Dealing with cart abandonment

How do Irish e-tailers compare?

Contents

> " Ecommerce relies on deep knowledge of consumer behaviour and requires brands to adapt their platforms to fulfil consumer needs. "

Introduction

As marketers, we spend so much time, effort and money on getting visitors to our website. And yet, just when we have them where we want them, high rates of cart abandonment abound.

We tell ourselves 'oh, they are only window shopping' or 'they'll turn up in store' - but are we really doing all we can to reduce the phenomenon? And, considering the investment made to get them there in the first place, shouldn't some of that be spent on assessing and improving our techniques for getting them to convert once we have them where we want them? In fact, shouldn't that be the first money that we spend?

Part of the problem for brands is that they have no real sense of whether they are good, bad or indifferent performers in this regard? What techniques are available? Do they work? How many companies are using these? Is my competitor using them?

256 Media has completed an online survey of cart abandonment just so that you can answer those questions and get a real sense of whether you are ahead, on or behind the curve.

We are Ireland's first content marketing agency. We understand this space very well and we have the resources and skills to turn your website into a sales machine.

Want some cart appeal? Keep Reading...

A little about our research

To begin with, we borrowed some secondary research from our Irish and American fellow marketers. (Thanks guys!) We studied statistics and reports. We ate, drank and slept cart abandonment. This helped to lay down the foundations for our own study. Then we set about creating some new knowledge, informed by what we had learned, but approaching from a new angle.

What makes our research unique?

A whole new slant
After we did our homework and got to know cart abandonment intimately, we went bravely onto the field – this time looking at things from the side of the retailer. Our research takes an in-depth look at cart abandonment from the perspective of the retailer. It looks at every consumer issue, and it looks at the major consumer issues and how brands are performing against each one.

A comparative study
Our study distinguished between Irish and international brands, focusing on a number of key Irish brands and compared them to their international counterparts. We asked: how are Irish brands dealing with cart abandonment?

We've seen the best in action
We have witnessed the cream of the crop of ecommerce (and the worst). We have been there, worn the tee-shirt, and we have captured the screengrabs. We have good benchmarks and a context in which to place the best practices, so we can see where Irish brands are both ahead of and trailing their international competitors.

Part one

Irish ecommerce and cart abandonment

Starting from the ground up

Let's get comfortable in our surroundings and have a look at the Irish ecommerce market right now. The good news is the sun is shining in the land of Irish ecommerce.

Irish ecommerce is growing…
We know that Irish online spending increased by 51% from 2013 to 2014 (Thanks to our friends in **Wolfgang Digital**) and that the Irish ecommerce industry was worth at least €4.1billion in 2013. .

It is changing its ways…
51% of people will browse online, only to make their purchase in-store. As online and offline retail come closer and closer together, the lines between the two begin to blur. They fulfil co-dependent roles. **Kantar retail** has labelled this 'everywhere commerce.'

'Everywhere commerce' is everywhere these days.

But Ireland is still losing out on mega-money…
According to the **Digitaltimes.ie** and **ecommerce Ireland**, 75% of online purchases go overseas, and into the economic pockets of other countries. That is over 9 million every day. (Yikes).

Colm Griffin of **ecommerce Ireland** explains that every percentage point we can get back is worth €40 million p.a. to the Irish economy. Yes, we had our credit cards out too when we heard. A selfless justification to buy ourselves some shiny new things online (it is for the good of the country).

But instead of splurging, we got down to business and focused on the bigger solution. This involved focusing on a key element to the problem – how Irish and international brands are dealing with cart abandonment.

Transfer 1% of our online shopping from international to domestic brands to win back €40 million for our economy?
What are we waiting for? Let's go!
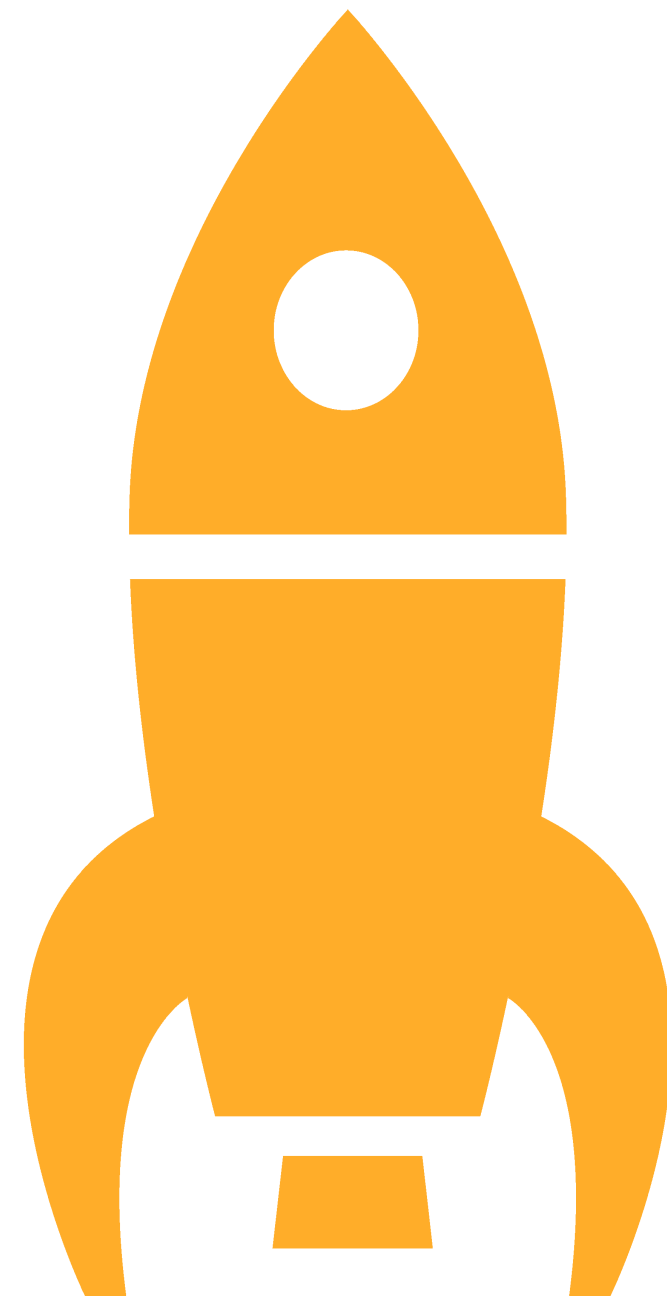
Understanding the cart abandoner in 7 steps

You've been abandoned. You may be feeling a little down, a little cart-broken. But that's okay. Because once you know why it has happened, you can make some improvements and move on. So let's get acquainted with that cart abandoner.

