

# 9 Ways to Convert Visitors to Purchasers through Improved Checkout Design

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Are your customers buying what you're selling? An exhaustive study by the Baymard Institute, which conducts research on website usability, found that nearly 70% of all online shopping carts are abandoned before the shopper completes their purchase.<sup>1</sup> But why?

Potential customers abandon their shopping carts for five main reasons:

- The cost of the product is unexpectedly high.
- The checkout process is cumbersome.
- The website's interface and user experience design is uninviting or unintuitive.
- The user lacks trust in the vendor's ability to provide personal data security.
- The buyer is not yet ready to make a purchase.

The average large-scale eCommerce site can increase its conversion rate by more than 35% solely through better checkout design.<sup>2</sup> What follows are the top 9 ways publishers can convert site visitors to purchasers by improving the user experience of the eCommerce journey on your website.

**1. Guest checkout:** Between 14% and 37% abandon their carts when a site requires them to register before making a purchase.<sup>3</sup> But many users are not interested in signing up to make a one-off purchase, or worry that registration will result in a flood of unwanted emails. Optional registration can increase conversion rates.

**2. "Save for later" or wish lists:** Many researchers decide what to purchase after completing a comprehensive search across many different websites.<sup>4</sup> Enabling them to save the content they're interested in makes it easier for them to find it when they return to make a purchase.

**3. Targeted discounts:** Analytics-based price setting and data-driven promotions can tempt users to make a purchase they're ambivalent about. Discounts can be based on variables such as society membership, field of study, institution, or subscription status, or offered to users who have made other purchases recently.

**4. Mobile-optimized interface:** Mobile purchases comprise up to one quarter of all dollars spent online<sup>5</sup>—and mobile usage continues to increase. But even though mobile phones represented 46% of global eCommerce traffic in Q2 2016, only 27% of purchases were made online—and an estimated 73% of mobile users abandon their shopping carts.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Google ranks

## The Literatum Advantage

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Guest checkout is standard functionality in Literatum's eCommerce module.

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"Save for later" is standard functionality in Literatum's eCommerce module.

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Promotional offers are setup up using Smart Groups, which segment users based on selected characteristics. And Literatum's Product Information Manager tracks the sales and usage data needed to shape successful promotions.

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All new Literatum websites are responsive, a feature of UX 3.0, Atypion's design-and-build system. Non-UX 3.0 websites can be optimized for mobile.

responsive sites higher in search results: sites get penalized if the content is too wide for the screen, if the text is too small to read on a mobile device, or if the links are too close together. Making your site responsive can improve its discoverability, the UX—and the purchase rate.

**5. Smooth, intuitive checkout:** The easier you make it to buy something, the more likely you are to sell it. More than one in four users abandon their shopping carts because the checkout process is too cumbersome.<sup>7</sup> A one-step checkout in a unified view—with everything required on a single page—can significantly reduce cart abandonment. Other UI considerations include clear, descriptive field labels; data entry fields long enough to accommodate the information requested; easy-to-understand error messages; and automatically making the shipping and billing addresses the same.

**6. Don't be nosy:** The 50 top-grossing eCommerce sites require an average of only five and a half steps prior to checking out.<sup>8</sup> So consider limiting the amount of data shoppers are required to enter before they are able to complete their purchase: 37% of people abandon their carts because checkout requires too much personal information.<sup>9</sup>

**7. Persistent cart with email reminders:** Users often add items to their cart as a way to keep track of them, even if they don't plan to purchase them immediately. Enabling the items in their cart to persist even after they've logged out—or using a cookie to create a browser-based persistent cart for unregistered users—lets users make a purchase later without having to search for the product again. And reminding users of the content of their cart via personalized emails with information about the products they've saved can lure them back to your site.

**8. Customer rewards:** These can take many forms: discounts for repeat customers, future freebies in exchange for subscription renewal, unlocking supplementary content in exchange for information about themselves, and many others. Offering rewards is a time-honored tactic for keeping loyal customers loyal.

**9. Content suggestions:** Understanding your customers' interests lets you tailor marketing offers and present them with content they're more likely to purchase. Such info is gleaned from users' profiles and site behavior—items they have browsed, saved for later, or purchased previously.

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UX 3.0 websites incorporate all of these UI and UX best practices.

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Decisions about data collection are made during the implementation of Literatum's eCommerce module.

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Cart data collected by Literatum can be coupled with SendGrid or your own email marketing system to trigger automated promotional emails.

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Reward programs can be set up using Smart Groups in combination with tag sets and licenses.

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Purchase suggestions rely on collaborative filtering, which infers a user's interests based on similar readers' interests, and Atypn's AI-driven automatic topic modeling, which makes connections to similar products automatically.

Contact your Account Manager to discuss adding any of these Literatum functionalities to your website.

<sup>1</sup> Baymard Institute (2017). 37 Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Baymard Institute (2017). eCommerce Checkout Usability.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Nisha Doshi (2016). "Finding" and "discovering": How understanding researchers' search and discovery behaviour informed the building of Cambridge Core.

<sup>5</sup> Felix Richter. Statista (2017). 1 in 4 E-Commerce Dollars Is Spent on a Mobile Device.

<sup>6</sup> Evan Bakker. Business Insider (2016). Shopping Cart Abandonment: Merchants now leave \$4.6 trillion on the table, and mobile is making the problem worse.

<sup>7</sup> Baymard Institute (2017). 37 Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics.

<sup>8</sup> Baymard Institute (2016). The Average Checkout Flow Has 14.88 Form Fields—Twice as Many as Necessary.

<sup>9</sup> Baymard Institute (2017). 37 Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics.