



MANUFACTURER'S GUIDE TO  
**e-Commerce Growth**



BITCADET

This simple guide was created for manufacturers with all levels of experience selling products online. These essential steps will help assure you're maximizing this growth opportunity while containing costs.

This growth guide will take you through the essential e-commerce sales steps:

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- KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS**
  - KNOW YOUR TEAM**
  - MAP YOUR ROUTE**
  - LEADERSHIP MATTERS**
  - BUILD YOUR BEST DIGITAL SALESPERSON**
  - GENERATE SALES**
  - FULFILL THE PROMISE**
  - ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**
  - MAINTAIN FOCUS**
  - RESPECT YOUR PARTNERS**

# Why should I be interested in selling my products online?

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For the past 5 years, manufacturing sales has been changing to match customers' new expectations: self-service sales with products delivered on time and as promised. Companies adapting to this change continue to thrive through the ever-changing sales demands.

Please use this guide at any point in your e-commerce journey. Our team created this document to help manufacturers get the most value from every dollar spent, and to give you technological know-how to succeed in this changing sales environment.



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FOUNDER  
& CEO



**Lisa Clark**

MANAGING  
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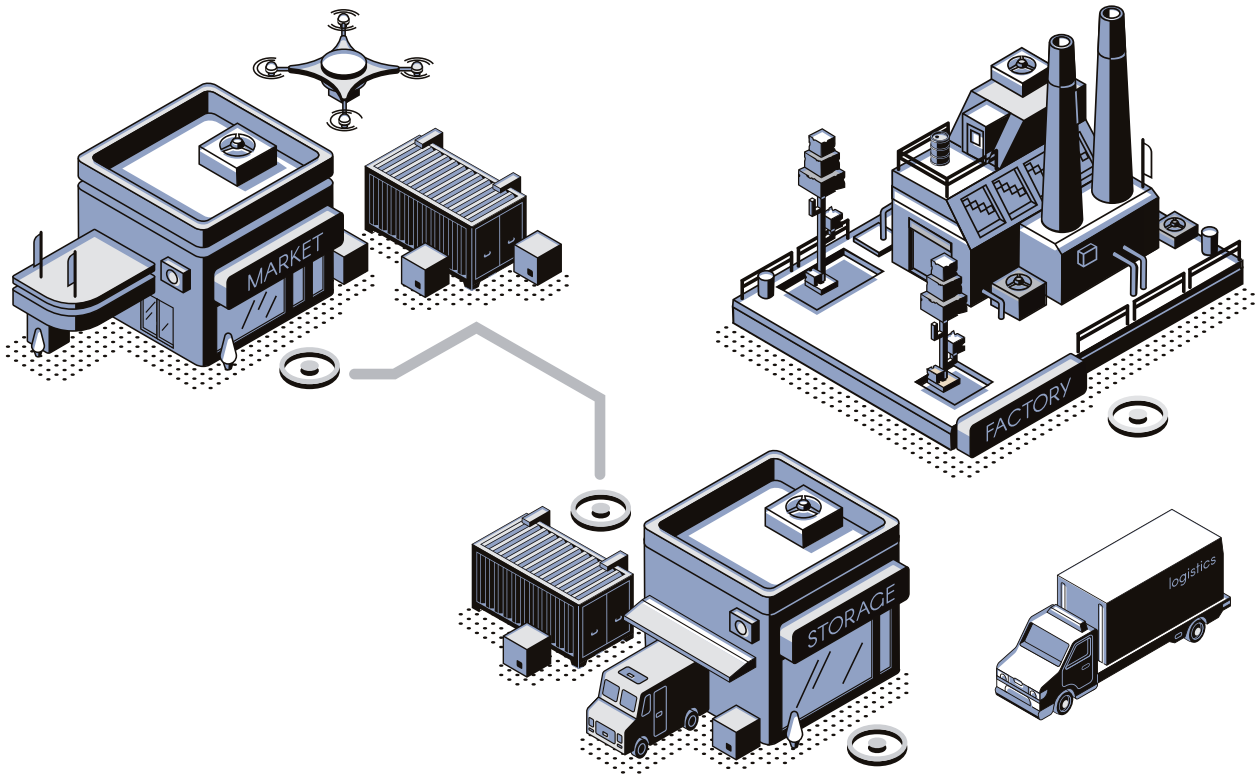
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# Know Your Customers

You will gain the most success from your e-commerce store by making it a value add service for your customers. To know if you are adding the value they expect, you must know your customers.

