HOW SMALL OFFLINE BUSINESS CAN SET UP AN ECOMMERCE STORE

Ravi Shekhar* | Research Scholar, University Department of Commerce and Business Administration, Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar. *Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT A very large proportion of small and medium businesses in India operate completely offline with physical stores. The covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of ecommerce for small businesses. The old way of building an ecommerce store was to purchase a domain name, web hosting and hire a web developer to build your ecommerce website and mobile app. But now we have many new and easier ways to set up an ecommerce store and sell our products online.

INTRODUCTION

A very large proportion of small and medium businesses in India operate completely offline with physical stores. Customers visit these physical stores and do shopping. The need of online presence for small businesses in India is of least priority or of no priority. Small business owners avoid this because of many reasons like lack of technical knowledge, not willing to invest money for website and or mobile app development or just because they consider this as an unnecessary thing to do.

The covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of ecommerce for small businesses. The pandemic is disrupting the ecommerce model of business. Big market players are showing interest in retail business through ecommerce. Existing big ecommerce players in India like JioMart, Grofer, BigBasket are aggressively expanding their business. So, it's high time for small businesses to introduce innovative ideas like ecommerce model to retrieve their existing customers and also attract new customers. Small retail businesses need to operate both online and offline.

The old way of building an ecommerce store was to purchase a domain name, web hosting and hire a web developer to build your ecommerce website and mobile app. But now we have many new and easier ways to set up an ecommerce store and sell our products online.

Sell On Third Party Ecommerce Marketplace

Small businesses can start selling products on third party ecommerce marketplace like flipkart.com, amazon.in, paytm mall etc. These marketplace will manage everything for you like delivery of products, payment gateway etc. In return these marketplace will charge some fee on every sale.

Setup Online Store On Third Party Platforms

There are many platforms where small businesses can create their online store, list their products and sell their products online. These third party platforms may also provide payment gateway for your business. You can create your store on these ecommerce platforms within a few hours only. Some of the popular third party ecommerce platforms in India are indiamart.com tradeindia.com instamojo.com etc.

Setup Online Store On Social Media

Many social media websites offer you to set up your online store and sell your products and services through their platform. Ecommerce business using social media has many advantages like you get connected to lakhs of potential customers, easy to set up and get started, very basic technical knowledge is required, easily accept online payments, communicate with your customer using their inbuilt features like message and chat etc.

Facebook.com, the world's largest social networking website has a feature called Facebook Shop using which you can set up your online store on facebook.com Similarly, you use other social media websites like instagram, twitter, linkedin to sell or promote your business online.

Setup Own Branded Ecommerce Store

If you want to have better control and more flexibility of your ecommerce store, you should build your own branded ecommerce website and mobile app. You will need to purchase a domain name like your-business-name.com, web hosting and hire a web developer to build your ecommerce website and mobile app. Having your own ecommerce store will save fee charged by third party platforms.

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