

Your Guide to Driving Traffic to Your Ecommerce Site

Learn about the different tactics you should consider adding to your marketing strategy to start seeing more site visitors.

In this guide, we'll cover:

- ✚ Starting to build a traffic strategy
- ✚ Different methods to increase site traffic
- ✚ Getting new site visitors to return to your site

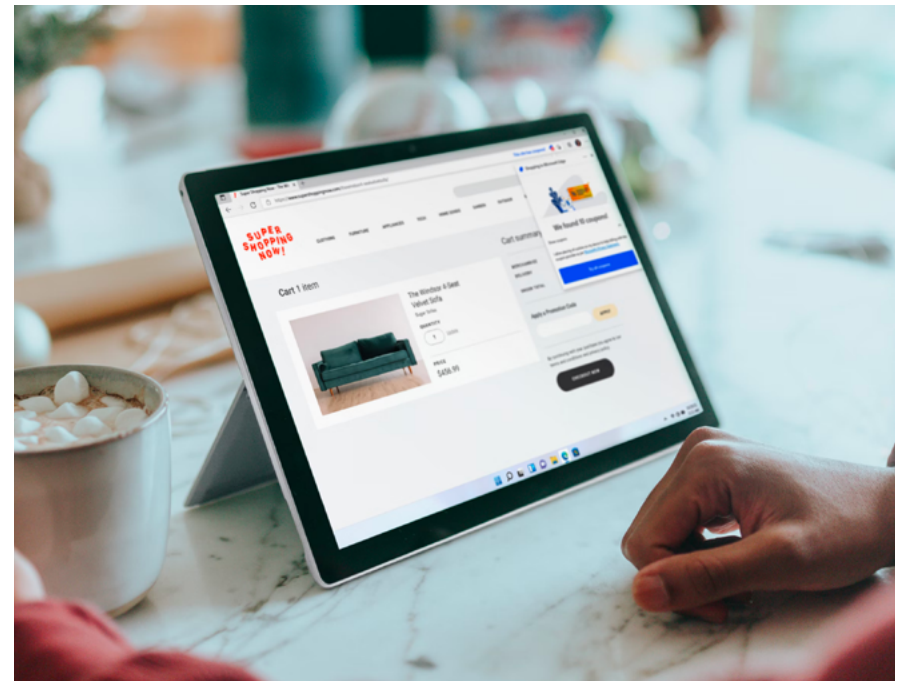
INTRODUCTION



Your ability to make money with an ecommerce store is directly tied to driving traffic to your site. Your online store may be the most beautifully designed, performance-optimized experience offering high quality products at lower prices than your competitors. But just like a brick-and-mortar store requires an easy-to-find location, if customers can't find (or even simply stumble upon) your store online, all that effort is for naught.

In the crowded online marketplace, getting found online can be a challenge. In 2022, the estimate of total online stores [falls somewhere between 12 and 24 million](#), which means that not only are businesses struggling to get visitors at all—they're competing against hundreds of thousands of businesses just like theirs for the attention of the same shoppers.

Fortunately, online businesses who are strategic about luring digital shoppers to their sites can benefit from the increase in traffic by growing their sales numbers. By making your website easy for customers to find at the very moment they're looking to buy your products, you too can achieve success online.



GUIDE OUTLINE

Part 1: Build Your Overall Strategy

- a. Perform audience research
- b. Identify potential traffic sources
- c. Prioritize traffic sources and tactics

Part 2: Start Putting Different Tactics Into Play

- a. Use SEO to increase organic traffic
- b. Use PPC to increase paid traffic
- c. Use Social Media to increase traffic
- d. Build a content marketing strategy
- e. Earn referrals through relationship building

Part 3: Turn New Site Visitors Into Repeat Customers

- a. Employ Email Marketing to stay top-of-mind
- b. Use Retargeting to bring people back

Ecommerce Traffic Leads to More Sales



Build Your Overall Strategy

As with any new (or revamped) initiative, any actions you take to drive more traffic to your website must start with a thoughtful strategy.

Trying ad hoc tactics without thinking through how they'll work together means spending more time and money for worse results. By putting together a "battle plan" beforehand, you ensure that you have a clear understanding of your specific goals and the actions you need to (or have the bandwidth to) take to reach them.

To develop a successful traffic strategy, you'll need to follow a few specific steps that have been proven to work for other businesses. We'll cover these steps in this section.



a. Perform audience research

Figuring out the best way to reach potential customers requires understanding who those people are. The people who are most likely to buy your product are known as your **target audience**, and they are united by a common characteristic—whether it be a certain behavior or simply belonging to a particular demographic. When you pinpoint your target audience, you can get a better idea of what methods and strategies you must take on to capture their attention and achieve great conversion rates. Audience research will help you identify and understand your target audience and what their typical online shopping habits are.

The first step in conducting thorough audience research is gathering data on your current customers. There's no better place to start than looking at those who have already bought your product. What information you are able to gather depends on how customers connect with your business, but collect what you can without pestering your customers.



If you don't have this sort of information on hand, taking a look at your website and social media analytics can give you an idea of who your customers are. Most social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have built-in analytics tools, but you can also use third-party services. Even though not everyone interacting with your social accounts will be customers, it reveals who is interested in your product and services. Look for information like:

- **Geographic location:** Where are your customers located? Finding geographic trends helps you determine where to target ads. It also allows you to adjust and fine-tune the times that you post on social media to ensure that your message is reaching the largest audience possible when they're most active online.
- **Age:** Knowing the general age of your customers can inform your marketing strategy. There's no need to get specific, but having an idea of the generation or decade will likely come in handy as you craft messaging.
- **Stage of life:** This factor is often correlated to age, but it doesn't necessarily have to be. Are the people who buy your product newlyweds? Students? Parents?
- **Income and spending patterns:** Analyzing the average income of your customers gives some insight into how they approach purchasing your product and those like it.

- **Interests:** Find out what your customers like besides your product or services. What are their hobbies? What music are they listening to? How do they spend their free time?

As you collect your data, be sure to input it in a database or spreadsheet that will allow you to track trends. Once you have some data points, you can use the information to target consumers who have similar characteristics.



b. Identify potential traffic sources

For most ecommerce websites, your main traffic sources will be organic (search engines), social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), email, and word of mouth (online reviews, friend recommendations, etc.). Crafting a good strategy depends on understanding these sources and the best tactics for driving traffic through each one.

