The Three Key Areas to Optimize on Your Ecommerce Website

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Introduction

Providing a customer-centric user experience on your ecommerce website is absolutely essential to sustainable growth and profitability.

If you want your site visitors to purchase from you, it helps to identify any information that might be unclear, confusing, displeasing or uninteresting, and improve it.

The challenge is, unlike situations where sales take place in a physical retail location and a storekeeper can observe a customer's behavior in-person, it's much harder to understand how a customer experiences your online store.

That's why, for the past ten years The Good has built our business around expertise in data-driven customer research and website optimization. Meanwhile, with our mission to "Remove all the bad online experiences, until only the good remain." ...we have always strived to help, whether you're a client of ours, or not.

The information below may be valuable to any ecommerce site operator, but in particular we are providing as part of our recent efforts to support folks operating an ecommerce site as part of their small or medium-sized business. This is now more important than ever.
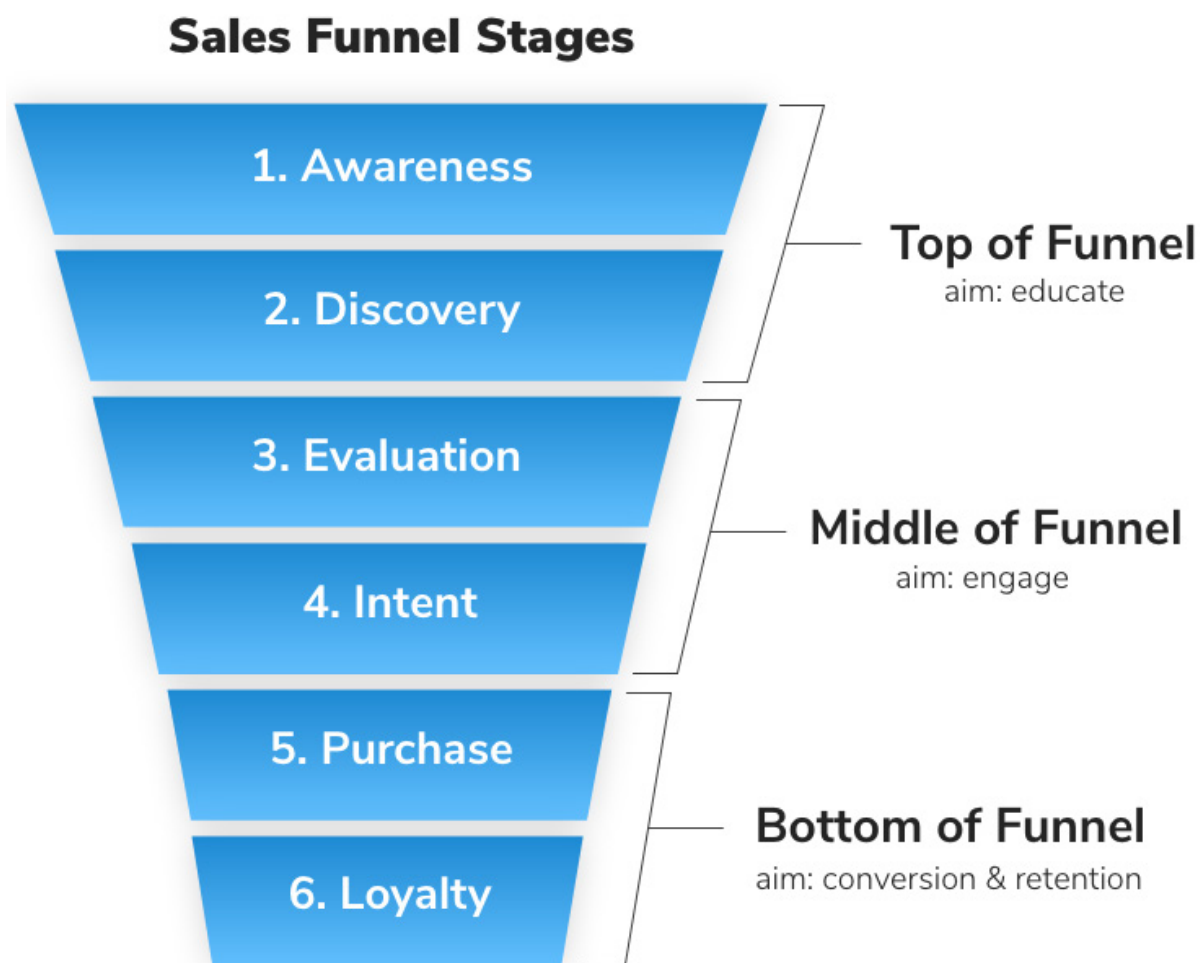
Our goal is to help you begin to think about your ecommerce site the way an expert would, and to provide you some initial guidance on which parts of your site to focus on first when you're looking to improve your customer experience.

