

Digital Merchandising Best Practices

1. **Map and test your customer journey to product.** Understand customer's journey to product and conversion. Develop processes to get them to the desired product as easily as possible. Test content and optimize the experience using personalization, on-site search, banners, product recommendations, landing pages, categories pages, and product detail pages.
2. **Test merchandising across your pages.** Start by testing different merchandising slots across your pages and test the viability of the content. Optimize your on-site search results page, banners, product recommendations, landing pages, categories pages, and product detail pages for merchandising slots. Ensure that you run A/B tests to evaluate effectiveness.
3. **Product content must include basic information; be direct and sell.** Ensure the basics: product detail/size, care / cleaning, price, and assortment. This helps the customer, while improving search and site optimization. Product copy should be detailed enough to answer questions, but short and concise enough hold attention.
4. **Quality product imagery key.** Quality imagery, videos, 360-degree spin shots help your customers feel closer to the product and ensures the fit. All merchandising on digital channels should include quality images.
5. **Featured and related items are a great way to offer customers the complete a look.** Create "related items" and "featured" widgets. This often leads to cross-sells and up-sells.
6. **Ratings and reviews provide customers with trusted feedback.** Customers expect getting review and recommendations from other customers. Include this feature via the ecommerce platform or a third party provider. Leverage social media comments and feedback.
7. **Search is a critical navigational tool for web and mobile sites.** Present relevant searches. Do not have empty pages for customer search. Merchandise search results – ensure key terms present relevant searches for customers. Feature key filters to allow customers to sort and reduce results – Best Sellers, Rating, Price, Size, Color, etc.
8. **Coordinated omnichannel merchandising provides customers with option to buy items via any channel.** Coordinate merchandising efforts across channels. Promote and integrate online ordering with your offline / retail inventory. Ensure that in-store merchandising matches with offline.
9. **Tailor product categories to customer's shopping needs.** Develop product categories that are tailored to how customers shop. Name categories based on buyer friendly terms, not internal department naming conventions. Test and measure taxonomy categories.
10. **Build and test checkout optimization.** Individual testing is required to for each product type to find the journey that best-fit your customer and brand. Some things to consider:
 - Should your customer have to login to checkout?
 - What payment types are you offering?
 - How clear are your delivery options?

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eCommerce Diligence™ Checklist

Digital Merchandising Key Questions to Ask Providers

Company

1. How long have you been in this business?
2. How many clients have you sold? How many have you lost, and why?
3. How many clients have you sold? How many have you lost, and why?
4. What size or types of clients fall into your “sweet spot”?

Products/Services

1. Is your solution offered as perpetual licensed software or on-demand solution?
If perpetual license:
 - a. What are the hosting requirements?
 - b. What should I expect regarding upgrades (both timing and pain-points)?
 - c. Do you provide customization /implementation services? Can a third party?**If SAAS/ASP**
 - a. Do all tiers include maintenance and support?
 - b. How often are new features introduced?
 - c. What do I do if I need a feature you don't have?
- d. Do you offer a free trial? What's missing in the trial version?
- e. What technical support services are available?
- f. Is your support team located in the US or abroad?
- g. What is your SLA for support issues?
- h. Do you have a support knowledge base, community forum, or applications that are shared by customers?
- i. How can I export data if I need to change platforms? Do I own and control my data?

Features

1. What key features are included in your solution?
 - a. What features are currently missing?
 - b. What features are on your roadmap?
 - c. What features does management love?
 - d. What features does your platform have for integration into existing retail systems?
 2. What is your product's competitive advantage over other digital merchandising solutions?
 3. What key features are geared toward big businesses? What about small and mid-sized?
 4. How do you integrated into back office company merchandising and planning tools? Other?
 5. What analytic tools does your platform provide? Does your platform analytics integrate into current ecommerce to analytics tools? Please provide a list of standard reports, tracking and statistical tools included. In what timeframe do you provide reporting?
 6. What specialized internal company resources and technologies are required to manage your product and services?
 7. How do you support personalized merchandising on the web and mobile? What integrations into CRM systems do you offer?
 8. Please describe your customer data, types, what can be included on templates, and how this can be integrated or managed on your solution.
 9. What tools does your platform provide to build and support a personalized mobile merchandising experience for show-rooming?
 10. What ecommerce platforms is your tool already integrated into?
 11. What strategic services do you offer to help retailer's digital merchandising initiatives?
- Search Merchandising Tools**
12. Does your product offer tools to optimize website search capabilities?
 13. What APIs do you offer?
 14. Do you support APIs for integration with other systems not currently supported by your standard integrations?
- Product Recommendation Tools**
15. Does your product integrate into existing ecommerce platform merchandising dashboards?
 16. What APIs do you offer?
 17. Do you support APIs for integration with other systems not currently supported by your standard integrations?

Pricing

1. Describe your pricing model. Do you charge for number of users, assets, etc.? Are there different levels?
2. Why do I want to pay to upgrade to the next level?
3. How do you charge for annual support? What about maintenance?
4. Are there any hidden fees (e.g., implementation, transaction costs, revenue sharing)?

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