

E-Commerce Workflow

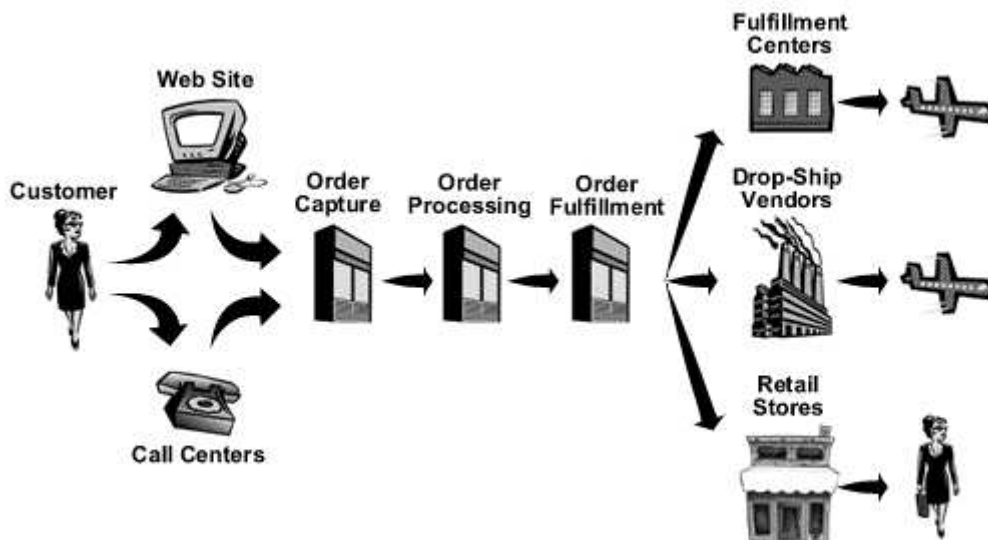
E-Commerce Opportunity Evaluation

1. Determine the business model (B2B, B2C).
2. Determine the customer base.
3. Evaluate the market size.
4. Determine the products that are eligible for web sale.
5. Determine the roles of the parties involved in the process (suppliers, fulfilment companies, payment processors, certificate authorities, customer service, 3rd party technology partners, etc).
6. If it is going to be a global business then, regulatory constraints in those different countries related to product selling, tax, etc should be considered.
7. Have insight on rival businesses that have gone through the same steps.
8. Determine which backend integrations (inventory, payment, accounting, fulfilment, customer service, etc) are crucial and initially required.
9. Evaluate technological requirements.
10. Evaluate in-house development capabilities and the need for 3rd party solution providers.
11. Evaluate the training needs.
12. Evaluate product prices, discounts, shipment options, payment options and sales tax that are feasible for web sale.
13. Evaluate ROI (return on investment) and determine whether it is feasible to go on or not.
14. Make an effective implementation plan.
15. Form a group of dedicated people that will own the business.
16. Setup an effective marketing campaign.
17. Determine up selling and cross selling options.
18. Closely monitor the site traffic and take new actions based on customer experiences and demographics.
19. Communicate effectively with customers based on this feedback.

Site Merchandising

1. Web site should be easy to navigate, fast, secure, informative and effective.
2. Determine the nature of goods (soft & hard) that are going to be sold on the site.
3. Determine the shipment, payment and tax options suitable to the nature of goods.
4. Determine the site layout, product categories, promotions, etc.
5. Determine the number of SKUs (initially and after one year).
6. Determine affiliations and virtual communities.

7. Provide interfaces for merchant setup, site administration, etc.
8. Provide merchant interfaces for the creation and population of product pages.
9. Determine search methods based on product category, price, keyword, brand, product number or content.
10. Customer registration. Unregistered customers should also be able to use the site. Registration should be promoted by discounts, coupons, etc.
11. Site personalization for registered users.
12. Custom checkout screen. Multiple shipment and multiple payment options, gift wrap, customer and merchant notification.
13. Customer support interfaces for order tracking.
14. Tools for shopping experience, hit and buy evaluation, up & cross selling.
15. Ideally, site should have backend integrations with inventory, accounting, payment, fulfillment and customer support services for minimum manual intervention.
16. Processes should be designed to reduce operational costs.
17. Underlying architecture should be flexible and scalable enough to support rapidly changing business models.



A typical Commerce Site Traffic

Steps Involved in a Typical Commerce Site

Shopping Experience

- Customer browses the web site.
- Chooses the product, payment and delivery options.
- Checks out.

Order Capture

- Inventory availability
- Product pricing
- Sales tax calculation
- Shipping method & price
- Validate order
- Determine whether online credit card verification will be done or not
- Allocate inventory
- Accept order
- Notify customer & merchant

Order Fulfillment

- Determine whether fulfillment will be handled internally or externally
- Determine whether orders will be fulfilled from single or multiple locations
- Route order
- Print packing slip
- Pick & pack
- Logistics
- Payment settlement
- Order status change notification

Order Processing

- Determine whether partial shipments are accepted or not
- Determine whether product will be allocated prior to credit card authorisation
- Update customer file
- Update inventory file
- Determine closest warehouse
- Process order
- If orders are going to be batched, then determine the frequency of the processing

Shipping

- Integrated shipping
- Drop shipping
- International shipping
- Fulfilling by zip code
- Integrations with various 3rd party shipping companies

Customer Files

- Gathering customer data through user registration, shopping habits.

Payment Systems

- Setting up merchant accounts with payment processors
- Integrations with payment processors
- Required types of credit card authorisation (real time or batch)
- Security (SSL, SET)
- Certificate management.
- Determine whether credit card authorisation will be done prior to confirming inventory availability.
- Determine whether alternative payment methods such as micro payments, coupons, purchase cards, proprietary cards and gift certificates will be used or not.

Customer Service

- Customers should be provided with an easy to use interface to query their orders. Ideally, this interface should provide access to all 3rd parties participating in the process in order to minimise phone calls.

Accounting

- Integration with the current accounting system in order to access all financial input and output from a single point of view.

Returns

- Determine and implement a “return policy” for total customer satisfaction.