

How to Create a Money Making Shopify Store for Fun and Profit

After working 20 years on e-commerce websites including Shopify stores, I find myself giving the same advice to many entrepreneurs. My hope is that this guide will help you avoid the mistakes made by beginner Shopify store owners. I've seen countless people fail miserably with their stores, even after paying \$4k+ for some "genius" to give them a plan. Let's "fix" your store and work together to automate, scale and repeat!



Domain Name

I've never seen a profitable store that did not have a custom domain name. I'd suggest getting a domain name from Godaddy which will cost you from \$10 to \$15 per year. You do NOT need any of the Godaddy "up-sell" services. Stick with the basic Domain Name Registration service and use the Shopify Admin control panel to point your domain from Godaddy to your Shopify Store.

See my Domain Name guide for more details on how to find a great domain name.



Choose a niche

One of the most commonly “broken” Shopify stores I see is a website with random items that looks like a garage sale of unwanted items.

People have a variety of options to purchase the things they want and need every day. If you can create a niche store for like-minded people, you can get people to buy from you based on an emotional decision and feel good about supporting your store.

Here are some niches I'd recommend:

1. Stuff for your Pets
2. Stuff for your Kids
3. Cell Phone Accessories
4. Computer Accessories
5. Sci-Fi Movie Fans
6. Social Justice Warriors / Social Issues
7. Political Gear
8. Light Up Gear
9. Office Desk Toys / Bling
10. Religious Store
11. Gear for Single/divorced/married people
12. Gear for entrepreneurs, closers, salespeople or other specific job titles
13. Musical Instruments
14. Smokers
15. Sports Fan Gear (I would do one specific team per website)
16. Your Favorite Hobby or Sport

A fantastic niche would be something you are passionate about such as playing the electric guitar. You are more likely to sell a product if you have the first-hand experience with the item, hopefully with a video, compared only showing the stock manufacturer photos on your website.

Would you rather go to a restaurant with a nice website or five-star reviews?

Having a detailed description of the items on your store is not as persuasive than a video of someone using that product and giving their honest opinion about that item.

If you have two interests such as being a Washington Redskins Superfan and also YOGA, you are more likely to have success with two separate stores compared to having two categories on the same store.

Passion Stores

If you are building a store for your passion, I'd suggest only choosing products for your store you would personally use and recommend. It may be tempting to offer high-profit items that you would not recommend yourself, but remember the best stores have a loyal following and make multiple sales. Buy the product yourself and demonstrate it to your followers.

Money Stores and Market Testing

If you are building a store for profit, you will need to understand the needs of your target audience and give them what they want. If you are **ONLY** focusing on **MAKING** money, your prospects will know it. Your mindset should be to offer products of value to **EARN** money by adding value.

Sometimes you aren't sure **which** niche to offer. You can do a market test to see what may work best for you! It's a pretty simple concept but a widely underused technique to market test niches or market test products within a specific niche.

Select between 2 and 20 items in different niches that you think will work. I'd recommend 5 items as I find it offers a balance of variety while still being small enough but put in good effort into each one.

Create 5 Facebook Ads (spending the same amount on each) or post 5 Craigslist Ads offering each of the different items. Whichever product gets the best response is your "winner". Stop selling products with very little response and focus on whatever is working the best!



Getting Started with Marketing

Once you are confident in your niche and product options and want to put in the effort, there are a few common foundation marketing techniques I'd suggest for most stores.

1. Make sure your store's domain name matches your store's focus
2. Create a Facebook Business Page
3. Create an Instagram Business Profile
4. Create a Pinterest Profile
5. Post videos with people using your gear on YouTube
6. Post a few blog articles about your gear
7. Get customer reviews (hopefully video)
8. Drive traffic using paid and free sources
9. Analyze, modify and scale up



After doing the above items, you can “open” your store and start driving traffic which may take some time. Here are some more advanced marketing techniques that I would recommend if you have the capability or budget to hire someone to complete these tasks.

1. Add a Facebook Pixel - This will allow you to “retarget” people on Facebook
2. Add google analytics to measure your traffic and track your progress
3. Add MailChimp newsletter and shopping cart abandonment automated emails
4. Add a post-checkout upsell
5. Add a Tawk Chat to your website to answer questions and give prospects confidence
6. Add a customer support phone number to your website. I like to use a different number for each website or service, so when I receive a phone call, I can answer the phone with the right website name.
7. Add HotJar heatmaps and visitor recording to track visitor activity on the website.
8. Create a featured item on your homepage for your best selling item and to give the visitor focus.



All customers are selfish

Probably the most common mistake I will see is a headline that says, “Joe’s Store! Best Deals on the Internet”. To me, that says, “Yet another store.” If I click on a Star Wars Ad and go to a website that says, “Unique Star Trek Gifts for the Ultimate Fan”, I’m thinking I’ll be able to buy myself a cool gift instead of supporting “Joe’s Store”

Most internet visitors will view your website for 2 seconds before deciding if they want to go to the next Google Search Result or read more on your website. I’m talking about a **literal** 2 seconds, not figurative. What the user sees as the main headline for the website is what you need to optimize to get them to stay on the page and read more. Saying that everything is “90% off” also goes in the “who care’s” category for me as well. So some random guy puts up a store, marks everything up 10X then gives 90% off? I immediately feel that this is a scam store that is playing games with the price... better click off immediately.

