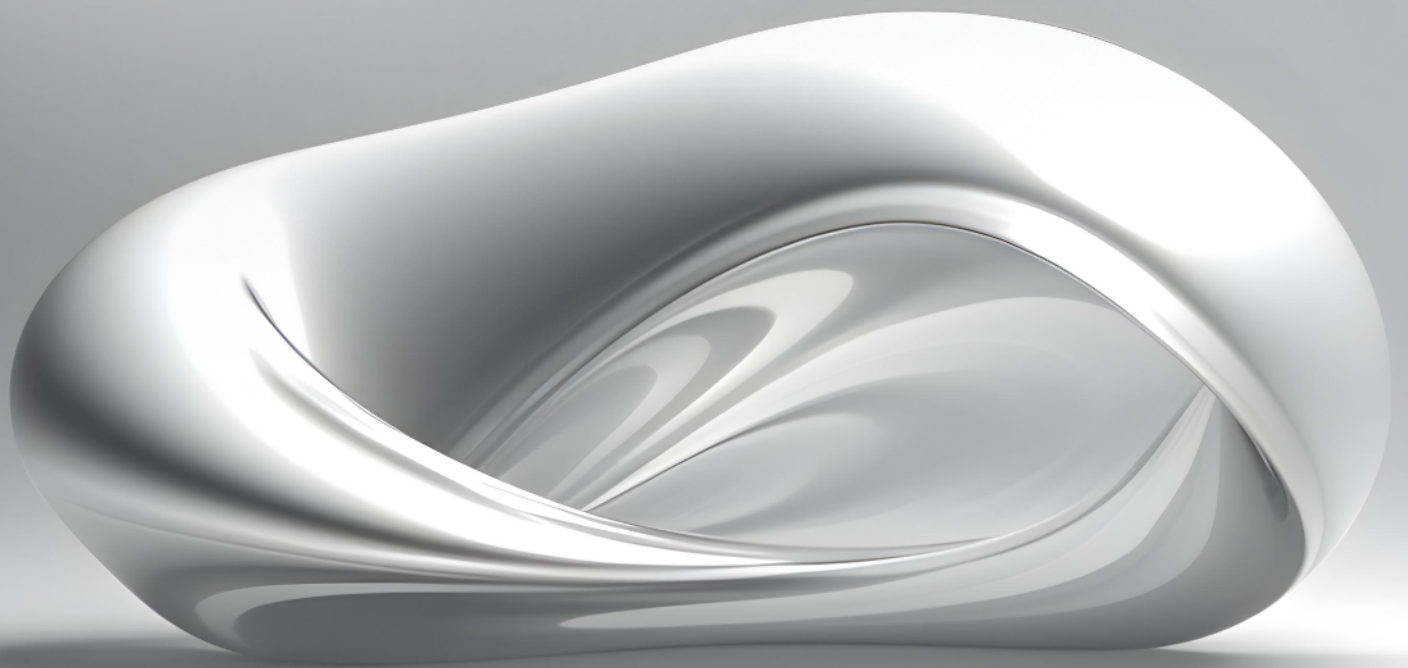


DROPSHIPPING

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO STARTING & SCALING



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What is Dropshipping?

There were two eCommerce business models before the drop shipping model made its appearance.

First one, creating your product and selling it on the internet. Second is to buy products from manufacturers/wholesalers in bulk and then sell the products on the internet.

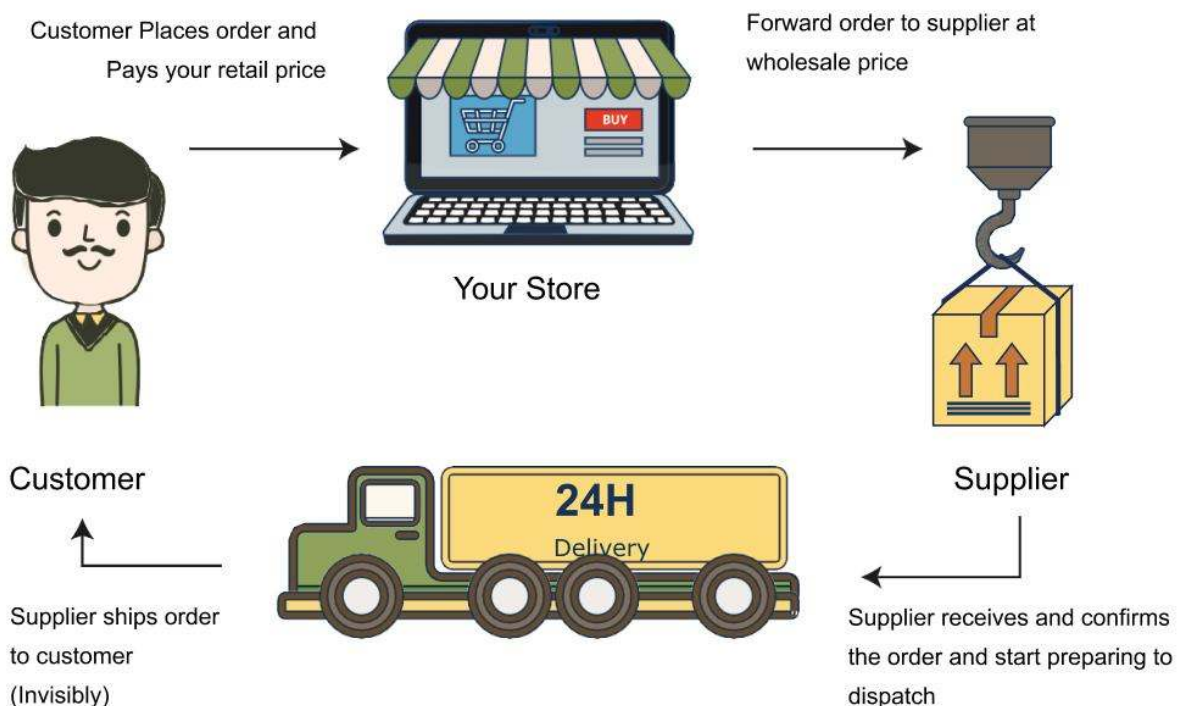
Physical Inventory was the necessity of the Online Store.

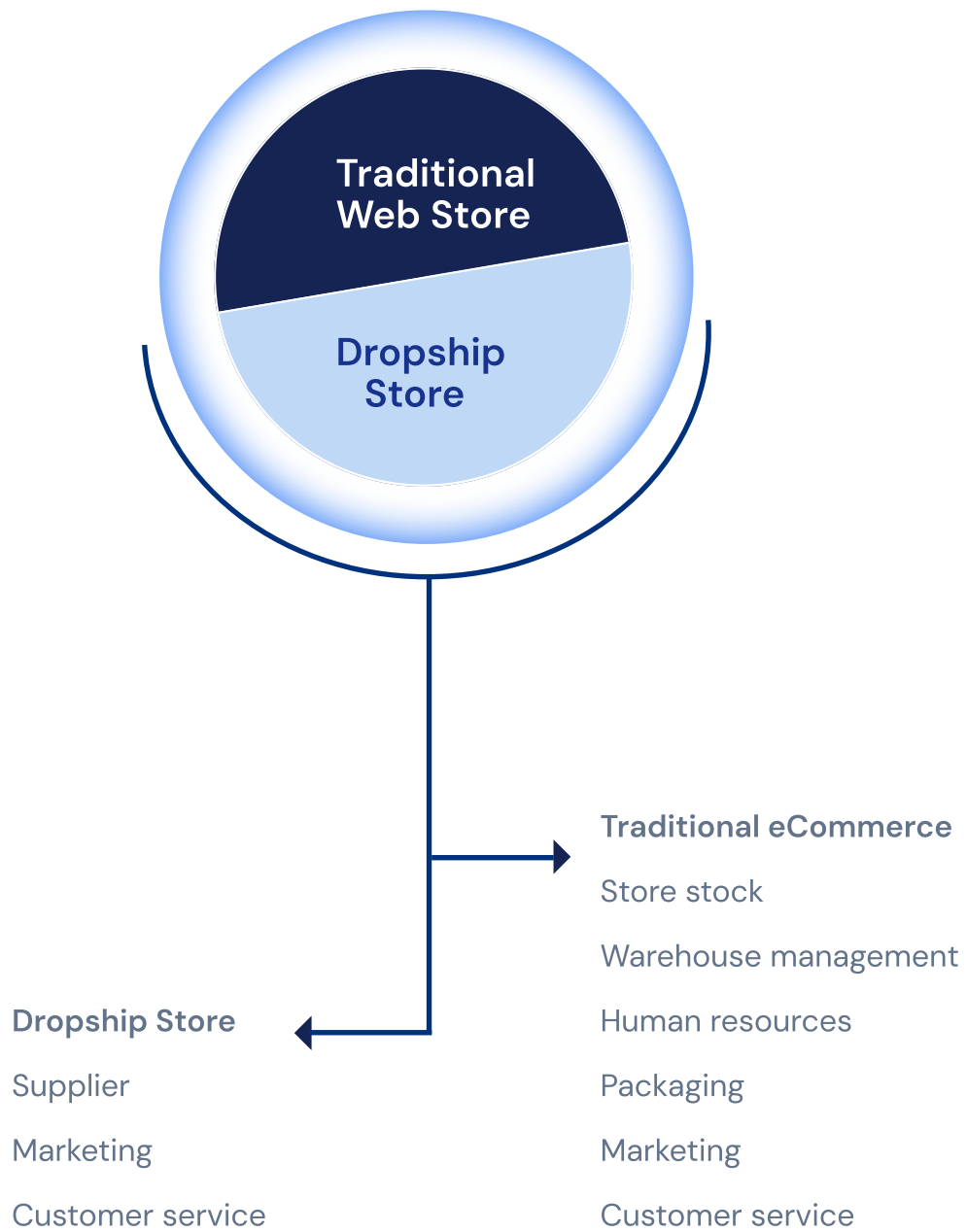
Dropshipping eliminates the need for inventory for the seller. The drop shipper uses the storage of wholesaler.

