

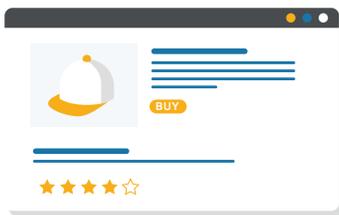
Setting up your Online Shop

BC Tech's 10 Top Tips for e-commerce

What is e-commerce? Buying and selling goods or services online

More than ever, you need to offer online shopping

- Opportunity to reach more customers and business outside of your local community
- Creates business efficiencies - less time and resources to complete transactions
- Improves your customer experience through a hybrid shopping model - the ability to shop online and pick up in-store



1. Choose the right technology

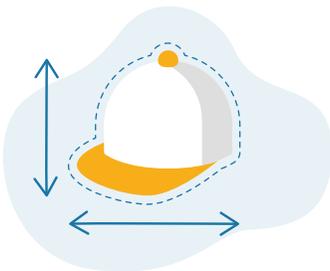
There are many platforms out there to choose from that can host your new online shop, such as Shopify, WooCommerce and Squarespace. Make sure you choose a platform that will suit your business needs and technological ability. Considerations to think about include: how simple it is to set up and maintain, pricing options and payment gateways.



2. Invest in good photography

Your customers can't experience the products first hand so it is important that you provide good quality photographs of your products or services. It is good to use multiple angle shots with the ability to zoom. You can source quality photos in various ways, such as holding a photoshoot or contacting the manufacturer to see if they have images you can use.

PRO TIP: *Improve your site by including photos of people to add a human factor to display the product or service in its natural 'environment'*



3. Include detailed specs

Make sure you write engaging copy that describes the product or services and includes the detailed specifications. Consider all the details and ask yourself 'what features are my customers looking for?'. Missing a key piece of information could mean the difference between closing a sale and having the customer leave your site 'to think about it'.



4. Plan time to load your products

It sounds obvious but this can be a big job when setting up a new site and you should plan sufficient time. If you determine that it takes approximately 5 minutes to load one product and you have 500 products, you'll need to budget 2,500 minutes - just over a week of a full-time member of staff - to get this done.

5. Don't forget these all-important sections

About us, contact us, return policy, and shipping info are all key bits of information your customer will want to know about so ensure you include this on your new online store. It is also important to have the back-office operations set up before launching such as shipping and fulfillment, packaging and sales inserts, and handling customer inquiries.

PRO TIP: *Bring a personal touch to your site and provide your own story, showcasing who is behind the store.*

6. Start small

Don't get bogged down trying to create a huge, high-end website with thousands of products at the beginning. Why not start small and upload your best selling items or services to first to gauge customer interest. The beauty of technology is that it allows you to try things quickly and economically and then make improvements based on your learnings.

7. Hiring a pro: Is it worth it?

Investing in experts such as developers, marketers, and creatives can drastically improve the success of your online store, improving the quality, ROI and time-to-market. Experts can help you with setting up the new store site, choosing the right layout and brand, and marketing your new site.

8. Treat your online store like a new location you are about to open

A new online store is just like a physical store and your goal is for your customers to be able to purchase from you easily with minimal friction or roadblocks. Your new online store will require sufficient staffing, attention, and resources and well as regular re-shelves to keep it enticing.

9. Be creative- what other experiences can move online?

Online demos, virtual fittings, online appointment bookings for in-store fittings, or transitioning in-store events to online are all great ways to engage your customers without being face-to-face. Get creative!

10. Marketing marketing marketing

A new online store is completely invisible until it is revealed online through digital marketing. In a highly crowded marketplace, you need to stand out. Social media, email marketing, paid adverts are all great ways to reach new customers.

PRO TIP: *Think about how you can foster repeat purchases: "refer a friend" deals or exclusive offers can be a great way to do this.*

