

Business Support Services

E-Commerce information sheet

Many small business operators are finding the concept of E-Commerce somewhat daunting and do not understand this strange new world with its acronyms and jargon. This information sheet aims to de-mystify this concept by providing an overview of the key elements in utilising E-commerce.

What is E-Commerce?

E-Commerce is not simply Internet exchanges. It refers to transactions completed online via a website or mobile application, and includes:

- Electronic trading; eg. on-line purchasing
- Electronic messaging; eg. billboards at airports
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI); eg. a company's ordering system may automatically generate and send a Purchase Order to a supplier, where it is automatically received and entered into their Order Entry system
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT); eg. On-line banking
- Electronic mail (E-mail)
- Electronic catalogues and bulletin board services (BBS)
- Electronic payroll
- Electronic forms (E-forms)
- On-line access to services such as the Internet and any other form of electronic data transmission.

The current focus of **E-Commerce is commercial transactions over the Internet between companies' suppliers, customers and partners.**

Utilising E-Commerce alone is not sufficient. It should be an integral part of a comprehensive, well-planned business strategy. The Business Support Unit can assist with information on developing this strategy.

Obtaining a web-site

- Firstly, you need to register your domain name. Your domain name should be directly derived from your business or company name. A domain name is the address that is typed into a web browser and gives you your own space on the World Wide Web (www) to showcase your business.
- au Domain Administration Ltd (auDA) administers .au domain name registrations (e.g. .com.au). The easiest way to register is to visit [auDA website](#). This site also allows you to search domain names to ascertain whether your preferred name is available.
- It is recommended that you engage a consultant to create your website to ensure professional presentation and ease of use and to maximise your business success. Lists of web-site developers are available from the [Yellow Pages web-site](#) or visit www.business.qld.gov.au and view our online business guide for "[Creating a website](#)".
- Visit www.business.qld.gov.au for any upcoming programs about [E-Commerce](#).

Marketing your web-site

- Once your business has a web-site the following strategies for marketing your business on the Internet could be utilised:
 - Include your web address and E-mail address on all business stationery including business cards, letterhead, brochures, invoices etc. This gives current and potential customers additional ways of getting in touch with you.
 - Include your web address in any advertising in newspapers, magazines, the Yellow Pages and any other promotional material.
 - Potential customers need to be able to find your web-site. 'Add your site' into popular search engine databases. With most search engines this is free. People with an interest in your industry will usually 'surf the net' and may come across your site.
 - Your web-site provides a great opportunity to compile a database of customers and potential customers. Create an E-mail Newsletter where people can subscribe to your web-site. You can send a monthly newsletter promoting new products or services, giving tips about your industry and generally keeping your business in the mind of customers.
 - Social Media allows you to communicate with your customers, supporters or donors using media and platforms that are different from the traditional static website. Social Media tools and platforms can assist your organisation build greater customer awareness and engagement.

Monitoring your outcomes

- Identify what marketing strategies work best for your business
- Develop and implement a customer survey - ask your customers how they found out about you
- Monitor sales through your web-site
- Measure your web-site's performance
- Listen to and act upon your customers' comments

Additional Resources

- Contact the [Business Support Services](#)
- Visit the [Business and Industry website](#)
- View the Australian Government [Digital Business Guide](#)
- View a guide to using [Social Media](#) to market your business