

10 ECOMMERCE SHOPPING CART ESSENTIALS



eCommerce spending is capturing more of the overall retail market share every year. And with so many players coming on board every day, it's wise for businesses to put their best foot forward.

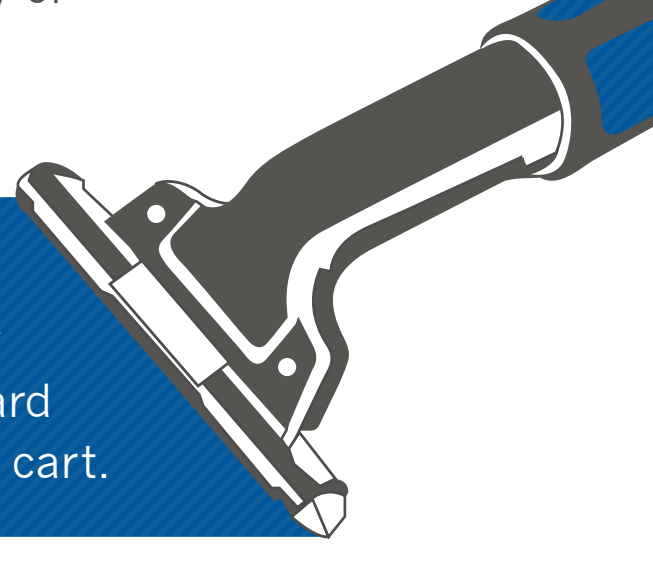
THE BARE ESSENTIALS: Items in a shopping cart should include a thumbnail, price and brief description. The better the shopping cart experience, the higher the chance that online shoppers will proceed to checkout.



1: CHANGE IS GOOD

From a user experience perspective, a shopping cart needs to be **EASY TO EDIT**. When shoppers can easily delete an item, modify the quantity or change the shipping method, the customer experience improves.

THE DETAILS: Be sure to provide a link back to the product page for each item in the cart. This allows shoppers to quickly review products as opposed to hitting the back button and then the forward button multiple times, potentially losing the entire contents of the cart.



2: ROGER THAT!

When an item is placed in the shopping cart, confirm that the item is **IN STOCK AND AVAILABLE**. No one wants to get all the way to the order page to find out the item is no longer available.

THE DETAILS: Enable your cart to have inventory tracking built into the ordering process. If an item is on backorder, allow the user to enter their e-mail address to be notified when it's back in stock.

3: SEEING IS BELIEVING

The **SHOPPING CART SHOULD ALWAYS BE VISIBLE** and open even when it's empty. Consumers should also be able to navigate away from a site, knowing that their items will be there when they return – without having to log in.



THE DETAILS: Remember that users don't always buy products on their first visit. They often leave a website to comparison-shop elsewhere. However, if a shopper returns to website to find their items waiting for them in their shopping cart, conversion rates are sure to soar.



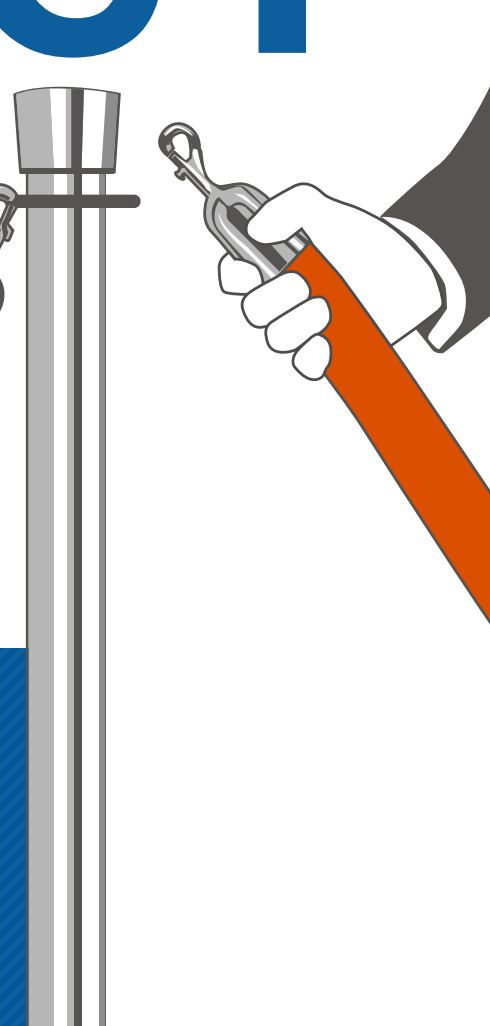
4: YOU'VE GOT MAIL

CART ABANDONMENT EMAILS are an excellent method to get a shopper to return to your website and make a purchase. In fact, studies have shown that a significant number of shoppers will return and make a purchase when a targeted and personalized e-mail is sent to them.