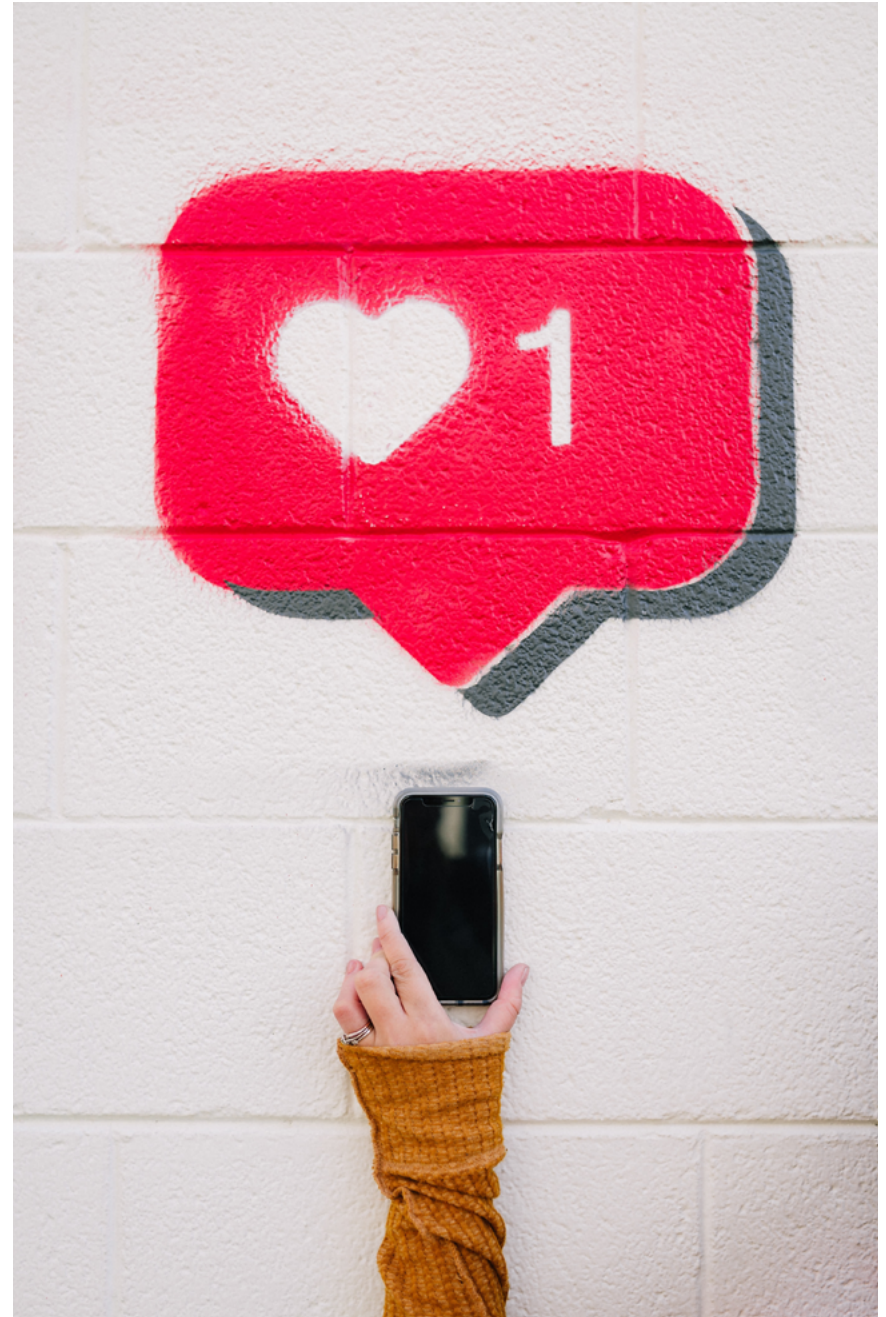


c. Prioritize traffic sources and tactics

Online marketing can feel overwhelming if you start out trying to do everything at once. Instead, consider your audience's habits and your company's skillset to prioritize which traffic sources and tactics make the most sense for you.

Use the target audience data that you gathered to determine which method(s) would be the most effective traffic source to target. For example, [71% of Instagram users](#) are under the age of 35. This means that if your target audience is teens and young adults, Instagram is probably a good platform to market your products and business. On the other hand, if the majority of your customers are retirees over the age of 60, it is not an effective use of your time or resources to focus your efforts on the platform.

A truly great website traffic strategy will be multi-channel, but focused on reaching the right people in the right context.



PART 2

Start Putting Different Tactics Into Play

Now that you have a big-picture strategy in mind, it's time to start putting your plan into action. Depending on the channel(s) you'd like to focus on, there are several different tactics you can use to begin driving more traffic to your site. Some of the most common and effective tactics business owners and marketers use include:

- SEO
- PPC
- Social Media
- Content Marketing
- Relationship-Building

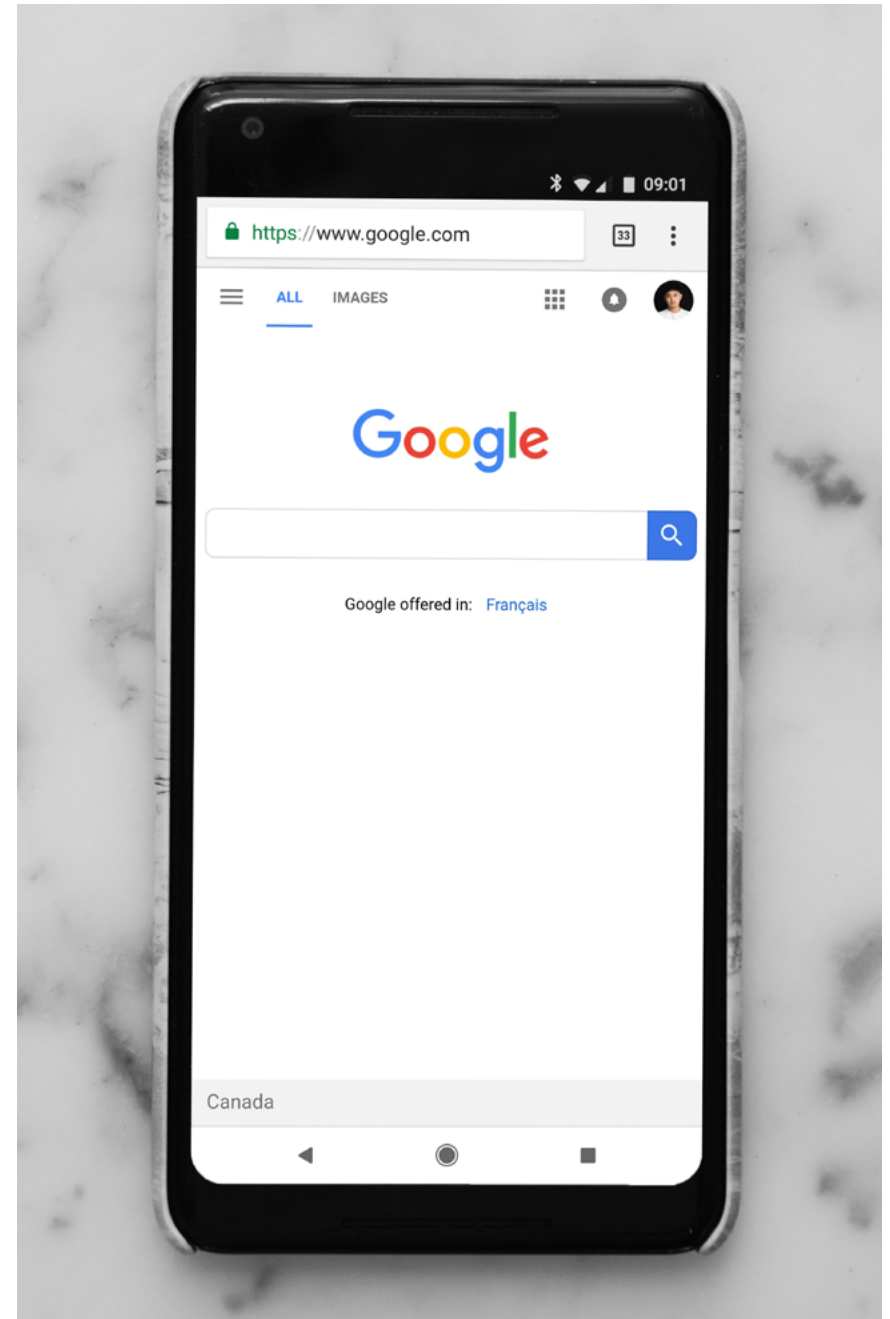
In this section, we'll walk through a brief overview of each of these tactics and the steps you can take to integrate them into your strategy for driving traffic to your store.



