



7 Problems Ecommerce Websites Face & How to Fix Them

CATALYST.

Having helped both B2C and B2B **ecommerce websites improve sales by 63% on average**, we know a thing or two about optimising ecommerce websites for success.

You may already be aware of the issues your website is facing, or you may be a little at a loss. Whatever stage you're at, this guide is designed to help you make the most out of your ecommerce website, boosting sales, driving more traffic and getting the ROI you need from your website.

We'll be running through 7 problems that many ecommerce websites face, and what you need to do to rectify them.

Let's get started!

On average
ecommerce websites
improve sales by:





Ecommerce Problem 1

High bounce rates

Your website's bounce rate is the percentage of people who leave after visiting only one page.

If potential customers don't immediately like what they see, they'll head elsewhere.

On average, only 10-30% of people who bounce from a website return. This means that, as soon as someone's bounced off your website, they're unlikely to come back, especially if they've had a better experience and purchased from a competitor's website already.

The main two things that cause customers to bounce are:

- Slow loading times.
- Confusing navigation.

If your ecommerce website isn't properly optimised and built to drive sales, then it won't perform to its potential. A good ecommerce website's bounce rate sits at around 20-45% (depending on the industry).

The Solution?

You should split this process into two steps: improving your website's navigation, and optimising it to improve its speed.

Improving your navigation

Bad navigation isn't just a problem for bounce rates – getting lost in a website is frustrating. Yes, people will leave your site, but they'll also leave with a poor impression of your brand.

Good navigation is key. Click through your website, see if the route to purchase makes sense. We also recommend installing plugins such as Hotjar, which show you exactly how visitors to your site are using it.

This will show you where people get lost and eventually exit the site, which is invaluable information.

From there, we recommend:

- **Cutting out unnecessary options** – You can have too much of a good thing, make sure your nav is as simple and streamlined as possible.
- **Keep visuals clear and uncluttered** – Avoid excessive logos, emblems and iconography, this only serves to make the process more confusing for potential customers. Simple clear text with small icons is the way to go!
- **Prominently feature your high-priority pages** – Make sure that your most important products or critical landing pages are featured first. After all, that's where you're making your money!



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Improving your website's speed

Ideal website load times sit around 1-2 seconds, with Google preferring speeds of around 0.5 seconds.

53% of site visits abandon the page they're on if they take longer than 3 seconds to load – we're all used to having things instantly!

Knowing that, it's clear why having a fast ecommerce site is important. Faster site = more sales, it's as simple as that.

So, to improve your site's speed, we recommend:

- **Optimising imagery** – You can use certain formats (such as Webp or AVIF) to optimise your images as much as possible without impacting quality, meaning there's less data to load.
- **Cleaning your code** – Does your website use loads of scripts on page load, and are they all needed? When we delve into the backend of many of our clients' old websites, we find loads of unnecessary, data-hungry scripts that can be either removed or tidied.
- **Lazy load** – This is a technique commonly used to help speed up load times. Lazy load stops objects from initialising until they're absolutely needed, meaning your website is only ever activating what's needed at any given time.

Get both your navigation and site speed spot on, and you should see your bounce rates dramatically decrease!

Ecommerce Problem 2

Cart abandonment

There's nothing worse – losing right at the finish line. Once you've got a potential sale to this stage, they're already committed to buying; you really don't want to lose them here!

People abandon their carts for all sorts of reasons. Including:

- A lengthy or complicated checkout process.
- Unexpected fees (postage, service, etc.).
- A lack of trust in your website's security.

What should you do to reduce cart abandonment?

Depending on your industry, cart abandonment rates can be as high as 60-80%, but there are things that you can do to help get these sales across the line.



The Solution?

Make your checkout as simple as possible.

- Don't make a customer register in full if they don't have to, offer a guest checkout where they only have to register necessary information.
- Cut out any unnecessary steps, such as forms with too many fields, or overly complex captchas/security challenges.
- Be flexible with payment methods; include things like Klarna and digital wallets (buy now, pay later has grown in popularity by 68%, as well as apps like PayPal and Apple Pay growing by 274% and 70% respectively).
- Make any fees clear on the product pages so they're not a nasty surprise at checkout.
- Prominently feature reviews and testimonials, both throughout the site, but also at checkout.
- Make sure you demonstrate your security principles (Cyber Essentials, etc.).