Here's what we'll be covering:

— The Ecommerce Sales Funnel

— Top-of-Funnel Analysis

— Middle-of-Funnel Analysis

— Next Steps: How The Good Can Help

The Ecommerce Sales Funnel

One of the most useful models for thinking about your ecommerce site is the **Sales Funnel**...

Sales Funnel Stages

1. Awareness
2. Discovery

Top of Funnel
aim: educate

3. Evaluation
4. Intent

Middle of Funnel
aim: engage

5. Purchase
6. Loyalty

Bottom of Funnel
aim: conversion & retention

Here, the job of your ecommerce site is to collect visitors at the top, educate them about your brand, products and services, get them to engage in a process of determining which products they are interested in, and finally convert and retain them as paying customers.

Using this model your customer's experience of your ecommerce site is all about...

— Building Awareness of your brand and what you're all about

— Enjoyable Discovery of the products and services you offer

— Easy Evaluation of which products and services are right for them

— Signaling their Intent to purchase by moving items to the cart

— Confidently making their Purchase at checkout

— Demonstrating their Loyalty, by returning to your site and purchasing again

— Start with Top-of-Funnel Pages

Okay. Now that you're thinking about your ecommerce site a little more like an expert, it will be easier to start looking for customer experience improvements in a methodical way.

We recommend starting at the top of the funnel: Starting with the pages that the majority of your visitors see…which is typically your homepage, but perhaps a specific landing page that you are driving traffic to (with ads or through SEO efforts).

Identify how these pages fit into the sales funnel: Once someone lands on your website, they have demonstrated some form of *awareness* - either in your products or your brand. Since they've demonstrated awareness, it's a great opportunity to take advantage of their attention and help move them down the funnel towards *discovery.*

— **Reference Google Analytics for traffic considerations:** In consideration of other high traffic pages to focus on first, if you have access to analytics data–through Google Analytics or another tool/ dashboard–you can view your site's landing pages report to see which pages receive the highest percentage of incoming traffic.

Homepage and landing page goals: For the first page a user sees, you want to encourage them to take some form of action to move further down the funnel. On the homepage this might mean highlighting your product categories and a few of your best selling products. First impressions are very important if a customer is going to continue down the funnel.

Note: If, by chance, your homepage isn't one of your top landing pages, it's still worth prioritizing along with whichever pages get the most traffic.

Our initial guidance for these pages: Focusing on these pages, and other high traffic pages, will give you the greatest return on your investment since they're where visitors are starting their customer journey. Remember that the homepage will also need to serve users who arrive there after visiting another page on the site first - so try to cater the page to users at any stage of their

Moving Down-the-Funnel

The second area of focus we recommend: The second page type to focus on optimizing should be the product category or "collections" pages. This is often the next step in the user experience after a user has moved beyond the homepage.

How these pages fit into the sales funnel: As visitors move down the sales funnel, they begin their discovery of your products and/or services. Typically this is facilitated by your site's navigation menu, which brings users to a product category or "collections" page. It's on this page that visitors can begin to narrow in on something specific they're looking for based on the product types or categories that your site sells.

Product category / collections page goal: The goal of your product category pages is simply to help site visitors find a product detail page (PDP) that interests them, where information can be gathered about that specific product. For obvious reasons, this category will be important to your focus.

Page considerations for your business: It's very likely there is a product category on your site that is key to your businesses success. A product category that you are known for, or where a majority of your highest margin products are found. For obvious reasons, this category will be important to your focus.