In dropshipping business, a person buys the product from the web store. Then the store redirects that order to the third-party seller and that seller ships the products directly to the customer.

In a way, the web store is acts as a middleman between the buyer and wholesaler.

This diagram will simplify the process:





The major difference is:

The dropshipper makes the wholesaler ship the product to the customer when the orders arrive.

The importance of the loading speed of the webpage is not unknown. Google ranks fast loading sites, and users like to interact with the fast loading pages.

Loading Speed is directly proportional to User Experience.

When multiple requests are being made to fetch the data from one place, the loading speed gets slow, which negatively affects the User Experience.

To understand it more clearly, you have to understand Network Latency.

What is Network Latency?

Network latency is the time taken by the data to transfer from the source to the destination.

It is measured in milliseconds. Latency depends on the distance. The more the distance between the server and browser, the more will be the latency.

The best way to reduce latency is to decrease the distance between the source and the destination.

This is the primary function of CDNs.

In simpler words, CDN's purpose is to improve user experience by enhancing network routing for the resources.

How CDN functions – explained in two points:

Distribute the critical content to multiple data centers located globally so that the user can access it from the nearest servers

Optimizing the servers for the content so the content can transfer more efficiently

CDNs also save the cost for the content provider by offloading the traffic that is served directly from the site's origin infrastructure. Furthermore, CDN secures the site by being effective against the DDoS attacks.

Pros and Cons of Dropshipping

There are few Pros and Cons of Dropshipping you should know. They will help you to make up your mind about this business model.

PROS

- Low Investment
- Easy to begin
- Work from anywhere
- Scalable Business Model
- Size of Store

CONS

- Low Margins
- Product Experience
- Inventory Issues
- Lack of Complete Control

Pros of Dropshipping

Low Investment

The large investment is not required due to the absence of physical inventory to buy or manage. Dropshipper buys the product from the wholesalers when the customer has already paid you.

Dropshipping is a business where buying is always profitable. One person can manage a small dropshipping site easily. There are tools in the market that automate the whole process and only ask for a few hours of manual work a week.

Though it will become difficult for one person when the site grows. You need starting money for hosting, domain name and marketing of the store.

Flexible Workspace

Laptop plus Internet plus Phone is a complete work environment for dropshipping. People manage their business from home or while travelling. Most of the dropshippers manage their work from their apartments. Just be in touch with your suppliers and customers, and every location is your workplace.

Easy to begin

Dropshipping business is easy to set up. You need some time to learn, and you will be able to create a store on your own, Without much technical knowledge.

There are no physical products, so there is no worry regarding product management. Complicated processes like warehouse management and supply chain management are mostly absent in dropshipping.

A drop shipper doesn't have to hassle with packaging, refunds, and reordering of the product. Once you set the process, it could work on automation with little effort.

Size of Store

Selling a vast number of products become possible when you are not stocking them. You can list as many products as you want because you are not buying them until someone buys them from you.

Creating a large store with lots of products is a great option with Droshipping. But it is better to make a niche store instead of a general one.

Scalable Business

According to dCart:

- In 2017, approximately 23% of online sales last year were fulfilled via dropshipping, which amounts to about \$85.1 billion.
- With eCommerce growing by about 17% every year, it's projected that the popularity of dropshipping as a fulfilment model will continue to increase alongside the industry.

Dropshipping is not dying.

The low-quality dropshipping store may not survive. But the one that are providing a quality service are not going anywhere. To scale the dropship store to something more substantial is not tough. You can invest more money in advertising and branding to make the store authoritative. If done right, the future of the Dropship store is bright.

Cons of Dropshipping

Low Margin

Entry to the dropshipping market is easy-peasy. For every niche, for most of the product, there are a number of dropshipping stores. The starting budget is so low that people usually set up the store and start selling the product at a low cost.

They may not be giving excellent customer service, but the lower price makes them a competition. In the beginning, dropshippers have to sell products at low margins. Until they find a way to improve the prices.

Product Experience

Product experience begins with the packaging of the product. And dropshipper doesn't have any control over how the supplier packs the product. A deal could be made with suppliers, enforcing him to pack the product in a certain way.

But again, you don't have complete control over the packing. Product quality will not be consistent.

Inventory Issues

Imagine this scenario:

- Customer A orders a product
- You tell it to supplier
- Supplier tells you that he dont have any more products
- You have to cancel the order

The suppliers are also supplying to other buyers. There is positive chance that his stock may run out.

That's why it is essential to find a supplier who provides live tracking of his inventory. Unfortunately, a small number of the supplier are doing that.

Little Control

Mistakes are made even in the best of systems.

Supplier Mistakes: late order processing, sending the damaged product, not following the packaging guidelines.

Shipping Mistakes: wrong address, damaging product in shipping, lost in shipping.

Buyer Mistakes: providing an incorrect address, accidental ordering.

The point is, it does not matter who is wrong in the situation. The consequences have to be suffered by the dropshipping store.

“

”

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Should I Do It or Not?

You need to understand that with dropshipping you are entering into the Service Industry.

DROPSHIPPING IS A SERVICE.

How?

A person likes to buy a product. But he does not want to buy it from wholesalers or some foreign-looking site he doesn't trust. Here you enter with the idea of providing that product to that person.

The person does not have to deal with anything else. He will pay you, and you will get him that product. In between the transactions, you will find your service fee.

Making a drop-ship store is easy, but running it is not stress-free. But still, it is better than traditional eCommerce where there is a lot to do.

Should you Do It?

There was a time when the Industries were running on the Production concept. But now is the time of the marketing concept.

If you are willing to provide the value to the customers, dropshipping is an easy way to enter the market.

Product and Product Research

I cannot stress it enough how important is product research in the dropshipping business. The majority of the people find themselves drawing a question mark while deciding a niche.

The product selection has a long term impact on your dropshipping business. For a successful dropship store, we must give product research the time it deserves.

Proper research of the product, market and competition will minimize the probability of failing at dropshipping. It also helps you in understanding your customers.

How to do Product Selection?

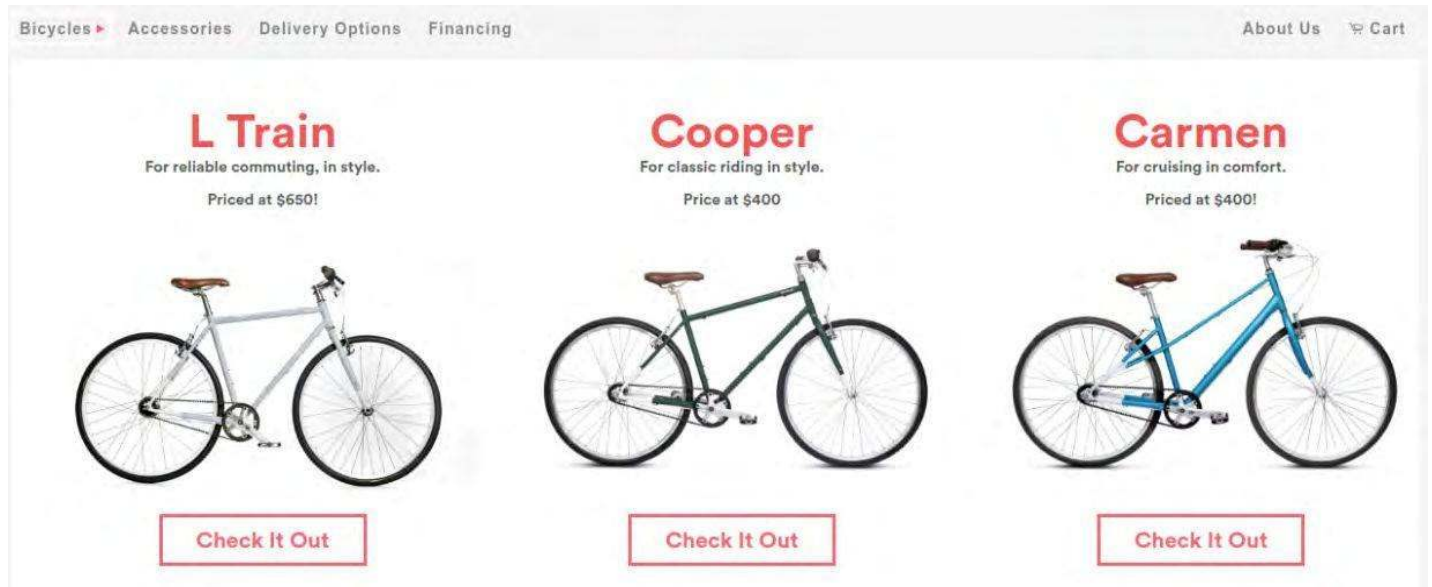
The best practice is to build a long list of products. Include every product that you find interesting. Then compare them to find the best one.

Let's see a few ways to find a product.



