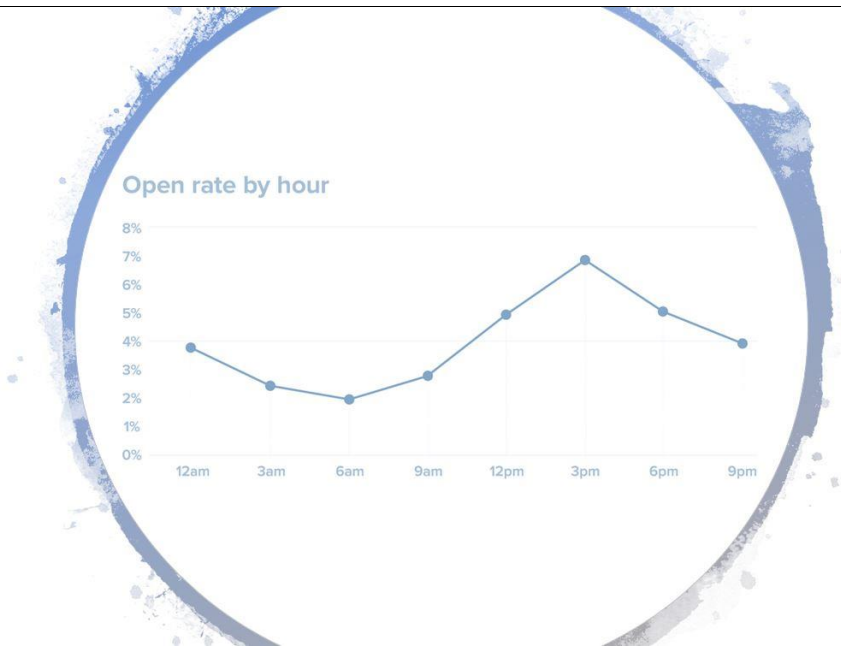


<b>TITLE</b>
<b>1. Email marketing</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>
Email is one of the most important and most effective marketing communication channels. One should make sure that one's emails are trustworthy, relevant, personalized and contain only one call to action.
<b>GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION</b>
<p><b><u>The trend</u></b></p> <p>It is a fact that more than 250 billion emails are sent within a day and this number is expected to reach 275 billion by 2019. For online marketers, email marketing is one of the elite channels for business communication, as it delivers the best marketing ROI, outperforming even SEO, PPC and content marketing.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b><u>Why email marketing?</u></b></p> <p>Email marketing should be every business's priority, providing miscellaneous benefits<sup>2</sup>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is <i>always up to date</i>, as it is one of the most direct approaches to your target group.</li> <li>2. It is <i>part of your identity</i>, since it is the number one communication channel.</li> <li>3. It is one of the most <i>cost-efficient</i> marketing solutions, as marketing campaigns are of low cost.</li> <li>4. You own your list, as email marketing connects you directly with your audience, building up a more <i>personal relationship</i>.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Email marketing strategies</u></b><sup>2,3</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Personalize your email:</b> Marketing emails have to be interesting for the reader. Since there are only few people that would actually read emails starting with 'Dear Sir/Madam', your emails need to be more personalized to the reader, while the use of appealing graphics instead of a wall of text can motivate even more people to read.</li> <li>2. <b>The long and short of subject lines:</b> Research has shown that subject lines with more than 70 characters are more engaging, while subject lines with less than 49 characters tested also well with open rate. For that reason, most marketers refer to subject lines of 60-70 characters as the 'dead zone' of their length.</li> <li>3. <b>8:00 p.m. to midnight is the prime time to send your email:</b> Although most emails are being prepared during office hours, most emails are opened from 8.00p.m. until midnight. The graphs below show exactly the open rates per day and time of the day.</li> </ol>



Graph 1. Open rates by hour of the day

Source: <https://www.superoffice.com/blog/email-open-rates/>



Graph 2. Open rates by day of the week

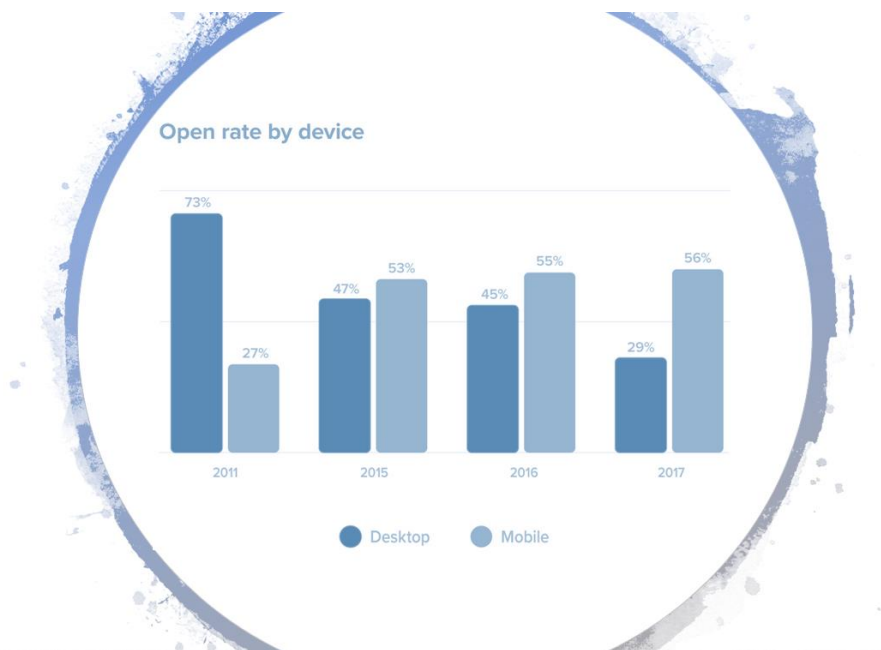
Source: <https://www.superoffice.com/blog/email-open-rates/>

4. **The best content is free content:** E-books, templates, photos or tools that are free for the audience are much more to email readers. So, don't be afraid to give something away!
5. **Mobile opens accounts for 47 percent of all email opens:** For that reason, make sure that you design a responsive content that will look great in all devices. Some useful tips are:
  - a. Convert the content of your email to one column template#
  - b. The font size must be bumped up in order to be readable in smart phones.
  - c. As recommended in iOS, all buttons must be 44X44 pixels.
  - d. Everything that needs to be tapped must be in the middle of the screen.

