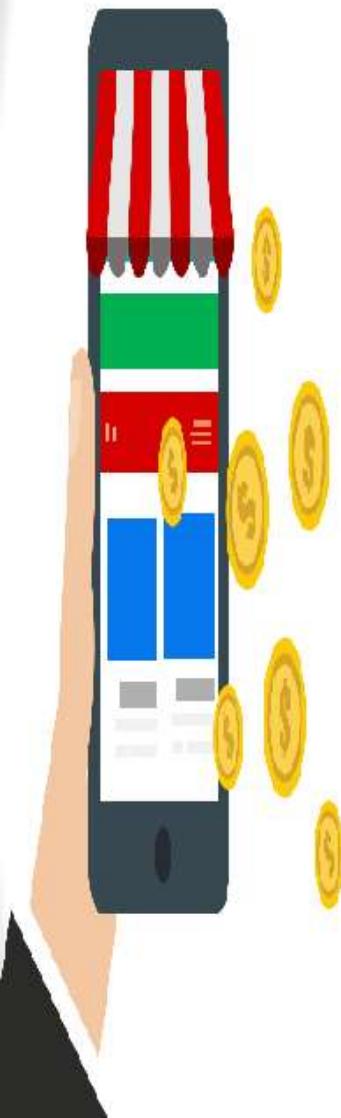


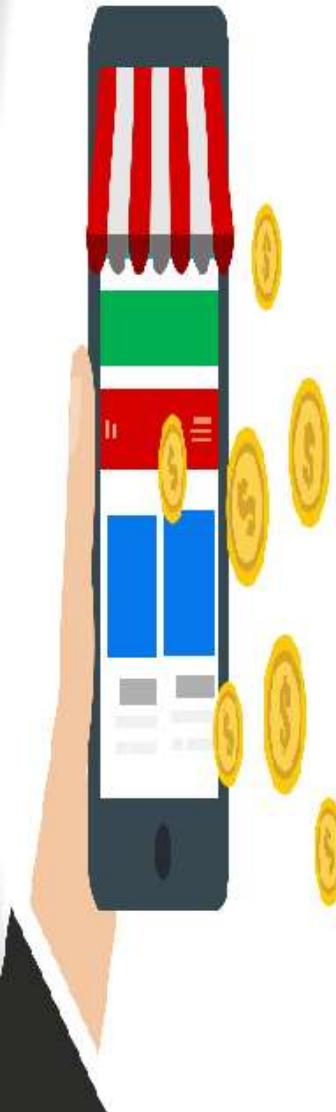
8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Paid Marketing Channels!



➤ Social media ads:

- ❖ Paid social media ads on Facebook can target new prospects and retarget previous website visitors.
- ❖ One of the best Facebook Ads strategies is to use their DPA ads.
- ❖ These ads appear to Facebook users who visited your product pages and highlight the exact same products they saw on your website.
- ❖ You can also sell directly on Facebook with product listings.



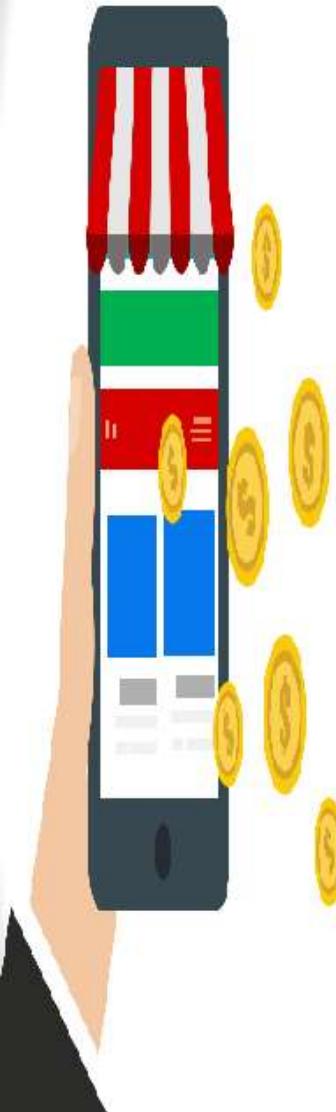


8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Paid Marketing Channels!