Hobbyists

Hobbies make people happy. And people do not hesitate to pay for the things that make them genuinely happy.



Hobbies could be expensive.

Few Most Expensive Hobbies:

- Skydiving
- Scuba Diving
- Car racing
- Flying
- Yacht Racing
- Mountain Climbing

If you can target the right hobbyist with the right product, the store will thrive from the first month.

Trending Products

It is a scientific fact that people get high on shopping. The brain releases dopamine whenever we buy something and it is a pleasurable experience.

I have several friends who buy stupid stuff on the net. Why? Because they like buying and the product has unique attractiveness.

The creative product plus a person who enjoys buying makes a profitable combination for dropshippers.



You need to be quick to cash the trending products. These products die as fast as they boom.

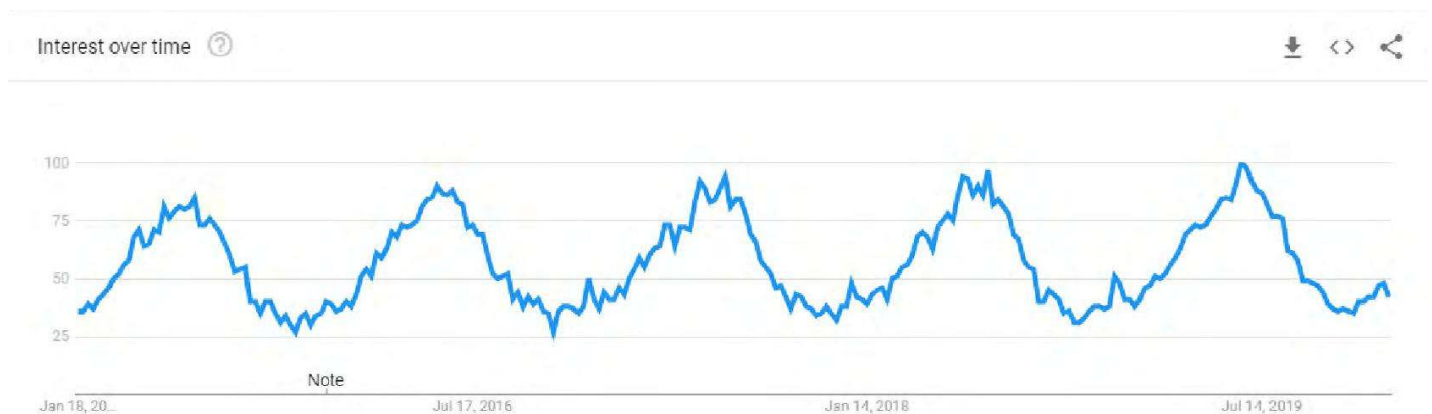
Characteristic of Trending Products:

- Ongoing huge demand
- Easy to ship the product
- Low pricing
- Creative usefulness

Repeat Demand

There are products with limited uses. So the demand is steady. People buy these type of products again and again for use. They are seasonal products. Like fishing lines, or Halloween costumes.

The interest in 'fishing line' is consistent in the USA. This is seasonal demand.



Start selling with the main product. With time, the dropship store becomes authoritative seller, and you can add accessory products. The more you will stay in business, the more you will grow. This type of product provides a consistent flow of revenue.

Consistent Demand

There are products that remain consistent in demand throughout the year. Toilet Paper, sunglasses, and mobile back covers are the few one.

It is challenging to set up a store for a product that has evergreen demand. There are big competitors for those products.

But if the investment is good, it is better to set up a store for a product that has continuous demand.

Best Selling Products

This is the easiest way of finding products.

Go to any large marketplace and check out the best selling products. You can easily check the bestselling products of Amazon. All the big eCommerce platforms provide the list of most selling products.

Also, check out New release products and most wished products. That also indicates which product people are liking.



Product Research

After making the product list, the next step is to research them. This way you can find the best of the best product, to begin the store.

Characteristics of Products that are an excellent choice for dropshipping:

- Pricing
- Availability of Cross-Selling products
- Consistent product
- Not available in Local market
- Size/Weight of the product
- The adaptability of the product

Pricing

The margin on the cost price is not your profit.

Margin also includes the services – pre-sale and post-sale. The advertising cost, store set up fee, and other kinds of expenses are also a part of that margin.

That's why you need a balanced selling price:

Not too high that people hesitate to buy and not too low that you can't make a profit.

A person will spend \$5 on a product easily. The same person will think a little in buying a \$100 product. But he will not buy a \$500 product without doing any research.

Finding a sweet pricing spot is the key.

A product that you can sell in \$10–\$150 is usually sell well. Customer decision making is fast for low priced products.

To sell the expensive products, you have to provide the potential customer with pre-sell interaction. People usually don't buy a costly product without actually interacting with the seller or the product.

Pricing is an important factor. Find a product available at a low price. So even after adding the margin, the product does not become expensive.

Availability of Cross-Selling Products

Checking out the accessory products is a smart idea if you are working for a long term dropship store.

At some point, adding new products to the store would become necessary to increase revenue. Selling a general product on the site is not a good idea if you are selling products of a specific niche.

Like a site selling mobile back cover starts selling soda water. It looks like spam.

But adding the product that is related to your product. This is also a great way to increase the trust factor of the store.

You can sell the low price product at a good margin with the main product.

Consistent Product

The product must have some consistency in its features. It is not a wise idea to drop ship a product that upgrades every year. Dropshippers have to educate the customer about the product. Like educational videos or how to use the product type articles and images.

It is worth investing in creating high-quality content if the product is not changing at a regular interval. It would be a one-time investment.

If the products keep changing, you have to change the educational content on your site. That would be a headache.

Not available in Local Market

Easy availability of the product in the local market is a threat to dropshipping store. To attract the buyers of an offline store, you have to give them a lower rate than the local market.

By this way, you will not be able to make the desirable profit.

People usually run to local stores for the products they need. But if they can't find them there, they go to the internet.

Sell that product which is not available offline easily. It increases the chance of customers visiting the site.

Size/Weight of the Product

Dropshipping products should be shipping friendly.

Shipping friendly products are:

- Small in size
- Less weight
- Low shipping fee

The probability of the product getting damaged during shipping is higher for large products.

Small products will be less expensive to ship. Hence making the product more desirable.

Adaptability of the Product

Best dropshipping products are those that can be adapted to sell on different occasions.

For example a Rubik's cube.

You can sell the Rubik's cube to hobbyists. Also, it could be a great gift to give to anyone. Rubik's cube can also work as a prop for the room aesthetic. It is also a toy.

One product has a different function. You can target various groups for a product like that.

Product Research Summary

Keep all these points in mind while searching for your product. These are the most common characteristics of the best dropshipping products.

Product research is not enough. Next is to find the Market Potential of the product.

Market Potential of the Product

Market potential means the size of the market. MP is the volume of the population that is interested in the product.

Calculating the market demand is essential before launching any product. If the demand is not high enough to cross the break-even point, there is no point to start selling online.

You can find the demand for the product with the help of the available online tools.

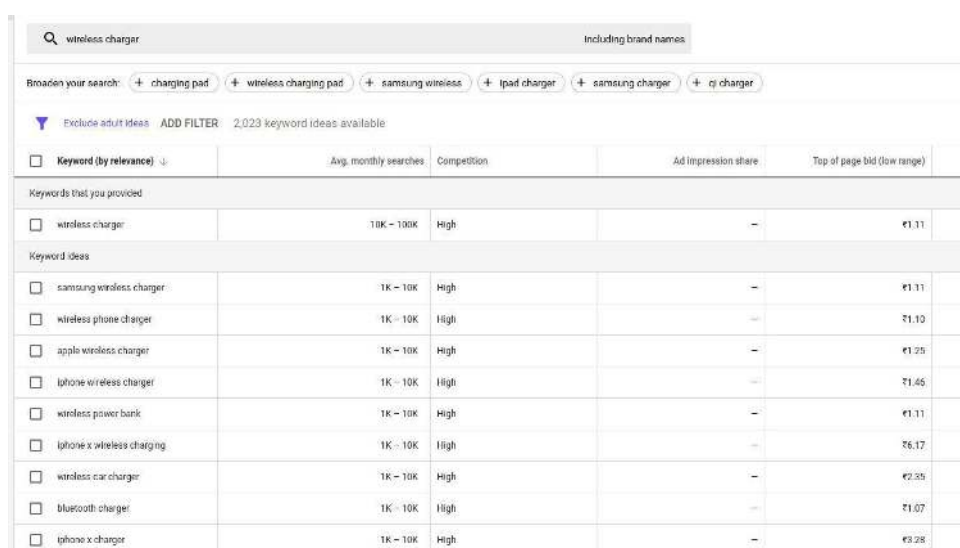
Best one is from Google.

Google Keywords Planner

The search volume of the product is a great indicator of the online demand of the product. You can find out the volume from the Google Keyword Tool.

You have to log in to Google account. After that, open the Google Adword. From there, you can get access to the Keyword Planner tool.

It is a smart tool that provides lots of information.



The screenshot shows the Google Keyword Planner interface. The search term is 'wireless charger' with the option 'Including brand names'. Below the search bar, there are filters for 'Broaden your search' with options like 'charging pad', 'wireless charging pad', 'samsung wireless', 'ipad charger', 'samsung charger', and 'qi charger'. A dropdown menu shows 'Exclude adult ideas' and 'ADD FILTER' with a note '2,023 keyword ideas available'. The main table displays keyword ideas with columns for 'Keyword (by relevance)', 'Avg. monthly searches', 'Competition', 'Ad impression share', and 'Top of page bid (low range)'. The table lists various related keywords such as 'samsung wireless charger', 'wireless phone charger', 'apple wireless charger', 'iphone wireless charger', 'wireless power bank', 'iphone x wireless charging', 'wireless car charger', 'bluetooth charger', and 'iphone x charger'.

