

INSIGHTS

FOR ONLINE RETAILERS

From SellerDeck | Winter 2015/16



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How the latest update will save you time and money p3

Build Your Unique Online Business



by Mark Ballett
SellerDeck Chairman

Twenty years ago, or even ten years ago, it was something of a differentiator to be trading online at all – having an online store helped you to stand out from your more traditional retail competitors.

But not anymore.

Today, almost every retailer has an online presence and being online is no longer enough to differentiate you from your competitors. This is a big problem for many mature online businesses, because being meaningfully different is what drives business success. Indeed, if you aren't different enough, you are unlikely to survive and prosper in today's (and tomorrow's) online retail environment.

So, what can you do about it? You might be surprised to hear that the best approach to go back to basics. You need to find a way of being meaningfully different to your target audience with the application of some basic, but often ignored, marketing strategy

development. Whilst that can sound like a daunting task, it isn't necessarily as hard as it first appears. Many businesses are different in some way, they just haven't made the most of it. Largely because they didn't need to.

That is until now.

It is time to make sure your business is unique in some way and that this difference is meaningful to enough of your target market to sustain your business and build on your success to date. And SellerDeck are here to help you with that.

With two decades, 5000 customers and an estimated £11 Billion (yes, Billion!) of sales via our ecommerce platforms, SellerDeck have built up a lot of expertise in helping retailers establish and grow their online businesses.

Helping its customers to stand out from their competitors is now central to SellerDeck's mission, and its new **Evolve** service is

designed to help you to build a winning strategy for the new competitive environment we all find ourselves in these days.

Do you want to find out more about why being different is important enough for you to take some action, rather than just reading this and do nothing? Would you like to know just what SellerDeck can do to help you better differentiate your business? If so, send an email to sales@sellerdeck.co.uk and we'll put you on the invitation list for our next webinar on this topic.

Be quick though, we limit numbers on each webinar to just 50. Everyone who attends this webinar, and tells us a little about their business, will also be sent a free copy of my Amazon bestselling book that explains just what is involved in building a unique business and it provides a clear step-by-step guide for those of you who like to do things for themselves. ♦

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It's time to make sure your business is unique in some way

Take Your Business Into the Cloud

SellerDeck Cloud p3

Business Matters at the SellerDeck Conference

On September 16th 2015, store-owners, designers and developers congregated at PayPal's HQ in Surrey for the annual SellerDeck Ecommerce Insights Conference.

But this year, SellerDeck wanted to do things a bit differently.

In previous years, the conference talks were based around SellerDeck's software. This year the focus was more on using marketing to help your business grow.



"SellerDeck has always described itself as being 'All You Need To Succeed'," explains Phil Rothwell, Managing Director. "But with the level of competition in the marketplace, and the tough challenges we knew our customers were facing, we realised that 'All You Need' means more than just technology updates. We needed to talk about what makes businesses grow and succeed, as well as the tech stuff."

To this end, the 2015 conference included seminars on market positioning, Google Adwords and running a successful web development project. Then in the afternoon SellerDeck complemented this with talks and workshops on SellerDeck Desktop 2016 and SellerDeck Cloud, the new cloud-based ecommerce platform.

If you have any suggestions for what SellerDeck could cover in its 2016 conference, we would love to hear from you. Call the team on **0845 189 1859** or email sales@sellerdeck.co.uk.



HOW TO GET YOUR BUSINESS OUT OF A RUT

All companies grow in phases. Those that don't fail in the first few years of trading, succeed by finding a niche market – a group of customers for whom their products and services have a specific appeal. They then increase sales by replicating what they do and improving how they do it.

But online retailing is a competitive business. Over time, success attracts the interest of competitors who are

happy to steal market share by copying other businesses. The end result is that without continuous development, even successful businesses start to decline.

YOUR BUSINESS HAS TO STAND OUT

To maintain sales growth online businesses need effective marketing, which is often misunderstood. Although marketing includes the process of promoting products and services

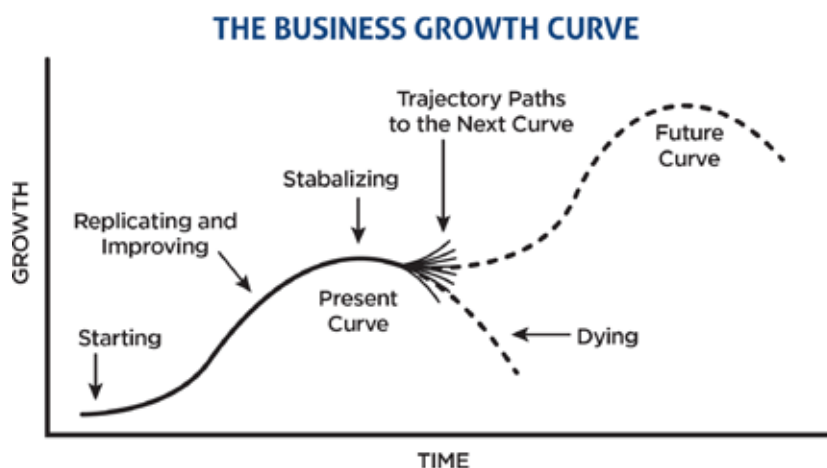
through a range of channels, to deliver long term business success you need to do more than increase awareness.

Look at the logo of any well-known company and you will find that as well as having an awareness of the products they offer, you will also have a sense of what they stand for; a positive emotion that marks them out as being different in a way that is meaningful.

