

Visual Online Merchandising for E-Commerce Stores: Why It Matters



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Introduction:

Visual elements have always been important in sales in brick and mortar stores. The window displays and the displays in the stores help to entice buyers through the doors and to buy items shown. Of course, now that so much shopping is done on the web, you need to consider methods of improving your visual merchandising on the web.

It is possible and it might be easier than you imagine, as long as you follow some basics.

The Internet and Online Sales

The Internet has changed the way the world works, for good and for bad. It has the potential to be a fantastic tool for businesses that want to sell products and services through the web, of course. However, the competition online is fierce and unless you have a very good understanding of just what it takes to set up a quality online shop that is appealing to the customer from a visual standpoint, it will be difficult to succeed.

The web is a very visual medium. Sure, the written word is still important, and we will touch on that in this e-book. However, the visual nature of the web is the most important element. Look at social media sites where people communicate in photos, illustrations, memes, and video.

Therefore, if you want to run a successful e-commerce store, you need to learn some methods of improving your visual online merchandising. When you take some simple steps, you can vastly improve the visuals on your e-commerce site, as well as other places you sell or market online. This is essential if you hope to do well.

Over the course of this e-book, we will be looking at the various ways you can improve your visual merchandising. It is very important if you want to succeed, so take the lessons in this book to heart.

Layout of Your E-Commerce Site

Are you happy with the current layout you have for your site and for your e-commerce store? **Your site needs to do several things from a visual standpoint.** The design needs to be fun and inviting, and it needs to do a good job of showcasing your products. In addition, you need to think about your brand and make sure that your e-commerce site has the same branding as your blog and other areas online. From a visual standpoint, this means you need **a single logo and a color scheme** that will work on all your online outlets.

Essentially, it needs to consider all the elements that we discuss in this e-book to create a stunning design that is also *accessible*.

That's right, the visual element of the layout is only part of it – granted, it is a large part. You also need to make sure you think about the other considerations that make a good layout. Let's look at what these might be.

Other Considerations

When a customer comes to an e-commerce site, they expect things to work a certain way. While your site does not have to match all the other sites out there, you do want it to feel familiar. The **navigation should be easy to find and understand.** Your products should have **different categories** and it should be easy to search for and learn about the various products you happen to offer. A good concept and functional design are essential.

The **shopping cart and the checkout process should be simple** to understand as well. The easier you make the process the greater the chance of a purchase. If you have a convoluted process at the end, such as requiring a lot of information from the buyer, there is a good chance they will simply abandon the purchase.

In addition, your **e-commerce site needs to be secure** for the customers to feel safe while making a purchase.

While these things aren't necessarily part of the "visual presentation" of your site, you can be sure they are very important. If you want to have a successful e-commerce site, you need to address these issues in addition to the visual components. Even the most impressive site in the world will not garner any sales if people can't navigate it or they do not feel safe buying from the site.

Remember Mobile

When designing an e-commerce site, you want to make sure it is easy for people to use no matter what device they might have in their hands at the time. You need to consider mobile friendly sites, and the benefit of using responsive design. More and more people are using mobile sites today, so it is essential that you provide those customers with a good experience when they visit your site.

High-Quality, High-Resolution Photos

Take the time to think about what it is you are selling. It might be a service. It might be products for the home, clothing, electronics, knives, or any other number of items. Your products are the reason you are in business, and that means you need to make sure those products always look as good as possible.

Why, then, do some sites look at though they have photos that have been taken with a phone from half a decade ago? Simply having a photo is not enough today. The photo needs to look good if you hope to get the attention of potential buyers.

Do Not Compromise on Quality

As mentioned, the photos are essential to your site. Do not compromise on the quality of the photos; believing that the description of the product will be enough to sell it.

While the description is important, especially for SEO purposes, the pictures are, as they say, worth a thousand words. It gives people a visual representation of what they are getting.

People are visual. You need to give them what they want. In the case of e-commerce, this means providing them with quality photos of the things they want to buy. Good photos can help to push a person over the edge and make them go from potential buyer to actual buyer.

Of course, you need to make sure you have high-resolution photos on the site. They need to be large enough to give the buyer a good idea of what the actual product will look like when it arrives. This is important with various types of items that people love to shop for and want to own, such as clothing or jewelry.

However, it is also important for some of the more mundane products out there. Even those “boring” products should have good photos. It ensures the customer is buying the right item, and it can provide more visual interest for someone while they are shopping. Go the extra mile to make sure the photos are nice, no matter what you might be photographing.

Consider Models

One quick and easy way to add a bit more visual interest to your photos is to have people in them **modeling or using the products**. This can work for many different types of products, not just clothing. Think outside of the box with models, as they might be a good addition.

Of course, if you are going to hire models, it does mean an added expense. In the beginning, you might not want to have models for all your product photos. You may want to pick and choose some of your items that sell well to see if the addition of model photos adds an uptick to the sales. If they do, then you could add them to more product photos in the future.