No matter what you do, you'll always have a few abandoned carts.

For these, you should ensure that automated remarketing is set up. This sends those with abandoned carts targeted messages to help bring them back to finish their purchase.

Remarketing is a great place to feature offers and discount codes to bring people back in.



Ecommerce Problem 3

Low conversion rates

Average ecommerce website conversion rates sit around 2–4% depending on your industry.

If your web experience is poor, it'll sit below this range. You can work out your conversion rate by taking the number of conversions, dividing this by the total number of visitors and multiplying this by 100.

Say you have 5000 visitors to your website, and you convert 200 of these visitors:
 $(200 / 5000) * 100 = 4\%$.

Low conversion rates can be caused by a range of things, including:

- Poor bounce rates (as mentioned in point 1).
- Not enough proof points (reviews, testimonials).
- Poor product imagery that doesn't properly show off the product.
- A lack of FAQs (which are a great way to ensure potential customers don't need to go elsewhere to find answers).
- Comparisons between you and competitors (they'll likely have found you through Google, which means they'll have access to plenty of comparison!) – how do your prices/services stack up?

These are not the only reasons people click away before converting, but it gives you some ideas as to what might be going wrong.



The Solution?

Conversion rate optimisation.

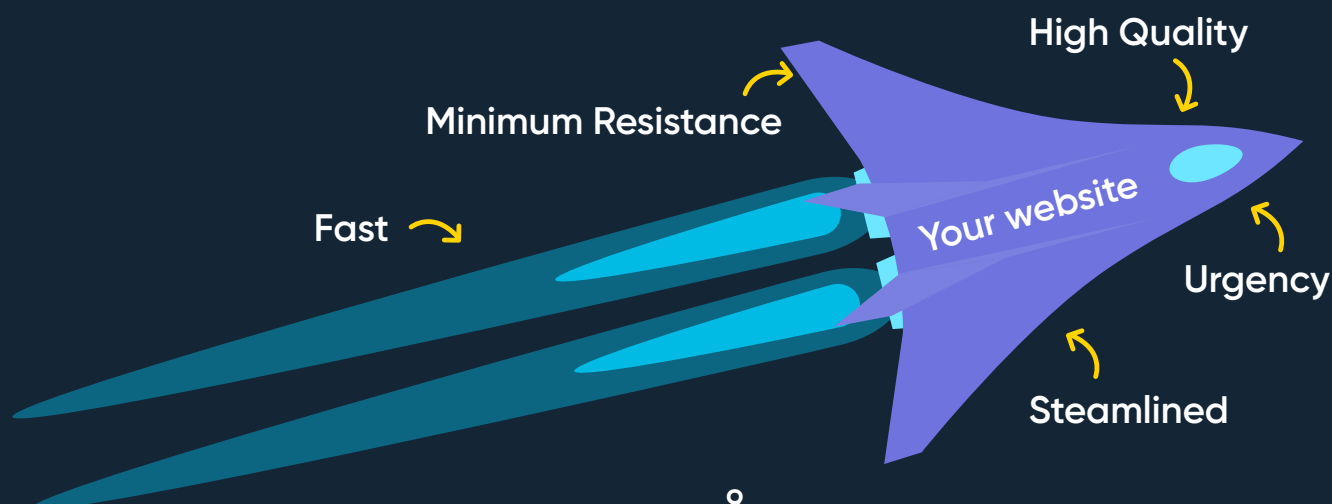
We talk a lot about conversion rate optimisation, it's important for literally every ecommerce website on Earth.

No conversions = no income, it's as simple as that.