SellerDeck Evolve combines sales data analysis with brand development to enable businesses of all sizes to develop their market positioning, providing a platform for sustained growth and creating intellectual property that can increase the value of the organisation.

With projects costing as little as £3,000, SellerDeck Evolve is an affordable way to keep your competitors at bay and grow sales in the long term.

For more information, call the team on **0845 189 1859** or email sales@sellerdeck.co.uk.





Heading into the Cloud

We find out more about SellerDeck's new cloud-based platform, and look at what this means for desktop software

SellerDeck made its name selling Windows-based ecommerce systems and over the years has loudly trumpeted the benefits of having the 'engine' of your online business within your business: faster site performance; more ownership and control of your business and so on.

So why has it apparently changed its mind this year and launched **SellerDeck Cloud** – its new cloud-based technology platform? Is SellerDeck abandoning desktop-based software?

"Absolutely not," responds Josh Barling, SellerDeck Ecommerce Consultant.

"We are 100% committed to our desktop-based solution as it is a popular and proven

platform. By launching SellerDeck Cloud we are giving customers the choice of two very different platforms, both with their own unique strengths, while still providing access to SellerDeck's experience and support.

"SellerDeck work with many businesses who are happy with SellerDeck as a company, but who would benefit from the functionality and features of a cloud-based platform. We wanted to give these customers the option of moving to a more suitable platform while continuing the relationship with an ecommerce company that they know and trust."

SellerDeck Cloud is based on the popular and powerful open-source platform, Magento, and Cloud users can benefit from a wide range of

advanced functionality and features which are embedded into the platform but also available through hundreds of plug-ins.

Furthermore, being browser based, users are able to access and maintain the website from anywhere.

"But taking advantage of these benefits is a technical challenge," continues Josh. "That's why we are offering SellerDeck Cloud as a managed platform which we host and support, along with providing additional services to ensure a seamless transition and ongoing commercial success."

If you would like to find out more about SellerDeck Cloud, visit sellerdeck.co.uk/cloud or contact SellerDeck Sales on **0845 189 1859**. ♦



SellerDeck Desktop 2016

SellerDeck's latest update promises to save you time by simplifying some of the tricky tasks that you have to do on a regular basis.

Finding it difficult keeping track of what you are selling on eBay?

SellerDeck's new 'Ebay Order Management' extension downloads your eBay orders into SellerDeck where you can process them alongside your other orders.

Finding it fiddly keeping track of the stock level of your options?

With SellerDeck Desktop 2016 you can track the stock level of your different sizes and colours directly, without having to use a hidden product for each choice.

Want an easier way to reconcile PayPal payments? You can now commit, void and refund PayPal payments from within the order in SellerDeck.

There are lots of other new features, but the most exciting addition to SellerDeck is 'under the hood', with the addition of a new 'Extensions Architecture'. This gives any developer the ability to add their own new plug-ins and extensions to SellerDeck, which should result in loads of new features becoming available without having to wait to SellerDeck's annual product releases.

For a full list of features visit sellerdeck.co.uk/2016 ♦



Finding The Right Words

SellerDeck's SEO expert Tim Pritchard explains the dos and don'ts when adding new items to your store.

One of the most important things you can do to help your search engine rankings is to take time and care when adding new products. Sadly, all too often, I see retailers upload a low quality image, add the manufacturer provided product blurb and maybe a title tag. And that's it.

Wouldn't it be lovely if life was that simple? Unfortunately, you need to do a more to have your products make an effective impact in search results.

We'll start with pictures. You no longer need to use an 8kb low quality image that even the sharpest eagle eye would struggle to make out. We live in an age of big data; if we're not on superfast broadband, we're on superfast 4G. Even with those super speeds, modern PNGs have fantastic compression rates.

So we have a nice clear image; that's

"I cannot stress the following enough: Do not use the manufacturer's descriptions."

enough, right? WRONG. Google can't see your lovely image until you give it an 'alt' tag. Be descriptive with this, keeping in mind what people might search for if looking for pictures.

Next, your product description, and I cannot stress the following enough: Do not use the manufacturer provided description.

It's not that the manufacturer's descriptions are bad per se, it's just that

a whole host of other retailers will also take the 'easy route' to copy and paste the content. This means that your page/site is being cannibalised by loads of other pages, and Google doesn't like that. Sure, you can take influence from the manufacturer, but ideally all content should be informative, descriptive and most of all unique.

The final thing to think about is the title tags to use for your product page. Don't ramble in these – keep it concise and to the point. Include the product name, and add other relevant information such as 'Free Delivery' or 'In Stock Now'.

I reckon that with a good page title, a unique description and a good quality image, you have a very good chance of having your new products stand out from the pack. ♦

Desktop Tip: Suspending Ordering

During an upgrade, or any sort of maintenance, it's a good idea to temporarily suspend your online ordering to make sure no orders are lost.

You can do this by going to 'Business Settings > Ordering' and then selecting the 'Suspended' box under where it says 'Online Ordering'.

You then need to do a publish, and your cart buttons will be replaced

with some text that says 'CATALOG SUSPENDED'.

This does the job, but is perhaps a touch unfriendly.

Change this text to whatever you want (such as asking customers to call you to place orders) by going to 'Design > Text > Web Site (cont) > General Information' and changing the 'CATALOG SUSPENDED' text to something else. ♦

For more information about SellerDeck software and services, please call SellerDeck Sales on **0845 189 1859**

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