

# The 2014 ecommerce site checklist

## About this checklist

*We built this list of current e-commerce best practice whilst researching what features to include in our conversion boosting Shopfront platform, available as part of **our e-commerce services**.*

We thought we'd share these points to help e-commerce retailers out there boost their own onsite conversions.

Our philosophy for developing this checklist is:

- **To always keep in mind the customer perspective.** Customers should find shopping on your site easy, fast and fun, resulting in more instant purchases as well as repeat business.
- **Follow the leaders.** We looked at what the biggest and best ecommerce sites are doing. They've spent significant time and resources finding out how to sell better online, so make use of their learning.
- **Feedback.** It's paramount that you gather customer feedback; it's the easiest way to constantly be improving your service and improving future conversion rates.

The end result will be a happier customers that buy more because your site is easy and enjoyable to shop on.

Using intelligent recommendations and email re-marketing, such as **cart abandonment emails**, will supplement this and boost conversions on your site.

The list concerns on-site best practice. Marketing is outside the scope of that. Don't forget that once you have an amazing shop online, you need to find the best ways to promote it.

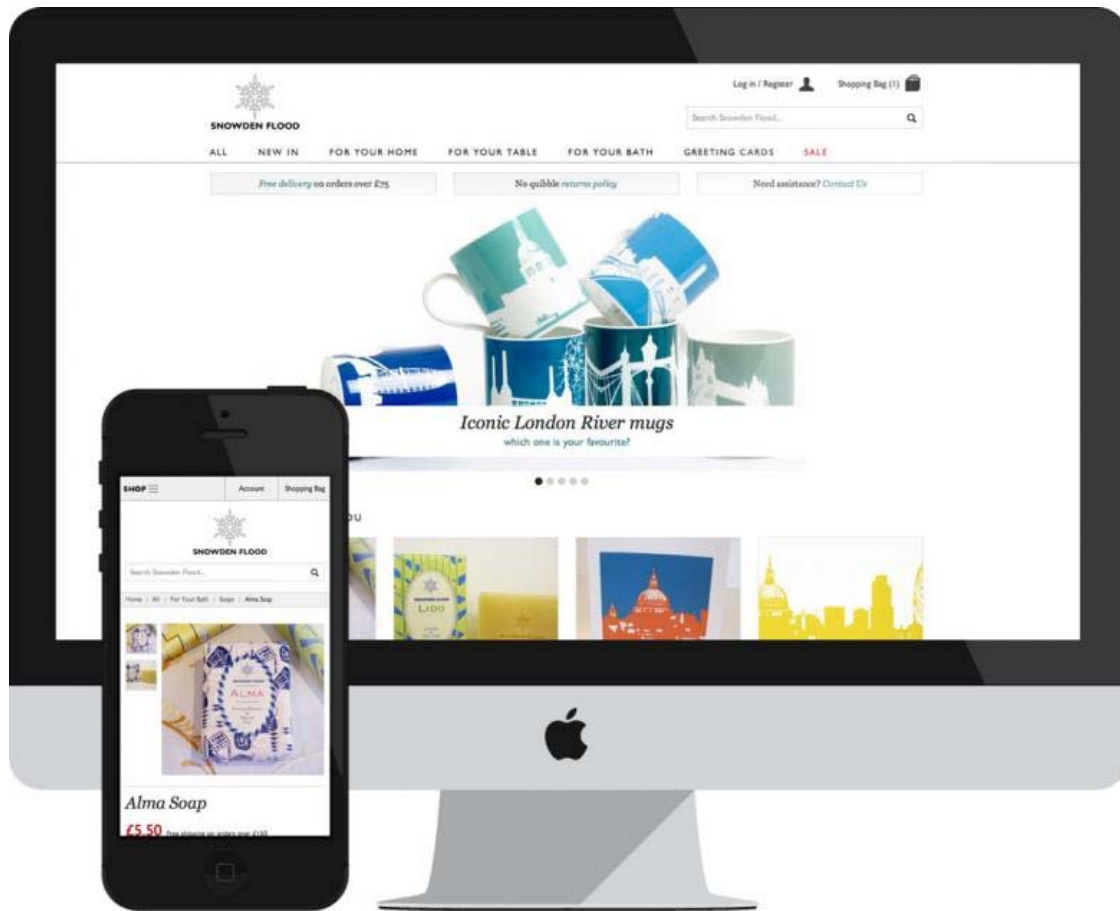
# The Checklist

*The screenshot examples are taken from [illustratedpeople.com](http://illustratedpeople.com), a client of ours that doubled their revenue after using our e-commerce service.*

## On all pages

- **Sites should be responsive**, changing layout when viewed on mobile, tablet or desktop, to give an optimised user-experience.
- Ensure the site is cross-device and cross-browser tested.
- **Ensure your site runs quickly**, with effective use of caching and content delivery networks where applicable. In 2006, Amazon announced that for every 100ms in load time there was a 1% decrease in sales. In regards to rankings, in 2010 Google began using site speed as a ranking factor in their search algorithm.
- Ensure the cart / basket is visible on every page, perhaps use a hover/reveal set up for the cart and always include product thumbnails.
- Make the checkout button large and in an obvious location.
- Include a prominent search box for reaching product listings, with **suggestive or predictive search**, if possible.
- Offer third-party authentication (e.g. signing on with Facebook or Twitter) – but don't force users to do this; always provide the option to sign-up for an account on your site.
- Remember that some customers will be arriving from search engines and won't land on your home page, so every page should include **consistent and clear navigation** and **breadcrumbs**. Use common headings on the main navigation to make the site instantly familiar - for example, on an online fashion store, use 'Women' and 'Men' as top level headings, and then using drop-down menus split by garment type, e.g. Dresses, Tops, Accessories.
- Make contact information clear on each page. This has been shown to reduce the buyers concerns.
- Have a quick feedback tab at the bottom of each page, to allow visitors to notify you if they're having problems on the site. This is a good way to catch any usability issues.