As a result, we recommend:

- **Write clear, concise product descriptions** – these should include the benefits of your products and other key information. Keep these as short as possible – people won't read them otherwise.
- **Factoring in a sense of urgency** – perhaps a sale, countdown or low stock indicator. All of these techniques have shown to work in improving ecommerce conversion.
- **Use social proof** – this might be user-generated imagery or testimonials from social media/other avenues.
- **Personalised product recommendations** – if the visitor doesn't purchase the product they're looking at, is there anything else that may interest them?
- **Ensuring that imagery is of the highest quality** – sight is our most potent sense, so your website should take advantage of this!
- **Creating explainer videos where appropriate** – this is a great way to show off your product/convince someone to buy.

In addition to all of the above, you'll also want to remove any friction from your website, in the same way that we did to help reduce your bounce rate (everything is connected, after all!).



Ecommerce Problem 4

Customer trust – are you credible?

How do potential customers know that they can trust your brand?

If they've never shopped with you before, and you give them no real reason to trust your brand, then why would they?

Studies conducted by the Baymard Institute found that trust signals like security badges, customer reviews and clear return policies can contribute to higher user trust and increased conversions.

We've browsed many ecommerce sites, both as customers, and as professionals. You'd be astonished how many sites don't feature testimonials, security details, customer support options, or other basic trust-forming measures.

Bigger brands with trusted names can get away with this – your SME probably can't.



The Solution?

There are a few ways you can build trust with potential customers, including:

- Prominently featuring customer testimonials (noticing a trend here? Testimonials are incredibly important!).
- Getting customers to review your products, both on your website, but also on third party review sites such as Google Reviews.
- Providing a clear, easy way for customers to get in touch with your customer support. This can be via a support email, online chat or a chatbot.
- Include safety certifications on your website.

Once someone has made a purchase, we recommend gently encouraging them to leave a review. Perhaps offer an incentive in the form of a discount or loyalty card, and provide a link to where you'd like them to review your product, making the review process as simple as possible.

This can be fully automated, saving you time while generating reviews.



Ecommerce Problem 5

Poor mobile sales

Mobile-first design is more important than ever, with Google ranking your site based on mobile friendliness and performance.

Poor mobile performance = poor search engine performance. It's essential that your website works properly on mobile.

Not only this, but roughly three quarters of adults say that they prefer shopping online via their phone.

That's an astonishingly high number, and one that you cannot ignore. 57% of internet users say they won't recommend a business with a poorly designed website on mobile, meaning that, if your ecommerce website is poorly optimised for mobile, you'll be missing out on sales. It's as simple as that.



The Solution?

Fully optimising your website for mobile. It should be responsive, easy to use and quick to load.