a. Use SEO to increase organic traffic

Search engines can be a huge driver of traffic for websites. In fact, organic traffic makes up nearly 50% of all website traffic. But even better than that, search engines are a great way to get relevant traffic since the people who find you through Google are actively searching for what you sell. It is a terrific medium for website and brand discovery, and leads to higher conversions due to the specificity of searches.

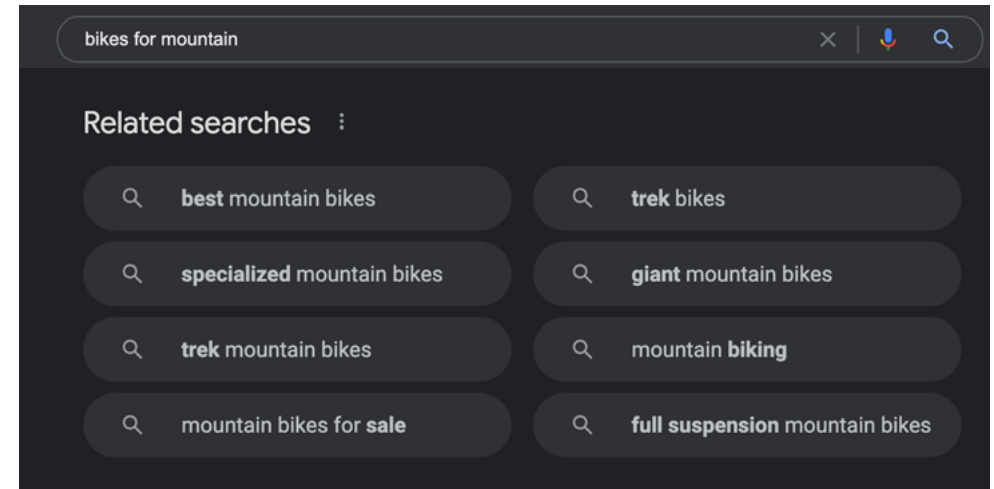
Unfortunately, just showing up on the fifth page of results isn't enough. Oftentimes, people don't even click past the second page of search results, which is why it is so important that your business or product appears as close to the top of the first page as it can. [SEO \(search engine optimization\)](#) is the practice of working to get your website to show up higher in the search engine rankings for relevant keywords. The marketing techniques that make up SEO aim to increase a website's authority, build trust, and ensure topical relevance. Let's take a look at the tactics that SEO utilizes.



Keyword research

Using keyword tools that provide information about how popular and competitive different search terms are, you can easily identify the main keywords people are using to find the kind of products you sell and the topics you cover. Once you've determined what people are searching for and how they are conducting that search, you can include the keywords and relevant content in your marketing plan.

The first step in keyword research is to compile a list of topics that are relevant and important to your business—ones that you'd like to rank highly for when searched on Google. For an ecommerce store, a good place to start would be the market that you are in such as apparel, decor, outdoor equipment, etc. Once you've got a decent list of topics, focus on the most relevant and dig a little deeper to make a list of keywords you think potential customers may search for when looking for your product.



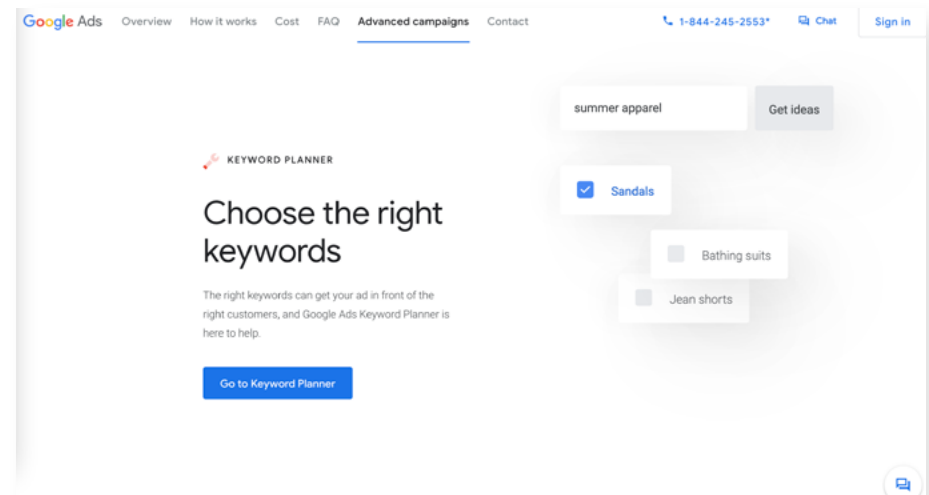
Note: If you're having trouble coming up with terms, you can use Google to help expand your list. Conduct a search with a term that you have, scroll to the bottom of the page, and look at the related suggestions. This is a good method of finding similar terms. If you want to take it a step further, do a search on the related terms and consider those related searches. You can also find a number of websites that generate lists of frequently searched permutations.

