

Trust

Written by Jeff Pittelkow

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Trust is a funny thing. It's somewhat easy to gain the first time, but really hard (if not impossible) to get back if you lose it.

On the internet, trust is what makes someone purchase with you the first time. If you do everything correctly that first time, it's really hard to lose that trust. Simply put, they place an order, you communicate a lot through emails about that order, ship it promptly, it arrives well packed and as the customer expects. You have now gained a customer.

The thing about trust on the internet is that it does not rest in actively "trust" related things. These active things are showing the online BBB logo, the SSL logo, HackerSafe, etc. Most savvy shoppers don't put too much stock in these items. They are all easy to get with a small fee. In fact, the only one I feel is worth while is the HackerSafe logo. This is because HackerSafe implies in its title "we're safe from hackers." The fact of the matter is they are just PCI certified which all sites that accept credit cards on the internet are required to be. This is just really good marketing.

The main thing people use to trust you is the look and feel of your site. It also comes down to the small features you offer such as order tracking, showing order status online, and regular emails such as; when the order has been confirmed, when your credit card has been charged, and when the order has shipped.

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But those items are fairly standard in even open-source ecommerce platforms. Let's talk about design and layout. Below, I have three competing web sites. I have personally purchased from all three. They sell disc jockey equipment which is a hobby of mine if you couldn't already tell.

1. <http://www.123dj.com/>
2. <http://www.cheaplights.com/>
3. <http://www.pssl.com/>

As you can see, the first two are very amateur looking. However, due to cheap prices, i purchased from both of them. I had good ordering experience so I will order again. However, the third one, the one that looks the best, I ordered from first. Only price and selection drove me to the other two otherwise it would be PSSL all the way. The look and professional feel got me to pay more for the security to know i wasn't being screwed. The item i ordered was in stock, and shipped quickly. The other ones it was like rolling the dice.

So here are my rules for being trustworthy the first time:

1. Good Looking Design
2. Plenty of product information
3. Great account section tied in closely with your ERP and warehouse system for easy order tracking.
4. Useful and professional looking features.
5. Ample ways for the customer to contact you
6. Quick response times on all emails
7. Sales staff knowledgeable of the web site and all company policies(after all, they are the first line of defense)
8. Professionalism

Simply put, caring about your customer and their experience more than the company bottom line and the rest will fall into place. The more you care, the more they buy. The more transparent and accessible you are, the more they trust you. Lose that trust, good luck getting them back.