- It should be easy to share content from each page via social sharing widgets. We recommend focusing on one or two social networks that your audience is likely to be active on (and ideally that you're also active on). So you may choose to focus on encouraging shares on Facebook and Twitter, rather than all the social networks. This will make your call to action clearer.
- Clear return and exchange policies should be shown. These are typically found in the footer of the website, so follow convention and keep them there (you can always link to them from other parts of the site, such as the product pages). Make sure your return policy is short and easy to understand. Offering no-quibble returns can really help to convert shoppers who are uncertain on a particular purchase.
- Show supplier logos clearly, especially if these are well known brands – again, this helps build trust as visitors will subconsciously associate your brand with theirs.
- It's important to maintain visitors confidence throughout the sell process, in your footer include supplier logos and navigation to the following pages: Customer testimonials, Why shop with us, Privacy policy, Returns policy, Delivery information, Contact page. If you have the capability, offer a live chat function.
- Make it easy for customers to sign up to your newsletter. Include a 'subscribe to special offers' or 'subscribe to our mailing list' option on the checkout. Allow customers to opt out.

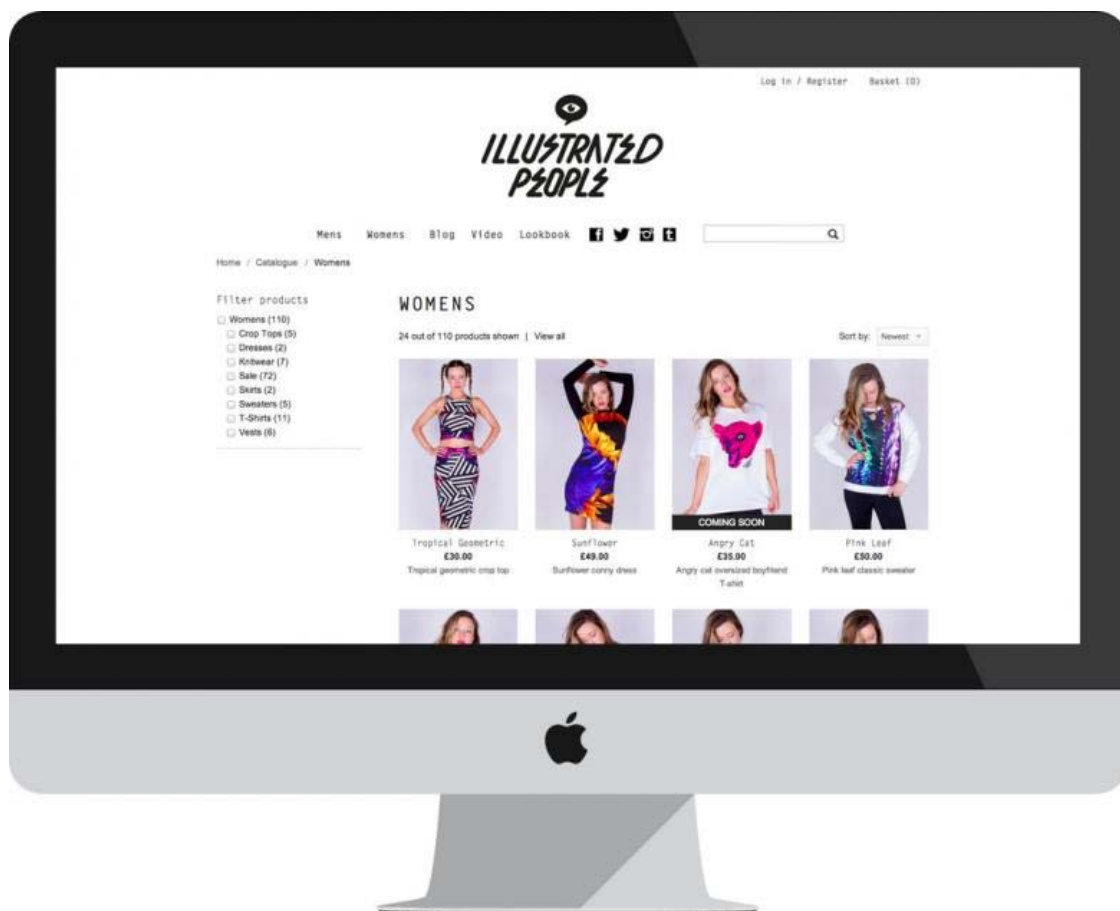


## Your home page

- This is where many visitors will land on your site, so it's important to get across what you do quickly and to show the variety of products that visitors might be looking for.
- Ensure you have prominent calls to action on the front page that encourage the visitor to further explore the site, for example "Find the perfect case for your equipment", "Get cooking with our 28 day aged steak within 24 hours", "View our range of birthday present ideas".
- Use large appealing imagery that clearly displays products, offers and other promotions.
- Include 'Top Selling', 'Featured Products' and 'Recommended for you' sections. There are many ways to achieve this behind the scenes: You can select related products manually when creating / editing a product; or automate the selection based on different criteria, such as products that are often bought together, products of a similar style (perhaps controlled by tags or categories attached to each product), products of the same colour etc.