You'll want to be sure that you're including both head terms and long-tail keywords on your list. Head terms are those words that you probably think of when you hear the word "keyword"—they are typically generic and shorter than long-tail keywords, which contain more than three words. Long-tail keywords are generally more specific and tend to lead to more conversions. This is because a person is more likely to be further in the buying cycle. For instance, someone who searches for "cute shoes" may just be browsing for ideas. Meanwhile, someone who is looking for "black heels size 9" is probably closer to making a purchase.

You will also want to do a little digging into your competitors' performance when it comes to keywords. Seeing what keywords they are ranking for can help you decide which are important. This isn't to say that if your competitor isn't ranked for certain keywords they don't matter; on the contrary, that could be a great opportunity for you to lead the way and own a market share on certain terms.

Now that you've worked hard to compile a large list, you need to narrow it down. You'll use hard data to find which of those words will best serve you and your business. Third party tools like the [Google Keyword Planner](#) allow you to see search volume and traffic for keywords.

This allows you to weed out any keywords that have very little traffic and focus more on ones that will get more eyes on your product. But keep in mind that too much traffic and volume for a keyword can also be a bad thing. Large companies and retailers are going to rank for general, highly competitive keywords such as "women's clothing," and it's highly unlikely that you will be able to outrank them. So when it comes to smaller ecommerce businesses, your energy is probably better spent ranking category pages and individual products rather than your company as a whole.





On-site optimization

You can tell the search engines what a page on your website is about by incorporating your target keyword into a few main parts of the page and including content that matches the intent behind users' search queries. The goal of on-site SEO is to place content on a webpage so that search engines find the page valuable and worthy of a good results page ranking.

On-site optimization is more than simply placing a few keywords here and there on your website. Over the years, the placement of certain words has come to matter less and less. Today, relevance is the name of the game. So while keywords still matter, you also want your content to be genuinely relevant to what users are looking for. Web pages should be:

- **User-friendly:** Content should be neatly organized and easy for the user to navigate. Clean pages are favored over those covered with ads or affiliate links.
- **Unique:** Duplicated content within your site or on other sites hurts your ranking. In the ecommerce sphere, one thing to be careful of are deep product pages. While pages that show every color and size of a jacket may be useful and legitimate to a customer, Google sees the duplicated pages as low-value content. You'll also want to avoid copying descriptions from your manufacturer or other companies. Write your own unique descriptions that tell customers and Google what the product and page are all about.
- **Aligned with intent:** Do users find what they are looking for when they come to your website? It's important that the search delivers on the expectation of the user. If you are using keywords just to use keywords and they aren't really matching with what you're actually offering, your rankings will suffer.

Link building

The search engine algorithms determine a website's authority in part by measuring how many links point back to a page. Link building is a type of off-site SEO, meaning your efforts won't actually be focused on your own website. Instead, link building helps you get high-quality, relevant websites to link to your site.

According to Google's algorithm, the more web pages that have links that point back to your site, the more trustworthy your website is deemed to be, which leads to higher rankings. In addition to higher rankings, it also gives more people an opportunity to discover your website while browsing other pages. But you can't just throw links around other webpages—Google recognizes sketchy and disreputable link building techniques and penalizes sites that engage in those methods.

Whose sites you are linking to also matters. Pages with low-quality content are penalized, so you want to make sure that the sites with your links are relevant. And if you're including other sites' links on your own website, you'll want to make sure that those are reputable sites as well.

While SEO progress is slow, once you start to gain relevant rankings, it can send a high volume of traffic your way. So how do you successfully build links for your ecommerce website? Here are a few techniques to get started:

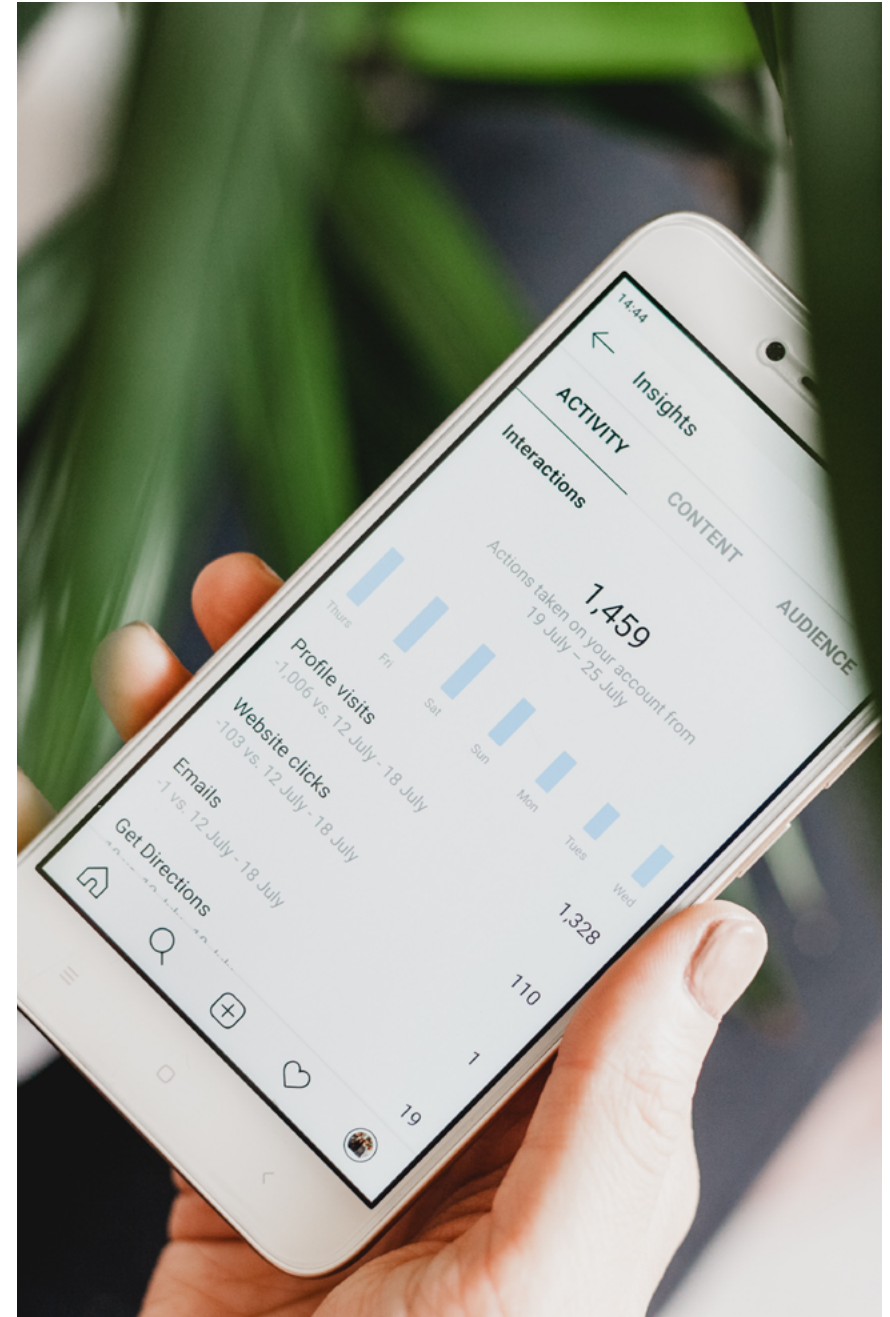
- **Blogging:** Starting a blog is a simple, yet effective way to steer traffic to your website and products. Keep content relevant and related to your particular niche. Blog posts that make for great evergreen content are things like how-to guides, buying guides, product comparisons, and infographics. These stay fresh year-round and don't become irrelevant as quickly as viral content.
- **Guest posting:** To get your links across a wider variety of sites, consider writing guest posts on other blogs. Pitch stories to sites related to your niche and create quality, on-topic content. If you accept guest posts on your own blog, make sure that you are only receiving links from trustworthy sites and content that is relevant to what you are selling in your store.
- **Get manufacturers to feature you:** If applicable, get the brands that you stock to feature you on their own websites. Many manufacturers list the stores that sell their products. It never hurts to reach out to make sure you are featured on the page.
- **Ensure that your site is worth linking to:** In ecommerce, sometimes product and category pages aren't that exciting to look at. To encourage more backlinks, create pages that are unique, fun, or interactive in some way.
- **Watch competitors:** As always, it helps to keep an eye on what your competition is doing. You can use online tools to see where their backlinks are, and craft a strategy inspired by their marketing tactics.