— **Referencing Google Analytics for traffic considerations:**
On Google Analytics: You can navigate to Behavior > Site Content > All Pages to view the most heavily trafficked pages on your site and identify your most popular category page based on your current user traffic.

Some initial guidance for these pages: When looking for customer experience issues on product category pages, it's important to be thoughtful and strategic about the level of detail you're providing. You'll serve your customers best by providing them with easily scannable images and meaningful differentiators between the products, making it easy for them to identify the individual items they want to view in detail.

Note: For ecommerce sites with multiple product category pages, keep in mind that these often share the same overall template. In some cases, making improvements or changes to one will mean making changes to the others.

Next, focus on the product detail page:
A PDP is the page on your site that presents the description of a specific product in view. This is one of the most important points in the customer experience because it's where your site visitors typically convert into buyers.

How PDPs fit into the funnel: When users begin to evaluate products, moving to stage three of the sales funnel, they will need to engage with product detail pages. In the evaluation stage, users are looking for key aspects of value the product will deliver to them. After engaging with a category page during the previous stage of discovery, they will narrow in on something more specific they think will offer the value they're looking for and dig into the "nitty-gritty" details to find out.

Product detail page goals: On the product detail page, the goal is to communicate the most meaningful features and benefits of a product in a compelling way that convinces site visitors to add it to their cart.

Page considerations for your business: Similar to category pages, it's not uncommon to have a handful of products that drive a majority of your business. Focus on these product pages to get the most out of your optimization efforts.

Some initial guidance for these pages: When optimizing a product detail page you should be focused on writing benefit-rich descriptions, providing clear images, and using a conventional page layout that places information like reviews in places where customers expect to find them. Ask yourself if you were purchasing one of your products for the first time if all the information you would need to feel comfortable making a purchase has been shown somewhere up to this point.

Next Steps: How The Good Can Help

To say it again, getting your customer experience right is essential. We hope this information helps you consider a more strategic approach to optimizing the customer experience of your website.

And hopefully, the recommendations we provided here have already helped you to identify a few things to start working on.

Invest in the holistic on-site experience that your customers will have when they arrive and begin navigating your site. Identify and address any pain points preventing your visitors from having a fluid experience on your site. Remove the barriers that may be interfering with the user's path to purchase. Help YOUR site be the one your visitors are confident about purchasing on!

As a final recommendation, we'd like to emphasise the importance of getting outside perspective. Something we've learned from our years doing this work is…

"It's very difficult to read the label from inside the jar."

It's important to get feedback from your customers whenever possible, and invaluable to get expert help from a company like ours if you can!

If you're interested in receiving expert advice on how to begin optimize the customer experience of your ecommerce site, consider our **Conversion Growth Assessment™** (www.thegood.com/services/conversion-growth-assessment). This service was established in support of small to medium-sized online brands seeking to improve conversions on their website. Boosting your conversions and strengthening your business is its goal.

— A PDF deck that with eye tracking heatmaps of your 3 pages (you'll also have the option to add more)

— A one hour review call with one of The Good's CRO Strategists to review the heatmaps, which combined with out 10+ years of expertise, will lead us to specific challenges and opportunities to address to improve the experience for your users.

To reiterate the pain point mentioned at the start of this article: when you are spending money and time getting people to come to your website, you better make sure the experience they have when they arrive is meaningful and starts to sell them on your value proposition.

Our team will not only help you narrow in on important pages to focus time on, but provide specific feedback you can use leverage to deliver a more meaningful experience to your users, and improve your bottom line.
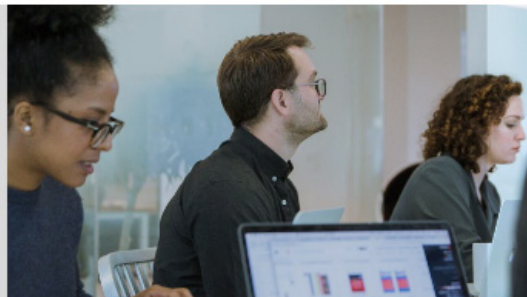
The Good's expertise, your small business.

The Conversion Growth Assessment™

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