## Landing Pages

- Use landing pages for specific promotion campaigns (e.g. Summer Sale or PPC campaigns).
- Dedicated landing pages convert much better than using the homepage.
- Set a headline, intro text, banner image and a selection of products that are consistent with what the landing page is being used for. For example, if you have a PPC ad that's referring to Valentine's day, the title of the landing page should mention valentine's gifts and the selection of products should be relevant.
- Include testimonials, badges, other social proof to reduce customer anxiety.
- There should be a clear call to action to 'add to cart' or begin shopping. Some landing pages go as far as removing all other navigation to focus user's attention on purchasing.

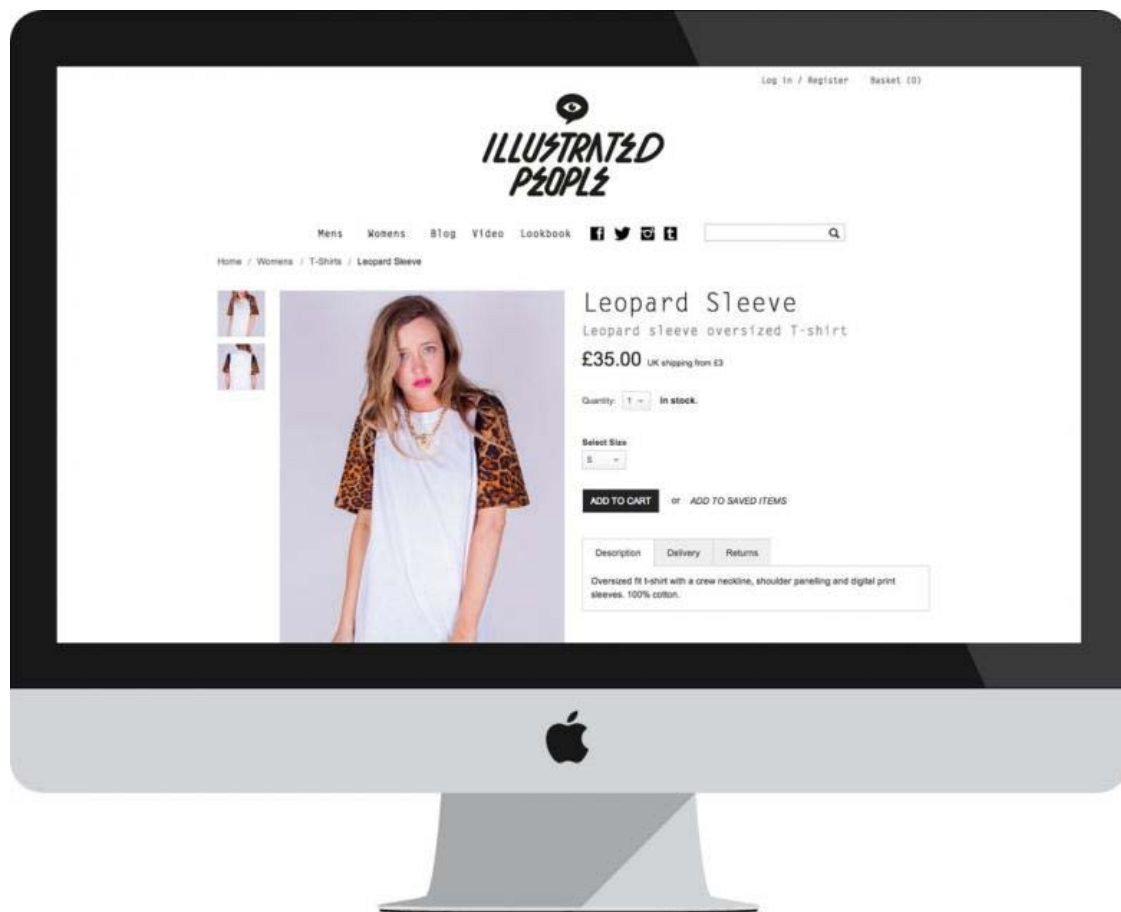


## Product listing / catalogue pages

- These are the pages that lists products after a) a customer has selected a category from the main menu or b) the user has performed a product search.
- If the listing page is for a particular category, it can be useful to include a category

introduction that gives an overview of the products available.

- Ensure stock and availability is shown as early as possible so customers know immediately if the item they want is available. This should be obvious and is shown to reduce shopper frustration, rather than the visitor having to click in to each product to check it's availability.
- Show offers based on what the visitor viewed or purchased last time they visited the site.
- Include multiple sorting and filtering options on product listings and search results. The idea here is to make finding products as easy as possible – for example if I want smart shoes, that are brown and come in size 10, I should be able to filter the products to those commonly used attributes.
- For each filter option, if you can you should show the number of products that match that criteria, for example *Material: Fabric [257], Leather [182], Man Made [44], Suede [2]*. Ensure these filters are multi-select so many options can be selected at once.
- Use categories that matter to customers and add a 'Customer favourites' or 'Best sellers' category, these can convert casual visitors.
- Maintain visitors choices when they go back to the page from viewing a product, to reduce frustration when browsing.
- Some shops allow for the removal of certain filters from within the listing
- If you have the technology, use an infinite scroll or 'view all' link to make it easy to reveal all products that match the current criteria. For performance reasons most sites will only load a handful initially. If you do use AJAX, ensure compatibility with **Google AJAX crawling** or submit an XML sitemap to ensure all your products get indexed.
- If you have a powerful search technology powering your site, use text-based search rules like **predictive or suggestive search**. This works wonders, as misspellings are quickly redirected to actual products.
- Show the amount saved for items on sale as early in the process as possible, this can be done by showing the original price next to the sale price in listings.
- If you are using pagination, ensure links contain the relevant rel=prev and rel=next attributes, so that search engines know you're paginating your products list.



