Get Ready to
Launch Your New
eCommerce Website

amazonwebstore

An Amazon Webstore Guide
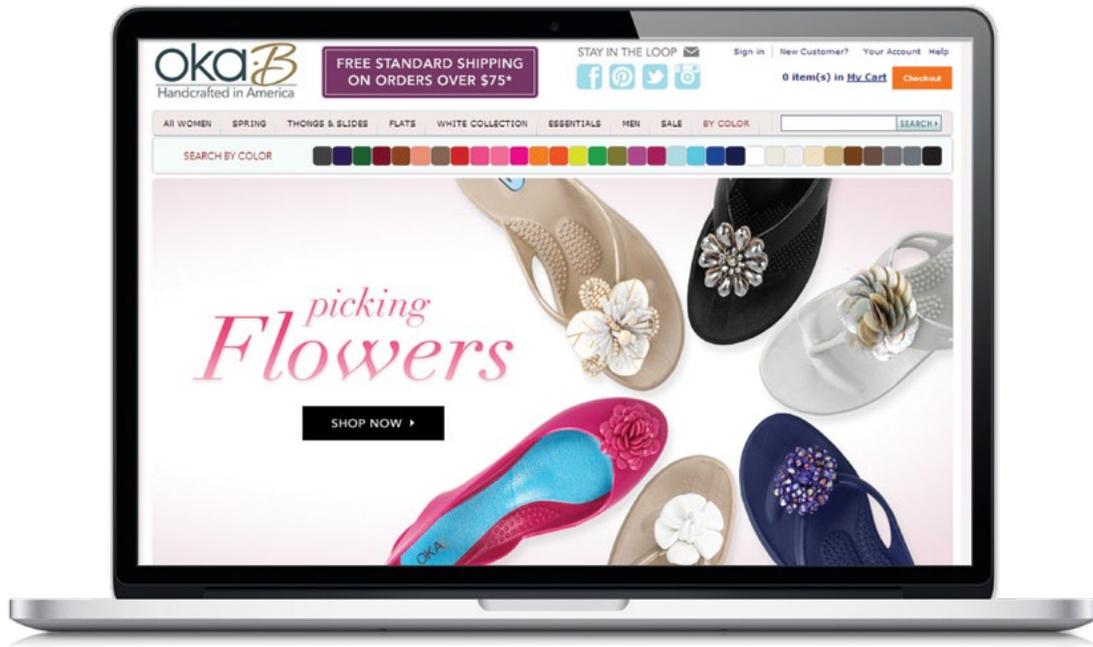
After you've gathered real data, evaluated alternatives and made the decision to migrate to a new eCommerce platform, it's time to build a practical and thoughtful launch plan. There are three critical steps that help ensure the successful migration to a new eCommerce platform:

1. Develop a project plan, build out a timeline and create risk and contingency plans.

2. Focus on improving user experience by implementing a user-centered design that is engaging and responsive to your customers.

3. Use careful testing and a customer onboarding strategy to provide your customers with a seamless migration to the new platform.

amazonwebstore

PROJECT PLANNING, BUILDING OUT TIMELINES, AND RISK AND CONTINGENCY PLANS

Project planning is critical when you're migrating to a new platform. The project plan identifies and defines data, design, marketing, integration requirements, and custom functionality. When developing a project plan, it is important to determine which features are critical and which features can be phased in at a later date. A good project plan also includes a detailed budget containing all replatforming related costs, such as systems, consulting, hardware upgrades, and hosting fees.

According to From War to Peace, a company that recently replatformed, "Getting everything right took time and patience. Our advice: Plan better! It's hard to make every decision as it comes."

Equally essential to planning is building a timeline for the migration. The timeline should include everything from start to finish, including initial planning, evaluation and selection, implementation, data conversion, testing and training. A realistic timeline includes best and worst case scenarios, which aids in execution and budgeting for delays.

Consider creating risk and contingency plans for best and worst case scenarios. Risk mitigation focuses on minimizing risks as they arise, while contingency planning is an alternative course of action after a risk surfaces. It's important to prepare for short-term negative impacts and make a plan to manage any problems that may arise. Replatforming impacts nearly every aspect of your organization, so it's important to prepare your staff for the upcoming changes. The three most common risks include decreased site performance, reduced conversion rate, and reduced short-term sales after replatforming.

According to Forrester Research:[1]

- 44 percent of organizations reported slower load times after replatforming

- 39 percent of organizations polled indicated that conversion rates went down

- 25 percent reported that their average order value decreased

With a contingency plan in place, your company can minimize these risks during or following the migration.

> **Take-away:**
> A successful migration requires careful planning with realistic timelines, checklists and risk and contingency plans. Although some companies may face reduction in sales and conversion rates in the short term, in the long term, moving to a new eCommerce platform can greatly benefit your business.

FOCUS ON IMPROVED USER EXPERIENCE

The number one focus of any eCommerce migration should be improving user experience through a customer-focused design. Customers expectations continue to grow with the growth of technology and high standards set by best-in-class eCommerce sites. This means that customers expect more from each visit to your site - they want engaging, seamless, and personalized experiences.

User experience is how a person feels when he or she is using your company's site. It is driven by usability, user-friendliness and efficiency of the site. The key components of usability are effective navigation, rich content, and an efficient cart and checkout process.[2] Before moving to a new platform, it is important to understand the user experience on the current platform. You can obtain this feedback through pre-launch feedback using surveys, questionnaires, and phone interviews.