If I’m a mother and looking for toys for my 3-year-old son, and I see a store that says, “These 5 toys keeps my toddler busy all day” Now I’m interested, this is going to (selfishly) help me and solve a problem I have which is entertaining my 3-year old!

I’m a customer and I’m selfish. I don’t care if you donate 10% of the profits to some charity, I don’t care if your prices are 20% off because I’ve never been to your store before. I’m not going to go through dozens of your items to see if there is something there that interests me. You have 2 seconds of my time, show me something I want, or I’m going to spend my money somewhere else.

People buy from Shopify for Emotions

The two biggest motivating factors for purchasing something online is cost and emotions. If I wanted to buy an iPhone XR 128GB phone, I'm mostly shopping for price. If two stores have the exact same item for different prices, why wouldn't I choose the cheaper item?

- I may pay a little bit more to buy an item off my Amazon Prime account because I **feel** confident that my item will arrive quicker and more reliably that way.
- I may pay more for my iPhone from the Apple Store because I **feel** that I may have better support and don't have to worry that the item may be stolen compared to a private party.
- I'll pay \$4 for a coffee from Starbucks because it **feels** good to have a morning routine and get my Frappuccino exactly the way I want.
- I'll pay \$4 for a box of cookies because it **feels** good to support the Girl Scouts.

Are you getting this now? I can't stress using emotion in your marketing enough. Figure out what would motivate someone to purchase from you, and make sure they will **feel** good about that purchase. In my most successful businesses, I didn't offer my services at the cheapest rate. I would make sure my clients felt good about purchasing from me because I offered superior service, quality or reliability. I once had a competitor come to my office and scream at me because I was 30% more expensive but still making more sales! He thought I was cheating somehow and didn't understand **price isn't everything!**

Reasons People will Purchase from You

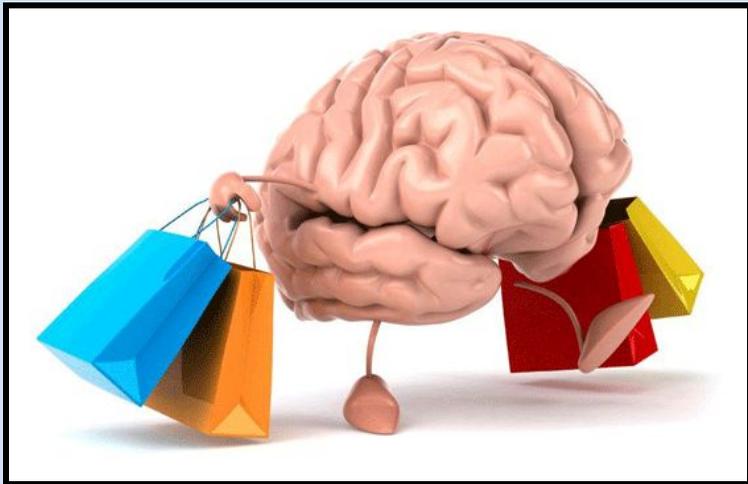
Your product **solves my problem**. Your cell phone cases will protect my phone when I drop it or wrench will help me fix my leaky faucet. Describe the problem and demonstrate how your product will solve that problem.

You have **similar beliefs** and they want to support you because you both love the Philadelphia Eagles, are both Catholic or play the oboe. Let the shopper know who you are as a person and connect with you.

You have a **unique product** such as a coffee mug of a Unicorn punching a tax collector or a bumper sticker that says, "I climbed Mt. Washington." You could also have rare items such as a guitar signed by Bruce Springsteen or a baseball from a World Series.

You have a **shared cause** that people want to support and the item is not as relevant. School Bands sell snacks for fundraising that are outrageously priced, but you may purchase anyway to help the local school attend a conference.

You have **added value** to a product. This could be as simple as sharing your personal experience of using the product. You have saved the shopper time by evaluating the product themselves. If there are many common options in the marketplace, you can offer your opinion and share the differences between the different option. Customization such as engraving or personalizing also adds value.



You have **removed risk** for purchasing your product. Typically these are 30-Day money back guarantees. Many store owners are very worried that people will purchase a product or service, and say they don't like it just to avoid paying. I would say this is true, but my experience is that you will get 10 people more buyers for every 1 scammer. Even if people intend on asking for a refund when they make the purchase, they may change their mind, be convinced of the value after the purchase, or forgot to request the refund. You can do everything right and still have to issue a refund. Assume that a small number of purchasers will be unethical and plan accordingly.

You are an **authority** on the niche. If you are a certified nutritionist and have helped hundreds of people lose weight and you have a book and video helping people to lose weight, you have established yourself as an authority.

You are a **celebrity**! If you have a popular TV Show or YouTube Channel with many followers, people may buy from you because they have watched you for some time, and feel confident in your opinions.