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Ad impression share	Top of page bid (low range)
Keywords that you provided				
<input type="checkbox"/> wireless charger	10K - 100K	High	-	€1.11
Keyword ideas				
<input type="checkbox"/> samsung wireless charger	1K - 10K	High	-	€1.11
<input type="checkbox"/> wireless phone charger	1K - 10K	High	-	€1.10
<input type="checkbox"/> apple wireless charger	1K - 10K	High	-	€1.25
<input type="checkbox"/> iphone wireless charger	1K - 10K	High	-	€1.66
<input type="checkbox"/> wireless power bank	1K - 10K	High	-	€1.11
<input type="checkbox"/> iphone x wireless charging	1K - 10K	High	-	€6.17
<input type="checkbox"/> wireless car charger	1K - 10K	High	-	€2.35
<input type="checkbox"/> bluetooth charger	1K - 10K	High	-	€1.07
<input type="checkbox"/> iphone x charger	1K - 10K	High	-	€3.28

Put the name of your product to see what queries are people making to search for that product.

It will also show the variation of searches people makes related to your product. You can view all the long tail and short tail keywords.

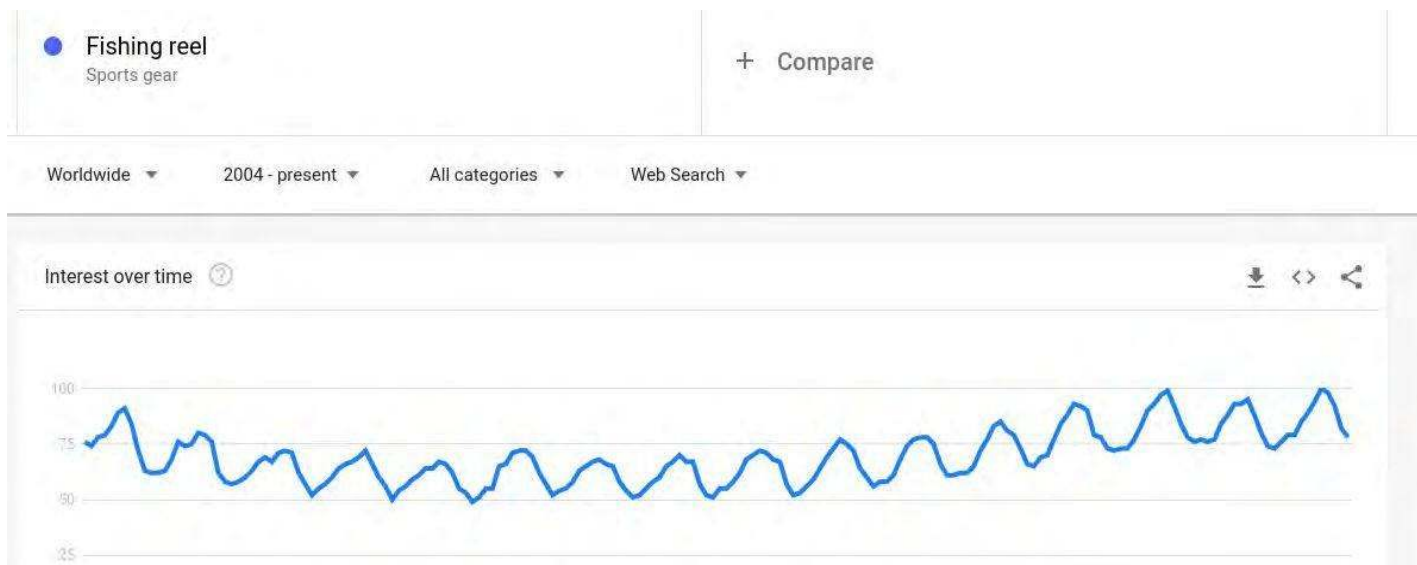
You can filter the results according to countries, browsers, and difficulty of the keywords. Find out the number of searches of the product in a given region by using the location filter.

There are many functions in this tool. You must include it in the Market Research.

Google Trends

Google Trends offers excellent insight into the search pattern over time.

Google trend Image of Fishing Reel



It shows the Worldwide search trend of the term from 2004 until now.

You can change the time or the country as you need. You can compare any number of terms to examine the trends among the products.

In this image, we can see that the term begins to rise after a while. It's a seasonal term.



Interest by Region is another feature of the Google Trend. You can see what countries do the most searches for the keyword 'Fishing Reel'.

All this data gives you a clear picture of the product audience. If one intends to sell fishing reels, Japan, and Hungary are the countries that are searching for the product most.

You can do a lot of Market research about your product with these free tools. Google Trend and Google Keyword Tool are powerful tools to get detailed insight into the demand for your product.

After knowing the market Potential, the next logical step is to look for competitors.

How to do a Competitor Research?

Competition analysis tells you about the structure of the market. Large competitions mean that it is profitable to sell the product. The entry would be tough. But the public is aware of the product. You do not need to create an introductory or educational content around the product.

If there is no competition and the market is bare, it means the demand is less. People do not know about that product. Dropshipper has to aware the public about the product.

This is a rule of the market; if there is a demand, there are sellers. If there are no sellers, it only means the demand is not much. Or the product is untapped opportunity.

To find out more you have to do the competition analysis.

What to see while doing Competition Analysis?

Your dropshipping store aims to make sales. Sales only come with traffic.

There are two ways to bring traffic.

- Paid traffic
- Unpaid traffic

Many dropshippers make the sales via paid traffic. Anyone can create and run ads with practise and budget.

The thing to check out is how strong the SEO (search engine optimization) of competitors is.

SERP

First of all, check the Search Engine Result Page of your product. Check out what pages are ranking for your product.

Dropshippers don't compete with large marketplaces (Amazon-Walmart) so ignore them. Look for the dropshipping sites that are ranking.

Check the SERP in an incognito browser. Use the Advanced Google Search for specific results

“ Ubersuggest is a free tool that can help you while Ahref and Semrush are the paid one to do the complete competition analysis. ”

Make an Excel Sheet of all the domains ranking on the first two pages.

Some metrics to understand:

Backlinks:

Number of sites that are recommending that site. A backlink means a link given to that page from other web pages. The lesser the number of backlinks, the easier to outrank the competitors.

Domain Authority:

DA means the power of domains. It is the sum total of the number of backlinks, age of the domain, authority of the writers, and many other factors. Again the difficulty of ranking a page is directly proportional to the domain authority.

Page Authority:

It is similar to DA. DA is for the whole domain, while the PA is for one specific page of the site. Every page for the website may have different PA. But DA will be the same for the complete site.

Outranking a competitor site with high PR is a challenging task.

These three metrics are not complete SEO.

They only give an overview of the strength of the position of website.

Backlinks, DA, and PA provide you with quantitative figures. Quality factor of the site are different. They also demand a look.

Look of the Site:

You have a list of competitors. Browse each site manually as a customer. Don't only check out the homepage. Also see: Offer page, Cart page, Checkout page, Sales page, Payment Methods

Are they easy to find? How is the structure of the site?

Is it easy to buy the items from the web store?

User interactivensness is one of the ranking factors. Gone are the days when the mess up html pages sites were ranking. Now the attractive and user-friendly websites work better. Explore all the sites and ask yourself a question.

Would you buy a product from any of these websites? What are they lacking in customer experience that could be an opportunity?

Speed of the Site

eCommerce sites are usually heavy with images and videos. Many dropshippers do not give much mind to Speed of the Site page speed. As they believe in bringing the traffic from facebook.

Check the page speed on Google Page Speed Insights.

Google give points to those sites that load fast. So a website with bad user experience and slow speed could be outranked with excellent web design and fast speed.

Security

More than 90% of customers do not buy from sites that do not have SSL certificates.

Dropshippers always use HTTPS on their store. It is one of the first steps of setup.. But do look for it.

Insecure sites don't rank when it comes to eCommerce. If by any chance there is an unsecure dropshipping store ranking, it is a clear indication that Google does not have any secure site to rank.

It means the competitor could be outranked.

Customer Support

Dropshippers do not provide much customer support until they have significant revenue.

If a competitor is providing complete customer support, it would be difficult to compete with him without customer support.

Even if your store ranks better than him, he will sell due to the customer loyalty and customer assistance.

Checking out the reviews of your competitors is an excellent way to find out where the competitor is lacking.

Are they providing help to disappointed customers?

All these could be the weaknesses of the competitor that could be your opportunity.

Content Marketing

Majority of the dropshipping stores do not leverage the power of content marketing.

“ Content Marketing is a type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of online material that does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services. ”

Content could be a blog, videos, gifs, infographics, and any content that is shareable on social media.

Competitors doing content marketing means they are trying to diversify their traffic source. Though expensive, content marketing can bring a ton of traffic. You can convert that traffic into leads.

Summary of Competitor Research

Now all these factors do help us in knowing the strengths and weaknesses of competitors.

After the complete study of competitors, you would be able to know what is lacking in your competitors. Market research helps you in finding the right audience and the right angle to sell your product.

After having a product and doing the product research, hunting for supplier could start.