b. Use PPC to increase paid traffic

For a faster traffic source, pay-per-click (PPC) advertising can get you on the first page of Google right away. The main search engines all have ad platforms that use a PPC model, meaning you don't pay for the ads themselves—you only pay for the traffic they deliver.

Pay-per-click works exactly as it sounds. Every time someone clicks on your ad, sending a potential customer to your website, you are charged a fee.

There is not a set price for each click. Businesses place bids on keywords that their customers are likely to use when looking up their products and services. For example, a company that sells backpacks for hiking may place bids on “hiking day pack” or “hiking backpack.” The price of bids varies based on several factors, including the search volume and competitiveness of a keyword. Of course, numerous companies can place bids on keywords, so not all PPC ads are seen with a search. The ads that actually get shown are determined by a number of factors, like the size of the bid and the quality and relevance of the actual ad to the keyword.



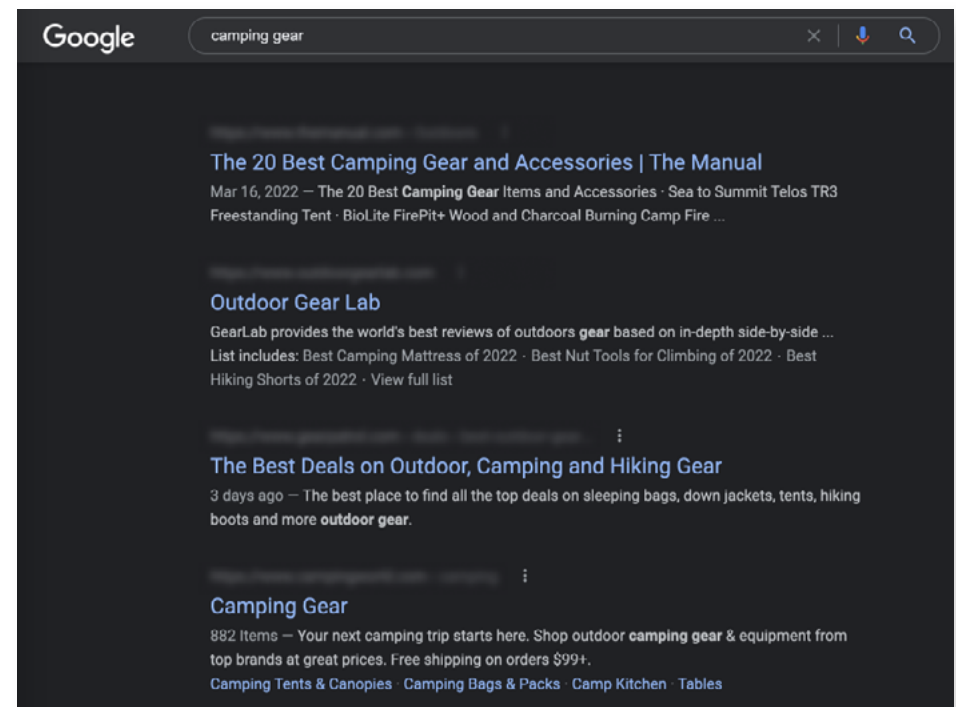
PPC ads are valuable for a few main reasons:

- **PPC traffic is relevant:** Your ads will only show up for the keywords you choose, so you only pay for clicks from people seeking out your products.
- **PPC ads are targeted:** You control who sees your ads based on factors like demographic details and behavioral data.
- **PPC campaigns give you a lot of control:** You set a maximum budget to control your spending, and choose the text, images, and placements for your ads.

Here are a few factors to be aware of to improve chances of being featured in SERPs:

- **Relevance of keywords:** Use your keyword research to select the most relevant terms to place bids on, and remember that long-tail keywords can contribute a hefty portion to overall site traffic.
- **Optimized landing pages:** You want your landing page to be clear, cohesive, and navigable from a user experience perspective. Are people finding what they initially searched for?
- **Ad text:** Not only does the landing page need to be relevant, but so does the text of the ad itself. The better your ad copy, the higher your click-through-rate will be.

The work doesn't end once you have a PPC campaign up and running. You should continuously analyze data and aim to improve your campaign. Reduce costs by reviewing the performance of keywords and discontinuing the use of under-performing terms. Refine the copy of your ad to create something that is enticing and relevant. Fine-tune your landing pages so they always align with search queries, leading to higher conversion rates. The longer you do it, the more you'll learn and come to truly understand the ins and outs of PPC advertising.