According to **Listrak**, 72% of carts are abandoned just before the purchase is made. However, let's not lose all hope, as **SeeWhy research** claims that 75% of customers abandon their carts with the intent of making a purchase at a later stage. We studied reports from big data companies such as **Kantar**, **SeeWhy** and **Forrester**. We then assembled 7 key reasons to explain why cart abandoners are, well, abandoning.

1. Shock, shock, price-horror

Price shock is one of the biggest reasons for cart abandonment in the form of shipping costs and taxes. In a **SeeWhy** study, 44% of users abandoned their carts because their shipping costs were too high. An **E-tailing Group study** found that 73% of consumers considered free shipping a critical factor when shopping online. Online pricing is a different kettle of fish. Procedures and conducts have not yet been standardised, and customers are sceptical of online pricing, which can vary widely.

2. Ready yet? Not quite!

A second huge factor in cart abandonment is that the user is not ready to buy there and then. Users may be dictated by their bank balance, and then abandon their carts with the intention of returning at a later date. They may have been called off on urgent business, like a coffee craving or this **funny cat video**. (Well, it is exceptionally entertaining).

As mentioned, 75% of users in a **SeeWhy study** abandoned their carts with the intent of making a purchase at a later stage, and 51% of consumers will browse online, only to make their purchase in store.

Therefore, true to the trend of 'Everywhere commerce' customers are using their carts as tools for browsing – not always tools for purchasing. They are the window shoppers of the online world.

Interestingly, this means that most online cart abandoners are at a later stage of the buyer process than their offline counterparts. (Ah-ha. So that's the reason that you wouldn't see 50 abandoned carts in your local supermarket on your weekly shop).

This means that once ecommerce brands can accept that cart abandoners are not simply lost leads, they can focus on tactics to win them back before they purchase elsewhere.
The Cart abandoner does not have to be 'the one that got away'.
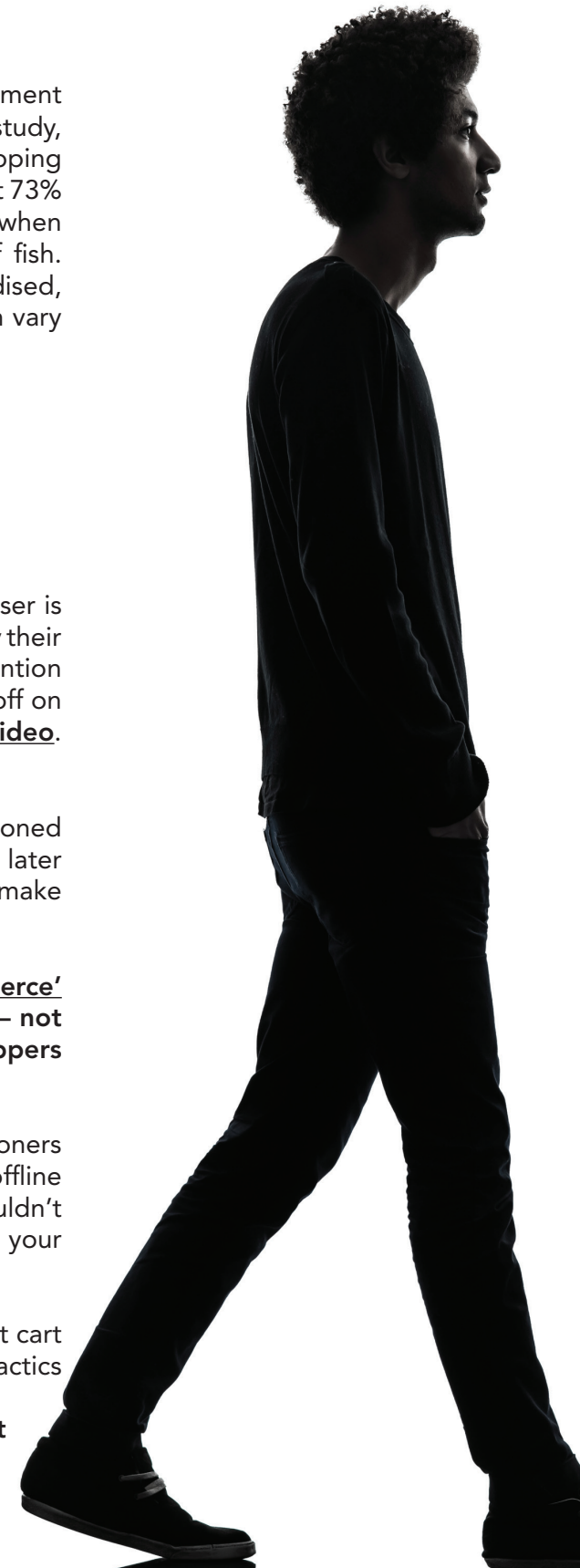
3. Looks are everything

As buyers, we tend to be very visually led. The consumer world is shallow (as it should be). Everything we purchase largely has to do with how it looks. Lack of visual information and knowledge about the product means one thing – buyer anxiety. The anxious shopper abandons their cart, as the researchers at Bronto have assured us in their **white paper**. When customers are in a real store, the presence of the shop advisor and the ability to see the product gives them much-needed buyer reassurance. Therefore, users will need a pretty good visual substitute when they are shopping online.

SALE

4. Putting your policies where we can see them

Mark Hayes of Shopify confirms the importance of having solid and visible ecommerce policies on your site as it gives buyers confidence. It is worrying for your consumer when they don't know how or if they can return a product they haven't seen. The least they need is the reassurance of a clear and convenient returns policy (like a firm supportive nod). Your ecommerce policies need to be right there beside the product as the user makes their purchase; an instant remedy to any potential doubt.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5. Is your user journey wasting your user's time?

The one thing more precious to your consumer than your price, is their time. People buy online because it makes their busy lives that bit easier - that's why it is so crucial to offer your users a seamlessly smooth user experience.

According to a study by **e-consultancy**, 14% of users would abandon if there was no Guest Purchase option. A **Forrester Research** found 40% would abandon if it takes more than 3 seconds for a page to load! (Patience was a virtue... now the virtual world has no patience).

Be our guest... 14% would abandon if there was no Guest Purchase option.

6. Are your users seeing stars?

(The 3rd party kind, we mean)

The number one way to ease buyer anxiety is to offer them the authenticity of third party reviews.