You have the **lowest price**. Unless you have special access to a product or service, you will be in business just long enough for someone else to copy you and sell for slightly less. This is my least favorite reason and one you should avoid. If you said, “lowest price on the internet”, I may research other websites to find the same item. If it’s cheaper somewhere else, I’m not buying from you. Even if you do happen to have the lowest price, make sure you also include another reason to purchase from you.

If the only reason to buy from you is your low price, you will eventually fail.

Avoid the Sales Gimmicks

There are some great plugins for Shopify that advertise that they will “increase sales” if you install them. However, as consumers become more and more educated and experienced last month’s bells and whistles may seem like tacky and gimmicky sales trick this month.

It seems like most the stores offer limited time offer sales if you buy right away. I understand that your goal is to create urgency in the sale, but what happens if someone returns to your store a week later and see the same countdown timer? While people may make a purchase based on emotion, a negative emotion will ensure they will NEVER purchase from you again. Many times, people will need to return to your store 10 times over several weeks before they make a purchase.



Rather than offering every item for a discount, I'd suggest offering one or just a few items at a discount. Switch the discounted item once per week or once per month and advertise just that one product. Your goal should be to get people to return to your store and make multiple purchases. If everything is discounted, nothing is discounted.

Instead of offering a limited time discount offer, I'd recommend doing an "added" limited time offer. First-time visitors get free shipping. Buy in the next hour and you will get an eBook or sticker completely free. If you keep offering discounts, people will just wait for the next best discount. If you have an add-on bonus, it seems more likely that the bonus could be taken away at any time.

Avoid the "some guy just purchased" popup. It's annoying and distracting. If you have what looks like a startup store, very few reviews and you see popups that "someone" is purchasing every few seconds, you will look unauthentic and sleazy. People sort of know that these popups will generate random fake people until real sales are made.

Avoid popups that happen when you first arrive at the website that covers the screen. They are distracting and if I'm a first time visitor, I don't even know what your store is selling before you are asking me to join your newsletter. Seems desperate and not the tone of a store I want to make my purchase.

Create a Newsletter

So you have gone through all of the steps to get someone to visit your store, be interested in your product, but maybe they will need to think about it some more. They may bookmark your page. They may forget to come back and finish their purchase.

One of the most powerful tools for the past 20 years has been the newsletter. If you can get someone to join your email list, you can market to them every day to stay on their minds and remain connected with them. It takes some work to schedule an email every day, but well worth it.

Shopify has multiple tools for the “abandoned cart” email newsletter. You will want to ensure that people enter their name and email on the first step of your checkout form. When people see the second step of the checkout where they have to enter their credit card number, most people will stop and think. When you have the person’s contact information but not their credit card approval, this is considered an “abandoned cart”. You can send the abandoned cart owner an email reminder in an hour and the next day, “Hey! I saw that you started to place an order. Use this code to finish your order for 10% off”.

While I don’t like a newsletter request popup to appear when I first arrive at a store, I do like an “exit intent” popup if the person is leaving. You are going to lose the sale anyways, so why not offer them a free newsletter to receive helpful information.

While it may cost you several dollars to get someone to visit your store the first time, sending out a newsletter is virtually free and lets you squeeze all of the sales out of your efforts to give you the most profit.

One technique in growing a business is having a “tripwire” product. You have a simple item which is at or below cost to get as many people as possible to join your newsletter. Your goal isn’t to make a profit now, it’s to make a profit later.



If you have a store selling computer accessories and you can sell a mousepad with the store name on it and break even, you are doing great! It is costing you no money to get mousepads on the desks of people who are interested in computer accessories who will see your store name every day. In addition, for each sale, you are likely to get 10 additional people to join your newsletter that didn’t finish their purchase. That’s fantastic! You can continue to make the mousepad sales until you have thousands of REAL emails of people that have specifically given you permission to contact them.

I've RARELY seen an email list that you can buy and instantly make a profit. Your best option is to create your own email list and do things the **right** way. Grow your store following, send interesting newsletters and stay in contact. The sales will come.

Summary

It's more common than you think to go through all the steps to create your Shopify store, create a great logo, load products into the database, connect your credit card processing, launch your Facebook Ads and then... crickets. This does not mean you have done anything wrong! Remember that most people online (and offline) are complete LIARS! I personally know "Gurus" that charge \$4K for their "sure-fire" way to make money online, when, in fact, less than 1% of their students will make more than their original investment.



If you are passionate and motivated to make money, you ABSOLUTELY can make money online. It's about making the right decisions, be open to being coached (and accept criticism) and offer something of value. Ensure that your website, ads, messaging and overall tone would make someone trust you, make a purchase from you, and feel good about that purchase.

(and here's the shameless plug you were expecting)

If you have followed my guides and still have problems, please email me directly at: hello@royharken.com.

Services I offer:

- Overall Business and Marketing Coaching
- Website Design including HTML, CSS, Javascript, and Liquid
- SEO - Search Engine Optimization - Getting ranked in Google
- CRO - Conversion Rate Optimization - Getting visitors to take action on your website
- Marketing Automation
- Video Creation
- Facebook Ads Management

Thank you for reading my guide!

Roy Harken

<https://RoyHarken.com>

(503) 389-3886