6. **Email still has higher rates than Facebook and Twitter:** Social Media are constantly increasing their social influence, but email inbox is still the king of the content, as it has a significant advantage to convert new customers in comparison with social media.
7. **Re-engage an inactive group of subscribers:** It is less likely for subscribers to follow-up your emails. Recent research has shown that most of your contacts are actually inactive. Re-engagement campaigns with catchy subjects are an efficient way to start.

#### How to increase email open rates<sup>4</sup>

Your email marketing campaigns are highly dependent on the way your recipients read their emails. For example, the type of the device they use to open them (desktop, mobile). Research since 2011 has shown that open rates from mobiles increases more and more each year.



Graph 3. Open rates by device

Source: <https://www.superoffice.com/blog/email-open-rates/>

#### Be careful of GDPR

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) refers to a new set of rules especially designed for EU citizens to provide them more control over their personal data. Its purpose is to make the regulatory environment simpler for businesses in order for them and the citizens to benefit from the digital economy in the most efficient way possible.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Action Type**

#### **Connected Actions**

Actions that can be implemented immediately but require an investment.

#### **Time required to implement a solution and when possible associated cost**

A day is needed to create the email template and then half a day max per email. Then one needs to test the emails effectiveness permanently by means of split testing.

Costs involved: optional costs of the use of an email platform.

#### **Positive and Negative Part of the Solution**

**Positive:** One of the positive aspects of this solution is related to GDPR, as your email list is made out of people who have agreed to receive your emails. Then, this real-time marketing technique is efficient in terms of money cost and time, while it can guarantee measurable results and increased sales.

**Negative:** The danger for commercial emails is spamming. If your recipients are not the right ones, they may delete your email or unsubscribe. Advise GDPR to make sure that your email marketing is targeted to the recipients who want to receive your emails. Also, be careful of the design and the size of your emails in order to keep your audience engaged. Successful email campaigns require in-house or outsourcing skills.

### Estimated Exploitation

Email marketing is one of the most cost-efficient marketing strategies, especially for start-ups and small businesses. This strategy can increase your brand recognition, while being a great opportunity to attract a wider audience or even partnerships and expand your network.

### ICT Competence

Basic

### English Language Skills

Advanced

### Webshop Level

Established

### Informative Text (Sources)

1. MacDonald, S. (2018, July 17). Email Marketing Strategy: A Data-driven Guide (with Original Case Studies), retrieved from <https://www.superoffice.com/blog/email-marketing-strategy/>
2. Optimonster Website. Email Marketing Made Simple: A Step by Step Guide (UPDATED), retrieved from <https://optinmonster.com/beginners-guide-to-email-marketing/>
3. Lee, K. 8 Effective Email Marketing Strategies, Backed by Science, retrieved from <https://blog.bufferapp.com/8-effective-email-strategies-backed-by-research>
4. Kolowich, L., 19 of the Best Email Marketing Campaign Examples We've Ever Seen [+Template], retrieved from <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/email-marketing-examples-list>
5. Palmer, D. (2018, May 23). What is GDPR? Everything you need to know about the new general data protection regulations, retrieved from <https://www.zdnet.com/article/gdpr-an-executive-guide-to-what-you-need-to-know/>

### Additional Resources

1. Email Marketing Software [https://www.capterra.com/sem-compare/email-marketing-software?gclid=CjwKCAjw\\_b3cBRByEiwAdG8Wqv-5EF1q2wjBSS2nxMwQhmWqC9FKFWwrfVL\\_MjAvMIVHbykmKS1kFxoCcT8QAvD\\_BwE&gclid=aw.ds](https://www.capterra.com/sem-compare/email-marketing-software?gclid=CjwKCAjw_b3cBRByEiwAdG8Wqv-5EF1q2wjBSS2nxMwQhmWqC9FKFWwrfVL_MjAvMIVHbykmKS1kFxoCcT8QAvD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds)
2. General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR <https://gdpr-info.eu/>
3. A Beginner's Guide to Successful Email Marketing <https://neilpatel.com/blog/beginners-guide-email-marketing/>
4. 18 Tips and Tools for Managing Email Successfully <https://blog.bufferapp.com/20-tips-and-tools-for-writing-and-managing-email-successfully>
5. Email marketing: Advantages and disadvantages of email marketing <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/advantages-and-disadvantages-email-marketing>
6. Exploit the full potential of email marketing automation

<https://www.mailworx.info/blog/en/2017/exploit-full-potential-email-marketing-automation/>

**Cross Border remark**

Increasing your network and enlarging your audience automatically leads to more sales. Email marketing meets no borders and potential customers all over the world will be open to build up a loyal relationship with you, as long as you use the write language style and design to motivate them and keep them engaged.