As the wise folk at **Kantar Retail** admit, shopping decisions are now framed by the open platforms of social networks, blogs, and chat-forums, as consumers look for reviews and for that buyer reassurance. These spaces are out of the merchant's control.

Therefore, it is up to you to offer your consumers access to instant third party information, so they don't need to leave your website to get it elsewhere. You are proud of your product and you're not afraid to show it. Also, customers trust the opinion of their peers, as they believe it to be authentic and true.

7. Safety first… second and third

Paying for things online can still be an uneasy experience for some users, as they are sending their payment information into cyberspace – they need 100% reassurance that this is safe and secure.

This reassurance can be created with prominent SSL badges and secure payment badges. You can also give your readers a reassuring nod by simply displaying your contact details and company address where they can be seen, as this creates a degree of authenticity.

According to Listrak, 72% of carts are abandoned just before the purchase is made.

Part two
Our research is your weapon against cart abandonment

The study

Using the cart abandonment statistics as a starting point, 256 Media surveyed 27 different retailers, some international and some Irish, to see how they were dealing with cart abandonment.

Our research included: 27 online retailers, 39 questions, and 1 survey.

We devised 39 questions informed by our research to evaluate how brands were performing. This gave us an insight into ecommerce best practice and the innovative tactics used by industry leaders.
Surprisingly, some of the little guys were making the big moves...
So, how are brands dealing with cart abandonment and how can we learn from them?

1. Price shock

Honesty is a winning tactic – it makes for confident buyers. This is especially true when it comes to price (as pricing is a prickly issue).

Best practice

1. Offer free shipping in some shape or form
If you can't afford to offer unconditional free shipping, then it is important to offer free shipping over a certain threshold or spend. Then you can display this information clearly on your homepage and on all product pages.

59% of retail websites in our survey offered free shipping to their consumers

One step ahead...
Two brands in our survey gave real time information telling the customer just how much more they had to spend to receive free delivery. This removes any chance of price shock at the till and encourages the user to increase their online spend to reach the free delivery threshold. (Smooth move).
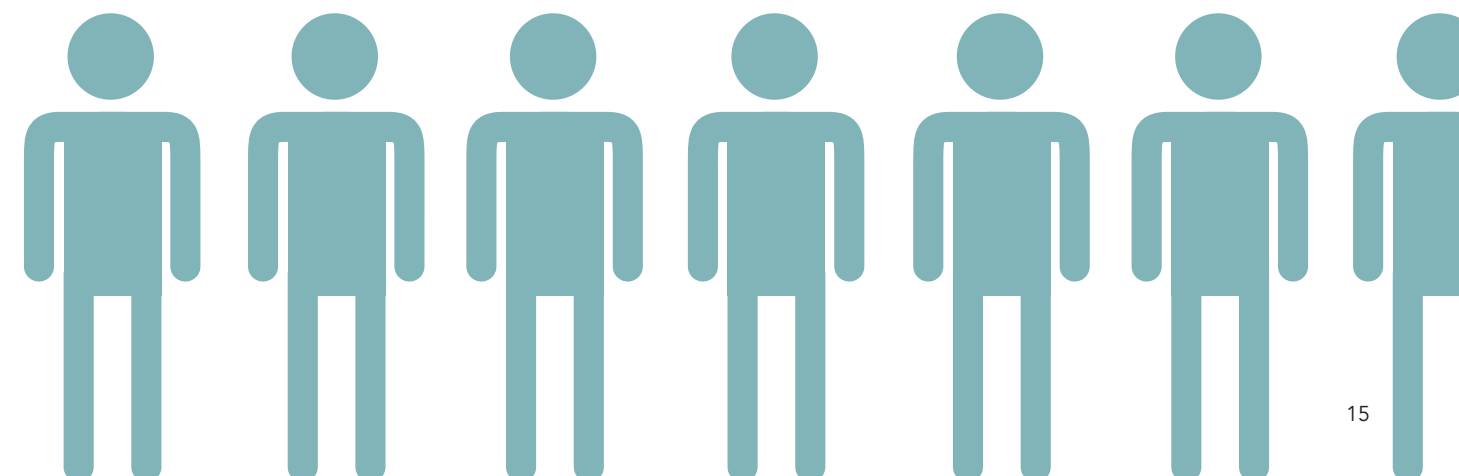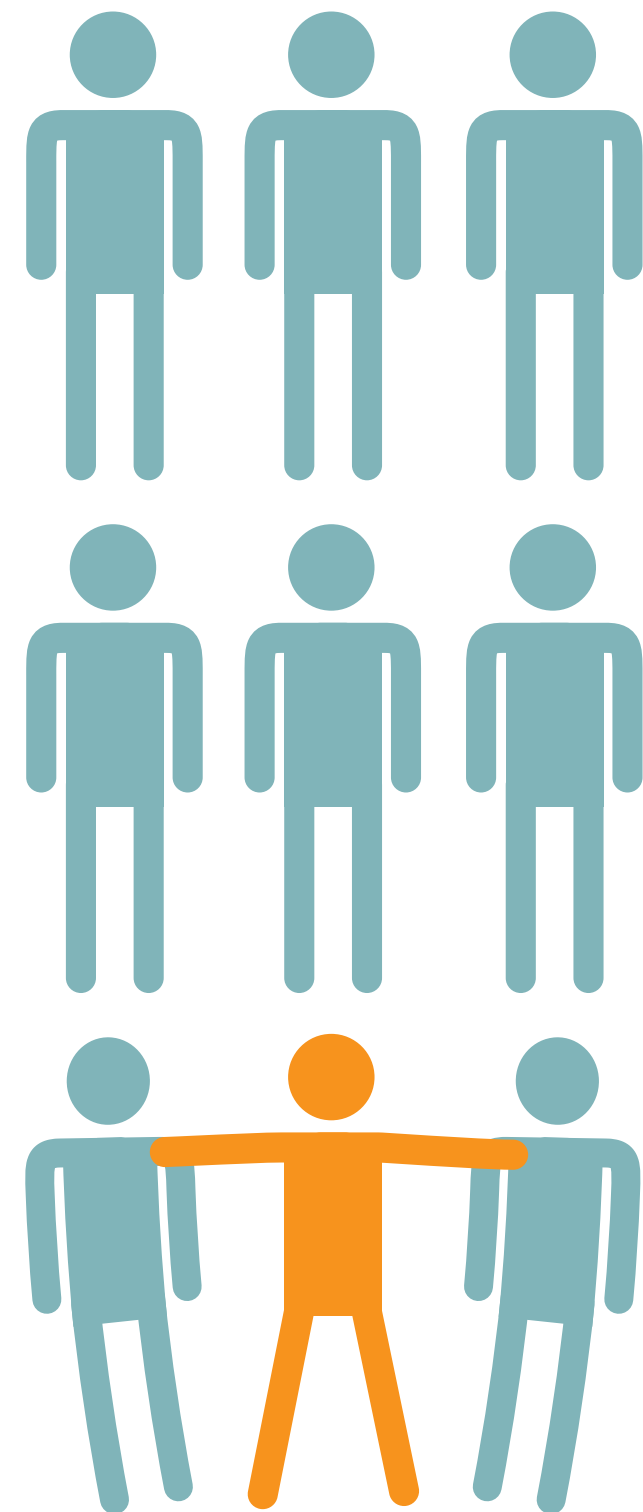
2. Offer a shipping calculator on your product page

Show your users a detailed explanation of your shipping costs and present them bravely and proudly on your product page. If there are any additional pricing or costs, users will need to know who, what, why and where.