With the growth of on-the-go digital experiences, consumers are increasingly making purchases on mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. In fact, According to eMarketer, in 2012, mobile devices accounted for 11 percent of U.S. retail eCommerce sales.[3] This means that engaging customers extends beyond the computer and an eCommerce presence on mobile devices is essential.

Another piece to customer engagement is brand management. It's important to present users with highly relevant, targeted and personalized content on all channels. This not only increases the quality of interactions and experiences but also helps build brand loyalty.[4]

> " We needed a platform that had a full range of tools to support product inventory while still supporting sales. "
>
> - Alaska Arms LLC

Companies that build brand awareness and loyalty through an effective replatform will not only improve customer engagement, but will also differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Successfully improving the customer's user experience is dependent on listening to and understanding customers' needs.

However, improving user experience is an ongoing process that doesn't end after a new site is launched. Constantly understanding your customers' needs is essential to your success and so it is very important to put mechanisms in place to easily capture customer feedback post-launch. There are several ways to obtain this customer feedback, including the use of integrated mechanisms, such as web analytic tools, feedback forms, and comment boxes. These tools allow companies to better understand and manage their user experience.

Web analytics tools can be used to recognize problems in the shopping experience. Understanding the shopping cart abandonment by observing customer behavior can provide a better insight

into customer interactions.[5] Alternatively, feedback forms with features like thumbs up or thumbs down, provide immediate feedback on a price or product.

These tools can be built into a site and enable a companyto quickly respond to feedback, resulting in increased conversion rates and improved customer satisfaction.

> **Take-away:**
> Improving user experience is accomplished through soliciting and responding to customer feedback before, during, and after a site launch.

USE CAREFUL TESTING AND DEVELOP AN ONBOARDING STRATEGY

Testing the site and its features before, during and after the replatform is key to a seamless user experience. In order to streamline the project, companies can pre-test design concepts, branding elements and site layout before implementing the new platform. Testing ensures that features are functioning properly and gives you time to correct any issues before launching your site. By using key employees and test groups, your business can gain valuable feedback during the testing phase.

Often, delays during the migration shorten the time allocated for testing. An improperly tested system may take many months to stabilize in production, adding additional costs to the replatforming project, alienating customers, damaging a company's reputation

and reducing sales. For this reason, testing is crucial to the replatforming experience and when done properly, results in a more successful transition.

In addition to testing, developing a customer onboarding program helps maintain customer loyalty. Generally, customers do not welcome change, so educating customers about the upcoming changes ahead of time is very important. A customer onboarding strategy generally includes contacting customers, providing step-by-step instructions on how to place orders on the new platform, and then offering post-launch incentives such as free shipping or a loyalty discount. In the end, a comprehensive customer onboardingstrategy may increase the new eCommerce site's adoption rate.[6]

> **Take-away:**
> Careful testing and a customer onboarding strategy increase the new site's adoption rate and reduce the potential for lost sales and customer loyalty.

SUMMARY

Migrating to a new platform allows companies to remain competitive and can potentially increase conversion rates and reduce overall operating costs.

To ensure a successful launch, follow these steps:

- Develop a project plan, build out a timeline and create risk and contingency plans.

- Focus on improving the user experience through improved usability, customer engagement and listening to customer feedback.

- Use careful testing and a customer onboarding strategy to increase the new site's adoption rate and reduce the potential for post-launch issues.

"
We now have happier clients, higher conversion rates, and increased visibility of our products, all of which mean more sales.
"
- Trusted Nutrients

amazon webstore

Amazon Webstore is a complete commerce platform that enables companies to leverage Amazon technology and expertise in building and managing their direct-to-consumer business.

Commerce sites built on the Amazon Webstore platform utilize Amazon's powerful cloud infrastructure and payment processing technology to deliver a scalable, secure online shopping experience to customers. Amazon Webstore also integrates seamlessly with selling on the Amazon Marketplace and using Fulfillment by Amazon, Amazon Prime, and other Amazon Services.

To get started with Amazon Webstore, visit the website at webstore.amazon.com or contact the Amazon Webstore team directly.

[1] Duney, Paul. "6 Things to Keep in Mind When Replatforming." Business2Community. Accessed March 31, 2014. http://www.business2community.com/strategy/6-things-to-keep-in-mind-when-replatforming-0481594#!B47tP

[2] Moz. "Holy Grail of eCommerce Conversion Optimization." Accessed March 31, 2014. B http://moz.com/blog/holygrail-of-ecommerce-conversion-optimization-91-points-checklist

[3] eMarketer. "eMarketer: Tablets, Smartphones Drive Mobile Commerce to Record Heights." January 9, 2013. Accessed December 7, 2013. http://www.emarketer.com/newsroom/index.php/emarketer-tablets-smartphones-drive-mobile-commerce-record-heights

[4] Adobe. "Why Should You Replatform Your Website?" November 21, 2012. Accessed November 22, 2013. http://research.pcworld.com/content23485

[5] Inc. "How to Make the Most of Customer Feedback" Accessed December 13, 2013. http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/07/how-to-make-most-of-customer-feedback.html

[6] Rodenborg, Rachel. "Improving B2B E-Commerce Adoption." Insight Software. December 18, 2012. Accessed November 22, 2013. http://www.info.insitesoft.com/Insite-Software-Blog/bid/93372/Improving-B2B-E-Commerce-Adoption