## Individual Product Pages

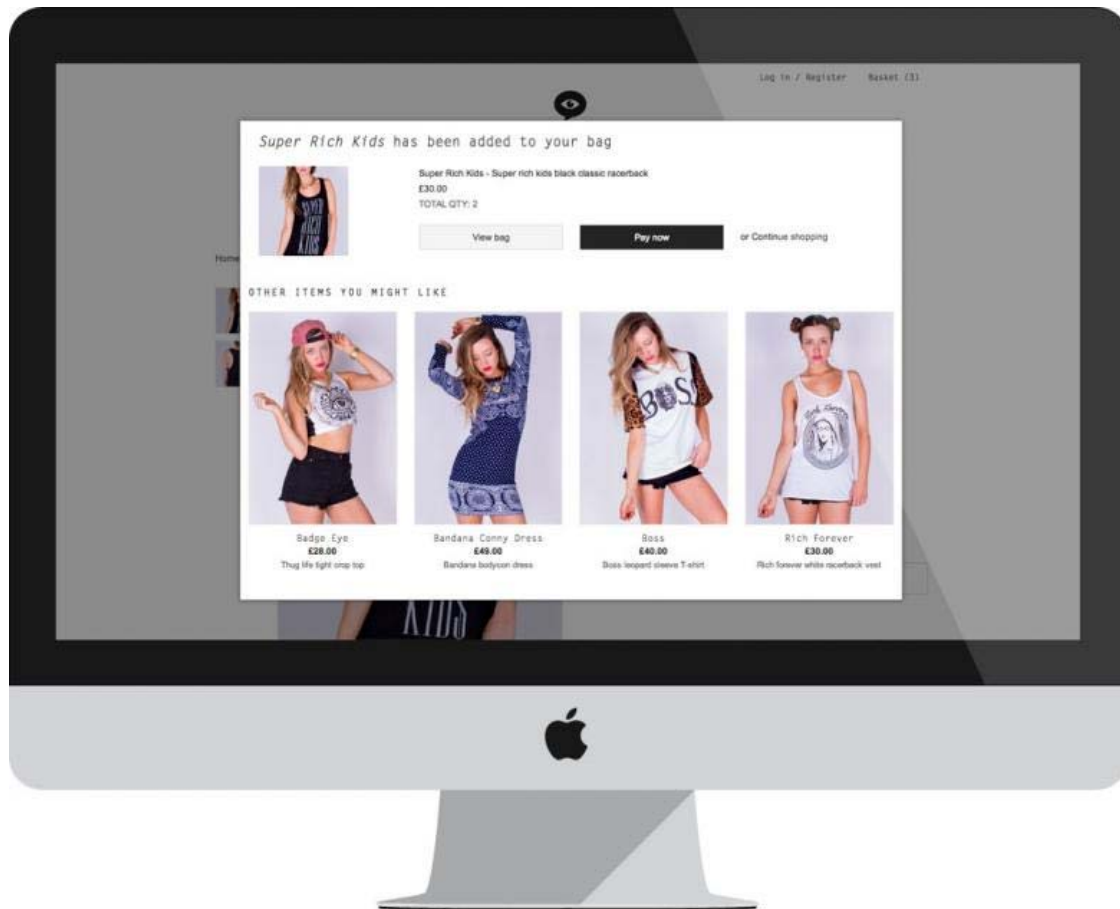
- This page should be clear and easy to take in within 3 seconds. sure 'Buy' buttons are clear and stand out from the page. Making them brightly coloured and relatively large usually does the trick.
- A wish list or 'save for later' button should be present but not as prominent. Ideally this will show a drop-down so the visitor can choose the wish list to add to or create a new one.
- If you only have one wish list per user it should just add to the wish list instantly.
- We strongly recommend you allow for the creation of wish lists without registration, but that if a user has anything on a wish list you should prompt them to sign up or sign in so that they don't lose it. This is a great way for gathering email addresses for re-marketing purposes.
- Use collaborative filtering on product pages e.g. 'other customers that bought X also bought Y'.
- Up-sell products after an item has been added to the cart – this is in addition to the

suggested products used on the product page itself. A good strategy here is to show items that are frequently bought together with the item already added to the cart – e.g. batteries that fit the camera they've just added to the cart; a belt that goes with the jeans they've just added.

