

Start off the new year right with this 17-point checklist

The holiday madness has subsided, and winter is upon us — in other words it's the perfect time for your e-commerce business to step back and revisit the fundamentals, finding new opportunities to help your business grow. We're going to walk you through a simple checklist of items to ensure that your business enters the New Year in tip-top shape, ready to drive more revenue in the year ahead.

Start with the basics

1. Renew your business subscriptions

The New Year is a perfect opportunity to sweat the small stuff that all too often gets lost in the mix. Renewing your domain name and SSL certificate might seem like minor issues, but if they're allowed to lapse later in the year, the consequences could be significant.

2. Update your delivery, and privacy policy

Of course, it's not just the small stuff that you should be sweating, it's also the small print. Between GDPR compliance issues and the natural evolution of your business, it's distinctly possible that your posted policies are out-of-date with both your business and the world. Time to fix that.

3. Execute annual security testing

To protect both your customers and your business, you'll need to conduct a thorough security test. A variety of open-source tools exist to help business owners detect application vulnerabilities and protecting your site from malicious attacks.

4. Check site backup

An errant keystroke here, some malware there, and your website, along with terabytes of data, codebase, and more, could disappear like a

magician's assistant. Thankfully backing your site up to the latest version is neither time consuming nor expensive — make sure it's on your agenda.

5. Update copyright dates and language

This one can be very easy, and just as easily forgotten. Make sure those © 2018s have made the switch to © 2019, and ensure that your copyright notice is appropriately phrased.

Audit your web store

6. Update meta descriptions and site tagging

Accurate meta descriptions and site tagging is crucial to helping customers navigate your products, they'll also help ensure search engines are better indexing your offerings.

7. Optimize product descriptions

Having a clear CTA and compelling product photography can go a long way, but updating all your products takes time. Start by refining high-level descriptors for your best selling products. According to the Baymard Institute¹, integrating key functionality into descriptive headlines and summaries can help consumers find information they may otherwise miss.

8. Review and refresh inventory

The last two months of the year typically see a higher-than-usual volume of inventory running through online stores – the perfect chance to identify what is selling well in your stores to inform next year's inventory strategy. January is also a great time to take stock of what's left, removing discontinued products, updating

cross-sell items included at checkout, and automating which products will appear when current offerings sell out.

- **9. Revisit post-holiday pricing**
Lingering holiday prices could throw a fiscal wrench in your plans for 2019. A price audit should ensure that the holiday hangover doesn't include your prices.
- **10. Streamline site navigation**
Revisit your site's navigation to align with best practices. According to the Baymard Institute², displaying your businesses main product categories in your site navigation provides clarity on your product offerings for new customers on your home page and can eliminate excessive layers of sub navigation in the hierarchy.
- **11. Run a broken links check**
Get your customers where they want to go. We assure you, it's not a 404 page.
- **12. Test browser compatibility**
How does your site look for someone running an old version of Firefox in a 28" monitor? You might be surprised. Not every browsers supports every feature in CSS, some image formats and HTML tags are similarly unsupported. If you need help, there are a variety of tools that will help you check for cross-browser, cross-resolution compatibility issues.
- **13. Update and incorporate retargeting pixels**
Ensure that you're setup to provide customers with a truly personalized experience, and double check where your retargeting pixels have been placed.

Revisit your mobile experience

- **14. Prioritize mobile load speed**
Customers' shopping habits are increasingly moving to mobile — 52.2% of global traffic is now attributed to phones alone³ and one-third of mobile users make payments from their

devices. That means it's more important than ever that your site's mobile experience, not the desktop, is fully optimized for load speed.

- **15. Optimize mobile conversion separately**
Consumers shop differently on mobile devices than desktops, sometimes using their phones to research a product before completing the purchase on desktop. If you're optimizing a customer's path-to-purchase the same way for both devices, you're likely losing out on conversions.
- **16. Minimize steps to checkout**
A 2017 benchmark study from Akamai Technologies' SOASTA found that even a 100-millisecond delay in load time can decrease mobile conversion rates by 7.1%. If your mobile checkout experience is introducing extraneous steps for your customers to check out, then you'll continue to see abandoned carts.
- **17. Consider mobile payment solutions**
Another great way to decrease cart abandonment is helping customers avoid the dreaded credit card, shipping address, and billing address form fills — that is where alternative payment solutions can help optimize your mobile commerce experience. Amazon Pay is already optimized for mobile, making it easy for your customers to check out wherever they find you – desktop, mobile, or voice.

² Baymard Institute, Usability Study, 2018

³ Statista, 2018.

⁴ Deloitte, Global mobile consumer trends report, 2018.

