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**Shopping Cart Abandonment Solved!**

**By Mike Banks Valentine**

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Imagine yourself at the local Sears carrying a shopping basket down the isles looking for the perfect gift for your spouse when you come to a great looking watch in the jewelry department. You know she'll love the design, but also know she has a curious allergy to white gold and call over a salesperson to ask them what the bevel surround is made of. She reassures you that it's made of platinum so you cheerfully purchase the watch, smiling as you wander over to have it gift-wrapped.

Take the same scenario online and imagine you have the same simple question to ask someone. Now what? You most likely just abandon the shopping cart and leave the store because you can't imagine spending that amount of money without knowing whether your sweetie will break out in hives because the white gold allergy affects her wrists so badly.

Abandonment of shopping carts online is blamed on everything from fear of using credit cards on the web to privacy concerns.

My theory is as follows: If you have any questions about any product or service you are purchasing online, ecommerce sites expect you to either look up the answer in their FAQ's (frequently asked questions page) or just search out their 800 number from the site somewhere and call them yourself to find out. This can be a ridiculous process on some sites as they simply don't want to be bothered with expensive phone calls and leave their number off of the shopping cart pages.

## Shopping Cart Abandonment Solved!

They don't want to devote customer service reps to those fickle shoppers that abandon online shopping carts at rates as high as 90% at some ecommerce sites. I'd propose that most online shoppers abandon those carts because they need to know something that could never be considered for those FAQ pages like the term of the product guarantees or how long the battery life is. If there were a simple way to have your questions answered, I'd like to suggest that those shopping carts would rarely ever be abandoned.

I've found the solution and can't believe the brilliance of the idea behind the answer to this thorny question. Customer clicks a button labeled "CallButton" and gets a pop-up screen

asking for their name and phone number so a representative can call them at their convenience to answer any questions and/or concerns!

They fill in their name and phone number and receive a polite response page custom designed to reassure them that they will be contacted how and when they would like to be by a person that can actually answer their question! No nasty telephone trees or automated callbacks, but a person from the jewelry department that knows platinum from white gold.

You now have the name and phone number of a prime valuable customer ready to buy who WANTS to hear from you.

>From the customers viewpoint, this is simple, responsive and satisfying. From the sellers position it is one of the most powerful ecommerce tools to be announced on the web this year! This idea and the powerful software behind that simple button were announced at a press event titled "Showstoppers" during the Spring 2001 InternetWorld conference and show in the City of Angels (Los Angeles) March 15th.

This tool receives my vote as a better ecommerce solution than any seen at the huge eCRM (Customer Relationship Management) show held concurrently with the I-World show at the LA convention center this month. The powerful tracking and reporting functions that come as part of the package with this incredibly simple little button could turn around the fortunes of major e-tailers like many of those we've seen sink in the economic downturn.

Priced at a very low per-call rate starting at about \$1.50

## Shopping Cart Abandonment Solved!

per customer contact, you can have calls routed anywhere from your cell phone to your home office and be assured of making the sale to that customer that very likely would have walked (or clicked) right out of your e-store without that personal contact from a caring customer representative. Most so-called CRM solutions are simply automated-database-tracking-purchase-recording-preference-listing-sub-routine-predictive-expensive-file-them-here-contact-them-then-follow-up-with-them-next types of robotic de-personalizers.

CallButton offers the reporting and tracking tools available in those complex CRM solutions with two major differences. Your customer gets their questions answered and you make the sale! It's installed on your page with a short line of HTML code and you don't invest the tens of thousands of dollars required of major corporations for their robotic de-personalizer software.

You make the sale, your customer is satisfied. Now comes the

bonus. The upsell while the customer is on the phone with you. This prospect has requested your contact, has an interest in more of what you sell and has qualified themselves for your services. If you don't upsell them now, you might consider doing something else with your time.

I've signed up for the service and can't imagine how I got along without it. It's priced for the small business and handily solves a difficult issue for both business owners and their customers.

<http://callbutton.com/>

Mike Banks ValentineWebSite101 "Reading List" Weekly Netpreneur Tip SheetWeekly Ezine emphasizing small business on the InternetSubscribe address <mailto:WebSite101-subscribe@listbot.com>articles available: <http://website101.com/freecontent.html>

### **E-commerce Solution: Shopping Cart or Web Store?**

**By Joel Walsh**

If you're planning on opening your own online store, you should make sure that you learn all about e-commerce, so that you can select the best online store builder for your business. One big decision you want to make early on is whether you want your online store to consist only of a shopping cart, or if you want your online store to be your entire site, with shopping cart functionalities available to every page. Let's look at the options. Ecommerce Option One: Complete Online Store

## Shopping Cart Abandonment Solved!

Software that creates a complete online store for you, with completely integrated ecommerce capabilities, is arguably best for new websites, since it will save you the trouble of buying separate content management software and then integrating it with your current site.

Here are some things you can do with a completely ecommerce-enabled web store that you can't do with a traditional website that just has a CMS attached: Show a "in your shopping cart" list of selected items to users who add something to a cart, then continue browsing your site. Studies have shown that "shopping cart abandonment," in which users add something to the cart and then forget about it while browsing the site, is greatly reduced when users can see their shopping cart contents in front of them at all times. Feature a different product on your homepage each day, rotating based on a dynamic selection from your shopping cart inventory. Automatically recommend a brand new product to users who are browsing a related page on your site-without updating the code on that page. Remind returning visitors to your homepage of an item they added to a shopping cart on a previous visit but did not purchase. Manage your entire website's look and feel, including both the regular pages and the shopping cart pages, from a single interfaces, without having to copy changes in design from one to the other. Automatically remove a product featured on regular pages of your site when it is no longer in stock. Show an updated list of the latest additions to your inventory on the homepage or other non-shopping-cart pages. Display a signup form for users to receive email announcements of new products, dynamically generated from your web store. Ecommerce Option Two: Separate Shopping Cart

If you already have a website, transferring everything to a new web store system can be daunting. You may want to start your foray into ecommerce with a simple add-on shopping cart.

But don't limit your possibilities for the future. You can still employ a full-featured web store now and simply use only its shopping cart functions. Simply set up the online store to show in a directory or subdomain of your existing domain, or host it off-site completely. Then link to the individual product pages on the web store from your existing site.

Users never have to know the shopping cart is actually a full-featured site with its own homepage-they'll never see those pages, and in many web store software packages, you can simply disable those pages from every being created.

After all, on the web you don't have to buy a bigger building to expand your store. Why limit your growth with less-fully-featured software? Choose ecommerce software that will grow with your business, and your store can grow as big as you can make it.

Joel Walsh is a writer and online business owner. Check out this affordable web store:

<http://www.easystorecreator.com>

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