THE DETAILS: In instances where an online retailer has already collected the shopper's e-mail address, coupons or discounts can be sent. The key is to send it quickly, though, before they make a purchase on a competitor's site.

5: PUT VISITORS ON THE GUEST LIST

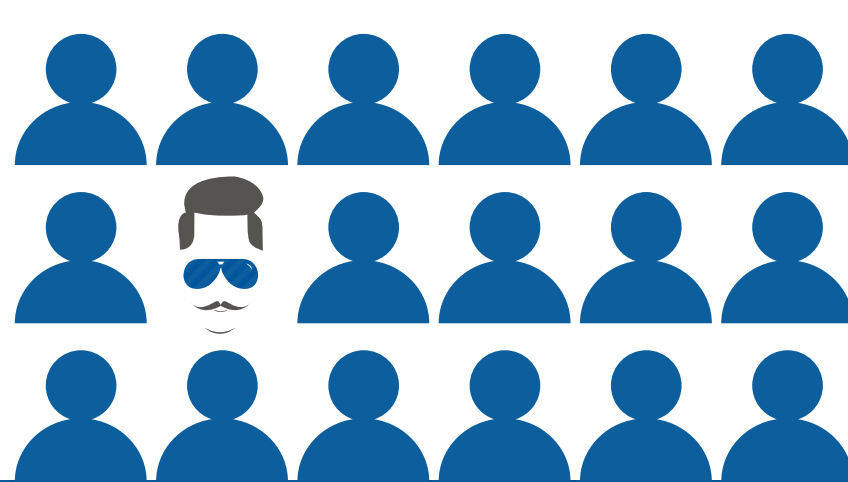
Don't force shoppers to create an account to put items in their shopping cart. Although registration is an easy way to collect visitor information, **NOT EVERY SHOPPER WANTS TO CREATE AN ACCOUNT** or they simply don't have the time.



THE DETAILS: Let site visitors make a purchase as a guest user instead of creating an account, which according to an eConsultancy.com study, could cause 26 percent of shoppers to abandon a shopping cart. If you want to collect information, present a promotional popup for a percentage off of the next order by joining a mailing list.

6: REMEMBER ME

By including a "remember me" feature – also known as a **PERSISTENT SHOPPING CART** – shoppers don't have to re-enter credit card, billing or shipping information every time they want to make a purchase.



THE DETAILS: Persistent sessions are essentially a more subtle way of registering a site user. The benefit to shoppers comes in the form of easy access to order histories and billing and shipping information as well as access to coupons and promotions.



7: SAVE IT FOR LATER

Let site visitors save their shopping cart to a **WISH LIST** so they can easily retrieve those items and complete a purchase at a later date.

THE DETAILS: By implementing a wish list plug-in to an online store, shoppers can make a purchase when their budgets allow. Just because they don't buy it today, doesn't mean they don't want it.

8: CALCULATE THE COSTS

Show **ESTIMATED SHIPPING COSTS** for the contents of a cart as individual items are added.



THE DETAILS: If you can configure your shopping cart to calculate actual shipping costs based on zip code, you are guaranteed to lower cart abandonment, considering high shipping costs are a primary reason to trigger an abandoned cart.



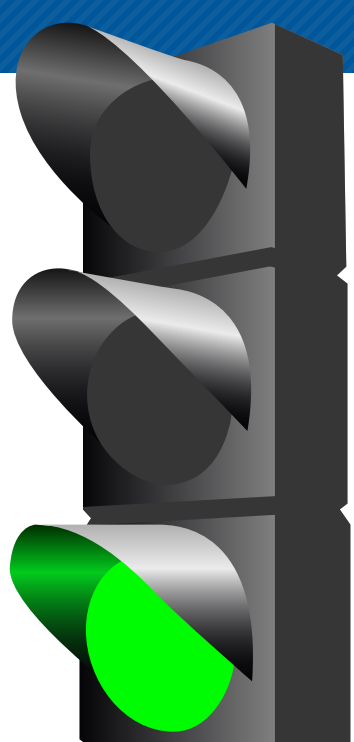
9: COMPLEMENTS TO THE CART

Once an item is added to a cart, be sure to present up-sell and cross-sell items. By doing so, retailers can **INCREASE THE SIZE OF THEIR AVERAGE ORDER VALUE** and shoppers don't have to waste time searching for complementary or auxiliary items.

THE DETAILS: Up-sell and cross-sell opportunities could include free shipping on a specified purchase amount, bundling a product with accessories to provide a price break and displaying recently viewed products, allowing the shopper to rehash their decision once more.

10: PROCEED WITH EASE

Provide the checkout button in a prominent place in the displayed shopping cart to remind shoppers that they can **EASILY PROCEED TO CHECKOUT** at any time.



THE DETAILS: When a shopper places an item in their shopping cart, best practices dictate that the shopper not be pulled away from a product page. Because of this, it's important to present the route to checkout in a clear manner.