## TITLE

# 2. Integrating consumer reviews in product pages

## ABSTRACT

User reviews are generated via an online form on the website where registered users can share feedback and ratings on the purchased products. Users' reviews usually are placed in a separate website section under the displayed products. Consumer reviews are a powerful means to increase sales. By integrating consumer reviews, one achieves a twofold purpose:

1. To magnify the chances for the products to be purchased
2. To personalise the relationship with customers

By implementing this technique one can increase easily the conversion rate up to 12%.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION

### Why to embrace online reviews

The landscape of e-commerce is constantly evolving. One of the biggest factors that contributed to the change of this landscape has been the fact that online reviews have spread across the web. In particular, now they appear whether you are encouraging them or not. Therefore, online marketers took the opportunity to use them strategically, as reviews can potentially persuade and motivate other people to buy.<sup>1</sup>

### The benefits

Online reviews have a great value both for consumers and businesses and so many people depend on them. More specifically, the benefits for retailers are numerous and should certainly be taken into account<sup>1</sup>:

1. **Change customer's opinion about you:** Positive reviews and good reputation can encourage consumers to look at you as someone trustworthy, who is willing to improve customer experience.
2. **Unbiased insight:** Information given by customers is unbiased and provides insight into the quality and experience that you provide.
3. **Building trust and credibility:** It is much more difficult for small businesses to compete with well-known brands and build trust larger than big companies do. Trust indicators are important, and online reviews serve as such.

### How to include customer reviews in your marketing strategy<sup>2</sup>

The most powerful tool in (digital) marketing is word of mouth advertising, which happens through social media, blogs, and free online customer review sites, where consumers can share their opinion for your products or services and go easily through other customers' reviews. Those reviews is one of the best practices to attract new customers and keep the already existing ones, since they can strengthen not only your sales but your customers' loyalty as well.

1. **Statistics can validate the power of your customer reviews:** Based on the ["Online Shopping and e-Commerce"](#) survey (Pew Research, 2015), the decisions of customers to proceed to purchase are highly affected by online reviews. In particular,
  - 53% of 18-to-29-year-old consumers read reviews on a regular basis.
1. 40% of consumers proceed to purchase after reading 1 – 3 online reviews.

In terms of mobile shopping and browsing increasing as a global trend, online reviews are now a certainly influential marketing tool.

**2. Fake reviews do not work:** Value authentic customer reviews and prefer not to falsify them on your website only to give the perception of high approval rating. Being honest online is always an effective way to acquire organic customer reviews. However, you should be aware that authentic reviews will vary and will not always provide a perfect rating, as they can contain negative feedback too. Nevertheless, all word of mouth advertising has a significant value for your brand.

If you are still not convinced about buying fake reviews being a bad idea, check out [Fakespot](#), that evaluates Amazon reviews for authenticity.

**3. How to share customer reviews with clients:** Especially when running your own business, customer reviews are significantly important for its reputation. You can take TripAdvisor as an example of industries focusing on hospitality directly benefiting from customer reviews. This is how the review page of TripAdvisor displays all reviews:

1,857 reviews from our community

50 points/miles [Write a Review](#)

Questions about Hyatt Regency Phoenix

Traveller rating

Excellent	727
Very good	630
Average	337
Poor	109
Terrible	54

See reviews for

Families	191
Couples	226
Solo	93
Business	1,171

Rating summary

Location	5/5
Sleep Quality	4/5
Rooms	4/5
Service	4/5
Value	4/5
Cleanliness	4/5

Traveller tips help you choose the right room. [Room tips \(290\)](#)

1,857 reviews sorted by: [Date](#) | [Rating](#) English first

**“SE Ballet Association ”**  
Reviewed 1 week ago via mobile  
Beautiful hotel. Very convenient to the convention center. Our room was on the 3rd floor near the pool which was a plus. Staff were all very helpful and friendly.  
We enjoyed having Einstein's right there in the hotel. We also enjoyed

Karen Georgia  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Level 3 Contributor  
12 reviews

Questions about Hyatt Regency Phoenix

- Is there any additional fees being charged per night on this... 4 Answers (1 month ago)
- do you have to pre-book parking at the offsite location? 2 Answers (2 months ago)
- is parking free at the hotel? thanks 7 Answers (7 months ago)

See all questions (14) [Ask a question](#)

Browse nearby  
Hotels (174) | Restaurants (3,082) | Places to Visit (440)

Map showing Downtown Phoenix, Arizona Science Center, and surrounding streets.

Source: <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/customer-reviews-marketing-strategy/>

**The dos and don'ts of review:** Responding in as many comments and reviews as possible will certainly make a big impression. Build up a management community or social media team that uses a software that notifies them whenever a new review or comment comes in. When enabling your consumers to publish a review on your website without an approval, keep in mind that this entails a risk. There are social media management software, like [Sprout Social](#) and [Buffer](#), that are able to see alerts referring to comments. Facebook is the dominant source when it comes to customer reviews.

The best social media guidelines when responding to reviews are:

- Never argue with a consumer online. Show other customers that your business is proactive by addressing online complaints properly.
- Keep responses polite, positive and helpful.

- Respond to each consumer with a unique statement avoiding standard replies.
- Remove statements that violate community terms of service and language guidelines.

Some tools that notify you when your brand is mentioned online are:

- [Google Alerts](#)
- [Brandwatch](#)

**How to get customer reviews:**

1. Ask your customers to leave you a review on your website.
2. After a purchase, schedule an email approximately three to five days after the customer has used the product, asking for their feedback. Incorporate a link to Facebook or your website review form to make it easier.
3. Create an incentive. Respect your customers' time and effort by giving them a reward (coupon, discount, entry to a contest giveaway).
4. Use insights from negative feedback as a chance to improve the customers' experience.

**Action Type**

Simple actions that can be implemented immediately

**Connected Actions**

--

**Time required to implement a solution and when possible associated cost**

It takes about 3 hours to integrate a review form into your website. Then, moderating your responses to reviews is a daily task.

**Positive and Negative Part of the Solution**

**Positive:** This solution can help you retain your existing customers and recruit new ones.

**Negative:** The feedback can vary in terms of satisfaction. You should be careful in how to deal with negative comments. They are actually your opportunity to improve your products.

