E-COMMERCE COURSE WORKBOOK

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"Anticipate the difficult by managing the easy." Lao Tzu

INTRODUCTION

Welcome! Inside this course you will learn how to setup and run an e-commerce online store. This material is especially useful for artists but can be applied to other types of products as well.

There is a lot of information inside! The modules will open on a weekly basis, a new module each week. This serves two purposes; it keeps you from being overwhelmed with the material and it prevents you from jumping around from topic to topic. It will help you stay focused on the topic for that week.

This is a **live class!** That means it's beneficial for you to be present at the live meetings. Student interaction is one of the best parts of a live class. So do try to make the live meetings. However, we all know that things come up so if you miss a class, you can always view the recording.

Each week we will cover a specific topic. I will give a 30-45 minute lecture with a live screen recording from my computer. We will have plenty of time for Q&A after the lecture. Then you will have homework from each module each week. Some topics will require more homework than others, but go at your own pace. Remember, you have access to this material forever. So there's no rush.

You will have access to me on a regular basis. I'll be in and out of the Facebook group, you can reach out by email and you can even text me! More on that in our first meeting.

Without further ado, let's get to the overview of what's included in this course!

OVERVIEW

Week 1 - What is e-commerce? Store and platform discussion. Product discussion. Customer definition. Introduction to Shopify setup. Vendor definition.

Week 2 - Setup your Shopify trial account. Product definition continued. Profit margin and cost analysis. Choosing a vendor.

Week 3 -Define products, working with images. Assets and clip art. Working with photo editing software and free online photo editing sites.

Week 4 - Working with images continued. Hands on working with images.

Week 5 -Create your first product. Introduction to Shopify setup. URL, tax ID, email, shipping and other business requirements.

Week 6 - Shopify setup continued. URL, tax ID, email, shipping. How to grow an email list.

Week 7 - Shopify setup continued. Products and collections. Integration with vendors. Dropship versus carrying inventory. Shipping procedures and shipping vendors.

Week 8 - Store setup continued. Google, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram advertising. Introduction to store analytics and advertising.

Week 9 - Store analytics and advertising continued. Facebook business manager. Google adwords.

Week 10 - Recap. Open your store. Prepare a launch plan. Send out an announcement. Start your first ad.

Chapter One

Any product that is sold online falls under the definition of "e-commerce." So it doesn't matter whether you're selling art reproductions or baby clothes. You are still engaged in e-commerce. In this course we will focus specifically on products that are created by artists such as art reproductions, images on home and lifestyle goods and so on.

Your store platform is the place where you will conduct your online business. It helps to think of your online store as a real brick-and-mortar store. This helps to make you aware of what your customers see and how they behave when they enter your store. What does it look like? Is it inviting? Are the products laid out in a clean and orderly fashion? Is it easy to understand your pricing structure? Shipping methods?

Remember, there is no "live" sales person for your customer to ask questions. Your products and your store need to be easy to navigate and understand. Otherwise your customer will leave without purchasing anything.

Store Platforms

There are a number of store platforms available. Here are just a few; Etsy, Society 6, Woo Commerce, Shopify, Saatchi, and many more. You can check out an in-depth comparison of the top 10 store platforms **here**. After it's all said and done though, the author of that article agrees with me; Shopify is the best overall platform for an online e-commerce store. We will focus on Shopify throughout this course.

PLATFORM	EASE OF USE	PHONE SUPPORT	24/7 SUPPORT	CHAT SUPPORT	COMMUNITY RATING	# OF APPS/ PLUGINS
Shopify	4.8	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	2000
BigCommerce	4.5	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	500
WooCommerce	3.3	No	No	Yes	4	250
3dcart	4.1	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	100
Volusion	3.9	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	20
Magento	2.9	No	No	No	5	3000
Prestashop	3.4	Yes	No	No	4	3000
SquareSpace	3.1	No	Yes	Yes	3	10
Wix	2.6	Yes	No	No	2	250
Weebly	3.2	Yes	No	Yes	2	300

Image from Ecommerce.com

Type of Store
There are primarily two types of store: a dropship store and a physical inventory store. Each has it's pros ancd cons.

Dropship - In the dropship method you carry no physical inventory. Your products are created and shipped from your vendor. You have no costs related to carrying physical inventory such as storage, prepaid purchase of inventory and so on.

Physical Inventory - in this method you must have your product physically available to ship to the customer. You are responsible for packing and shipping the product. You are also responsible for carrying enough inventory so product is available for your customer to purchase online.

Hybrid - In this model you combine the two methods above. Perhaps like me, you sell a physical item such as a book that you keep in physical inventory, and combine that with dropship products that are produced by your vendor.

All of these types of stores have their pros and cons.

Dropship - Physical Inventory Comparison

- Initial Investment - This is a biggie and dropship wins hands down. There is no initial investment in the dropship method. You "pay as you go." When a customer orders the item, the order is placed and you pay the vendor.
- Ease of use - Dropship wins here. Your vendor does all the work. Once the integration is set up properly, the dropship method works behinds the scenes.
- Cost of inventory - Dropship wins here again. You carry no physical inventory, so no there is no cost upfront.
- Shipping cost - This is a tie. Dropship and physical inventory both require shipping costs.
- Damaged goods - Dropship is the winner here again. Most vendors will replace goods that are damaged in shipping at no cost to you. If your physical inventory is damaged in shipping, you must replace that for the customer at your cost.

So it looks like the dropship method wins, right? It does for me!

HOMEWORK MODULE 1

Decide what kind of store you will have.

Next, decide what kind of product you will sell.

Now, who will you sell it to?

Your homework this week:

- **Define your product and**

- **Define your customer**

- **Setup your Shopify trial account**

1. Download and fill out the Product Definition Worksheet.

2. Download and fill out the Customer Avatar Profile.

3. Download and use Setup Your Shopify Trial Account.