3. Target cart abandoners with pop-up messages before they leave your site

Don't underestimate the power of pop up. You can use this messaging software to show your consumer timely, personalised offers as they make the click to leave your site. An example of an online provider offering pop-up messages is **Picreel**.

Room for improvement:

4%
of brands surveyed

use a pop-up message to target cart abandoners

77% of respondents displayed clear shipping costs during the payment process

2. When the user is not ready to purchase

Unlike in the real world, your customers can come back to you with just **one click**. (And the majority of them intend to).
The interesting thing is that it is these customers that are the hidden gems. According to **RJ Metrics**,

Returning customers contribute to 75% of online profits

Retailers need to accept that cart abandonment is a normal part of the online buyer process. Then they can give their users the space and tools they need to consider, use tactics to bring them back at a later stage, and then offer them a tailored user experience fit for a king.

What are the key tactics to attract and retain your returning users?

- Retargeting them after they have left your site
- Personalisation

In the growing world of digital, personalisation is becoming an effective substitute for the personal advice and recommendation offered by shop assistants. A study by **Infosys** revealed that 59% of user purchases were influenced by personalised services.

Let's get personal –

59% of user
purchases are influenced by personalised services

Best practice

1. Retarget cart abandoners with display ads

Take advantage of your digital platform; the communication doesn't have to end when a customer leaves your store. Retargeting reaches your consumers on websites they visit after they have left your site. When done right, retargeting can give your customers that gentle nudge they need to make the purchase. Retargeted ads have a **10% higher CTR** than standard display adverts, according to CMO.

The most effective way to do this is to use items in the cart or a price incentive as bait! This is known as **dynamic retargeting**.

Tip: Customers at the consideration stage of the buying process are as fragile and transparent as bubbles. Don't blow them away by over exposure to display ads. **Retargeter** recommend no more than 17-20 ads per month.

Looking to win back some shoppers? Chances are you'll find them on Facebook...

Facebook is also a great platform in Ireland for retargeting, as according to **Ecommerce Europe**, 53% of the 4.6 million inhabitants of Ireland use Facebook. Also, you can easily segment your audience by demographic. **37% of our respondents targeted cart abandoners with display ads.**

Room for improvement:

Only 11% used dynamic retargeting

Only 7% of respondents used Facebook retargeting

Best practice

2. Target cart abandoners with personalised emails

The most personal platform or tool you have at your disposal in the online world is email. It is a one-on-one form of communication and can be highly tailored to each consumer. According to **SalesForce's Exact Target**, **60% of abandoned cart emails generate revenue and most of that revenue occurs in the first 24 hours of the email being sent.**

This is a great way to offer price reduction incentives to your users– an effective method to encourage them to complete the purchase.

29% of respondents sent a personalised email – However only 11% offered an incentivised email to complete the sale

There are software sites such as **Barilliance** which specialise in cart abandonment emails.
Be incentive-wise: it's best to prevent returning customers from predicting your discount tactics, as some might use this to their advantage, waiting for the best incentive or offer to hit their inbox. The trick is to mix it up and use different discounts and incentives instead of steadily increasing your email offers.

60%
of targeted emails generate revenue

One step ahead...

3. Include a timer in your email for your offer, to really put the wheels in motion!

For timed price offers, there is a handy tool from Conversions on Demand called **Time2Buy**.

Tick, tock, watch that clock: timing is crucial when targeting your consumers.

Best practice

4.Offer a registration option and cart maintenance

A registration option means that you can take care of your returning customers by saving their personal details and using these details to offer perks, such as maintaining their cart items for as long as your users need.

75% of brands surveyed offered registration for returning customers, and 54% maintained user carts for over three days.

Offer your users a registration option so that their cart can be maintained until the cows come home...

One step ahead...

As consumers are usually wary of registering their details online, it is a nice touch to offer them a friendly explanation of how registering will really benefit them.
A great way to capture returning customers is to offer them brilliant, informative content. Why not **contact us** for a free consultation on how to get started?

Best practice

5. Offer 'wishlists'

Clicking that big **'buy now'** button immediately triggers buyer anxiety in the user. It seems a very final act. They may be thinking along the lines of: **'Aghh! What have I done?'**
However, offering them a wishlist beside **'Add to cart'** or **'Purchase now'** is not so psychologically pressuring. It will give them space to consider, and may just work wonders (a **'Save for later'** or **'Favourites'** button will work well also).

6. Offer a loyalty scheme

Show your returning customers some love and make them feel special. Offer them a loyalty scheme so they can be rewarded for every purchase made on your site. Placing this clearly on your homepage, beside your products and also during the payment process is a good incentive for users to register and return to your site.

45% of brands in our survey offered their users loyalty schemes

One step ahead...

7. Keeping track of user behaviour and purchases will allow you to collate a list of 'favourites' for your consumers.

This means they have access to a wealth of personalised content based on past purchases, without having to (metaphorically) lift a finger.

Customer loyalty cards can be used to keep track of purchases your users are making online and offline. This offers a level of consistency in the user experience across your online and offline channels, which is a strong element of 'everywhere commerce.'

7% of respondents, two grocery websites, offered a **'favourites'** service, which automatically cumulated user's regular purchases from their club/loyalty cards.

3. A negative user experience

Make sure your website experience is silky smooth – it will pay off big time when your users get onto your site and have the experience they expect. Don't forget to shop your site yourself and see how it works at every stage including follow up, fulfillment and delivery.

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Average
☑ Poor

Best practice

1. Be up to speed with your page speeds

Test your website pages for load speeds to ensure they are not taking longer than three seconds to load. There are online tools available to help you improve this, including one from **Google Insights**.