- Keep product description text concise or limit it and then show a 'view more' link. People want to find details quickly, so long rambling descriptions are unlikely to be read. If possible, use bullet points to describe key features. Answer seller's potential questions in the description.
- In your photographs, show a variety of angles and some with the product in context e.g. lifestyle shots. Make it easy to jump between each. This makes the shopping experience more similar to real-world shopping since you can see the product from all angles.
- Include a product zoom feature so the customers can see the detail. Again, this makes the shopping experience more similar to real-world shopping since you can see all the details you need.
- If you can, include an option to embed video. Consumers are increasingly expecting this. They are also more likely to be shared if they are interesting.
- If there are lots of product details, make sure they are tabbed to keep the page tidy and ensure the visitor can find what they need to know quickly. Important information should be instantly visible, more detailed information (such as delivery, product care, technical specifications etc.) can be in separate tabs.
- If you collect reviews from past customers, include them to help persuade the visitor to buy and to give comfort. Consider using a trusted, third-party review system (such as [b2b.reevoo.com](http://b2b.reevoo.com) or for adding testimonials, <http://www.resellerratings.com/merchant-solutions> and <http://www.trustpilot.co.uk/>) as this will dramatically improve conversion rates – particularly if your online shop is not yet a household name.
- If you are a reseller, you could include product reviews from the media to further boost social proof.
- If options are out of stock, do not show them, or make it obvious they are out of stock. If possible, allow the user to enter their email address so they are notified when the item is back in stock.
- Clearly show the amount saved for items in sale.



- Clearly display your returns policy.
- Use social networking links to allow visitors to quickly 'like' or 'share' products. For Pinterest, ensure the product image to be pinned is selectable.
- Trust seals, supplier logos and payment methods should be visible even at this stage, perhaps in the footer, so the customer knows they can checkout securely.
- When a customer clicks your 'buy' or 'add to cart' button, show a pop up or some other feedback. Even take them to some new page entirely or perhaps your cart. Wherever it is, ensure there are further product recommendations shown.
- If you are a reseller of another brands goods, show 'product authenticity' images i.e. the brand of the product or perhaps a certification. This is great for reducing customers concerns regarding your product's authenticity.
- In the background, your pages should be generating automatic **rich snippets** to encourage click through from Google.
- Ensure your titles have relevant keywords included - be as descriptive as possible.
- Below a certain threshold, show an "x remaining in stock" label to instill a sense of urgency in the purchase.
- If you can, show estimated delivery times and prices at this stage.
- Provide an email-a-friend button to encourage sharing.



## The cart page

- Show *all* fees in the shopping cart before checkout. Hidden fees are the number one reason for cart abandonment
- Show stock levels if some products are running low
- Display any specification details and, if applicable, show user-selected options for each product.
- Provide an easy way to update items in the cart e.g. to remove products and update quantities.
- At this point, if you can, show estimated delivery times.
- Include a 'return to shop' link.
- Don't miss out on the upsell - show suggested products based on the current cart contents and what other, similar customers bought

- Provide an area where customers can enter a 'coupon code' to get a discount. You may be using this tactic in your marketing. To reduce risk of customers disappearing off to try find a coupon code elsewhere, considering naming this box 'gift certificate code' instead of 'coupon / voucher code'.
- Offer free shipping - this is a great way to boost conversions.
- Offer same-day shipping. Some shoppers will go for it – particularly those desperate for the item and, as such, will be willing to pay a premium for it. This is a great way to boost order profitability

## The checkout

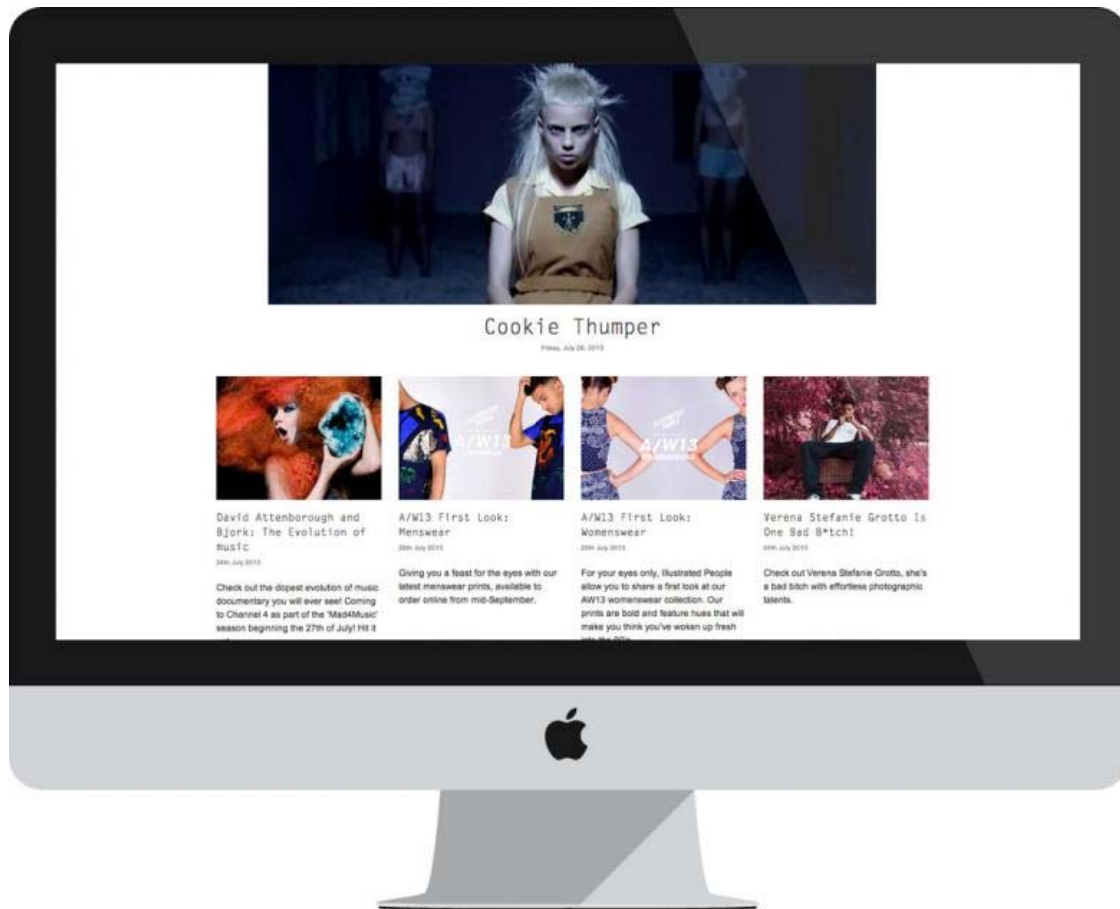
- Keep unnecessary items and navigation off the checkout page - strip back your navigation. This keeps visitors focused on checking out.
- Allow guests to checkout without creating account, providing the option to create an account at the *end* of checkout process.
- If the visitor is a previous customer, pre-populate everything you can to make checkout as quick and effortless as possible.
- Break up the order process in to simple steps and show progress. The ideal number of steps is five. Ensure the back button is fully functional.
- If you have the capability, provide access to real time support.
- Include a gift wrapping option if you think your audience will go for it.
- Offer several different payment options, so customers can choose one they trust/know. Make payment options obvious. Always include an off-site option like PayPal or Google Checkout. This is especially important for less established online shops as people already trust Paypal and Google Checkout.
- Use copy in the order process that boosts trust (e.g. 'Safety' information). This includes security badges and testimonials, an SSL certificate signing authority badge, logos of payment methods (e.g. Paypal, Credit Cards) and any other security or payment details that will help gain visitors' trust.
- Call attention to mistakes (missing fields or incorrect input) clearly.
- Offer free return shipping to convert doubters.