Of course, those who are selling clothing will find that having models for the clothing from the outset can be a huge advantage.

Should You Hire Pros or Take Them Yourself?

If you have the skills and the equipment to take quality photos of products, then you could take them on your own. However, being a good photographer requires more than being able to photograph your cats or your kids. You need to know how to set up the product shots and you need to show them in their best light.

These are things you can learn, but if you do not have the time or inclination, your best option is to work with a professional photographer. You will find that the pros can get the job done faster as well. If you do decide to use models, then the pro photographers will probably have some connections that can help get the right models for the job.

What About Using Manufacturer's Photos?

Now, you might be thinking that you could simply use some manufacturer photos for your site if you are reselling goods created by someone else. While this is something you could do, it is not something you want to do.

While you might be able to save some money and time doing this, you are going to have the same photos that quite a few other sellers have. This means customers who

visit your e-commerce store and look at your products will not be able to tell the difference between all the other e-commerce sites out there. Remember, you want to “wow” people with the products, and that will typically require some new, quality photos that show off the product.

Remember Video

While photographs are certainly important, remember that video can be equally important. You can – and should – have video on your site. It has the potential to provide you with some very good results. This is true for just about any type of product or service you might be selling on your site. People love photos, but videos can do quite a bit more when it comes to advertising what you offer.

Where to Place the Video

Naturally, you will want to place the video on the e-commerce site. It should be right on the same page as the product, if you have the capability to add it to your e-commerce site. However, you can do quite a bit more with the video. You can also add the video to your blog, where you can write a piece on the product you are selling. Have links that take people right to the product page.

You could also put it on your social media sites. Even YouTube could be a good option, so long as the video is not overly promotional. We will discuss some of the “types” of video you can create later.

It Needs to Look and Sound Good

Just like with photography, you could record the video on your own. If you have the equipment and the time to do it, then it might be something you want to consider. However, do not film the video on your phone, even if you believe you can get good quality.

Instead, you will want to use a quality video camera or a DSLR that records video. You need to make sure the sound is great, as well, so you will want to invest in a microphone. Make the video as professional as possible.

Of course, you do not have to create these videos on your own. Again, you could hire a professional to take care of them for you. As your company grows and you need to create more and more video, you might even want to consider bringing some pros on board who can create all your video content.

Types of Videos

When it comes to the types of video you can make about products, you have several different options. It depends on the nature of the product and the type of video you want to make. In some cases, it might just be a video presentation that shows the item or a model with the item. It could be a video of people wearing the item. Maybe it is a tutorial showing people how to use the item.

The possibilities are endless. Think outside of the box with video, and this medium can do some wonderful things for your product sales.

Product Descriptions

When you are creating your product descriptions, you need to do more than just write a litany of facts about the product. While you certainly want the description to contain the basic facts a customer needs to determine whether it is the right solution for them, you also need to provide a bit of color to it through the words you use.

The words in the description, when coupled with the photo or video, help to paint the overall picture for the customer. The description can make the product seem more appealing or more necessary to their life. The following are some simple tips to help you improve your product descriptions.

Tips for More Effective Product Descriptions

You should first get organized. Make a list of the products you need to cover, and make a keyword list for each of those products. Your description needs to make the product sound great, but it also needs to have keywords added to help your products climb in the rankings. Have your keywords in hand before you start writing, as it will be much easier.

Look at other product descriptions to get an idea of what sells. However, never plagiarize. Do not use the stock descriptions from the manufacturer either. This will not help you get better rankings in the search engines, and it will not help you to impress anyone who reads the description.

When you are writing the description, remember your brand and your tone, and use that as the “voice” by which you write the descriptions. If you are writing about men’s grooming products, write to that audience and from that point of view. Do this no matter what type of product you are selling.

Edit the description to make it as lean as possible, while still containing your voice and all the pertinent information. People do not want to read a book when they are merely looking for a one or two-paragraph description. Make sure the spelling is good and get more than one person to read the copy to make sure it makes sense and that it reads well.

Conclusion:

With the tips found in this e-book, you should have a much better idea of the types of things you should do when you are trying to better your visual merchandising. When you put an emphasis on the visual aspect of your sales, it can help to entice more people to check out your products and become customers.

Of course, you still need to have a quality or product. If you do, and if you follow some basics on improving your visual merchandising, you have the potential to make your sales increase.

Resources:

<http://poqcommerce.com/app-commerce/2012/12/5-tips-to-improve-your-online-visual-merchandising/>

<https://designmodo.com/elements-e-commerce-websites/>

<https://www.portent.com/blog/copywriting/to-better-product-descriptions.htm>

<http://www.creativeincomeblog.com/product-descriptions/>

<http://www.creativeincomeblog.com/product-descriptions/>