37% of brands in our survey achieved page speeds of under 3 seconds

40% of users in a Forrester study revealed they would abandon their cart after 3 seconds...

2. Offer tailored suggestions for products

Tailored product suggestions will make the shopping experience that bit easier for your customers and will discourage them from shopping elsewhere for other items. It will help create a personal connection. Be careful though – recommended products are effective only if they are relevant to recent buyer behaviour. Generalised product recommendations suggest a lack of consumer value: like a man receiving a random recommendation for ladies razors **(uh-oh)**.

Companies such as **RichRelevance** offer online tools for customised product recommendations.

Only 33% of brands surveyed offered tailored suggestions.

Best practice

3. Get mobile-friendly at the checkout

Mobile has a big future. According to research by **Wolfgang Digital**, mobile traffic on ecommerce sites has surged 52% in 2014. However, consumers remain hesitant to make transactions on their mobile devices, with three quarters of shoppers still making purchases on a desktop. This means that it is time for brands to improve their mobile experience and to alleviate any obstacles for mobile purchases on their websites. Does your site get the mobile-thumbs up from Google?

With Google's new mobile-tag affecting your page rank, it's best to **check it here** with this free tool.

4. Label and number your payment steps

The recommended limit of steps in the payment process is 4, and these should be numbered and labelled so your user knows exactly where they are.

78% of brands offered a mobile-friendly site

Step **1** Step **2** Step **3** Step **4**

One step ahead...

Offer a step-by-step guide with a quick description of each step. This will help bring the user through the process quickly in their mind and will imply a quick, hassle-free experience.

To get more tips on how to create quality, clickable content that will add value to your user's lives and will have them coming back to your site for more, why not drop us a line?

48% of respondents had the recommended amount of steps for their purchase process

Best practice

5. Offer a Live chat option

There are many things that haunt online shoppers – the fear of the payment page crashing for example, or deliveries not arriving on time. The importance of a personal service is again the best method to offer buyer reassurance. Simply knowing that they can reach out to an advisor for help through live chat is enough to build a buyer's confidence and reduce cart abandonment. According to Forrester research, 57% of users would abandon if they couldn't get their questions answered quickly.

An example of a live chat tool for websites which does not charge a monthly subscription is **tawk.to**.

Room for improvement:

Only

15%

of brands surveyed

had a
'Live chat option'

6. The big 3: Offer a registration option, a guest purchase option, AND a log in option

The first thing a user should see is a guest purchase option. Being presented with nothing but a registration box and no option to make a quick purchase is enough to make many online buyers run to the virtual hills.

For instance, 26% of respondents in an **eConsultancy study** said they had abandoned their cart because they were forced to register.

4. If your users can't see what they're buying..

Lack of visual information and knowledge about the product means one thing – **buyer anxiety**. Users will need pretty good substitutes for the physical absence of the product when they are making online purchase. (Read more on this in an **eggscellent report** by CrazyEgg.com, which analyses buyer anxiety on websites.)

Best practise

1. Offer high-quality images

Give your consumers the ability to turn your product around, inspect it at all angles, and to really get up close.

You can do this online by offering the 5 fundamentals of product visuals:

- 360 degree skew option
- Zoom functionality
- Multiple images
- High resolution quality
- Strategic location on your product page

This **Magic 360 skew tool** is a quick online plug-in for ecommerce sites and may be the solution to getting the high-quality visual experience your customers need.

Room for improvement:

Only 24% of brands offered all 5 visual elements. When it comes to online sales, it is all about how your product looks – so let's get superficial

Best practice

2. Use video to show off your product

According to a report by **eConsultancy**, viewers are 64%-85% more likely to buy after watching a product video.

Video allows for virtual product demonstration and storytelling, really bringing your product to life. It will allow you to show the product in action and influences the user to see the product in a real world environment, alleviating their buyer anxiety. Users can visualise themselves enjoying product benefits in their own lives. This may very well be the nudge they need to make a purchase.

48% of brands surveyed used video for product demonstration

5. Security and other online buyer concerns

Buyer anxiety is bigger online than it is offline, due to the absence of the product and payment worries. Because of this, the online retailer must work to reach buyer expectations and standards and to ease as much of this anxiety as they can. Deep breathing exercises won't work here, but we have some best practice methods which will ease your customer's security fears.

Best practice

1. Offer 3rd party reviews

The best way to offer buyer reassurance is with 3rd party reviews. The power of word of mouth (or eWOM) is not to be regarded lightly! A Kantar Retail study revealed that 70% of customers trust each other's product recommendations for making informed decisions, compared to 25% who trust branded information. If your consumers can instantly view external opinions about their purchase on the product page itself, they don't have to leave your site to get the reassurance they need.

Feefo and TrustPilot are examples of fast growing 3rd party review tools. However, the advantage of Feefo is that it is a product review tool as opposed to a brand review tool.

Room for improvement:

Only 22% of brands surveyed offered 3rd party reviews

2. Encourage Google Plus reviews

All set? Good stuff. Not only does Google Plus help your SEO, but it also increases your visibility through Google Plus reviews. Brands with Google Plus reviews have a stronger presence on the Google result pages, and this is a free and instant way to offer 3rd party reviews for your brand. (If you do not have a Google Plus page, it might be a good idea to set one up now)

38% of brands offer Google Plus reviews

3. Display SLL badges and secure payment badges

It is crucial to show users that your site is secure and their credit card details are safe and sound. Therefore, SLL badges and secure payment badges should be worn proudly beside credit card fields (this is a payment anxiety hot-spot for your shoppers).
Here is a quick and easy way to get a Norton trust seal for your site.

One step ahead...

4. Offer a reassurance checklist

Offering shoppers a quick checklist to alleviate a range of potential buyer worries is a painless way to reduce cart abandonment. It is a good idea to display this in a prominent position on your product pages. Give your users the thumbs up and notify them with a summary of your delivery concerns, delivery costs, and your return policy in one quick reassuring tick-list.

Room for improvement:

☑ Only 7% of ☑ respondents ☑ offered a ☑ reassurance ☐ checklist on ☐ their ☐ websites

Part two takeaway special

When people can't see their products or try them on, they will need pretty good substitutes to reassure and to ease online buyer anxiety. **Real-time technology** such as tailored suggestions, live chat options, 360 images and video demonstrations are the future of ecommerce.

Honesty is a key factor which needs to be adopted on a wider scale. Brands need to embrace **third party reviews** and clearly display all their **delivery costs and return policies** right where users can see them.