Now is the time to find a supplier for the product.

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Supplier Research

The first thing an aspiring dropshippers should know is to identify the retailers from wholesalers. Many retailers pose as a wholesaler to get large orders.

While they take the product from the wholesaler at a low price, they sell products to the dropshippers with their margin. A real wholesaler provides better prices.

How to confirm a real wholesaler?

It is not that tough to see the sign of fake wholesalers. Being a little aware could save a newbie dropshipper from this trap.

Membership Fee

Fake suppliers try to scam by asking for a monthly membership fee. This fee goes into the pocket of these middlemen.

They provide the same information as any wholesaler will do without a fee. But for every month they thug money in the form of monthly subscriptions.

There is a good chance of the supplier being a fake wholesaler if he is asking a monthly fee.

Selling to the Public

The wholesaler does not sell to the public. To sell to the public means establishing a different supply chain that is not economically wise for the wholesalers.

Check the review of the seller. If they are selling products to individuals, it is more likely to be a retailer.

Minimum Orders

A wholesaler only sells in batches. They don't sell in pieces. If a wholesaler has a minimum order requirement, it is okay. The issue is if the wholesaler is ready to sell one or two pieces.

Packaging and shipping of a few products are different than the packaging and shipping of large orders. Wholesalers do not entertain the small orders. They work on production concepts.

Where do you find the real Wholesalers?

There are many ways to find suppliers for the product. Some methods are convenient, and some are hard to follow. A strategy may work for one type of product and could fail for another kind of product.

It is not hard to find a supplier. They are not good at it but they are also trying to find dropshippers that can bring business to them.

Start with Manufacturer

The best way to begin the search for a quality supplier starts with a manufacturer. Try to buy the product from them.

If not, ask them about the wholesalers you can get the product from. Manufacturers do have a public list of wholesalers that they can share with you. You are eventually a customer.

In a few calls, you may be able to get the numbers of decent suppliers.

Google it

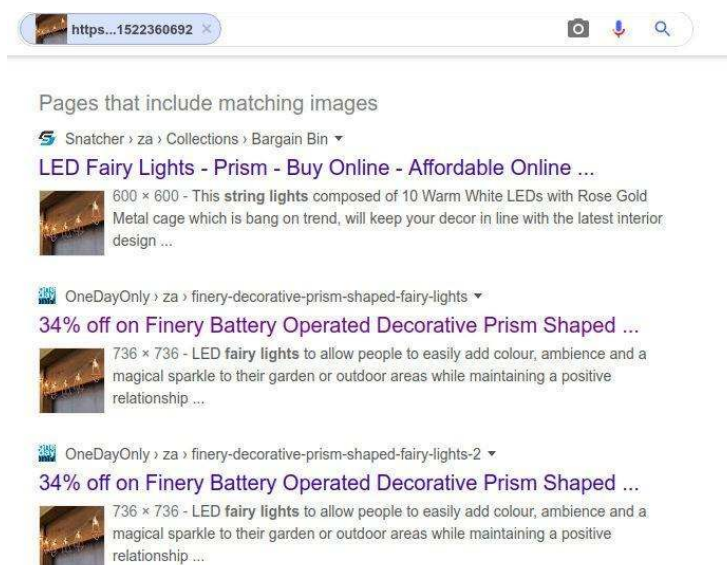
Google has answers to all the questions. So Google it. But be alert. Wholesalers are not good with marketing. A number of retailers pose as a wholesaler.

Dig deeper. Use different modifiers like – wholesalers, supplier, lot seller, distributor. Add the name of the product, of course.

Use Google Image Search.

Get the product image from the competitor site. Image search it to find the source of the image. Hopefully, the image search will land you at the wholesaler's site.

Check out the sites carefully. Look for the WhoIS information of the domain. Try to find out the publicly issued papers of the suppliers to verify the identity of the store.



Trade Shows

Trade fairs are one of the oldest ways to get in touch with suppliers.

Creating interaction between customers and suppliers is one of the purposes of these trade fairs. These sellers in Trade fairs are usually the quality one as they have to fulfill a criteria to participate in the fair.

But you need to find the trade fair that is related to your niche. Large Fairs usually happen in major cities.

If time is not an issue and fair tickets are affordable, a trade fair is an excellent way to not only find the supplier but also interact with them.

Wholesalers Directories

Wholesalers directories are service sites that offer you a curated list of wholesalers. Quality directories have strict criteria for the wholesalers to get listed. These directories work consistently to maintain the quality of the list.

Though they are not free, they can offer you all the excellent dropshipping suppliers for the product. These directories charge for this service.

Some popular Wholesale Directories:

- Worldwide Brands
- SaleHoo
- Doba
- Wholesale Central

Wholesalers Directories

Large marketplaces are full of retailers posing as wholesalers. But with some research, you can find good wholesalers in these Marketplaces.

These business sites do not ask for any fee to make an account.

Popular B2B sites:

- Alibaba
- Indiamart
- eWorld Trade
- DHGate
- Global Sources

These sites are the biggest b2b sellers of the World. Products from every niche are available on these eCommerce stores. Find a quality supplier and ask out if they support dropshipping.

How to finalize a dropshipping wholesaler from the list?



Supplier plays a critical role in making the dropshipping business successful.

A quality suppliers have these common characteristics:

Sales Team

A good wholesaler does have a sales team. The sales team makes the order processing easy.

Quality suppliers assign a personal salesperson to conduct communication with the dropshippers. It makes the whole dropshipping process smooth.

Technology Friendly

The whole dropshipping model works because of technology. Suppliers that are not tech-friendly makes the entire thing difficult.

A right supplier uses inventory software. They use CRM to maintain the relationship with customers. Product tracking software can improve the operation management a lot for a drop shipper.

Overall Organization

Some organizations work efficiently because of their excellent structure. The managers and the staff are in good relations with each other. That creates a clean environment to do business.

Checking if the seller is involved in illegal activities is a wise idea. Ask for the industry certificates from the wholesaler before making any deal.

Payment Options

Most of the suppliers asks for the credit cards in the beginning.

Later, you can talk to the suppliers if you want a different payment method. But credit card is a great option for both sides.

It eliminates the need of wire transferring the money at a regular interval of time. And writing cheques is also a headache.

A good seller accepts all popular mode of payment. They also keep solid paper-work of all orders.

Select a seller after weighing him on the various quality scales. You should ensure that everything is set nicely before going public with your online store.

Setting Up The Store

Where to showcase the products for the buyers?

There must be a digital store where the customer can order the product.

There are Two Options:

- Selling on a Marketplace
- Selling on personal eCommerce Site

Selling on a Market Place

Marketplaces sites like Amazon and eBay support dropshipping.

Dropshipping is a legal business on Amazon. Amazon only asks the seller to follow the packaging rule.

- There should be no third party packaging on the product.
- Business information of the seller must be on the product.

Make an account on Amazon Central, and they will approve the account after a review.

Pros and Cons of selling on Marketplace

PROS

- A large number of buyers
- Buyer's trust on these sites
- Lower ad rates
- Customer support handled by them

CONS

- Invisible branding
- No relations with the customer
- Listing fees
- Can't customize the look of the store

eCommerce Site

It is up to the dropshipper if he wants to build the site himself. Hiring a developer to create a site is convenient but expensive.

Building eCommerce site is not a herculean task, but it is a time taking process. It saves money too. Developers are expensive.

To start an eCommerce Site, you need to follow these steps:

- Buy a Domain Name
- Select a hosting Platform
- Buy Web hosting
- Designing the Site
- Go Live

Let's follow these steps to make a site.

Domain Name

Selecting the right domain name is a crucial part of online business. Changing domain name later is not a good decision. It hurts the branding and overall SEO of the site.

People remember the business with the name. They visit the site by entering the domain name.

There are two types of domain names: keyword-rich domains and branded domains

Keyword Rich Domains have targeted keyword included in them. For example Headphone Zone, already have 'headphone' in the domain. These type of domain names has a small benefit in SEO because of the presence of keyword.

But it is difficult to find the desired domain name. Also, the eCommerce site becomes targeted for the keyword used in the domain.

Dropshipping store with a domain name CatSocks.com cannot sell Dog socks. That is a significant drawback of Keyword Rich Domain names. The dropship store becomes the slave of its domain and can't grow to sell a variety of products.

On the other hand, branded names allow getting as creative as possible. Names like Uber, Google, Moz are branded names. They never had meaning before the sites.

These business sites has provided the meaning to these words.

The branded domain name also provides a personality to the store. But they don't give any clue about what your product is about. The word 'Uber' does not tell anything about the business.

From a marketing point of view, the branded name is not a brand. It has to become a brand gradually. This becoming the brand takes time. Sometimes years and years.

“ Content Marketing is a type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of online material that does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended to stimulate interest in its products or services. **”**

Selecting a Hosting Platform

Shopify, WooCommerce, and Magento are the most popular eCommerce platforms.

They all fulfil different needs and have their pros and cons.

Shopify:



Shopify might be the best platform for the non-technical people to build an eCommerce site. Majority of the drop shippers trust Shopify blindly.

Shopify is a complete solution for the eCommerce business. From buying a domain to hosting, it manages everything. It provides lots of useful extensions that improve the functionality of the eCommerce Store.

Being an excellent platform, Shopify stores do not offer much freedom to creative personalities. The service is expensive and there are lots of hidden charges.

One glaring problem with the Shopify is that it does not give analytical data to everyone. Complete reports of the store are only available for premium accounts holders.