**Estimated Exploitation**

Online consumers today want to be sure that they can trust your business before making any purchases; one of the easiest ways to sell and **make money online** is by writing great online product reviews. Those reviews can be used for a positive brand promotion and improve your google rankings.

**ICT Competence**

Intermediate

**English Language Skills**

Intermediate

**Webshop Level**

Established

**Informative Text (Sources)**

1. MacDonald, M. *Why Online Store Owners Should Embrace Online Reviews*, retrieved from <https://www.shopify.com/blog/15359677-why-online-store-owners-should-embrace-online-reviews>
2. Patel, T. (2017, July 10). *How to Include Customer Reviews in Your Marketing Strategy*, Brandwatch blog, retrieved from <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/customer-reviews-marketing-strategy/>

**Additional Resources**



1. **Top 28 Product Review Websites for Online Marketers**  
<https://partners.livechatinc.com/blog/best-product-reviews-websites/>
2. **The Complete Guide to Creating On-Site Reviews + Testimonials Pages**  
<https://moz.com/blog/the-complete-guide-to-creating-onsite-reviews-testimonials-pages>
3. **Top 14 eCommerce Rating and Review tools: an overview**  
<https://mopinion.com/ecommerce-rating-and-review-tools-an-overview/>

**Cross Border remark**

Online reviews are publicly available online for a worldwide audience.

## TITLE

# 3. Use of product comparison features

## ABSTRACT

Product comparison feature enables the business website to display information of similar products on a comparative manner. Offering shoppers suggestions, gives the webshop the opportunity to feature items, shoppers wouldn't have stumbled upon otherwise. Some shoppers might not be savvy in searching, but are more likely to wander through the website based on the suggestions they receive. For the majority of e-commerce websites, the biggest reason for a lack of conversion is that customers are unable to find the desired product. Implementing this feature however, gives the webshop a unique opportunity to customize the product viewing based on what the customers have searched before.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION

### When Is A Feature Comparison Useful?

It is quite revealing that many users claim that they never use the feature of comparison, as they believe that it clutters the interface. However, comparison is one of the most critical activities of a user within the web. Why? Customers need a feature comparison, as they tend to purchase low-priced items in comparison with large highly priced items, which are not bought so frequently.<sup>1</sup>

### How to conduct a product comparison step by step<sup>2</sup>

A product comparison provides an easy way to compare the features of your products or their capabilities across similar products. Therefore, undertaking a product comparison lets you determine whether your product has different or even better features than others or not.

**Step #1:** Create a list of competing products including a brief summary and then a general product description together with its purpose of use and functionality.

**Step #2:** Undertake research on available material and be the first to test your product.

**Step #3:** Create a product comparison table to evaluate one product from another.

**Step #4:** Establish and present a conclusion that determines if your product needs additional features.

### Designing the perfect comparison table

Comparison is an essential step before visitors in your website perform an action like purchasing a product, signing up or contacting you. This is where the comparison table comes in.<sup>3</sup> Feature comparison tables are helpful in decision-making by placing product specifications side by side and often from a technical point of view, explaining why a feature is relevant and how the product can be used.<sup>1</sup>

A feature comparison table uses columns for the products or services and rows for the features and attributes. In this way, an easy and quick way of comparison between different products is provided.<sup>3</sup>

### Tips for your comparison practices

1. Make it easy to print
2. Include as much product info as you can

<p>3. Always show prices (as long as this makes sense for your business)</p> <p>4. Make sure you provide an “Add to Cart” button</p> <p>5. Allow users to remove items from comparison</p> <p>6. If possible, show if an item is in stock, qualifies for free shipping or is only available in-store</p> <p>7. If you have customer ratings available, include them in the matrix</p> <p>8. As much as you can help the user refine the results before comparing, do it (by price, brand, storage, type etc)</p> <p>9. If you can show actual or estimated shipping costs, this is a bonus</p> <p>10. For some industries, it makes sense to include an “email this product” link (for instance, a customizable promotional product distributor showing a shortlist of products to a client from a wholesaler’s catalog)</p>
<b>Action Type</b>
Simple actions that can be implemented immediately and require no investment
<b>Connected Actions</b>
-
<b>Time required to implement a solution and when possible associated cost</b>
1-3 weeks
<b>Positive and Negative Part of the Solution</b>
<p><b>Positive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This feature adds more to product description thus, potential customers are able to seek the most profitable options for the products they wish to buy, thus increasing the possibility to make a purchase</li> <li>- Relatively easy to apply with the use of the appropriate plug-in.</li> </ul> <p><b>Negative:</b> This action is not indicated if the webshop does not offer an extended variety of products.</p>
<b>Estimated Exploitation</b>
Apart from e-commerce purposes, comparison tables are equally used to services, membership levels, pricing packages, software features, tuition rates or locations. They can be used to compare similar items from the same business, or to your products against those of a competitor.
<b>ICT Competence</b>
Intermediate
<b>English Language Skills</b>
Basic
<b>Webshop Level</b>
Established
<b>Informative Text (Sources)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Friedman, V. (2017, August 15). <i>Designing The Perfect Feature Comparison Table</i>, Smashing Magazine Articles, retrieved from <a href="https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2017/08/designing-perfect-feature-comparison-table/">https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2017/08/designing-perfect-feature-comparison-table/</a></li> <li>2. Brainmates Blog, ‘How To...’ Undertake a Product Comparison, retrieved from <a href="https://brainmates.com.au/brainrants/how-to-undertake-a-product-comparison/">https://brainmates.com.au/brainrants/how-to-undertake-a-product-comparison/</a></li> <li>3. Moran, K. (2017, March 5). <i>Comparison Tables for Products, Services, and Features</i>, NN Group Articles, retrieved from <a href="https://www.nngroup.com/articles/comparison-tables/">https://www.nngroup.com/articles/comparison-tables/</a></li> </ol>
<b>Additional Resources</b>