Personalisation is a major tool in challenging cart abandonment and is a key element for the future of ecommerce sites. Brands need to make their returning customers feel loved by offering them tailored experience on their site, which is fitted to their user's shopping habits. Another tactic is reaching out to their customers with tailored ads after they have left the site.
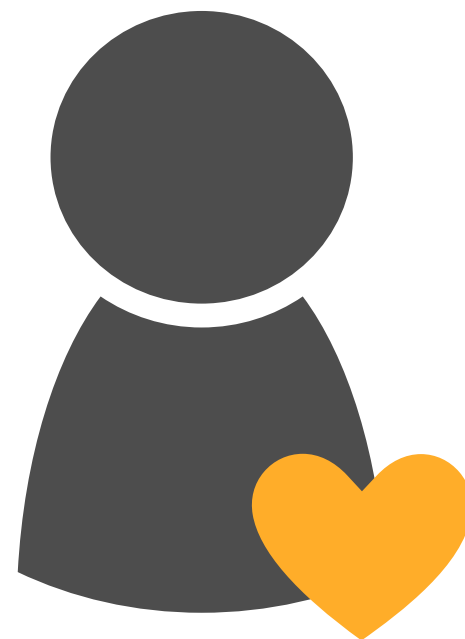
Feeling cart-broken? We have the remedy...

Part three
Irish v
International brands

We surveyed
15 local brands.
12 international brands.

We asked
How are Irish brands in our survey performing against their international counterparts?

From the innovators to the rule breakers, we have identified how Irish brands are dealing with cart abandonment.

Let's have a look the good news first – the areas in which Irish brands are excelling.

The good news: Where Irish brands are outperforming International brands

1. Use of targeted email

To reach customers who were not ready to purchase and just needed a little more time to consider, email was the main tactic used by Irish brands.

Irish brands were more successful than international brands at leveraging this power of email to capture customers.
You've got Irish mail. Irish brands were also right on time – **83% of local brands sent an email within 12 hours compared to 50% of International brands.**

40% of Irish brands used email targeting, compared to just 17% of international brands

**40%**

17%

Putting on our thinking caps...

Traditionally, Irish retail has valued personal customer relationships in the offline world. And according to the **MII Email marketing report 2013**, **94%** of Irish brands are mostly using email for maintaining customer relationships.

It is possible that our ecommerce tactics are also focused on making personal consumer connections through the most personal marketing platform of all; email.

2. Multiple purchase options

Irish brands recognised the importance of offering a guest purchase option and a registered user option for users (Different strokes for different folks!)

41% of Irish brands offered a guest purchase and a registration option compared to 30% of international brands

41%

30%
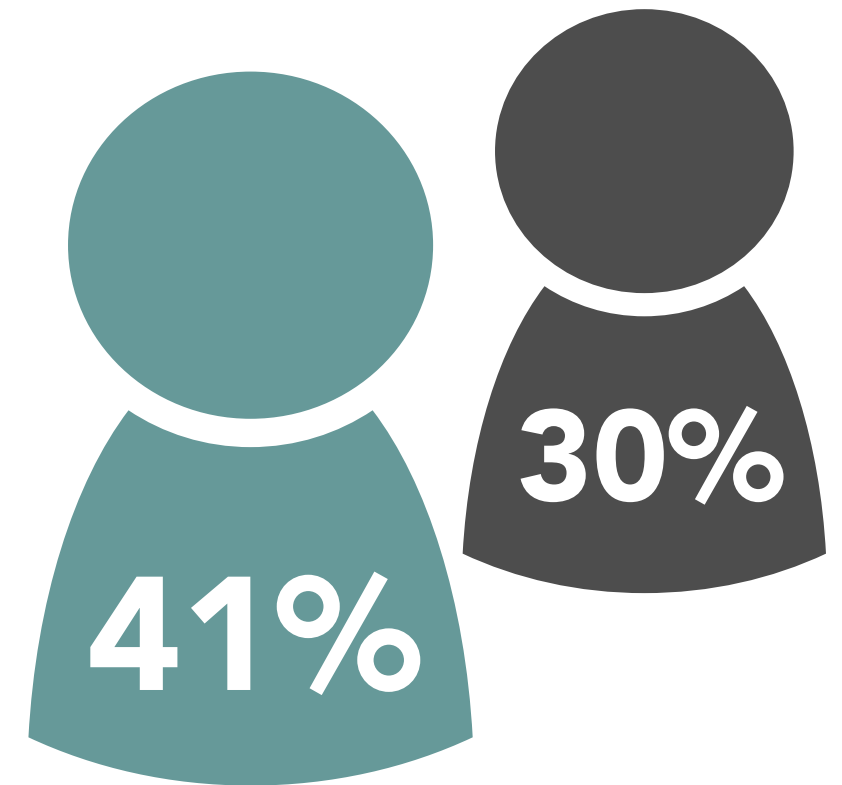
Putting on our thinking caps...

Irish brands recognised the importance of offering a guest purchase option and a registered user option.

**Either the customer has a lot of time and wants to use it wisely...
Or, they don't have any, and they want to buy NOW.**

Irish brands are exceeding international brands when it comes to serving both types of consumer.

3. A smooth user experience

Overall, Irish brands have some smooth manoeuvres when it comes to their user experience

(i) Page speeds

Although Irish brands were not Speedy-Gonzales they beat international brands with their page speeds. **Irish brands scored an average of 2.5>3 seconds.** International brands scored an average of over 3 seconds for their page speeds.

(ii) Explaining the inline validation & CVV code

47% of Irish brands offered inline validation, compared to only **33%** of international brands. Inline validation saves a lot of time for your users when they are filling out forms. **87% of local brands compared to 75% of international brands** explained what a CVV code is; this is on a need-to-know basis for users new to ecommerce.

(iii) Labelling payment steps

93% of Irish brands labelled their payment steps in comparison to **92%** of international brands (close shave, but a win is a win!)

Putting on our thinking caps...