- Include a final confirmation page that shows what the customer is about to order, what their billing and delivery addresses are, the payment details they have entered and finally a 'Confirm' button.
- Once the visitor has completed the checkout, a clear 'thank you' page should be shown. The page should include : what happens next; the ability to create an account, providing an incentive to do so (like the ability to track their order); and further, related product recommendations. In our opinion there is no need to repeat the order information here - you should have already emailed this to the customer.

## **Wish list**

- If possible, include a 'wish list' that allows visitors to record which products they might buy in future.
- This is a great way to capture email addresses, as users will need to create an account to save their list. Link this with a specialist mailing list service like MailChimp or a bespoke tool for more sophisticated/bespoke mail shots.
- Send out emails on a fortnightly basis showing special offers available to mailing list subscribers. This type of exclusivity always appeals to people.

## **Your blog**



- A blog is a great way to inform visitors about your brand and increase traffic.
- Use Disqus or Facebook for comments and use social networking links to allow visitors to quickly 'like' or 'share' posts and products.
- Set up your Authorship tags via Google+ to provide **rich snippets** in search results.

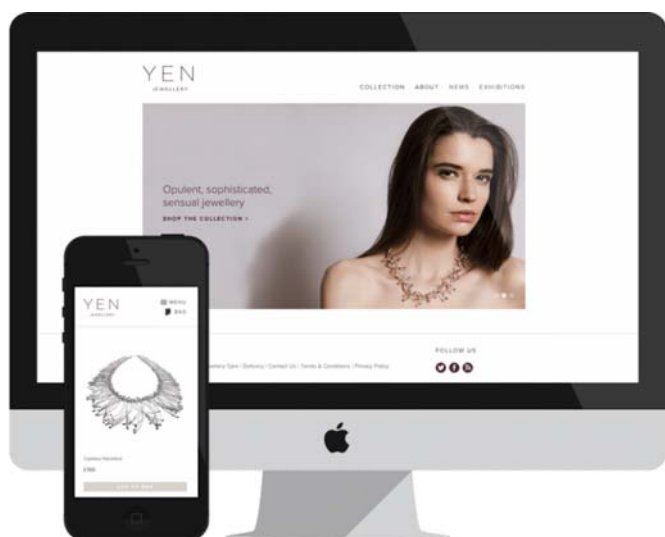
## Emails

- Email is an ecommerce staple - returning visitors are 9x more likely to buy than new visitors.
- If you can track customers through the checkout, email the ones that don't complete checkout and ask why. Provide the option for them to complete their checkout.
- Send 'thank you' emails after purchase, as well as order confirmation via email. Use these to ask for feedback to help improve your service.
- If you provide product reviews on your site, send customers an email two weeks after ordering to encourage them to leave a review.

- Send personal email updates regularly with products that compliment the customer's previous purchases.
- Include the shoppers name on everything you send them, this will encourage people to read the rest.
- Keep the customer informed. Make it easy for customers to track orders and email them each time the status of an order is updated e.g. to 'shipped'.

# We can improve your store and increase your sales

*Get a free consultation and find out how we can help your e-commerce business.*



## FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION

We've worked on over 100 projects and our e-commerce advice mailing list has over 3,000 subscribers. When you're ready, you can discuss your needs with one of our experts and we can offer insight where needed.

## INCREASED SALES

48% of people feel frustrated when they visit non-mobile-friendly websites - our sites are mobile and tablet optimised so shopping is easy. We also use technology like product recommendations and cart abandonment emails to ensure you don't lose valuable customers.