1. 4 product comparison best practices <http://www.agconsult.com/en/usability-blog/4-product-comparison-best-practices>
2. Optimizing Ecommerce Usability – Product Comparison Matrix: <http://www.getelastic.com/ecommerce-usability-product-comparison-matrix/>
3. Word Press e-Commerce Compare Products plug in: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-ecommerce-compare-products/>
4. e-Commerce Software Review of product Features: <http://ecommerce-software-review.toptenreviews.com/index.html>
5. 10 best comparison engines: <http://www.shopify.com/blog/7068398-10-best-comparison-shopping-engines-to-increase-ecommerce-sales>
6. Price comparison websites examples: <https://econsultancy.com/blog/63947-how-seven-ecommerce-sites-present-price-comparison-details>
7. Tips to improve product pages: <http://www.shopio.com/blog/how-to-improve-product-pages-seven-top-tips-you-cant-ignore/>

**Cross Border remark**

Useful functionality for increasing sales in general so also for cross-border sales

## TITLE

# 4. Item return options

## ABSTRACT

The item return option is a service which let customers not completely satisfied by the purchase, to return the good at no or very limited cost. This service can be provided with telephone contact or via mail. A good practice is to provide free shipping regarding products return. Also letting the costumers that they have these options will have a significant effect on the conversion rate. A good item return service has to allow customers to exploit the maximum of flexibility as possible in returning the items already purchased or not yet paid but dispatched. A good which presents damages or is not exactly the one purchased or, simpler, it is not what the client expected to receive has to be returned at low if no cost. Even better than implementing a successful returns policy is not to implement it at all. Meaning that the vendors will need to understand what lies behind the items' returns request. For example when a particular item is returned on a regular basis, this might mean that the product information is not efficient. Or when the products arrive damaged and then are returned, the online store has to check delivery conditions with the carrier company, or needs to reevaluate the product checking process prior to shipping.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION

### E-Commerce returns and refunds

According to recent research, **at least 20% of online orders end up being returned, as against just 8.89% of brick and mortar sales.**

### Return rates in retail and ecommerce

Aggregated and compiled data across industries



Source: <https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-returns>

There is a number of factors influencing this high rate of returns in e-commerce stores. Some of them are: <sup>1</sup>

- Products not matching their online descriptions
- Items damaged in transit
- Gift items that are returned
- Wrong items shipped out
- Fraudulent returns
- Problems with fit and/or product quality
- The customer changed mind and no longer wants the product

## State of ecommerce returns in 2018

Returns are the new normal



Buy multiples with the intent of returning



Of returns come from repeat customers



Of shoppers returned in the last three years

Source: <https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-returns>

For that reasons, consumers are getting more cautious when buying online. First, they want to avoid shipping costs. Second, many of them prefer physical stores so that they can directly see the product before buying it. A returns and exchanges policy shows that you, as the e-commerce business owner, support your product and pride yourself on a stellar customer service experience. It is one of the many “wow” factors you can provide shoppers who may be a little concerned about buying online rather than in person. <sup>2</sup>

### **Best Practices to Manage Your E-commerce Returns and Refunds**

It is highly recommended for your e-store to have a Return or Refund Policy that includes the following sections:<sup>3</sup>

1. Build great product date
2. Encourage customers to leave product reviews
3. Improve order fulfilment accuracy
4. Decide where to ship a returned item based on product categories
5. Consider setting up an online returns management portal
6. Offer competitive return deadlines
7. Allow in-store returns
8. Clarify acceptable return conditions, documentation required
9. Specify who pays for return shipping
10. Communicate your return policies clearly
11. Consider offering product exchange
12. Manage the issue of fraudulent returns in a delicate way

Here is a very simple sample policy based on above tips:

- If you are not 100% satisfied with your purchase, you can return the product and get a full refund or exchange the product for another one, be it similar or not.
- You can return a product for up to 30 days from the date you purchased it.
- Any product you return must be in the same condition you received it and in the original packaging. Please keep the receipt.

It is definitely easier for large companies to offset the financial impact of free shipping on returns and exchanges or full refunds with no questions asked. As a small business, it can be hard to go big on return options. Ideally, you'll work your way up to a very competitive offering. In the meantime, there are some things that you can do for your customers that will still show them you stand behind your offering. After all, a good returns policy should not only be positive for the customer, it should still be profitable for your business.

**More tips:**

- Check the numbers and figure out how to offer free return shipping with a minimum order value. For instance, you could have free returns on any order over 75 Euros. This will help you cover some or all of the cost of the return or exchange.
- If you happen to have a physical store, let your customers return or exchange a product in person for free.
- Offer free return shipping during your high-volume sales periods, like Christmas and other holidays, as a promotional offer. The high volume of sales could offset any losses you may encounter.

**Action Type**

Actions that have prerequisites (other actions need to be implemented first), and require investment

**Connected Actions**

Action 3 – Use of product comparison features

**Time required to implement a solution and when possible associated cost**

Time depending on the agreement with the chosen carrier company. Costs depending on location and presence of more company offering a delivery service.

**Positive and Negative Part of the Solution**

**Positive:** Increased sales and higher retention rate.

**Negative:** Increased costs for the implementation of the returns' policy.

**Estimated Exploitation**

In a study done by web agency Oneupweb, 95.5% of their sample said that "Pricing/shipping information clearly stated" is the most influential factor in their purchase decision.