Most Irish brands surveyed are aware of the importance of making the buyer journey as smooth as possible for their users. A smooth experience means users do not have time to let buyer anxiety set in.
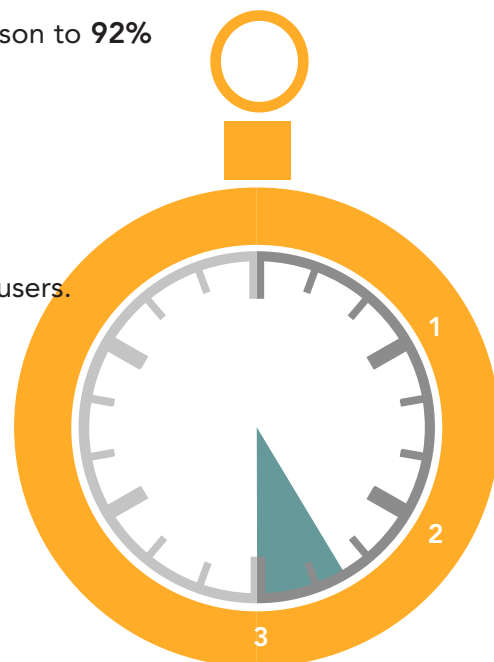
4. Honesty is the key

(i) Being upfront with policies

Irish brands were more upfront than international brands when it came to displaying their returns policy where it belonged – beside the product during the payment process.
73% of Irish brands showed their refund policies in comparison to **58%** of international brands.

(ii) 3rd party reviews

33% of local brands offered Third Party Reviews on their website, compared to just **8%** of international brands.

Irish brands know how to third party – 25% more Irish brands offered third party reviews than international brands

The bad news: Where Irish brands are underperforming v International brands

1. Lack of focus on tailored experiences

The majority of Irish brands did not focus on winning over returning customers as long-term conversions by using personalised tactics.

Only **8%** of Irish brands offered **wishlists** or **'save for later'** options...compared to **100%** of international brands **(ouch!)**

33% of Irish brands offered loyalty schemes to returning customers... compared to **58%** of international brands who offered this

40% of Irish brands maintained carts for longer than three days, compared to **67%** of international brands

Only **33%** of Irish brands retargeted cart abandoners with display ads, compared to **41%** of international brands

Putting on our thinking caps...

Some Irish companies view their online consumers as 'once off sales' and are not using tactics to win them back to the extent that international brands are.
Irish brands need to accept that some customers **WILL** abandon their carts. Then they can focus on tactics to entice them back, again and again.
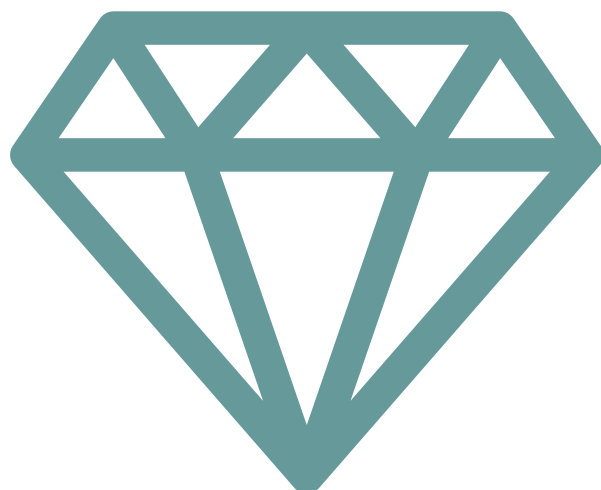
They'll be back... Irish brands need to realise that the customers who are not ready to buy could be the hidden gems

2. Shady shipping costs

Irish ecommerce sites scrimped a bit when it came to offering some form of free shipping to consumers – only 54% of Irish brands offered free shipping compared to 67% of international brands.

Putting on our thinking caps...

Although many local brands may make the point that they do not enjoy the same margins as international brands have, is it worth potentially losing **73%** of their online sales? (According to the **E-tailing Group**, **73%** of shoppers considered free shipping essential). Irish brands could choose the most affordable free shipping threshold as a compromise.

3. Google Plus

100% of international brands maintained a Google Plus account compared to 73% of Irish brands

35% of local brands offered 3rd party reviews on their pages, compared to 25% of international brands.

Putting on our thinking caps...

Google Plus reviews are a major factor for web visibility. These reviews are a free and quick way to ease buyer anxiety. Interestingly, the option to review was removed from many of the international respondent's Google Plus pages. Also, many of the smaller brands had multiple Google Plus pages linked to individual brick-and-mortar stores.

Google Plus for business is a location based platform. It is possible that smaller stores who do not have an international presence use their Google Plus accounts to represent each local store and could benefit from local feedback. In contrast, International brands are maintaining one large Google Plus page and managing their reputations tightly.

4. Irish brands are not image driven

(i) Use of visuals

21% of local brands scored 5 out of 5 for the use of product visuals on their site. Our International buddies are not too far ahead of us however – **27%** of international brands scored 5 out of 5 for product visuals.

(ii) Use of video

40% of local brands made use of video on their site for product demonstration and storytelling, in comparison to **58%** of international brands.

Putting on our thinking caps...

Irish brands are in a similar position to their international respondents when it comes to using visual and video technology for ecommerce purposes.

Irish and local brands both need to improve their visual experience and exploit the use of product storytelling

5. Mobile friendliness

73% of Irish brands offered a user friendly checkout, compared to 83% of international brands.

Putting on our thinking caps...

Mobile ownership in Ireland exceeds many other major European countries, including Spain, Italy and Portugal. We are a digital savvy nation, as we one of the youngest nations in Europe, according to **Ecommerce Europe**. Therefore a mobile friendly checkout is a crucial element for any Irish ecommerce site.
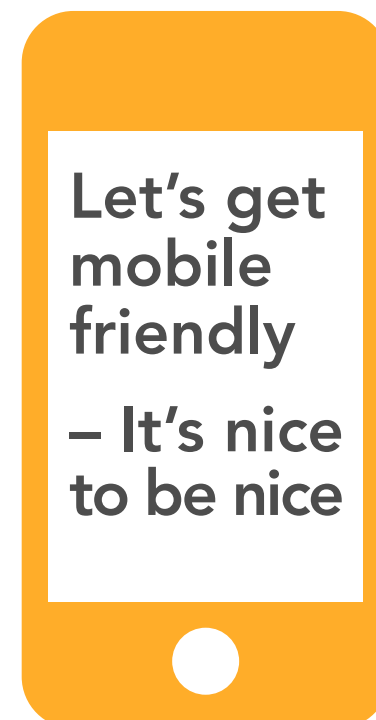
Let's get mobile friendly

– It's nice to be nice

73% of Irish brands offered a user friendly checkout, compared to 83% of international brands

One step ahead...

6. Blogging

Only 50% of international brands and 47% of Irish brands maintained a blog as a tactic to attract and more importantly, to retain their customers

However, targeted, relevant content is an important part of your brand's long-term marketing goal. For more advice and tips on great content creation, we're here to help.