Shopify does not give complete freedom over the store. Customization of the design is limited to the option provided by the platform.

WooCommerce



WooCommerce is the best platform for beginner dropshippers.

First of all, it is not expensive at all. WooCommerce is open source, hence free. But it is a plugin that you install on the WordPress site.

There is absolutely no limit to what you can do with WooCommerce. The best part is you own everything. All the data and the reports are yours to collect whenever you want.

But then everything has to be done and set up by you. It is not wrong to say that WooCommerce allows more functions than Shopify at a very low cost.

There is no need for any in-depth technical knowledge, but with some basics, anyone can create a fantastic store with WooCommerce.

But being open source, WooCommerce has security issues. Though, A big community is out there to resolve any WooCommerce issue.

Magento



According to Alexa, Magento is the most used eCommerce platform in the eCommerce Industry.

Shopify is for the total non-technical people, while WooCommerce is used by the people who can play with some technicalities. An experienced web developer is required to build a store on Magento.

“ Tip:
Magento is not for the small dropshippers with a tight budget.
But people who are planning to make a big eCommerce site,
Magento is one platform that offers you everything **”**

Magento offers the best features to integrate with the store. From Marketing to SEO to Customer relation, Magento provides all the powerful tools to create a solid eCommerce store.

Web Hosting

A quality hosting is a crucial part of any eCommerce business site. eCommerce site demand competent hosting so the store can run smoothly.

There are many Hosting Service providers in the market.

A quality hosting gives you:

Uptime Guarantee

A potential customer can visit the site anytime. Keeping the website live for 24/7 is vital for the business. It is the responsibility of the Hosting to keep everything in perfect condition from their end.

A quality hosting provider gives a guarantee that the hosting will never be down.

Fast Loading

Another attribute of good hosting is a fast loading site.

Speed is not only an essential factor for SEO but also Consumer Experience.

Customers do not like to wait for the pic of the product to load. Dropshipping sites are made up of lots of product images and videos. eCommerce stores need a fast hosting that can load the heavy pages quickly.

Security Concern

Everything connected to the Internet is under threat of hacking.

Web owners can take precautions from their side, but quality hosting providers have their defence systems. They protect the site from hacking attempts. Hosting service also helps in recovering the website if any issue happens.

Design the Theme that Matches the Product

What would be the look of the Store?

You get to do experiments on the design to find out what the customers find attractive. It depends on the product and the customers. Using a Hard Rock type theme on the Wedding Gown site would be weird.

Designing the site is a continuous process. Keep on learning and tweaking the design to make it more appealing.

Going Live

Dropshipping stores do not have to be perfect to go live.

Only important parts are:

- Customer can make an Order
- Working Payment Gateway
- Product reaching the destination

All the other components could be improved with time. All you need in the beginning is a working operation line.

Summary Until Now

Product is ready. The supplier is prepared. And the store is built. Next chapter is about Shipping and Customer Service.

Marketing/Promotion

How to make a strategy for the promotion of the store?

Product Study

The first step to make any marketing plan for a product is to understand the product.

Making a marketing plan without understanding the product is like shooting an arrow blindly and wishing it will hit the eye.

To study the product, ask these questions?

- What is the objective of the product?
- What use does this product have?
- Is this product solves any problem?
- What can my product do that could enhance the life of the buyer?

Studying the product gives a clear mind about what to sell and how.

The importance of the product research is that Product Study is work half done of the promotion strategy.

Who needs the product?

Needs are stronger than wants. If the product is satisfying a need of a person, it is a great hook to attract him. No worry if the product intention is of want and not need.

Want become need after a time.

At this step, we look for a group of people who could be your potential customers. It is done by finding out the people that the product could help.

For example, I am selling a drone.

I make a list of my potential customers:

- Technology fans
- Amateur photographers
- People with such hobbies
- Fire departments
- Engineering Universities

The list could be longer. But I need to narrow down to the most profitable segment. For 'drones', it would be amateur photographers and people with such hobbies.

Where to Find them?

Next step is to find their interaction circle. Where is the targeted customer of the product hanging out?

It could be on social media groups. They could be watching something on Youtube. Problem-solving sites are also an option if your product solves problems.

Few places to get an idea:

- Product Niche forums
- Social Media Groups
- Reddit Threads
- Suggestion Forums
- Problem Discussion Sites

After understanding the product, it is not difficult to find the location of targeted customers.

#drone

11,880,585 posts

Related Hashtags: #dji #dronevideo #drones #djimavicpro #mavicpro #droneoftheday #djimavicair #mavic2pro #mavicpro2 #dronevideography

There are more than 11M #drone. A drone is quite a popular product on Instagram. Related hashtags suggest other hashtags the drone community follow.

It is not as simple as it looks, nor is it much harder. You can always follow your competitors, btw. Try to find the source of his traffic and target them.

How to target the Customers?

Target them means bringing specific people to your store.

There are two types of traffic:

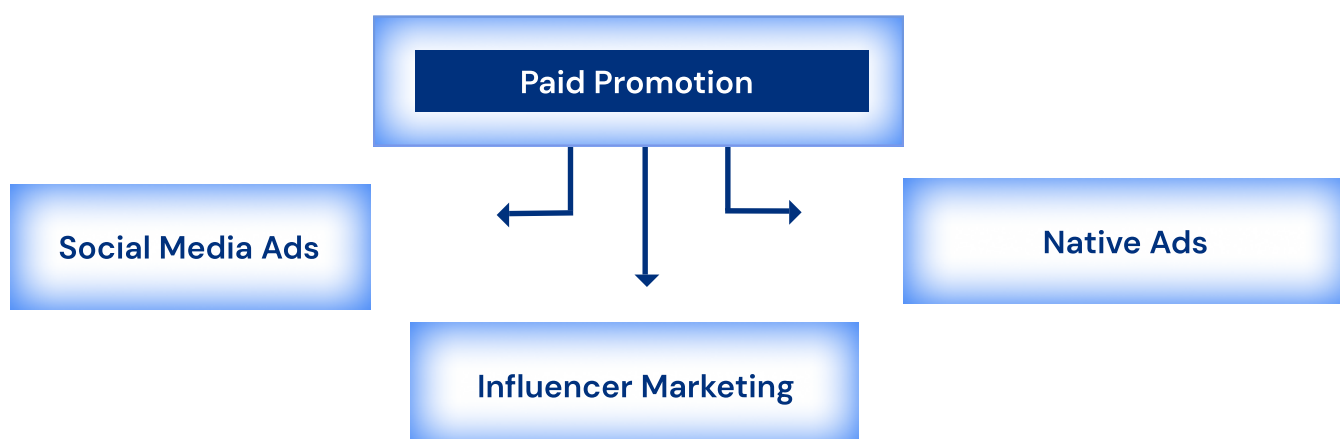
- Paid
- Non-paid

Let's talk about the paid one first.

Paid Promotions

A large number of dropshippers relies on paid traffic. Advertisement works excellent for trending products.

The time it will take to bring the traffic organically the trend will die. So running ads or doing the paid promotion is a quick way to bring the customers to the dropship store.



Methods of Paid Promotion

Social Media Ads

Social Media ads are still the best way to reach the customer. Every brand or no-brand keeps social media ads under their promotion strategies.

I do not need to tell the number of users on Facebook or Instagram. You know it's enormous. Potential customers are hiding among the users.

Social Media sites provide a range of tools to help in making the ads. They offer a lot of data that can be used to target ads to the desired customer segment.

Popular social media platforms:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Reddit
- LinkedIn

Influencer Marketing

Social Media influencers are people who have a huge following in their field. They are like opinion leaders.

Find out a person that has good reach in the niche of the product. It could be done by doing a little research on any social media platform.

How to work with Influencers:

Barter system: Positive post in exchange for a product



Affiliate type: Giving them an affiliate code



Monetary: Buying a post on their account



There are many fake influencers too in marketing. They buy followers and boost their posts. The traffic from their followers is not worth it.

Look for genuine people who do have some real influence.

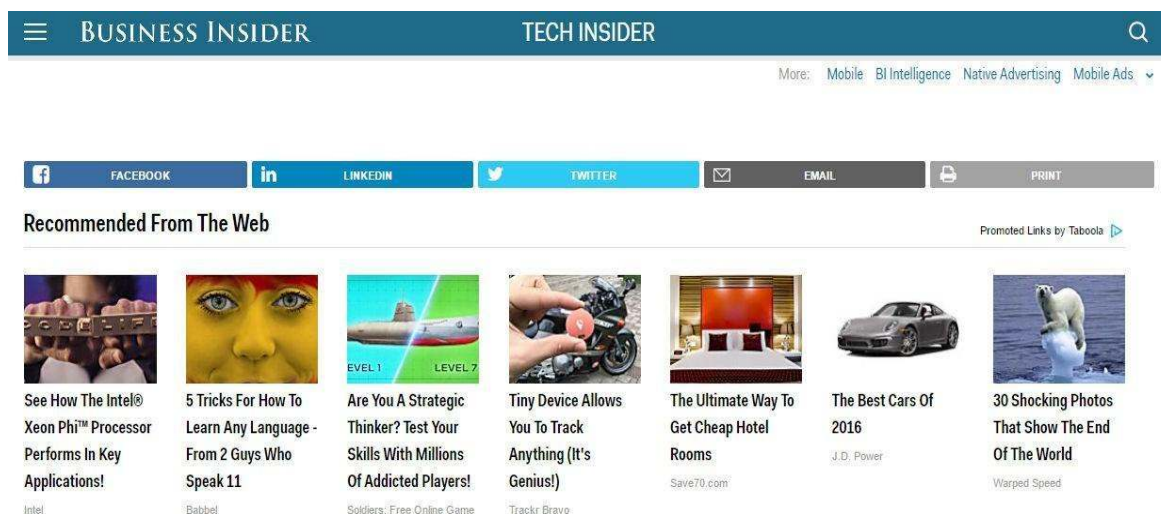
Tips for finding a true influencers:

- Must be of your niche
- Check out the followers if they are real or not
- Ask for the number of post views, reach and post interactions
- Check out the comments on their posts

Be aware, and you will not fall in the trap of fake influencers.