**ICT Competence**

Intermediate

**English Language Skills**

Intermediate

**Webshop Level**

Established

**Informative Text (Sources)**

1. CommerceHub (2017, January 17). E-Commerce Returns and Refunds: A Best Practice Guide, CommerceHub blog, retrieved from <https://www.commercehub.com/e-commerce-returns-refunds-best-practice-guide/>
2. Winkler, N. (2018, September 25). *Ecommerce Returns: Policy, Rates, Best Practices & Statistics (2018 Holiday Ed.)*, retrieved from <https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-returns>
3. Chambers, S., *Ecommerce Return Policy Template: How to Write a Returns and Refunds Policy to 3X Sales*, retrieved from <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/create-a-returns-and-exchanges-policy-that-sells/>

**Additional Resources**

1. Manage returns, missing items, and refunds for sellers  
<https://www.ebay.com/help/selling/managing-returns-refunds/manage-returns-missing-items-refunds-sellers?id=4079>
2. Setting up your return policy <https://www.ebay.com/help/selling/managing-returns-refunds/handling-return-requests/setting-return-policy?id=4368>
3. How to use the online exchange & refund/return feature  
<https://support.zalora.com.ph/hc/en-us/articles/206525333-How-to-Use-the-Online-Exchange-Refund-Return-Feature>

**Cross Border remark**

When it comes to cross border e-commerce, an on-line service has to consider all technical or legal limitations that may arise, especially in case of EU companies selling beyond the EU.



## TITLE

# 5. Communication Monitoring and responding via social media

## ABSTRACT

Social Media is undeniably one of the most important communication media about 750 million people are on the social media site, What's important for wholesalers is that SM is an active media that pushes content to SM site users (vs. a passive media like a website which waits for people to visit the site) but does so unobtrusively (vs. an email in their already-overloaded inbox).

In other words, SM fan pages are the best balance of keeping customers engaged with your wholesale business without being obnoxious by sending a number of emails which may never be opened anyway.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION

### **Social media marketing**

We have all heard about communication monitoring and responding via social media, the big question for most SME's must be 'does it work?'

Since the very beginning of social media, brands have been trying to engage and interact with customers in a more *human* way. Companies don't want to be seen as power hungry. Instead, they want to interact by personalizing their consumers' experience.

Social media is an important aspect of any brand. According to HubSpot, social media are the most powerful tool of advertising, but you can't achieve a great result by simply creating a page and publish posts. You need to have a two-way conversation with your audience on social media and monitor your progress using your insights.<sup>1</sup>

### **What is social media monitoring?**

Social media monitoring is the process of listening out for social media conversations that are relevant to your brand. Some of the reasons that businesses choose social media monitoring are to connect with their customers, provide customer support, measure their social media impact or follow the social media trends. In order to do so, they are using monitoring tools to collect social mentions, track keywords, hashtags and links that are relevant to their industry. This is why social media monitoring is also known as **social listening**.<sup>2,3</sup> Social monitoring is actually the way to gather all the information about what people are posting about you, while social listening is more active and strategic since it entails analysing the data deriving from monitoring.<sup>3</sup>

### **Top 12 Free Social Media Monitoring Tools**<sup>4</sup>

1. [Keyhole](#)
2. [Hootsuite](#)
3. [Twitter Counter](#)
4. [Digimind](#)
5. [TweetReach](#)
6. [Sprout Social](#)
7. [Klout](#)
8. [Buzzlogix](#)
9. [Simply Measured](#)

<p>10. <a href="#">Zoho social</a></p> <p>11. <a href="#">Falcon io</a></p> <p>12. <a href="#">Buffer</a></p>
<p><b>Action Type</b></p> <p>Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without requiring an investment.</p>
<p><b>Connected Actions</b></p> <p>-</p>
<p><b>Time required to implement a solution and when possible associated cost</b></p> <p>Time: Up to 1 month Cost: Little to none</p>
<p><b>Positive and Negative Part of the Solution</b></p> <p><b>Positive:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing a personal relationship with the customer as a part of the business' customer service policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Negative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The exclusive use of social media as a marketing strategy, won't have the desired results sales-wise</li> </ul>
<p><b>Estimated Exploitation</b></p> <p>When this action integrated alone has a little change on the conversion rate, only 0,69% increase.</p>
<p><b>ICT Competence</b></p> <p>Intermediate</p>
<p><b>English Language Skills</b></p> <p>Intermediate</p>
<p><b>Webshop Level</b></p> <p>Established</p>
<p><b>Informative Text (Sources)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edgecomb, C. (2017, March 27). Social Media Marketing: The Importance of a Two-Way Conversation, retrieved from <a href="https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/social-media-marketing-the-importance-of-a-two-way-conversation">https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/social-media-marketing-the-importance-of-a-two-way-conversation</a></li> <li>2. Lua, A. (2018, April 30). <i>Are You Listening? The 20 Best Social Media Monitoring Tools</i>, retrieved from <a href="https://blog.bufferapp.com/social-media-monitoring-tools">https://blog.bufferapp.com/social-media-monitoring-tools</a></li> <li>3. Mathison, R. (2017, August 14). <i>15 of the Best Social Media Monitoring Tools for Business</i>, Hootsuite Blog, retrieved from <a href="https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-monitoring-tools/">https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-monitoring-tools/</a></li> <li>4. Sims, S. (2017, May 31). <i>12 of the Best Social Media Monitoring Tools to Consider</i>, retrieved from <a href="https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-business/12-best-social-media-monitoring-tools-consider">https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-business/12-best-social-media-monitoring-tools-consider</a></li> </ol>
<p><b>Additional Resources</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Social Media Marketing: The importance of a Two-Way Conversation</b> <a href="https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/social-media-marketing-the-importance-of-a-two-way-conversation">https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/social-media-marketing-the-importance-of-a-two-way-conversation</a></li> <li>2. <b>The 7 Undeniable Benefits of Social Media Monitoring for Brands</b> <a href="https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-monitoring/">https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-monitoring/</a></li> </ol>
<p><b>Cross Border remark</b></p> <p>Language barrier only in native language without linguistics. A proactive action would be the provision for a translated text message to the customer, having in mind his/her country of origin.</p>