The case study:

Let's meet the brands who are leading the way

These are six brands that we covered in our survey who were doing it right,

- Chain Reaction Cycles
- John Lewis
- Mick's Garage
- Brown Thomas
- Littlewoods
- Vodafone

3 Irish brands were among the top ecommerce performers to deal with cart abandonment. **When we're good, we're GOOD!**

Case study: Chain Reaction Cycles

Let's go on a journey – a 2 wheeled user journey with Chain Reaction Cycles.

Thirty years ago, before the miraculous advent of the inter-web, George and Janet Watson opened a small bike shop in a rural Antrim village Ballynure. Today that bike shop is one of the world's fastest growing online bike stores in the world.
Chain Reaction Cycles is an Irish ecommerce fairy-tale. What started as a small business now has its own software development team.

Chain Reaction Cycles

1. **The first thing that catches the user's eye on their site is a navigation bar which displays a 365 day return policy and a free delivery on all orders over €9**

Immediately the shopper is assured that their shipping is not going to cost an arm and a leg, and also that if they are not happy with their order, they will have no hassle receiving a refund. The information on this bar changes depending on what pieces of information the site wants to offer, but this information is always focused on alleviating buyer issues and worries.

2. **Chain Reaction Cycles are big fans of offering their consumers discounts with categories on their site for different types of discounts. The brand emails their cart abandoners within an hour, offering 10% off abandoned items. This offer has a 72 hour time limit attached, to push things up a gear and drive a purchase.**

Costs may rule against this as an option to offer to all your shoppers. However, as we have seen, offering discounts to cart abandoners exclusively is a number one tactic to increase sales.

3. **Their website offers high-resolution, enlarged images, which can be viewed to full screen capacity, with no loss of quality. The shopper can also twist and turn the product as they please, with a 360 degree spin option. This is even down to the smallest hub-cap.**

4. **Within each product section, the brand uses language which speaks to their audience and connects with them. They are not just a bike shop – they are fellow cyclists.**

Content is crucial here for Chain Reaction Cycles for letting their users know they understand them and for providing a positive user experience.

5. There is a reassurance checklist beside every product which covers shipping costs and location, return policy, and payment options, all in 4 short, visually reassuring ticks.

6. Real time product recommendations are shown under the product the user is researching which can be instantly compared, side by side to the user's product.

7. There is a separate checkout for Paypal and secure SLL badges.

8. Chain Reaction Cycles only 2 straightforward purchase steps which are labelled clearly.

9. Chain Reaction Cycles uses Dynamic retargeting. The user is targeted with their abandoned cart items on Facebook and other key sites on the web.

Psst. Want to know how to create great content for your ecommerce needs? Contact us here!

Part three takeaway special

Irish brands are focused on offering a clean and quick user experience to their customers, while International brands are looking at the bigger picture – they are focusing on tactics to capture returning customers and not on once off sales.
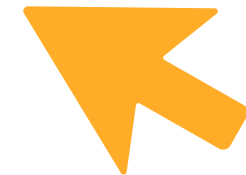
Email targeting is something which Irish brands are exploiting over international brands

There are very successful Irish ecommerce brands who are helping to set the standard and are performing better than some top international brands.

Irish brands need to focus on personalisation and offering tools that will give customers space to consider

Another tactic local brands are missing out on is Facebook retargeting. Facebook offers big potential for capturing cart abandoners, as according to **Ecommerce Europe**, **53%** of the Irish population are Facebook fanatics.

Conclusion

Overall, Cart Abandonment shows ecommerce sites that there is a gap to be bridged in order to meet fast changing customer expectations.

Online retailers don't have the luxury of making face-to-face customer connections, which can really help to close the sale. But with the development of online tools and software, there are new ways to win over customers. Shopper's needs have not changed, only the means by which online retailers must fulfill them.

Within this online environment, Irish brands are excelling in some areas, and are behind the curve in others. (However, some are certainly winning in all areas). Irish brands are exceeding international brands in areas such as user experience and leveraging email. However, on e-commerce platforms the majority of Irish brands are focusing on one-off sales, and not on tactics for retaining customers in the long-term. Returning customers are the hidden gems and retaining these customers is crucial to your e-commerce strategy.

This survey can offer Irish brands a solid starting point for reducing cart abandonment on their sites and a clear benchmark which they can begin to move towards.
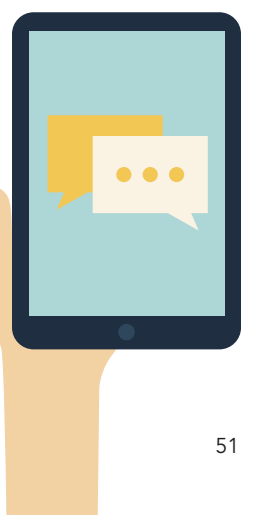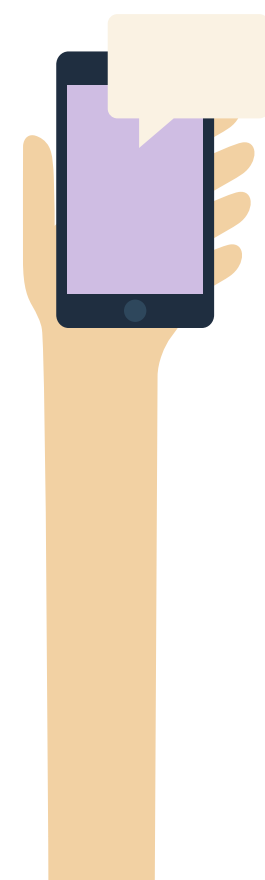
Now your cart is full with all the tools you need to stop cart abandonment... So how do you get started?

What can you do next?

To get you started, we have compiled a quick method for battling cart abandonment pronto!

The Quick-Fix Checklist

☐ Target cart abandoners with tailored display ads

☐ Maintain user carts for longer than 72 hours

☐ Display 3rd party reviews for reassurance

☐ Target cart abandoners with email incentives to close the sale

☐ Show shipping costs and return policies clearly during the payment process

☐ Label the payment process clearly

☐ Ensure your page speeds are below 3 seconds

☐ Offer some form of free shipping

☐ Be mobile-friendly

☐ Offer a quick 'Guest-Purchase' option

☐ Offer a Registration option for returning customers

☐ Display a list at checkout with important information to alleviate buyer anxiety

☐ Offer high-quality product demonstration with video or visuals

☐ Maintain a regular blog to bring customers back to your site

We can help to make your website customer-friendly!

256 Media is Ireland's First Content Marketing Agency.

We are 'Content Natives'. We've been publishing content in magazine and digital format for the past 20 years. We believe passionately in the power of content to attract, nurture and sell to your brand prospects.

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