- The most effective marketing strategies use a **combination** of different channels to capture consumers and generate conversions.
- If I were to start an ecommerce business from scratch today, I would first create a strong SEO strategy.





8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Paid Marketing Channels!



- This includes conducting keyword research around terms that have high search volume and could bring in your target audience.
- For example, if you sell camping supplies, you could write a blog post on “The Top 10 Backpacking Tents” and link to your product pages within the content.



8. Driving traffic to your online store!: Paid Marketing Channels!



- Next, you'd want to develop a strong link building strategy and partner with other blogs in your niche to get backlinks.
- This will increase your website's Domain Authority (DA) and make it easier to rank all of your pages on search engines.
- Finally, I'd use paid advertising carefully, starting with retargeting ads on Facebook.
- Then I'd move to PPC ads on Google only if you can generate a strong ROI.



9. Measuring ecommerce success!



- Ecommerce analytics tools, like Google Analytics, help you understand how visitors reach your site and what they do when they get there.
- Ultimately, they also provide insight into your conversion rates and sales.



9. Measuring ecommerce success!



- You can use the data you gain from analytics to optimize product descriptions and page content so that more of your visitors turn into customers.
- SaaS ecommerce platforms, like BigCommerce, support Google Analytics integrations.
- If you're a BigCommerce customer, simply set up an account with Google Analytics, then visit the Web Analytics submenu in the Advanced Settings section of your control panel.



9. Measuring ecommerce success!



- Check the box next to Google Analytics and paste your tracking ID into the Property ID field to get started.
- BigCommerce Google Analytics integration supports Enhanced Ecommerce and Site Search, which lets you evaluate individual page views and search terms.
- You can view analytics within Google Analytics (site traffic), Facebook Insights, and your email provider.



9. Measuring ecommerce success!



- Here are some metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to pay attention to:
- **Sessions:** The number of times people see your web content.
- **Reach:** The total number of people who saw one of your ads.
- **Email click-throughs:** How many recipients open your emails and click on the included links.

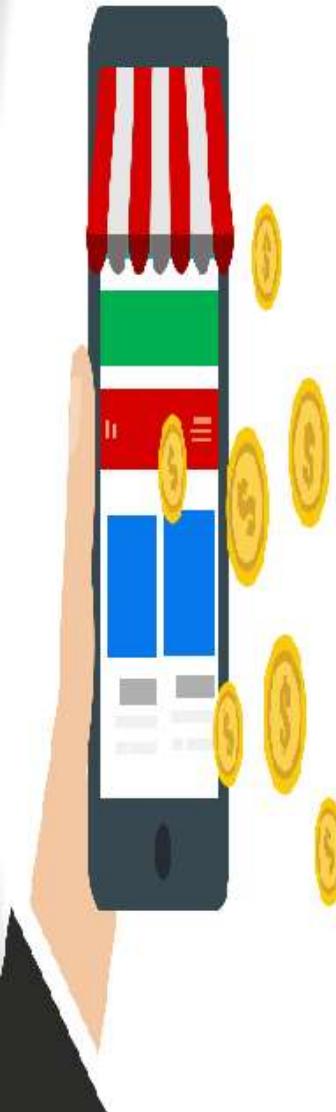


9. Measuring ecommerce success!



- **Social media engagement:** How many likes, shares, comments, and clicks you get on each post you create.
- **Shopping cart and checkout abandonment:** How many people add products to their carts but then leave your site without beginning — or completing — the checkout process.
- **Average order value (AOV):** The average total value of one order on your site.
- **Overall, you need to view and take action on these insights to drive more sales.**





Conclusion



- It takes determination and dedication to set up a successful ecommerce store.
- You also need a great product in a growing niche, a stellar business plan, the right ecommerce platform, and a well-researched marketing strategy.
- This might sound like a lot of work — and it is — but if you break down goals into manageable tasks, you'll create an ecommerce business you can be proud of.