## TITLE

# 6. Promotional techniques (discounted delivery costs, free delivery over threshold)

## ABSTRACT

It is always a good thing to provide mechanisms that support discounted delivery costs, or even free delivery costs if the order exceeds specific amount. All of big e-commerce companies have such mechanisms in order to encourage customers to buy more. For example, Amazon currently offers free shipping for orders above 10€ for most countries in Europe. Having that option on e-commerce website is more likely to have customers trying to meet the specific threshold in their shopping cart, which results in higher income for the company.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION

### **10 Sales Promotion Examples**<sup>1</sup>

#### **Examples #1: Do it like [Threadsense](#)!**

Launch successfully your product with pre-marketing. Threadsense has a 'Presale' section on their online store to promote products before they officially launch, so they can test their products online before selling them. This gives customers the impression of early access to great products and it also works well for dropshippers if you want to test products to see their popularity.

#### **Example #3: Do it like [Ript Appare!](#)**

Include a daily deals section on your website, presenting each day three new products on a discount that expires within 24 hours. The urgency of changing the products every days helps encourage people to keep coming back to the site to find a great deal.

#### **Example #4: Do it like [Miss Selfridge](#)!**

A great idea is to add 'Selling Fast' or 'Black Friday Offer' icon to create urgency and boost the performance of your sales. The fear of missing out (FOMO) provides an extra drive to encourage your customers to purchase.

#### **Example #5: Do it like [Svelte](#)!**

Svelte has a different approach when it comes to the sale section. On the top of the product image, it includes a filter that informs you about how much money you will save if you buy that specific product and when you hover over the product, you can see the actual cost. This method is not really proven to be effective for every website, but it's worth testing it on your own store.

#### **Example #6: Do it like [Ryder](#)!**

This site offers a 10% off for students, provided they get a discount card. There is a huge possibility to attract more students once your brand starts growing in popularity. Remember that students have a large network of friends who can promote your brand even more.

#### **Example #7: Do it like [Victoria's Secret](#)!**

This site is already quite popular in the fashion industry. Victoria's Secret store includes a 'Today's Offers' tab, where customers can find out the daily deals. It might also include free shipping, discounts on certain collections or limited edition collections, bundling deals or even freebies with purchases of specific products. This feature helps customers to find all the promotions in one place and provide a convenient customer experience.

**Example #8: Do it like [Daily Steals!](#)**

This store provides a free plus shipping feature. When adding this section, you should bear in mind that the shipping cost has to be realistic for your customers and that it might seem deceptive especially if the product cost isn't actually free, but incorporated into the shipping cost. However, the way that Daily Steals use this feature makes shipping cost seem legitimate, as they charge \$4.99 on average.

**Sales promotion tools<sup>1</sup>**

1. [Free Gifts](#) by Secomapp allows you to create special offers on your store. For example, if you want to run a Buy One Get One (BOGO) promotion, you can use this app. You can also run promotions such as 'buy (product) get 50% off (another product). Or buy a product and get a free gift. During the holiday season, you might offer a 'free gift' with purchase such as a bracelet, a low cost product. You can also run promotions such as 'buy 3 get one free' or 'spend \$150 and get a free gift.' When it comes to running sales and promotions on your store, this is one worth considering.
2. [Spin-a-Sale](#) is an exit intent discount spinner, where visitors can see a discount pop-up if failing to make a purchase. The spinner to get the discount is not available every time, which creates a sense of urgency to motivate the customers.
3. [Countdown Cart](#) by Beeketing creates urgency on your product pages with the help of a countdown timer. This timer showing that the sale ends soon can help drive more conversions as it can make them experience a fear of missing out.
4. [Product Discount](#) by Bold is an app that allows merchants to run daily deals, add timers and schedule sales.

**Action Type**

1. Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without an investment

**Connected Actions**

-

**Time required to implement a solution and when possible associated cost**

On-going - in order to keep the "offers fresh and enticing to customers.

**Positive and Negative Part of the Solution**

Positive:

- Encourage customers to purchase if they know and trust business policies. This will turn browsing into sales.

Negative:

- It takes time to constantly update the offers and to ensure that business processes are working as stated.

- Possible to become reliant on the freight haulage company who deliver the goods

**Estimated Exploitation**

Increased take up of the passing web traffic and better marketing will lead to more direct uptake.

**ICT Competence**

Basic

**English Language Skills**

Intermediate

**Webshop Level**

Established

**Informative Text (Sources)**

1. Oberlo blog, *10 Sales Promotion Examples and Ideas*, retrieved from <https://www.oberlo.com/ebooks/get-sales-dropshipping/sales-promotion#>

#### **Additional Resources**

1. **Conditional free shipping is a win for you and your customers**  
<https://www.tradegecko.com/blog/conditional-free-shipping-is-a-win-for-you-and-your-customers>
2. **Quick Guide to Offering Free Shipping As A Small Business**  
<https://blog.justuno.com/a-guide-to-making-free-shipping-feasible-for-small-businesses>
3. **Top ten Promotional Strategies** <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/top-ten-promotional-strategies-10193.html>
4. **11 Unique Sales Promotion Examples to Help You Stand Out and Attract Foot Traffic**  
<https://blog.vendhq.com/post/64901830936/sales-promotions-examples>
5. **The 10 Best Content Promotion Tools & Resources Around**  
<https://mention.com/blog/the-best-tools-resources-for-content-promotion/>
6. **How to Effectively Run a Sales Promotion** <https://rmi-solutions.com/blog/how-to-effectively-run-a-sales-promotion/>
- 7.