## OUR ADVICE

Use feedback from sales people and direct customer surveys to help you create customer profiles and story boards. Creating profiles of your standard audience will help you identify what they value most: their time, their decision making flexibility, their privacy. You can then begin to build the entire marketing and sales process to assure you are meeting your customers' expectations to capture the most sales.

The better you define your customers, the more you will understand what they think is valuable, and where to best make your investments.

# Know Your Team

Like most companies, your internal team will be handling your e-commerce orders. Their comfort with technology will help drive your success.

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Use this step to build employee buy-in. It is critical they believe in this project as much as you, and that they know the system is built to support them.

Our history has shown us that this step often reveals opportunities to save time, energy, and variable costs.

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## OUR ADVICE

Survey everyone who will be interacting with the order at any time. Record any information they need and note how best to present the information to them (ie., is it easiest for them to see the order number at the top of a page or at the bottom).





# Map Your Route

Once you know your customers and team, you can begin to tailor your strategy. Success should be defined with optimistic, but achievable sales goals and targets.

**Over the past 10 years, BITCADET has created a financial modeling framework to help companies budget and plan for their e-commerce investments. Without such models, companies can easily spend too much or too little in pursuit of success.**

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## OUR ADVICE

First, decide what sales channels you will bring online. Create rough timelines and pro-forma budgets based on sales volume estimates, and contingencies if the plan shifts. Target 'return on ad spend' as a key metric since the money previously spent on sales salaries and commissions will shift to your marketing budget. Consistently reassess the path you are taking and keep an open mind to capture the most sales.

# Leadership Matters

Like any major company change, leadership is required from the most senior executives. In the case of small and medium size manufacturers, this stewardship may come from the Founder or President.

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## OUR ADVICE

Work to remove any project barriers to success while assuring it stays on the strategic roadmap. Actively communicate and show how you are aiding the project to build team camaraderie and enthusiasm.



# Build Your Best Digital Salesperson

Well designed e-commerce websites not only meet all customer and team member expectations, they give a wow factor. They are built to answer all customer questions, and provide real-time pricing, lead-times, and a seamless transaction for every customer type (ie., dealers, distributors, direct buyers). It's your 24/7 salesperson who brings you orders with no mistakes and no commission.

## OUR ADVICE

Build your website using best User Experience (UX) standards. Design your site to enhance your company's brand while matching your customers' interests. Approve mock-ups with team members and use their feedback to improve your site. Don't get caught by all the bells and whistles and focus on the true value-adds for your customers and your team.



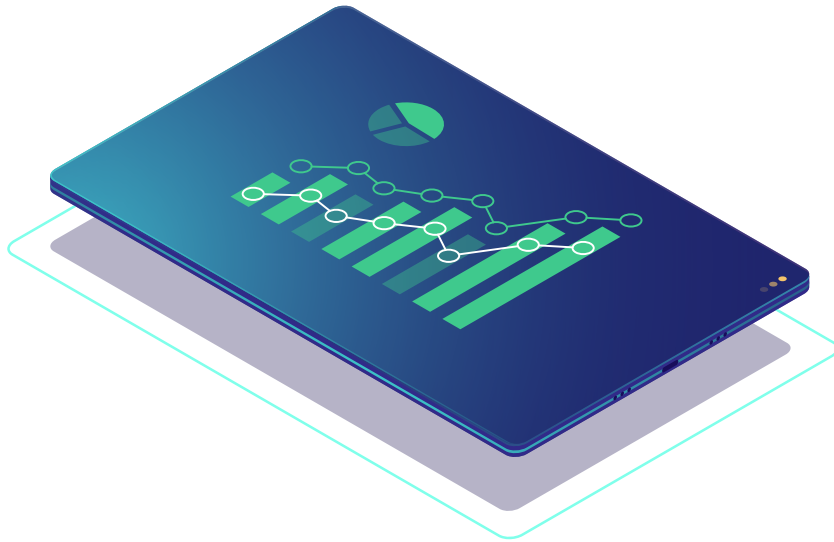
**Myth:** My company's products are too complex to be sold online.

