



## Ecommerce: Not your mother's flagship store

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“My ecommerce site is just another store”. “My ecommerce site is my largest store”. “My ecommerce site is my flagship store”. All of these statements are true. However, in order to fully leverage the ecommerce opportunity, your ecommerce site is all of the above, and much more! To optimize your ecommerce, there are two important principles to follow:

1. Recognize those nuances that make ecommerce unique and different
2. Recognize the unique strengths of ecommerce that can offset a weakness in your retail stores

### 1. Recognize those nuances:

- The long tail is still long, longer than ever. Extend your assortment online. Add those hard to find sizes, those additional colors and patterns, and those niche items that appeal to a narrow, but loyal, subset of your customers... too fringe to occupy floor space in the store. Also, consider unique online-only items that add an air of excitement to your store including late developing items not yet in store, or test items that may later be added to the store. Consider supplemental categories, not found in your store, but with appeal to your customer, who may just buy those items from you rather than elsewhere for the convenience of one stop shopping. Whenever possible, partner with suppliers having drop ship capabilities.
- Price points matter. You cannot be all things to all people. It is difficult at best to make any money picking, packing, and shipping (and returns handling) items under \$10. Multi packs raise that AUR, provide customer convenience... and you still have the store for the customer who just wants one or two. Put that underwear into six packs!
- Promotion matters.... but does not have to always match. Obviously pricing congruency on advertised items is mission critical.... but not the only game in town. Your store sales may have a violent peak each Saturday for the week. Your ecommerce sales though may be fairly flat each day.... maybe slight peaks on Sunday and Monday. Think about varying promotional offers to leverage this difference. Your stores probably are in a frenzy those last 10 days before Christmas. Yet your ecommerce sales are leveling off. Are you developing some unique Holiday offers? What are you doing for Cyber Monday?

### 2. Leverage Strengths = Offset Weaknesses

Every retail business has its own set of strengths and weaknesses and they often differ by channel. (TRTT offers two tools to help you objectively identify your unique strengths and weaknesses: EXPRESSINSIGHTS and ASSESSMENTRUBRIC). Identify a weakness in your stores, and develop an ecommerce strategy to address it. Here is my favorite example: Department store sells lots of infant and toddler clothing, but has no space in store for infant furniture and wheel goods. Rather than have loyal customers shop elsewhere, the store offers these products thorough ecommerce and promotes with store signage. Customer satisfied, retailer wins.

Ecommerce is your flagship store.... and now your customer's favorite store (and industry leader). For more innovative “Retail Insights” visit our website [www.theretailthinktank.com](http://www.theretailthinktank.com). Follow us on LinkedIn and get all our updates.