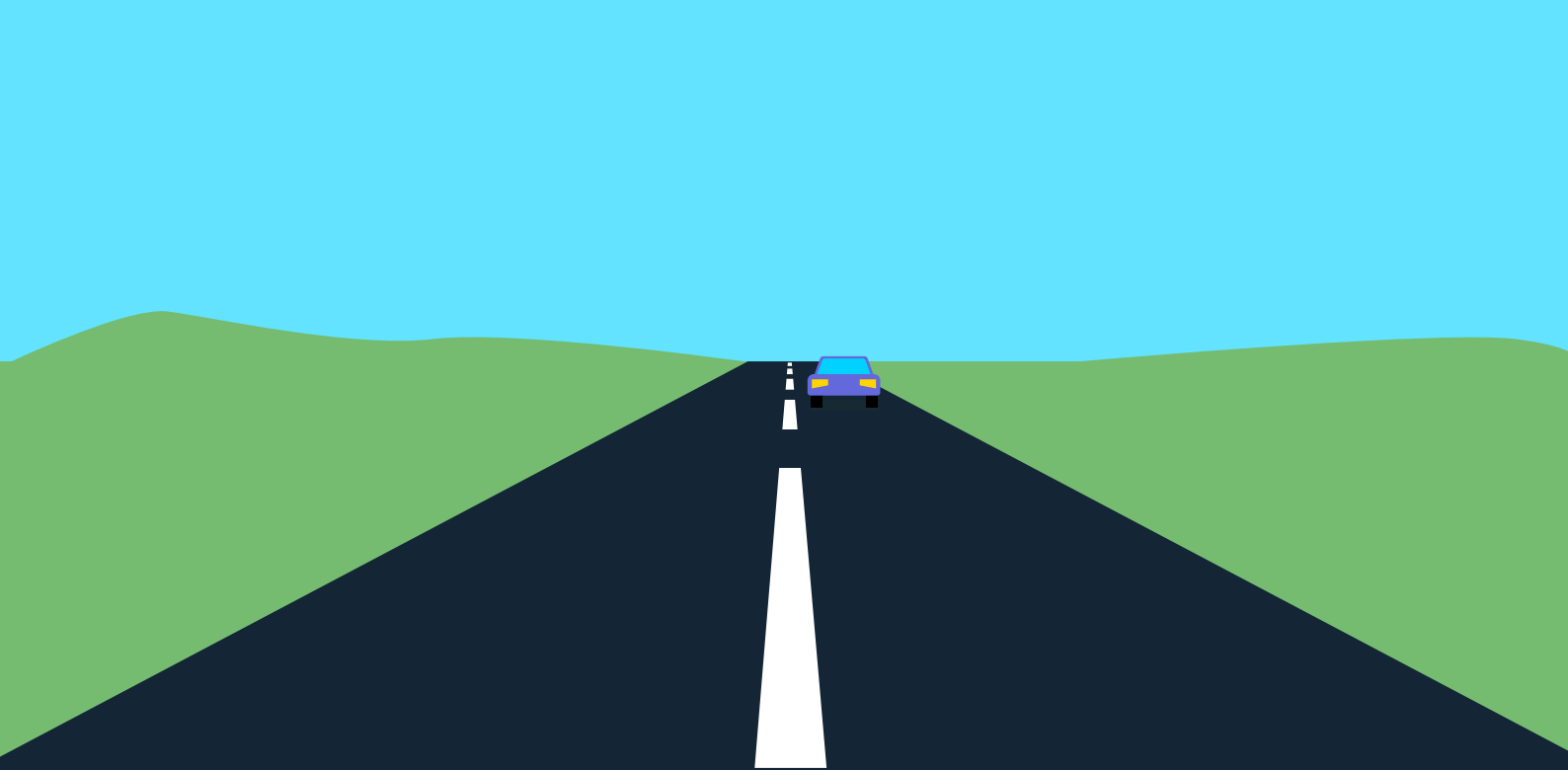
To achieve this, you should:

- Simplify your navigation in a mobile-friendly way. Many websites' navigation fail to translate nicely to mobile.
- Make your CTA buttons large and easy to tap.
- Boost the size of your text.
- Optimise your imagery for mobile. If you fail to do this, images can appear misshapen or parts will not show properly.

You might also decide to develop an ecommerce app, providing a place for your customers to buy, track their orders, access customer service and more, all from one convenient app!

Studies show that having a mobile app can give your business a competitive advantage over competitors who do not offer one. Often, people will pay a slight premium for convenience; use this to your advantage and make your ecommerce process as simple as possible.





Ecommerce Problem 6

A lack of traffic, or not bringing in the right people

This is one of the problems we hear about all the time. 'Nobody's visiting my site, how am I supposed to sell?'

Businesses either have limited visibility on search engines, or they have visibility, but attract visitors with the wrong intent.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is essential. You can bet money on the fact that your competitors are not neglecting their SEO, meaning that, over time, they'll start outranking you in search engines.

If you're not on the first page of Google, your website may as well not exist, so investing in SEO is really important.

You also need to balance this with pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, where you pay to place your ads at the top of Google search results.

The Solution?

