

Does my Business need a Website or E-commerce Site?

If you're a business owner, chances are you've asked yourself the question, "Do I need a website or an e-commerce site?" Choosing the right platform for your business can be daunting, as both options offer many advantages and drawbacks. Ultimately, the decision depends on the needs of your business.

Before deciding which one to use, you should ask yourself a few questions.

What is your goal?

The first question you need to ask yourself is what you are hoping to achieve with your website or e-commerce site?. Do you want to make money by selling products online, or are you just looking to share information, promote your business, or provide a platform for yourself or customers to interact?

If you are looking to sell products online, an E-commerce site is a requirement.

Do you have products to sell?

If you want to create an e-commerce site, you need to have a clear idea of the types of products you are selling and your target audience. Depending on what you are selling, you may need to create a shopping cart system or payment gateway to accept payments online.

How many products do you have to sell? Would it be better to start off selling locally and on social media before branching out to an online store? Do you know which products are going to sell already?

Do you have the resources?

Creating and maintaining a website can be an expensive and time consuming task. You need to be aware of the cost involved in web hosting, domain registration, design and development, and content management. It is very possible to learn to build both a website and an E-commerce site yourself. Platforms exist now that don't require coding knowledge such as Wix or Square. They guide you through the setup and SEO (Search Engine Optimization) aspects of it. It will still be a time consuming endeavour for you to input each product and description, do keyword research and learn the platform.

How much content do you need?

If you are simply looking to provide basic information about your business or products, then a website might be the right choice. However, if you plan to include a lot of content, such as product descriptions, images, videos, customer reviews, or tutorials, then you should consider an e-commerce site to ensure the user experience is optimised.

There are other considerations to think of as well. There may be reasons you don't want people to purchase online even though you have a product to sell. Maybe you have customised pricing or must talk to a person before purchase. In those examples a website would be just fine with a contact link.

Once you are clear on what you want your site to accomplish, but still have some confusion as to certain aspects of your site, applying the following comparisons to your specific challenge should clear it up for you.

1. A website is typically static while an e-commerce site is interactive.
2. A website typically shares information while an e-commerce site facilitates transactions.
3. A website is usually used as an information source while an e-commerce site is generally used for buying and selling.
4. A website is generally designed for attracting more visitors while an e-commerce site is specifically created for buying and selling products/services.
5. A website usually offers limited functionality compared to an e-commerce site which is built for online shopping and transactions.