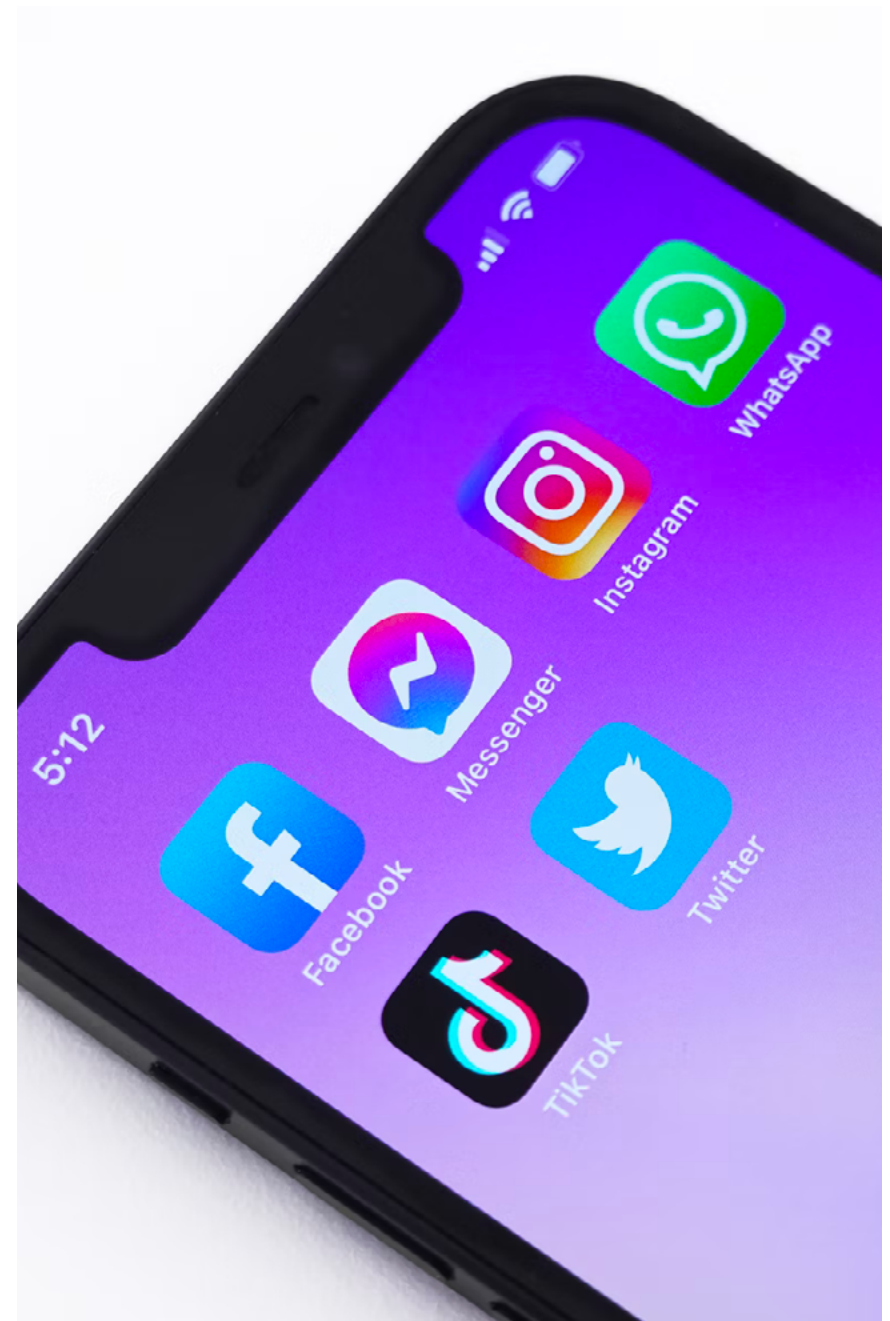
c. Use Social Media to increase traffic

Social media has become a huge part of everyday life for most people. Around the world, [3.4 billion people](#) used social media in 2020. That makes it a powerful channel to interact with your audience directly. There are two main methods of driving traffic to your ecommerce site with social media:

Organic social media marketing

This includes everything you can do on social media for free (or at least, that only costs you time). With all the platforms out there, it can be overwhelming to try and conquer every single one. The key is to identify the main social media platforms you want to be on based on where your audience is active. Remember the audience research you did in step one? You'll use that to help determine which platform will help you reach your target audience.

Even though each platform is a little different in what you can share or post, there are a few general pointers that can be applied across most platforms. The ultimate goal of your social media presence is to drive traffic to your website by sharing links to your content, promoting special deals, and including a link to your homepage in your bio.



In addition to promoting your website, use social media to be social. Share links to other content your audience will find valuable and join conversations relevant to your industry or product niche. This will help you grow your following so that when you do share links back to your website, you'll have followers who see them. Besides sharing good content, good social media marketing strategy includes:

- **Sharing images:** Photos and videos are more likely to grab our attention and capture our interest than large blocks of text. Whenever you can, share relevant pictures on your social media posts. They don't always have to be photos of products, either. Consumers love seeing things like behind-the-scenes looks at how companies are run. Pictures and videos should always be of high quality and shareable.
- **Interact with customers:** Social media is the perfect place to interact directly with customers and those interested in your products and services. If anyone has any questions or concerns about the product, you can reply and give them the answers or help that they need. Because of this, social media is often an extension of customer service.
- **Be consistent:** Users aren't going to be interested in following an account that only posts once in a blue moon. By posting quality content consistently, you build up a relationship of sorts with consumers and show that you're dedicated to sharing information with your followers. Posting often doesn't have to mean posting a lot—in fact, being concise with your content is often more effective than longer, more detailed messaging.