## A SIMPLE SERVICE

Everyone thinks getting a website made is a major headache, but we don't think it needs to be that way. Read on to find out how it works.

## How it works

## Our four-step process to designing and building your perfect online shop



### 1. Initial consultation

Fill out our **briefing form** and we'll arrange a meeting to discuss:

- The objectives of your website
- Your design preferences
- What solution is right for you and how this would fit in with your marketing strategy

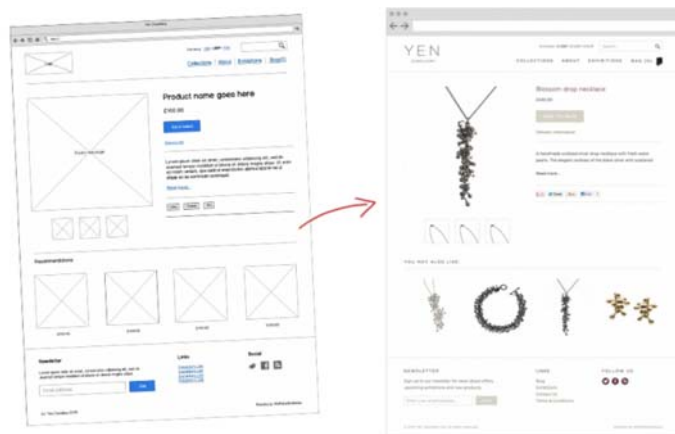
*"I was delighted with the service from the WeMakeWebsites team. They worked with me to create a website that fitted my needs, both now and in the future. Everything was explained clearly and I now have a website to be proud of. Thank you!"*

**Amy Twigger Holroyd, Keep&Share**

### 2. Design & Build

Once you decide to go ahead, we'll begin piecing together your site:

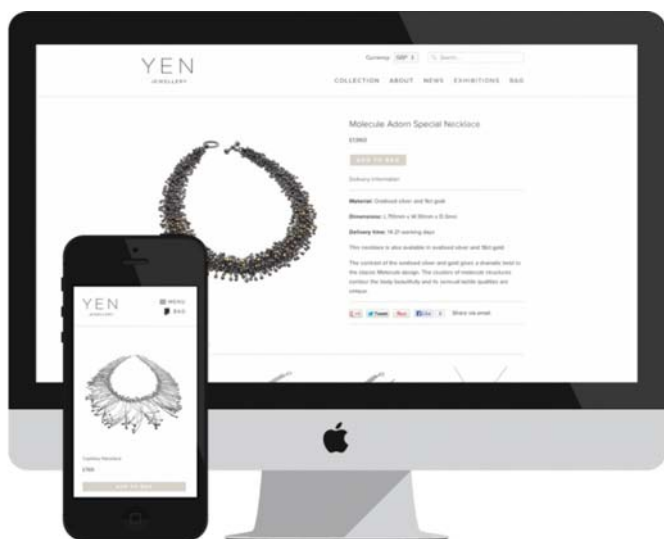
- We'll create a custom design based on your brand. No brand? No problem - we can help with that.
- Your website will be easy to use on any device and full of the latest e-commerce technology
- Typically takes two to three weeks to get ready





*"WeMakeWebsites were 100% reliable, they worked to tight deadlines to produce a slick, clean design with great understanding of the vision of the brand. There was great communication and issues were dealt with promptly and calmly. I cannot recommend highly enough."*

**Charlotte Saye, Founder of Carousel**



### 3. Launch

This is the exciting part.

- Add in your content. We can help. We can also recommend photographers for your product range.
- We'll update your URL/domain name settings to point at your new website
- Congratulations! Now wait for the first order.

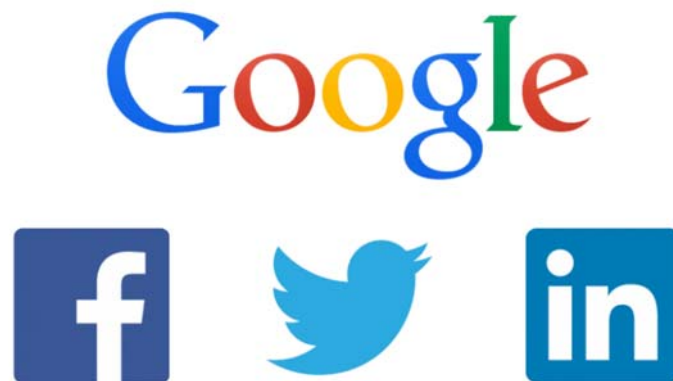
*"We consistently sell twice as much as on our previous website and we noticed the uplift within a couple of weeks of going live. We find the system intuitive to use and it's making our lives easier whilst increasing our revenues. The service level was exceptional and most queries were answered the same day."*

**Duncan McNamara, Owner of Illustrated People**

## 4. Bring in the traffic

We can help you market your site and acquire the visitors you need. You can do this by blogging consistently, using social media and building links to your site. In addition, we offer the following services:

- Search engine optimisation of your site
- Paid ad campaign management on Google, LinkedIn and Facebook
- A monthly audit of your marketing strategy



*"WeMakeWebsites are an efficient & enjoyable team to work with. The team showed great respect for time frames and worked to the given deadline. They were flexible and reliable and took the time to develop designs that suited the individual needs of the business. They listened & offered sound advise when required."*

**Yen Duong, Founder of Yen Jewellery**

## Features of our websites

*Our e-commerce websites are jam-packed with features designed to sell more*



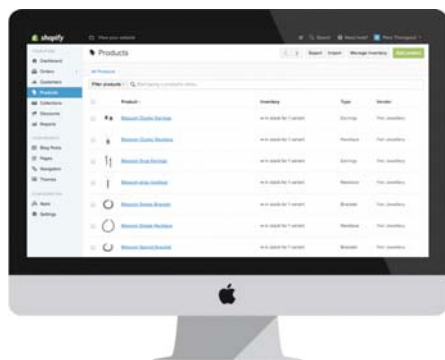
### Mobile, tablet and laptop friendly

Our website utilise responsive design, to ensure they look great on any device.