Native Ads

Social Media sites have policies that don't allow the ads for a type of products.



Native ads are helpful for such products.

Best Native Ad Networks:

- MGID
- RevContent
- EvaDav
- Taboola

Upcoming Ad Network

Apps like TikTok, where users usually go to time-pass are an excellent opportunity for dropshippers.

The users of TikTok type apps are content consumers. They watch these short videos back to back. Dubsmash, Like and Cheez are working towards availing the user-generated content for users.

Our Ad Formats

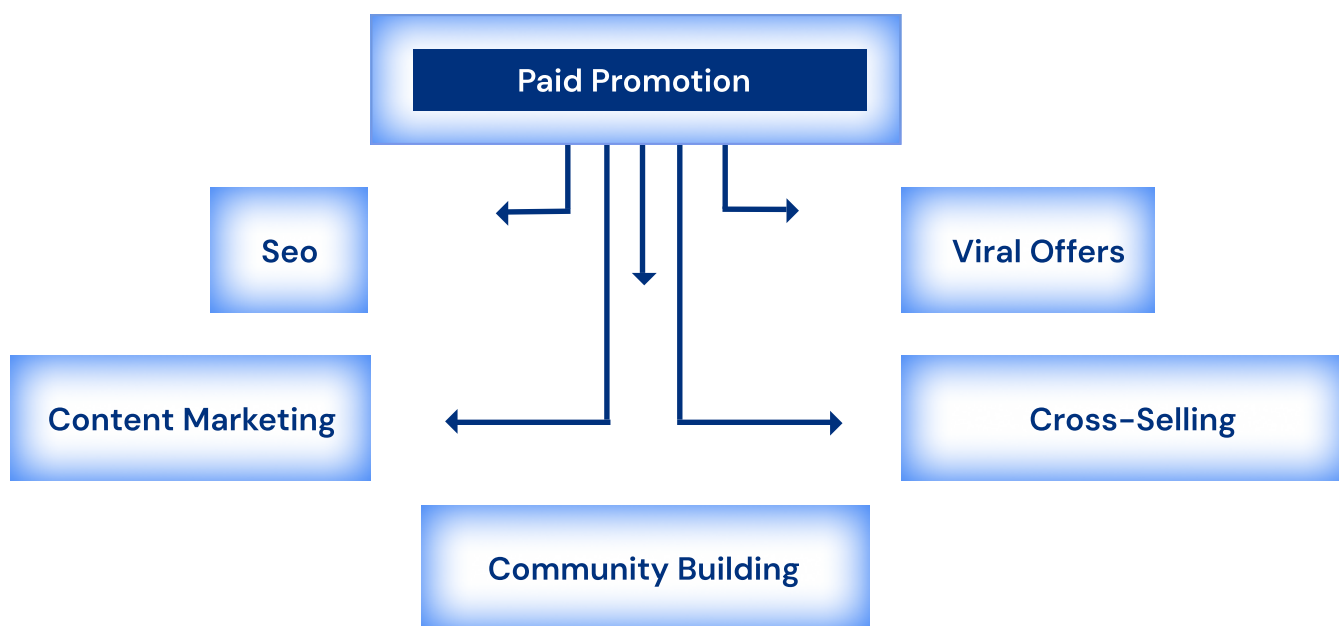
DIGIDAY TikTok

- Brand Takeover**: A smartphone screen displaying the TikTok logo as a full-screen takeover.
- In-feed Native Video**: A smartphone screen showing a video ad integrated into the TikTok feed.
- Hashtag Challenge**: A smartphone screen displaying a grid of videos under a specific hashtag challenge.
- Lens 2D, 3D & AR**: A smartphone screen showing an AR lens with a character and the text 'SPICABLE ME3'. A callout below the phone reads 'Available in 2019'.

Short video ads mix with the original content homogeneously. These apps have a massive number of viewers, and the ad rates are low right now.

Non-Paid: Organic Traffic

Getting organic traffic on the store is a result of a long process, but it is worth it for long term goals. To create and optimize the various channels for the traffic is not a day's work. Or one time work.



SEO – Search Engine Optimization

Optimizing your site so it can come in the search result is the best practice to get free traffic.

There are two parts of SEO: On-Page SEO and OFF Page SEO.

On-Page SEO means structuring the page in a way that search engines can identify quickly what your site is about. Google has bots that crawl websites and read what the page is about. On-Page SEO presents the information in a manner that is easy to read for the crawlers.

OFF Page SEO is about increasing the trust of the site. The recommendation and links from the other sites boost the off page seo.

Building links for your site is a task that takes time. Doing SEO for eCommerce is different from any other SEO. You can read our eCommerce SEO Guide.

Content Marketing

Content Marketing is an attractive way to leverage the potential customer by offering them a content around the product.

A site that sells Cat Socks could create content around Cats. They can publish content on various social media platforms. The audience will interact with the Cat pics or share it among their friends.

BLOG & RECENT POSTS



High-Pressure Power Washers and How You Can Use Them

Cleaning and maintaining your house and your car are both tasks that everyone loathes doing. The reason being pretty obvious, it is simply too boring...

[Read More >](#)



V-Line Sheet Masks - Your Magical Non-Surgical Face Lifts

Skincare and beauty routines have significantly upgraded since the past couple of decades. From the most ancient treatments of massage to acupuncture therapy, we have...

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There have been quite a bunch of new inventions that help solve our weirdest problems. Problems that we can't even begin to explain have already...

[Read More >](#)

Inspire Uplift uses Blog marketing to drive traffic to their store.

Content could be:

- Memes
- Funny videos
- Informational posts
- Educational content
- Tips and tricks

Either way, people will recognize the brand that is publishing Cat pics. Pique the interest of people, and they will start visiting your store. All the big brands are in content marketing. CM is not hard to employ. Choose interesting topics related to the product.

Create text or image content if video content is not affordable.

Viral Offers

Many dropshippers provides off coupons if a user recommends the store to their friends.

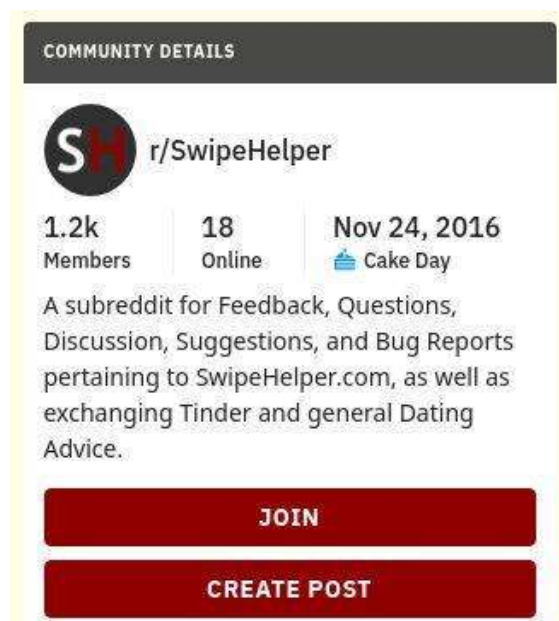
There are various ways to touch the hearts of the consumers.

Like donating by the name of the customer when he buys from the store. Or feeding a homeless on every order, sending a surprise gift to a lucky buyer every day.


Offers that make the consumer feel good about themselves work great.


Community Building

Look at this community built by SwipeHelper.



COMMUNITY DETAILS

 r/SwipeHelper

1.2k Members	18 Online	Nov 24, 2016  Cake Day
-----------------	--------------	--

A subreddit for Feedback, Questions, Discussion, Suggestions, and Bug Reports pertaining to SwipeHelper.com, as well as exchanging Tinder and general Dating Advice.

[JOIN](#)

[CREATE POST](#)

It is an active community. The best part I see is that they are genuinely helping people to get more matches on Tinder.

Creating a community on any social media platform is rewarding. All the members becomes the potential customers. The consumer feels connected to the sellers and buyers. It bound them in a group.

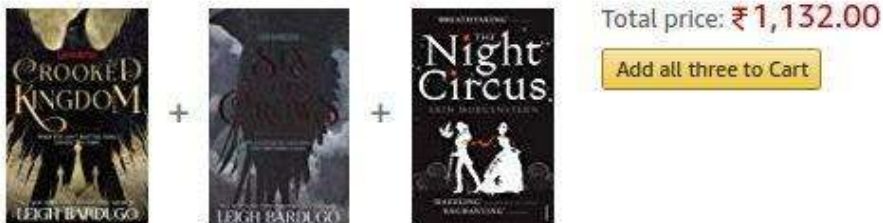
If managing a community is difficult, join a community where the customers hang out. Offer them help and build an image of opinion leader in that group.

It is about having a stable existence outside the store.