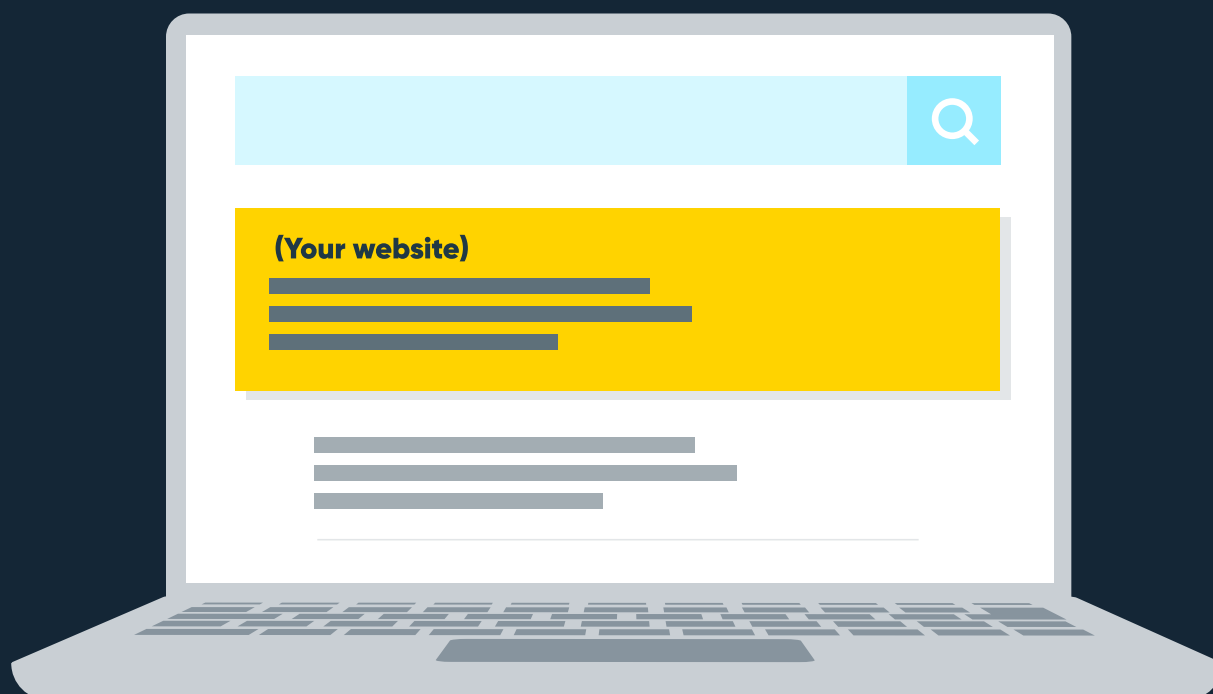
To succeed, you need both SEO (the long game) and PPC (the short game).

You can learn more about the difference between search engine optimisation and pay-per-click by [clicking here](#).

Generally speaking, for ecommerce, we recommend:

- Putting together a comprehensive SEO plan, mapping out target keywords and how you're going to start ranking for them. You should focus on optimising/improving your website, and producing content that helps drive traffic.
- Focusing your PPC on your key products and optimising your PPC ads to ensure that you're attracting the right people who are ready to buy.

You may also consider online or social ads. By developing a quality buyer profile, you can target the right people with the right message at the right time, helping driving more, better traffic. This leads us quite nicely onto our final problem...



Ecommerce Problem 7

Not understanding your audience

How well do you *really* understand your audience?

Many ecommerce businesses don't take the time to put together a comprehensive buyer persona, which may well be why your website isn't converting as well as you'd like.

Any good websites, but especially ecommerce ones, are built with the target audience in mind at all times.

If you're not analysing your metrics (buyer demographic, intent, etc.), then you're never going to see the results you want.



The Solution?

There are a few things that you can do to help get a better understanding of your buyers and their thought processes.