#### **Cross border remark**

Asking for referrals and testimonies from existing customers will boost sales, especially cross-border sales when testimonials originate from foreign customers.  
Free delivery and promotions will help get testimonials

<b>TITLE</b>
<b>7. Utilisation of m-Commerce</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>
<p>Mobile market is booming, so it is natural consequence to prepare e-commerce platforms for mobile devices. This poses however a whole new range of challenges, especially for mobiles. Implementing responsive web template is crucial and required, however it doesn't guarantee success. But if done properly it can generate a decent profit margin.</p> <p>We anticipate that these phenomena will continue to grow within the next few years. Therefore, it is important to understand the principals of m commerce to help you decide if its right for you at this moment in time or to prepare the way for future adoption.</p>
<b>GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC ACTION</b>
<p><b><u>Types of m-commerce</u></b></p> <p>Mobile commerce is a natural evolution of e-commerce and it is expected to increase e-commerce sales by 54% by 2021. Of course, there are different types of m-commerce that include: <sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobile shopping</li> <li>- Mobile banking</li> <li>- Mobile payments</li> </ul> <p><b><u>5 steps to create an impactful strategy</u></b> <sup>2</sup></p> <p>The first thing you should keep in mind is that e-commerce cannot be replaced entirely by m-commerce. All you have to do is to adapt the interface for making it easier for mobile users, as in smartphones and tablets the navigation and customer interaction are totally different from the websites designed for desktops. Follow these five tips and be confident to create your own m-commerce strategy:</p> <p><b>1. Unique client:</b> your e-commerce and m-commerce features should interact with each other. This means that your clients can start the buying process on their mobiles and finish it on their computers and vice versa. This is way for the customers to feel cared and unique as your website will recognize their selections and preferences.</p> <p><b>2. Geolocation:</b> This is an attribute that any m-commerce strategy should exploit. It is important for your clients to know if there is any store close by and if this store has availability of the products they select. Give them the feeling that you are near and there if they need you.</p> <p><b>3. Optimized information:</b> Provide your mobile customers with all the product and service details including images, technical specifications, stock availability, information about purchase decision. Keep only the details that matter.</p> <p><b>4. E-Commerce and m-commerce integration:</b> Keep the infrastructure and date the same both for your e-commerce and m-commerce sites.</p> <p><b>5. Website or App:</b> Conduct research to define your business needs and your clients' characteristics, as well as the overall market needs and trends, so you can make a decision of creating a website or an app. However, the advantage of an app is that it can provide a user experience that is similar to catalogues, so that customers can interact more.</p>

### **5 tips to improve your m-commerce strategy**<sup>3</sup>

If you want to increase even more your ROI, here are some valuable tips that are going to improve your mobile strategy:

**1. Focus on the cart:** When designing the interface and environment, do not forget about the shopping cart. Users feel uncomfortable when they have to go through too many screens to proceed to their purchase.

**2. Mobile is the new social:** Mobile can be regarded as the default platform for social media, as users access their media mostly through their mobiles. Therefore, it is important to link your social media posts to mobile-optimized landing pages.

**3. Design email for mobile:** Your email campaigns have to be optimized for mobile since 76% of all consumers use their smartphones to sort their emails before reading them on a computer.

**4. Paying for mobile PPC:** Based on Google's recent changes for mobile 'Pay-Per-Click', you have no longer the ability to split your budget between different devices. Therefore, in order to avoid paying per clicks that will not lead to a purchase, it is important for your search ads to send consumers directly to the product page on your mobile site.

**5. Avoid the same mistakes:** Looking back at online history and e-commerce strategies, you will realize that a successful m-commerce strategy includes multiple channels. Take some time to ensure that you implemented all the above tips so you will not spend the next few years catching up.

#### **Action Type**

4. Actions that have prerequisites (other actions need to be implemented first) and require investment

#### **Connected Actions**

1. Email Marketing
5. Communication Monitoring and responding via social media

#### **Time required to implement a solution and when possible associated cost**

Up to several months

#### **Positive and Negative Part of the Solution**

Positive:

- Opens up a whole new way for people to buy the products.

Negative:

- Not everyone is confident about mobile purchasing at the moment.
- There is still a high degree of uncertainty about security and mobile technology.

#### **Estimated Exploitation**

Possible new markets

#### **ICT Competence**

Basic

#### **English Language Skills**

Intermediate

#### **Webshop Level**

Established

#### **Informative Text (Sources)**

1. Mali, N. (2018). *Your M-Commerce Deep Dive: Data, Trends and What's Next in the Mobile Retail Revenue World*, Big Commerce blog, retrieved from <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/mobile-commerce/#why-does-mobile-commerce-matter>
2. Hermida, N. (2016). *Be smart with phones and tables: how to create an impactful mobile commerce strategy*, retrieved from <https://www.diligent.es/how-to-create-an-impactful-mobile-commerce-strategy/#>
3. Ganelli, C. *5 tips to improve mobile commerce strategy*, retrieved from <https://www.retaildive.com/ex/mobilecommercedaily/5-tips-to-improve-mobile-commerce-strategy>

#### **Additional Resources**

1. How to develop an effective m-commerce strategy <https://www.marketingmag.com.au/hubs-c/develop-effective-m-commerce-strategy/>
2. The future of Mobile Commerce: 10 Trends, 37+ Stats & Three Case Studies <https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/mobile-commerce-future-trends>
3. Examples of Mobile Commerce <https://www.techwalla.com/articles/examples-of-mobile-commerce>
4. Top 13 Mobile Commerce Platforms <https://www.predictiveanalyticstoday.com/best-mobile-commerce-applications/>
5. 3 Steps to Launching A Successful M-Commerce Application <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jiawertz/2017/06/01/3-steps-launching-successful-m-commerce-application/#c36269f2db36>
6. Strategic Recommendations for Mobile Commerce <https://www.mobify.com/insights/strategic-recommendations-for-mobile-commerce/>

#### **Cross border remark**

The importance of m-commerce in e-Commerce is reflected on all recent studies. Adoption will boost sales, both domestic and cross-border.