Cross-Selling

Cross-selling is not actually for getting traffic. But it is a way of promoting one product with another product. All the big eCommerce sites do it.

Frequently bought together



- This item:** Crooked Kingdom (Six of Crows Book 2) by Leigh Bardugo Paperback ₹ 393.00
- Six of Crows: Book 1 by Leigh Bardugo Paperback ₹ 435.00
- The Night Circus (Vintage Magic) by Erin Morgenstern Paperback ₹ 304.00

When a customer is buying a product, suggest him to add one more product. The added product should be related to the main product.

Add Positive Reviews

Showing positive reviews on the store is a way of promoting your store.

Dropshippers motivate buyers to leave a review by offering them off coupons. This way, they also drive the consumer to make more purchases.

You can also share the social media posts of consumers on your site. Give them credit though.



Penguin sharing the user's post on their account.

Using user-generated content by sellers is not a new thing. If anything, it improves the reach of the seller.

Summary Until Now

We are living in the Internet era. There is a high number of Internet users who buys stuff daily.

People are not afraid of spending on the net. But that does not mean they will buy anything blindly.

With so much competition in the industry, a promotion strategy is necessary to make the business successful.

You must not forget that strategy depends on the product. Marketing for the tech product is different from the fashion product.

Keep experimenting and keep the product in mind, always.

serverguy

**A dedicated hosting partner to
help you scale & succeed.**

Contact Now



Shipping & Customer Services

The first thing to do after setting up the store is doing an order. It's a trial order that checks the leakage in operation.

First-order will give insights into:

- Time supplier is taking to process the order
- Time before shipping
- Shipping Time
- Packaging of the Order
- Payment processing time

Looking from the perspective of the customer is the best way to look for weaknesses in the business structure.

Payment Gateway

Payment Gateways are software that enables the transaction on the eCommerce websites. A dropshipping store needs Payment Gateway so the customer can pay for the product.

There are various Payment Gateways popular in the Market. Integrate anyone with your site.

Popular Payment Gateways:

- PayPal
- WePay
- Stripe
- Authorize.net
- 2Checkout

Packaging

The packaging is the first interaction of the customer with the product. The packaging is not only for printing the information but also for protecting the product from harm during shipping.

Being attractive is a plus point for packaging.

Make a packaging guideline and share it with your supplier. It will help in building the overall brand, and gradually, customer loyalty.

How do you charge the shipping?

The supplier will share his shipping chart. Shipping charges depend on the weight and the size of the product. Also on the location of the customer.

For the product that has similar shape and weight, the shipping charges would be nearly the same.

Arranging different shipping rates for different products could be done while building the store. The option comes up during listing of the product on the site.

Shipping Time

Never keep the customer in the dark about the shipping time. Inform honestly how much time it could take the product to reach the location.

By this way, he will not be disappointed.

Customer satisfaction depends on customer expectation. Don't give false hope that the product will arrive fast.

Free Shipping

Shipping is never free. Free shipping means that the customer pays the shipping fee when he pays for the product.

You can employ this too. Add shipping fee to product fee and make the shipping free. The watch dropshipping sites were on the rage a year ago.



Leather Quartz Analog Watches

★★★★★ (9 reviews)

~~\$129.99~~ **\$0.00**

Model

Quantity

HURRY! ONLY 1 LEFT IN STOCK!

Add to cart

Price: 129.99\$ - NOW FREE Leather Blue Ray Glass Analog Watch (Just pay shipping)

These Custom Designed Leather Blue Ray Glass Analog Watches are a MUST HAVE for any watch lover! Designed with premium High Quality Material.....and you can get it **FREE NOW**, but only for a limited time!

We are running a special promotion, and YES we are giving them away for **FREE**. You just have to pay shipping & handling.

They sold a lot of product with Free Plus Shipping Fee method. Nobody likes paying the shipping fee. So keep it as low as possible.

Depends on the Product

Shipping procedure also depends on the products. A customer can wait longer for one type of product but not for another type of product. For some types of products, the customer would pay the high shipping fee easily.

Some products may get damaged during shipping. It all can be resolved with the proper interaction with the dropshipping wholesalers. You have to negotiate with him to get a tough packing for the vulnerable products.

At the ends of the day, keep doing experimentation with wholesalers.

What to do in Customer Service?

For beginner dropshippers, customer service could be a loathing task. It becomes difficult to understand what the customer wants other than the product. Sometimes customers have extreme demands.

Service does not mean that there should be call representatives ready to talk 24/7. Solving customer queries and clearing his doubts is only a single part of customer service. There is more to it.

Customer Support

Mistakes happen in dropshipping. Dropshipping is the process that involves people situated at a great distance.

Even in an excellent dropshipping system, there will be a tiny package that will go to the wrong address. Sometimes the mistake happens from the supplier side, sometimes from the store and sometimes from the customer side.

But whoever made the mistakes, the dropshipping store has to pay.

Here, you need to solve the problem professionally. Positive reputation of online business is important at every level. But in the beginning, few negative reviews could harm a lot.

Lost Product in Shipping: Refund the money. Offer them a coupon for future purchases.

Damage Product: Exchange the product. Provide a little gift or card.

Customer complaint: Ask for the issue and solve it.

Whatever the issue arises, solve it with patience. Excellent customer support will make the customer loyal. They will not hesitate in buying more product from the store.

Prime Sale

How to make customers excited?

Invite them to exclusive sale. A sale that is only accessible by regular customers. It will give them a feeling of being a part of a closed group.

Once a customer buys from the site, add their email id to the VIP list. Send them an email now and then offering exclusive coupons and deals.

Wish The Customer

Everyone likes to get wishes on their birthday.

You can automate this process with the help of plugins/extensions/addons/apps. Collect the birthdates and send a customized email.

Sending a coupon code is a great idea. People usually don't hesitate to make a sale on their birthday.

Summary Until Now

No business, small or big, can run without providing the customer service at some level. Majority of the dropshipper do not give much customer support in the beginning.

But it is essential for business and even a dropshipping site should do it from day one.

Start with the small plan like following up the visitor comments on social media posts.

Resources

Dropshipping Stats

<https://blog.3dcart.com/can-dropshipping-be-profitable-check-these-key-statistics>
<https://www.amercommerce.com/the-numbers-behind-dropshipping>

Case Studies

https://www.reddit.com/r/Entrepreneur/comments/8ho2f2/how_i_generated_10211326_in_2_months/
<https://www.dropshiplifestyle.com/how-we-made-3400-in-sales-after-only-22-days-of-being-in-business/>
<https://stream-seo.com/facebook-e-commerce-case-study/>
<https://www.referralcandy.com/blog/ecommerce-case-studies/>

Product Research

<https://bootstrappingecommerce.com/find-dropshipping-products/>
<https://beeketing.com/blog/dropshipping-products/>
<https://dominatedropship.space/shopify-product-research-guide/>

Trending Products to Sell Online

<https://www.cloudways.com/blog/trending-products-to-sell/>
<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/trending-products>
<https://www.shopify.com/blog/best-products-sell-2018>
<https://www.withintheflow.com/trending-products-to-sell-online/>

Tools for Research

<https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US>
<https://ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/>
<https://backlinko.com/google-keyword-planner>
<https://ahrefs.com/blog/google-keyword-planner/>
<https://ahrefs.com/blog/how-to-use-google-trends-for-keyword-research/>
<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/google-trends>

Supplier Research

<https://www.liquidweb.com/woocommerce-resource/dropshipping-suppliers/>
<https://www.quicksprout.com/best-dropshipping-companies/>
<https://www.webretailer.com/lean-commerce/dropshipping-suppliers/>
<https://ecommercebuff.com/how-to-find-dropshipping-suppliers/>

Shipping

<https://itsalanyoung.com/deal-long-shipping-times-dropshipping-aliexpress/>
<https://www.inventorysource.com/understanding-shipping-dropshipping/>
<https://alidropship.com/aliexpress-shipping-time/Dropship>

Marketing

<https://www.oberlo.com/ebooks/dropshipping/marketing-strategies>
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<https://3hundrd.com/ways-to-promote-your-dropshipping-store>

FB Ads

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-advertise-on-facebook/>
<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/facebook-paid-ad-checklist>
<https://neilpatel.com/blog/deep-dive-facebook-advertising/>
<https://adespresso.com/guides/facebook-ads-beginner/>

Instagram Ads

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-ads-guide/>
<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/11/20/instagram-advertising>
<https://later.com/blog/instagram-ads/>
<https://influencermarketinghub.com/how-much-does-it-cost-to-advertise-on-instagram/>

Content Marketing

<https://neilpatel.com/what-is-content-marketing/>
<https://optimonster.com/content-marketing-examples/>
<https://www.jeffbullas.com/content-marketing-101/>
<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/content-marketing>

Search Engine Optimization

<https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo>
<https://searchengineland.com/guide/what-is-seo>
<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2015/04/30/seo-basics>
<https://ahrefs.com/blog/what-is-seo/>

DropShipping Store Example

<https://dodropshipping.com/dropshipping-store-examples/>
<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/shopify-stores>
<https://www.shopify.com/blog/shopify-stores>
https://www.reddit.com/r/dropship/comments/abcdul/looking_for_good_real_dropshipping_websites/

About Zeno Cloud

Zeno Cloud offers AWS Consulting Service and Cloud Solutions to businesses WorldWide. Our expert team will assess your cloud needs and deliver the solutions that will help your business to achieve its goals. We are certified Amazon partners.



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