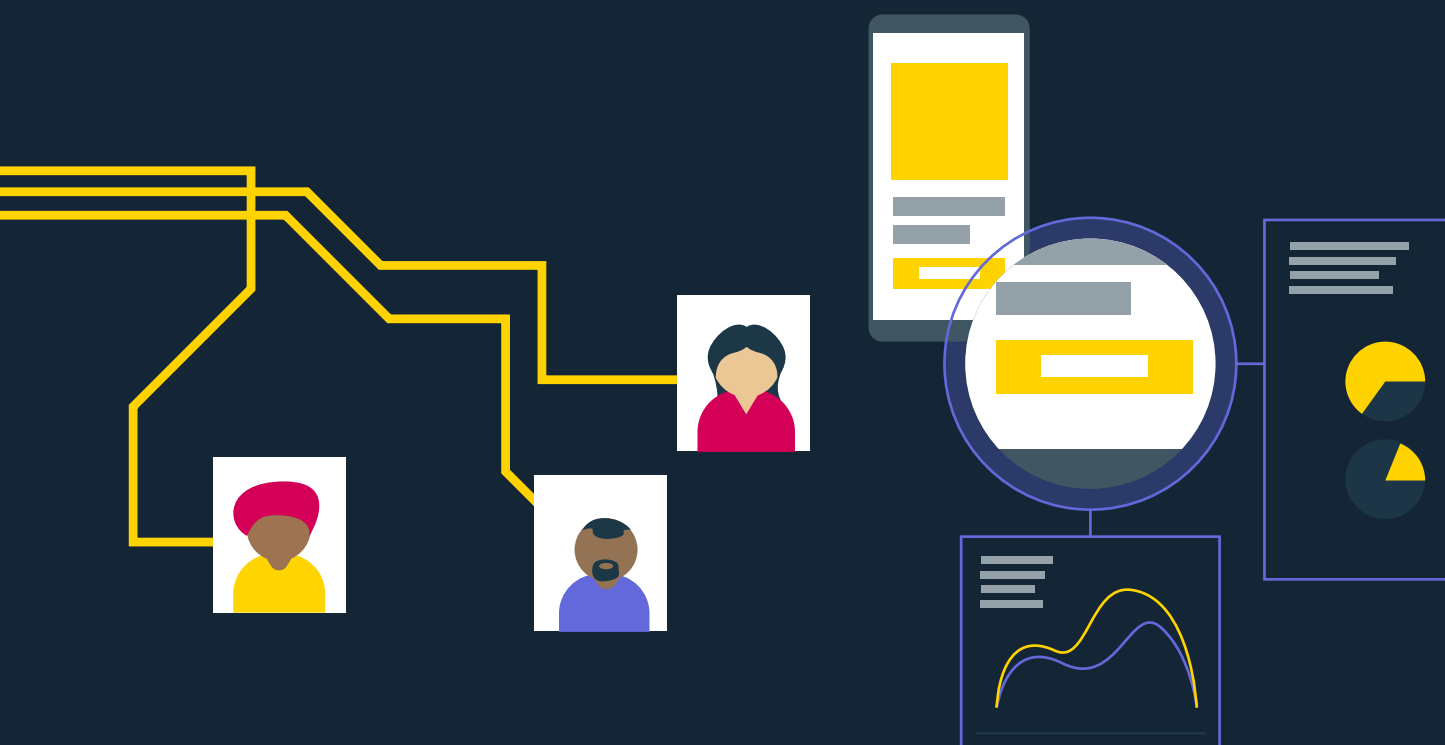
- Track the user journey using heat mapping and analytics. This will show you where they came from, what they looked at on your website and what they were browsing when they decided to click away.
- Analyse what messaging, button placement and images work. The best way to do this is by A/B testing, which is where you create two nearly identical webpages and test to see which works best.

There are two things you need to understand from your testing: where do people drop off, and where do people convert?

Understanding this will allow you to tailor your ecommerce experience to what people want.

In addition to the above, you should also take the time to build an ideal buyer persona. Map out your target demographic and identify their wants and needs.

The better you understand your audience, the more tailored you can make your messaging.



Ready to boost your ecommerce success?

We've been working with ecommerce businesses just like yours for years, helping them to drive more sales and grow their brands.

Whether you want to speak to one of our specialists to get more information, or if you'd like to book a free website audit, we're here to help.

Talk to an ecommerce website specialist

Book your free website audit

Your free website audit will identify key areas of improvement for your website, as well as steps you should take urgently to help boost performance.

The sooner you get in touch, the sooner we can help you boost your sales.

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