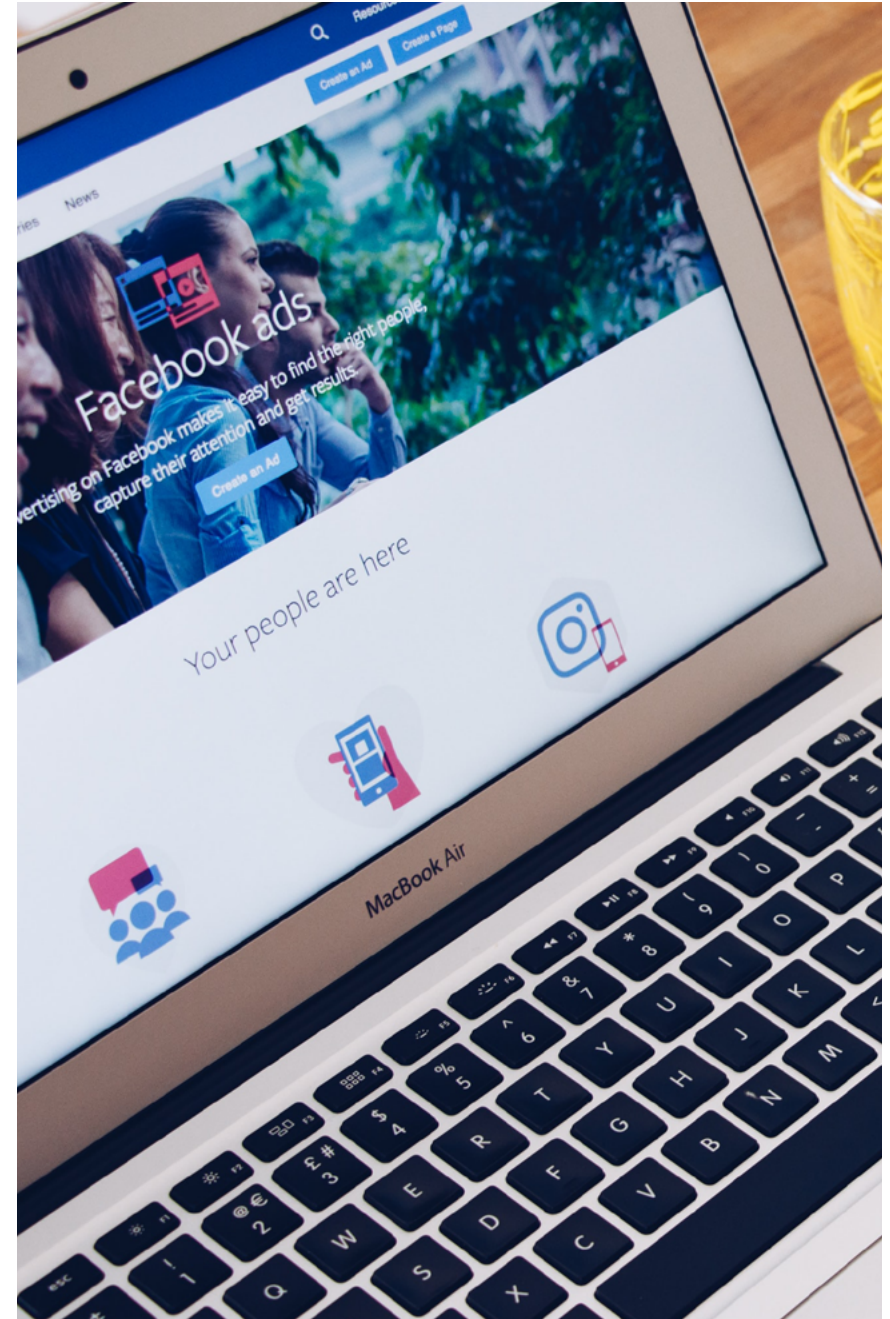
- **Use hashtags:** Hashtags help your content reach new audiences who aren't already following you. But before you go adding hashtags to all of your posts, make sure you understand the norms and etiquette for each platform. For example, adding eight hashtags on Instagram is pretty normal, but might look a little excessive on a Facebook post. If you're having trouble, take a look at similar businesses' posts for inspiration.

Paid social ads

In conjunction with your organic social media marketing techniques, consider utilizing paid social ads. Most of the updates you share on your social media accounts will only be seen by people who already follow you. Paid social ads are how you use social media to reach a new audience. These are those posts you see on Facebook that say things like “Sponsored Ad.”

Like search PPC, most of the social ad platforms offer PPC ads, so you’ll only pay for the traffic the ads send your way. And the social platforms offer extensive targeting options to help you reach the right people with your ads.

There are many existing guides on how to create, optimize, and measure different types of PPC campaigns—check out the [“Paid Search” section of Volusion’s blog](#) for some great content.



d. Build a content marketing strategy

A digital content strategy is an important component in many of the traffic tactics on this list. It's a powerful way to improve your website's SEO, gives you more to promote on social platforms and in ads, and helps you start building relationships with your target audience.

In order for content marketing to drive new traffic to your website, there are a few good procedures to keep in mind:

- **Optimize your content for search:** Just because you're writing a fun blog post doesn't mean you can forget about SEO. Use your SEO keyword research to guide your content strategy, and make sure each piece of content you create is optimized to perform well on search engines.
- **Create content in different formats:** While a blog is an obvious place to start your content marketing, don't overlook other content formats. Videos, infographics, ebooks, podcasts, and webinars can all be equally useful for getting the attention of your audience and driving traffic to your website.
- **Promote your content:** You already know to promote your products, but make sure to promote your content too so your audience can find it. Tie your social media marketing strategies together with your content marketing plan by sharing content on your social platforms. Not only does this allow your followers to see what you're putting out there, but it also gives them an opportunity for them to share it, putting even more eyes on your brand.
- **Focus on what your audience cares about:** Make sure your content centers on the needs and interests of the people you want to reach. By being helpful and not making it all about you and your products, you'll build trust. And when you're viewed as a reputable, authoritative source, your search engine rankings improve.

e. Earn referrals through relationship building

Before the digital age, word of mouth was the name of the marketing game. Today, word of mouth still matters—it's just a little different since people now have platforms with which they can reach thousands of people. A lot of online marketing success is about relationships with those who can vouch for and promote your brand. A good digital content strategy will have relationship-building baked into it. Here are some relationship-building strategies to consider:

- **Using video to highlight industry experts:** Video content offers a good opportunity for connecting with others in your industry. Do an interview series where you invite notable people in your industry to share their opinions. Not only do they offer valuable information to your customers, but they also make you an authority in your industry or niche.
- **Connecting with influencers through affiliate marketing:** Affiliate marketing involves recruiting influencers in your industry to link to your products in exchange for a small cut of the profits when traffic they send your way results in a sale.

- **Interacting with influencers on social media:** Social media is all about making connections. Identify industry influencers on social media, then respond to their posts and share their content when it relates to your product or service.
- **Quoting experts in your written content:** Expert quotes strengthen a piece of written content and increase the likelihood that the expert will share your content with their audience.

As you connect with more potential customers and people in your industry, they'll not only become website visitors—they'll also start to share your content with their followers and help drive new traffic your way.

Turn New Site Visitors Into Repeat Customers

You did it—by putting your well-thought-out strategy into action, you’ve seen an uptick in the number of visitors accessing your ecommerce site! Hopefully, by folding your preliminary research into your strategy, your site is experiencing traffic from members of your target audience who are more likely to appreciate what they encounter.

But the plan doesn’t stop there—as we know, “window shoppers” don’t pay the bills or grow the business. Now you need to focus on enticing those site visitors to turn into paying customers. Not only that—you’ll also want to make sure they feel excited to return to your site for additional shopping at a future date.

Two of the best tactics for gaining repeat visitors are email marketing and retargeting—we’ll briefly cover each of these in this section of our guide.



a. Employ Email Marketing to stay top-of-mind

In ecommerce, email is an incredibly important tool used for everything from receipts and transactional messages to reminders of items left in a shopping cart. You can use marketing emails to promote new content and promotions that can drive more traffic and turn visitors into sales.