- 48% of visitors feel frustrated and annoyed when they visit

nonmobile-friendly sites

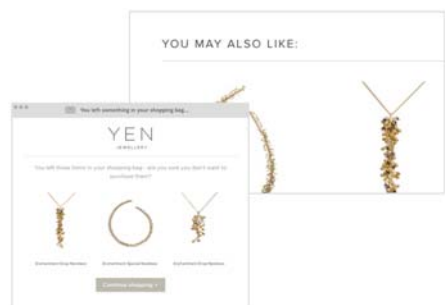
- 56% of smartphone owners also own a tablet and shop online with it regularly.
- Be ready for them, with a website that optimises your shop layout based on what screen size the visitor is using.



## Easy to use

We use Shopify to build our e-commerce websites because it provides intuitive, easy-to-use admin screens, making running your online shop a breeze.

- Intuitive order management screens
- An easy to update blog
- Simple product management pages
- Logins for all your staff
- Create offers and discounts with ease
- View reports on sales and website traffic



## Powerful selling features

Our e-commerce sites are built to encourage visitors to buy. We use several techniques to achieve this:

- Powerful, personalised product recommendations
- Cart abandonment emails: Your site will automatically email customers who abandon their order during checkout to remind prompt them to reconsider. These emails convert customers 3 times better than conventional marketing emails.
- Compelling, usable design
- Straightforward, easy-to-use checkout



## Point of sale (POS) terminals

If you have a bricks-and-mortar retail shop, we can supply you with point of sale software that:

- Fully integrates with your Shopify e-commerce website.
- Manage stock between your bricks-and-mortar and online shops.
- Runs on your iPad
- Easy for staff to use with minimal training



## Online Marketing

Now your website is converting visitors to customers, keep the traffic coming with these services:

- Search Engine Optimisation campaigns
- Managed paid advertising campaign
- Ongoing reports showing effectiveness
- Social media campaigns



## Ongoing support

Once your new website is live, you can rest assured that you have:

- Ongoing access to high-quality technical support
- The ability to add new features at a future date
- Marketing advice and website audits / reviews when you need them
- Access to visitor statistics and analytics

# LET'S GET STARTED!

*Please leave your details and a member of our team will be in touch.*

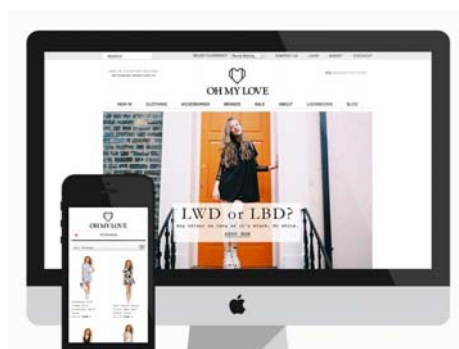
**FIND OUT MORE >**

## Recent E-commerce Sites



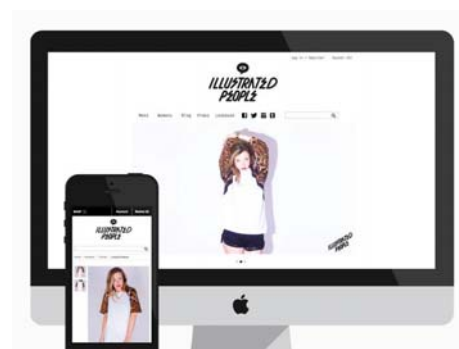
### Negative Underwear

We recently launched the new Negative Underwear website, which took an astonishing 100 orders on the first... [Read more >](#)



### Oh My Love

OhMyLove are one of the hottest female fashion brands around so we were super-pleased when they turned to us... [Read more >](#)



### Illustrated People

We worked with Illustrated People to produce an online shop that uses current e-commerce best practices to... [Read more >](#)

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**JOIN US!**

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6-8 St John's

Square,

London,

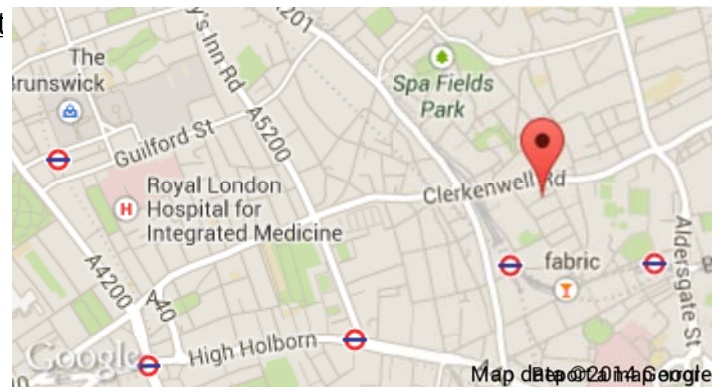
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