**Fact:** From no subparts to 100s of subparts, no product is too complex for today's online sales. In fact, you can even offer real-time pricing quotes on highly complex products.

**Myth:** My company lacks the technical skills to create or manage an e-commerce store.

**Fact:** Your company likely partners with a freight provider to deliver your products. You aren't expected to build the nationwide infrastructure needed to move your goods. Building and managing your e-commerce system should be no different. You can partner with companies like BITCADET who design, manage, and build your e-commerce store at a variable rate that scales with your operations.





# Generate Sales

Avoid the “if you build it, they will come” trap. Attracting and converting site visitors into customers takes a marketing budget, and a team that uses your internal customer database to make the most of today’s advanced advertising tools.

At BITCADET, we’re always looking for new sales opportunities for our clients. We have shown that by consistently testing ads and product pages, companies can grow sales while maintaining their costs.

## OUR ADVICE

Create a look-alike database using your recent customer profiles, including age, location, interests, income, and buying habits. Try to capture your customers’ contact information without pestering them. Keep your customers interested through scheduled email campaigns. Consistently reassess your audience and ad spend, adjust accordingly. No matter what, keep your content interesting.

# Fulfill the promise

Your new e-commerce channel will be heavily scrutinized by your customers from the moment an order is placed until their product is received. It is critical to maintain strong customer communication and deliver the product without any errors. If you can fulfill your promise, you may gain a repeat customer and strong online reviews.



Our experience shows us that mistakes in e-commerce sales can be turned into opportunities. If these problems are approached correctly, they can build customer loyalty and additional sales.

## OUR ADVICE

Only make promises your company can keep. Assure your customer service team is well prepared for the sales, and that your operations team can deliver the product on time. Solicit feedback from customers and team members regularly and actively use the information to improve your processes or site. Plan to scale your business as your e-commerce sales ramp up.

# Establish a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Growing e-commerce sales requires a commitment to continuous testing and optimization. This effort assures you are getting the most return on your ad spend, while maintaining your customers' interest.

Lean operations principles can be applied to both the development and maintenance of your e-commerce site and advertising. This will help you capture the most value while maintaining costs.

## OUR ADVICE

Align all improvements with your customer value proposition and eliminate projects that do not meet this expectation. Updating your product page, checkout flow, and ad messaging can lead to measurable increases in conversion rates.



# Maintain Focus

Although your products and promise to the customer may not change over time, your customers' interests, communication methods, and shopping patterns evolve. It is important to keep a pulse on your audience to remain relevant to capture sales.

If you're focused on competitors, you can only try to catch up.  
If you're focused on customers, you set the pace.

## OUR ADVICE

Watch your audience through your advertising and sales. Understand what drives customers to purchase versus just view your products. Survey your customers and use the data to develop new campaigns. Consistently test your campaigns against your audience and retire campaigns before they become tired. Recognize if your budget needs to shift to meet customer demands.



# Respect Your Sales Partners

You, like most manufacturers, likely grew your business through a small group of loyal dealers, distributors, or mass merchants. You would never want to undercut this relationship, so you want to make sure that your e-commerce site supports and does not compete with them.



## OUR ADVICE

Establish a minimum advertised price with merchants for key SKUs that are important to their business. If you decide to sell these products in your online store, sell them for a higher price; if not, use your site to redirect customers to your retail partner. Stay up to date on your vendor agreements, and renegotiate terms if they are too limiting. Build portals in your new e-commerce site to support your vendors.

There are many ways to support your partners. We have found that interviewing your vendors to see how your e-commerce site can support them often builds good will.

Thank you for taking the time to review this guide for successful e-commerce sales growth. Although each company's path will look different, these general suggestions will help you achieve the sales you've been looking for.

**If you're ready to grow your e-commerce sales, contact BITCADET today.**



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