Of course, you can't successfully market via email without email addresses. To start building your contact list, collect addresses from website visitors. To do this, create a simple landing page that invites the visitor to input their email address in exchange for something (subscribing to a newsletter, 20% off a product, etc.). You'll also want to make sure that there are plenty of places to opt into emails across your website, whether it be in your header, About Us page, or pop-up lead capture. Another source of contacts is the customers who have already bought your product; always allow your customers to opt into special deals and exclusive discounts.



Once you've got a decent list built up, you can start crafting the email content. What goes into an email will depend on the type of marketing email that you're sending.

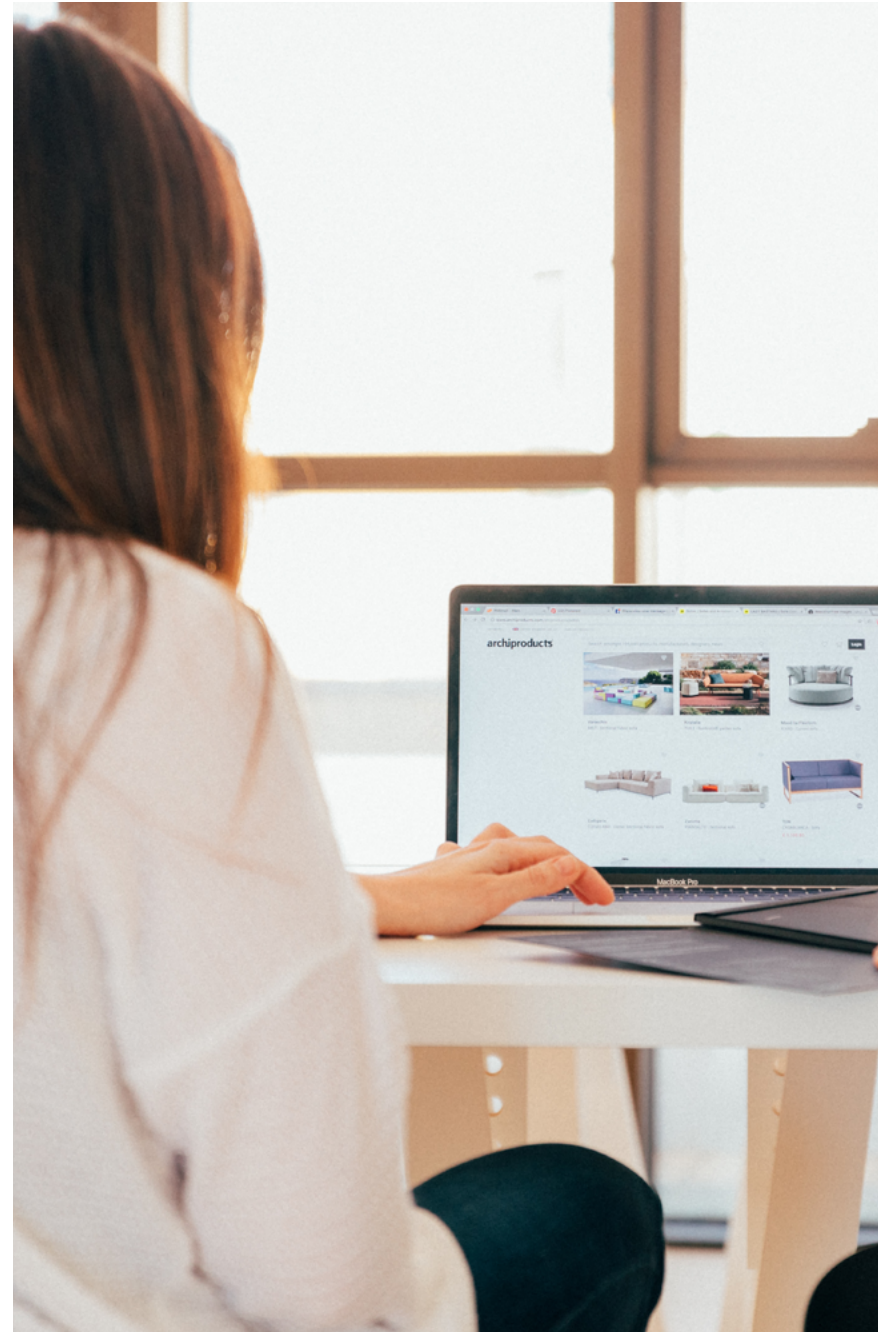
- **Transactional emails:** These are sent after a transaction is completed and give the customer information about their purchase. Receipts and shipping notifications fall into this category. Because they are expected and often contain info like product arrival dates, transactional emails have the highest open rate. This makes it the perfect opportunity to suggest related products or add-ons to their order. Give them the chance to share their purchase on social media or incentivize word-of-mouth marketing by having them refer a friend.
- **Lifecycle emails:** This type of email is triggered by a specific action taken by the shopper, and is dependent on where they are in the consumer cycle. An example of a lifecycle email is a cart abandonment message, which is useful for recapturing some customers who would not have otherwise come back to your website. Another important lifecycle email is the welcome message that shoppers get when they first sign up. Here, you can provide value upfront, set clear expectations, and let the shopper know the most important facts about your brand.
- **Promotional emails:** These inform customers of special deals and discounts that are coming up or currently being offered. Boost sales by offering seasonal promotions, subscriber-only discounts, or time-sensitive sales. Promotional emails can also be used to introduce new products as they roll out.



To track your email marketing performance, analyze several metrics, including your list size, growth, open rates, and click-through rates. This will tell you the percentage of people who clicked a link from the email. Like most marketing techniques, practice makes perfect—as you send more and more emails, you'll learn what works and what doesn't for your business.

b. Use Retargeting to draw people back

You can use retargeting ads on PPC platforms to show past visitors ads based on what they viewed on your site. If someone checked out a pair of shoes, but wasn't ready to buy, seeing an ad for those shoes a few weeks later could encourage them to finally take that step of purchasing. Explore the options available to you on the platform you've chosen for your other PPC initiatives.



CONCLUSION

Ecommerce Traffic Leads to More Sales

No matter how much effort you put into creating the perfect ecommerce website, all websites need traffic to thrive and grow. Every visitor to your site is a potential customer, but no one will become a paying customer without first being a site visitor.

By using the strategies mentioned in this guide, your online store will be well on its way to attracting a higher amount of traffic. From there, you can employ additional strategies to make sure that your business is doing all it can to turn traffic into sales.

Studio

Special Thanks to the experts at [Grow With Studio](#) for contributing to this guide. Looking for some help driving traffic to your ecommerce site? The marketing experts at Studio, an ecommerce-focused digital agency, can create and implement targeted social media, SEO, and advertising strategies that will help push visitors to your site. [Learn more](#) about Studio's services.